MODERN AND MILLENNIALS: ENGAGING THE NEXT GENERATION WITH THE PRESERVATION OF MODERN HERITAGE

By

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To my family
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By

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Cochair: Kay Williams
Major: Historic Preservation

As the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 approaches its fiftieth anniversary in 2016, the historic preservation movement is facing numerous challenges, including the need to evaluate a vast array of post-war resources that have reached the pivotal age of 50 and the need to engage a wider range of stakeholders, especially the younger generations. The millennial generation, those born between the early 1980s and the early 2000s, currently represents the largest portion of United States population. This generation is distinguished, among other characteristics, by their break in traditional priorities regarding quality of life, education, and diversity.

Mirroring the values of millennials, historic preservation philosophy regarding the conservation of Mid-century Modern heritage is also evolving into a broader approach. While preserving modern architecture has its own set of technical challenges, public perception is a key component in engaging the general public with its significance. By utilizing a mixed methods approach and surveying socio-cultural values through an online platform, this thesis is focused on understanding millennials’ perception of the field of historic preservation, and then, specifically, of preserving modern heritage.
Focusing on vernacular, residential Mid-century Modern architecture, the survey attempts to raise awareness for non-pedigree resources.

The results and conclusions of the survey aim to identify essential interests and values associated with millennials that parallel preservation philosophy and that could be better utilized when conducting advocacy campaigns associated with conserving modern resources. Overall, millennials seem to value preserving modern heritage, even if they do not consider it historic or aesthetically pleasing.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, approximately 15 million people in the United States are engaged in preservation related activities, but do not consider themselves as preservationists.\(^1\) The National Trust refers to this group as “Local Preservationists,” those who are involved in the community and a part of a wide range of activities that are directly related to saving historic places, but are not typical, professional, preservation leaders.\(^2\) While the National Historic Preservation Act (1966) approaches its fiftieth anniversary in 2016, the historic preservation movement is facing numerous challenges. Among the more pressing of these challenges is the need to evaluate a vast array of post-war resources that have reached the pivotal age of 50 and the need to engage a wider range of stakeholders, especially the younger generations. With Mid-century Modern heritage currently celebrated in popular culture, perhaps strategies could be devised to advocate for both challenges, utilizing post-war resources to attract a younger generation to historic preservation.

The millennial generation, those born between the early 1980’s and the early 2000’s, represents about one-third of the total United States population in 2013.\(^3\) This generation is distinguished, among other characteristics, by their break in traditional priorities regarding quality of life, education, and diversity. Whereas the generation that created millennials, the baby boomers, valued the nuclear family, car transportation,


\(^2\) Ibid, 3-7.

and suburban development, millennials value walkability of cities, sustainability, and a connection with their community. Millennials are also the most educated and most diverse generation thus far in United States history, with about 61% having attended college. Understanding and marketing to millennials is a current focus not only in multiple industries and companies, but in the field of historic preservation because of the massive impact that this generation will serve. William Fulton writes, “Just like the baby boomers, the preferences of the millennials will drive our society for two generations. They’re making location decisions based on their idea of quality of life. And they’re going to make those decisions in the next few years—by the time they’re 35.”

Conversely, though millennials do represent the most educated generation, most are generally unaware of what the field of historic preservation entails. While their values, interests, and priorities parallel those of preservation, most do not associate themselves with the field. Those who are aware would not call themselves traditional ‘preservationists,’ associated with the standardized, professional field. After surveying thousands of Americans, the chief marketing officer of The National Trust for Historic Preservation, Terry Richey, gleaned, “Millennials want to be active in support of the preservation cause and not passive consumers of information. They want to sign up for action alerts or attend ‘behind the scenes’ tours, for example, but they don’t necessarily want to be traditional members.”

Previous studies in Atlanta, Georgia, and Canada

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5 New Voices: Engaging Millennials at the ARC Table (Atlanta: Atlanta Regional Commission), 12.


have focused on engaging millennials in city planning and understanding their idea of heritage values, therefore this thesis works to further this investigation by keying into current preservation issues, such as perception of modern heritage. Theodore Prudon writes, “Understanding how the perception of a building has evolved is critically important to a comprehensive preservation approach. It helps to develop an informed basis from which to engage the public.”8 This research will explore this aspect of historic preservation because there is a lack of study specifically focusing on how to engage millennials in the preservation of modern heritage, even though a majority of preservationists agree that preserving modern is the next set of resources on which to focus.9

Since the millennial generation is next in line to shape not only the built environment, but American culture itself, it is essential to discern how this generation perceives Mid-century Modern heritage in order to assess how preservationists can better communicate the significance of these architectural resources. For the purposes of this thesis, Mid-century Modern, and modern in general, is defined as the built environment after World War II, from the late 1940s to the 1970s in America. While it is most often used in reference to architecture, modern heritage is also associated with interiors, landscapes, and neighborhoods.

By utilizing a values based approach and evaluating publicly held perceptions of this architecture as opposed to design based significance, this research takes a

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contemporary stance and follows what Jeremy Wells calls “people-centered architectural conservation.” While this approach opposes traditional methodological practices in historic preservation, Wells writes, “Such a perspective does not necessarily mean entirely deprecating fabric-based approaches, but instead supplementing these traditions with a better understanding of the contemporary social, cultural, and experiential dimensions of built heritage.” He continues, noting, “Armed with a better understanding of how everyday people actually value historic places, architectural conservators can adjust their interventions and plan accordingly.” By surveying millennials on their perception of Modern architecture and the values they associate with preserving modern, this thesis will first capture what millennials think about preservation and then provide a tool to better guide preservationists on how to engage and market to millennials and provide recommendations for future research.

