M News: Goodbye Frank Gehry / McCreery Fired / Architects+Artisans / Lustrons / Kelly Policelli
From: George Smart HAIA <george@usmodernist.org>
Date: Monday, December 8, 2025



US Modernist



Monday, December 8, 2025

Welcome, Modernist architecture fans, to the USModernist newsletter, sharing Modernist news and events since 2008. USModernist is an award-winning nonprofit 501C3 educational archive for the documentation, preservation, and promotion of Modernist architecture.

Modernist House Archives: 25,000+ Houses	Architecture Media Library: 5M+ Pages	USModernist Radio Podcast: 430+ Shows

View as Webpage

Editor: **Ron Gallagher** Newsletter Staff: **Virginia Faust, George Smart**
Got Modernist News? Contact **Ron Gallagher** at rpg.modernist@gmail.com

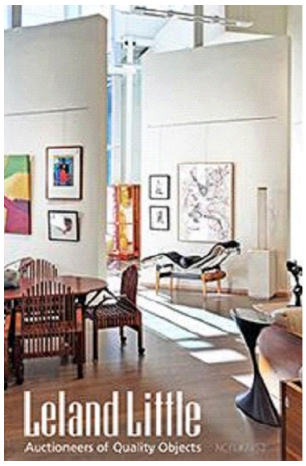
Newsletter Sponsorship: Connect your product, service, or organization to USModernist's 77,000 Modernist fans, architects, real estate agents, preservationists, and builders. Reach out to George Smart, 919.740.8407.

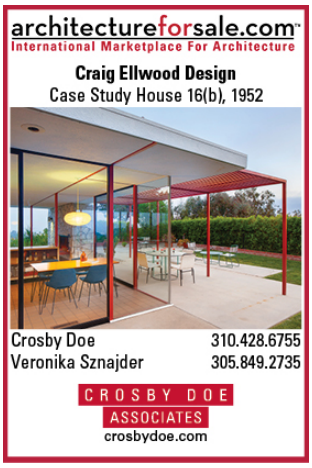
Meet the USModernist Team

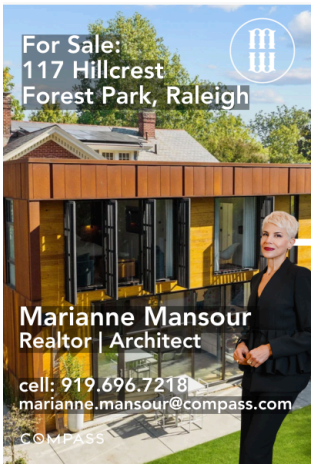
Check out the NCModernist For Sale/Rent Database. Real estate agents and owners can list their North Carolina Modernist houses for sale or rent for free.
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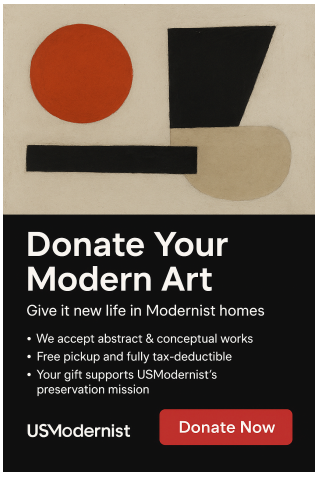
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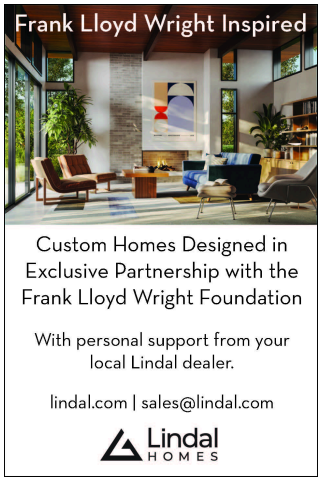












Featured Upcoming Events

ARROWHEAD

Thursday, December 18 - NCModernist Thirst4Architecture Happy Hour at Arrowhead, a design-build firm, 5-7pm, 330 Dupont Circle #102, Raleigh.

