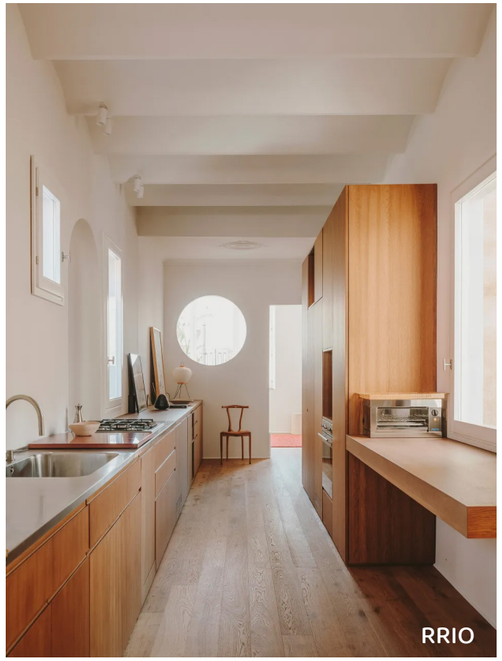
CASE STUDY 2.0
REBUILDING LOS ANGELES

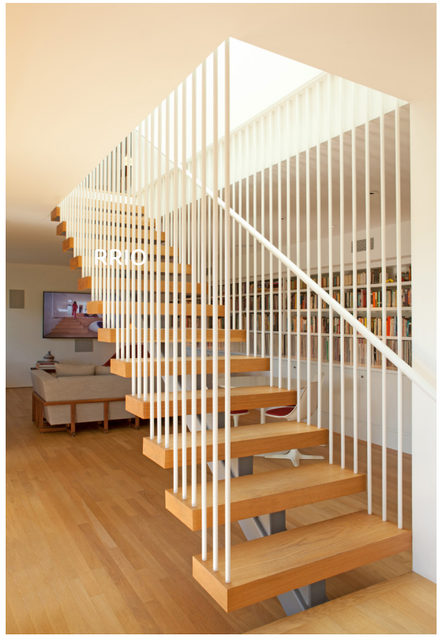
Casa Cuadrada

DUTTON
architects
x RRIO

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION





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COLLAB / FIRM SUMMARY

DUTTON ARCHITECTS

Based in Los Angeles, Dutton Architects has been designing high-quality homes and spaces for over twenty years. We are known for delivering thoughtful, well-detailed but cost-effective architecture. Each project is unique, and respects a client's particular needs, goals, and ways of living. Our practice is dedicated to creating inspiring places to live and work — from custom residences and creative office environments to multi-family housing and urban infill projects. At every scale, our work reflects a warm, inviting approach to modern architecture. We want people to experience the joy of being in a well-designed house, without the architecture upstaging their life.

Dutton Architects is committed to the best traditions of California modernism: contemporary living standards expressed through timeless, human-centered design. Every project is custom-tailored through a collaborative, creative process that ensures a rich dialogue between architect and client. We specialize in solving complex challenges — from difficult sites to demanding programs — with elegant, sustainable solutions.

Our designs are deeply connected to the landscape and climate of California, maximizing indoor-outdoor living and emphasizing natural light, open space, and a sense of ease. With a profound appreciation for the history of Southern California architecture, we approach every project with an understanding of — and respect for — this unique and inspiring context.

JOHN DUTTON

John is the founder of Dutton Architects, where he oversees the firm's highest design standards and ensures comprehensive, personalized service for every client. His passion for design spans all scales — from homes and workplaces to furniture and public parks — reflecting a belief that great design can enhance every part of daily life.

John brings a unique and distinguished background to his work. He trained at some of the world's most renowned architectural firms — including Morphosis, Richard Meier & Partners, Renzo Piano Building Workshop, and Santiago Calatrava — gaining experience in the creation of iconic, visionary buildings. At the same time, he has cultivated a deep expertise in urban and neighborhood design, giving him a rare ability to design not just individual spaces, but the broader environments that support vibrant, sustainable communities. His work is grounded in an understanding of how people live, work, and connect within inspiring, thoughtfully crafted places.

