

Modern Architecture Attract New Generation to Its Conservation

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Short Communication

However, many important twentieth-century places remain unprotected. There is still little research addressing common technical problems impeding the repair of these buildings. With the termination of the Conservation of Modern Architecture course a partnership of various Finnish institutions and International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property there is no dedicated training on the subject at an international level, and there are only isolated opportunities at national levels [1]. This is the area of conservation where future and past collide, where creator and conservator may come together, and where we have better access than ever before to first-hand knowledge of why and how places were created. But despite considerable professional interest and an admirable body of conservation knowledge, there remain many challenges [2]. Clearly we have not yet achieved widespread recognition and support for the conservation of twentieth-century places, nor have we arrived at a shared vision, approach, or methodology for doing so. It is therefore timely to reflect on how the practice of conserving modern architecture has advanced, in order to identify the areas on which future efforts should be concentrated [3]. This need prompted the Getty Conservation Institute to launch the Conserving Modern Architecture Initiative. In considering how the Getty Conservation Institute could contribute, preliminary research identified the most commonly cited and interrelated challenges as, lack of recognition and protection, lack of a shared methodological approach, life span and technical challenges, obsolescence [4]. The limited passage of time in which to assess the Modern Movement within the palimpsest of history impacts how conservation is approached and gives rise to the first two challenges. Many national and local authorities now include twentieth century heritage in their listing programs. Nevertheless, in parts of the world, there remains nervousness about protecting anything but the icons of the Modern era [5]. There is so much of it, we don't like it, and it's too hard to deal with are common criticisms. In many areas, twentieth-century structures dominate the urban landscape, and for older generations their realization is a living, but not necessarily positive, memory. These places are yet to go through the Darwinian natural selection process, after which the survivors are appreciated as heritage. Thus, questions are raised about what to protect and how to establish comparative levels of significance within existing frameworks used in the heritage identification and assessment process [6]. Conservation approaches have evolved since the first modern buildings were awarded heritage protection in the late 1970s. Recognition of a broad range of heritage values and types of heritage places, changes in heritage management, reduced government support, and the importance of public participation have all influenced what is protected and how it is conserved [7]. In many places, attention has shifted from expert assessments of iconic architectural buildings a focus seen as elitist by some to community-based heritage assessments that capture places expressing wide-ranging values, places appreciated across large sectors of the community. While modernism was seen as an important tool in social reform, the listing of modern heritage has been driven primarily by the architectural community, and it focused initially on architectural value [8]. Lack of public support has sometimes hampered efforts by authorities to list modern heritage successfully. When listing

efforts were designed strategically with education and awareness-raising components that enhanced understanding of these places and that provided conservation information to owner's controversy was reduced, and listing was more successful [9]. Stronger support was also generated when community engagement occurred early in the process. As time passes, appreciation will inevitably grow for places that represent the Modern era's richness and diversity. Survivors will become more precious, and a level of comfort about conserving them will be achieved [10].

Acknowledgement

None

Conflict of Interest

None

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Received: 27-Oct-2023, Manuscript No. JAET-23-121617; **Editor assigned:** 30-Oct-2023, PreQC No. JAET-23-121617 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 13-Nov-2023, QC No. JAET-23-121617; **Revised:** 19-Nov-2023, Manuscript No. JAET-23-121617 (R); **Published:** 26-Nov-2023, DOI: 10.4172/2168-9717.1000359

Citation: Elodie F (2023) Modern Architecture Attract New Generation to Its Conservation. *J Archit Eng Tech* 12: 359.

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