

COXE-HAYDEN HOUSE AND STUDIO, BLOCK ISLAND, RHODE ISLAND

Architects: Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates, Inc.

Location: Block Island, RI

Completion: 1981

The Coxe-Hayden house and studio were to be sited in an open meadow running down to a salt water pond on Block Island. The design program for these big-little buildings with their small interior spaces focused on details related to comfort, image and function. The houses required privacy for the owners, who would use them as a workplace and retreat as well as a gathering place for friends and a large blended family of grown children and grandchildren. While initially a vacation place, the cottages have become their owners' permanent home.

The house and studio refer stylistically to the countrified Classical Revival bungalow typical of many nineteenth-century buildings on Block Island. The Classical Revival bungalow includes a "Temple Front" with symmetrical entrance and a simple profile with over-scaled overhangs, windows, batter-boards and trim. The two new buildings combine the ordinary historical images and associations with big-scale elements to create an extraordinary monumental presence belying their small size. One critic commenting on the AIA Honor Award described the house and studio as an "homage to the beach cottages of memory. Indeed, they are not a copy of any old buildings, but a distillation of their elements with contemporary modifications. The buildings seem not so much imitations, but memories themselves."

The larger building has living, dining and kitchen areas on the ground floor and a studio above in the gable. The smaller building has a garage workshop below, with two guest rooms above.

*Awards: National Honor Award, AIA, 1983; "Record Houses", Award for Excellence in Planning and Design, *Architectural Record*, 1982*