A longtime educator, John is an adjunct professor at the USC School of Architecture and a professor with the Mediterranean Global Studies program. He served as president of the Los Angeles Forum for Architecture and Urban Design and was a member of its Board of Directors for five years. In addition to practicing architecture, he has contributed writings to numerous publications, served as a guest critic at leading architecture schools, and lectured internationally on architecture and urbanism.

John holds a Master of Architecture from Princeton University and a Bachelor of Arts from Brown University.

DUTTON ARCH x RRIO

The Casa Cuadrada is a collaboration between Dutton Architects and the Barcelona-based architecture firm RRIO. Led by Roman Sarria, this young and dynamic firm designs housing, restaurants, stores, and furniture. Their elegant Mediterranean design sensibility is combined with a rigorous conceptual process. Their appreciation of art and technology, and solving unique problems, will be a powerful contribution in the development of the Casa Cuadrda. The collaboration between the two firms will bring a unique house prototype to Los Angeles.

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Rebuilding Homes, Recovering a Spirit.

The recent wildfires in Los Angeles have erased more than homes — they have revealed a deeper need to rethink how we inhabit space: with resilience, intelligence, and openness to change. In this urgent context, the lessons of the Case Study Houses feel more necessary than ever: homes designed to be built rapidly, economically, and above all, to offer frameworks for richer lives.

Our project picks up this spirit and advances it into the present. It proposes a home that sees simplicity and resource optimization not as restrictions, but as the starting point for a freer, more personal domestic life.

The house begins from a pure, rational geometry: a perfectly square plan, derived from modular principles and contemporary construction techniques. This structure is single story, allowing the life of all parts of the house to spill into the surrounding landscape. Inside and outside blur, expanding the vital space of the home and multiplying the scenarios available to its users. The single-story decision also simplifies the structural logic, ensuring faster, more efficient construction.

The plan divides into two distinct halves. One side concentrates all technical demands — kitchen, bathrooms, storage — into a dense and efficient block. In doing so, it frees the rest of the house from technical and structural constraints, offering a large open space, flanked by two generous apertures to the exterior. This space remains deliberately undefined: a flexible, high-potential zone that invites inhabitants to shape it according to their evolving needs and desires.

Beyond this, we propose an optional upper-level module: a detached, almost “treehouse-like” space. Unlike the ground floor, this room severs direct connection to the outdoor areas, offering instead a suspended atmosphere of retreat. Framed by a single window that erases the reference to the house below, it becomes a place of isolation, introspection, or imagination — another layer of freedom, projected into the landscape.

The house is designed with modular, easily sourced materials, ensuring both speed of assembly and long-term adaptability. A central skylight draws natural light deep into the plan, while allowing for passive cross-ventilation — responding intelligently to the Californian climate. Large sliding glass doors slide open so the main public parts of the house flow to the patios beyond.

Our goal is to create homes that are efficient to build, flexible to inhabit, and prepared to adapt over time — spaces that are frameworks for new ways of living.

Altadena Site:
3306 Tonia

Total Gross Area:	2400 sf
Total Net Area:	2108 sf
First Floor:	1826 sf
Second Floor:	282 sf

Three Bedrooms
Detached Carport

Palisades Site:
1037 N Iliff

Total Gross Area:	2121 sf
Total Net Area:	1845 sf
First Floor:	1568 sf
Second Floor:	277 sf

Three Bedrooms
Detached Carport

DESIGN FEATURES

FIRE RESISTANCE

The house is designed to current fire resistant standards, from non-combustible materials on the roof and exterior walls, to dual-glazed windows, to defensible space surrounding the house. There are no eave overhangs, which have a tendency to catch embers.

ROOFING

The roof will be a Class A, fire-resistant TPO flat roof.

BUILDING SIDING

The house will be entirely finished in non-combustible portland cement based 3-coat stucco. There are upgrade options for other non-combustible cladding like corrugated metal, cementitious panels, or CMU.

