NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Style in Steel Townhouses
Other name/site number: NA
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: 4156, 4158, and 4160 Meyerwood Drive
City or town: Houston State: Texas County: Harris
Not for publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this (☑ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility) meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property (☑ meets ☐ does not meet) the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:
☐ national ☐ statewide ☑ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☑ C ☐ D

Chief Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Signature of certifying official / Title **Date**

Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official **Date**

State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register.
___ removed from the National Register
___ other, explain: _____

Signature of the Keeper **Date of Action**

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

X	Private
	Public - Local
	Public - State
	Public - Federal

Category of Property

X	building(s)
	district
	site
	structure
	object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
3	0	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: NA

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

Current Functions: DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification: c. 1945 - c. 1970 (MID-CENTURY MODERN RESIDENTIAL)

Principal Exterior Materials: METAL/Steel, STUCCO, GLASS

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets 7-8 through 7-14)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

	A	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
	B	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
X	**C**	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
	D	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations: NA

Areas of Significance: Architecture (local level of significance)

Period of Significance: 1968

Significant Dates: 1968

Significant Person (only if criterion b is marked): NA

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion d is marked): NA

Architect/Builder: Wilson, Talbott and Weatherford, Hal, Wilson Morris Crain & Anderson, architects
Cummins, James A., consulting engineer
Johnson, Sam, builder
Fred Buxton & Associates, landscape architects
Evans-Monical, Inc., interior design

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets 8-15 through 8-25)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see continuation sheets 9-26 through 9-28)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):
___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. Part 1 approved on (date)
___ previously listed in the National Register
___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
___ designated a National Historic Landmark
___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:
___ State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission*, Austin)
___ Other state agency
___ Federal agency

___ Local government
___ University
___ Other -- Specify Repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NA

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Approximately ¼ acre

Coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

Latitude: 29.680849° Longitude: -95.444662°

Verbal Boundary Description: All of Lots 13-16, Block 2, Townhouse Manor Subdivision. (Map 4)

Boundary Justification: The boundary encloses the entirety of the original four (replatted as three) parcels on which the townhouses are located.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Steph McDougal
Organization: McDoux Preservation LLC
Street & number: 2219 Brae Lane
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Date: February 9, 2026

Additional Documentation

Maps (see continuation sheets MAP 29 through MAP-33)

Additional items (see continuation sheets FIGURE-34 through FIGURE-71)

Photographs (see continuation sheets PHOTO-72 through PHOTO-117)

Photograph Log

Property Name: Style in Steel Townhouses
Houston, Harris County, Texas
Photographed by Steph McDougal, August 2, 2025
All photos reflect the appearance of the building at the time of the nomination's submission to NPS.

Photo 1
All three townhouses
Front (south) elevations
Camera facing northwest

Photo 2
Unit A/4160 Meyerwood
Front (south) elevation
Camera facing north

Photo 3
Unit B/4158 Meyerwood
Front (south) elevation
Camera facing north

Photo 4
Unit C/4156 Meyerwood
Front (south) elevation
Camera facing north

Photo 5
Unit C
East elevation
Camera facing northwest

Photo 6
All three townhouses
Oblique view of carports and alley
Camera facing west

Photo 7
Unit C
Carport
Camera facing south

Photo 8
Unit B
Carport
Camera facing south.

Photo 9
Unit A
Carport
Camera facing south

Photo 10
Unit A
Front courtyard gates
Camera facing north

Photo 11
Unit A
Screen panel in eastern courtyard wall
Camera facing northwest

Photo 12
Unit A
Front courtyard
Camera facing east

Photo 13
Unit A
Living room
Camera facing east

Photo 14
Unit A
Study
Camera facing south

Photo 15
Unit A
Dining room
Camera facing south

Photo 16
Unit A
Interior courtyard (view from gallery/hallway)
Camera facing west

Photo 17
Unit A
Hall bathroom with original porcelain enameled steel wall surrounds
Camera facing east

Photo 18
Unit A
Bedroom 1
Camera facing north

Photo 19
Unit A
Bedroom 2
Camera facing north

Photo 20
Unit A
Kitchen with original cabinets
Camera facing southeast

Photo 21
Unit A
Rear courtyard
Camera facing east

Photo 22
Unit B
Front courtyard
Camera facing east

Photo 23
Unit B
Front courtyard gate and louvered screens
Camera facing south

Photo 24
Unit B
Front courtyard, structural steel and window wall
Camera facing northeast

Photo 25
Unit B
First floor living/dining room
Camera facing east

Photo 26
Unit B
Kitchen
Camera facing south

Photo 27
Unit B
Kitchen, expansion into original rear courtyard
Camera facing northeast

Photo 28
Unit B
Rear courtyard (view from kitchen)
Camera facing east

Photo 29
Unit B
First floor, view from east end of living/dining room to study
Camera facing north

Photo 30
Unit B
First floor study
Camera facing north

Photo 31
Unit B
Second floor bedroom 1, view to forecourt and balcony over front door
Camera facing south

Photo 32
Unit B
Second floor bedroom 1, with balcony handrail over dining room
Camera facing west

Photo 33
Unit B
Second floor bedroom 2, view of balcony handrail over living room
Camera facing east

Photo 34
Unit B
Second floor bedroom 3, view of window wall and operable louvered screens
Camera facing northeast

Photo 35
Unit B
Staircase with square steel handrail
Camera facing west

Photo 36
Unit C
Front courtyard
Camera facing west

Photo 37
Unit C
Living room with fireplace
Camera facing south

Photo 38
Unit C
Dining room with light sculpture by Michael John Smith
Camera facing east

Photo 39
Unit C
Original Knoll draperies in living/dining room
Camera facing east

Photo 40
Unit C
Kitchen
Camera facing northwest

Photo 41
Unit C
Original kitchen cabinets and appliances
Camera facing west

Photo 42
Unit C
Original kitchen cabinets and appliances
Camera facing west

Photo 43
Unit C
Refrigerator (original model but later year)
Camera facing south

Photo 44
Unit C
Bedroom 1
Camera facing northwest

Photo 45
Unit C
Bedroom 2 with view of interior courtyard
Camera facing west

Photo 46
Unit C
Study
Camera facing southeast

Physical Description

The 1968 Style in Steel Townhouses are a set of three "demonstration" townhouses designed by architects Talbott Wilson and Hal Weatherford of Wilson Morris Crain & Anderson and constructed to promote the practicality and advantages of steel in residential construction. The townhouses are located at 4156, 4158, and 4160 Meyerwood Drive in Houston, Texas, within the Townhouse Manor subdivision, a neighborhood of 189 townhouses at the southwest corner of Houston's "Inner Loop," bounded by IH-610. As "demonstration" houses, steel comprised the structure of the townhouses, as well as some original furnishings and fixtures. As a set, they present a symmetrical front view; the central townhouse at 4158 Meyerwood is two stories tall, while the two flanking townhouses are one-story. All three townhouses are built in the Mid-Century Modern Residential style, with flat roofs and are characterized by tall ceilings and open floor plans, with natural light provided by exterior and interior courtyards separated from living spaces by full-glass window walls. A rear alley provides access to shallow carports and rear courtyards. Clear, straightforward floor plans provide privacy while allowing views through each townhouse.

The one-story townhouses at 4156 and 4160 Meyerwood retain many of their original features, some of which were reintroduced by the current owners. The townhouse at 4160 Meyerwood has been minorly altered to add flooring and a slatted cover to its interior courtyard, and the fireplace was replaced with a modern unit in order to create storage space in the closet behind. The townhouse at 4156 Meyerwood is even more intact, although the in-ground steel pool has been removed from the front courtyard. The extensive restoration of 4158 Meyerwood in 2022-2023, informed by original architectural drawings and detailed photographic documentation of original conditions, removed insensitive alterations including a peaked roof with skylights, although a few changes to the interior floor plan remain. Overall, the "Style in Steel Townhouses" retain outstanding integrity and continue to convey the historic, innovative design that resulted in architectural awards and nationwide publicity.

Location

The Style in Steel Townhouses are located in the southwest quadrant of the Townhouse Manor subdivision in Houston, Texas, within the J. Hamilton Survey (Abstract A-878). Townhouse Manor is approximately seven miles due southwest of Houston's downtown commercial district and less than one mile from the southwest corner of IH-610, the inner-loop highway around downtown Houston (Map 1). Townhouse Manor is a relatively small subdivision with 189 lots on Meyerwood Drive, Denbury Way, Breakwood Drive, and Bassoon Drive (Map 3). It is generally bounded by IH-610 South Loop West Highway to the south, Union Pacific Railroad tracks to the west, the Woodshire subdivision to the north, and Stella Link Road to the east (Map 2). Townhouse Manor is clearly differentiated from the Woodshire subdivision homes to its north, which feature traditional gabled and hipped roofs and are freestanding on typical suburban lots with attached or detached garages. The nominated properties are located slightly west of center within Townhouse Manor subdivision, where Meyerwood Drive makes a nearly 90º curve, transitioning from east-west to north-south. (Map 3).

Built with a single set of construction plans, the townhouses were originally identified as Unit A (4160 Meyerwood), Unit B (4158 Meyerwood), and Unit C (4156 Meyerwood). Unit A is the most westerly of the three townhouses.[1]

- Unit A occupies all of Lot 13 and the west 10.76 feet of Lot 14, with a footprint of 2,000 square feet on a 3,420-square-foot parcel.
- Unit B occupies the east 21.224 feet of Lot 14 and the west 21.224 feet of Lot 15; the living area is 2,844 square feet across two stories, and the parcel measures 3,390 square feet.

[1] For clarity, the individual townhouses will be identified throughout this nomination with the unit number; e.g., "Unit A".

- Unit C occupies the eastern 10.776 feet of Lot 15 and all of Lot 16. It measures 2,100 square feet on a 3,420-square-foot parcel.

The four lots on which these three townhouses were built were replatted as three parcels in November 1968. As a result, Townhouse Manor now has 189 lots, instead of 190 as originally laid out.[2]

Setting

Townhouse Manor was one of Houston's early planned townhouse communities. It is a mix of one- and two-story townhouses; modest front setbacks result in generally consistent front wall planes and shallow grassy or landscaped strips between the concrete sidewalks and the buildings. Sidewalks are immediately adjacent to the streets, with no curb lawns. The townhouses in this neighborhood vary by material and architectural style, although many of them are flat-roofed with front facades that reflect the popular trends of the late 1960s, when the subdivision was constructed. Garages or carports, inset below roofs, are integrated along rear alleys. Many townhouses feature small interior courtyards, open to the sky, which illuminate interiors with natural light. Most (but not all) of the townhouses in this subdivision were constructed as continuous rows of buildings without spaces in between, and with small front setbacks, the winding streets through Townhouse Manor feel a bit like modest modern versions of the old-town sections of medieval European cities.

Common Interior and Exterior Features and Materials

Because the Style in Steel Townhouses were built as a set, they originally shared many common features, most of which are still extant.[3] Information in this and following sections is drawn from original architectural drawings, visual observation and photographs, archival research, and information provided by the current property owners.

- *Steel structure*. The Style in Steel Townhouses were built using steel post-and-beam over concrete slabs. Wall studs are steel, as is the fascia.
- *Other materials*. This project was designed to demonstrate the compatibility of steel with other materials to create comfortable, warmly attractive homes. Interior partitions are gypsum board. Exterior walls are two layers of gypsum board covered with stucco. Floors are terrazzo (Unit A), brick (Unit B), or travertine (Unit C). The townhouses are insulated with fiberglas batt insulation by Owens Corning.
- *Flat roofs*. Steel decking by Armco is 1.5" thick and was originally surfaced with built-up asphalt roofing topped with pea gravel. Today, the roofs are no longer covered with pea gravel, and Unit B has an elastomeric covering. The roofs were originally insulated with Owens Corning rigid fiberglass insulation (1.5" thick). Metal canopies atop the carports are made of a similarly sized, but factory painted, steel decking. Unit C has replaced the original carport canopy with a stainless steel deck.
- *Courtyards*. Each townhouse is entered through a deep full-width entrance courtyard at the front of the house. Rear access is through a shallow full-width courtyard at the rear of the house, between the kitchen and the carport; exterior solid steel doors are present at both ends of the carport, with a third door to the house at the kitchen, which was originally sheltered beneath a wired-glass canopy. The wired glass has been replaced with laminated glass in Units A and C. The kitchen was expanded into part of the rear courtyard in Unit B. The one-story houses (Units A and C) also feature interior courtyards that provide natural light. These courtyards remain open to the elements, as originally built.
- *Front courtyard gates and other screens.* Screened double gates in front courtyard walls are comprised of horizontal red cedar louvers, set on point to create a textured exterior appearance, within a robust full-height

[2] "Developers of Largest Townhouse Project," *Houston Chronicle*, February 14, 1965, sec.11, page 9. Harris County deed records, vol. 7424, pages 178-181, November 14, 1968.
[3] "25 Year Award," pamphlet, AIA Houston, 1998.

steel frame. Screens of horizontal wood louvers, to match the courtyard gates, are located on the side courtyard walls of Unit A and Unit C, closest to Unit B, and also were used at Unit B to screen that building's two-story front courtyard wall and second-story rear windows.

- *Kitchens and bathrooms*. All interior walls were covered with gypsum board, but over this, enameled steel wall panels were used in the bathrooms as wall panels and tub surrounds. Bathroom walls are original in all three units. Matching steel kitchen cabinets are extant in the two one-story units (Units A and C). The kitchen cabinets in Unit B were intact until the most recent previous owner replaced them in 2020, in an attempt to make the townhouse more appealing to potential buyers.
- *Interior doors*. Most interior doors are extant and fabricated of hollow steel; hinged, sliding, and bifold doors are topped by fixed steel panels.
- *Window walls and sliding glass doors*. Spectra-Guard full-height glass was manufactured by Carmel.
- *All-electric service.* All three houses were constructed with all-electric equipment and "electronic technology," including central air conditioning; brass "Medallion All-Electric Homes" badges were inlaid in the sidewalks at the front entrance and are extant at Unit A and Unit C.
- *Built-in central vacuum system*. A vacuum canister and motor were mounted outside in the rear courtyard, with ducts in the walls and plug-in inlet connections in various rooms of the house. While the vacuum system in Unit B was removed and discarded by a previous owner long ago, the original central vacuums in both Unit A and Unit C have been refurbished and are operational today.
- *Carports*. The three units all have shallow open carports in which two passenger vehicles can park parallel to the rear wall. Unit B's carport was previously converted to an enclosed garage but has been restored. The carports are accessed from the common alley.
- *Lighting*. Original Lightolier semi-recessed can light fixtures have been preserved in all three units, and a significant number of new recessed lights have been added to improve overall lighting.

Unit A/4160 Meyerwood (Figures 1-21, 25, 30, 34, 40, 48; Photos 2, 9, 10-21)

Unit A is a one-story townhouse with a large, nearly square courtyard near the center of the house. The front gate is approached via a concrete sidewalk near the westernmost property line. The west exterior wall is directly abutted by a one-story brick wall on the adjacent property. The east exterior wall abuts Unit B. Unit A measures 41' 7" wide by 80' deep from the front courtyard wall to the rear eave of the carport.

Exterior

The front courtyard is bounded by a full-height stucco-clad wall with vertical expansion joints that create six bays; a full-height double gate made of slatted wood, painted dark brown, is located in the westernmost seventh bay. A full-height fixed panel of slatted wood, painted dark brown, connects Unit A's front courtyard wall to the two-story wall of Unit B. The front courtyard wall rests on a concrete grade beam, painted dark brown. Five small features to the right of the door are arranged in a single vertical column: from top to bottom, these include a boxy white downward-pointing light fixture, the street number in red metal, a small round doorbell within a square metal panel, a wall-mounted mailbox with red front panel, and a landmark plaque. No windows or other penetrations provide visibility into the front courtyard.

The front courtyard is 12' 8" deep and contains a concrete patio at the east end, a walkway of pavers salvaged from the central interior courtyard, and a narrow field of river rock next to the unit's front window wall, for drainage. Vegetation within the courtyard includes an ornamental tree, low landscaping beds with decorative boulders and a fountain, and a strip of grassy lawn. The concrete areas were added when two large water oak trees were removed in 2013.

The front of Unit A is a full-height window wall behind slender steel columns and fascia, painted white. The window wall glass panes are mounted in dark bronze aluminum frames. Six columns create a seven-bay front elevation. The double full-glass front door is in the westernmost bay (Bay 1).

The rear courtyard is 6' 4.5" deep between a second full-height window wall and stuccoed courtyard wall identical to those at the front of the townhouse. The rear door into the kitchen is located in the westernmost bay (Bay 1). Solid steel doors to the carport are located on both ends of the rear courtyard (Bays 1 and 7). The courtyard contains a walkway of the same salvaged pavers as in the front courtyard; the rest of the ground is covered with dark gravel. Beams attached to the steel columns at the rear window wall extend over the courtyard wall to support the carport roof.

Interior

Unit A's single level contains a 17' 10" deep front room, with the living room in Bays 1-4, a large central fireplace aligned with Bay 5, and a study in Bays 6-7. The fireplace, which faces west to the living room and retains its original marble surround, is contained within a larger floor-to-ceiling construction framed in steel and clad in gypsum board; originally, shallow closets were inset into the other three sides of this construction. Its interior volume was mostly taken up by the original wood-burning fireplace's firebox. Bifold doors between the central fireplace and adjacent walls, to separate the living room from the study, were detailed on the original architectural drawings but never built, as seen in 1969 photos.

The rear of the house contains the kitchen (to the west) and the primary and secondary bedrooms. The kitchen has been slightly rearranged, but its original cabinets are intact.

The center of the house contains a central courtyard, with the dining room on one side (to the west) and a "gallery" (hallway) on the other side; the courtyard can be accessed from either side via full-height sliding glass doors. Two full bathrooms are located east of the gallery, with one accessed from that hallway and the other through a "dressing room" (walk-in closet) connected to the primary bedroom. Original terrazzo floors are present in the living room, dining room, bathrooms, gallery (hallway), and study. The bedrooms and dressing room are carpeted. The kitchen was originally floored in vinyl tile, which has been replaced with Armstrong vinyl composite tile flooring.

Alterations

Current owners Dian and Mike Lewter have made minimal changes to Unit A; the townhouse retains excellent integrity. The Lewters completely renovated the front courtyard to address persistent drainage problems. They also removed gutters and downspouts installed by a previous owner, redirected roof drainage to the rear and out to the alley utilizing roof drains, and renovated the front window wall system to address persistent leaking.

In 2005, the front gates were restored by removing solid panels installed by a previous owner and installing wooden louvers to match the originals. The louvers were replaced again in 2016.

The south-facing front window wall and the sliding glass doors to the central courtyard have been screened with shades (2009) and solar film (2025) to mitigate light and heat gain. The original woodburning fireplace was replaced with an electric unit. The large firebox was removed and the east-facing closet closed in to create a larger storage closet behind the fireplace. The front-facing closet adjacent to the fireplace has been converted to a dry bar.

The kitchen was designed as an open space with cabinets on three walls and appliances on the fourth wall. It has been minorly renovated to relocate the refrigerator away from the doorway to the dining room and to add soffits above the

original steel cabinets. Solid-surface countertops were recently installed to replace the original "Textolite" laminate countertops but are visually compatible with the original design of the kitchen.

In 2002, the bathtub in the primary bathroom was replaced with a shower with a frameless glass door, preserving the coated steel panels. Both bathroom cabinets & faucets were replaced in 2009, using the same wall-hung design as the original. In 2012, the primary bathroom shower was completely replumbed and retiled, while preserving the original coated metal panels; and the bathtub in guest bathroom was recoated to preserve it. Both ceilings were covered in white porcelain panels and an appropriate light fixture installed. Original sinks were retained in both bathrooms.

The original switching was replaced throughout the house in 2021 with Lightolier "Caseta" system dimmers to provide automatic control of lighting throughout the interior & exterior of the house. In addition, the original electrical panel was replaced in 2025.

In 2013, the current owners installed an Ipe wood deck over steel framing in the interior courtyard to match the finished floor level of the rest of the interior. They also addresssed drainage issues in the courtyard and installed a steel grid at the roof level, over the opening. Subsequently, in 2025, they added a wooden grid over the steel grid to provide sun protection while retaining the open-air condition. This room now functions as an additional outdoor space, easily accessible from the interior sliding doors in both the dining room and gallery.

Unit B/4158 Meyerwood (Figures 1-21, 23, 30-33, 43-47; Photos 3, 7, 22-35)

Unit B measures 41' 7.75" wide, and its enclosed living space was originally 32' 9" deep. This unit is set back so that the front screened wall of its two-story courtyard is in the same plane as the front window walls of Units A and C. Unit B's front courtyard is 17' 10" deep. The first floor is comprised of a fully open front living and dining room, a study or bedroom with full bath, kitchen, and mechanical room. The second story contains three bedrooms (one now used as an office) and two full bathrooms. All handrails and balusters are straight steel bars.

Exterior

Unit B is set within two-story stuccoed wing walls, without fenestration, which project forward of the front courtyard and rise to just below the roof deck. The front elevation—two stories in height and seven bays wide—is a grid of solids (steel framing, painted white) and voids (louvered screens of red cedar, painted dark brown). The front entrance is a double gate of the same louvered screens, below a flat steel canopy, painted white, that projects approximately 6' and contains a cylindrical aluminum downlight. Today, the entrance is flanked by U-shaped garden walls of dark gray brick with bright white mortar, the left of which extends substantially farther forward and bears the street number in flat brushed aluminum. (While in the same position as originally designed, these walls were constructed during the 2022 restoration.) The centered walkway from the street to the front gate is made of brick, stained in medium-to-dark shades of red and orange to match the glazed brick inside the front courtyard and set in a light-colored mortar. The spaces behind the walls are paved with similarly stained bricks, contain a few specimen plantings, and are open to the screened wall of the front courtyard. Up-down aluminum cylinder lights are mounted to the steel frame between the first- and second-story screens at the columns between Bays 1-2, 2-3, 5-6, and 6-7.

Inside the front courtyard (forecourt), the white steel structure is prominent; red cedar louvered screens create a permeable ceiling. The floor is paved with glazed brick in medium-to-dark shades of red and orange. The front window wall of the townhouse is organized identically to the front exterior screened elevation, except that the shelter over the front door is created by a square balcony, accessed from the second-floor primary bedroom, with balusters and handrails on the three open sides. A cylindrical aluminum downlight extends from the center of the balcony cover to

light the front entrance, a full-height double glass door in a robust steel frame. Original Lightolier pendant lamps, suspended from the steel beams, were restored and illuminate the east and west ends of this space.

