



BIG LITTLE HOUSE

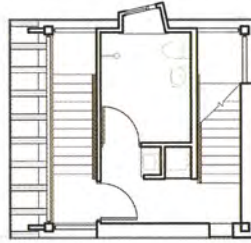
SMALL HOUSES DESIGNED BY ARCHITECTS

DONNA KACMAR

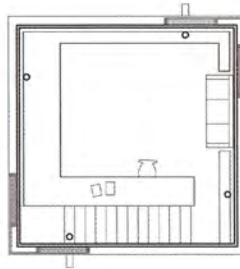


ROUTLEDGE

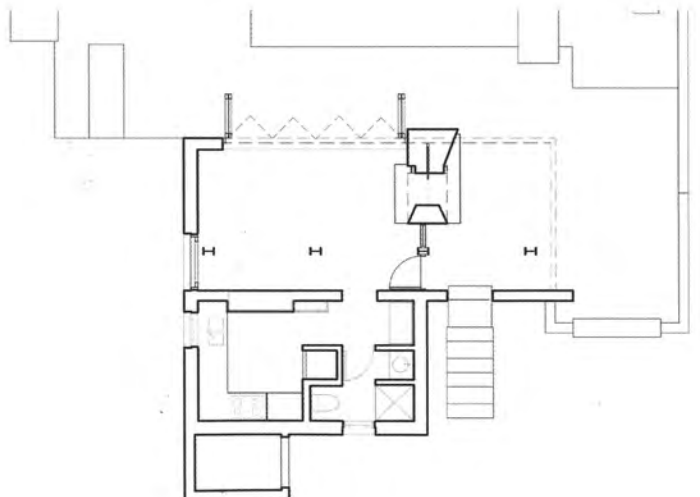
2000 Keenan Tower House
Marlon Blackwell Architect



2003 Scholar's Library
GLUCK +



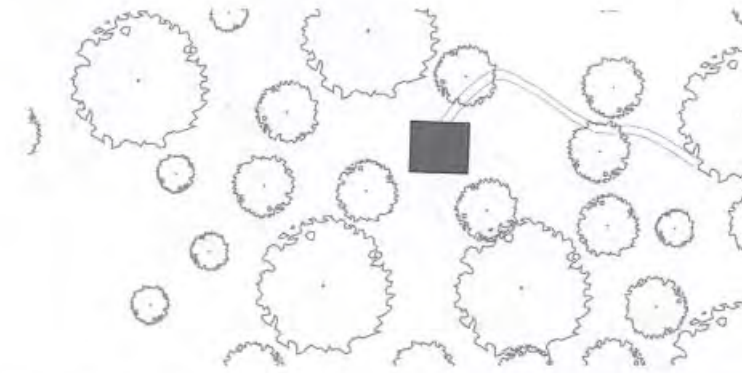
2004 Ravine Guest House
Shim-Sutcliffe



11

Scholar's Library

GLUCK +



Scholar's Library
GLUCK+

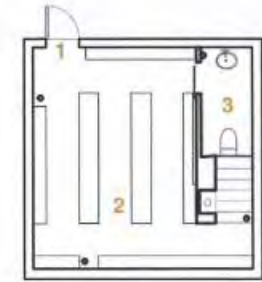
Upstate New York

2003

800 SF



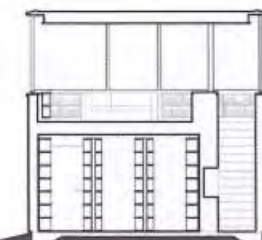
UPPER LEVEL



GROUND LEVEL

FLOOR PLANS

- 1 entry
- 2 book stacks
- 3 bathroom
- 4 study





◀ Figure 11.1 Scholar's Library view from forest



Figure 11.2 Scholar's Library second floor writing studio with windows open in spring

Located two hours north of Manhattan, on a heavily wooded site near a reservoir, this simple form sits directly on the ground. It appears as an unexpected folly in the forest. The client, a scholar of Japanese history (and wife of the architect) originally requested a new chair for her desk. The new chair project quickly became a new desk project. Soon, the really hard question "what are you going to do with all of these books?"¹ was asked, and the program requirements gradually became a new library and writing studio.

Peter Gluck designed and built this project on family property in upstate New York. A house for his son—the Tower House, an elegant suspended box supported by a glass stair tower—was also recently built on the same property. For this building, Gluck looked to clues from the site and the program in order to achieve a harmony between the two. In this clear, lucid project, the overall form signifies the use of the building. As Gluck describes, "the study sits on the books below, much

like scholarship rests on the body of work that precedes it."² The ground floor, thermally controlled, provides a protected environment for the storage of the scholar's book collection. Very little natural light is allowed to enter the space in order to protect the books from possible UV damage. The upper level, a completely open, light-filled writing studio, is lifted up and removed from the floor of the forest. It provides a place of speculation and study.

The Platonic cube building sits in the underbrush of the densely treed site and thus receives no direct light. During summer months, its sliding panels—actually standard sliding glass doors used as windows—can be opened up on all four sides, turning it into a screened loft space with summer breezes filtering through and immersing the writer in the natural world of the forest. A thin roof extends over the volume and appears to almost float. The white ceiling reflects light, creating a diffusely lit, contemplative environment for the writer.



Figure 11.3 Scholar's Library second floor writing studio in winter

Major materials include steel, glass, maple flooring, and dark cementitious panels that clad the lower level, allowing it to mimic the surrounding shadowy forest. The project is protected by the canopy of the trees and receives only filtered light. The bottom level reflects the darkness of the trees' understory and is meant to appear completely enclosed and lightless. This lower level is secret and secure, disengaged from the ground plane. The Minerit cement panels are detailed to make the entry door location not readily clear. In contrast, the upper level connects to the trees and becomes a screened room when all the glass panels are slid away from the corners.

Steel columns support the roof and the ceiling that hovers at the open corners.

Peter Gluck runs an architect-led design-build practice based in New York City. The firm, GLUCK +, builds most of its own projects. Constructability runs in their blood. From day one of a new project, they start to think about how to build what they design. The same team works on the entire building project, from design to construction, helping elevate quality and reduce cost for the client, while linking creativity and responsibility.



Figure 11.4 Scholar's Library lower level book collection storage



Figure 11.5 Scholar's Library hidden entry door is located to the left

Notes

- 1 Peter Gluck, phone interview with author. January 2014.
- 2 Gluck.