M News: GSA Seeks a Classicist / Tiki Night / Fallingwater Trip / North Carolina Modernism
From: George Smart <george@usmodernist.org>
Date: Monday, April 27, 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: 460+ Shows

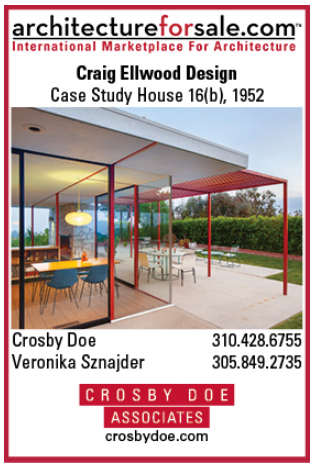
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Editor: **Ron Gallagher** Newsletter Staff: **Virginia Faust, George Smart**
Got Modernist News? Contact **Ron Gallagher** at rpg.modernist@gmail.com

Newsletter Sponsorship: Connect your product, service, or organization to USModernist's 87,000 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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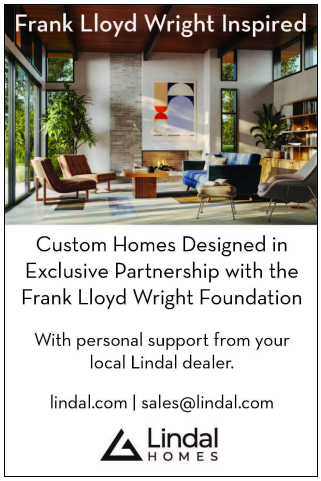














Featured Upcoming Events

MATSUMOTO PRIZE

It's Matsumoto Prize time! The Matsumoto Prize is open to any new Modernist house project located in North Carolina; the designer/architect can be from anywhere. Owners and builders can submit, too.

Deadline 5pm ET this Wednesday 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. The 2026 Prize is sponsored by:



NCMODERNIST MOVIE SERIES

Tuesday, May 5, 7pm: *The Donn of Tiki*. Come in your best Hawaiian shirt as we celebrate one of the most enjoyable artifacts of the mid-century era: the tiki bar and its creator, Donn Beach, also known as Don the Beachcomber.

Separating fact from exaggeration to finally tell his fascinating story: a youth spent in Jamaica, running rum during prohibition, hunting down cigars and liquor for troops in World War II, and bringing the first commercial lūau to Hawai'i. Remote Q&A afterwards with producer **Max Well.**

Featuring curated tiki drinks in tiki cups and **live tiki music by Vibexotica** starting at 6pm**.** Rialto Theatre, Glenwood Avenue, Raleigh NC. Get tickets in advance, or at the door. Doors open at 5:45pm.

Sunday, June 7, 11am-1pm: USModernist Celebrates Frank Lloyd Wright's 159th Birthday with a Jazz Brunch on Petra Island. Details. SOLD OUT. We are taking a waiting list.



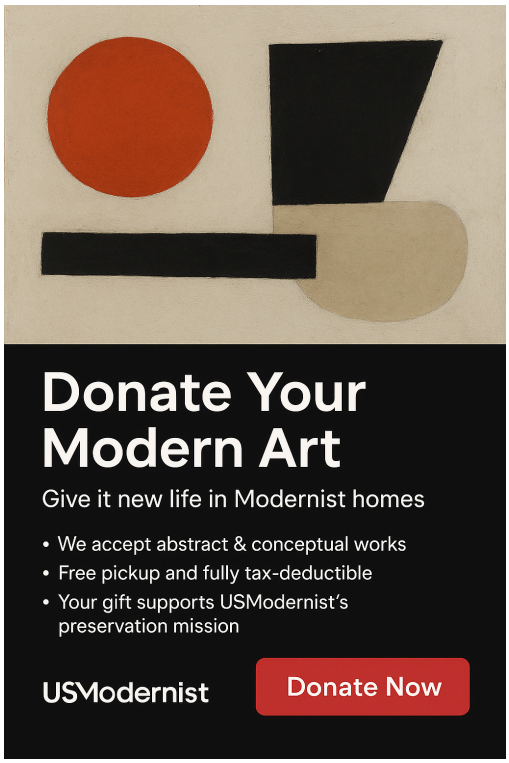
New: The USModernist Fallingwater Tour! September 11-12

The #1 bucket list destination for Modernist house fans! This trip is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity with virtually everything included!