Interior

The first floor is finished in the same glazed brick found in the forecourt. The front room is a combination living/dining space; because the second-floor spaces are centrally located in Bays 2-6, the ends of this room (Bays 1 and 7) are open to the full two-story height. Behind a lateral dividing wall, the staircase rises to the second floor. The rear portion of the first floor contains the kitchen and a study or bedroom with full bath. A mechanical room is accessed through the study. The second floor is divided into three bedrooms and two full bathrooms, one off the primary bedroom. All rooms except the primary bath are accessed from the small landing/hall at the top of the stairs. The front bedrooms (primary and one secondary) open to the two-story volume on one side and the primary bedroom also opens to the balcony. The openings to the two-story space are lined with balusters and handrails to match those surrounding the balcony. The rear bedroom looks out over the rear courtyard and carport; red cedar louvered screens, stained to match those elsewhere on this unit, provide privacy. Although originally designed to be operable (tilt out from the bottom), these were originally built in a fixed position and were reconfigured as designed during the 2023 restoration.

Alterations and Restoration

The current owners of 4158 Meyerwood, Philip and Mandy LeBlanc, purchased the townhome in June 2020. Previous owners had made substantial changes to this townhouse. The front garden walls and walkway had been removed. A standing-seam side-gabled roof—with skylights on the front slope and a pop-up third-floor storage room on the rear—had been built above the forecourt and second-story spaces. The forecourt had been completely enclosed with glass window walls, and a fireplace with interior chimney was constructed in the east end of that space. A shed roof (also in standing-seam metal) had been constructed over the carport, which was enclosed to create a garage. Gutters and downspouts had been added to the pitched roofs. In the primary bedroom, built-in cabinets had been installed along the central wall. All of these alterations were reversed during the LeBlancs' 2023 restoration.

The primary remaining alterations include the updated kitchen and extension of the kitchen into the portion of the original rear courtyard, with an atrium-style window wall facing into the courtyard. This also expanded the primary bathroom on the second floor. Carpeting in second-floor spaces was replaced with white marble tile. The LeBlancs recoated the stucco walls, repaired and repainted exposed steel, repaired and repainted the louvered screens, and rebuilt the garden walls. The roof was restored and coated with modern waterproof membrane. Mechanicals were relocated to the roof at this time as well.

Unit C/4156 Meyerwood (Figures 1-21, 27, 30, 35-36, 39, 49; Photos 4-6, 36-46)

Unit C is identical to Unit A in size and shape, but its single-story floor plan rearranges the components: two bedrooms and a study/third bedroom, two full bathrooms, a combined living/dining space, and a kitchen.

Exterior

Located on the curve of Meyerwood Drive, Unit C has the largest front yard of the three townhouses, with a planting bed featuring two crepe myrtle trees and low groundcover flanking the pebbledashed concrete walkway. To the east, Unit C is bordered by common space, including a grassy lawn with mature deciduous trees, pebbledashed concrete sidewalks, and a small patio with seating. The front wall of Unit C is stucco (painted dark gray) with expansion joints creating seven bays. The easternmost bay (Bay 7) contains a full-height double gate comprised of red cedar louvers set

in a robust steel frame, identical to the exterior gates on Units A and B. Decorative and functional elements are closely stacked to the west of the gate and include (from top to bottom) a downlight, the street number in individual metal numerals, a doorbell, mailbox, and a City of Houston Landmark badge.

The exposed east wall is clad in stucco, painted white, and is 15 bays deep, with the dining room window centered in Bays 7-9. The concrete foundation is painted black. A cylindrical aluminum downlight is mounted in the center of Bay 15, next to the carport; otherwise, this wall is devoid of any decorative or functional components.

Interior

In Unit C, the three bedrooms are located along the west wall, the living/dining room is oriented north-south along the eastern wall of the townhouse, and the kitchen is in the rear behind the living dining room. A fireplace is set into the dividing wall between the common area and the secondary bedroom, which is centrally located; the west side of the secondary bedroom is a window wall looking into an interior courtyard, which illuminates this bedroom with natural light. A smaller bedroom/study occupies the remainder of the front of the unit and is separated from the living room by a jack-and-jill full bathroom that opens to a short hallway to both the study and the secondary bedroom. The primary bedroom and full bath are located at the rear west side of the townhouse, and both that suite and the secondary bedroom can be accessed from another short hallway to the rear of the fireplace wall.

Alterations

This townhouse is the most intact of the three and retains many original features, in addition to those mentioned earlier, including Knoll draperies in the dining room, cabinets and some appliances in the kitchen, and the fireplace with stainless steel surround. The prior owners (now tenants), Michael J. Smith and Malcolm Perry, even sourced a refrigerator in the same model (but a more recent manufacture date) that was originally installed in the kitchen. An original water feature, consisting of an in-ground enameled steel pool with center steel planter and stainless steel gutters, was removed at an unknown date. The townhouse is currently owned by Jeff Carowitz.

Integrity

All three townhouses have been continuously owner-occupied single-family dwellings, with few changes in ownership since their construction. Insensitive alterations to the two-story center unit (4158) have been reversed, and the two one-story units (4156 and 4160) remain largely as constructed, with only minor alterations. Today, the Style in Steel Townhouses retain integrity of **design**, **workmanship**, and **materials**, very closely reflecting their original condition when constructed in 1968. The townhouses' **setting** — within the Townhouse Manor subdivision —also is highly intact, as is the **location** of the townhouses within that neighborhood. All of these factors contribute to its integrity of **feeling.** Finally, the restoration of 4158 Meyerwood has been lauded in numerous recent publications devoted to architectural design and historic preservation, guaranteeing that the townhouses' ongoing **association** with the January 1969 National Association for Home Builders (NAHB) show remains strong.

Statement of Significance

The "Style in Steel Townhouses," located at 4156, 4158, and 4160 Meyerwood Drive in Houston, Texas, were built in 1968 as a demonstration project for the January 1969 National Association for Home Builders (NAHB) show at the Astrodome Astrohall. Sponsored by the American Iron & Steel Institute (A.I.S.I.), Houston Lighting and Power, and General Electric, the houses were a promotional development intended to show the practicality and advantages of steel in residential construction. Steel was used throughout the house—not only in the structure itself, but also in the furniture, equipment, and fittings. The Style in Steel Townhouses were also used to demonstrate the Live Better Electrically Gold Medallion home construction program sponsored nationally by General Electric, and all three townhouses featured a wide array of innovative electric appliances and accessories. The construction of the Style in Steel Townhouses was extensively documented and publicized.[4] The Style in Steel Townhouses are significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture at the local level of significance as an excellent, intact example of a demonstration house project constructed during the mid-twentieth century. The project incorporated characteristics found in steel demonstration houses constructed starting in the 1930s, as well as the innovative "all-electric" heating, power, lighting, and appliances promoted by General Electric's "Live Better Electrically" campaign of the 1950s and 1960s. The period of significance is 1968, the year of construction.

Demonstration Houses in the United States

Since at least the 1920s, architects in many countries have designed "demonstration houses" to showcase and promote specific construction materials and technologies. This technical focus sets demonstration houses apart from those associated with the Better Homes in America movement in the 1920s-1930s, which promoted homeownership and consumerism, rather than architecture.[5] Demonstration houses are also unlike those buildings constructed as part of the parallel Small House Movement (also in the 1920s), which was sponsored by the American Institute of Architects and primarily intended to provide affordable small-house blueprints by mail.[6]

Technical demonstration houses typically had a singular focus, such as:

- *A type of material:* e.g., the 1931 prefabricated metal Aluminaire House at the Architectural and Allied Arts Exposition in New York City, or the all-plastic Vinylite house, both at the 1933 Chicago World's Fair Art and Architecture Exhibition.[7]
- *A type of construction technology*: e.g., the "solar houses" built with Libbey-Owens-Ford "Thermopane" glass, beginning in the 1930s and continuing through the 1950s, designed to maximize natural light and balance solar heat gain/loss,[8] or today's 3D-printed concrete houses.
- *A goal for performance*, often energy efficiency or sustainability: e.g., the 1945-1963 Case Study Houses in southern California, or more recent projects that strive for *net zero energy* (using less energy than is produced by the building's solar panel array), limited water consumption, and/or limited waste production.[9]

[4] The current owners collectively possess many historic archival sources, which this nomination incorporates to the greatest extent possible.
[5] *Better Homes in America Plan Book for Demonstration Week, October 9 to 14, 1922* (New York: National Advisory Council and Bureau of Information, August 16, 1922), 11, 18-20, 25-29. https://www.loc.gov/item/ca23000369/.
[6] Valerie Smith, "The Small House Movement of the 1920s: Preserving Small 'Better' Houses," master's thesis, Columbia University, 2022, 13-15. https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/h0bm-0d37.
[7] Anthony Walker, "Plastics: The Building Blocks of the Twentieth Century," *Construction History* 10 (1994), 67-88, 72. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41613731.
[8] Daniel A. Barber, "Tomorrow's House: Solar Housing in 1940s America," *Technology and Culture* 55, No. 1 (January 2014), 1-39. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24468396.
[9] Esther McCoy, "Arts & Architecture Case Study Houses," Perspecta 15: Backgrounds for an American Architecture (1975), 54-

The first demonstration house built with an exterior of interlocking enameled-steel panels—the Ferro-Enamel House at 2077 Campus Road in the South Euclid suburb of Cleveland, Ohio—was designed by Charles Bacon Rowley and Associates as a prototype in 1932.[10] This house was widely promoted by the Lincoln Electric Company, manufacturers of welding equipment, and it received favorable publicity, as welded residential buildings were rare at that time. Its structural plans were approved (and tacitly endorsed) by engineers from Carnegie Steel Company and the American Institute of Steel Construction.[11] Rowley designed a similar house for Wheeling Corrugated, a division of Wheeling Steel of West Virginia, which was built in 1936 at 6 Oakmont Road in the Wheeling area.[12]

That house notwithstanding, steel demonstration houses were typically sponsored by steel companies. In 1933, the Stran-Steel House was constructed by the Stran-Steel Corporation of Detroit, Michigan, for the Chicago World's Fair "Houses of Tomorrow" exhibition. Its design by architects H. Augustus O'Dell and Wirt C. Rowland included a steel frame to which traditional building materials could be nailed together by regular carpenters—no welding required. The exterior was covered by panels of "Glasiron Macotta," by the Maul Macotta Company. The panels were constructed from a layer of tough, lightweight Haydite (a type of concrete using a lightweight cellular burned-shale aggregate) covered with a thin gauge "Toncan Iron" steel by the Republic Steel Company. The steel's exterior surface was coated with a weather-resisting "Pemco" architectural porcelain enamel. The edges of the panels were protected with a small bead of Enduro Stainless Steel. Fencraft and Fenwrought steel casement windows were used throughout the house, and the kitchen incorporated steel cabinets by Dieterich.[13] The house was purchased and moved to Wilmette, Illinois, following the completion of the Fair and eventually became vacant and was forgotten. It was rediscovered when the lot on which it was standing was purchased in 2017, and after no buyer for the by-then-dilapidated house could be found, it was dismantled the following year.[14]

The Armco-Ferro House (NRHP 1985) was also constructed for the 1933 Chicago World's Fair and featured in the "Century of Progress" Exposition, which presented the role of science in industrial advancement. Model houses in that exposition featured modern materials and construction techniques, including prefabrication, as well as innovative home appliances. The purpose was to "bring the out-of-date housing industry in line with more efficient manufacturing practices, such as those used by the auto industry."[15] The Armco-Ferro House was designed by Robert Smith, Jr., of Cleveland, Ohio. ("Armco" was the abbreviated name of the American Rolling Mills Company of Middletown, Ohio.) Its design was intended to be mass-produced and affordable, with a revolutionary construction system of corrugated steel panels that were bolted together and then clad with porcelain-enameled steel panels. Armco fabricated the corrugated steel, while the cladding was produced by the Ferro Enamel Corporation. This system is said to have inspired the post-World War II prefabricated houses developed by the Lustron Corporation. Following the Exposition, the Armco-Ferro House was purchased by a private individual and moved to a lakefront lot in Beverly Shores, Indiana (now part of Indiana Dunes National Park), along with several other buildings. It remained in private ownership until 1976, when the National Park Service bought it. The Armco-Ferro House, along with the other buildings from the

73. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1567014.
[10] Tom Wolfe and Leonard Garfield, "'A New Standard for Living': The Lustron House, 1946-1950," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, Vol. 3 (1989), 52.
[11] Margaret Sondey, "Welding in U.S. Housing, ca. 1930-ca. 1950," *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, Vol. 11, No. 4, Winter 1994, 339-358, 349.
[12] Jeanne Finstein, "6 Oakmount Road," Friends of Wheeling Heritage, 2020, https://wheelingheritage.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/6-Oakmont-Road-compressed.pdf.
[13] Promotional booklet, "Stran-Steel House" (Detroit: Stran-Steel Corporation, 1933), 9, 11, 15.
[14] Jonah Meadows, "Wilmette's 1933 World's Fair 'House of Tomorrow' Being Dismantled," *Patch*, December 2018. https://patch.com/illinois/wilmette/wilmettes-1933-worlds-fair-house-tomorrow-being-dismantled.
[15] Maria F. Ali, *The Century of Progress Documentation Project* (Washington, D.C.: Historic American Buildings Survey, Department of the Interior, 1994), 1, HABS No. IN-239. Appendix A.

1933 Exposition, were listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1985 as the Century of Progress Architectural District.[16]

Beginning in 1945 and continuing through 1963, architects including Charles Eames, Eero Sarinen, Richard Neutra, and others were tasked with designing experimental modern houses that played with form and material to achieve a "good environment" in southern California. The resulting "Case Study Houses" included two steel-framed examples, one by Eames and the other by Raphael Soriano. Soriano built a pavilion-style structure framed with 3.5" steel pipe columns supporting 6" flanged beams below a steel roof, while Eames' famous house was "a steel and glass cage" with a double-height living room overlooked by a balcony containing two bedrooms (Figure 41).[17] Soriano's first exposed steel-frame house (1947-1950) was built at 7875 Woodrow Wilson Drive in Los Angeles, California, for photographer Julius Shulman, who lived there until his death in 2009 (Figure 42).[18]

Steel in Residential Construction in the United States, 1933-1951

Steel has long offered performance advantages for its use in building construction: it can be used to produce precisely dimensioned components, easily assembled through bolting or welding, that are relatively lightweight at longer lengths than is possible in brick, stone, or wood.[19] During the mid-twentieth century, steel was employed extensively in framing for commercial construction, and porcelain enamel steel was used as an exterior wall cladding in some limited building types (White Castle restaurants, Gulf service stations, etc.). The use of steel in residential construction during the same time period was largely limited to experimental examples and the prefabricated houses offered by 280 companies during the post-World War II period.[20]

In the early 1930s, companies manufacturing prefabricated steel houses included "General Houses, Inc. (which produced both a steel-frame house and a house with load-bearing steel panels); American Houses, Inc. (a steel-frame house with an asbestos skin); and National Houses, Inc. (a steel frame house with steel panels). Each company built a few hundred houses."[21] Welding equipment manufacturers—led by Westinghouse Electric & Manufacturing—also promoted steel for residential construction. A frameless steel house, assembled by welding together corrugated sheet metal panels, was constructed in Solon, Ohio (a suburb of Cleveland) by Insulated Steel, Inc., in 1932. Popular Mechanics magazine called it "a marked advance toward the factory production of low cost homes."[22] However, prefabricated steel house designs were beset with many technical problems, including insulation, condensation, and corrosion. High unit costs prevented widespread adoption of the technology, although the United States military purchased approximately 200,000 steel houses for personnel during World War II.[23]

In 1939, the U.S. Department of Commerce and Bureau of Standards published their *Building Materials and Structures Report BMS12: Structural Properties of "Steelox" Constructions for Walls, Partitions, Floors, and Roofs*,

[16] Janice Slupski, et al., *Armco-Ferro House Historic Structures Report* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service History Electronic Library and Archive, 2024), 9, https://npshistory.com/publications/indu/hsr-armco-ferro-house.pdf.
[17] Esther McCoy, "Arts & Architecture Case Study Houses," *Perspecta* 15: *Backgrounds for an American Architecture* (1975), 54-73, 73. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1567014.
[18] Sarah Amelar, "Picture Perfect," *Architectural Record*, April 2015, 112-117.
[19] Basil Honikman, "A Critical Appraisal of Industrialized Building: Prefabricated Steel Frame Systems—One," *Official Architecture and Planning* 29, No. 3 (March 1966), 435-436. https://www.jstor.org/stable/44750736.
[20] Tom Wolfe and Leonard Garfield, "'A New Standard for Living': The Lustron House, 1946-1950," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, Vol. 3 (1989), 51-61.
[21] Wolfe and Garfield, "'A New Standard for Living': The Lustron House, 1946-1950," 52.
[22] Margaret Sondey, "Welding in U.S. Housing, ca. 1930-ca. 1950," *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, Vol. 11, No. 4, Winter 1994, 339-358, 349.
[23] Wolfe and Garfield, "'A New Standard for Living': The Lustron House, 1946-1950," 53.

sponsored by Steel Buildings, Inc. This was part of a federal effort to identify materials and structures for use in low-cost houses and apartments, following the Great Depression. Steel Buildings, Inc., of Middletown, Ohio, provided "load-bearing wall, floor, and roof constructions consist(ing) essentially of interlocking, channel-shaped, sheet-metal panels" representing elements of a typical house and sold under the brand name "Steelox". The report concluded with a statement by Steel Buildings, Inc. that "approximately 350 houses using these constructions were completed or under construction July 1, 1938."[24] Unfortunately, at least some purchasers discovered that Steelox houses were designed so that "the ceiling panels were supported at the wall by a flange which was bolted to the metal panels and thus afforded a through metal path from the outside of the building" to the inside, resulting in "severe condensation and mould growth" when temperatures were low and humidity was high.[25] (Steelox was used for the canopies over the carports at the nominated properties.)

Prefabricated steel houses included those produced by the Rheem Company of California, which incorporated:

> [A] steel service and structural core … lowered into position by a crane. This core, measuring 36 feet by 9 feet, is completely prefabricated and consists of a fully fitted kitchen and two bathrooms. It also consitutes the sole load-bearing part of the building. There is a compartment containing a unit 2 feet by 4 feet by 8 feet 6 inches which takes care of the electric air-conditioning, central heating and hot water systems. Prefabricated sheet steel panels form the external skin of the external walls. … The required standards of internal finish and insulation are achieved by gluing suitable materials to the self-supporting external skin.[26]

Probably the most famous steel houses in the United States were those produced by the Lustron Corporation. Using a structural steel frame clad with enameled steel panels on the interior and exterior, Lustron Houses were mass-produced in Ohio in an assembly-line fashion. Parts were loaded on flat-bed trailers so that they could be unloaded at the building site in the order needed for assembly. The company was heavily subsidized by federal loans and venture capital, but after four years (1947-1950), it ceased operation, having delivered fewer than 3,000 houses. General Panel Corporation, which also received direct federal loans, built fewer than 200 houses between 1946-1951.[27]

Lustron houses had solved the problem of insulation and condensation, thanks to fiberglas batting on the inside of all exterior wall panels and a full-house plenum chamber between insulation boards attached to the underside of the roof panels and the suspended ceiling. Unfortunately, by the time Lustron's manufacturing facilities were at full production, the post-World War II housing crisis had ended, and the prices for (relatively small) Lustron houses soared beyond those of traditionally built starter homes. The U.S. Federal Housing Administration did not initially approve Lustron houses for inclusion in their mortgage program, and commercial lenders were hesitant to take chances on such new and different construction. In all, a series obstacles and setbacks doomed the company, and it closed in 1951.[28]

During the 1950s, improvements in gypsum board as a fire-resistant interior wall material, and the development of lightweight steel studs and self-drilling steel screws, made steel-framed construction more attractive, although commercial development far outpaced the use of steel in residential buildings.[29]

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[24] Herbert L. Whittemore, Ambrose H. Stang, and Vincent B. Phelan, *Building Materials and Structures Report BMS12: Structural Properties of "Steelox" Constructions for Walls, Partitions, Floors, and Roofs* (Washington, DC: National Bureau of Standards Technical Research Group, 1939), 1, 2, 17.
[25] C. R. Crocker, "Report on Steelox Buildings at R. C. A. F. Jet Training Station at Portage La Prairie, Man." technical note (National Research Council of Canada, Division of Building Research, February 19, 1954), https://doi.org/10.4224/20359048.
[26] Honikman, "A Critical Appraisal of Industrialized Building," 435.
[27] Wolfe and Garfield, "'A New Standard for Living': The Lustron House, 1946-1950," 51, 54.
[28] Wolfe and Garfield, "'A New Standard for Living': The Lustron House, 1946-1950," 58-61.
[29] "History," Cold-Formed Steel Engineers Institute, https://www.cfsei.org/history.

Steel never became popular for residential construction during the twentieth century, in part because of "the bewildering array of building codes throughout the United States," which were based on traditional wood-frame construction; a lack of consumer interest; technical issues related to moisture (condensation, corrosion); insulation; and heating and cooling; and the lack of a business model for individual home builders. "In order to build welded houses at a reasonable price, certain economies of scale must come into play. Steel companies are accustomed to selling large lots of material to other manufactureres. There was no distribution system available for selling small quantitites of steel to individual home builders, or even to home construction firms."[30]

Comparative Analysis

Like the Case Study houses, nearly all of the experimental demonstration houses that incorporated steel limited its use to framing. The 1933 all-steel Stran-Steel House was an exception, but later houses built using its plans (such as 2904 Taft Blvd. in Wichita Falls, Texas) are clad in brick. The Style in Steel Townhouses are clad in stucco over two layers of gypsum board, rather than a metal lath. Like the Stran-Steel House, the Townhouses incorporate steel kitchen cabinets, but utilize traditional gypsum board for interior walls rather than porcelainized steel panels.

Perhaps the most direct inspiration for the Townhouses came from the Case Study Houses in California. Eames' famous Case Study House was "a steel and glass cage" with a double-height living room overlooked by a balcony containing two bedrooms (Figure 43).[31] The Style in Steel Townhouse at 4158 Meyerwood utilizes a similar design for its second-floor bedrooms, which look out over a two-story forecourt and are also suspended above a living-dining room that extends the unit's full two-story height at either end, with the balcony railing of each bedroom overlooking the space below. Soriano's 1950 Shulman House featured full-height glass window walls and sliding glass doors, but unlike the Style in Steel Townhouses, Soriano's roof projected beyond the glass to create a shallow loggia supported by slender steel pipe columns. Soriano also utilized outdoor living spaces open to the sky, as well as interior courtyards to bring natural light into indoor spaces, just as Wilson and Weatherford did in the Style in Steel Townhouses.[32]

In comparison to other steel demonstration houses described above, the Style in Steel Townhouses stand out because they are highly intact, retain integrity, and are still in use as private residences. Of the two steel houses built for the 1933 Chicago World's Fair, the Stran-Steel House is no longer extant, but the Armco-Ferro House was relocated to Indiana Dunes National Park and is preserved there at 212 West Lake Front Drive, Beverly Shores, Indiana. Despite its relocation, it retains integrity. The Eames House also retains integrity as a highly intact example of steel residential design. It is currently owned by the nonprofit Eames Foundation and preserved as a house museum that can be toured by visitors.

