M News: "Jetsons" House Event Miami / White House Renovations / Merz Saved / New Arch Movies
From: George Smart HAIA <george@usmodernist.org>
Date: Monday, January 19, 2026

US Modernist

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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: 450+ Shows

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

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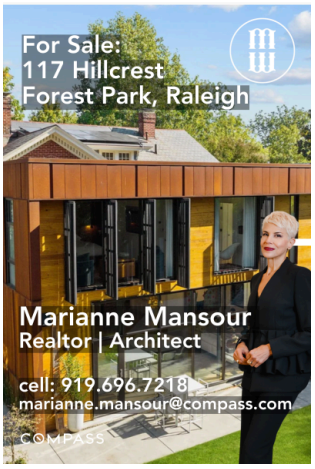


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Featured Upcoming Events





The Amazing "Jetsons" House
A Miami Modernist Icon Reborn
Benefit Tours Saturday-Sunday, February 28-March 1
Benefit Cocktail Party Saturday, February 28

Experience one of Miami's most extraordinary midcentury modern treasures! Tour this 4,220 sf masterpiece and discover how mid-century innovation meets contemporary refinement.

This 1949 Modernist icon was designed by architect **Rufus Nims**. Even before it was finished, the house was the talk of Miami. In the early 1960's, when the TV cartoon The Jetsons came out, the home was nicknamed The Jetsons House from neighbors who marveled at its futuristic form and floating appearance. The house stayed with its original owner **Charles Roman** until 1975, then developers came and went, unable to revive its potential.

After sitting vacant for years, the house found new life through the passionate vision of architect/owner **Gabriela Liebert** and her team who completed a thoughtful restoration and addition. A refined balance between past and present, beauty and logic, vision and restraint, this unique house now named SkyFin is ready to share its story with you.

Moon Over Modernism events in iconic houses support USModernist, a 501C3 nonprofit educational archive documenting, preserving, and promoting residential Modernist architecture.

Tickets and details. VIP tickets available.

MODAPALOOZA

Raleigh/Durham NC



NEW: Saturday, April 18, 8-4pm. Enjoy a great day touring eight exciting new and classic Modernist houses in Raleigh, Durham, Hillsborough, and Chapel Hill -- without the hassle of driving, parking, and finding your way around. Modapalooza includes the delightful company of lots of Modernist architecture fans plus coffee and bagels / a USModernist tote bag with snacks / bottled water / a delicious lunch / free wifi / in our luxury restroom-equipped, air-conditioned fleet of buses. At the houses, you'll meet *most* of the talented architects behind these houses, including **Heather Washburn**, **Arielle Schechter**, **Sophie Piesse**, **Notch Design**, **Phil Szostak**, **Arthur Cogswell**, **Charles Holden**, **in situ studio**, and **Raleigh Architecture**. Discount for Mod Squad members. Sponsored by Anna Hartwell of the Hartwell Financial Group.

Tickets and details.



The Frank Lloyd Wright Fallingwater+ Tour
Friday-Saturday, April 24-25 - Sold Out!

We are taking a waiting list for the next trip, Sept 11-12

Support USModernist



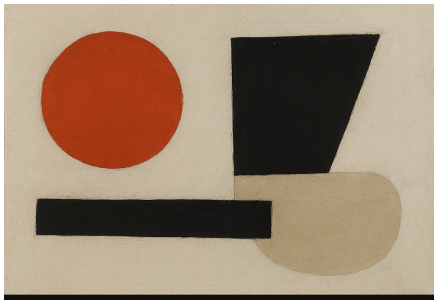
USModernist's documentation and preservation work consistently delivers national impact, but our future success is only possible through generous supporters. Plus there are many new and creative options in addition to direct donation, including legacy gifts. Every gift to USModernist keeps our entire digital archive free; produces engaging tours, parties, and events; and races against time to document at-risk houses.

- * A $250 donation funds the acquisition, processing, sorting, and digitization of 10 architecture and design magazines, preserving them forever and providing free access to the public
- * A $1000 donation underwrites the architect archive of your choice for year
- * A $1500 donation underwrites the cost of a bus for one of our wildly popular Modapalooza tours

Donate here. Tax-deductible!



If you have old architecture and design magazines and need that storage space back -- we can help. Donate them to the USModernist Library, the largest open digital archive for of architecture and design magazines in the world. USModernist gives long-gone architecture and design magazines new, text-searchable, online life with free user access. We pay for shipping. Contact george@usmodernist.org.



