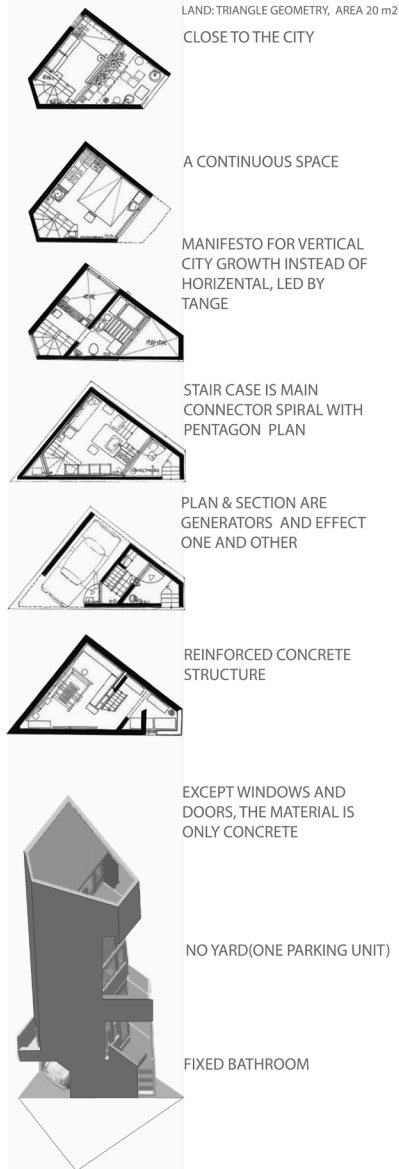
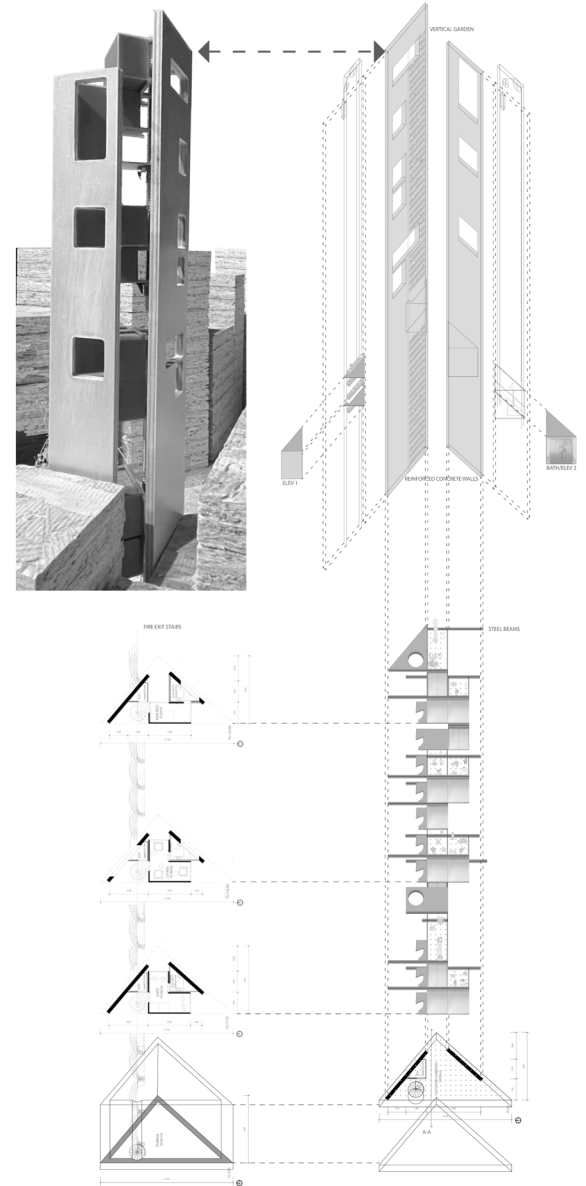
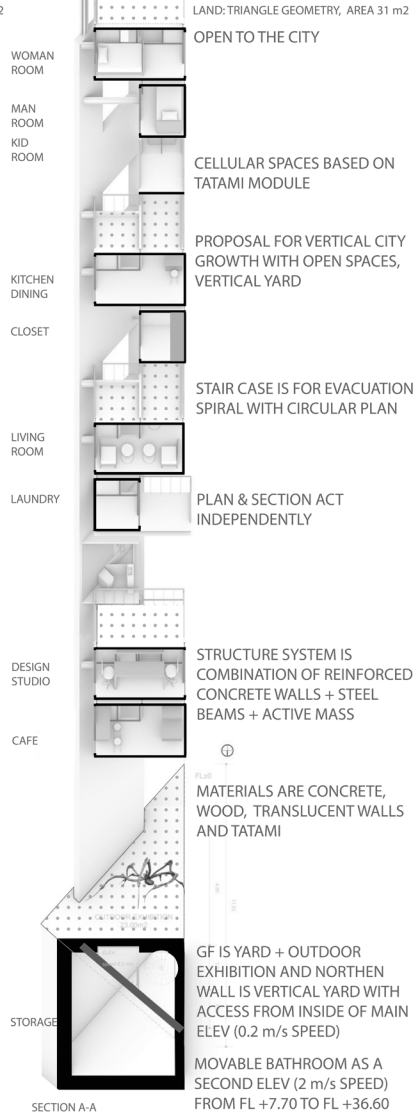


TOWER HOUSE

BY TAKAMITSU AZUMA-1966



DREAM HOUSE



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DREAM HOUSE

The Re-emergence of Secondary Spaces: Architect's Self-Designed House & Work Space in the Dense Urban Environment of Tokyo

By Meisam Dadfarmay

Total Area: 2045 sqft + 1044 sqft vertical garden

The Dream House serves both residential and professional needs by providing adaptable spaces that allow personalization in a dense urban setting. The re-emergence of secondary spaces into primary status breaks conventional architectural norms to reveal new opportunities.