Examples of steel houses that have undergone considerable alterations include Charles Rowley's two 1930s steel house designs in South Euclid, Ohio, and Wheeling, West Virginia respectively. Both houses are extant but do not retain integrity as the design, workmanship, and materials have been compromised. The South Euclid house has been covered in horizontal vinyl siding, the twin exterior chimneys have been clad with brick, the windows have been replaced, and the decorative flared roof over the front door has been removed altogether. The Wheeling Steel House has been covered in horizontal siding, and its windows have been replaced with vinyl units. Decorative vinyl shutters flank the larger windows on the front and sides of the house. One of the front doors has been entirely covered with siding, and the delicate metal arbors around the two doors in the front elevation are no longer extant. The overall

[30] Sondey, "Welding in U.S. Housing, ca. 1930-ca. 1950," 352.
[31] Esther McCoy, "Arts & Architecture Case Study Houses," *Perspecta* 15: *Backgrounds for an American Architecture* (1975), 54-73, 73. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1567014.
[32] Based on 1950 photographs by Julius Shulman, The Getty Research Institute, Julius Shulman Archive. https://ofhouses.com/post/629389336003198977/832-raphael-soriano-case-study-house-1950.

feeling of both houses has changed, in large part due to the horizontal materials that counteract the verticality of the original designs.

The 1950 Julius Shulman Home and Studio was occupied by Shulman until his death in 2009 at the age of 98. After new owners purchased the house in 2010, they hired Lorcan O'Herlihy Architects (LOHA) to rehabilitate and update the house. LOHA introduced new heating and air conditioning, updated the kitchen and bathrooms, restored the sliding glass doors and added screens, and replaced the home's built-in storage and furniture. LOHA also removed shag carpeting, poured a new concrete floor, and reconfigured the home's layout to add a new guest bedroom.[33] The home retains its feeling and association from the exterior, but the design, materials, and workmanship have been compromised on the interior.

American Iron and Steel Institute and the 1969 National Association of Home Builders Convention

By the 1950s, structural steel had become the design standard for high-rise commercial architecture with the curtain-wall construction of the Lever House (Skidmore Owings and Merrill, 1952) and Seagram Building (Mies van der Rohe, with Philip Johnson and Kahn & Jacobs, 1954-1958).[34] Despite the failure of the Lustron Corporation, the steel industry continued to recommend its products for residential construction. "The voice of the steel industry," the American Iron and Steel Institute (A.I.S.I.), was established in 1908.[35] In the 1960s, it published a newsletter called "Contemporary Steel Design" to promote residential steel construction. The second issue, titled "Why Steel in Residential Architecture?" featured the home of jazz musician Dave Brubeck, among other steel houses, to advance the notion that architects using steel were neither "Ferro Fanatics" nor being subsidized by steel companies. Instead, the author forecasted that wood, aluminum, and concrete were inferior structural materials and would "definitely come out on top during this inevitable transition to modern residential construction techniques."[36]

The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), a trade association that had held its annual convention in Chicago for 21 years, traveled to Houston in January 1969. The decision was incentivized by the Houston Texans football organization, Texas Governor John Connally, Houston Mayor Louis Welch, and Harris County Judge Roy Hofheinz, president of the Houston Sports Association. (In Texas, county judges in populous counties have primarily administrative, rather than judicial, duties.) The convention was held in the Astrohall, a complex of meeting rooms constructed adjacent to the Astrodome for that event.[37]

A.I.S.I., along with General Electric and the Houston Lighting & Power Company, sponsored the construction of the Style in Steel Townhouses for the 1969 NAHB convention. Part of the goal was to increase steel production. William H. Withey, chair of the A.I.S.I. Residential and Light Construction Task Force, stated, "If steel usage can be increased by as little as one-third of a ton per living unit, American steel mills would have to produce 500,000 more tons a year."

Promotional materials noted that the Townhouses were "built to demonstrate the practicality and the enormous advantages of steel in residential construction." The Townhouses were intended to represent three different price ranges, but all included "some of the most advanced and streamlined electrical appliances and equipment—such as the built-in vacuum system, piped-in music, Electri-Climate Control, and an oven that cooks with microwaves!" An

[33] Jenna McKnight, "LOHA updates legendary home built for photographer Julius Shulman," *Dezeen*, October 15, 2015, https://www.dezeen.com/2015/10/15/loha-home-architectural-photographer-julius-shulman-restoration-los-angeles-usa/.
[34] Carole Rifkind, *A Field Guide to Contemporary American Architecture* (New York: Plume/Penguin, 2001), 270.
[35] "History," American Iron and Steel Institute website, https://www.steel.org/about-aisi/history/.
[36] David Thorne, "Why Steel in Residential Architecture?", *Contemporary Steel Design*, Vol. 1, No. 2, March 1964.
[37] "Home Builders Plan to Meet in Houston," *New York Times*, May 24, 1966.

estimated 40,000 home builders were expected to attend the convention. Attendees could register for free shuttle-bus transportation to the Townhouses from the Astrohall, provided by Houston Tours & Charter Service.[38]

Following the convention, the townhouses would remain open for "inspection by the public" for three weeks so that Houstonians could see the decorative and functional uses of steel throughout each unit's interior.[39] Builders who visited the A.I.S.I. booth at the NAHB convention could pick up a sweepstakes entry and turn it in when they visited the Townhouses. Prizes included "exotic trips" to St. Andrews golf course in Scotland; a week of hunting and fishing in South America; a week in Rome, Athens, and "the Greek islands"; or a week of "shows" in New York and London. Other NAHB exhibitors were encouraged to promote the Townhouses tour and distribute sweepstakes entry forms at their own booths. The A.I.S.I. booth, which was entirely dedicated to the Style in Steel Townhouses, featured a color movie of their construction by Paul Peters, color slides and photographs by Jay Oistad, and a scale model by architect Talbott Wilson.[40]

Style in Steel Townhouses

The Style in Steel Townhouses are located in Townhouse Manor, a subdivision of all townhouses southwest of Houston's Downtown Commercial District. In the late 1960s, townhouses were promoted as a modern, exciting alternative to traditional single-family subdivision homes, with landscaped common areas instead of yards, and outdoor living space provided through amenities such as "deep walled terraces in front of each unit." Other alternatives to single-family subdivision houses during that time period included apartments, planned unit developments "with their clusters, greenbelts, and varied types of housing", and condominiums, which offered "maintenance-free living." Townhouses in particular offered a highly efficient use of land while maintaining privacy for residents.[41] The freestanding subdivision house, surrounded by a lawn of green grass, had been promoted heavily during the 1930s-1950s, but by the 1960s, an "interest in ecology … shaped a growing concern about domestic landscape and the artificiality of the front lawn."[42] Townhouses offered an option that required no time spent mowing, weeding, or treating the yard with chemicals.

Townhouse Manor was originally developed by D.M. "Boots" Nichols on land owned by Fidelity Terra Corporation (Ted W. Mohle Jr., president).[43] The plat map for the Townhouse Manor subdivision was filed in February 1965, laying out the subdivision in 5 blocks with a total of 190 lots over 20 acres.[44] The groundbreaking took place in the following month. The initial builders included T. R. Henry Jr. (McHenry Builders Inc.) and Winters Sampson. Walter M. Mischer Co. won the contract for the subdivision's paving and utility work.[45]

Six lots in Block 5 were the first to be sold, purchased by developer Winters Sampson in October-November 1965, with homes to be constructed by the East West Company (William D. Cleveland, vice-president).[46] However, in

[38] Advertisement, NAHB Convention program, January 1969, 21. Paul Votano and Bill Bruce, "Style In Steel Townhouses" Newsletter No. 1, August 15, 1968.
[39] "'Style in Steel Townhouses' make their debut in Houston," A.I.S.I. *Steelmarketing*, No. 17, January 1969. "'Style in Steel Townhouses' To Be Showcase For Electric Living," Houston Lighting & Power Company promotional mailer, undated.
[40] Votano and Bruce, "Style In Steel Townhouses" Newsletter No. 1.
[41] "Housing's Market Revolution—and what it means to builders," *House & Home*, Vol. 33, No. 1, January 1968, 54. https://www.usmodernist.org/HH/HH-1968-01.pdf.
[42] Virginia Scott Jenkins, *The Lawn: A History of an American Obsession* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1994), 129, 161.
[43] "Developers of Largest Townhouse Project," *Houston Chronicle*, February 14, 1965, Sec. 11, page 9.
[44] Harris County deed records, Vol. 125, page 31, February 24, 1965.
[45] "Plan Townhouse Manor," *Houston Chronicle*, March 28, 1965, Sec. 9, page 8.
[46] Harris County deed records, multiple filings dated October 20, 1965 and October 28, 1965.

December 1966, Sampson filed for bankruptcy, and the court subsequently ordered those lots to be sold to the East West Company for $2,500 in order to settle his debts with that firm.[47] After that, McHenry Builders Inc. appears to have been the primary general contractor in the subdivision, although other builders included Unicorn Corporation, U. L. Edwards, Charles B. Gifford, and Memorial Village Builders. The neighborhood developed through the end of the 1960s.[48]

The three Style in Steel townhouses at 4156, 4158, and 4160 Meyerwood Drive were constructed across four lots (13, 14, 15, and 16) on Block 2, at a bend in Meyerwood Drive where one of the subdivision's seven common greenspaces and sidewalk are adjacent to 4156 Meyerwood. The location provided a dramatic view for early visitors to the townhouses. Built with a single set of construction plans, the townhouses were originally identified as Unit A (4160 Meyerwood), Unit B (4158 Meyerwood), and Unit C (4156 Meyerwood). The four original lots on which these townhouses rest were purchased in September 1968 by Sam Johnson for $150,000, with a deed of trust the following month, paying $19,000 down to the Eleven-O-Four Corporation, one of many land development and title companies owned by L. C. Owens.[49] Johnson replatted the four lots into three parcels on November 14, 1968.[50]

Ground-breaking ceremonies took place on June 13, 1968, with speeches by Houston Mayor pro tem Bob Webb; builder Sam Johnson; developer Dwight M. "Boots" Nichols; W. H. "Bill" Withey, chair of A.I.S.I.'s residential construction task force; H. G. Stafford from Houston Lighting & Power; and architect Talbott Wilson.[51]

By September 1968, architects WMCA had completed "working plans" and construction had begun, but the public relations firm, Basford, reported in their newsletter to the project team that "[f]abricating problems and other innovations had delayed completion of these plans, forcing a delay in construction. Fortunately, Sam Johnson, the builder, allowed extra time in his optimistic construction schedule, so that our 'slow start' will not greatly affect the construction timetable. Now that he's been 'unleashed', the slab has been poured and the steel framework is going up."[52] The delays were, in part, related to the "uniquely shaped members … produced for purposes of aesthetic design, like, star-shaped columns," as reported by engineer James Cummins.[53]

The townhouses were "topped out" on November 2, 1968, with the uppermost piece of superstructure bolted and welded into place and adorned by a Christmas tree for the occasion. The topping-out ceremony was attended by builder Sam Johnson, Robert Portik from Armco Steel, and architects Talbott Wilson and Hal Weatherford of WMCA.[54] The townhouses debuted for their Grand Opening on January 9, 1969.[55]

The public relations firm responsible for promoting the project compiled the following list of steel used in contruction of the Townhouses, totaling 45 tons:[56]

[47] Harris County deed records, multiple filings dated July 13, 1966, and April 3, 1967.
[48] Review of Harris County deed records, 1965-1976.
[49] Harris County deed records, Vol. 6486, pages 568-571, September 12, 1968. Harris County deed records, Vol. 6541, pages 89-93, October 18, 1968.
[50] Harris County deed records, Vol. 7424, pages 178-181, November 27, 1968.
[51] Paul Votano and Bill Bruce, "Style In Steel Townhouses" Newsletter No. 1, August 15, 1968.
[52] Paul Votano and Bill Bruce, "Style In Steel Townhouses" Newsletter No. 2, September 15, 1968.
[53] Alan Kravath (A.I.S.I.), press release, "Unique 'Style in Steel Townhouses' Debut in Houston," undated.
[54] Paul Votano and Bill Bruce, "Style In Steel Townhouses" Newsletter No. 3, November 1, 1968.
[55] Kravath (A.I.S.I.), press release, "Unique 'Style in Steel Townhouses' Debut in Houston."
[56] Correspondence between Wilson Morris Crain & Anderson (architects), James Cummins (engineer), and Alan Kravath at Basford PR-Promotion, Inc., April-December 1968.

- Structural steel (26 tons), consisting of miscellaneous wide flange and light beam sections, angles, channels, and plate. 3-½" square 3/16" wall tube, 6" x 12" x ¼" wall tube, 4" x 8" x 3/16" wall tube, 4" square x 3/16" wall tube, 3" dia. standard pipe, and 10-gauge and heavier plate fascia sections.
- Open web bar joist (2.75 tons)
- Galvanized steel deck for floor slab (29 gauge, 10 squares)
- Galvanized steel roof deck (22 gauge, 58 squares)
- Aluminized carport canopy steel roof deck (22 gauge, 12 squares)
- Miscellaneous steel (2.4 tons), consisting of 10-gauge stair pans, structural channel stringers, angles for louvers, 2.5" square tubing for gates, 1" and ¾" square steel bars for handrails, angle frames for glass canopies, roof openings, and anchor bolts, plates, and angles with bar anchors.
- Lightweight steel stud framing (4.3 tons)

The Townhouses were completely furnished and outfitted with "an astounding array of steel products as well as the very latest innovations in electrical appliances and accessories," including:[57]

- Built-in central vacuum systems by Corbett Industries, Inc.
- Built-in music systems, exhaust fans, and food blenders by Nutone (Scovill)
- Fireplaces and prefabricated garbage cans by Condon-King and Majestic, from local distributor Earl McMillan, Inc.
- Home appliances by General Electric in harvest gold and avocado colors
    - "Versatonic Range" (microwave oven)
    - Self-cleaning built-in ovens and a cooktop with electric barbecue grill
    - Side-by-side refrigerator with automatic icemaker
    - Automatic dishwasher
    - 40-gallon quick-recovery electric water heater
    - Air conditioning system
- Closet doors and accessories by Leigh Products, Inc.
- Interior hollow metal doors and frames by The Steelcraft Manufacturing Company
- Exterior doors and door frames by Republic Steel Corporation
- Sliding glass door and window frames by Carmel Steel Products from local distributor Buie Building Material
- Stainless steel sinks (kitchen and bar) by Elkay Manufacturing Company
- Kitchen and bath cabinets by United Metal Cabinets
- Porcelain-enameled shower stall by Vitreous Steel Products Company
- Bathroom fixtures by the Eljer Plumbingware Coporation
- Modular bath accessories by Hall Mack
- "Textolite" plastic-laminate kitchen countertops (with stainless steel caps and divider strips) by General Electric
- Commercial stainless-steel-fiber indoor/outdoor carpeting by Commercial Carpet Corporation and fiber supplier Brunswick Corporation
- Vinyl floors by GAF Corporation
- Vinyl-covered steel shelving by Pemco (Kalamazoo, Michigan)

[57] "Steel Townhouses Get Underway Here," *Houston Chronicle*, October 13, 1968. Votano and Bruce, "Style In Steel Townhouses" Newsletters No. 1 and No. 3.

Steel interior accessories and furnishings selected by interior designer Jack Evans of Evans-Monical Inc., who commissioned the Great Eastern Furniture Company to provide stainless-steel cocktail tables, bedside tables, dining tables, headboards, mirrors, and stainless steel sculptures.[58]

Originally, the front courtyards of all three townhouses were partially paved, and the left (west) half of Unit B's forecourt was landscaped with a tree growing inside that space. Landscaping was provided by Fred Buxton & Associates, landscape architects.[59] Unit C's front courtyard originally featured an enameled steel water feature with stainless steel gutters, and a center planter in which a small tree was planted. This was apparently was removed relatively quickly—probably because it apparently did not include any sort of filtering equipment.[60]

Other suppliers included: [61]

- Structural steel supplied by Jim Doyle Co., Inc.
- Structural tubing supplied by C. A. Russell Co.
- Galvanized pipe supplied by McJunken Corporation
- Metal lath by Wheeling Steel Corporation and the Metal Lath Association
- Roof deck by Inland Steel
- Roofing and sheet metal by J. A. Sharman & Son
- Pipe columns by Textube
- Fiberglas insulation and ceiling panels by Owens Corning Fiberglas Corporation
- Form for the concrete slab over the second floor deck provided by National Supply
- Door hardware by Schlage Lock Co.
- Plastering by Doerner Plastering Co.

In addition to the preponderance of steel used in their construction, the Style in Steel Townhouses were also examples of "Medallion" all-electric homes. The "Live Better Electrically" (LBE) program was first introduced in 1956 and was co-sponsored by General Electric and, to a lesser extent, Westinghouse, to promote the sale of electric appliances. The following year, the National Electric Manufacturers Association debuted an initiative to promote the construction of all-electric homes. Homes that used only electricity for heat, light, and power were eligible to display a 3"-diameter brass badge featuring the "Live Better Electrically Medallion Home" logo. The badges were typically displayed near the front door, on the wall or embedded in the front step or sidewalk, although special doorbells or door knockers incorporating the logo were also available. (Window decals were also available for those who wanted a less permanent option.)[62] The Style in Steel Townhouses were certified Medallion homes and continue to display Medallion badges near the front entry.

The Style in Steel Townhouses were featured in *Architectural Digest*, *Architectural Record*, *NAHB Journal of Homebuilding*, *House & Home Magazine*, and *Home Furnishings Daily* in early 1969. Almost 30 years later, in 1998, the Style in Steel Townhouses received the 25-Year Award ("awarded to a building that has set an architectural design standard of excellence for 25–35 years") from the American Institute of Architects' Houston chapter.[63]

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[58] Votano and Bruce, "Style In Steel Townhouses" Newsletter No. 3.
[59] As-built drawings, Votano and Bruce, "Style In Steel Townhouses" Newsletter No. 1, August 15, 1968.
[60] Votano and Bruce, "Style In Steel Townhouses" Newsletter No. 3. Communication with Michael J. Smith, November 8, 2025. "Style in Steel Townhouses," *Architectural Digest*, June 1969, 22-33.
[61] Votano and Bruce, "Style In Steel Townhouses" Newsletters No. 1 and No. 2.
[62] Michael Houser, "Live Better Electrically: The Gold Medallion Electric Home Campaign," Nifty from the Last 50 Initiative, Washington State Historic Preservation Office, https://dahp.wa.gov/live-better-electrically-the-gold-medallion-electric-home-campaign.
[63] "Style in Steel Townhouses Win 25 Year Award," *AIA Perspective*, American Institute of Architects/Houston, April 1998.

Conclusion

Despite A.I.S.I.'s efforts, steel in residential construction did not take off as hoped in the 1960s and 1970s. Steel did offer advantages, including the ability of the architect to specify longer spans, which provided "more design freedom while making possible slimmer, crisper detailing." As architect Talbott Wilson noted at the completion of the project in 1969, "The only real surprises we had in designing these townhouses was that we were delighted to discover what a large vocabulary of steel materials we had at our disposal, from structural on out—and how economical they were."[64] However, during the twentieth century, the promoters of steel homes were unable to overcome the lack of a consistent building code for steel in residential construction; the difficulties of managing moisture, heating, and cooling a steel house; and the lack of a standard product that could be easily distributed to home builders. These issues have remained into the 2000s, although steel-framed houses continue to be constructed on a limited basis.

The Style in Steel Townhouses are significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture at the local level of significance as an excellent, intact example of a steel demonstration house project constructed during the mid-twentieth century. The project incorporated characteristics found in steel demonstration houses constructed starting in the 1930s, as well as the innovative "all-electric" heating, power, lighting, and appliances promoted by General Electric's "Live Better Electrically" campaign of the 1950s and 1960s. The period of significance is 1968, the year of construction.

[64] Kravath (A.I.S.I.), press release, "Unique 'Style in Steel Townhouses' Debut in Houston."