Fallingwater was designed by world-renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright in 1935 over a waterfall as a weekend home for the Kaufman family, merchants in Pittsburgh. TIME called it Wright's "most beautiful job," and the house was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1966. It's the most famous Modernist house in America. Did you know that just a few miles away, there's another remarkable Wright house, Kentuck Knob, and its world-class outdoor sculpture garden? That's included. Plus Polymath Park and the Andy Warhol Museum.

Indicate interest (no commitment yet) here.

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.**

Hello Architects, Librarians, and Collectors:



Free the shelves! Empty the storage boxes! The massive drop of state and Federal funding is forcing libraries to make space for new media. And sadly, most architecture magazines in those bulky binders or storage boxes have been not been circulated or even opened for decades. Donate your old magazines to the USModernist Library, the largest open digital archive for of architecture and design magazines in the world. We scan and give them bew text-searchable, online life – with free user access. We even pay for shipping. Contact **George Smart**, 919 740 8407, or george@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.

Endangered: 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. Sold to Urban Buildings Solutions.

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 at 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.

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 any more. Designed by Milton Small, the house was widely published when completed. Off the market, but not under contract. Previously listed for $675,000.

News



Palm Springs last week granted Class 1 landmark status to the 1956 First Church of Christ Scientist, by the firm of John Clark, Albert Frey & Robson Chambers. It's now a performance venue.



Donald Trump's efforts to save America from Modernist government buildings, like the JFK Federal Building in Boston, above, is marching on with a job posting for a senior architectural advisor for the General Services Administration, charged with getting rid of the government's pesky Modernist properties. "Classical" appears eight times in the posting and "traditional architecture" appears seven times, *DWELL* reported.



In Detroit's Core City area, **Bryan Boyer**, cofounder of the architecture firm **Dash Marshall** designed a house around a courtyard that's a home office and a weekend getaway.



A couple in Miami wanted a house that was quirky and great for entertaining, and they got it in a waterfront home from architect Max Strang, designers **Christine and John Gachot**, and landscape architect Raymond Jungles.

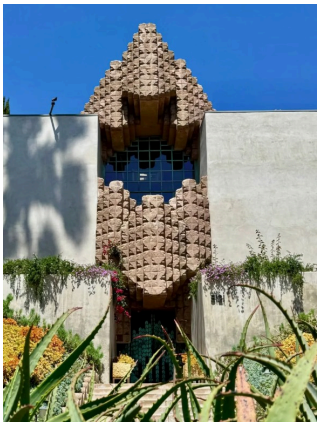


Fougeron Architects cited the influence of Eichler houses with the design of Wavelet House in Los Altos CA.

