M News: SMASH / White House Ballroom Blitz / Three E. Fay Jones Houses
From: "George Smart Hon. AIA" <george@usmodernist.org>
Date: Monday, March 9, 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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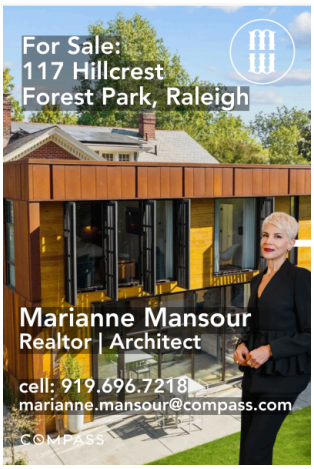
Editor: **Ron Gallagher** Newsletter Staff: **Virginia Faust, George Smart**
Got Modernist News? Contact **Ron Gallagher** at rpg.modernist@gmail.com

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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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Featured Upcoming Events

SMASH
DRINK EAT PLAY

Thursday, March 19, 6-8pm: NCModernist Thirst4Architecture Happy Hour, SMASH Social Club, 500 Glenwood Avenue, Raleigh NC. Free, registration required. Enter SMASH on the form.

Thursday, March 26, 530pm. Preservation Society of Asheville Buncombe County presents NCModernist's George Smart, speaking on Mayberry Modernism, the history of Modernism in North Carolina and Asheville. Ticket information TBA.



Saturday, March 28, 10am to noon: USModernist Art and Book Sale, 5409 Pelham Road, Durham NC. Purchase large (up to 5 feet by 5 feet) damaged contemporary canvases by artist **John Hiigli**. His paintings that normally sell stretched on frames for $800 to $3700 will be unstretched for $400 to $600! Coffee table books on Modernist architecture, many new $45 to $100, just $15 each! First come, first served. All proceeds benefit USModernist. **Want to donate contemporary art or architecture coffee table books to the sale? Bring'em at 930am and get first peek at the Hiigli paintings.**

NCMODERNIST MOVIE SERIES





Tuesday, April 7, 7pm. The NCModernist Architecture Movie Series continues at the much-loved Rialto Theatre, Glenwood Avenue in Raleigh NC. Double feature: *The Maslon House* and *Curating Modernism*, including remotes with producers **Scott Goldstein** and **Jake Gorst.** Get tickets in advance, or at the door. Sponsored by **Matt Griffith** and **Zach Hoffman** at in situ studio.

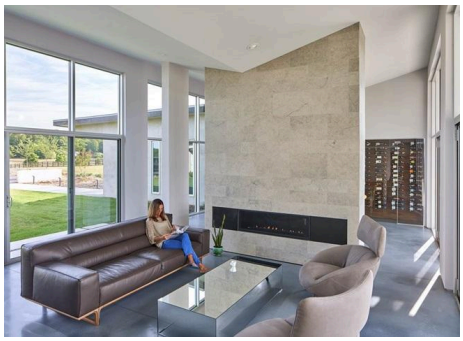
MODAPALOOZA

Raleigh/Durham NC



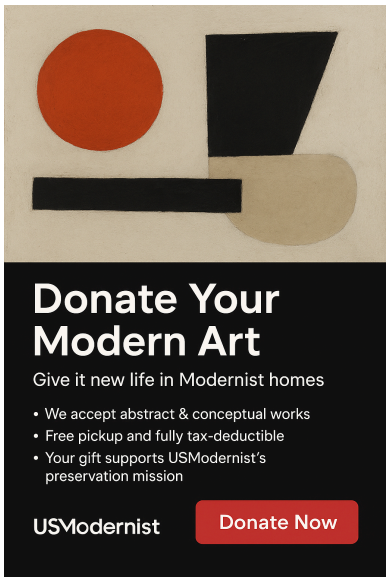






Saturday, April 18, 8-4pm. Enjoy a great day touring eight exciting new and classic Modernist houses in Raleigh, Durham, Hillsborough, and Chapel Hill -- without the hassle of driving, parking, and finding your way around. Sponsored by Anna Hartwell of the Hartwell Financial Group. Designed by **Heather Washburn**, **Arielle Schechter**, **Sophie Piesse**, **Notch Design**, **in situ studio**, and **Raleigh Architecture**. Discount for Mod Squad members. Tickets and details. *Only 12 seats left!*

Support USModernist's Mission and National Impact



So many ways to be part of the intrepid USModernist community! Sponsor this newsletter or the USModernist Radio podcast.