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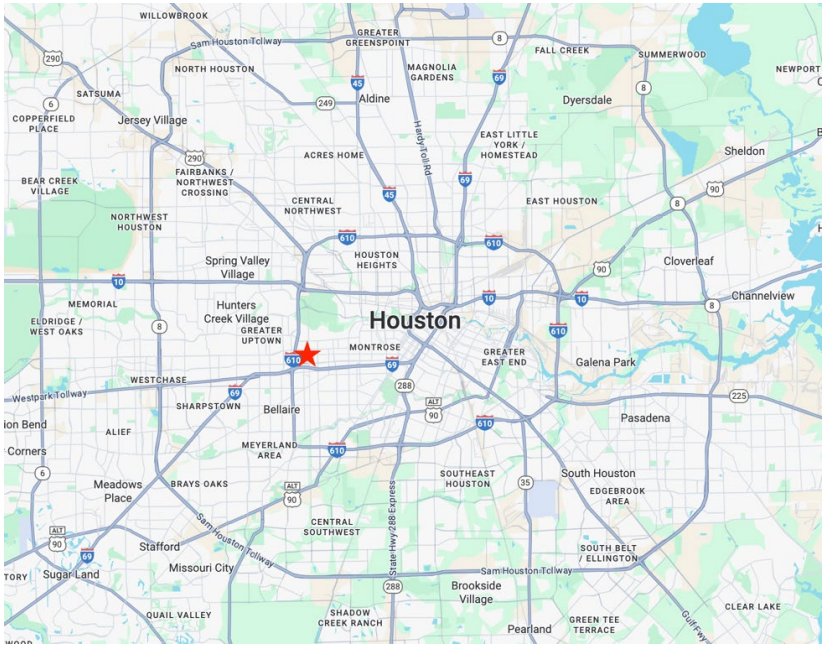
Maps

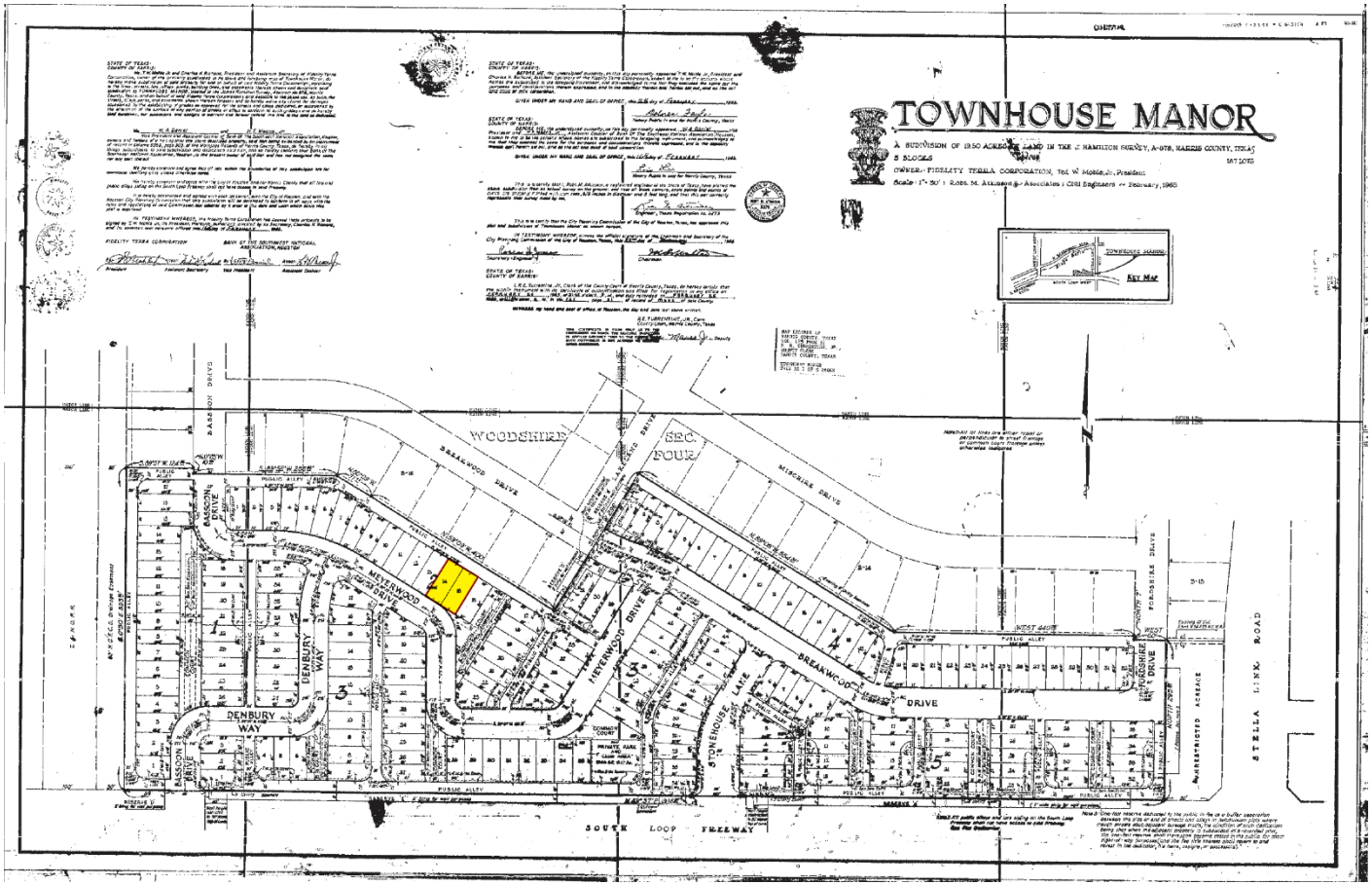
Map 1. Location of Style in Steel Townhouses within Houston area (Google Maps)



Map 2. Boundaries of Townhouse Manor subdivision in yellow with location of nominated property shown in red (Google Earth Pro)

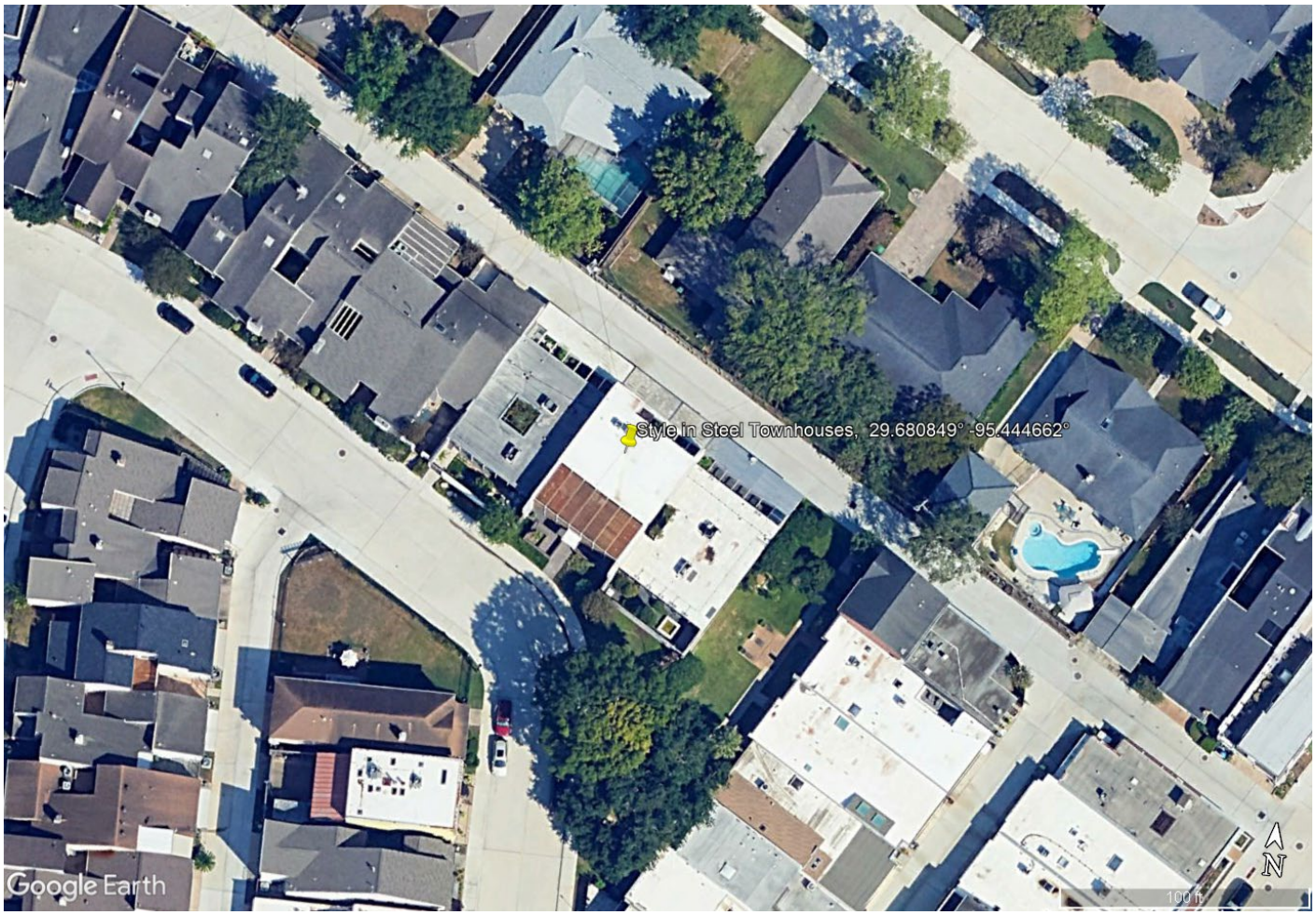

Townhouse Manor
Houston, Harris County, Texas
Legend
Breakwood Dr
Lakeland Dr
Breakwood Dr
Mischire Dr
Stella Link Rd
S Loop W
S Loop W
S Loop W
S Loop W
S Loop W
610
610
610
3
Lemac Dr
Sagong Dr
Kirkler St
Stella Link Rd
Google Earth

Map 3. Plat map of Townhouse Manor, with subject property highlighted



Map 4. Boundary Map of Style in Steel Townhouses. Lots 13, 14, 15, and 16. Harris County Central Appraisal District. (Accessed 2/26/2026)

Map 5. Style in Steel Townhouses, 29.680849° -95.444662° (Google Earth Pro)



Figures

Figure 1. Style in Steel Townhouses, original architectural drawings, sheet A-1 (Wilson Morris Crain & Anderson Architects, 1968)

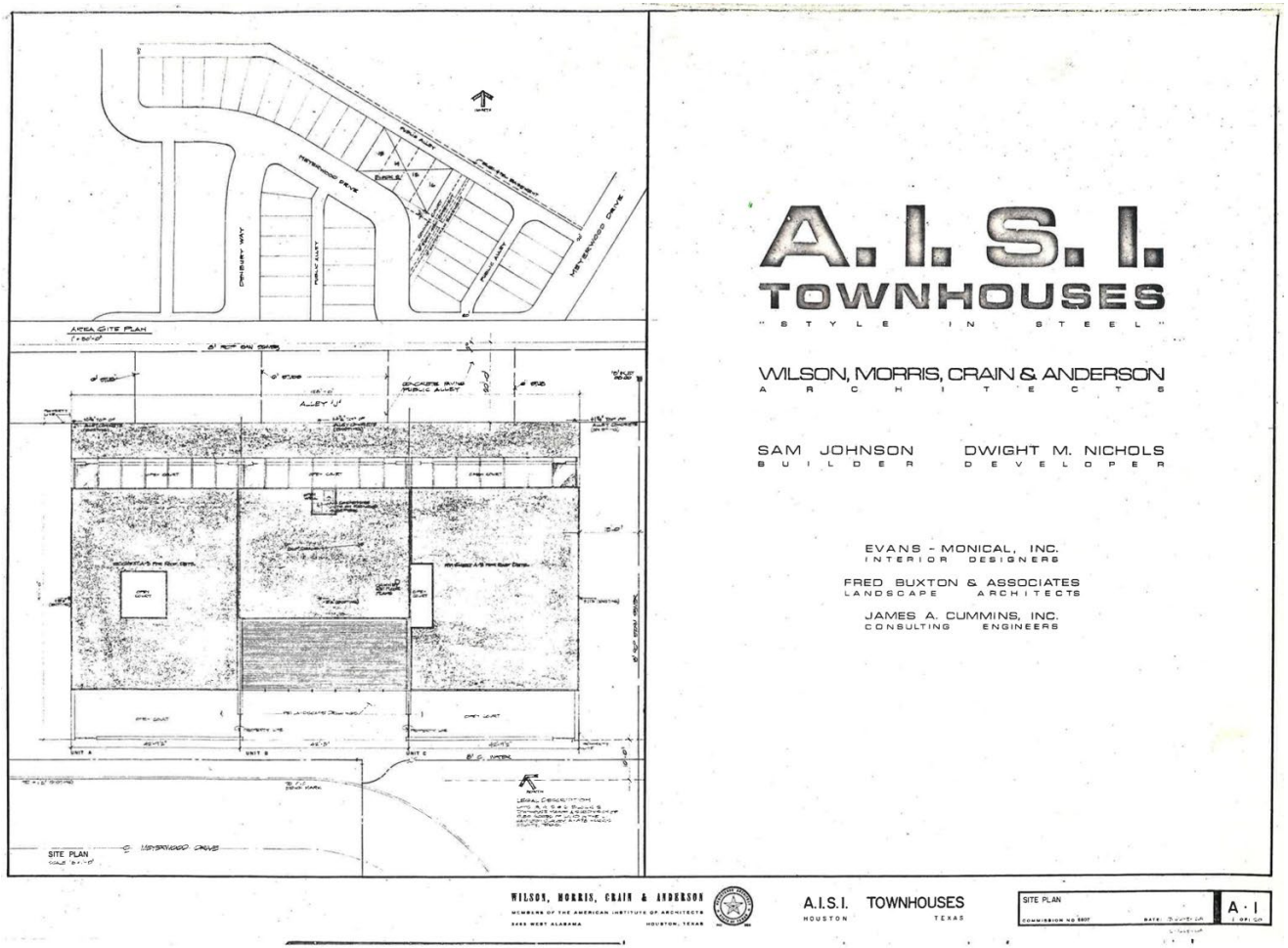


Figure 2. Style in Steel Townhouses, original architectural drawings, sheet A-2 (Wilson Morris Crain & Anderson Architects, 1968)

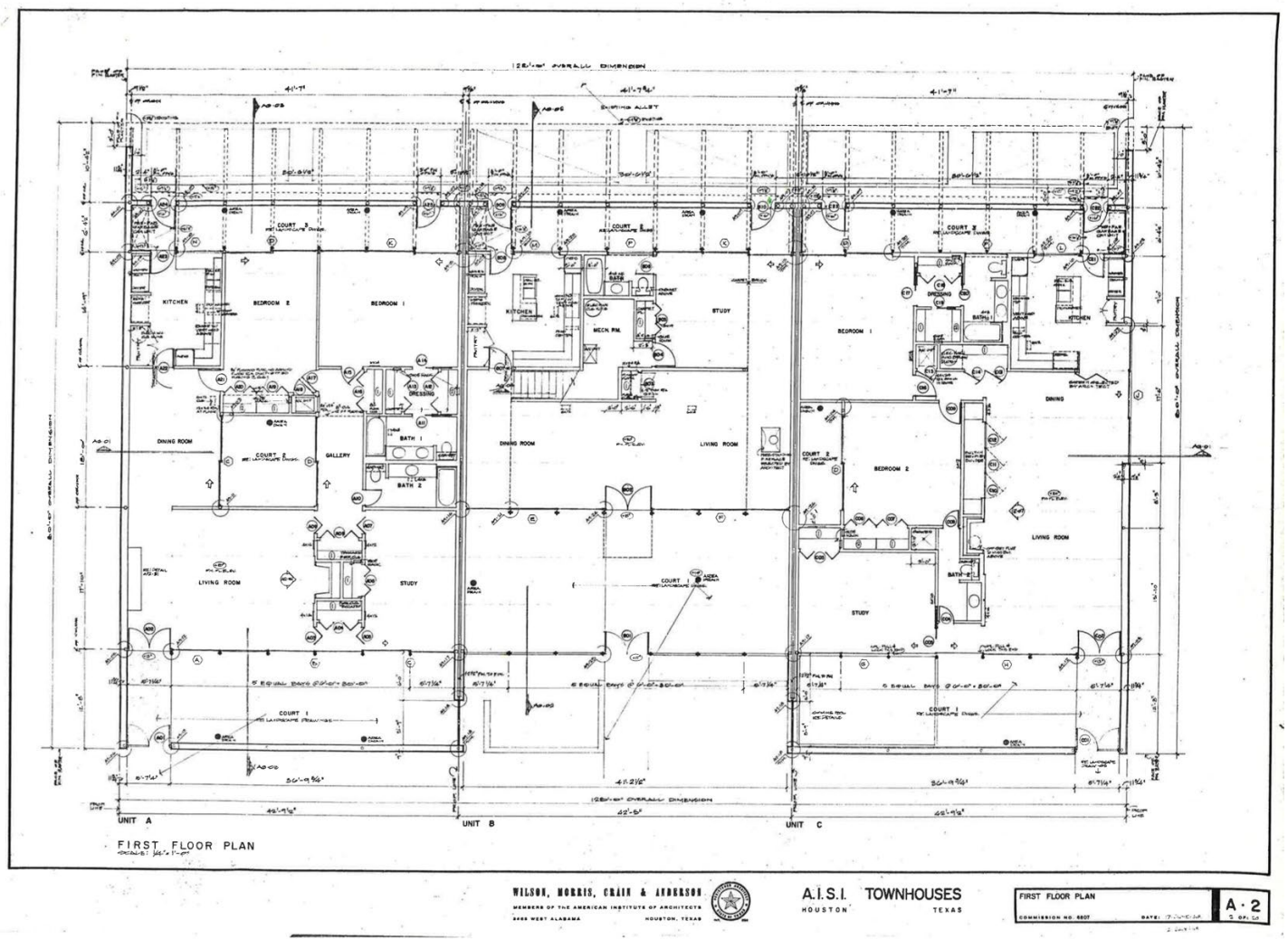


Figure 3. Style in Steel Townhouses, original architectural drawings, sheet A-3 (Wilson Morris Crain & Anderson Architects, 1968)

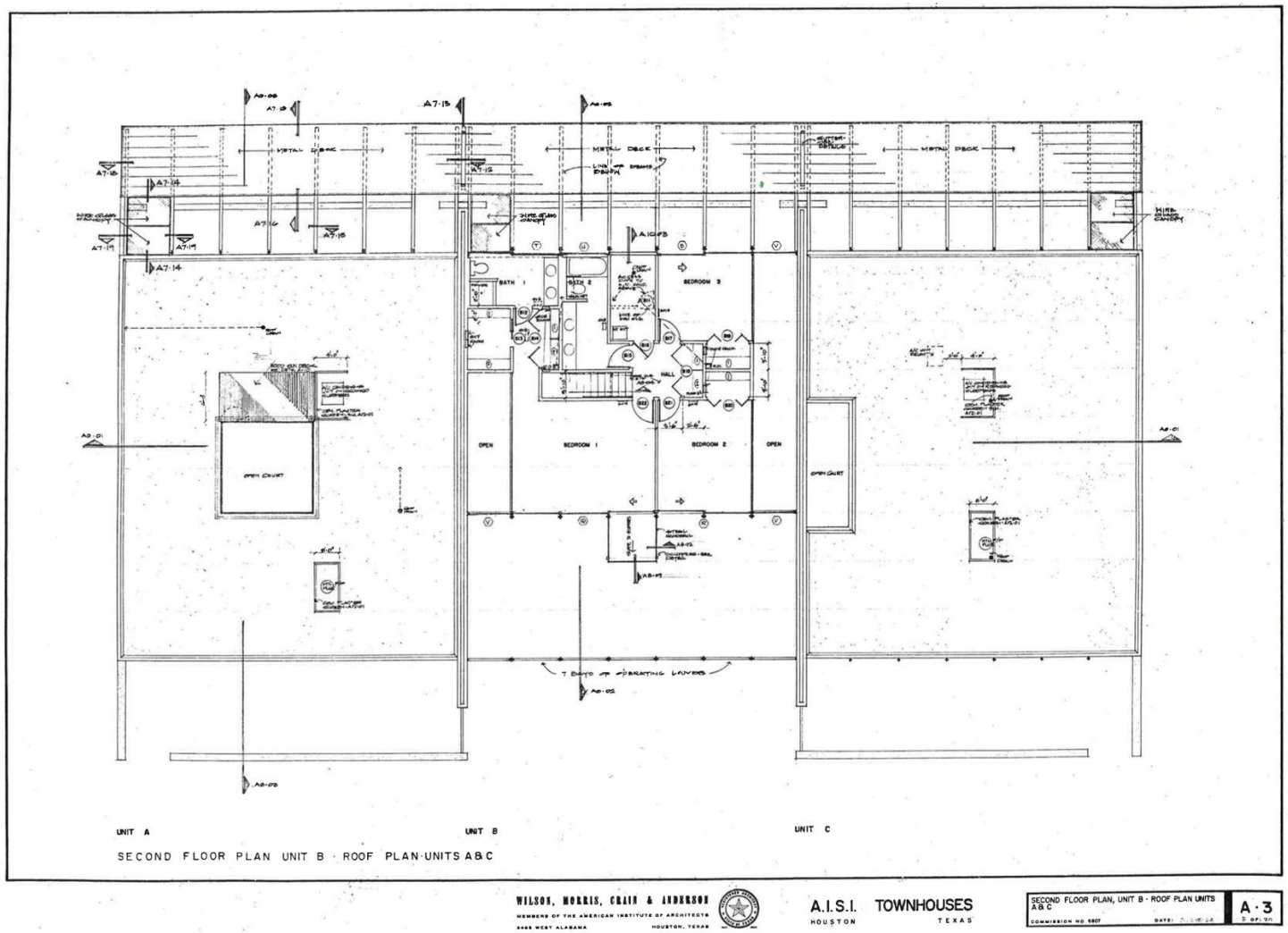


Figure 4. Style in Steel Townhouses, original architectural drawings, sheet A-4 (Wilson Morris Crain & Anderson Architects, 1968)

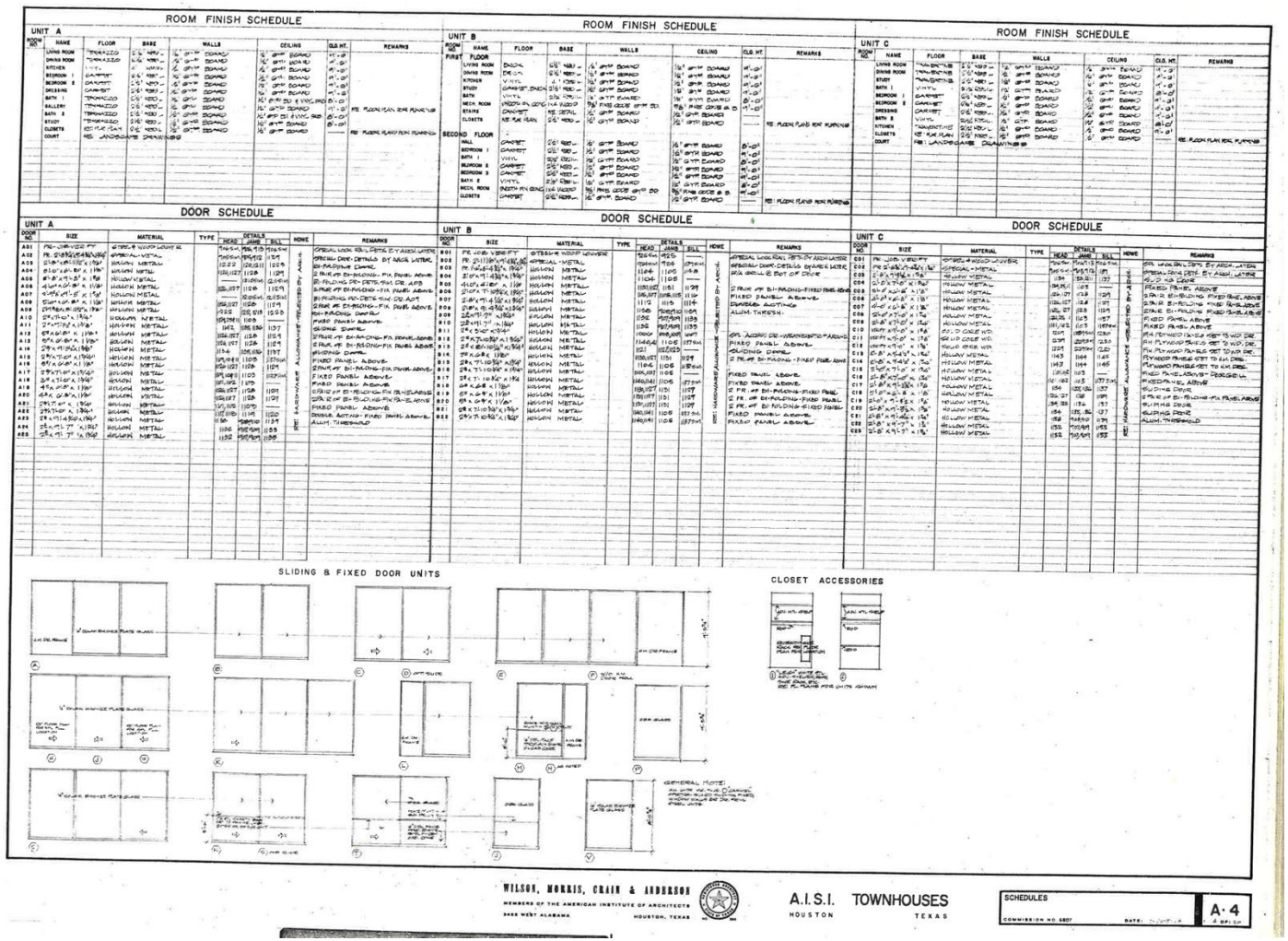


Figure 5. Style in Steel Townhouses, original architectural drawings, sheet A-5 (Wilson Morris Crain & Anderson Architects, 1968)

