M News: Bunker-Ballroom / Presidential Tower / Penn Station-MSG / 8-Figure Discounts
From: George Smart <george@usmodernist.org>
Date: Monday, April 6, 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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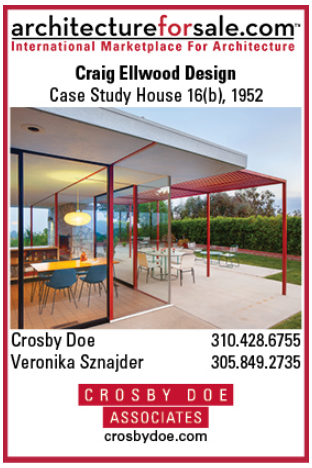
Meet the USModernist Team

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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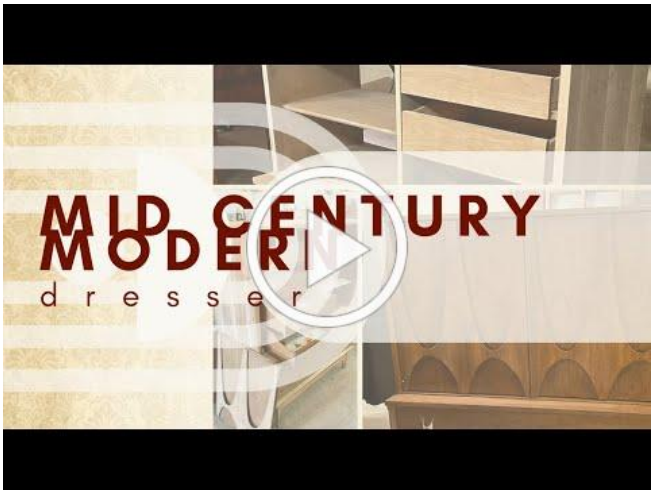








Featured Upcoming Events



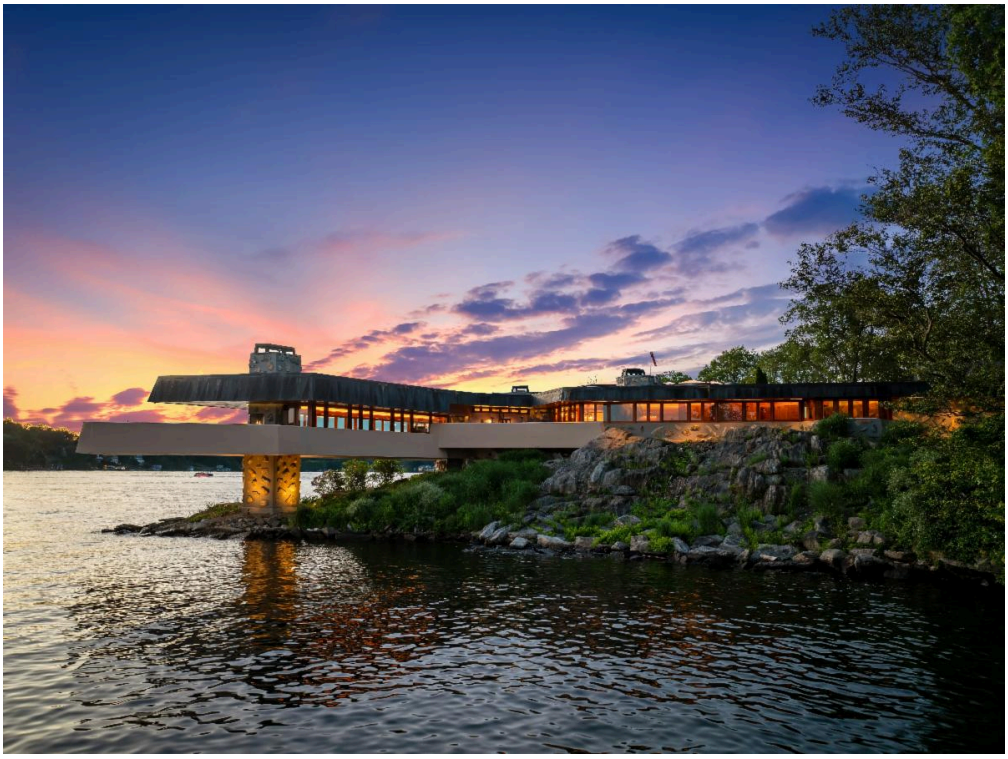
Thursday, April 16, 6-8pm: NCModernist Thirst4Architecture Happy Hour at Mumford Restoration, Ebenezer Church Road, Raleigh NC. Specialists in midcentury modernist restoration and much more! Free, registration required. Enter MUMFORD on the form.

