

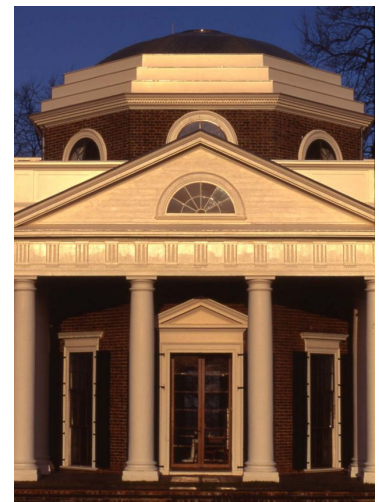
Jefferson and Architecture

Reading Level: Elementary School

“Architecture is my delight”

Architects design buildings. They also make the plans for the buildings. Thomas Jefferson loved architecture. Throughout his life, he drew plans for houses, towns, government buildings, churches and schools.

At the time, there were no schools to teach architecture. Jefferson taught himself. He read books about architecture. He studied the drawings of other architects. One architect he liked was Andrea Palladio (1508-1580). Palladio used the ancient buildings of Rome as models for his own work. Jefferson liked Palladio's drawings. He liked classic Roman features such as columns and pediments. Columns are round, tall supports. They are usually made of wood or marble. Pediments are the triangle-shaped fronts of buildings and windows.



Close-up of Monticello's West Front Portico, which has Doric columns

“Never more than half finished”

Jefferson designed his famous house, Monticello. He drew his first plan in the 1760s. He used Palladio's drawings as models. He used classic Roman ideas, such as columns and pediments.



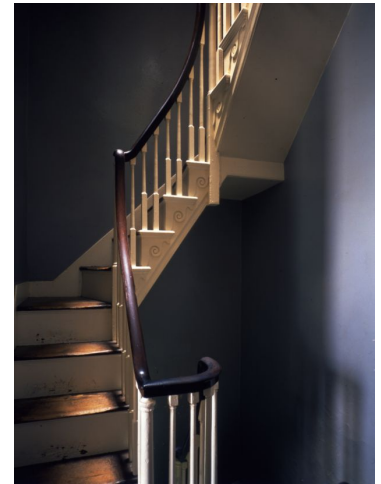
Jefferson drew this sketch of Monticello a couple of years after he wrote the Declaration of Independence.

In 1768, Jefferson started to build Monticello. Paid workers and slaves leveled the top of the mountain. They built kilns to make bricks. They dug a cellar and well and cut wood. First they built the South Pavilion, a one-room brick building. Jefferson and his wife Martha lived there while the main house was being built. The first Monticello had two stories. The outside of the house had columns and pediments. The inside had eight rooms. There were six more rooms in the cellar.

In 1784, Jefferson left for France. While in Paris, he saw many wonderful buildings. He saw a house with a dome. He saw homes with skylights, which let sunlight in through the roof. He saw houses with indoor privies (toilets). He returned to America in 1789 with many ideas.

In 1796, Jefferson's paid workers and slaves began to remodel Monticello. They added many ideas that Jefferson brought from France. They added a dome-shaped room to the third floor. Jefferson sometimes called it the "sky-room." They added skylights and round windows.

In 1809, Monticello was finally finished. It had taken forty years to build! The main part of the house had thirty-three rooms. There were four more in the pavilions, and six under the South Terrace. The second and third floors were reached by narrow stairs. Family and house guests stayed in these rooms. Anna Thornton recalls, "When we went to bed we had to mount a little ladder of a staircase..."



Rather than build a grand staircase, Jefferson designed stairways for Monticello that are elegant but narrow and hard to climb

"Father of our National Architecture"

Jefferson was well-known for his love of architecture. He helped design the Virginia State capitol in Richmond. Later his ideas were used to help design the new government buildings in Washington, D.C.



Jefferson designed the first buildings for the University of Virginia. He called it his "academical village." He wanted it to be a special place for students and professors. Jefferson designed the University's domed Rotunda. It was modeled after the Roman Pantheon. Today the University campus is one of the most beautiful in the country.

The Rotunda is the centerpiece of UVA's Academical Village, which Jefferson designed.

In 1993, Jefferson was awarded a Gold Medal. The medal was presented to The Thomas Jefferson Foundation. Today people can visit Monticello, the University of Virginia, and the Virginia State capitol. They can enjoy the beautiful buildings that Jefferson helped create.

Th. Jefferson
MONTICELLO