



From top: The Harry Weese-designed home on Red Mountain combines two separate units with a shared deck; built into the hillside, the structure sits almost entirely on stilts.

DECADES OF DESIGN

Three midcentury-modern homes continue to inspire architects today.

By Linda Hayes

The Aspen Institute. Aspen Sundeck. Boomerang Lodge. Prince of Peace Chapel. Red Brick School. Aspen Square. Paepcke Auditorium. As Aspen's reputation as a ski destination grew in the decades between 1945 and 1975, so did its modernist architectural community. Designed by such notables as Frederic "Fritz" Benedict, Herbert Bayer, Harry Weese and Ted Mularz, to name a few, these architectural icons, and many more like them, came to define the town we know and love today.

In decades since, new generations of architects and designers influenced by the design integrity of earlier works have continued to respect, reflect and restore

elements of the past. The Aspen Historic Preservation Commission's designation of 30-plus valuable historic resources, including two of the following homes, as mid-20th-century AspenModern, furthers the efforts.

Baird House: **Living Up to Its Past**

Orrin Baird waxes nostalgic as he describes the Red Mountain hillside home modernist Weese designed and construction-managed for his parents, John and Marian Baird, in 1974. "It's an unusual house—distinctive," he says. "It's built entirely on stilts and doesn't touch the ground except on one corner, where there's a large boulder built into it, and there



PHOTOS BY DAVID O. MARLOW



WHERE TO LOOK

Paris Underground Antiques: A unique source for midcentury-modern French antiques and accessories. 520 E. Durant Ave. #206, parisunderground.com

Aspen Design Room: Luxury furniture showroom featuring high-quality brands and interior design services. 625 E. Main St. #101, aspensdesignroom.com

are few right angles. Weese was an incredibly creative guy.”

Designed in two separate sections, with a deck in between, one with a large master bedroom and living area “for the parents,” and one with four smaller guest bedrooms for kids and grandkids, the house also features a concave roof that Orrin says forces one’s view up toward the mountains. After over 40 years of spending time there, Orrin says, “It’s very simple by today’s standards, with no five-car garage or movie room. But it’s open and private with a stream and trail nearby. Our family and friends all love it.”

Berko Studio: The Next Generation

Tasked with restoring the midcentury-modern studio of famed photographer Ferenc Berko, and adding to it to create a multigenerational family property on-site, Aspen architect Harry Teague contemplated both the needs of the owners, the Berko/Mallory family, and the design of the original architect, Mularz. “The family is steeped in the history of Aspen, and I respect Ted’s discipline,” says Teague. “We needed to be sure that the historic structure and the new construction, which is more contemporary, would be compatible and fit appropriately within the neighborhood.”

Still a work in progress, the project, in Aspen’s historic West End, is living up to expectations. Nora Berko, who grew up on the property, says, “To see the building in which [Ferenc] Berko photographed,

developed, printed, edited and archived his work over 40 years come into a new life as both a family residence and archive has been humbling and gratifying.” Voluntary designation in Aspen’s Historic Preservation Commission’s AspenModern program was satisfying for all involved.

McLain Flats: An AspenModern Gem

The architectural integrity, most notably the curved ceiling trusses with center skylights, of a midcentury-modern home built in 1969 on a viewcentric site was the touchstone for its remodel. “It wasn’t designated a historic structure, but its essential elements spoke to Aspen’s legacy,” says Sarah Broughton, whose Aspen studio, Rowland+Broughton, handled the work. “Rather than tear it down, as had been the new owners’ intention, we wanted to restore its character, to contemporize it and add value to the structure.”

To that end, the team refined and refurbished the original architectural elements, particularly the beams and columns, then complemented them with a restrained color palette and tactfully integrated modern materials and furnishings. Interior spaces, including the master suite, kitchen, dining room and main living area, were redesigned or reorganized to encourage natural light and increase indoor-outdoor living experiences. “We gave new life to the home and preserved its authenticity,” says Broughton. “It’s all about stewardship.” ■



Clockwise from left: Rather than tear down the McLain Flats home, built in 1969, Sarah Broughton refurbished the original beams and columns to maintain its character; by reorganizing the common areas, natural light now plays a more important role in the home’s flow; a rendering of the Berko/Mallory project shows the original studio (in front) with the addition in back.