Join the Mod Squad. Make a tax-deductible financial donation. Transfer some crypto. Contribute your dad's abstract paintings. Donate old architecture and design magazines to the USModernist Library.

Donate your midcentury furniture or modern art. Can't sleep? Volunteer to do online research. Travel with us. Attend our Raleigh architecture movies. Come to a free Thirst4Architecture (T4A) Happy Hour (schedule below).

Endangered Modernist Houses





Endangered alert! A demolition permit was issued for the **Frank Walser** House at 3350 Alamance Drive in Raleigh NC, a pristine Milton Small house in amazing condition. This will be the first loss in years of a significant Modernist house in Raleigh. As of last Thursday, it was still there.



Finally sold - but 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 now-Modernist-loving ARB, Bliss got his permit and the house is under contract at $22M. The buyer, unknown at present, has the green light to tear it down if they wish.



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. The house is under contract. No word yet on the buyer or the house's fate.



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, being sold as land.



Endangered: The 1953 Wade and Margaret Lewis Residence at 2700 Manning Place in Raleigh is one of the very few houses in North Carolina built over a stream. They don't let you do that anymore. Designed by Milton Small, the house was widely published when completed. This is the perfect project for someone who wants a classic midcentury modern to renovate. If that person doesn't materialize, the house will surely be destroyed. For sale as-is for $675,000.

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



The National Capital Planning Commission is made up largely of people loyal to **Donald Trump**, but it was flooded last week with 35,000 comments - most opposing Trump's White House ballroom project. The NCPC put off voting to approve it until April 2. There also were numerous in-person statements at the March 5 hearing, an unprecedented level of pushback that forced the agency to slow down a process rushed through without adequate scrutiny. The ballroom had received an enthusiastic endorsement last month from the Trump-controlled US Commission of Fine Arts.



What Inspires You about Modernism? Say Hello to Caroline Francis!

She has joined USModernist as Chief Development Officer, replacing **Leah Fell** who worked in an interim capacity for the last two months. Formerly the director of philanthropic gifts at PBS North Carolina, her career is defined by a commitment to public service and the cultivation of transformative partnerships. She focuses on stewarding gifts with thoughtfulness and creativity, ensuring that donor intent translates into long-term impact. Caroline brings

a fresh energy to our team as we expand USModernist's world-class archives. Reach her at **caroline@usmodernist.org.**



After a whirlwind week of pro and con commentary about whether Dallas should move out of its 1978 I.M. Pei-designed City Hall or try to fix it and keep it going, the City Council put off deciding. People in favor of preserving the building addressed the council for hours last Wednesday. There's disagreement over costs. Immediate repairs are pegged at $329M. Another report says it will cost $1.1B to to get 20 more years out of the building. Meanwhile, the Dallas Mavericks NBA team has expressed interest in building a new arena on the site.



Repairing Frank Lloyd Wright's 1907 Darwin Martin House in Buffalo NY was accomplished after a long expensive effort, but curators are still trying to track down furniture and other objects that were part of his design. *Collecting Ourselves* is a new exhibit about the work.



Dezeen reports on eight buildings that embrace Brutalist aesthetics but were designed by contemporary architects. One is the Chapel of the Risen Christ in St. Louis MO, designed by Design Alliance Architects and completed last year.





House & Garden magazine in Britain talked with people about what it's like to live in some of London's notable Modernist buildings, including the Barbican Centre, left, and the Brunswick Centre in the Camden area of the city.



Architecture as art: *The Wall Street Journal* presented a commentary on the Chapel of Notre-Dame du Haut, designed by Le Corbusier and opened in 1955, as "an exhilarating advance in his handling of light, space and landscape."



Many Modernist buildings in Japan face threats of alteration or demolition because of concerns over seismic risks or energy efficiency of because advocates can't win the same respect for them that is afforded older architecture, The New York Times reports. One is **Kenzo Tange**'s recreation center in Takamatsu, closed since 2014 because regional authorities believe it is structutaly unsound.

Modernist Houses For Sale







Three amazing E. Fay Jones houses are for sale in the northwest Arkansas area, all at 7500sf or above, with prices ranging from $699,000 to $13M. Joplin, Missouri; Clarksdale, Arkansas; and Fayetteville, Arkansas.



A 1964 house in Downey CA designed by **Jules Salkin**, a friend of and collaborator with John Lautner is on the market for a bit over $2m.