Free, registration required. Enter ARROWHEAD on the form.

Saturday, December 20. Moving Matsumoto: The Unveiling!

After moving 7 miles in January 2024 and a brilliant restoration and reconstruction, the house is ready for its big debut - and you can be there!

Photo by **Art Howard**. *Only 30 tickets left!* Tickets and details.





USModernist Scandinavian Capitals Trip
Copenhagen / Oslo / Stockholm
Tour May 12-22, 2026 / *Only two tickets left!*

You will see – and visit – incredible architecture, art, design, and furniture in three countries, including the work of **Bjarke Ingels**, plus the stunning natural beauty of Scandinavia. Details.

Support USModernist



Your Gift to Modernism. Doubled!

A generous $10,000 matching gift means every dollar you give to support USModernist through December 31 counts twice. Donate here.

It's that time of year when every nonprofit you ever supported (and many you haven't) come into your inbox asking for money. Some list their accomplishments, others list horrible things that may happen unless you donate.

We'll just say this. On behalf of our dedicated Board, incredible staff, and intrepid volunteers, if you like what we do, and if you make a tax-deductible donation before January 5, *a donor will double it*. Boom!

USModernist's documentation and preservation work consistently delivers national impact, but our future success is only possible through generous

supporters. Plus there are many new and creative options in addition to direct donation, including legacy gifts.

Our documentation and advocacy work continues to save endangered Modernist buildings, where our research methodology helps other cities see what's possible.

Every gift to USModernist keeps our entire digital archive free; produces engaging tours, parties, and events; and races against time to document at-risk houses. We cannot protect what people don't know about. Thanks to you, we're changing that — one house, one story, one community at a time. Donate here.



Have a wonderful holiday with friends and family! You are the reason Modernism endures and evolves. On behalf of the devoted team at USModernist, we are so grateful for your support.

With heartfelt appreciation,
George Smart, Executive Director, USModernist

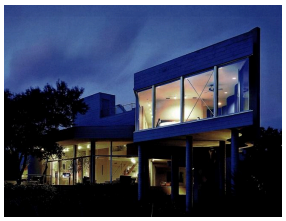
Endangered Modernist Houses



Endangered: The 1961 Prairie House in Norman OK, designed by Herb Greene, was named to Preservation Oklahoma's 2025 Most Endangered Places List. Preparations are underway for a 2026 capital campaign to support a restoration. Full press release.



Endangered? The 1956 TWA headquarters building in Kansas City MO, designed by **Raymond Bales** and **Morris Schechter,** will be vacant next year. No word yet on future plans - let's keep an eye on it.



Now under contract: Carl Abbott's 1989 Gaines House, 1761 Oceanview Drive, in Tierra Verde near St. Petersburg FL. The listing originally showed renderings for larger new house (not by Abbott), implying teardown. Under contract, no word yet on the buyer's intentions.



Endangered: Ray Kappe's 1946 Stoner House at 5679 East Corso Di Napoli in Long Beach CA was approved for a demolition permit. The decision will be appealed by a coalition of the Los Angeles Conservancy, Docomomo US/SoCal, and Long Beach Heritage to the California Coastal Commission. Support the coalition's work through this petition.



Endangered: From a town known as Oyster Bay, Long Island, made famous in song by **Billy Joel**, there's a rare, long-neglected 1955 Walter Gropius house, 144 Center Island Road, for sale on 17 acres for $6.75M.



Endangered: The 1963 Fleschner House, 8 Stony Point, Westport CT, designed by Ulrich Franzen. Featured in Architectural Record, November 1963 and Architectural Record Houses of 1964. Despite several clunky additions, the house is in good condition. Sold in 2024 to Thomas and Nadia Wearsch, who applied for a demolition permit. A hearing is scheduled next for January 2026.



