

THE PRODUCTION OF HOUSES

The Mexicali Experimental Project began in March 1976 with the participation of five families selected through an open call. The state agency Bienes Raíces del Estado de Baja California provided the land, and the Institute of Security and Social Services for Government and Municipal Workers of the State of Baja California (Issstecali) granted each family a 40,000-peso loan for construction. Alexander and his collaborators took on the role of architect-builders, carrying out tasks usually assigned to specialists such as designers, engineers, administrators, or masons. The houses of the five families were arranged around a central courtyard or common area. A system of lightweight concrete vaulted roofs cast over a wooden latticework and walls made of soil-cement blocks, manufactured on site with a Rosacometta press explicitly imported from Italy, were used. Due to various setbacks, the original project for 30 houses was not completed, and local authorities ended the process, deeming the houses too rudimentary and the construction process too slow compared to mass-produced housing.