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USModernist

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Endangered Modernist Houses







Endangered: 3401 Ocotea, Raleigh NC. This is a gorgeous 1966 Modernist house, 2862 sf, on 3/4 of an acre. Clearly designed by an architect (though we don't know who), the sales listing had no interior photos, which is a surefire sign of intended teardown. $795,000. Showings have been stopped, which means the house is under contract.



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. No interior photos.

Endangered: Frank Lloyd Wright's 1952 Lewis House, aka Spring House, 3117 Okeeheepkee Rd, Tallahassee FL, is still for sale at $2.1M.

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



Having circumvented the normal construction permit process in Washington DC, **Donald Trump's** White House project moves forward at light speed. Architect **Shalom Baranes** unveiled a revised design for the White House East Wing, putting the 22,000-square-foot ballroom on the second story and adding a story to the West Wing. A detailed submission is expected in February.

Trump also resurrected the Commission of Fine Arts, whose seven-member board he had previously gutted. Among the four new members – enough to take action – is architect **James McCrery**, who Trump fired as ballroom architect when McCrery suggested it was out of

scale. The commission has the authority to review – but not approve – the project.



Helsinki, Finland, recorded zero traffic deaths over a 12-month period, a remarkable achievement the city attributes to data-driven planning. According to **Roni Utriainen**, city traffic enginee , reducing speed limits to 30 kilometers per hour (about 19 mph) was crucial. The success aligns with the European Union's Vision Zero program, which aims to eliminate road fatalities by 2050. Helsinki identifies priority routes for pedestrians, cyclists, and children, then rebuilds infrastructure including bike paths, street lighting, and increasing public transit to reduce cars on the road. This is a robust model for medium-sized cities facing political resistance to road transformation.



The nation of Bhutan has committed up to 10,000 Bitcoin—approximately $1 billion—to develop Gelephu Mindfulness City, a special administrative region in southern Bhutan. **King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck** announced the pledge last month. "This commitment is for our people, our youth, and our nation," the King stated. Launched in 2024, Gelephu Mindfulness City spans approximately 1,544 square miles—10% of Bhutan's territory—near the Indian border. The masterplan by architect **Bjarke Ingels** features eleven mandala-inspired neighborhoods connected by green corridors and inhabitable bridges housing an international airport, spiritual center, healthcare facility, university, hydroponic greenhouse, and the Sankosh Temple-Dam—a hydroelectric facility with meditation spaces. The project aims to stem youth emigration from Bhutan's population of 796,000.



The FY26 National Defense Authorization Act, passed by Congress in December, includes a provision repealing post-Cold War era restrictions on using federal funds for international expositions like the World Expo / World's Fair. For decades, limitations dating back to the 1990s constrained American participation in world's fairs and similar global gatherings. The Cold War had ended, budgets were tightening, and the elaborate pavilions of earlier eras seemed like relics of superpower competition.

Now, international expositions have evolved. Showing up matters. When countries gather — even those with profound disagreements — the simple act of presence creates new possibilities. A shared meal at a pavilion, a conversation sparked by an exhibit, a moment of cultural exchange — these small encounters don't resolve geopolitical tensions, but they maintain the human connections that make resolution imaginable.



In honor of Martin Luther King Jr. day, explore the history of Black North Carolina architects through 1970. By 1950 there were only two Black architects registered in North Carolina. By 1980 the number increased to only 65 out of a total of 1909. Even by 1993, Black architects made up only 7.5% of national members of AIA. This series profiles the NC pioneers who followed their hearts into architecture despite substantial resistance from society.



Saved: The 1946 Booth House in Bedford NY, Philip Johnson's first residential commission and a cornerstone of American Modernist architecture, is under contract to a partnership headed by **Drew Lang**, developer behind Hudson Woods and Lang Architecture, and **Ravi Arps**, owner of Plane Remodeling Company. For a full reconstruction and sensitive modernization, they are looking for additional investors who will benefit from its eventual sale; the minimum investment is $100,000. For more information, contact **Ravi Arps** at ra@hudsoncityventures.com or learn more.