WINDOWS & DOORS

Exterior doors are fire-rated per code. Windows are dual-glazed with tempered glass. Window are thermally-broken aluminum frames by Fleetwood.

DEFENSIBLE SPACE INTEGRATION

A 5’ zone around the house will be have the most intensive defensible space per CalFire guidelines, with ember resistant planning. Fire resistant native plants and adequate tree location and spacing for the rest of the yard to reduce fuel and create landscape that can be easily managed.

VENTS
House will have ember-resistant vents with 1/8-inch mesh screens

EMBER-RESISTANT FEATURES
Fire-rated roof, no eaves, fire resistant materials, ember-screened vents

SUSTAINABILITY

The house will utilize sustainable materials (floors, low VOC paint, etc.), LED lighting, tankless water heaters, high quality and effective insulation. Large openings on opposite sides will allow for passive cooling most of the year. Photovoltaic panel -ready roof. Net Zero options available as upgrade.

DESIGN QUALITIES

The house is inspired by the original Case Study houses, which were compact, efficient layouts of rooms in harmony with nature. Building materials are part of the feature of the house, not to be disguised behind decorative elements. The house will be inspiring and simple, rich but rational.

CONSTRUCTION METHODOLOGY

Standard Type V framing- no steel required (except for optional bonus room on 2nd story), to keep costs down. Rooms are sized to require standard size affordable framing. The square plan is divided into two equal sections to make framing easy. The slab on grade foundation is simple and basic, and connects to the exterior patios.

EFFICIENCY

The house is very spatially efficient, with three bedrooms in a little over 2,000 sf. It feels ample, yet it’s modest size allows for effective use of the outside gardens. It is efficient in it’s use of resources too, and is well-suited to endure in the increasingly hotter climate of the region.

STYLE FEATURES

A modern house that harkens back to the simple and modest Case Study houses. It will fit in perfectly in Altadena or Pacific Palisades.

ADDITIONAL SPECIAL FEATURES
Half of house is one large space that owners can use and outfit how they choose. Exposed wood joists. Exposed concrete slab. Lots of warm wood cabinets. Highest quality but simple, organic materials.

CUSTOMIZATION POTENTIAL
An ADU can be built on top of the front car port. The exterior of the house can be clad in different materials. There is an optional second floor bonus room. The house can be made taller.

