While it is now required that we build at an increased distance from the ground, this duplex proposal attempts to maintain the familiar connection between the home and neighborhood. One unit of the strategy is reduced in area and maintained at a closer proximity to the ground, while the second unit is developed with increased area and is raised at an elevated position in anticipation of the threat of flood. While a reduced portion of the dwelling is put at risk attempting to maintain a link to the social network of the street, a larger portion of the dwelling is elevated to provide an added sense of security and permanence. If the city is again devastated by flood, the lower reduced portion of the structure may need repair, but the upper components of the home are preserved.

The efficiency unit may be utilized as a rentable apartment to aid in the financing of the entire duplex, or as a unit for an ailing family member. It may also be used as a future extension of the primary three bedroom unit. In fact, a young family could simply buy apartments and rent out the lower portion of this structure, or the family home. It could provide the flexibility for families growing and converting the duplex into a single family residence. The added cost of energy efficiency is an incentive to continue this trend and to accommodate families in changing family dynamics.

The underside of the scheme’s larger raised component acts primarily as the upper unit’s side entry portal as well as a location for vehicles, however, it may also be used as a site for the semipublic activities of the home such as play area for kids, and shelter for community engagements. In support of the shared urban activities of community, priority is given to the visible site of side yard activities rather than the concealed site of rear yard activities.

In addition, upper level components of the proposal are equally developed with considerations for the exterior. The street face of the primary unit houses a second level porch so that occupants of that home also have a public presence. The rear garden is viewed from a second level Master Bedroom suite and the third level is provided with circularity in use as a connection with the laundry room and upper bedrooms. The lower level of the efficiency unit houses the solar energy system and a highly accessible and racetrack view of a second level addition.

Living with dependence upon an unreliable ground is an oxymoron in New Orleans, but it is a familiar condition. Many of the city’s vernacular types have evolved in response to the limitations of climate and a very specific neighborhood culture. It is crucial that these relationships are maintained in response to the limitations of climate and a very specific neighborhood culture. It is crucial that these relationships are maintained in response to the limitations of climate and a very specific neighborhood culture.