Still endangered: Frank Lloyd Wright's 1903 Walser House in Chicago is out of foreclosure, but not out of the woods. The lender was the only one to bid on the house at auction and now holds the title, but whether there's a plan to stop deterioration or make any repairs. is unknown

Endangered: The deteriorating 1946 Booth House, 319 Pound Ridge Road, in Bedford NY is again for sale. One of the first houses designed by Philip Johnson, still languishing at the too-high price of $1.2M. Rumor is there is a very interested buyer.

Endangered? In 1980, after years of battling with the Modernist-hating Town of Southampton Architectural Review Board (ARB), **Orest Bliss** finally got to build his Norman Jaffe-designed house at 88 Meadow Lane. Fast forward 40+ years, including a non-Jaffe renovation, and Bliss wanted a demolition permit before putting the house on the market, as oceanfront properties get a better price with pre-arranged permits. After lawsuits against the ARB, Bliss got his permit and the house went on the market in August at $24M. Now it's off the market but listed at $21M. *Has it been sold?* If so, a buyer has the green light to tear it down if they wish. Details.

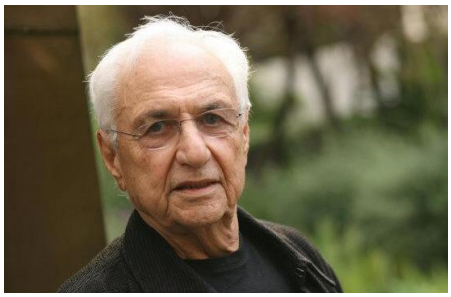
Endangered: Frank Lloyd Wright's 1952 Lewis House, aka Spring House, 3117 Okeeheepkee Rd, Tallahassee FL, was for sale through a commercial property broker for a little over $2.1M. **The property type is listed as "vacant land." That's never good.** Now off the market.

MODERNISM IN DANGER
USMODERNIST

Know an endangered Modernist house? Through our preservation alert program, **Modernism In Danger,** USModernist calls attention to the Modernist buildings around the country at risk for deterioration, demolition, lowball auction, or inappropriate renovation (like turning your Modernist house into an Italianate villa). Tell us.

News





Frank Gehry died last week at the age of 96. He was awarded the Pritzker Prize in 1989, even before designing his two most famous buildings – the 1997 Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, and the 2004 Walt Disney Concert Hall in downtown Los Angeles, photo above.



Gehry never retired, and most recently he designed a house for **Massy Mehdipour** of Atherton CA, featured in *Architectural Digest*. See all Gehry's houses. Other Gehry projects.

Architects + Artisans
THOUGHTFUL DESIGN FOR A SUSTAINABLE WORLD

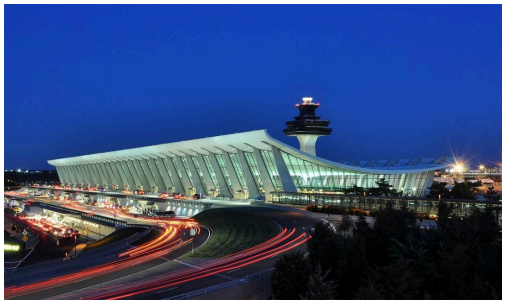
Architecture journalist **Mike Welton's** long-running Architects+Artisans blog has been saved in its entirety in the USModernist Library. An appreciation of Mike's life (1951-2025) will be shared at The Corner Meeting House in downtown Wake Forest on January 25 at 2pm. For more information, email annwelton11@gmail.com.



You're Fired: Last week, **Donald Trump's** ballroom architect, **James McCreary,** suggested that the proposed 90,000 sf ballroom would be out of scale against the 55,000 sf main White House. No surprise then that classicist McCreary was fired and **Shalom Baranes** has taken his place. Interestingly, most of the Baranes work is Modernist. CNN reports that the ballroom budget has gone from $200M to $300M, and work is already underway before getting any of the required major approvals, including from the National Capital Planning Commission.