PLANS

GROUND LEVEL

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ALTADENA SITE: 3306 TONIA

SECOND LEVEL

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ALTADENA SITE: 3306 TONIA

ROOF PLAN

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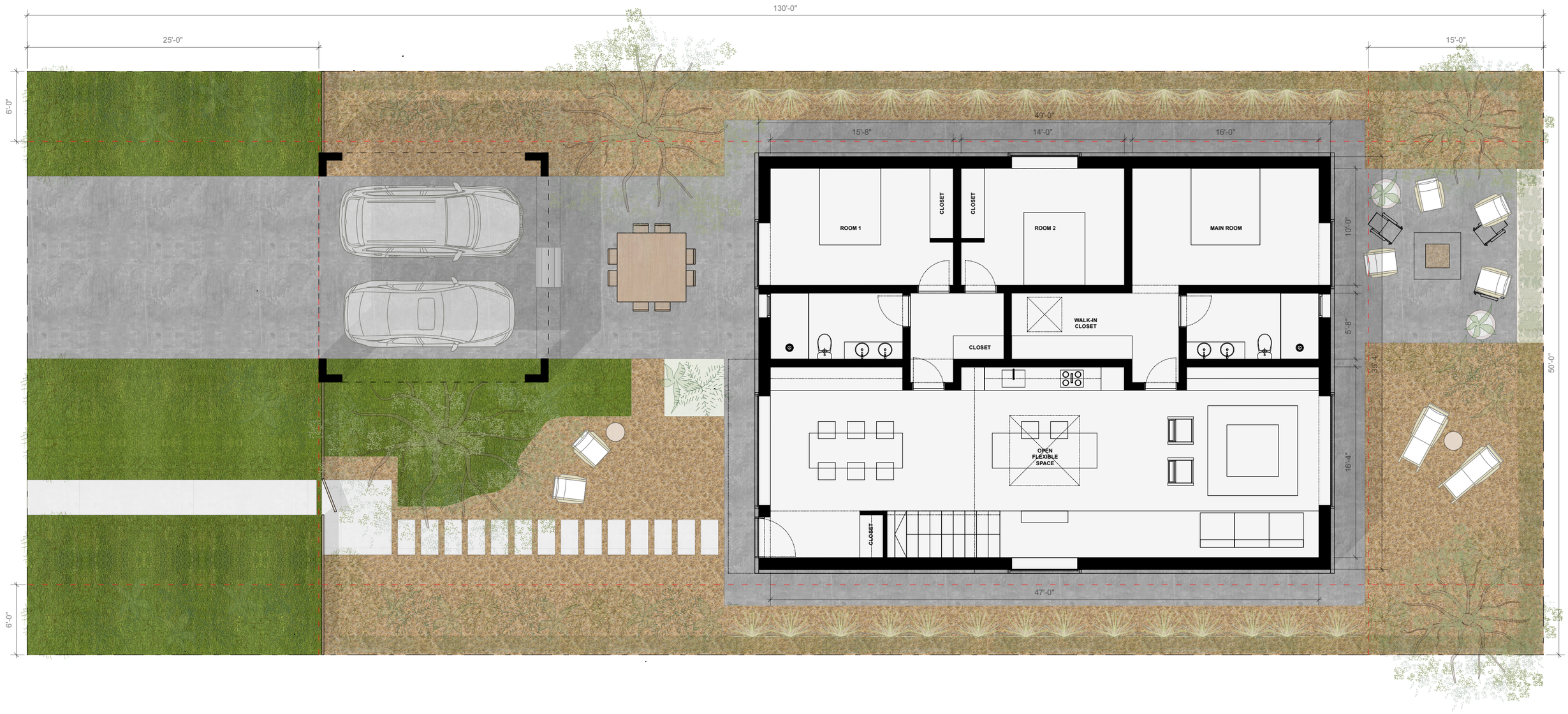
ALTADENA SITE: 3306 TONIA

GROUND LEVEL



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PALISADES SITE: 1037 N ILIFF

SECOND LEVEL

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PALISADES SITE: 1037 N ILIFF