The conceptual foundation derives from three essential viewpoints:

First, Slavoj Žižek's concept of Architectural Parallax highlights how underutilized spaces can challenge conventional architectural norms. Žižek argues that these spaces possess the potential to address class struggles. He critiques architectural projects, questioning their claimed "anti-elitism" and highlighting how they reinforce divisions between the inside and outside. He also challenges performance art buildings for their illusion of inclusivity and sees a false sense of universality even in renowned arts by Schoenberg and Mozart.¹

Žižek examines oppositions in performance-art complexes, such as "public/private" and "elite/popular," viewing them as variations of the class struggle

motif. He argues that «anti-elitist» structures still reflect upper-class contradictions. Žižek sees the space between exterior and interior as a site for utopian ideas and political struggle. While his effort to link architecture and politics is valuable, he doesn't fully explore the tension between exclusion and inclusion. Still, this gap opens the door for further study.¹ The concept of Architectural Parallax emphasizes the role of secondary spaces, such as staircases, in redefining spatial hierarchies. These spaces, often seen as mere connectors, are reimagined in this project as multifunctional elements.

Second, the analysis of Kafka's work by Greg Houwer in "Into the White" establishes a metaphorical basis. Houwer examines the fundamental ideas in Kafka's writings, which reveal that writers experience a shared feeling of responsibility because writing exists as their fundamental task. The process of writing resembles an endless battle against wrongdoing because it remains an impossible task. Why do you write? Go change the world. The world is broken, while your activities amount to nothing more than writing down words. You're just writing. This feeling of guilt might lead writers to write with remorse. Yet the more Kafka wrote, the more his feelings of guilt intensified. Kafka dedicated his life to writing because he sought to eliminate his feelings of guilt, which made him the savior of Writers. Kafka experienced a metamorphosis during his writing process, which occurs when authors write solely for the sheer joy of writing.²

The writing challenges Kafka faced reveal important aspects about the creative writing process. Like Architects establish distance from their conceptual frameworks because of practical constraints, so they design for themselves to achieve freedom. Writing(writing solely for the sheer joy of writing) and a personal architectural project, as a metamorphosis, can function as a tool for professional development.

Lastly, the urban residential architectural precedent of Takamitsu Azuma's Tower House (1966) represents a fundamental reference point. The building occupies 65 square feet of ground space but delivers 213 square feet of living area across six vertical levels to demonstrate how vertical construction can work in confined urban settings. The whole concrete house features a staircase as its main structural component, which creates an unbroken vertical space that allows rooms to stack without conventional divisions. The design approach of this project opposes the horizontal urban development plans that Kenzo Tange proposed for post-war Tokyo.

Building upon these precedents, Dream House emerges as a personal architectural manifesto. Situated near Azuma's Tower House, it establishes a dialogue with its predecessor while introducing contemporary solutions for urban living.



Spaces Between In a city carved of ceaseless whispers and shadows, a structure ascends silently. It is less a building than a series of pauses—breaths caught between the inhale of the crowded streets and the exhale of the open sky. Each pause is a realm unto itself, suspended in the ether, where solitude is cradled in the arms of the distant hum. These realms are strung together by a path that climbs, leisurely and with purpose, through an invisible column of air wrapped in green—a quiet rupture from the earth to the DREAM. This path is twofold; one moves slowly, a deliberate promenade through layers of thought and retreat, the other, swift—a sudden reminder of the ground’s call. Together, they balance the scales of retreat and return, mirroring the ambivert’s dance on the edge of engagement. Here, within these spaces, distance is both architect and inhabitant, crafting pockets of solitude framed by the fabric of the city. Each space is a private echo of the one below, a whisper louder than the urban roar. The structure stands as a testament to distance, a medium through which the city’s pulse is both felt and muffled, allowing one to float just out of reach, yet forever within sight of the tangled lives below.

The Dream House establishes a gradual transition between the city and the project, as well as within its internal spaces. This gradient functions as a dream-like boundary that enables the architect to define spatial limits while connecting public and private areas. The system maintains movement instead of stability because it adjusts its position in response to changing conditions. The urban weight compresses this tiny site to become a site of growth. Nothing is rigid—spaces can move and reconfigure. They do not dictate; they adapt. Dream House exists in a state of becoming—adjusting to needs, to time, to the city pressing in.

Tatami module-based boxes are scattered between two towering walls (each rising 130 feet high), suspended yet connected. A vertical garden supports the slow elevator as it moves between floors to care for the plants. The second elevator works fast because it responds to calls for service, and operates beyond mere movement because it functions as a bathroom that materializes at will and a space that maintains its position. The Partner’s Room floats above the Architect’s Room, linked internally yet distinct. Below them, the Kid’s Room, Kitchen, Dining Room, Closet, Living Room, and Laundry stack in quiet negotiation, each shaping the life within. The Design Studio rests above the Café—a workspace hovering over a place of gathering; the two joined from within. The ground belongs to the Watarium Art Museum, as before, for an outdoor exhibition. Beneath it, an underground structure quietly supports the outdoor exhibition.

Architecture is a balance—balance is also a dream. Between public and private, between work and life, between what must be and what could be. As a lifelong project, Dream House does not stand still. It moves, it evolves—just as its inhabitant does.

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