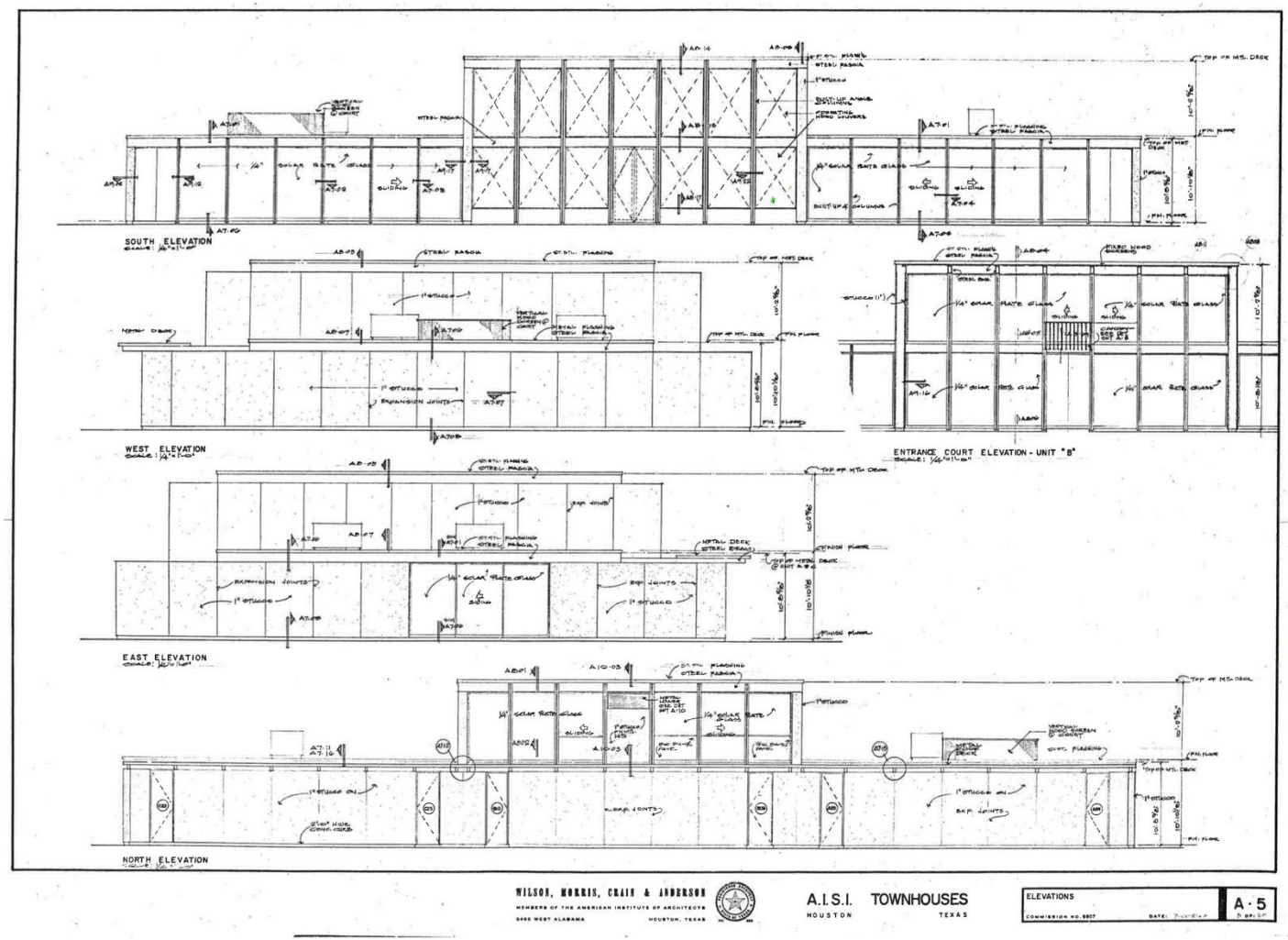


Figure 6. Style in Steel Townhouses, original architectural drawings, sheet A-6 (Wilson Morris Crain & Anderson Architects, 1968)

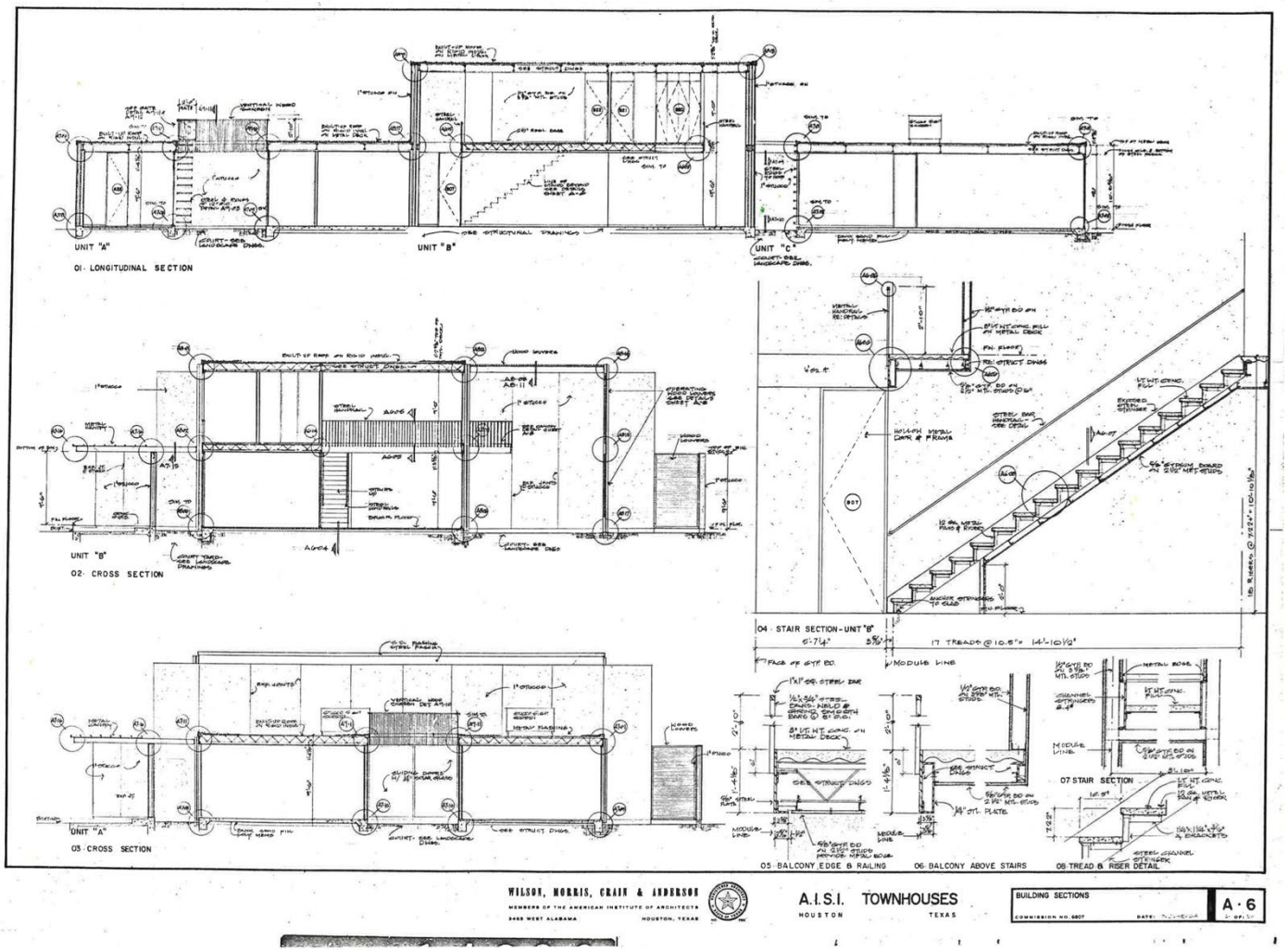


Figure 7. Style in Steel Townhouses, original architectural drawings, sheet A-7 (Wilson Morris Crain & Anderson Architects, 1968)

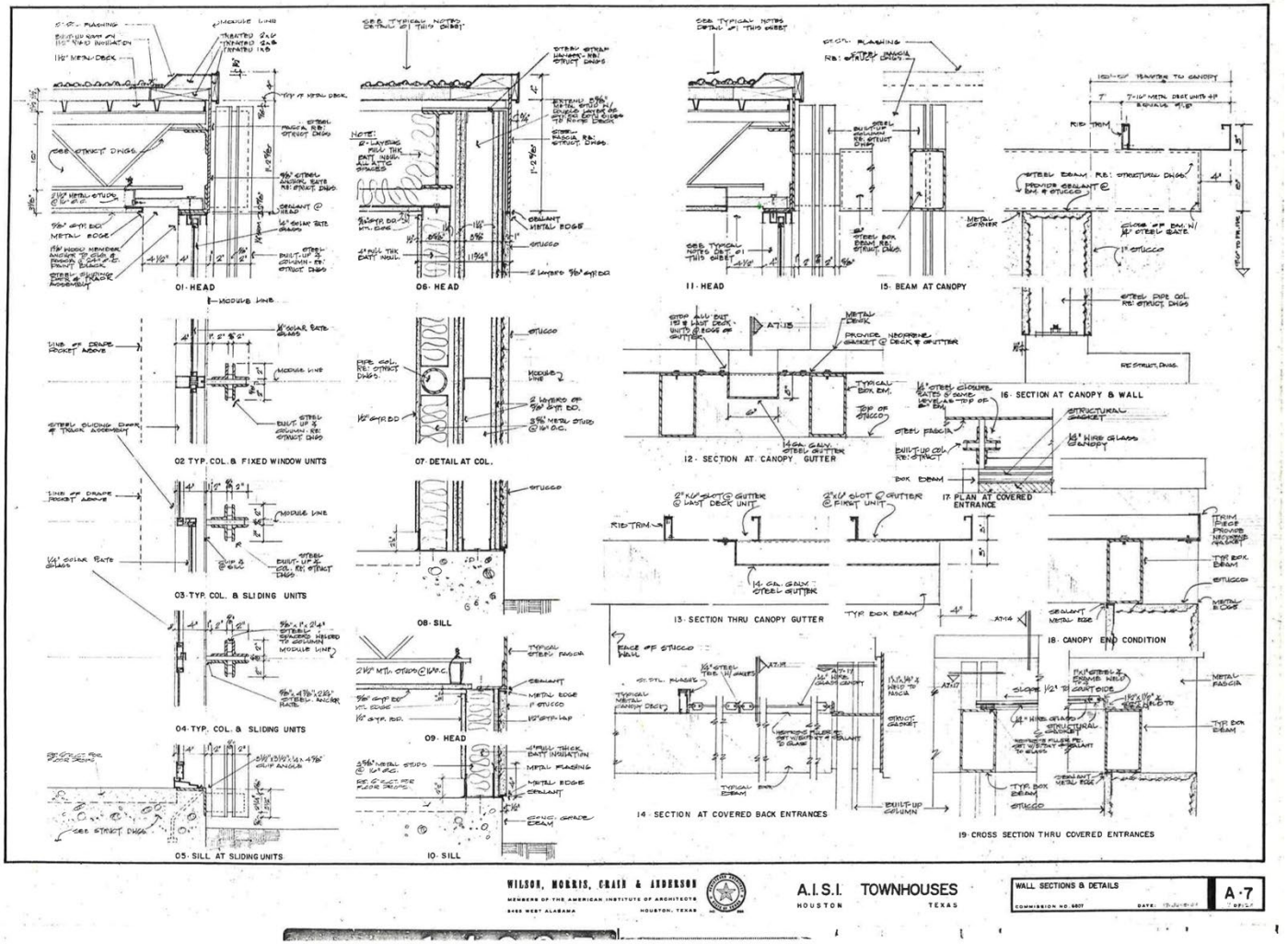


Figure 8. Style in Steel Townhouses, original architectural drawings, sheet A-8 (Wilson Morris Crain & Anderson Architects, 1968)

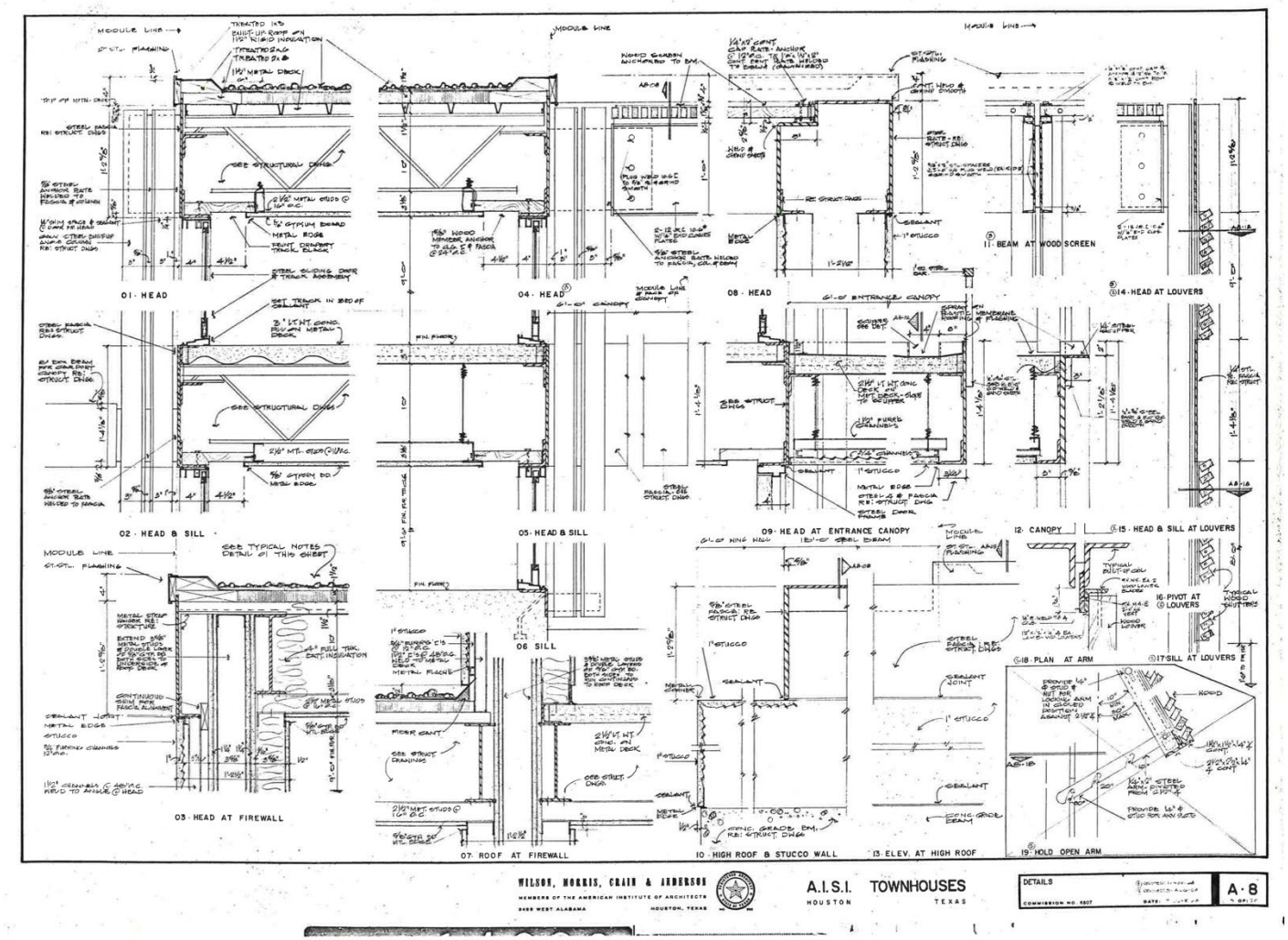


Figure 9. Style in Steel Townhouses, original architectural drawings, sheet A-9 (Wilson Morris Crain & Anderson Architects, 1968)

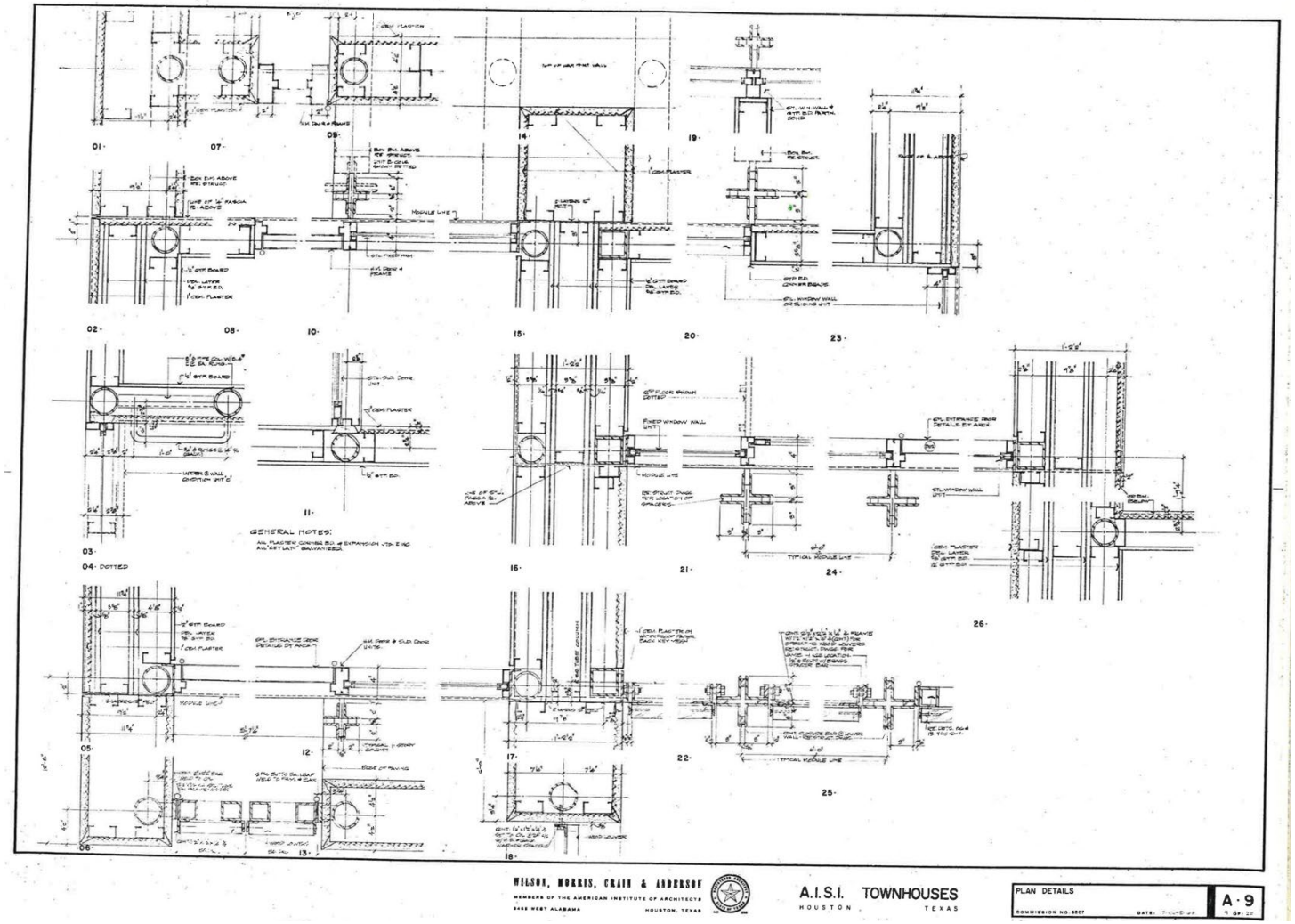


Figure 10. Style in Steel Townhouses, original architectural drawings, sheet A-10 (Wilson Morris Crain & Anderson Architects, 1968)

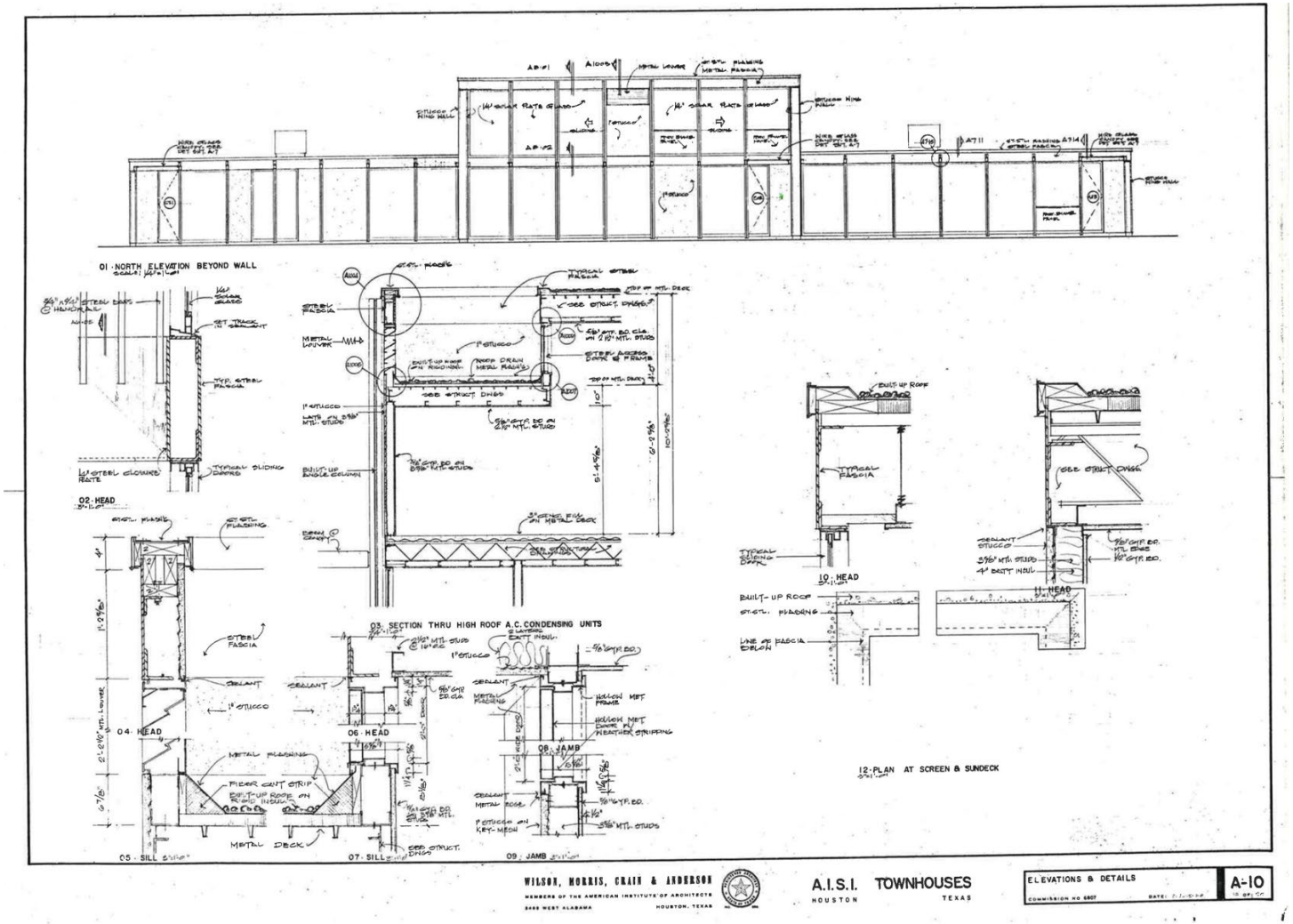


Figure 11. Style in Steel Townhouses, original architectural drawings, sheet A-11 (Wilson Morris Crain & Anderson Architects, 1968)

