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# 2005 PALLADIO AWARDS

Residential Architecture: New Design & Construction – over 5,000 sq.ft.

Winner: Albert, Righter & Tittmann Architects, Inc.

## Greek Revival Collage



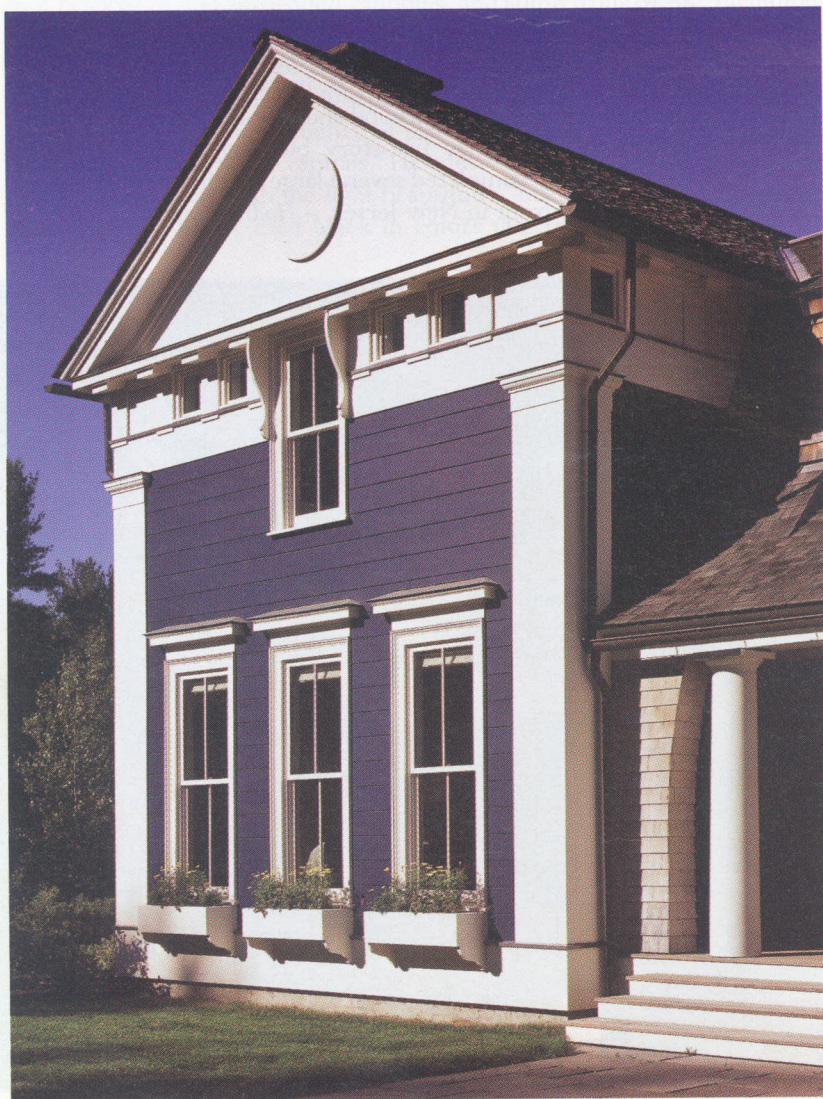
The Riverview house in Concord, MA, designed by Albert, Righter & Tittmann Architects, Inc., of Boston, MA, features pavilions that range from high to low Greek Revival styles. All photos by Robert Benson unless otherwise noted

**PROJECT:** RIVERVIEW HOUSE, CONCORD, MA

**ARCHITECT:** ALBERT, RIGHTER & TITTMANN ARCHITECTS, INC.,  
BOSTON, MA; JOHN TITTMANN, PRINCIPAL IN CHARGE

**GENERAL CONTRACTOR:** THOUGHTFORMS CORP., ACTON, MA

**INTERIOR DECORATOR:** MARY WELLMANN ASSOCIATES, BOSTON, MA



The Greek Revival style has been an important part of the architecture of Concord, MA, for more than 150 years. Honoring this heritage, Boston, MA-based Albert, Righter & Tittmann Architects, Inc., built a house there that reflects the range of possibilities that the style offers.

