



HOUSE IN STONY CREEK, CONNECTICUT

Architects: Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates, Inc.

Location: Stony Creek, CT

Completion: 1984

Stony Creek is a small community on Long Island Sound east of New Haven with a fine collection of shore homes (dating from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1930s). The site is a granite loading dock originally used by the area's thriving granite industry until the late 1920s. It then became, until it burned in the late 60s, an oyster dock with a processing plant. Its picturesque tradition of weathered shingle sheds sitting on a massive granite pier is one which the owner and architect respected and worked with.

The client, a couple in their 60s, had spent summers on one of the nearby Thimble Islands for thirty years. The program and zoning dictated a one-story house, elevated for hurricane and flood condition. The area's strong winter winds mandated an internal garage. The owners also required a living room designed around a sophisticated sound system for their collection operas and collections of Piranesi drawings and theatrical drawings.



An almost square, simple bungalow plan with gable roof was chosen for its compact efficiency and sympathetic scale and profile with its neighbors. The large "rose-window" ship wheel on the north facade presents a public-scale entrance. The entry vestibule works around the central fireplace to open into the 35' living room with vaulted ceiling. Four flat Doric columns on the full-width porch frame Long Island Sound and the rock-bound islands beyond. From the water, the house recalls a Classic Revival Bungalow. On the east and west elevations a diagonal, all-over pattern of white, scalloped shingles creates a Victorian decorative scale. The cedar shingle exterior finish and trim will weather naturally to a silver gray.

This simple house is also interesting for what it is not -- it does not use history by rote, nor does it use architectural style as superficial pastiche. Rather, it uses the historical seashore bungalow for scale and representational profile, adds complex modern plan development, manipulation of scale in elevation, and a humorous dash of nautical symbolism. This house fits into its context but adds a new note to that context, just as it comfortably accommodates its owners' established life style in a fresh, new setting.





Awards:

National Honor Award, AIA, 1987

“Record Houses”, Award for Excellence in Planning and Design, *Architectural Record*, 1984.

Silver Award, Philadelphia AIA, 1984.

First Award, Red Cedar Shingle and Handsplit Shake Bureau, 1985.

Honor Award, American Wood Council, 1985.



