

# Ohio Modern: Preserving Our Recent Past History–Architecture Survey

**T**he city of Dayton and the surrounding communities of Fairborn, Kettering, Huber Heights, Oakwood, Trotwood and Vandalia have been selected for a pilot survey documenting the historic themes and buildings of the mid-20th century, from 1940-1970. The survey will provide new information about housing, subdivisions, public and commercial buildings and the work of area builders, developers and architects from the recent past.

The Ohio Modern survey will chronicle individuals, families, and companies that designed, developed and built these structures and subdivisions. Interviewing the local builders, contractors and real estate developers responsible for the construction of the era provides a rare opportunity to tap into the memories and knowledge of the very individuals and companies that shaped the places where people lived, worked and shopped.

The Ohio Historical Society's Ohio Historic Preservation Office will coordinate the survey through a National Park Service Preserve America grant and matching funds. Partners in supporting this project include the Ohio Department of Transportation, Ohio Department of Development, Ohio Humanities Council, a state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the City of Dayton and the University of Dayton.

Additionally, the larger Ohio Modern initiative includes preparing a statewide historic context document outlining the important social, political and economic trends that shaped land use decisions, architectural styles, property types and building technology in Ohio from 1940-1970.

The Ohio Modern survey will directly benefit Dayton and the surrounding suburban communities with information about significant mid-20th century properties associated with post World War II historic events and architectural trends. Ohio Modern will also serve as a model for communities throughout Ohio to begin identifying and evaluating similar architecture and neighborhoods. The information resulting from Ohio Modern will be used for nominating properties to the National Register of Historic Places and for informed decision-making for education, tourism and economic development projects.

This 30-year span, from 1940-1970, was a time of great change defined by the end of World War II, modern architecture, the Baby Boom, a tremendous expansion in suburban neighborhoods and the construction of the interstate highway system. From 1950-1960, Ohio's population increased by 22 percent and over 1.8 million homes were constructed 127,000 in Montgomery County alone. Ohio was a significant leader in manufacturing and industry. It was a period that transformed the state's cities and towns, suburbs and landscapes, and continues to define Ohio today.

Dayton, a Preserve America Community, and the six adjacent communities were proposed because they exemplify the post-war optimism experienced in Ohio and throughout the nation. Communities experienced an increase in population from returning veterans and the migration of workers from elsewhere – all seeking jobs in the booming industrial and manufacturing sectors. Much of this dramatic growth was defined by suburban residential developments that resulted in changes in land use, increased housing, the need for more schools, and changes in commercial architecture – most dramatically the rise of shopping plazas and centers.

But, less than 1 percent of the built environment from these three decades has been recorded in the Ohio Historic Inventory, leaving the period of greatest impact with the least amount of research and documentation. Information gathered from the survey will add approximately 500 historic properties to the Ohio Historic Inventory including



TOLDEO, OHIO

subdivisions of ranch houses and cape cods, schools, churches, bank branches, shopping centers, public and commercial buildings.

Barbara Powers, of the Ohio Historical Society's Ohio Historic Preservation Office, will direct the Ohio Modern project. Ms. Powers oversees the Ohio Historic Inventory, Ohio Archaeological Inventory and the National Register of Historic Places programs in Ohio. The team of Steven Avdakov, Heritage Architectural Associates; Kathy Mast Kane, Historic Preservation Consultant; and Nathalie Wright, Historic Preservation Con-



PARMA HEIGHTS, OHIO

sultant will conduct the history-architecture survey in the greater Dayton area.

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- Pilot survey project will identify and evaluate mid-20th century architecture in selected neighborhoods in the Dayton and likely surrounding suburban communities of Fairborn, Kettering, Huber Heights, Oakwood, Trotwood and Vandalia. Survey will document 500 properties on the Ohio Historic Inventory form.

- Historic survey report that includes the research design, summary of the survey methodology, brief outline of historical development of survey areas, bibliography, maps of overall survey area and specific subdivisions surveyed, assessment of the significance of the inventoried properties based upon National Register criteria and integrity requirements and a list of properties/districts that may qualify for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.



DAYTON, OHIO

BRAND INDEPENDENT, CITY OF DAYTON

- Summary of oral interviews with local developers, builders, community leaders representing historic themes and construction activity associated with the survey areas and the broad themes identified in the statewide historic context.
- Public forum in Dayton to share the results of the history-architecture survey and the statewide historic context document; results of the Ohio Modern projects will be posted on the Ohio Historical Society's web site.

If you have photos, scrapbooks or other historical records of architecture or construction for the greater Dayton area or elsewhere in Ohio from this time period that you are willing to share, contact Barbara Powers at (614) 298-2000 or [bpowers@ohiohistory.org](mailto:bpowers@ohiohistory.org).

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To better serve you we recommend that you  
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