"The client was keen on picking up on New England's visible Greek Revival traditions," says John Tittmann, principal in charge. "At the same time, we were trying to do something very nontraditional, creating a composition that you can't find in any book – we wanted to form a collage, exploring how far the language could be stretched in one composition and expanding the edges of that composition."

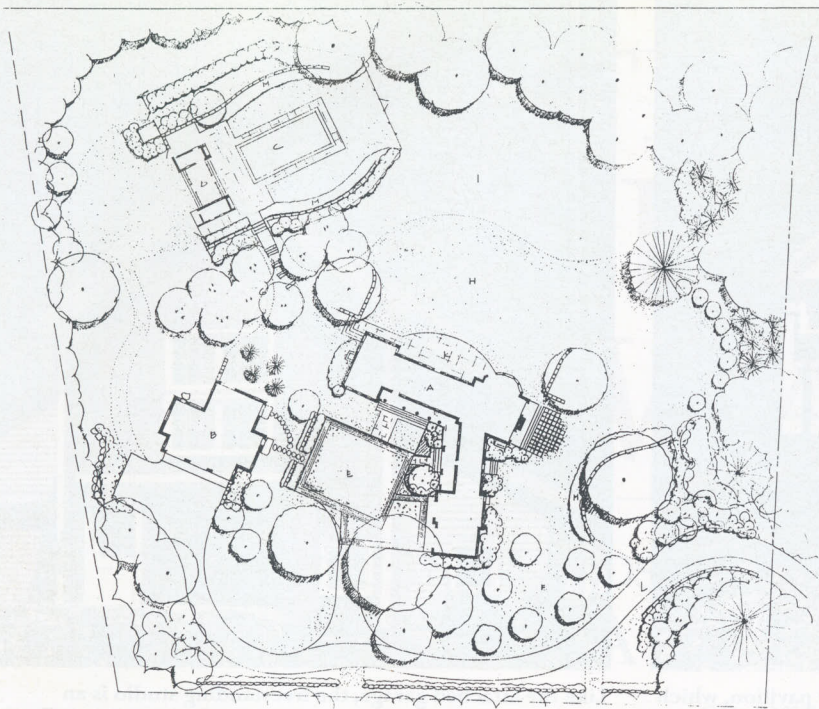
At 6,200 sq.ft., the house, which has six bedrooms, four-and-a-half baths and an attached two-car garage, could have been overwhelming. "But the client was interested in a domestic, not a regal, scale," says Tittmann. To maintain a human scale, the architects composed a series of pavilions, rather than one large mass. "Houses more than 3,000 sq.ft. are difficult to keep from looking like oversized monsters," says Tittmann. "A technique to overcome that is to make a series of small houses joined together – a little village of buildings."

Of the four pavilions that define the composition, three form the main house, while the fourth is a freestanding studio. The first three are differentiated by the architects' use of style. "The first one is in a high style, the second middle and the last low," explains Tittmann. The high-style section, for example, is painted navy blue and is the most ornate, with a fully developed entablature, eaves and pediments on the gable ends, and crowned window frames with pilasters on the corners.

The rooms within each pavilion correspond to the exterior style. For instance, the rooms in the high-style section of the house are the most formal ones – the master bedroom upstairs and the living room downstairs. "The fun of this technique was that architecturally it gave us a chance to explore different possibilities within the language of the Greek Revival," Tittmann says. The second pavilion is the crux of the L-shaped house, and comprises the kitchen and family room, above which are more bedrooms. "This pavilion is straightforward and house-like," he says. The third pavilion is the garage. Designed to look like a traditional New England barn with an attached shed, this composition reduces the two-car garage's apparent mass. "Painted red, the third pavilion, in the vernacular low style, relates across the courtyard to a fourth pavilion, which is the studio," he adds.

Clad in painted flush boards and adjacent to the front entry, the living room pavilion houses the master bed and bath. The hierarchy of the primary colored pavilions is expressed by their level of ornament. As the most ornate, the blue pavilion has a fully articulated entablature.