A 1964 A. Quincy Jones house in the Joseph Eichler subdivision of Conejo in Thousand Oaks CA is listed for sale for $2.4M.



In the Brentwood area of Los Angeles is a 1951 house designed by **Kenneth Lind**, renovated in 1959 by Pierre Koenig and **Josef Van der Kar** and renovated and expanded from 2019-21 by **Chu-Gooding Architects**. It's for sale now for about $9.3M after being listed for $10.5M about a year ago.

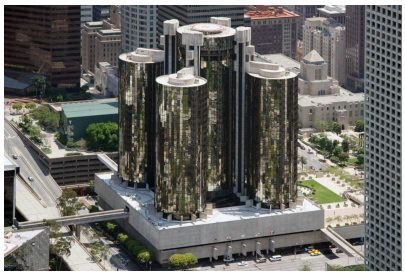


A 1957 house designed by architect **John Stroh** in Santa Paula CA is on the market with an asking price of about $1.8M.



Jim Webb designed a 1957 house in Chapel Hill NC sold now with a price tag of $825,000.

Upcoming Events



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.

Thursday, March 19: NCModernist Thirst4Architecture Happy Hour, 6-8pm, SMASH Social Club, 500 Glenwood Avenue, Raleigh NC. Free, registration required. Enter SMASH on the form.



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USModernist is proud to partner with Grace Farms for the 2026 Design for Freedom Summit on **March 26** in New Canaan CT. Join USModernist's **Devra Dubroff** and hundreds of leaders in design and construction dedicated to a more ethical built environment. Leave inspired and ready to take action to bring responsible sourcing into your world. Register.

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 embassy designs. Free and open to the public. Details.

March 28 and April 25: Public visit days to the Pearlman cabin in Idyllwild CA, designed by John Lautner with concept by **Agnes Pearlman**. 11:30 AM to afternoon after vegetarian lunch. pearlmancabin.com. Contact Nancysuepearlman@aol.com.

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 houses. Details.

Through March 31: *We Built This*, an exhibit celebrating the accomplishments of North Carolina's Black architects and builders, at **NCCU's James E. Shepard Memorial Library**, Durham NC.

April 2, 430pm: Designfluence, sponsored by STITCH Design Shop, featuring a talk by architect **Frank Harmon**. 1105 Burke Street, Winston-Salem NC. **Registration.**

Tuesday, April 7, 7pm: *The Maslon House* and *Curating Modernism*, with remote guests, producers **Scott Goldstein** and **Jake Gorst.** Rialto Theatre, Raleigh NC. Hosted by NCModernist. **Get tickets in advance**, or at the door.

Thursday, April 11, 11am-12:30pm: Docomomo-US NoCo tour of **Roger Lee** homes, Kensington CA. **Details and tickets.**

Thursday, April 16: NCModernist **Thirst4Architecture Happy Hour** at Mumford Restoration, Ebenezer Church Road, Raleigh. Free, **registration required.** Enter MUMFORD on the form.

Thursday, April 16: Preservation Raleigh Party event TBA.

April 16-19: Nevada Preservation presents Home + History Las Vegas, this year featuring midcentury Modernist experiences. **Tickets.**

Tuesday, May 5, 7pm: *The Donn of Tiki,* featuring curated tiki drinks and live music by Vibexotica starting at 6pm**.** Rialto Theatre, Glenwood Avenue, Raleigh NC. Hosted by NCModernist. **Get tickets in advance**, or at the door. Doors open at 545pm.

May 16: The **Frank Lloyd Wright** Trust's WrightPlus Architectural Housewalk, Oak Park IL. **Information.**

May 16-17: Preservation Durham Home Tour. **Tickets**.

May 5, 7pm: *The Donn of Tiki.* Rialto Theatre, Raleigh NC. Hosted by NCModernist. Special tiki drinks - plus live tiki music. Doors open at 545pm. **Get tickets in advance**, or at the door.

May 29-31: IconicHouses Conference - City Icons: Barcelona & Beyond. **Details.**

Tuesday, June 2, 7pm: *Visual Acoustics.* Rialto Theatre, Raleigh NC. Hosted by NCModernist. **Get tickets in advance**, or at the door.