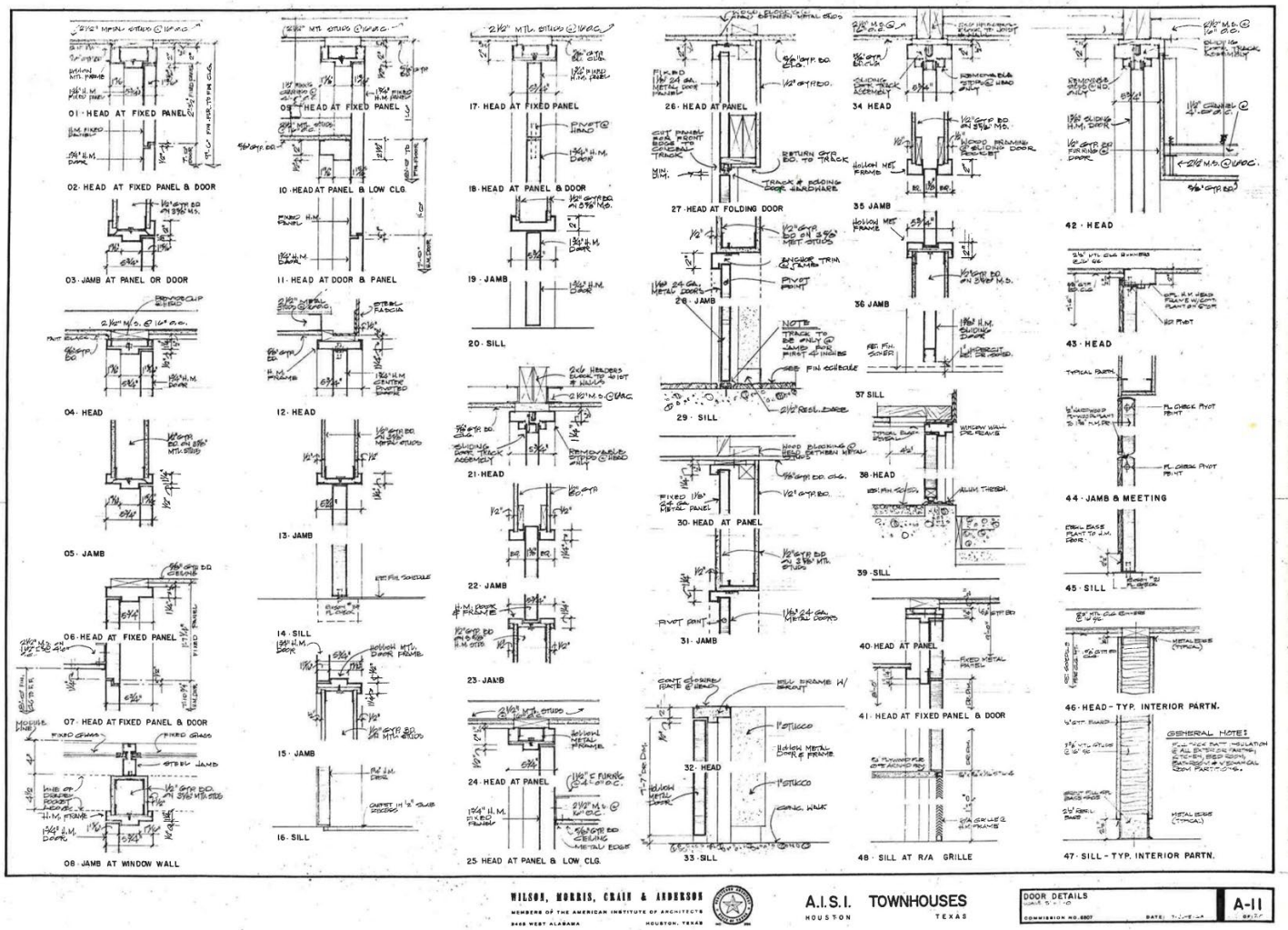


Figure 12. Style in Steel Townhouses, original architectural drawings, sheet A-12 (Wilson Morris Crain & Anderson Architects, 1968)

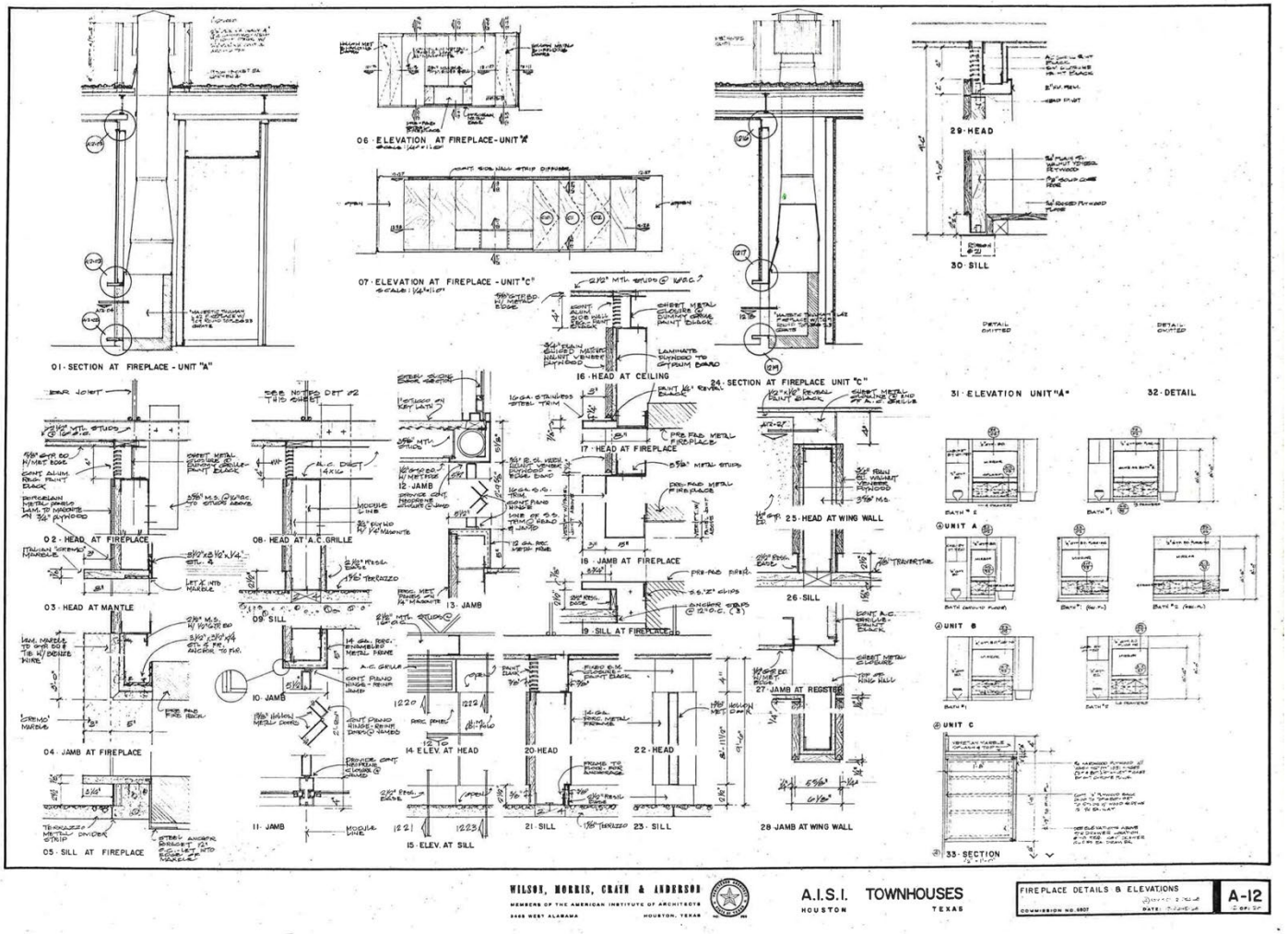


Figure 13. Style in Steel Townhouses, original architectural drawings, sheet A-13 (Wilson Morris Crain & Anderson Architects, 1968)

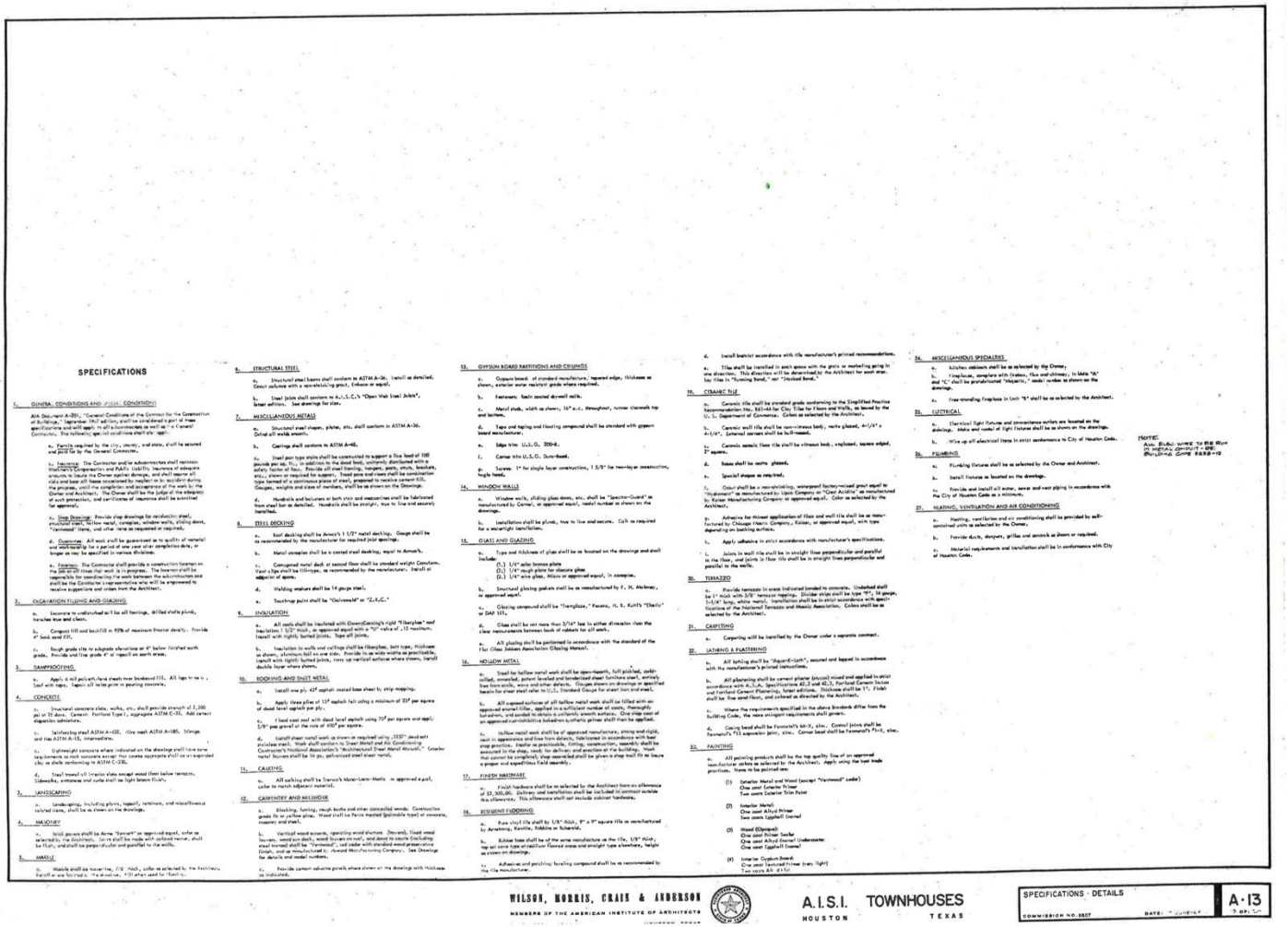


Figure 14. Style in Steel Townhouses, original architectural drawings, sheet E-1 (Wilson Morris Crain & Anderson Architects, 1968)

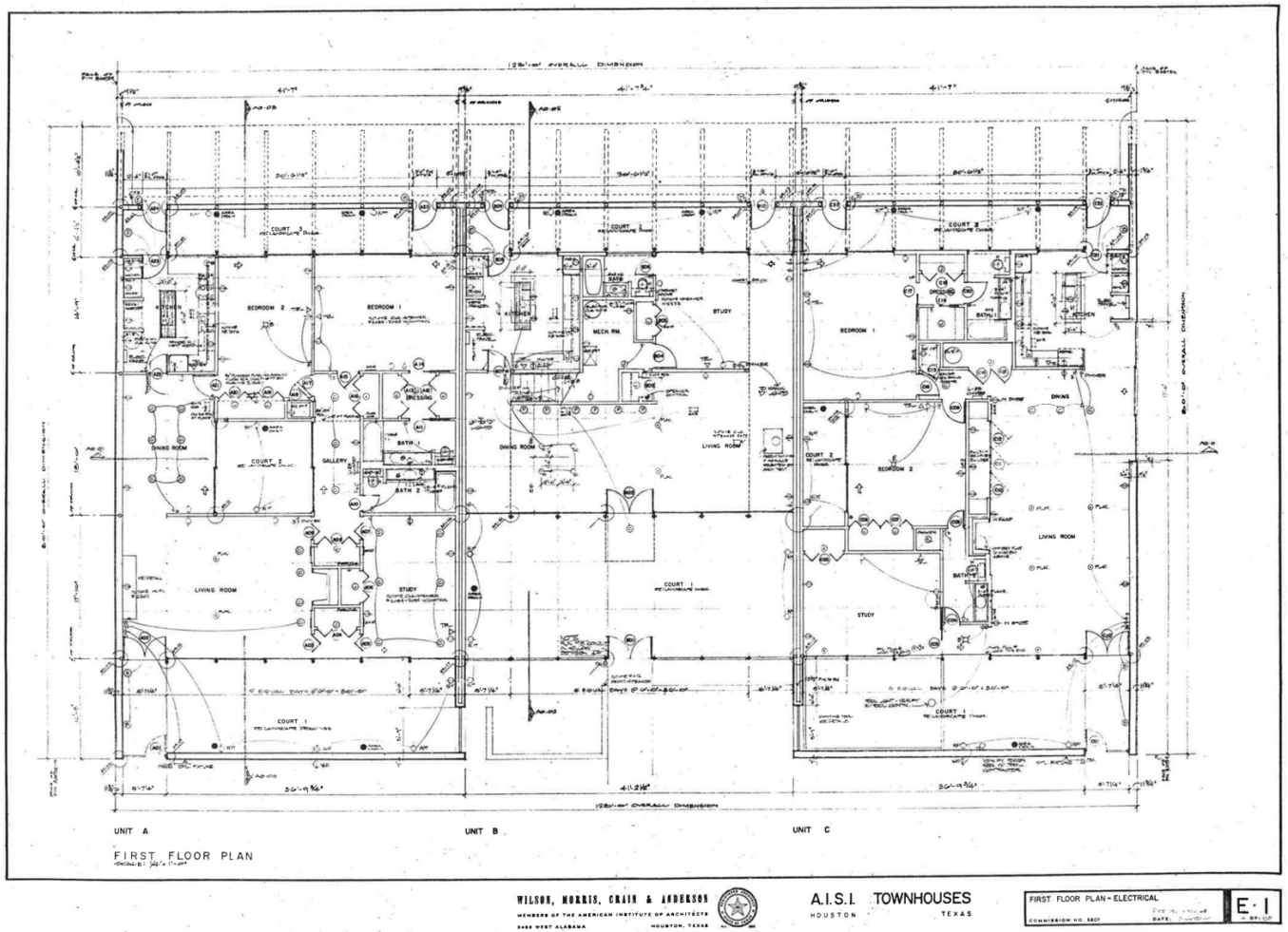


Figure 15. Style in Steel Townhouses, original architectural drawings, sheet E-2 (Wilson Morris Crain & Anderson Architects, 1968)

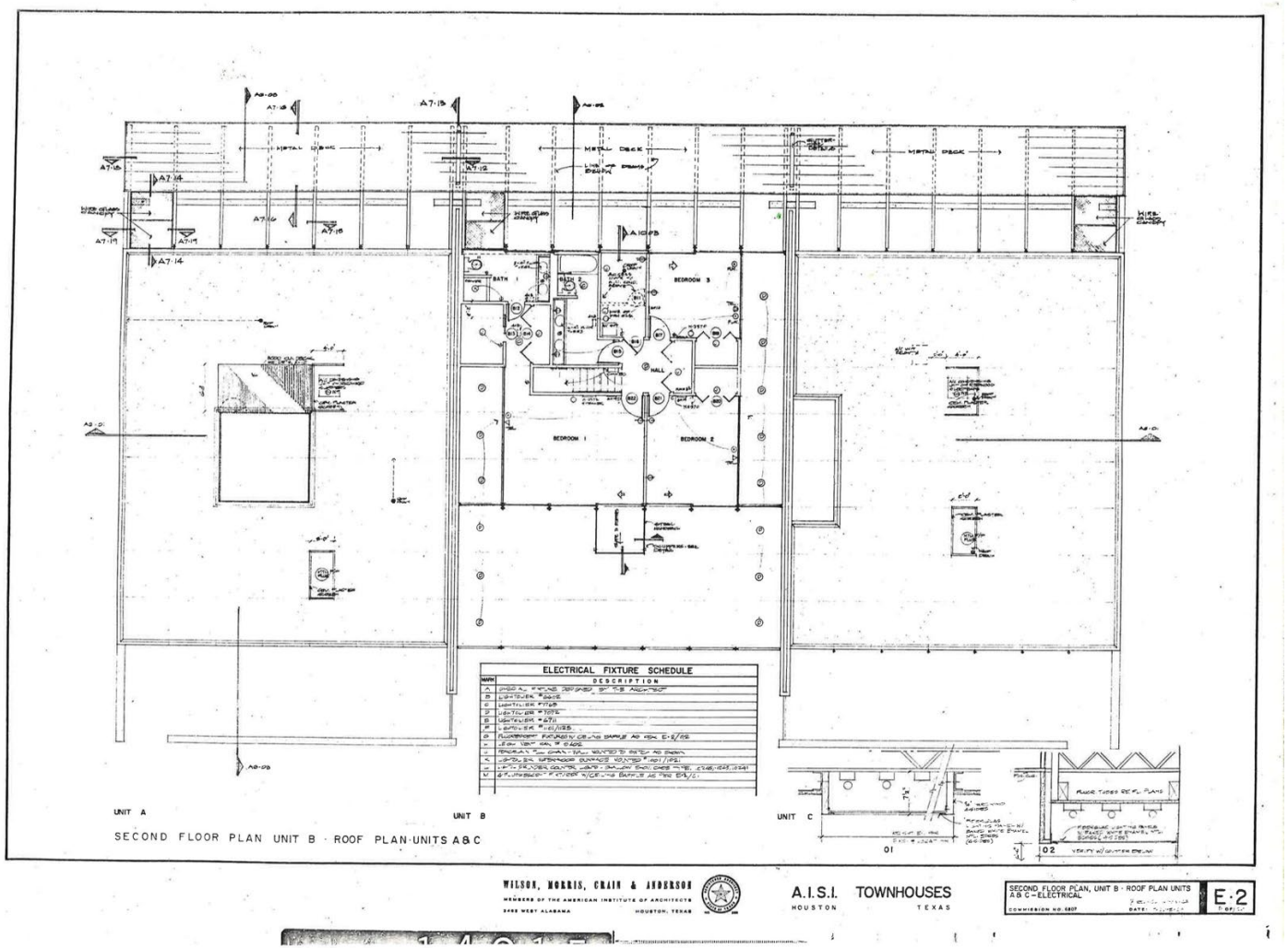


Figure 16. Style in Steel Townhouses, original architectural drawings, sheet S-1 (Wilson Morris Crain & Anderson Architects, 1968)

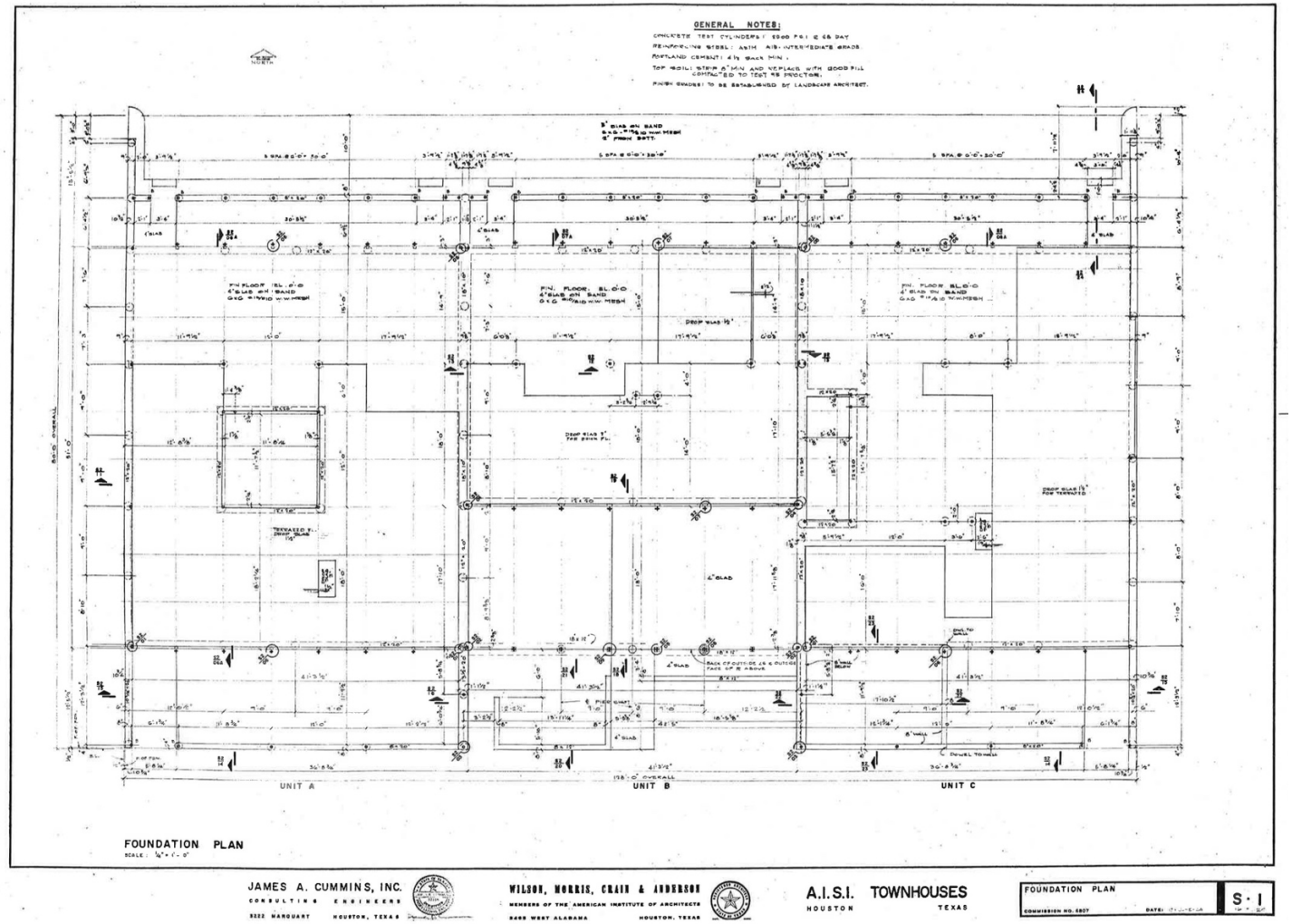


Figure 17. Style in Steel Townhouses, original architectural drawings, sheet S-2 (Wilson Morris Crain & Anderson Architects, 1968)

