

# UC Berkeley

## Places

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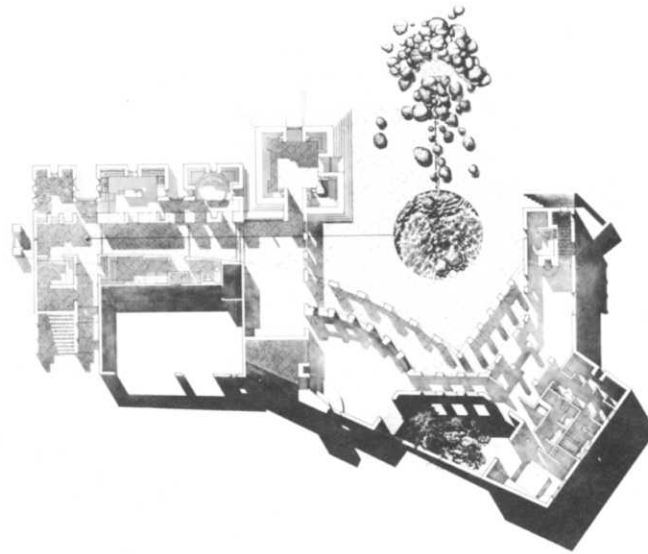
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# Fuller House

## Jury Comments

The Fuller House extends bare, harsh, but gently colored land forms into a compounded structure for inhabitation. It is a mixture of the strategies of merger and contrast, with the former predominant. The house stands amidst cacti and other sparse vegetation in the severe but austere beautiful landscape of the Arizona Sonoran desert. Major elements of the house merge with the surrounding desert, which has been disturbed as little as possible. Its colors, horizontality and varied spaces are keyed to the mesas, the sun and the desert floor. Yet by contrast the house itself also surrounds an outdoor space whose water and shade create an oasis reminiscent of Spanish patios. A place of refuge and outlook is carefully nestled in the desert through a masterful combination of contrast and merger.



## Architect's Statement

### Fuller

The high Sonoran desert site of the Fuller house is enclosed by peaks and eroded, decomposed granite ridges. Below this encircling rim, saguaro, cholla, ocotillo, and prickly pear cacti grow amidst palo verde and ironwood trees and jojoba and creosote bushes. This sparse vegetation, at once hardy and fragile, speaks of the adaptations necessary for life beneath an unremitting sun.

In this desert environment, architecture and landscape, human procession and natural cycles, join in synchronous dances. The low, weighty perimeter of the house connects in its massiveness to the powerful geologic context and in color to the olive-beige of the desert floor. Viewed from a distance, this base becomes