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

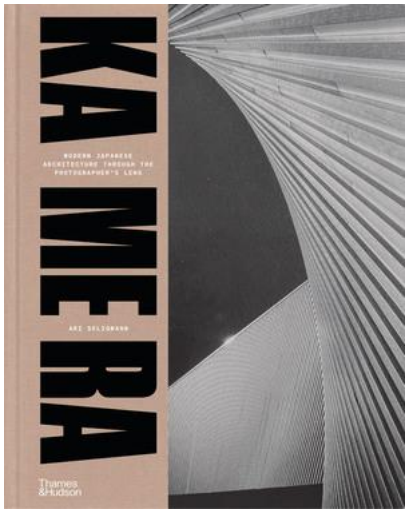
Sunday, June 7: USModernist's Brunch in New Canaan CT. Details and tickets TBA.

Thursday, August 20: NCModernist Thirst4Architecture Happy Hour at the new Raleigh Building Product Showroom of Fitch Lumber and Hardware, 3010 Stony Brook Drive, Suite 105. Free, registration required. Enter FITCH on the form.

Friday-Saturday, October 9-10: Harkrader House Tour and Celebration Party, Durham NC, sponsored by Preservation Durham and NCModernist. Details TBA.

Thursday, October 15: NCModernist Thirst4Architecture Happy Hour at Raleigh Architecture at their new office. Free, registration required. Enter RACO on the form.

New Books



Available March 31: *KA ME RA* introduces Japanese-architecture enthusiasts to the nine photographers who have been instrumental in shaping the way we view the country's spectacular postwar buildings. Through richly illustrated pages, readers can "travel" across the nation to witness its most astonishing structures through the eyes—and camera lenses—of these remarkable artists. Author and Japanese architecture expert **Ari Seligmann** examines the post-World War II evolution of architectural photography in Japan as a vehicle for considering both universal and culturally specific concepts of the world through images.

USMODERNIST RADIO
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Latest Podcast





#447/USModernist Radio Retro: Where No Furniture Has Gone Before + Special Musical Guest Jennifer Warnes

We've dug into the podcast vault for the story of *Star Trek*'s furniture. Gene Roddenberry's *Star Trek* launched a franchise in 1966 that is still going strong 60 years later. Sequels, movies, toys, fan films – there's just no end to *Star Trek's* bright, progressive, optimistic future where Earth has transcended national and international politics. Something architecture fans may have missed, and we certainly did, is that *Star Trek* adapted midcentury Modernist furniture for the set design, from the Bridge to the Conference Room, to the alien buildings on the planets the crew visited. Authors Dan Chavkin and Brian McGuire about talk their new book: *Star Trek - Designing the Final Frontier - The Untold Story of How Midcentury Modern Decor Shaped Our View of the Future*. Later on, legendary singer Jennifer Warnes, who you've loved for *I've Had the Time of my Life*, *Right Time of the Night*, *Up Where We Belong*, and a vast treasure of songs with and by Leonard Cohen.

US Modernist Radio is underwritten by The Brent R. Harris Charitable Trust, restorer of Richard Neutra's Kaufmann Desert House in Palm Springs and six other houses in California; by the E Fay Jones Conservancy, preserving the legacy of Modernist architecture in Northwest Arkansas. Visit efayjonesconservancy.org; and by Diane Bald and The Budman Family, restoring significant architecture in Toronto, Los Angeles, Malibu and Palm Springs.

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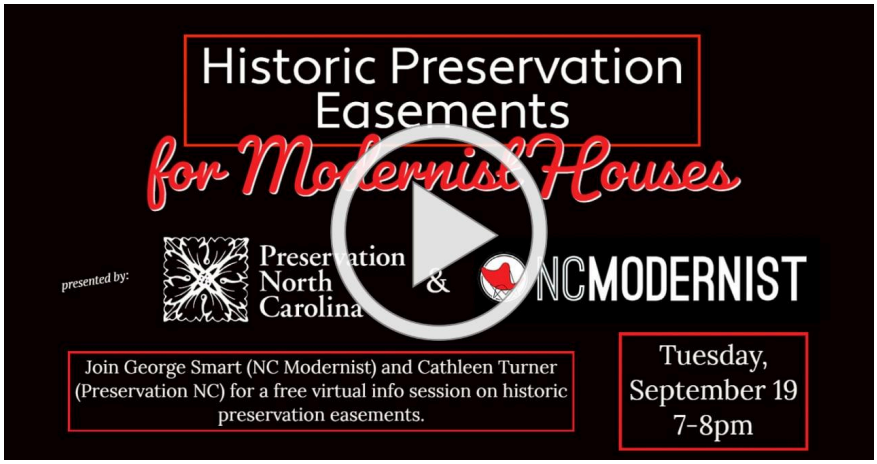


FOR SALE

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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