



CASE STUDY

# Harvard Lampoon Building

Location: Cambridge, Massachusetts | Original Design: 1909



## Reviving A Historic Landmark

The Harvard Lampoon Castle is a landmark building in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It was originally designed in 1909 by Edmund March Wheelwright, a prominent Boston architect and founding member of the student-run humor magazine for which the building is named. The compact, wedge-shaped structure stands in deliberate contrast to the more formal architecture of nearby Harvard Yard.

In 2009, the Lampoon Trustees engaged Albert, Righter & Tittmann Architects (ART) to undertake a long-term restoration and renovation of the Castle, with the goal of preserving the building for future generations. Over the following years, the project encompassed multiple phases, including life-safety upgrades, interior improvements, and exterior restoration.

A major component of the work involved the reconstruction of the building's historic roof. Research into archival drawings and historical documentation revealed that Wheelwright's original 1909 design specified clay roof tiles manufactured by Ludowici. The original tile roof had been replaced in the mid-1950s with gray slate and a copper dome, significantly altering the building's appearance.

Working with Ludowici—still producing clay roofing tile in Ohio—the design team developed a historically appropriate replacement using the company's Spanish 13 tile profile in a custom Historic Red color blend. The new roof restores the building's original character while meeting contemporary performance standards. The roof project was developed beginning around 2021 and completed in 2023.

The Castle's distinctive dome presented particular technical challenges. Its geometry transitions from an elliptical base to a circular top, requiring careful modeling and coordination to ensure accurate fabrication and installation of the tile system. The design team used advanced digital modeling techniques to study the dome and guide production.

As ART partner Eric J. Rochon, AIA, explains, the team worked to approximate the original appearance using available evidence: archival black-and-white photographs, material studies, and consultation with long-time Lampoon affiliates.

The work was carried out in phases to allow continued use of the building during the academic year. Throughout the project, the architects aimed to balance technical innovation with preservation of the Castle's distinctive and irreverent character.

### ARCHITECT:

Albert, Righter & Tittmann  
Architects (ART)  
[www.artarchitects.com](http://www.artarchitects.com)

### INSTALLER/GENERAL CONTRACTOR(S):

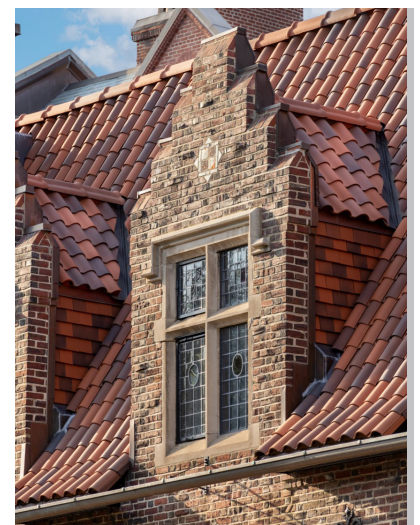
Cenaxo (primary)  
Walsh Construction

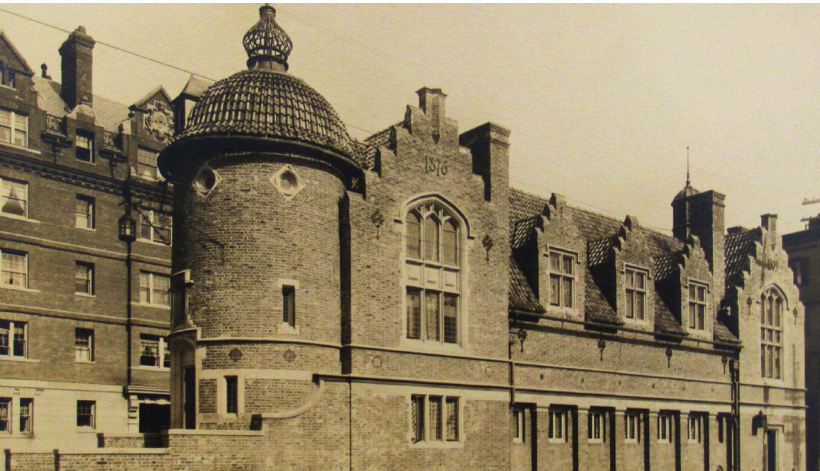
### PRODUCT(S):

Spanish 13"

### COLOR(S):

Historic Red/Ebony  
Restricted Range: Light to Medium  
Mist





In addition to the roof restoration, the project included significant upgrades to meet modern building codes, including a new fire-suppression system and improved emergency egress. Interior renovations included updates to key functional spaces such as the kitchen, bathrooms, and basement newsroom.

A new fire escape was integrated into the building's constrained footprint, concealed behind a decorative wrought-iron railing that incorporates Lampion motifs, including jester imagery and the Latin motto *Vanitas*. A new exterior door and custom limestone surround were also introduced as part of the life-safety improvements, designed to be compatible with the building's historic fabric.

The project has received multiple awards, including a 2025 Palladio Award from *Traditional Building* magazine and a 2025 Bulfinch Award from the Institute of Classical Architecture & Art New England Chapter in the category of Craftsmanship, Artisanry, and Preservation.

"This building is a Wheelwright masterpiece," says John Tittmann. "There is more architecture packed per cubic inch than almost any other building I can think of. It's a chamber orchestra in size, but it has the ambition of a symphony orchestra."

Albert, Righter & Tittmann Architects are widely recognized for their work in the New England architectural tradition, combining classical and vernacular design with contemporary performance and sustainability. Their work has been widely published in *Traditional Building*, *Period Homes*, and *New Old House*.

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