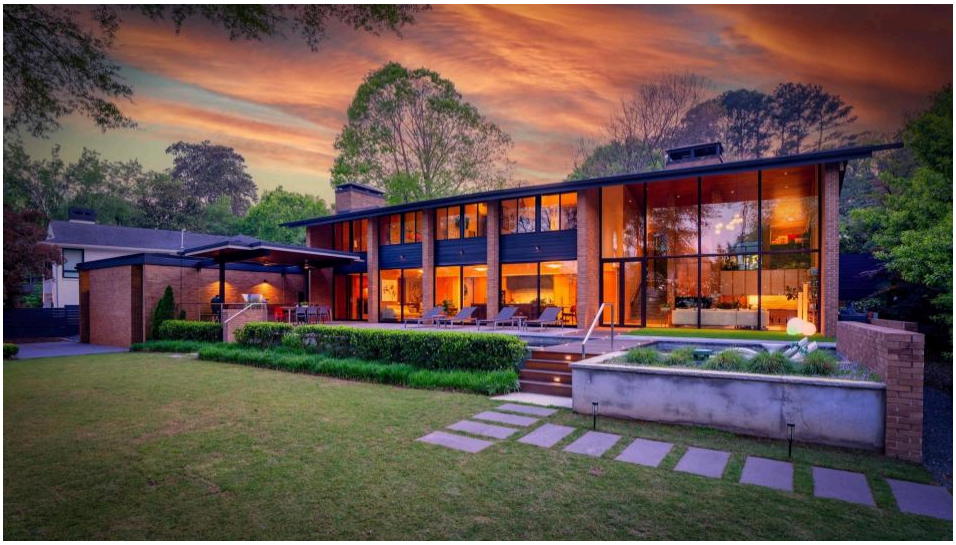


A video on woodworker **George Nakashima**. Hat tip to **Ron Collier.**





Realtor.com features LA's "wackiest" houses, including John Lautner's 1960 Chemosphere House to Lloyd Wright's 1926 Sowden House.



A 1965 house in Atlanta GA designed by architect **Ted Levy** went on the market for $3.25M and was under contract within a week.

Modernist Houses For Sale



Getting approvals to build the 1992 Cukier House that Lynn Swisher Spears designed in Houston, aka the Darth Vader House, derived from sketches Cukier based on the F-111 stealth fighter. Now, it's on the market for $7,777,777.



Wise Sellers: 1306 Mayfair in Raleigh NC is a delightfully small 1951 Modernist house in good condition. However, it's in a neighborhood full of teardowns. The owners, who love the house and have been there for over 50 years, have wisely required a no-teardown agreement for prospective buyers. Knowing that buyers can and do lie about destroying houses, this version of deed restriction is a legally enforceable binding promise attached to the property title. New caring owners, who have no intention of tearing a great house like this down, are undeterred. This scares away developers who would destroy it, as happened recently with the Milton-Small-designed Frank Walser house on Alamance Drive. Details.



Charles Gwathmey's 1988 Garey House in Kent CT is for sale for just under $7M.



The 1955 James and Nina Beck Residence by architect John Latimer in Durham NC is for sale for $810,000.

Upcoming Events

April 28, 5pm. The Onera Prize recipient **Anne Maxwell Foster** speaks at the Onera Foundation, New Canaan CT, on passive cooling for historic buildings. Details.



April 30: Museum of Arts and Design, New York NY. **Daniella Ohad** hosts Conversation with Design Legends. Special guest **Bill Sofield** who is converting the famous Flatiron building into residential. Tickets.

April 30: Screening of *Arthur Elrod Desert Cool,* 5pm PT. Palm Springs Cultural Center, Palm Springs CA. Details and tickets.

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 a special time of 5:45pm.

May 9: MAK Center Spring Architecture Tour of five Los Angeles-area houses designed by Lloyd Wright, Raphael Soriano, and Rudolph Schindler.

May 9: Restore Oregon's popular midcentury modern home tour will spotlight Portland's Argay Terrace. Details.

May 15-16: Mission Hills Mid-Century Weekend, San Diego CA. Information.

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

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

MOORE MODERNISM

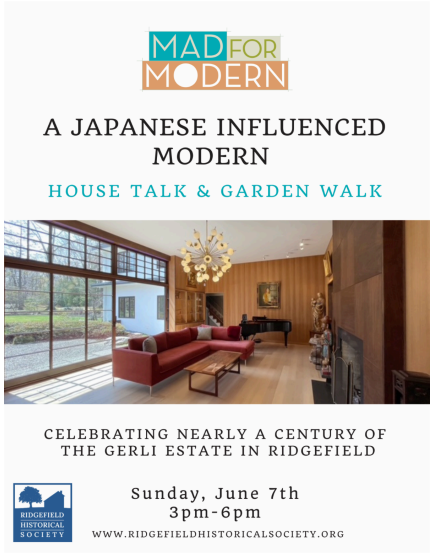
May 29-30: Moore Modernism Talk + Tour, Southern Pines NC. Featuring USModernist's George Smart speaking Friday night on Mayberry Modernism and the houses of the Sandhills. Then on Saturday, a tour of the WR Isom House, the Elizabeth Faye Long House, the Beith House, the Mattocks House, and the Adrian House. Tickets and details. Use the USModernist discount code **modernistmember** to receive 10% off.