MODAPALOOZA
Raleigh/Durham NC

Saturday, April 18, 8-4pm. Visit eight new Modernist houses on our luxury, snack-equipped, wifi-equipped, lunch-equipped fleet of buses. Only 11 places left! Details.

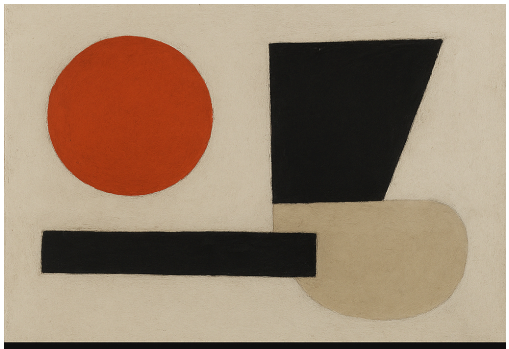
MATSUMOTO PRIZE

It's Matsumoto Prize time! In addition to new houses, NCModernist has added a new Renovations category for the 2026 Matsumoto Prize. This opens up the Prize for many creative solutions to expansion, restoration, and sustainability. The Matsumoto Prize is open to anyone with primary design responsibility for a Modernist house project located in North Carolina; the designer/architect can be from anywhere. **Deadline 5pm ET on April 29.** The 2026 George Matsumoto Prize Awards will be held at Leland Little in Hillsborough NC on July 22. Details, or skip right to the entry screen.



Sunday, June 7, 11am-1pm: Don't miss the boat! USModernist Celebrates Frank Lloyd Wright's 159th Birthday with a Jazz Brunch on Petra Island. Only 15 places left! Tickets and details.

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 donation. 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).

Contact **Caroline Francis,** USModernist Chief Development Officer, at **caroline@usmodernist.org.**

Endangered Modernist Houses

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.

3401 Ocotea, Raleigh NC, 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. Sold, but no word yet on the buyer or the house's fate.

Demolition is imminent for the **Frank Walser** House at 3350 Alamance Drive in Raleigh NC, a pristine Milton Small design in amazing condition. This will be the first loss in years of a significant Modernist house in Raleigh.

Endangered: From a town known as Oyster Bay, Long Island, made famous in song by **Billy Joel**, there's a rare, long-neglected Burke House, 144 Center Island Road, for sale on 17 acres for $6.75M. **Benjamin Thompson** of TAC was the project architect. TAC leader **Walter Gropius** was friends with the Burkes. No interior photos, being sold as land.

News



Rumors of a military bunker underneath the East Wing ballroom have been circulating for months and last week **Donald Trump** finally confirmed it. The new ballroom is indeed just a big concrete-and-steel "shed" covering a huge, underground military bunker. Virtually no one in Washington was surprised. It is unclear who has been commissioned for the project, but a subterranean visitor center designed by AECOM was recently proposed nearby. Details from NBC. A smaller bunker was underneath the now-demolished East Wing.

The ballroom design was blessed by the Trump-staffed National Capital Planning Commission on Thursday, but the project was ordered halted by US District Judge Richard Leon unless Congress approves it. He wrote what was likely the most quoted line from the week's news: "The President of the United States is the steward of the White House for future generations of First Families. He is not, however, the owner!" The judge allowed work to "ensure the safety and security of the White House."





