

HOUSE IN KATONAH, NEW YORK

Architects: Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates, Inc.

Location: Katonah, NY

Client: Carl Tucker III

Completion: 1975

At the time this house was commissioned, the client wanted quarters only for himself. From this simple program evolved a tribute both to the plain American shingled house and to the tradition of Mannerist gesture. It is a house designed to look ordinary at first glance, but to be extraordinary at second glance and while living in it.

This is a small house, but big in scale: its few parts are big and its form is simple and symmetrical. Bold in form but recessive in its color and shingle-texture, one has the sense of this building as an object, tall and wooden, sitting among the trees on its lush, semi-rural site.

The facade appears to be dominated by a gable although it is, in fact, a pitched roof rising steeply to a central pint. There is a wide overhang on all four sides and windows in the shingled walls are placed only to reflect interior demands.

The entry level is devoted to practical spaces -- a hall which doubles as a dining area, a kitchen, a bedroom, and a bath arranged to serve both the bedroom and the public spaces. A stair, wider at the bottom, rises against one wall of the house, turning at the top to open into the extraordinary major living space above. It is at once grand and intimate, formal and relaxed. Three walls have large windows and the fourth, the stair wall, is dominated by a large hearth. The fireplace structure echoes the shape of the house.

Finally, a narrow stair rises to a balcony above with book-lined walls and a lovely window seat-reading nook.







