

INNOVATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

The verities of the International Style are not without their challengers. A bold new proto-aesthetic has worked its way into Maine—an approach to design that is congenial to our rough rural landscape. Without a name, the new style is an eclectic reaction to the strictures of Internationalism. More to the point, the new style purports to celebrate American, as opposed to international, attitudes. Drawn from Shingle-Style mansions, the California wood tradition as found in the work of Greene and Greene, the intellectual pluralism exemplified by the late Louis Kahn, and certain existing vernacular attitudes, the new style maintains a lively mix. Shingle-style porches, gables and bays join unexpectedly and at unexpected places with simple utilitarian forms. Local shapes and local details synthesize with tense International passages. In its most extreme form, the new style is a mix of complexity and contradiction. It finds wit and more than a little irony in its conflicting elements. Finally, in its variety it seeks to develop a new American vernacular, one of common forms, but of uncommon symbolic power.

The work of Adams Associates in the Deer Isle environs exemplifies the progression toward the new aesthetic. A 1965 project, the Klaver/Adams Partnership, consists of two small separate cabins on a wooden deck, connected by a pathway (Figure 112); in it Adams uses broad-eaved broken parabolic roofs to express the plastic qualities inherent in cedar shingles. The Klaver/Adams project, after an evident bow to Barnes' Haystack School, is the first abstraction drawn from the old Shingle Style in over a half century. Later designs by this firm show a gradual withdrawal from the stern International prescription. The Gordon McClure House (1972), rectilinear but full of angular variety,

substitutes shiplapped pine for cedar-shingled walls. In it, as in other work of the period, the vertical board of native woods becomes a hallmark of the new style. Rough-sawn boards, hitherto used as siding for barns, are the skins and interior coatings of the buildings. Against this almost overwhelming embrace of natural texture, the designers insert occasional industrial forms and then freely add whimsical touches.

Steven Moore/John Weinrich's Gilpatrick House (1975) at Locke Mills carries whimsy to its most developed local state. In a Pop Art outburst, eyebrow-shaped windows join windows in square, rectangular and right-triangle shapes. That quintessential Americanism, the porch, is punched into the block of the building, rather than allowed to lean against it like its Shingle Style ancestor. Topped with the ribbed metal roof ubiquitous to interior Maine, the Gilpatrick House is intended to suggest a conglomeration of picturesque elements.

The Arthur Blatt House in Auburn (1973) by Stephen Blatt, the Robert W. Adams House on Deer Isle (1971-72) by Adams Associates and the Henry Woodbridge House on Vinalhaven (1973-74) by John B. Scholz are all, in fact, picturesque conglomerations. Designed in separate sections and then joined, the components are intended to remain visually separate. Gazebos abut hipped roofs, Bauhausian stair towers connect with broken plane surfaces, and shed-roofed cubes tumble against one another. It is not certain that this work actually refers back to earlier American idioms, but it certainly signals a return to romanticism. In the work of these young men we find the first pictorial architecture in this century. Their buildings become figural landscapes. Krumbhaar and Holt's spectacular home for Charles Foote in Rockport (1973) and

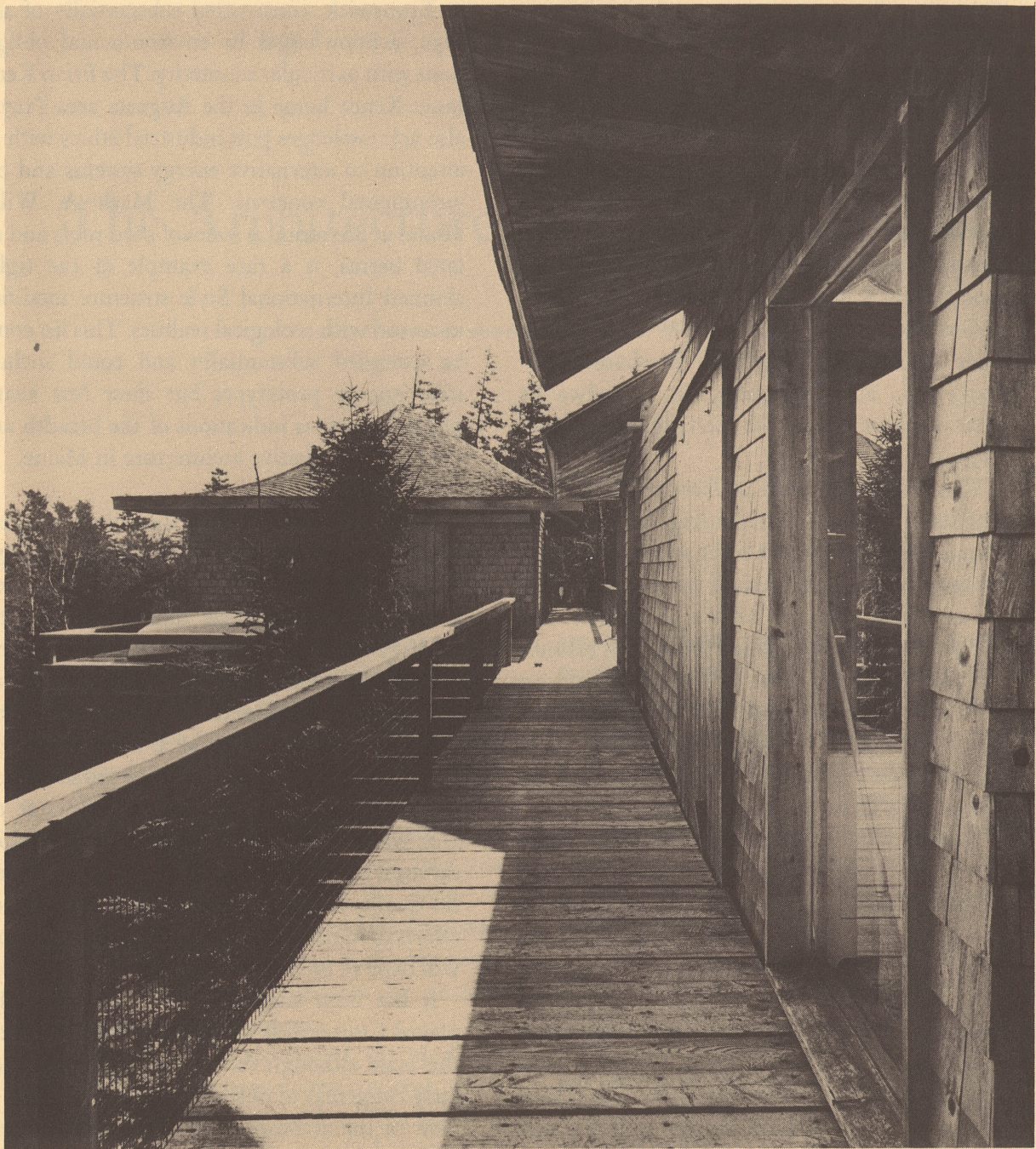


FIGURE 112. *Deer Isle, The Klaver/Adams Partnership, by Adams Associates (1965). Photo: Nancy Werth Woodward*