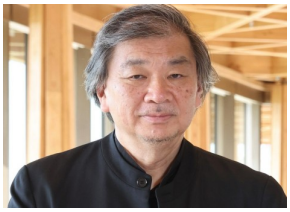


Donald Trump added his name to The US Institute of Peace Building in Washington DC, designed by **Moshe Safdie.** The Institute was an independent, non-partisan, federal institution funded by Congress but earlier this year, the Trump administration gutted the Institute's staff, budget, and operations until a judge intervened. According to the BBC, **George Foote**, a lawyer representing the former leadership team and staff, said, "A federal judge has already ruled that the government's armed takeover was illegal. That judgment is stayed while the government appeals, which is the only reason the government continues to control the building." The USIP website was changed to read: "The United States Institute of Peace is the nation's independent, nonpartisan institute that supports the Executive Branch in resolving violent conflict abroad."



US Secretary of Transportation **Sean Duffy** wants a renovation of Eero Saarinen's iconic main terminal at Dulles International Airport outside Washington DC. Dulles is owned by the US Department of Transportation but operated under a long-term lease by the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, which also manages Reagan. In addition, a bill has been introduced in Congress calling for Dulles to be renamed for **Donald Trump.**

Saarinen's daughter, landscape architect **Susan Saarinen**, responded, saying "**Donald Trump** wants to redesign Dulles airport. He lauded the terminal designed by my father, Eero Saarinen, and stated that he, Trump, wouldn't take it down. However, he also stated that he wouldn't take down the East Wing of the White House, so we cannot trust that he will keep his word. In an era when more planes fly and land is scarce to expand airports, the Mobile Lounge is being maligned, when it really needs to be updated. Mr. Trump is not qualified to redesign an airport, will not listen to his countrymen and hardly listens to members of Congress. However, **Jimmy Kimmel** is back ont he air, so Trump does listen if the roar is loud enough."



The AIA chose **Shigeru Ban** for the 2026 Gold Medal, saying Ban has "**revolutionized architecture with renewable materials like paper and timber, creating resilient, sustainable designs like disaster shelters and the Cardboard Cathedral.**"

THE MOD SQUAD

Do you love Modernist architecture? That feeling when you discover a cool house. The thrill of saving a piece of history. The community of people who get it. The midcentury homes you love - they're still out there and still vulnerable and worth fighting for. Become a USModernist Mod Squad member and join a national community of architecture fans supporting and preserving the Modernist architecture you love. Your membership can make the difference between saving a house and watching it fall to a bulldozer.

Join for a year, get a year free! New members only. Does not apply to monthly memberships. Good through 5pm ET December 22. Sign up here.



Last week marked the grand opening of the Greater Bay Area Sports Centre in Guangzhou, China, designed by Zaha Hadid Architects.



WRAL-TV featured the innovative Lustron, one of the great prefab designs of the 1950s. Only a few thousand are left. This one is now an AirBnB in Clayton NC. See USModernist's national registry of Lustrons.



A truly creative advertising video by realtor **Mike Noland** for a Lustron house in North Little Rock AR, priced at $165,000.



Dezeen issued a list of the top 10 museums and galleries around the world, including the long-awaited Zayed National Museum in Abu Dhabi, designed by Foster + Partners.

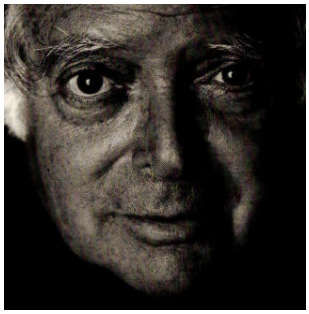


Former USModernist researcher **Kelly Policelli** is now the new State Archivist of North Carolina! Her previous experience includes Elon University, Digital Durham at Duke University, the Heinz History Center Library and Archive, NCSU Special Collections Research Center, and the University of North Carolina. Kelly has a master's in public history from NCSU and a master's in library science from UNC.

Congratulations, Kelly!