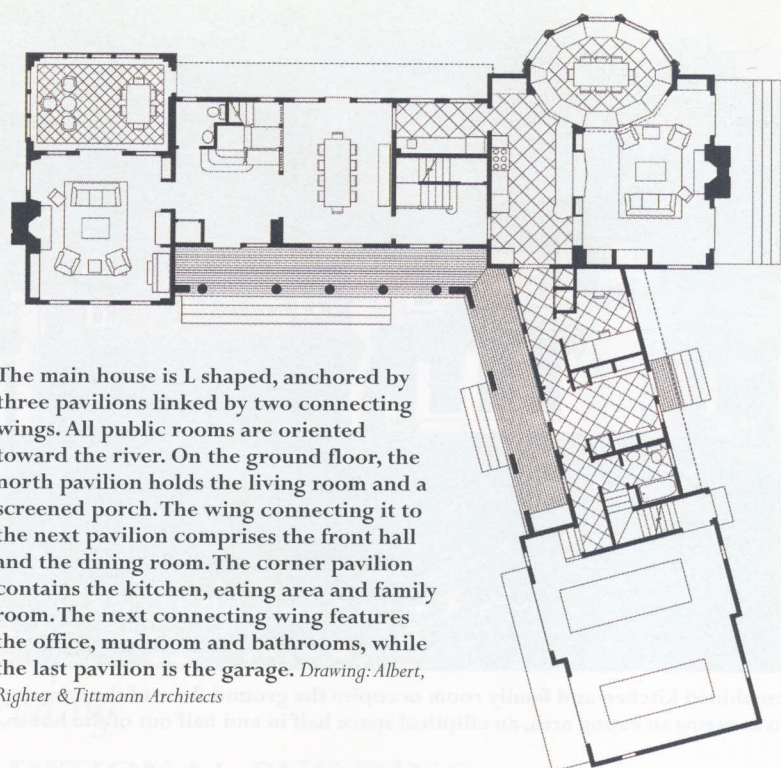




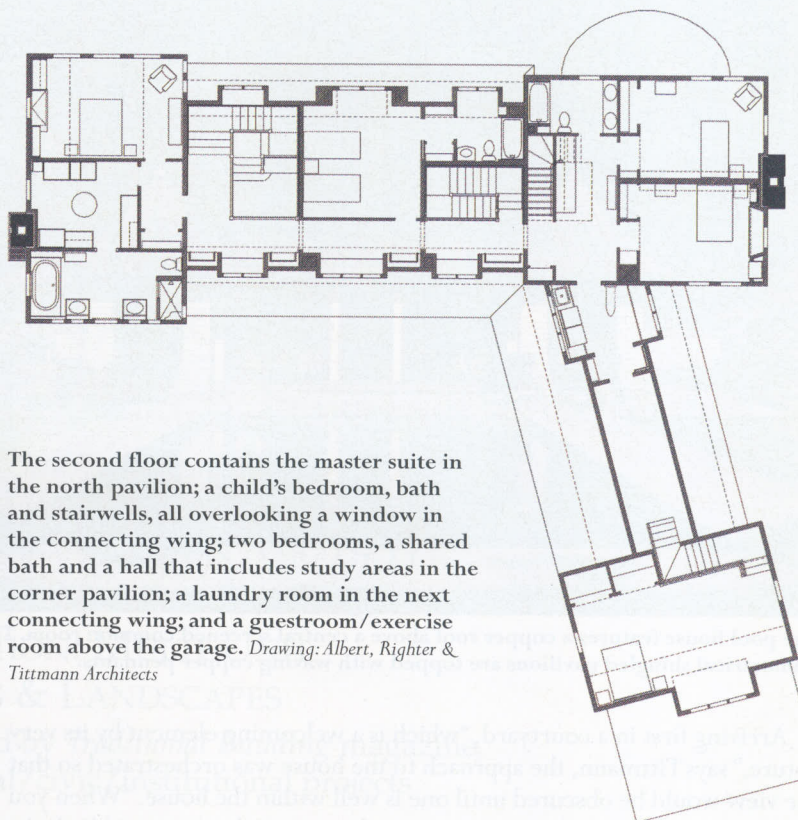
Overlooking a field, wetlands and river, the house hides the view until one is well within it. Drawing: Albert, Righter & Tittmann Architects

Sited down a slope from the main house, a pool house picks up the main house's primary color palette. A copper-roofed screened common room is flanked by symmetrical shingled pavilions – one containing a changing room, the other a kitchenette. An outdoor shower to the south and a bar-beque area to the north complete the pool house's program.

