

# Annex Supports Varied Pursuits

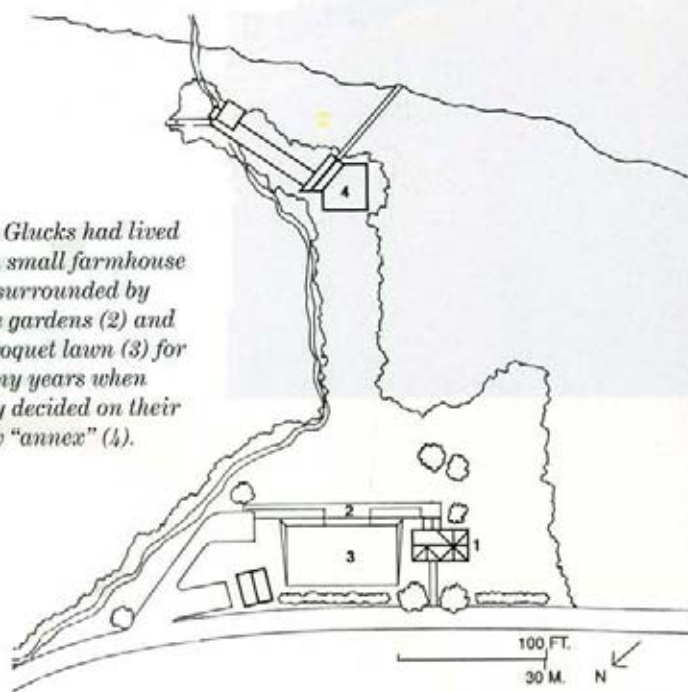
Bridge House Retreat  
Olive Bridge, New York  
Peter Gluck and Partners, Architect

For architect Peter Gluck's family of four, its new 3,000-square-foot annex to a much smaller nearby house (site plan below) embodies more than simply expanding a weekend retreat. It shows how to accommodate a unified group of people's differing needs in a single location. "We spent a lot of time rethinking how we live," says Gluck, talking about the maturing family's increasingly diversified pursuits and habits, not to mention its widening circle of friends and acquaintances. Their traditional little farmhouse in New York's rural Catskill Mountains, which had served well for 20 years, had begun to burst at the seams with too many activities and people.

Nor did the formal character and gardens lend themselves to the extensive, innovative addition the family had in mind. Instead, Peter Gluck and son Thomas chose a site far up an allée through the woods toward the back of the 18-acre property where they could freely experiment with new ideas about planning, massing, and construction. They had several criteria:

- The family's guests and two younger members could live and work independently, for as long as they liked, and come together only when they pleased, in a large welcoming common area. The result (projected plans, following pages) was a large multi-use space housing varied functions on several levels and a wing containing four tightly planned dormitory-style rooms plus one larger bedroom. Each room in the wing has a desk, ample storage, and computer hookups where, as Peter Gluck puts it, "the studios can explore the libraries of the world, while others go skiing, hiking, or rafting."
- The new building would respect the original house's character, but take full advantage of a natural wooded site—a transitional spot

The Glucks had lived in a small farmhouse (1) surrounded by rose gardens (2) and a croquet lawn (3) for many years when they decided on their new "annex" (4).



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between the old lawn and the trails in the untamed woods high atop a rock ledge beyond. To accomplish this dual role, the white symmetrical facade of the multi-use block was built to resemble a folly when viewed from the distant house, while the rest of the structure becomes more and more informal as it disappears into the woods.

• The structure would be a composite of many innovative materials, forms, and construction techniques. This was affordable only because Thomas Gluck took two years to build it himself with the help of a carpenter and an assistant.

The rectilinear multi-use space (this page) has heavy post-and-beam framing, exposed on the interior by Gluck's attaching insulated wood-stud curtain walls to the outer face. The exterior finish is 5/16-inch concrete panels with a 1 1/2-inch airspace behind to further block solar-heat gain. Roof framing is an inverted king-post-truss system of log-support compression members suspended from the outer framing by 3/4-inch tensile cables. Foundations were built on compacted soil with a surrounding dam to drain away ground water runoff from the ledge. The elevated bedroom wing bridges a stream and gives occupants tree-top views. Clad in corrugated aluminum-and-zinc-plated steel, it is likened by Thomas Gluck to a railroad car complete with pull-down bunks. This wing stands in the air on columns laterally stabilized by bracing cables sunk into deep concrete pads that taper from 12-foot square at their base. Bridges extend the house out into the woods, including one 85-foot long stretching from the roof terrace over the multipurpose space. *Charles K. Hoyt*

#### Credits

*Bridge House Retreat*

*Olive Bridge, New York*

**Owners:** Peter and Carol Gluck

**Architect:** Peter Gluck and Partners—Thomas Gluck, designer

**Engineer:** Ruderman Associates (structural)—Michael Theiss

**Builder:** Thomas Gluck



The multi-use space (right in plan) includes overlooking balconies designed to house a study and pool table on the second level and a studio for the senior Glucks on the third. The angled walls in the basically rectilinear box are created by superimposing a conventionally built gabled building with cedar siding (dotted lines, lower plan). The mahogany windows were built by Thomas Gluck on site. Seven-foot-square sections rise easily, counterweighted by bricks sliding on steel rods.

