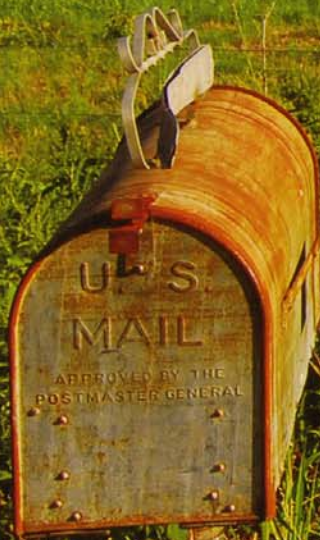


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O F H O U S T O N



## FRAMEWORK HOUSE: A PREFABRICATED SYSTEM

*Plus, seeking frugal beauty, porches of early Texas, and vanishing rail yards*

70>





**Architect:** Nonya Grenader Architects **Design Team:** Nonya Grenader, FAIA, and Christopher Mechaley **Structural Engineer:** Structural Consulting Co., Inc. **Contractor:** Builder's West, Inc.

## LOVE-WEBB HOUSE (2004)

### Love-Webb House (2004)

*Nonya Grenader Architects*

The Love-Webb House reflects the personality of both client Jim Love, a Houston artist who died a year after moving into his house, and its architect, Nonya Grenader. On close scrutiny, one can see how Love's suggestions were synthesized and enhanced by the steady hand of an architect who knew how to put aside ego in the service of architecture. From the mechanical "cushions" that mediate between the foundation's reinforced concrete piers to the steel pipe threaded into the roof overhang on the west façade, Love's interest in the process and aesthetics of assemblage and mechanics confers on the exquisite house the qualities of a modern and ancient machine.

The abstract, taut white walls and pine floors of the interior are a striking contrast to the undulating façades of corrugated steel, which are typical of the neighborhood, and ward off any temptation to consider the house as just picturesquely "rustic." The design responds to the spirit and nature of the site and the neighborhood.

The two-story house was built close to the road because of the presence of Love's studio (now demolished) on the east side. The existence of the studio explains the decision to have a virtually windowless east façade.

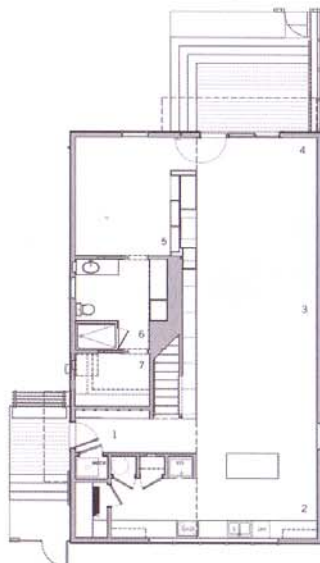
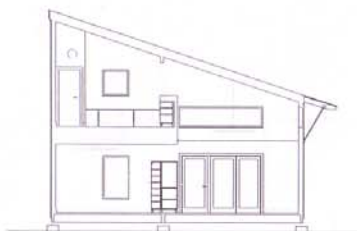
Love's desire to clad the simple volume with corrugated galvanized steel (Galvalum) responds to an aesthetic of modesty represented in Houston by such irreverent public buildings as Eugene Aubry's Rice Museum and Media Center and Gunnar Birkerts & Associates' Contemporary Arts Museum.

Grenader's Love-Webb house is just around the corner from Aubry's double houses—the original Tin Houses—designed for Fredericka Hunter and Simone W. Swan in 1974. In recent years, architect Cameron Armstrong has also worked to enrich the West End neighborhood with sophisticated additions clad in galvalum.

Grenader enhances the "primitive" and modest spirit of the cladding by treating it more like load-bearing armor than a mere skin. The Love-Webb house is an act of resistance against the encroaching townhouses that gesture to the humble spirit of corrugated steel, but share none of the subversive qualities its use represents.



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FLOOR PLAN

1. ENTRY
2. KITCHEN
3. DINING
4. LIVING ROOM
5. BEDROOM
6. BATHROOM
7. CLOSET

Plan and section courtesy Nonya Grenader Architects