ROOF PLAN

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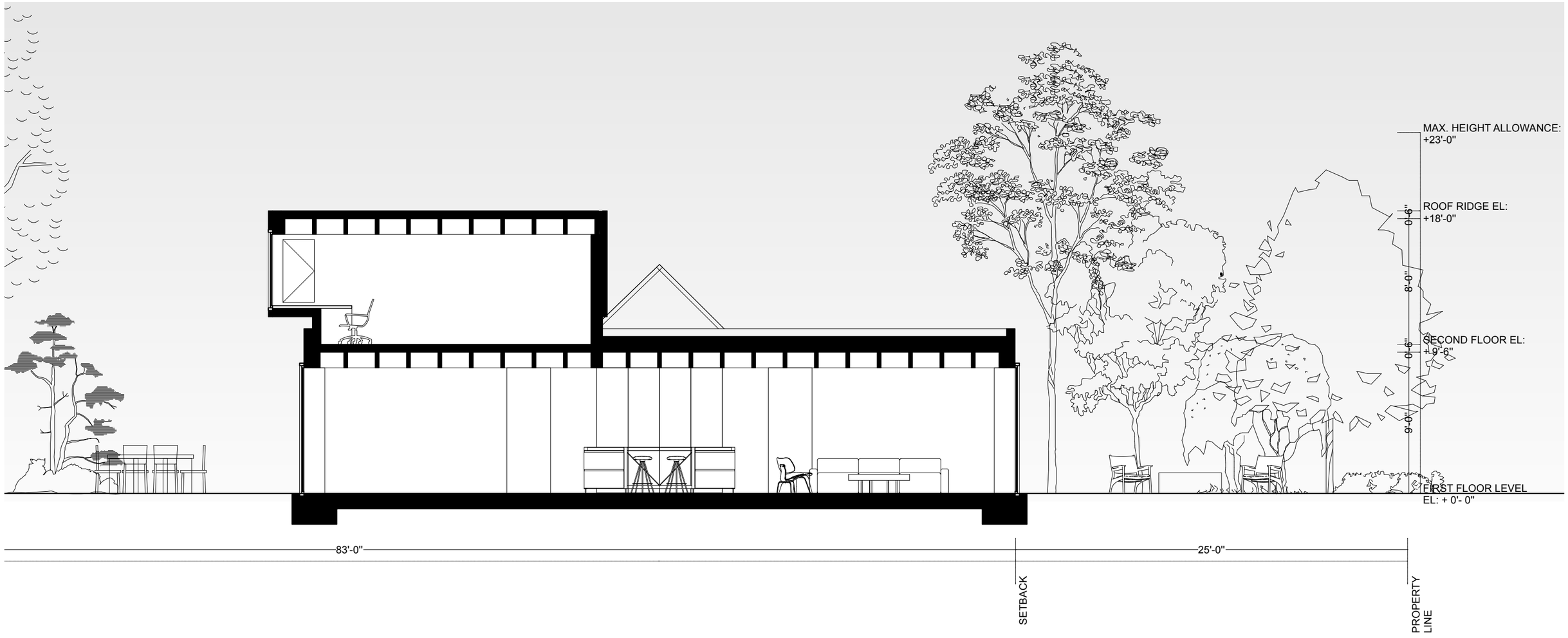
PALISADES SITE: 1037 N ILIFF

SECTIONS

SECTION A



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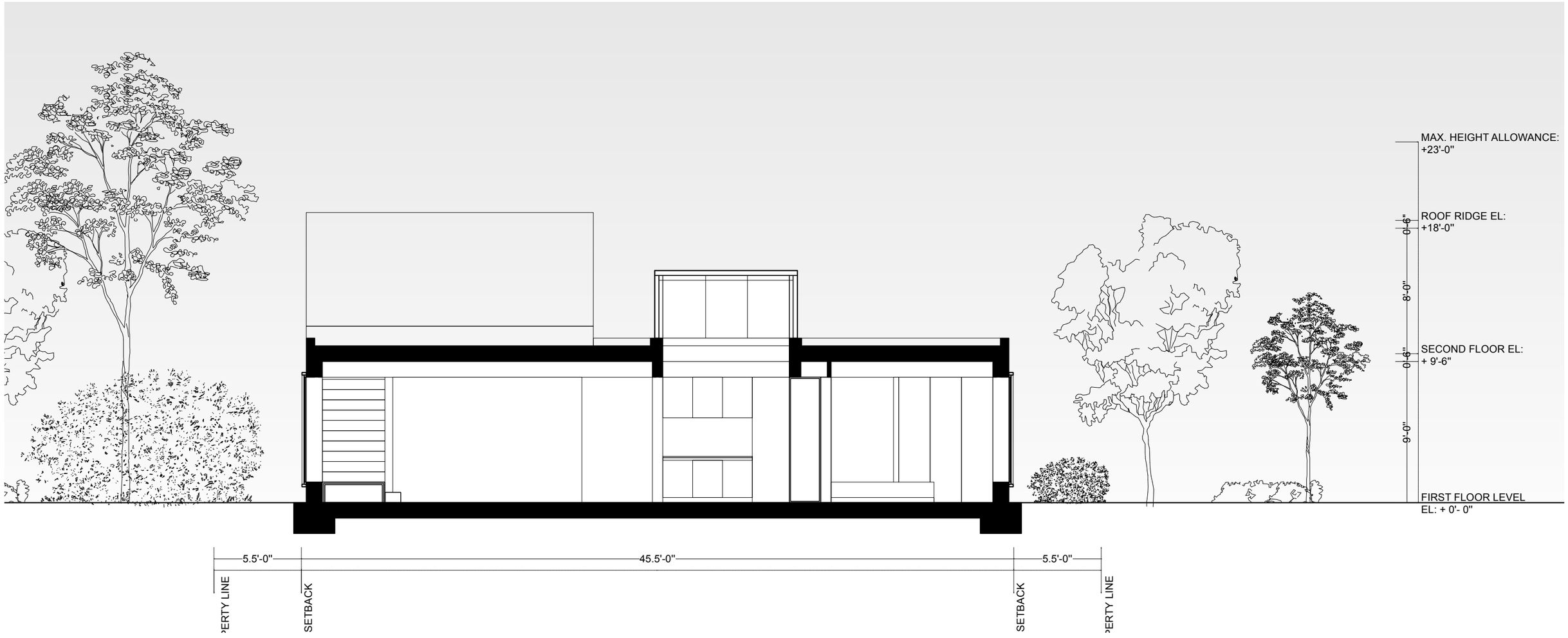
SECTION B