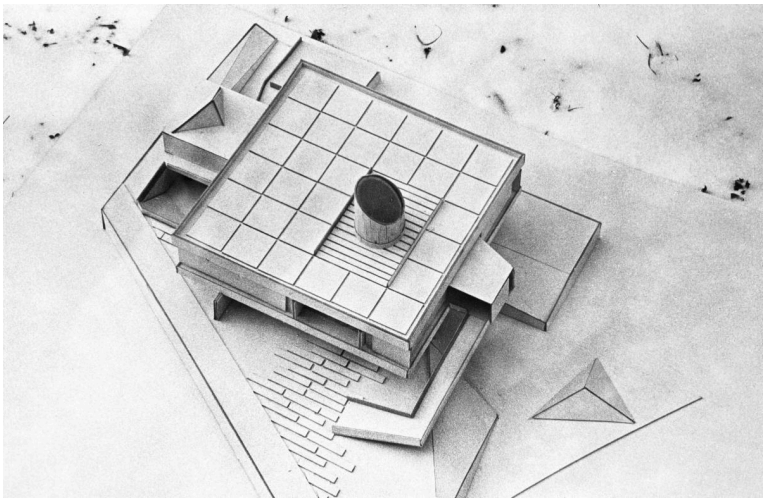
Saved for now: Andrew Beck, a former hedge fund manager, paid $10.6 million for a townhouse in Brooklyn Heights NY designed by John Merz's architect parents in the 1960s. Beck proposed adding a glass and steel rooftop structure on top of the house which Merz viewed as a violation of his parents' careful Modernist design. Merz mobilized architects, preservationists, and neighbors, gathering over 775 signatures and arguing it would break the block's skyline and violate longstanding visibility standards Beck, a philanthropist focused on child poverty, ultimately withdrew his application before the hearing. His architect noted Beck "never wanted to offend anyone" but he does have the option to return with revised plans.



Over the objections of preservationists, the Historic Preservation Board in Coral Gables FL voted 5-3 last week to permit the University of Miami to tear down three Modernist dormitories – the 1954 Eaton Residential College – designed by architect Robert M. Little.



A new video on Richard Neutra's Hailey House by Open Space.



Mystery House: Bruce Robertson was an architect in Charlotte NC who worked for A. G. Odell, Walter Hook, and Freeman White. At one point, he designed the house above, but we've not been able to determine if it was built. Clues, anyone? Write george@ncmodernist.org.



A preservation coalition that blends art historians with skateboarders wants the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to re-evaluate plans to destroy the 710-ton Vaillaincourt Fountain, erected in 1971, in the Embarcadero. City parks leaders say it's dangerous and have clearance to remove it without an extended review.



A former Bank of America branch that SOM architect Bruce Graham designed is for sale in Skokie IL. The listing says the site has "versatile development potential."





Location, location, location. *Parametric Architecture* featured 10 cliff houses, including one in Brooklyn, Australia (top), and one called La Binocle in Quebec, Canada.

MATSUMOTO PRIZE

Submissions are now open for the 2026 George Matsumoto Prize, North Carolina's highest honor exclusively for Modernist residential architecture. The unique design competition features a blue-ribbon jury of internationally-known architects and experts plus online public voting. NCModernist created the Matsumoto Prize in 2012 honor of George Matsumoto, one of the founding faculty members of North Carolina State University's College of Design. Matsumoto created some of North Carolina's most well-known and well-loved Modernist houses. The Matsumoto Prize encourages architects, designers, and prospective clients to continue the Modernist movement in houses so important to North Carolina's design heritage.

Entries are open to any ground-up Modernist house completed since 1/1/2021. New this year: a renovation category! Details.



Try our new AI-Powered Search in the USModernist archives: In addition to the usual search keywords, you can enter entire questions, like "List all the houses designed by Craig Ellwood." Remember, AI can make mistakes, so be sure to verify any information before acting on it.

Try it out, and let us know what you think!

Modernist Houses For Sale



The 1951 Benjamin Adelman House, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in Phoenix AZ, the House, is on the market for just under $6M. It was his first Usonian Automatic house.



On the market for $5.6M is a 1954 house **Kem Weber** designed in Montecito CA near Santa Barbara on 5 acres of land.



An 1867 townhouse to which Paul Rudolph added a 1976 four-story penthouse is for sale along the East River in New York City at $16M.



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 last August at $24M. Now it is $22M. A buyer has the green light to tear it down if they wish.



A 1965 house in Eugene OR designed by **Otto Poticha** has come onto the market with a $1.1M asking price.

Upcoming Events



February 3, 7pm: The NCModernist Architecture Movie Series continues at the much-loved Rialto Theatre, Glenwood Avenue in Raleigh NC, sponsored by **Matt Griffith** and **Zach Hoffman** at in situ studio. Featuring *Prickly Mountain* and a Q&A afterwards with producer **Allie Rood**.