Mystery House Solved: Last week's mystery house was indeed in Waccabuc NY, designed by **Bert Brosmith.** Hat tip to **Michelle Myers.**



Circle Square Triangle is a traveling exhibition on the brilliant and exciting geometric work of Modernist architect Myron Goldfinger. This high-value, portable, exhibition can be assembled in three hours and is available starting January 1. Perfect for small museums, galleries, architect offices, or historic preservation societies. For more info, contact **Kelvin Dickinson** at kelvin.dickinson@paulrudolph.institute or **June Goldfinger** jmgoldfinger@gmail.com.

Modernist Houses For Sale



John Lautner designed the 1948 Jules Salkin Residence in Los Angeles, but it was thought unbuilt for decades. Designer **Trina Turk** found it, had it restored

by **Barbara Bestor**, and it is now for sale for $2.4M.



The 2006 Ellerman House designed by Gene Leedy in Winter Haven FL is on the market at $2.25M.



In 1959, Celanese commissioned architect Edward Durell Stone, to build the Celanese House in New Canaan CT to showcase the company's new materials and styles. Carefully restored to museum-quality finishes, the Celanese House is one of New England's celebrated mid-century Modernist landmarks, admired and published by design publications for decades. Just over 2 acres, $4.4M. Details.

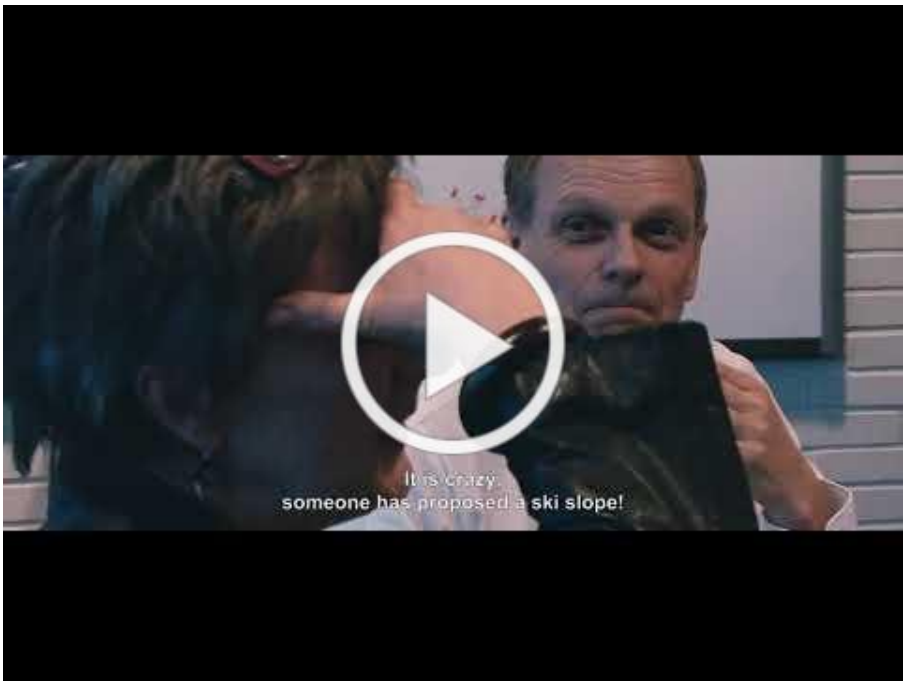


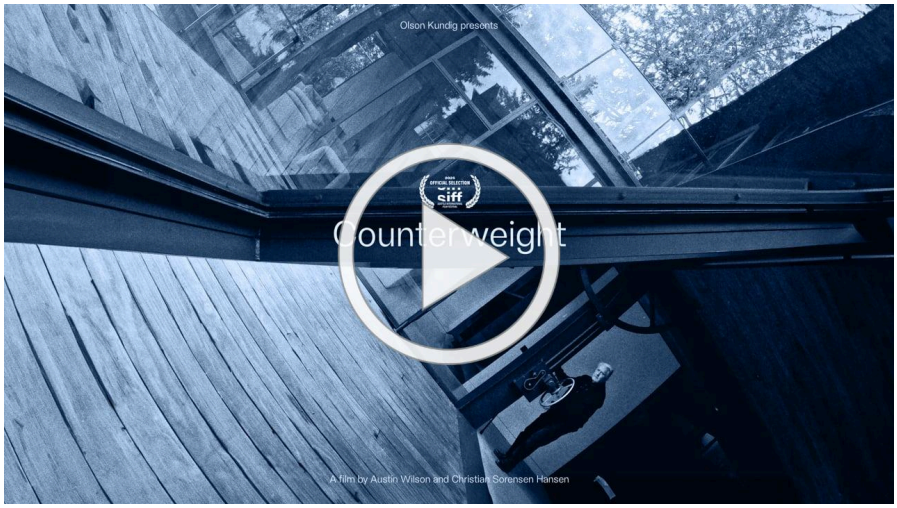
A 1963 condo designed by William Krisel in Canyon View Estates in Palm Springs CA is on the market with a $779,000 price tag.

Upcoming Events

December 20 - March 29: The Art Institute of Chicago presents *Bruce Goff: Material Worlds*, at Regenstein Hall. Features architect Bruce Goff (1904–1982), best known for his groundbreaking single-family homes. Details.

Through December 31: An American Versailles, a mixed-media exhibition at the New Canaan Museum, New Canaan CT. It is all about the Eero Saarinen-designed General Motors Technical Center in Warren, Michigan. Free.