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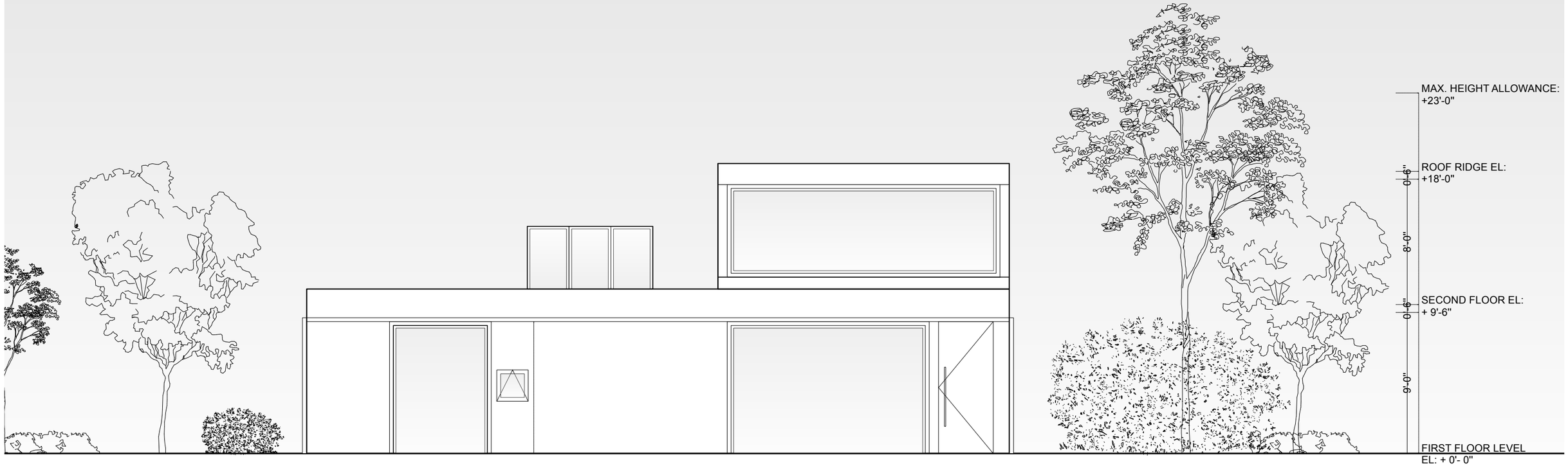
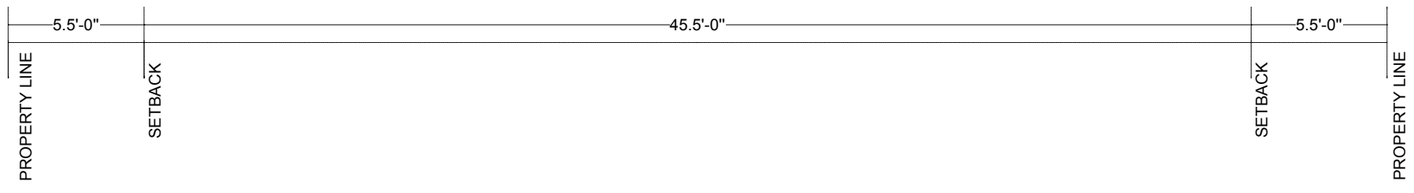
ELEVATIONS