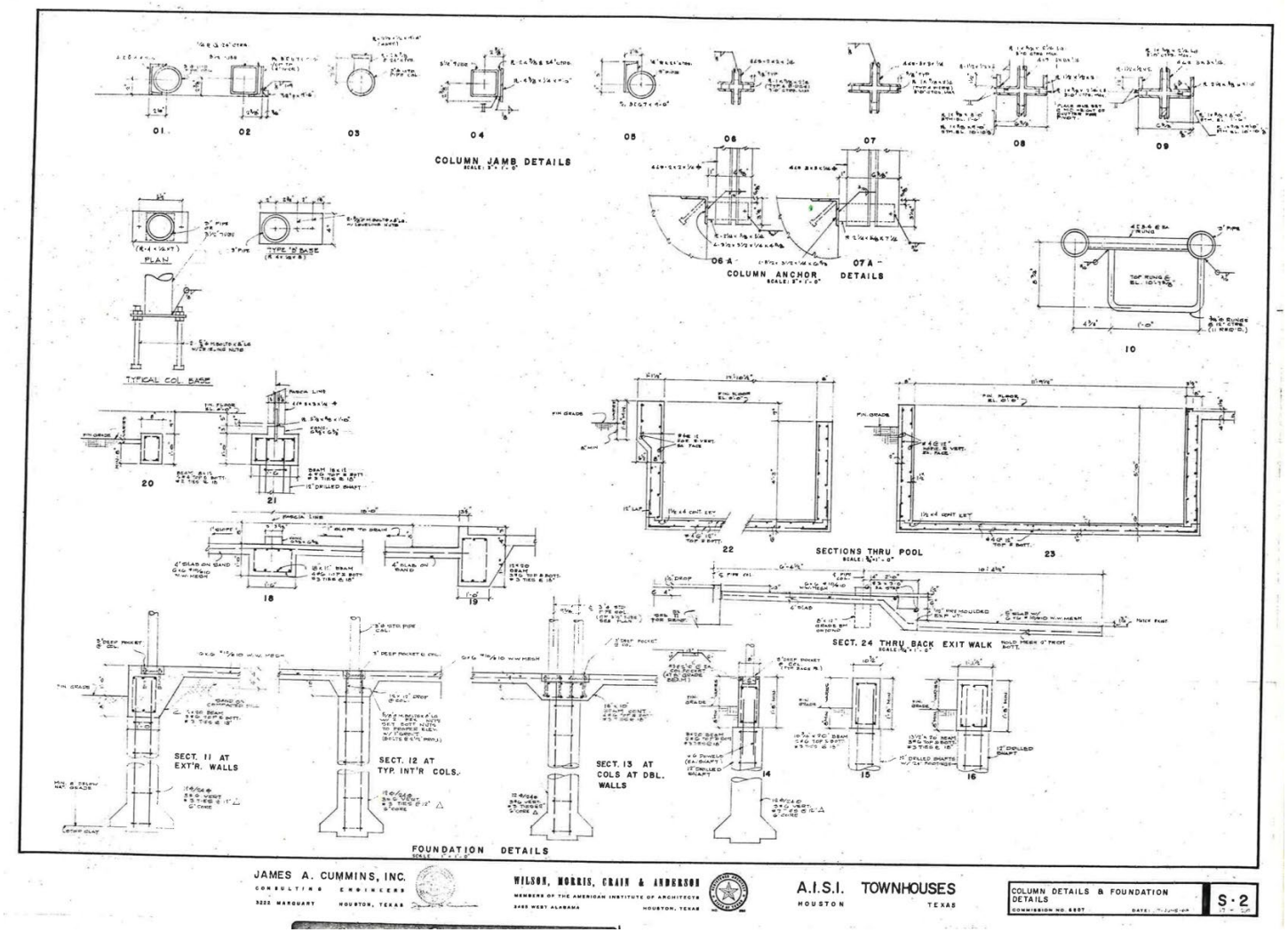


Figure 18. Style in Steel Townhouses, original architectural drawings, sheet S-3 (Wilson Morris Crain & Anderson Architects, 1968)

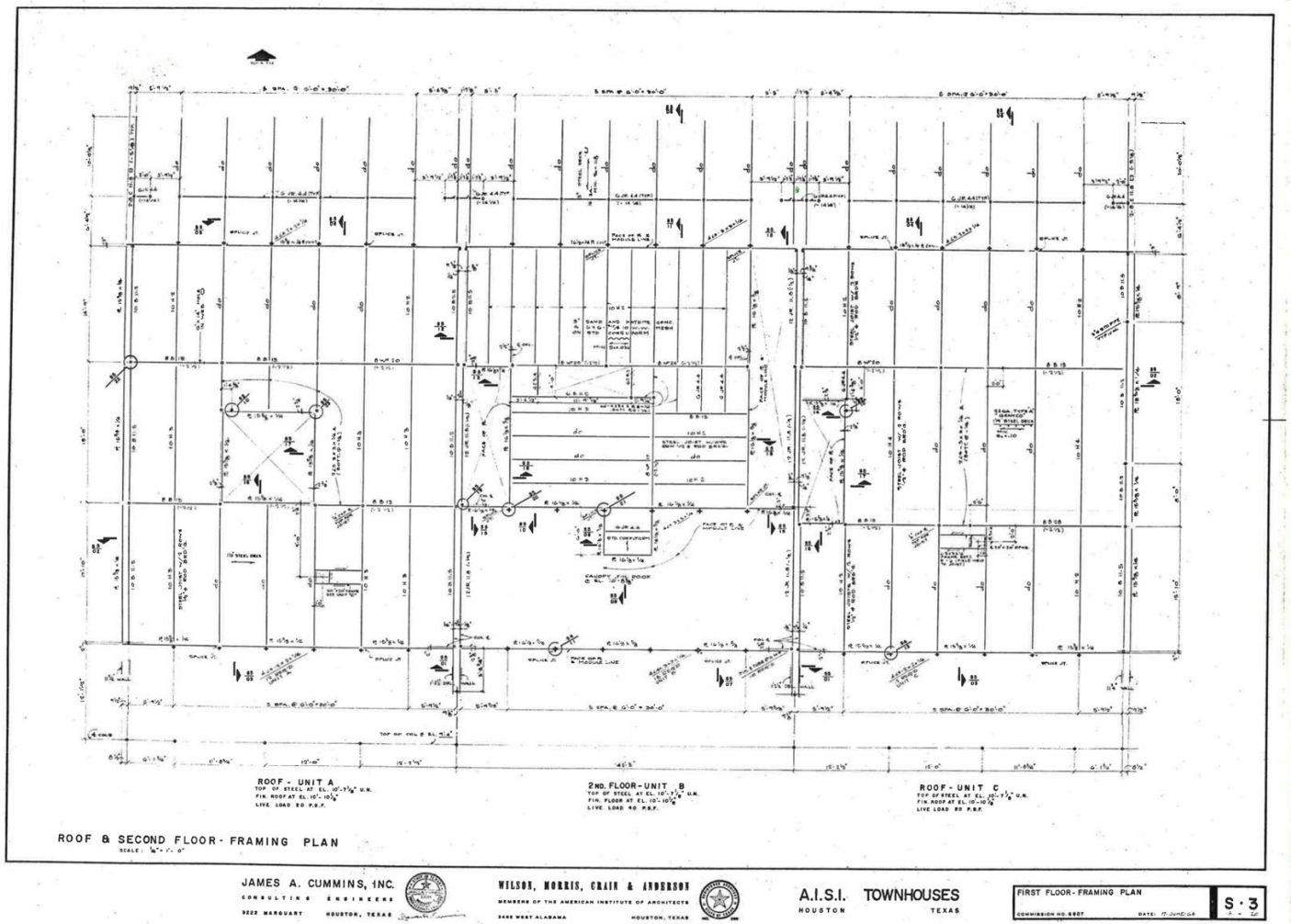


Figure 19. Style in Steel Townhouses, original architectural drawings, sheet S-4 (Wilson Morris Crain & Anderson Architects, 1968)

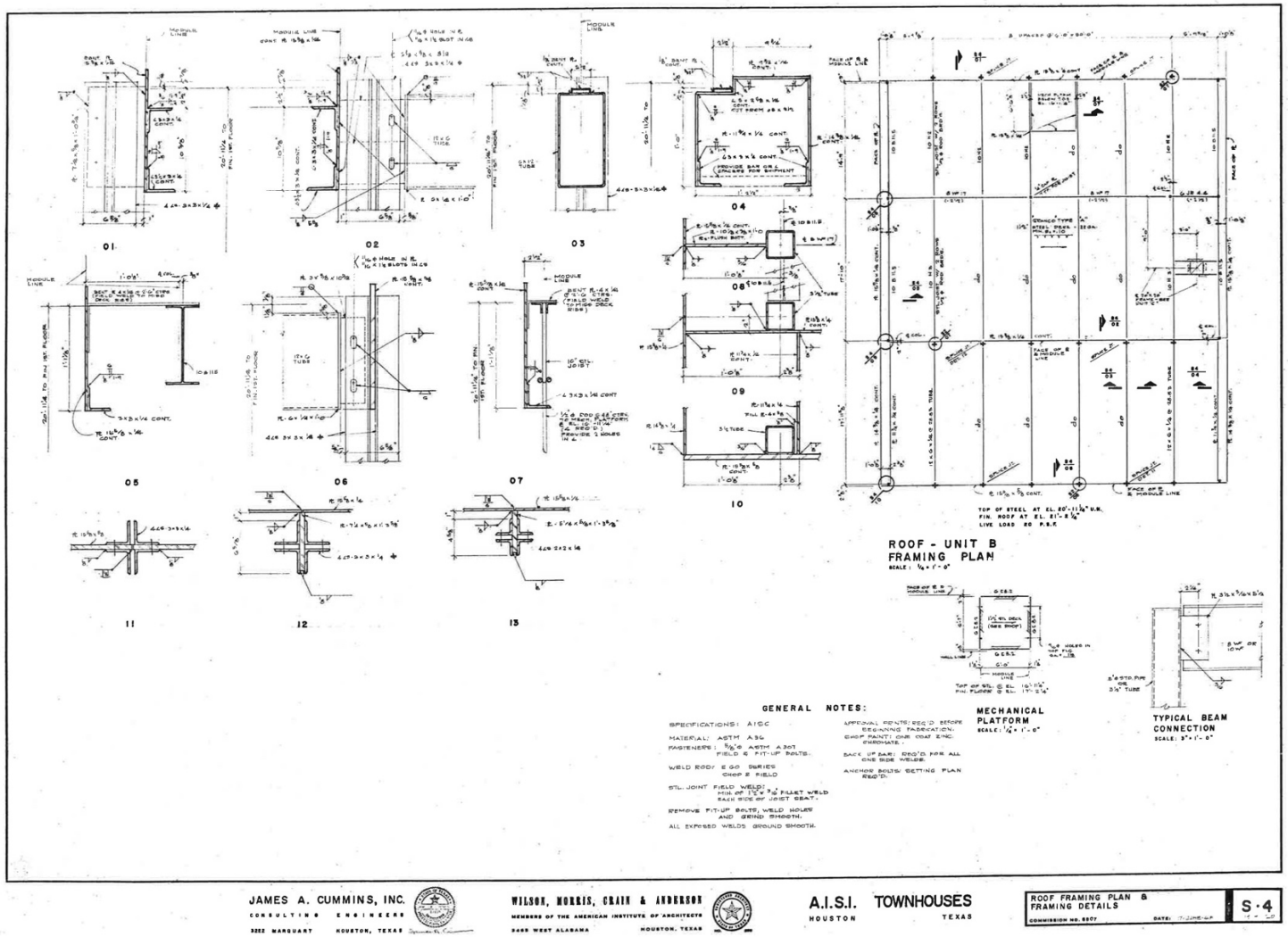


Figure 20. Style in Steel Townhouses, original architectural drawings, sheet S-5 (Wilson Morris Crain & Anderson Architects, 1968)

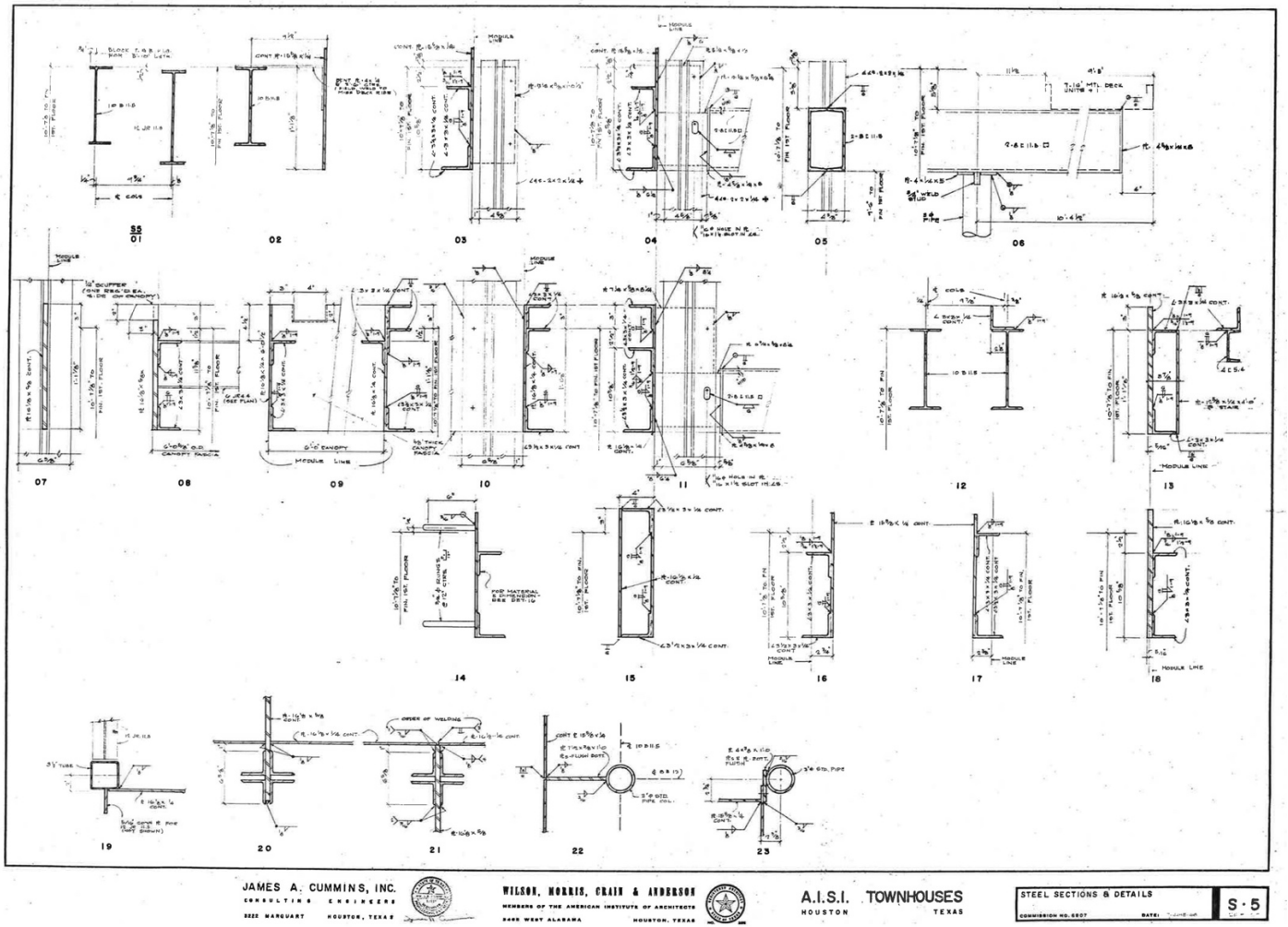


Figure 21. As-built floor plans from publicity materials, printed in *Architectural Digest*, June 1969

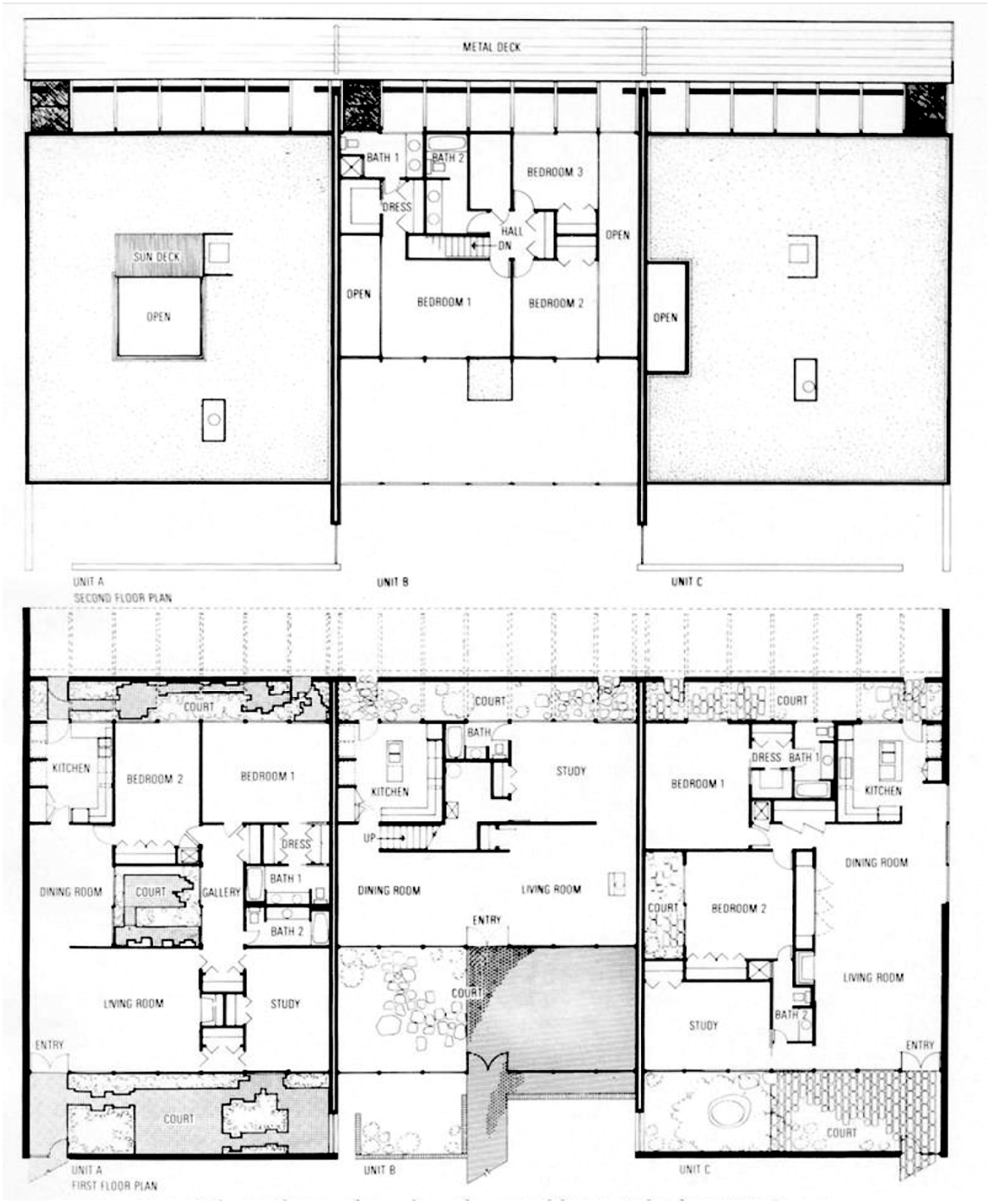


Figure 22. Groundbreaking ceremony (photo courtesy of Dian and Michael Lewter)

Figure 23. Initial steel framing, 1968 (Jay Oistad, photo courtesy of Dian and Michael Lewter)

Figure 24. Framing during construction, 1968 (photo courtesy of Dian and Michael Lewter)

Figure 25. Fireplace construction in Unit A, 1968 (photo courtesy of Dian and Michael Lewter)

Figure 26. In-progress construction photo, 1968 (photo courtesy of Dian and Michael Lewter)

Figure 27. In-progress construction photo, 1968 (photo courtesy of Dian and Michael Lewter)

Figure 28. Houston Lighting & Power Company advertisement for Medallion Electric Home as part of the Live Better Electrically campaign (undated)

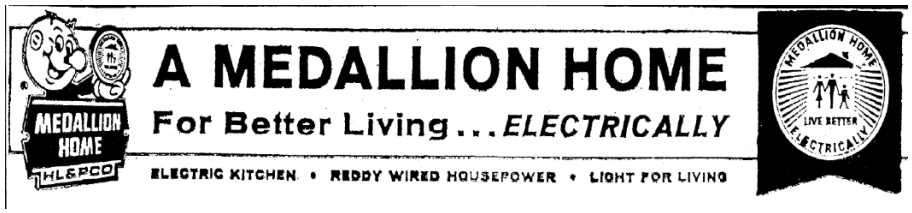


Figure 29. Advertisement for "Live Better Electrically Medallion Homes (Better Homes and Gardens, October 1958)

Figure 30. The completed Style in Steel Townhouses as they appeared in 1968 (Jay Oistad)

Figure 31. Publicity photo, Unit B/4158 Meyerwood, 1968 (Jay Oistad)

Figure 32. The forecourt of 4158 Meyerwood, as it appeared in 1968 (Jay Oistad, *Architectural Record*)

Figure 33. Interior view of Unit B/4158 Meyerwood, showing bedroom balconies overlooking first-floor living area (Jay Oistad, *Architectural Record*)

Figure 34. Living room in Unit A/4160 Meyerwood (Jay Oistad, *Architectural Record*)

Figure 35. Living room in Unit C/4156 Meyerwood (Jay Oistad, *Architectural Record*)

Figure 36. Front courtyard of Unit C/4156 Meyerwood, with view of water feature (Jay Oistad, *Architectural Digest*)

Figure 37. Advertisement for Style in Steel Townhouses prior to NAHB convention, January 1969

Welcome NAHB Exposition visitors!