January 6: Opening night of the NCModernist Architecture Movie Series at the Rialto Theatre, Glenwood Avenue in Raleigh NC, sponsored by **Matt Griffith** and **Zach Hoffman** at in situ studio. The first film is ***Making A Mountain***, the story of an Denmark incinerator no none wanted into a ski slope loved by everyone, designed by architect Bjarke Ingels. The second film is ***Counterweight***, about the creative gadgets in Tom Kundig houses. Tickets at the door, $16 plus small fees. Other movie series dates: February 3, March 3, April 7, May 5, all at the Rialto.

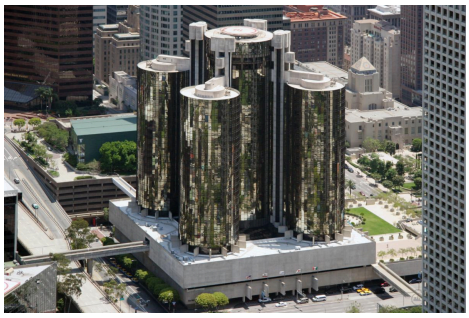


January 29, 630pm: Mayberry Modernism: North Carolina's Modernist Legacy, an entertaining and informative talk by NCModernist's George Smart at the Durham County Library, downtown Durham, designed by Vines Architecture. You can explore the building before or after. Free, registration required. Enter MAYBERRY on the form.

February 12-22: Modernism Week 2026, Palm Springs CA. Tickets here.

Thursday, February 19 - NCModernist Thirst4Architecture Happy Hour at Haven Design Build, 923 Broad Street, Durham NC. Free, registration

required. Enter HAVEN on the form.



March 17-22: DOCOMOMO International Conference in Los Angeles. Join USModernist's **George Smart** for a fantastic cocktail hour on **Wednesday, March 18**, at the revolving bar atop of the Bonaventure Hotel, designed by **John Portman**, with a thrilling view of LA. Register here. You must register for the conference to attend the party.

New Books



Tadao Ando has created a new book – *Sketches, Drawings, and Architecture* – that collects 750 drawings. models and plans from across his career.

USMODERNIST RADIO
ARCHITECTURE YOU LOVE

Latest Podcast







#434/Author Volker Welter + Cranbrook's Andrew Satake Blauvelt + Musical Guests Kathy and Gregg Gelb Honoring Paul Montgomery

Our first guest, **Volker Welter**, uncovers how architect **Leopold Fischer** fled Europe to shape Modernism in the US. We have Cranbrook Museum Chief Curator **Andrew Satake Blauvelt**, and later, musical guests **Gregg and Kathy Gelb** in a tribute to **Paul Montgomery**.