FRONT





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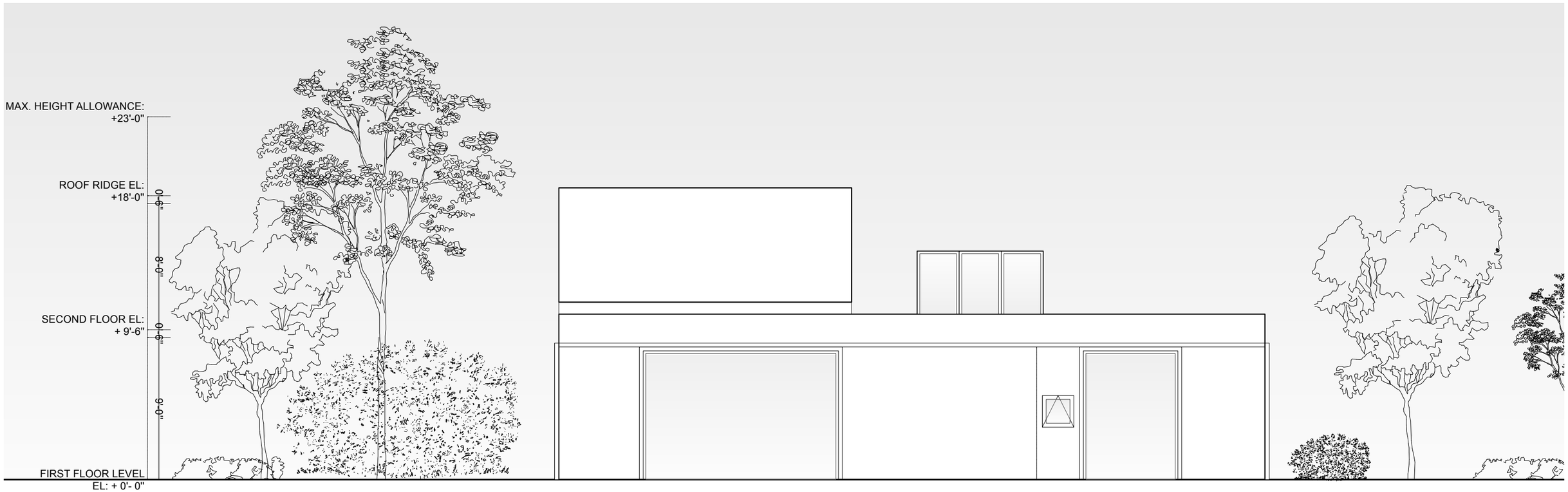
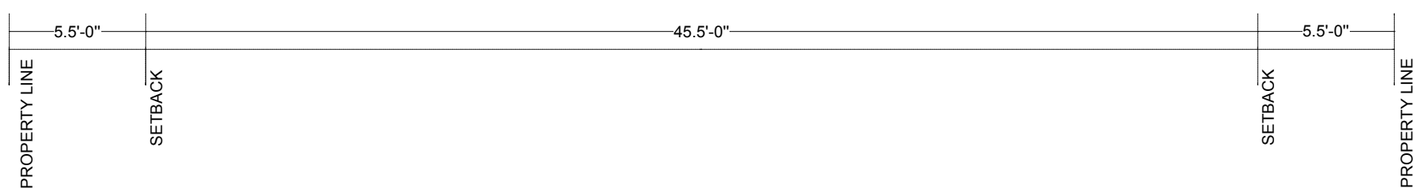
REAR





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RIGHT SIDE

DUTTON
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LEFT SIDE

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RENDERINGS

DUTTON
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