Donald Trump unveiled renderings of his proposed presidential library skyscraper in Miami, designed by **Bermello Ajamil & Partners**. Website trumplibrary.org. A grand entry pavilion clad in gold prominently displays a 30-foot-tall gold statue of Trump with an arm raised. A golden escalator referencing Trump Tower's famous moving stairway connects lobby levels over the wing or a replica of Air Force One.



A previously unreported September Oval Office meeting revealed that **Donald Trump** wants to rebuild Penn Station and relocate Madison Square Garden. The $7.5B proposal was pitched by the Grand Penn Community Alliance, a nonprofit backed by conservative donor **Thomas Klingenstein**, who has spent $4M developing the plan and who donated over $13M to Trump and Republicans in the 2024 election cycle. His plan restores Penn Station with Greco-Roman columns, a glass roof, and natural light, recalling the grandeur of the original station demolished in the 1960s. Madison Square

Garden would move across Seventh Avenue to the former Hotel Pennsylvania site, replaced by a public fountain and green lawn. The key obstacle is **James Dolan**, MSG's billionaire owner, who has repeatedly refused to relocate. The Garden's operating permit expires in 2028, forcing the issue. A master developer is expected to be chosen in May, with the federal government pledging billions in investment.

Of all the building ideas Trump has put forward, this one makes the most sense for everyone, regardless of politics. Penn Station never should have been torn down, and replacing the underground mess that is MSG is a good move for New Yorkers.



If you wish you had the wide-ranging inspiration that Charles and Ray Eames showed in their designs, maybe you could try a build-it-yourself replica of the house-studio combo they built in Pacific Palisades CA in 1949, after the end of World War II made steel available again for civilian use. The Spanish outddoor-furnituremaker Kettal is debuting an Eames House kit this month at Milan Design Week.

Perhaps these Eames units will carry on the good karma that spared the original, which is Case Study House 8, during the 2025 wildfires that ravaged Paciofic Palisades and other communbities

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Mid-Century Home reported on the way **Ogawa Fisher Architects** renovated a 1950 Eichler home in Palo Alto CA to better accommodate a family of five

while respecting the original design.



Tour William Cody's 1967 Glass House in Palm Springs



In an Easter Sunday feature, a story about the Modernist churches of New Jersey, including St. Aloysius, above, in Jackson Township, which was built in 2009 from a mid-century design by architect **Daniel Tully**.



In a Denver CO early-college high school program, architect **Margarita Gonzales** is pushing to raise the percentage of women in the architecture profession by giving students a head start on college studies.



Smithsonian Magazine has a story about a truck driver who put more than 20 years into creating a balsawood replica of all five boroughs of New York City.



Architect Ron Radziner guides a tour of his own house in Los Angeles.



Renovations are under way to update the 1965 Community Center buildings at Petrified Forest National Park in Arizona and fix issues caused by shifting clay soils. Richard Neutra and **Robert Alexander** designed the complex for the National Park Service.



A critic at the UK's *Financial Times* says he has recently (finally) begun to appreciate Modernist designs by architect **Patrick Gwynne**, who died in 2003.

Modernist Houses For Sale



Get a $10M discount! **Hugh Jackman** and his ex-wife **Deborra-Lee Furness** have their Richard Meier three-floor condo in Manhattan's West Village back on the market, this time for $28.8M. It was listed for two months in 2022 for $38.9M.



How about a $20M Discount? The price of the late musician **Quincy Jones's** estate in Los Angeles has been cut to $40M from $60M last May. Architect **Gerald Allison** designed it.



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.



A 2005 house in East Hampton NY designed by **Bates Masi + Architects**, the firm that grew out of the practice of Harry Bates, has sold at $3M.