March 3, 7pm: Googie, Q&A with producer **Jake Gorst**
April 7, 7pm: Curating Modernism, Q&A with producer **Jake Gorst**
May 5, 7pm: Double Feature: The Maslon House and The Donn of Tiki

Get tickets in advance, or at the door.



January 29, 6:30pm: Mayberry Modernism: North Carolina's Modernist Legacy, an entertaining and informative talk by NCModernist's George Smart at the new Durham County Library, designed by Vines Architecture. You can explore this exciting building before or after. Free, registration required. ***Almost sold out.***

Through February 8: At the National Building Museum, Washington DC, *Lightness of Strength: The Wave*, a 55-by-180-foot spaceframe made of recycled aluminum and constructed by Catholic University of America architecture students. Information.

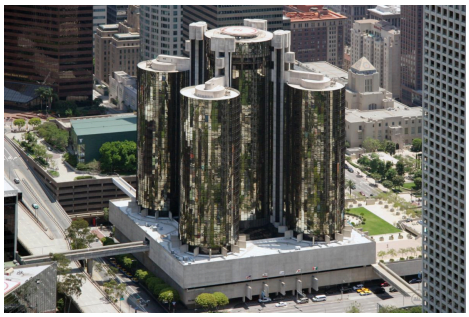
February 12-22: Modernism Week 2026, Palm Springs CA. Tickets here.

HAVEN DESIGNBUILD

Thursday, February 19 - NCModernist Thirst4Architecture Happy Hour at Haven Design Build, 923 Broad Street, Durham NC. Free, registration required. Enter HAVEN on the form.

February 19-20: Pearlman Cabin Tours, Idyllwild CA. Designed by John Lautner with concept by Agnes Branch Pearlman. On the National Register of Historic Places. Contact Nancysuepearlman@aol.com with your name and phone number, or call 213 705-4992.

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.



Through March 28: The Onera Foundation, New Canaan CT's newest exhibition venue devoted to architectural preservation advocacy, presents *Treaties on De-Fences* by **Jorge Otero-Pailos**, examining the afterlife of the Saarinen-designed US Embassy in Oslo, shown alongside an exhibition on Harvard Five's Marcel Breuer and John Johansen and their Cold War–era embassies designs. Free and open to the public. Details.

Through 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.

Saturday, May 16: Frank Lloyd Wright Trust's Wright Plus Architectural Housewalk, Oak Park IL. Information.

Saturday, June 6: Philip Johnson Glass House Summer Party, New Canaan CT. Details and tickets TBA.

Sunday, June 7: USModernist's Brunch in New Canaan CT. Details and tickets TBA.

USMODERNIST RADIO
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Latest Podcast









#440/New Architecture Movies: Allie Rood + Beck Carpenter + Ryan Mah + Danny Berish + Musical Guest Brandi Disterheft

It's movie time, and today we'll talk with producers of architecture and design documentaries featured in **Kyle Bergman's** *Architecture and Design Film Festival*, which opened last fall and continues around the world. Filmmaker **Allie Rood's** *Prickly Mountain* captures Vermont's countercultural design/build movement. **Beck Carpenter's** *Space Architect* tells the story of NASA architect **Constance Adams,** whose pioneering designs for off-planet habitats inspire solutions for our own climate challenges. **Danny Berish** and **Ryan Mah's** *Arthur Erickson: Beauty Between the Lines* traces the life and work of one of Canada's most celebrated architects, and wrapping up, the JUNO award-winning **Brandi Disterheft**.

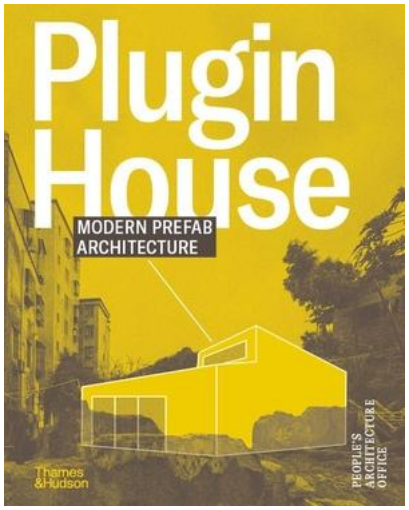
US Modernist Radio is underwritten by The Brent R. Harris Charitable Trust, restorer of several Modernist houses including Richard Neutra's Kaufmann Desert House in Palm Springs, and by Diane Bald and The Budman Family, restoring significant architecture in Toronto, Los Angeles, Malibu and Palm Springs.

New to podcasts? You can listen to USModernist Radio on any major podcast platform or through any computer.