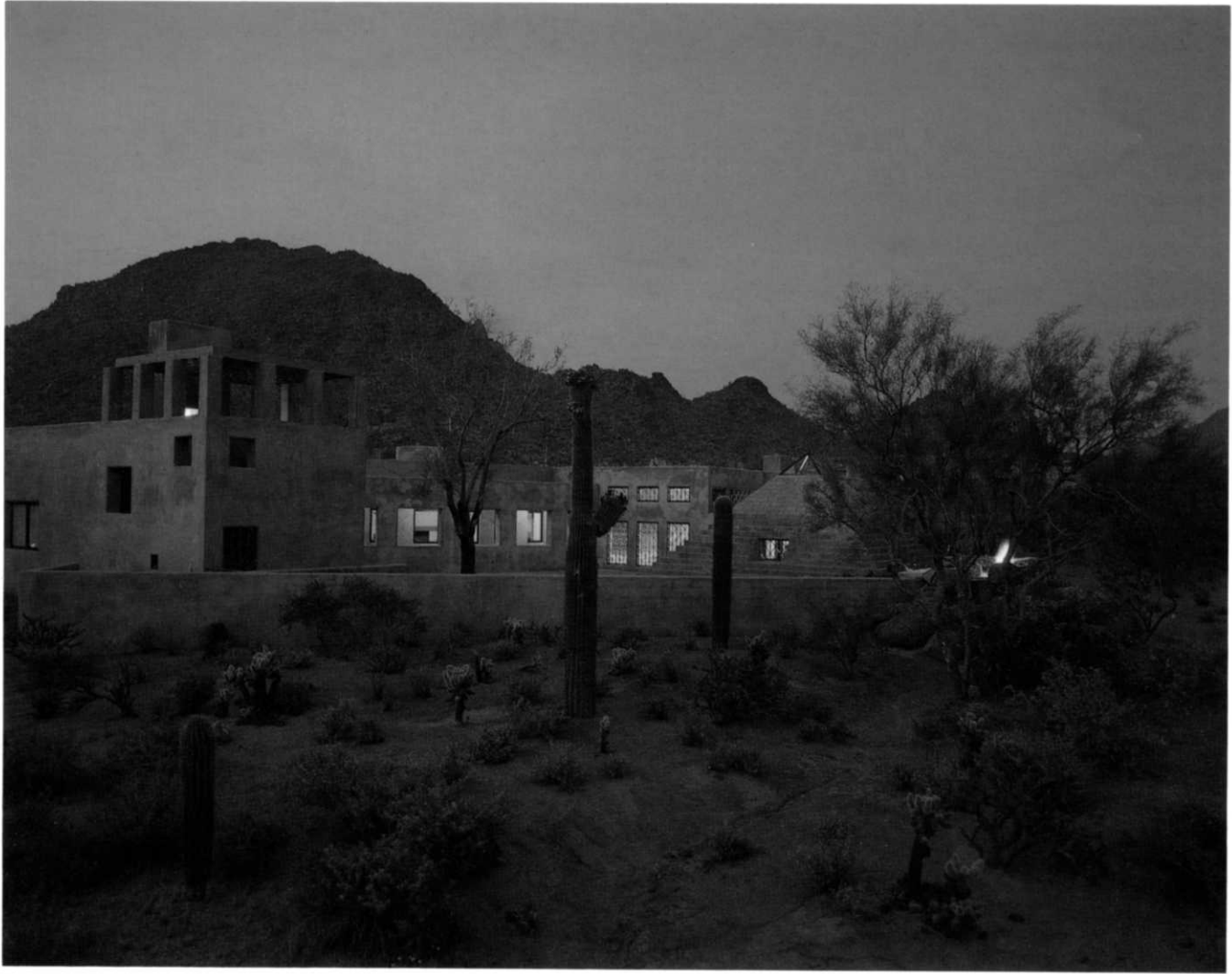
a mesa, and the pyramidal den, a mauve-purple abstraction of the surrounding sculptural peaks. Contrasting, brittle shade structures create shadow patterns of recalling the tracery cast on the site by the lacy branches of the ocotillo and palo verde.

The plan of the house distills into a single symbolic pattern the daily course of the sun and the routine of domestic activities. A sunrise-viewing pavilion is situated above the breakfast room; an interior "canyon" (gallery with centered, sequential water system) leads past abstracted kitchen and dining "boulders"; the "mountain" (pyramidal den) introduces the "valley"; a trellised, sunset-viewing tower completes the sequence.

At each event in this sequence

the building features view vantage points. The stepped exterior of the pyramidal den provides seating for viewing the night lights of Phoenix. The living areas focus on the distant mountains beyond the city. The bedroom zone, set apart from the rest of the house, concentrates attention on its private patio and sunset tower.

The gentle standoff between built forms and a desert environment is expressed in the project as a poetic tension. In the ensuing struggle, the line of demarcation between the house and the terrain becomes ambiguous. At certain places the desert enters, in other areas a tight line of defense prohibits entry. Looking out from this sequestered desert retreat the vast landscape scale can be better comprehended.



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**A Fuller House, plan**  
Drawing by Geoffrey Beebe

**B Fuller House**  
Photograph by Tim Hursely