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: USModernist hosts Frank Lloyd Wright's 159th Birthday Jazz Brunch on Petra Island! SOLD OUT. Tickets and details.

Through June 12: ***We Built This***, a traveling exhibition by Preservation North Carolina on NC landmarks designed and built by Black craftsmen, builders and architects. Free and open to the public at 700 Park Offices Drive, weekdays 9-5.

July 1: The Onera Foundation, New Canaan CT. *AMERICA ABROAD: Art, Architecture, and Diplomacy – Works from the FAPE Collection* explores how art and architecture have shaped the U.S. diplomatic presence abroad—from the Cold War to today. The exhibition features artworks from leading American artists including Ed Ruscha, Robert Rauschenberg, Carrie Mae Weems, Julie Mehretu, and Martin Puryear, alongside embassies designed by leading mid-century architects such as Edward Durell Stone and Walter Gropius, alongside more recent contributions by firms including Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) and Kieran Timberlake, among others.

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 non-architects. *Save $50 with code ASPMODERNIST26.*

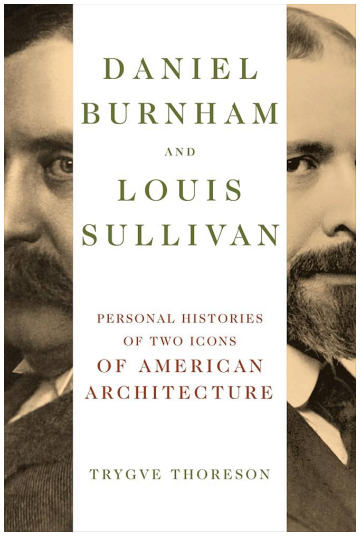
October 3: La Jolla Modernism Home Tour. Tickets will go on sale in July. Details.

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.

Through December 31: Tours of the Frank Lloyd Wright Russell W. and Ruth G. Kraus house in Ebsworth Park, St. Kirkwood MO. Details.

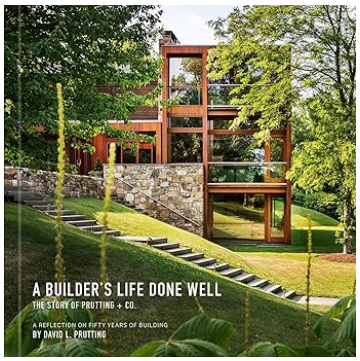
New Books



Available now: ***Daniel Burhham anid Louis Sullivan: Personal Histories of Two American Icons***, by **Trygve Thoreson.** Peers, foils, colleagues, and rivals—**Daniel Burnham** and **Louis Sullivan's** impact on each other still expresses itself in architectural masterworks that anchor Chicago's cityscape. Thoreson's parallel biography places their lives and careers within a panoramic history of the late 1800s and early 1900s. Unearthing a wealth of personal details, Thoreson pays particular attention to the influences that formed Burnham and Sullivan and shaped not only their designs but their conception of themselves as artists. He also examines the confluence of historical forces that pulled the two men together and pushed them apart.



Available now: ***Mid-Century Modern Midland***, by **Craig McDonald** and **Carol Neff**. This stunning 244-page coffee table book chronicles the unprecedented architectural legacy of Midland MI. Learn the story of MCM architecture in Midland – inspired by Midland native and architect Alden B. Dow – and see how more than 50 architects, designers and engineers contributed to the MCM movement, each expressing their unique style of Modernism. A mostly volunteer team surveyed 36 square miles in the city of Midland, helping to identify 403 structures built during the 40-year time period. Order.



Available May 26: ***A Builder's Life Done Well: The Story of Prutting and Company.*** Master Modernist builder **David Prutting** takes readers behind the scenes to offer a unique perspective on building some of the most distinguished contemporary homes in the United States, most around New Canaan, Connecticut. Working in an area that was once a hot bed of modernism—where influential modernist architects **Marcel Breuer, Phillip Johnson, and Eliot Noyes** designed pioneering houses—Prutting has built many award-winning homes designed by **Steven Holl Architects, Toshiko Mori Architects, Joeb Moore & Partners, Olson Kundig, KieranTimberlake,** plus others. Recounting his 50-year career, he imparts words of wisdom and advice for clients, architects, and contractors, sharing his experience of building homes and running a successful business. Order.