New Architecture Books



Available February 17: ***The Iconic Nordic House: Modern Masterworks Since 1900,*** by **Dominic Bradbury and Richard Powers**, is a lavishly illustrated book showcasing influential Nordic residential architecture from the early 20th century to the present, featuring both historical modernists like Alvar Aalto and contemporary innovators, with specially commissioned photography, floor plans, and text exploring the unique character and sustainable design of these homes across Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Iceland, and the Faroe Islands. Pre-order.



Available February 24: ***Plugin House,*** by People's Architecture Office. An inspirational handbook of innovative solutions to the urgent housing problems facing densely populated urban areas around the world, Plugin House presents innovative, community-driven solutions to the global housing crisis. Challenging conventional architectural practices, the book champions the prefab house as an affordable and practical way to address housing scarcity or gentrification. Located primarily in China and the United States, the projects shine a spotlight on issues underlying the global housing crisis. Pre-order.

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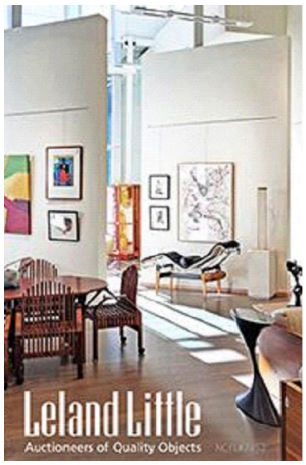





NCModernist has a number of artworks up for auction at Leland Little's Modern & Contemporary Auction on January 29. Bid here.



Raleigh lost an incredible midcentury modern house in 2001. Built in 1954, the Catalano House—also known as the Potato Chip House for its hyperbolic paraboloid roof—was a daring work by Argentinian architect Eduardo Catalano. But its legacy isn't gone. NCModernist partnered with local artist Dan Campbell to bring this architectural beauty back to life on canvas—and the result is nothing short of stunning. See it in person on Tuesday, January 27th, 6pm, at Leland Little's Modernist Auction Preview in Hillsborough, This one-of-a-kind oil painting will be auctioned on Thursday, January 29, with proceeds supporting NCModernist. Bid on it here.



Collectible Books, Maps, & Documents Auction Jan 22
Contemporary & Fine Craft Jewelry Auction Jan 28
Modern & Contemporary Auction Jan 29
Prints & Photographs Auction Jan 30
Fine Silver Auction Feb 12
Collector Car Auction Feb 25
Sporting Art Auction Feb 26
Fine Sporting Arms Auction Feb 27

Want to bring design-oriented people to your business, client site, or studio? Host a Thirst4Architecture design event!

NCModernist connects hundreds of people within the Modernist-architecture-loving public through social events called Thirst4Architecture (T4A). These exciting, informal events are free to participants. We welcome Modernist homeowners, architects, artists, designers, realtors, engineers, contractors, property investors, building

managers, materials and furniture dealers – or anyone with a huge crush on great architecture. T4A events focus on building relationships, sharing passion about good design, creating strategic alliances, and connecting people.

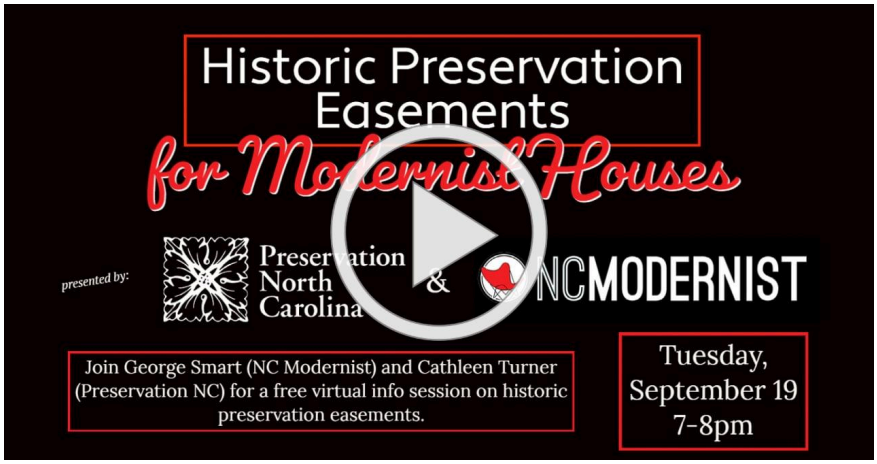
Contact Devra Dubroff, Special Events Manager, devra@usmodernist.org

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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