USModernist Radio is underwritten by **Diane Bald** and The Budman Family, restoring significant architecture in Toronto, Los Angeles, Malibu, and Palm Springs. New to podcasts? You can listen to USModernist Radio on any major podcast platform or through any computer.

NCMODERNIST



The Durham City Council has shifted gears in its quest to do something good for Milton Small's 1957 Home Security Life building. They are considering a deal to have Preservation NC take possession and explore redevelopment of the building independently from the rest of the block.

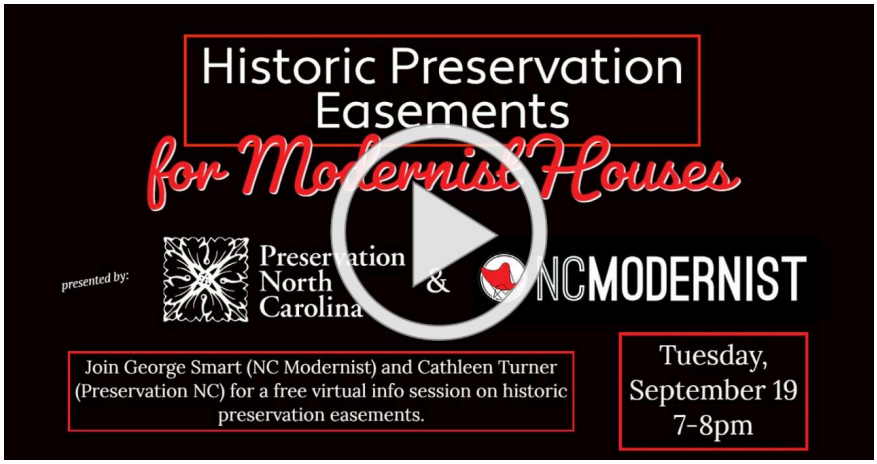
FOR SALE

Vacancy, not development, is the enemy of mid-century Modernist houses. Preserve and protect the architecture you love by notifying us when North Carolina houses go vacant or on the market.

Check out the NCModernist For Sale/Rent Database. Real estate agents and owners can list their NC Modernist houses for sale or rent for free. Submissions are subject to

approval: single-family Modernist houses only, they can be old or new, the architect or designer can be from anywhere, but the house must be in North Carolina. Exclusively sponsored by:

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The **preservation easement** is one of the only legally enforceable ways to assure a Modernist house does not get destroyed by future owners. National Register status? Meaningless. Famous architect? Nope. Local historic designation? At best, a delay in demolition. And as history shows, there are plenty of smiling buyers who say, "I would never tear this down." Then after closing, it's gone. Think of the preservation easement as a homeowner's association for one house. The easement requires future owners to maintain the house in current structural condition and state of repair, or better, including necessary work to preserve its integrity. Here's a video featuring Preservation North Carolina and NCModernist, along with **Jane Levy**, who has an easement on her Greensboro Modernist home. Here's a sample preservation easement document.

There is another way, the deed restriction. Consider it "preservation easement lite." When a once-cherished residence falls into the hands of new owners, there is always the risk that it will be destroyed, despite promises to the contrary from those owners. One powerful legal tool families can use to guard against demolition is a **deed restriction**. Knowing that potential buyers can and do lie about destroying houses, a deed restriction is a legally enforceable binding promise attached to the property title. Unlike some historic designations, a deed restriction travels with the property through changes in ownership. Even if a buyer threatens to demolish or radically alter a house, they are limited by the deed. The restriction is usually ten years, and it becomes part of the chain of title. Implementing a deed restriction before a sale immediately scares off developers (or developers-in-hiding) in an owner-value-friendly way to protect a property.

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