Modernist Fiction Book Review by **Bobbie Morris**

Villa E by **Jane Alison** explores the final week of **Le Corbusier's** life and his conflicted relationship with Irish architect **Eileen Gray.** Although clearly obsessed with her work, Le Corbusier vandalized one of her most celebrated buildings — Villa E-1027 on the French Riviera, designed with **Jean Badovici** — by painting murals and nude figures directly onto its white walls. The act enraged Gray and caused a permanent rift between them. In a strange and revealing psychological twist, Le Corbusier eventually built a small cabin just steps from the home he had defaced, and it was there he died after suffering a heart attack while swimming.

The novel covers his last seven days, telling the story through flashbacks that alternate between Gray's and Le Corbusier's perspectives. Alison renders both figures with complexity — Gray as an artist whose legacy was overshadowed by the men around her, and Le Corbusier as a towering ego unable to resist claiming ownership of what he admired. The stream-of-consciousness narration may not suit every reader, but it offers a fascinating recreation of one of modern architecture's most controversial episodes.

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Latest Podcast







#454/North Carolina Modernism with Phil Szostak and Ben Taylor + Musical Guests Vince Giordano and the Nighthawks

Architect Phil Szostak has shaped some of North Carolina's most prominent Modernist cultural spaces and houses, and architect Ben Taylor's long career has left a lasting mark across the state. Later, it's straight out of Birdland with musical guests **Vince Giordano and the Nighthawks**.

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

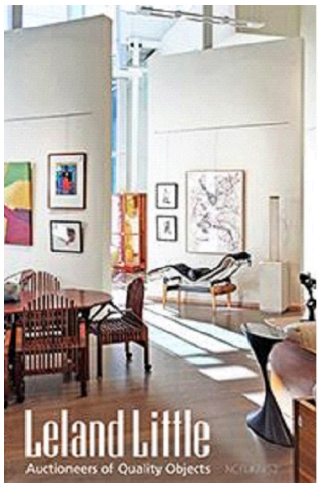
efayjonesconservancy.org; and by Diane Bald and The Budman Family, restoring significant architecture in Toronto, Los Angeles, Malibu and Palm Springs.

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

NCMODERNIST







Leland Little's fantastic quarterly Modern and Contemporary auction is online this Thursday, April 30, featuring nearly 400 items.

Support NCModernist by bidding on paintings by artist **John Hiigli,** examples above.

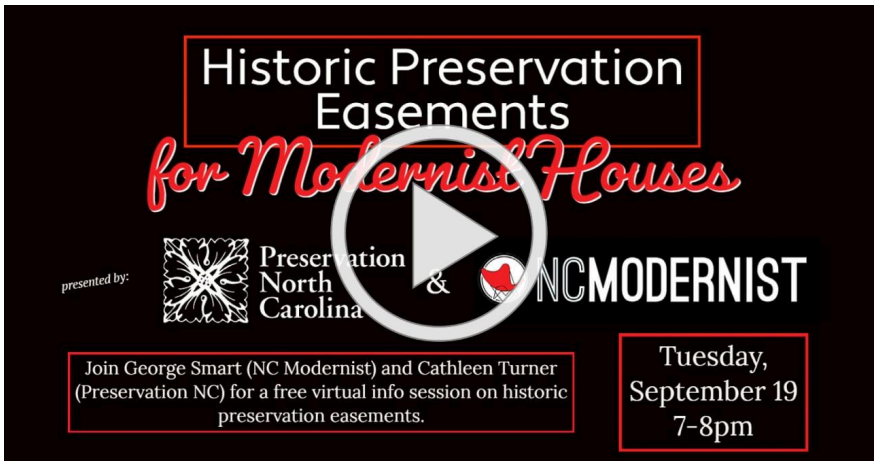
Join NCModernist's **George Smart** and **Devra Dubroff** at the pre-auction reception, 6pm, Wednesday, April 29, at Leland Little, 620 Cornerstone Court, Hillsborough NC. This event is free. More info & tickets here.

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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