Overlooking a field, wetlands and river, the principal sections of the main house are clad in painted cedar flush boards, while the connecting areas are shingled. "The shingles can be thought of as a variation on the house's language, a way of creating a hierarchy, and clarifying the pavilions as separate," Tittmann explains. The roofing was fabricated from red cedar shingles with copper flashing.



The main house is L shaped, anchored by three pavilions linked by two connecting wings. All public rooms are oriented toward the river. On the ground floor, the north pavilion holds the living room and a screened porch. The wing connecting it to the next pavilion comprises the front hall and the dining room. The corner pavilion contains the kitchen, eating area and family room. The next connecting wing features the office, mudroom and bathrooms, while the last pavilion is the garage. Drawing: Albert, Righter & Tittmann Architects



The second floor contains the master suite in the north pavilion; a child's bedroom, bath and stairwells, all overlooking a window in the connecting wing; two bedrooms, a shared bath and a hall that includes study areas in the corner pavilion; a laundry room in the next connecting wing; and a guestroom/exercise room above the garage. Drawing: Albert, Righter & Tittmann Architects

Left: This courtyard view from the front door along the porch toward the attached garage shows the play between the formal Doric columns of the front door porch and the informal shingled supports of the porch leading to the mudroom entrance.

Below: The living room and family room pavilions, left and center, are painted bright primary colors with bold details in the spirit of the Greek Revival houses that abound in Concord. The attached garage on the right is an interpretation of the New England barn vernacular.







A combined kitchen and family room occupies the ground floor of the corner yellow pavilion, which also contains an eating area, an elliptical space half in and half out of the house.



Like the attached garage, the freestanding studio is an interpretation of the New England barn vernacular.



The pool house features a copper roof above a central screened common room. The structure's two symmetrical shingled pavilions are topped with waving copper pennants.

Arriving first in a courtyard, "which is a welcoming element by its very nature," says Tittmann, the approach to the house was orchestrated so that the view would be obscured until one is well within the house. "When you walk in the front door you still can't see the view – the staircase blocks it. It's only when you move further into the house, off the entry access, that you see the breathtaking view down the rolling field to the river."

The house's main entrance is subtly signaled by the wider spacing of the Doric columns at the front door. All of the rooms are arranged on an axis parallel to the river. The ground floor public rooms were designed to flow easily from one to the next. For example, the front entry opens into the dining room, which is framed with columns and screens to give compositional

structure to the room without closing it off. The flooring is wood throughout the house, except in the kitchen, which features black and white linoleum. "The interior trim is large-scaled, as is the exterior," says Tittmann. "In both areas, the color choices are bold and idiosyncratic, a modern interpretation of the Greek Revival style as well as a reflection of the client's exuberant taste."

The north, high-style pavilion is comprised of a living room and screened porch, and the wing connecting it to the next pavilion includes the front hall, dining room and butler's pantry. "The heart of the house," a combined kitchen and family room and adjacent eating area, occupies the ground floor of the central pavilion. "The eating area is like a pavilion within a pavilion," says Tittmann, "an elliptical space half in and half out of the house. The ceiling is like a shallow tented canopy that reinforces the specialness of this space." The linoleum patterned floor and an expansive bay of windows contribute to the room's character. The next connecting wing has an office, mudroom and bathrooms, and the west, low-style pavilion contains the garage.

The second floor includes the master suite in the north, with a child's bedroom, bath and two stairwells in the connecting wing. A hallway lined with dormer window benches overlooks the courtyard and runs the length of the wing. The corner pavilion has two children's bedrooms, a shared bath and study areas. The laundry room is under the dormer in the second connecting wing, and a guestroom/exercise room, which has its own stairwell, sits above the garage in the third pavilion.

The design uses energy-conserving technologies such as highly efficient in-floor radiant heating and geothermal wells for both heating and cooling.

The result is a mix of high and low Greek Revival styles that not only reflects the desire of the client for a human-scaled house, but also responds to Concord's architectural history in an innovative way.

— Marieke Cassia Gartner



The ceiling in the eating area is like a shallow tented canopy and reflects the patterned linoleum flooring by Hazleton, PA-based Forbo Linoleum Flooring.



The entry hall and dining room maintain an openness with screens and columns, which give a sense of structure without closing them off.