Sam Johnson, Builder - Dwight M. Nichols, Jr., Developer - James A. Cummins, Consulting Engineers - Wilson, Morris Crain & Anderson, Architects - Fred Buxton & Associates, Landscapers - Evans-Monical, Inc., Interior Decorators - Sponsors: American Iron & Steel Institute, Houston Lighting & Power Company, and General Electric.

Want to see something really different while in Houston? See the...

"Style in Steel Townhouses"

"DOOMSDAY CONSTRUCTION WITH TOTAL ELECTRIC CONVENIENCE"

You've heard and read about the radically new concept of using steel in residential construction.

Here, for the first time, are three all-steel, all-electric townhouses which were built to demonstrate the practicality and the enormous advantages of steel in residential construction.

Each of the homes is separate and distinct from the other, representing three different price ranges. Featured are some of the most advanced and streamlined electrical appliances and equipment--such as the built-in vacuum system, piped-in music, Electri-Climate Control, and an oven that cooks with microwaves!

All the benefits of steel construction and electronic technology are combined in these unique homes--reflecting a dramatic departure from conventional residential construction.

This is YOUR opportunity to SEE the new home construction methods you've been reading about.

STYLE IN STEEL TOWNHOUSES
TOWNHOUSE MANOR
The South Loop at Stella Link
Just 5 minutes from Astrohall. Register for free transportation & Sweepstakes.

21

FUN Magazine - Jan.

Figure 38. Advertisement for Style in Steel Townhouses, Houston Lighting & Power, 1969

"Style In Steel" Townhouses To Be Showcase For Electric Living

Builder Sam Johnson's three "Style In Steel Townhouses", presently under construction in Townhouse Manor, incorporate an entirely new concept in residential construction. Scheduled for completion in January, the townhouse project will be a feature attraction for the National Association of Home Builders convention.

In keeping with the latest and most modern design and construction techniques, the "Style In Steel Townhouses" are total electric, featuring many of today's newest electric home appliances as well as complete year around Electri-Climate Conditioning.

Principal sponsors of the unique townhouse showing are the American Iron & Steel Institute, General Electric Company and Houston Lighting & Power Company.

Following the convention, the model townhouses will remain on display for approximately three weeks to afford local residents an opportunity to view them.

Steel is not only being used as the basic structural material, but is also being used in a number of decorative and functional ways throughout each unit's interior.

The construction site of Sam Johnson's three total electric "Style In Steel" townhouses in Townhouse Manor resembled that of a downtown skyscraper recently as the erection of structural steel framing neared completion.

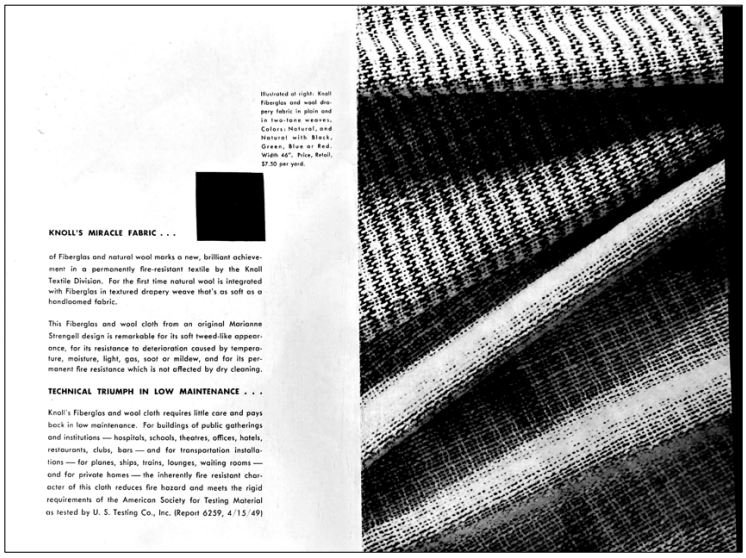
"Topping-Out-Ceremony" for the Style In Steel Townhouses. Shown are (left) Hal Weatherford and Talbott Wilson of Wilson, Morris, Crain & Anderson, architects for the project; Sam Johnson, builder; and Robert Portik (below right) of Armco Steel representing the American Iron & Steel Institute.

HOUSTON LIGHTING & POWER CO.
P. O. Box 1700
Houston 1, Texas

Return Postage Guaranteed

BULK RATE
U. S. Postage
PAID
Houston 1, Texas
Permit No. 880

Figure 39. Advertisement for Knoll curtain fabric used in the original Style in Steel Townhouses furnishings and still extant in Unit C/4156 Meyerwood



Illustrated at right: Knoll Fiberglas and wool drapery fabric in plain and in two-tone weaves. Colors: Natural, and Natural with Black, Green, Blue or Red. Width 46". Price, Retail, $7.50 per yard.

KNOLL'S MIRACLE FABRIC . . .

of Fiberglas and natural wool marks a new, brilliant achievement in a permanently fire-resistant textile by the Knoll Textile Division. For the first time natural wool is integrated with Fiberglas in textured drapery weave that's as soft as a handloomed fabric.

This Fiberglas and wool cloth from an original Marianne Strengell design is remarkable for its soft tweed-like appearance, for its resistance to deterioration caused by temperature, moisture, light, gas, soot or mildew, and for its permanent fire resistance which is not affected by dry cleaning.

TECHNICAL TRIUMPH IN LOW MAINTENANCE . . .

Knoll's Fiberglas and wool cloth requires little care and pays back in low maintenance. For buildings of public gatherings and institutions — hospitals, schools, theatres, offices, hotels, restaurants, clubs, bars — and for transportation installations — for planes, ships, trains, lounges, waiting rooms — and for private homes — the inherently fire resistant character of this cloth reduces fire hazard and meets the rigid requirements of the American Society for Testing Material as tested by U. S. Testing Co., Inc. (Report 6259, 4/15/49)

Figure 40. Promotional photo showing the kitchen cabinets and appliances in Unit A/4160 Meyerwood

Figure 41. Eames Case Study House #8, showing the bedroom overlooking the living area below (Eames Foundation)

Figure 42. Julius Shulman House by Rafael Soriano, interior courtyard (Julius Shulman)

Figure 43. The Style in Steel Townhouses as they appeared in 2009 ([Paul] Hester & [Lisa] Hardaway Photographers)

Figure 44. Rear elevation of 4158 Meyerwood as it appeared in 2020, showing enclosed garage, sloped garage roof, and third floor with viewing platform (Philip Leblanc)

Figure 45. First-floor floor plan as of 2020, Unit B/4158 Meyerwood (Rodolfo R. Fabre Design)

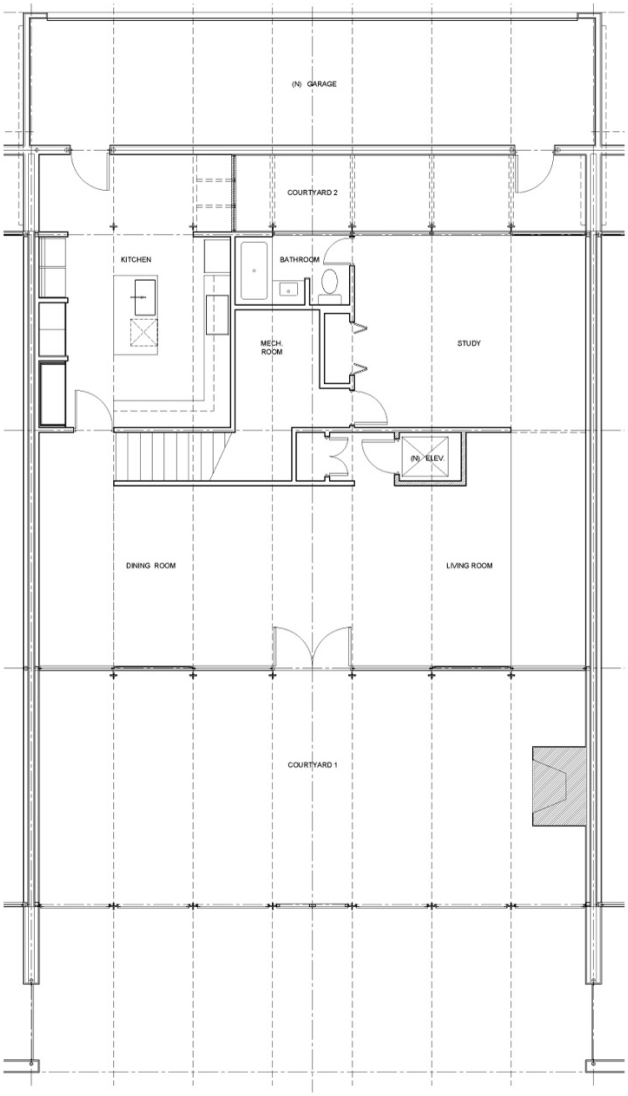


Figure 46. Second-floor floor plan as of 2020, Unit B/4158 Meyerwood (Rodolfo R. Fabre Design)

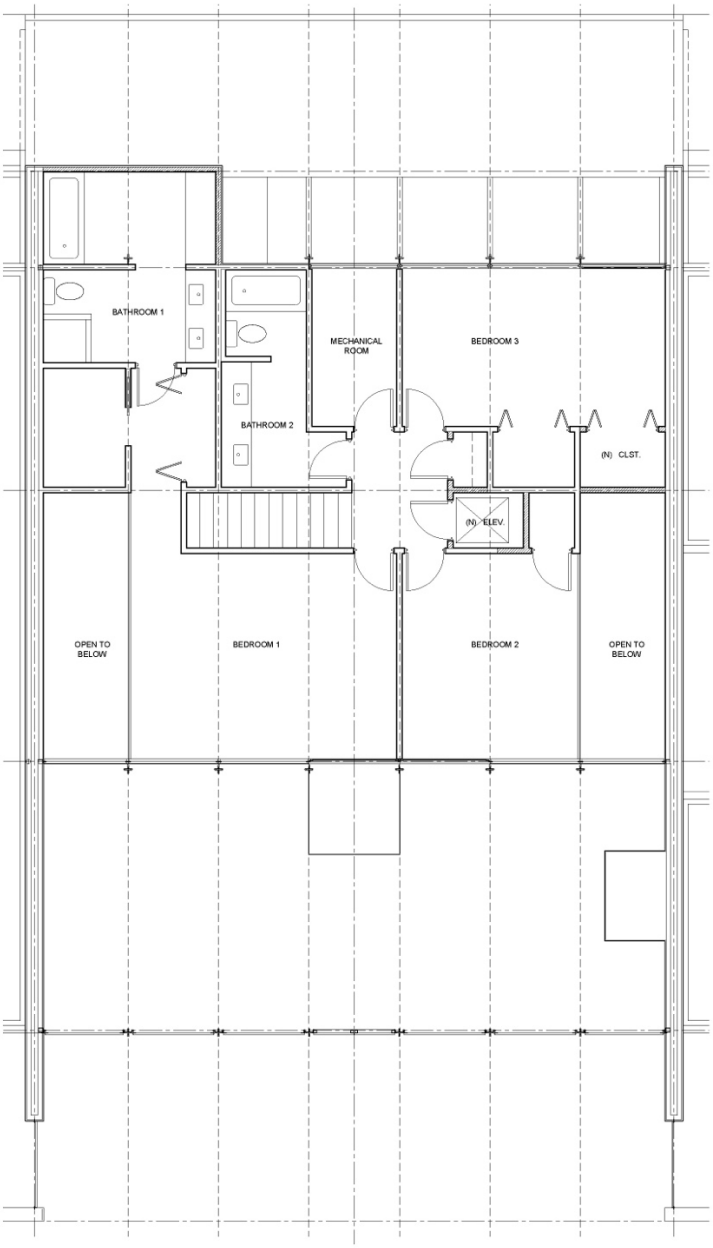


Figure 47. Third-floor floor plan as of 2020, Unit B/4158 Meyerwood (Rodolfo R. Fabre Design)

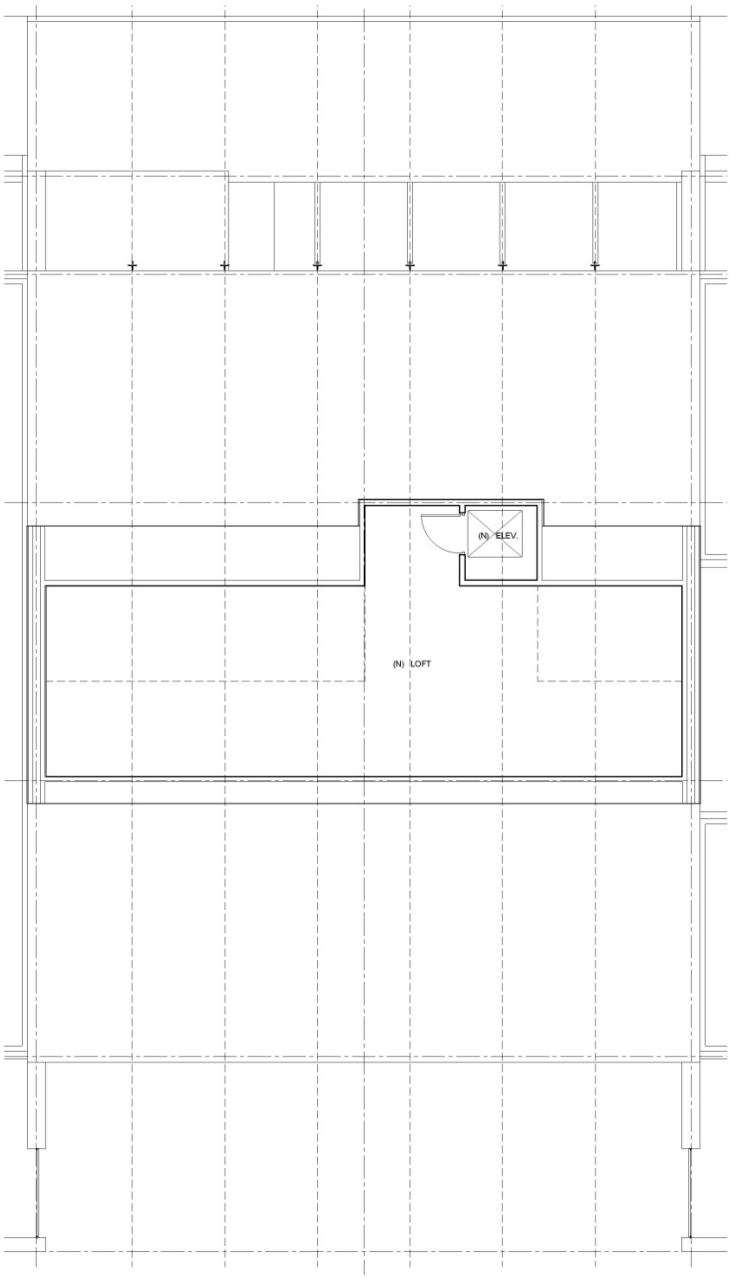


Figure 48. Floor plan as of 2025, Unit A/4160 Meyerwood

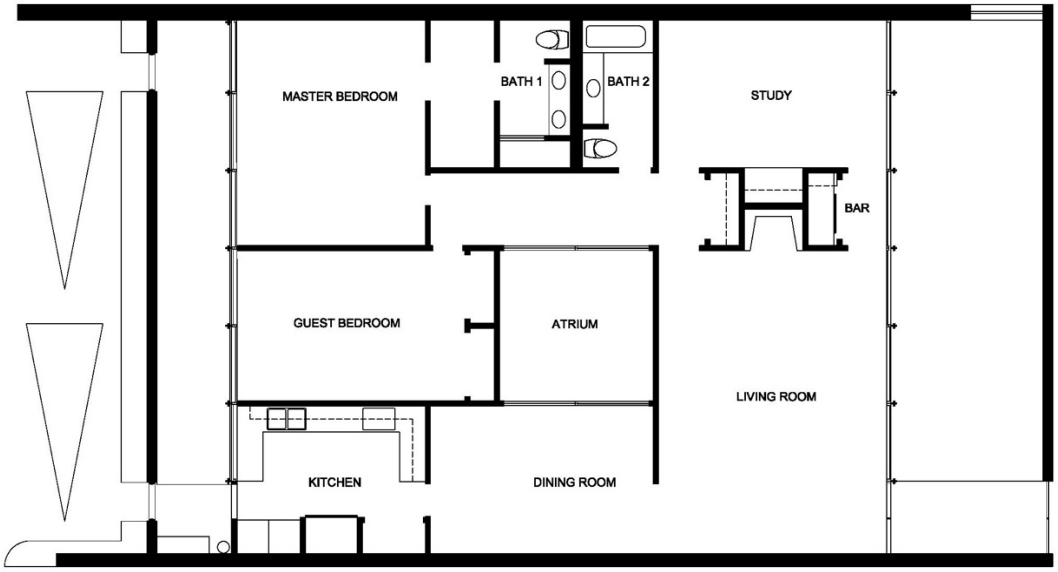
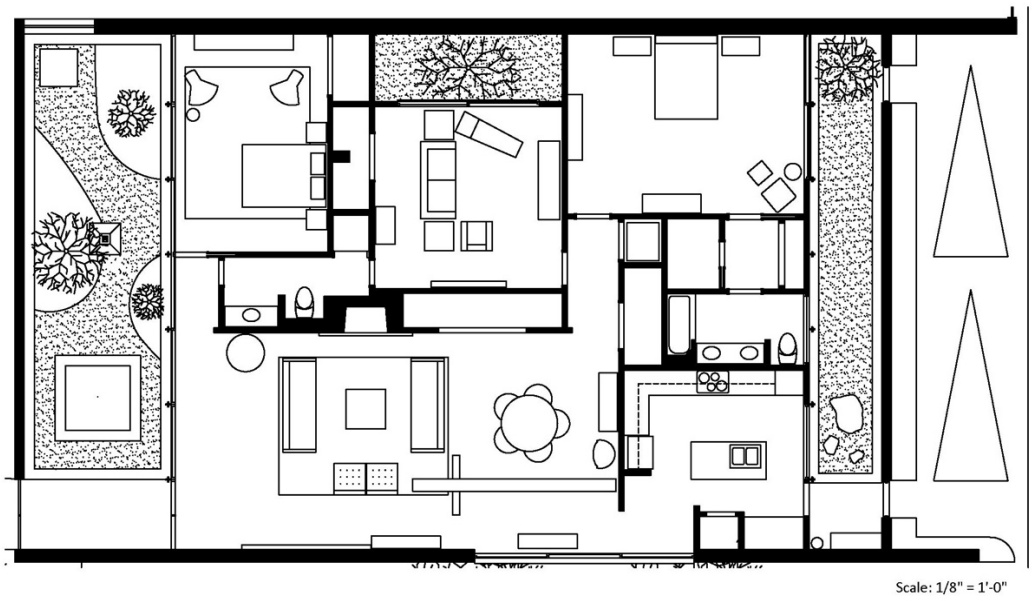


Figure 49. Floor plan as of 2025, Unit C/4156 Meyerwood



Photographs

Property Name: American Iron and Steel Institute Style in Steel Townhouses
City, County, Texas: Houston, Harris County, Texas
Photographed by Steph McDougal, August-September 2025
All photos reflect the appearance of the building at the time of the nomination's submission to NPS.

Photo 1. All three townhouses, front (south) elevations, camera facing northwest

Photo 2. Unit A/4160 Meyerwood, front (south) elevation, camera facing north.

Photo 3. Unit B/4158 Meyerwood, front (south) elevation, camera facing north.

Photo 4. Unit C/4156 Meyerwood, front (south) elevation, camera facing north.

Photo 5. Unit C, east elevation, camera facing northwest.

Photo 6. All three townhouses, oblique view of carports and alley, camera facing west.

Photo 7. Unit C, carport, camera facing south.

Photo 8. Unit B, carport, camera facing south.

Photo 9. Unit A, carport, camera facing south.

Photo 10. Unit A, front courtyard gates, camera facing north.

Photo 11. Unit A, screen panel in eastern courtyard wall, camera facing northwest.

Photo 12. Unit A, front courtyard, camera facing east.

Photo 13. Unit A, living room, camera facing east.

Photo 14. Unit A, study, camera facing south.

Photo 15. Unit A, dining room, camera facing south.

Photo 16. Unit A, interior courtyard (view from gallery/hallway), camera facing west.

Photo 17. Unit A, hall bathroom with original porcelain enameled steel wall surrounds, camera facing east.

Photo 18. Unit A, bedroom 1, camera facing north.

Photo 19. Unit A, bedroom 2, camera facing north.

Photo 20. Unit A, kitchen with original cabinets, camera facing southeast.

Photo 21. Unit A, rear courtyard, camera facing east.

Photo 22. Unit B, front courtyard, camera facing east.

Photo 23. Unit B, front courtyard gate and louvered screens, camera facing south.

Photo 24. Unit B, front courtyard, structural steel and window wall, camera facing northeast.

Photo 25. Unit B, first floor living/dining room, camera facing east.

Photo 26. Unit B, updated kitchen, camera facing south.

Photo 27. Unit B, kitchen, expansion into original rear courtyard, camera facing northeast.

Photo 28. Unit B, rear courtyard (view from kitchen), camera facing east.

Photo 29. Unit B, first floor, view from east end of living/dining room to study, camera facing north.

Photo 30. Unit B, first floor study, camera facing north.

Photo 31. Unit B, second floor bedroom 1, view to forecourt and balcony over front door, camera facing south.

Photo 32. Unit B, second floor bedroom 1, with balcony handrail over dining room, camera facing west.

Photo 33. Unit B, second floor bedroom 2, view of balcony handrail over living room, camera facing east.

Photo 34. Unit B, second floor bedroom 3, view of window wall and operable louvered screens, camera facing northeast.

Photo 35. Unit B, staircase with square steel handrail, camera facing west.

Photo 36. Unit C, front courtyard, camera facing west.

Photo 37. Unit C, living room with fireplace, camera facing south.

Photo 38. Unit C, dining room with light sculpture by Michael John Smith, camera facing east.

Photo 39. Unit C, original Knoll draperies in living/dining room, camera facing east.

Photo 40. Unit C, kitchen, camera facing northwest.

Photo 41. Unit C, original kitchen cabinets and appliances, camera facing west.

Photo 42. Unit C, original kitchen cabinets and appliances, camera facing west.

Photo 43. Unit C, refrigerator (original model but later year), camera facing south.

Photo 44. Unit C, bedroom 1, camera facing northwest.

Photo 45. Unit C, bedroom 2 with view of interior courtyard, camera facing west.

Photo 46. Unit C, study, camera facing southeast.

– end –