From 1950, one of the houses designed by **The Architects Collaborative** – Walter Gropius was the best-known member – in the Six Moon Hill community in Lexington MA is for sale for $1.95M.



A newly renovated 1965 house in Rancho de los Santos, an Eichler enclave in Concord CA, is on the market with a $1.28M price tag. The listing attributes this house to Claude Oakland.

Upcoming Events





This 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.

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

April 16, 5:30pm: Preservation Party by Preservation Raleigh at the McKinney House, 2109 Coley Forest Place, Raleigh. Designed by Macon Smith. Includes curated cocktails, spring wines, light bites, and a silent auction. Tickets and information.

April 16-July 19: *Gothic by Design: The Dawn of Architectural Draftsmanship*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Information.

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

April 26: Public visit day to the Pearlman cabin in Idyllwild CA, designed by John Lautner with concept by **Agnes Pearlman**. 11:30 AM to afternoon after vegetarian lunch. www.pearlmancabin.com. Contact Nancy Pearlman, Nancysuepearlman@aol.com.

May 2: Modernism in southern Minnesota bus tour by Docomomo-US MN. Details and 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 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, 11am-1pm: Frank Lloyd Wright's 159th Birthday Jazz Brunch on Petra Island! Tickets and details.

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.

September 13-15: AIA regional design conference, ASPIRE. Asheville NC. . Open to architects and the greater built environment. *Save $50 with code ASPMODERNIST26.*

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 in Raleigh NC. Free, registration required. Enter RACO on the form.

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Latest Podcast







#451/Industrial Musicals with Steve Young + WestEdge with Megan Reilly + Musical Guests Eric Stabnau and the Glenn Miller Orchestra

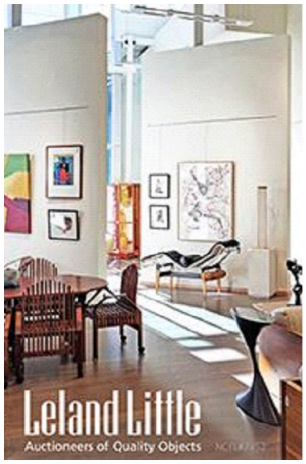
Ready for a dose of music, design, and spectacle? **Steve Young** digs up wild, forgotten mid-century industrial musicals and somehow makes them catchy again. **Megan Reilly** turns WestEdge LA into a playground of design, ideas, and inspiration. And **Erik Stabnau** keeps the venerable Glenn Miller Orchestra swinging, blowing the roof off of jazz clubs, arenas, coliseums, and amphitheaters for almost 100 years.

USModernist 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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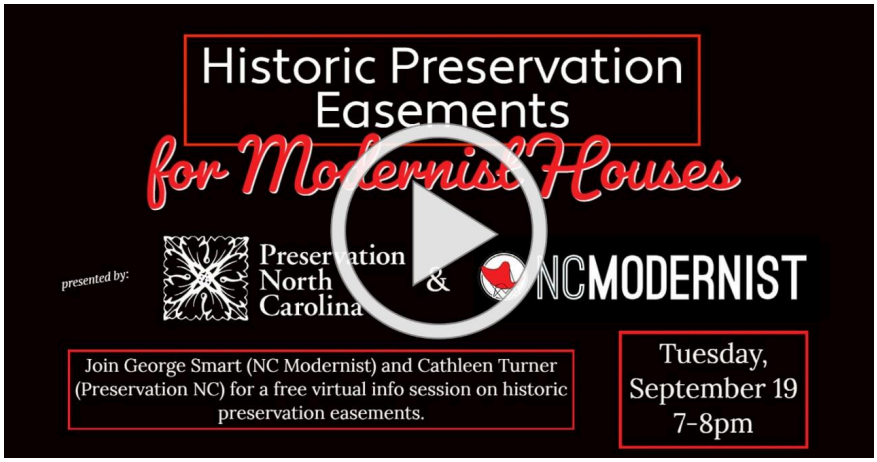


FOR SALE

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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