This study is important because it is working to further investigate the trend in historic preservation related to saving post-war architectural resources, but also expanding on this current trend by analyzing how to engage the next generation in the preservation of modern architecture. This research explores a specific age group’s perception of Mid-century Modern in general, instead of a group’s perception of a specific location, such as local examples, so that the results can be generalized to a larger audience. Also, rather than focusing solely on the importance of preserving Mid-century Modern because it is ‘historic’ or because of its ‘high-style’ architectural

11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
significance by well-known designers, this research serves to raise awareness of the underrepresented vernacular Mid-century Modern heritage and what the millennial generation’s perceived values of these resources are. Preserving modern heritage expert, Theodore Prudon, notes the importance of understanding perception, especially in the case of modern architecture, and states:

The perception of modern architecture, particularly from the period immediately following the war, has been characterized since the 1980s in stark terms and, presumably, as indifferent to human scale, comfort, or well-being. Many of the period’s icons are appreciated and praised by a professional audience for aesthetic or social values but have been rejected by the public at large, which has a great deal of negative perceptions about modern building design. These perceptions remain a serious obstacle to preservation efforts—not just for more ordinary examples, but even for the more canonical buildings, particularly those dating from the postwar decades.\(^\text{13}\)

Consequently, recognizing what the millennial generation values in relation to modern heritage is essential in helping inform preservationist’s strategies to advocate and to preserve.

The post-war era presents a unique challenge to preservation and advocacy because of its association with the Recent Past, misunderstood design aesthetics, and experimental building materials that have poorly deteriorated, among others. These issues often translate into public distaste and lack of community support for saving these architectural resources. As published in DOCOMOMO’s (international committee for Documentation and Conservation of buildings, sites, and neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement) Conference proceedings, *The Challenge of Change: Dealing with the Legacy of the Modern Movement*, “It is well known that ‘Modern architecture

generally needs to look new in order to look good.” However, if preservationists worked to realize what the public held as important to these buildings and relayed their architectural importance from a socio-cultural standpoint, more communities could be actively engaged in preservation projects for Mid-century Modern heritage. It makes sense to take a contemporary approach to a contemporary, technologically engaged, audience of the millennial generation.

According to Daniel Ronan, a young preservationist who often writes for the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s blog, PreservationNation, “Millennials…have the opportunity and ingenuity to bring the past forward. The key? Thinking of it in multifaceted terms, being open to innovative approaches, and refocusing on saving the local, community places that matter.” Yet there are several hindrances in the field of historic preservation for marketing to modern and millennials. In general, Ronan identifies older preservationists who stick by a “broken model” and seem “critical of non-traditional engagement techniques, as if more voices in preservation risks questioning their specialized knowledge and authority.” Traditional preservationists tend to utilize a standardized approach directly related to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Historic Preservation and a heavy focus on fabric, or materials based, authenticity rather than engaging the community with their values.


16 Ibid.
Also, within the preservation movement as a whole, the challenge of preserving modern is a continued debate of philosophy. The preservation of modern architecture might first appear paradoxical. This perceptual issue is one that modern heritage has struggled with since the inception of the 50 year guideline for the age of significant buildings in the National Register of Historic Places and modernism’s strong break with traditional building practices. Modernism has been called “the genesis and the bête noir of historic preservation.” However, by rejecting the preservation of modern architecture, preservationists and communities alike are once again refusing to learn from their forefathers. Written in 1966, on the eve of the National Historic Preservation Act, the National Trust’s publication entitled, *With Heritage So Rich*, notes:

> A Nation can be a victim of amnesia. It can lose the memories of what it was, and thereby lose the sense of what it is or wants to be. It can say it is being ‘progressive’ when it rips up the tissues which visibly bind one strand of its history to the next. It can say it is only getting rid of ‘junk’ in order to make room for the modern. What it often does instead, once it has lost the graphic source of its memories, is to break the perpetual partnership that makes for orderly growth in the life of a society.\(^{18}\)

While this refers to the widespread urban renewal that the United States was experiencing after World War II, this same philosophical idea ironically applies to today’s destruction of the post-war landscape. Historic preservation is a modern concept, born legislatively out of 1960s thought in America, but practiced through grass-roots efforts long before. Richard Longstreth discusses this issue of modern preservation, noting, “The products of the recent past, on the other hand, tend to be seen as simply no longer new and are still tainted by association with a world that

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people would like to improve. Victorian development likewise was scorned as early as the late 19th century…”

Style, taste, and even perception can be cyclical. Therefore, instead of disregarding the importance of Modernism based on preservation philosophy, let professionals in the field learn from the destruction and the failures of previous generations.

The topic of exploring the millennial generation’s perception of Mid-century Modern architecture is the result of an evolution of the question-- “what is the public perception of Mid-century Modern architecture?” I was given the opportunity to work with a small, local nonprofit which was in its first year of operation. Gainesville Modern, an outgrowth of Historic Gainesville, Inc. has enhanced my interest in public engagement and community involvement and awareness. While working with this nonprofit, I have learned and experienced invaluable lessons relating to creating and spreading awareness of Mid-century Modern architecture. Originally, this research was focused on how to help Gainesville Modern grow and expand by examining best practices of other organizations in similar communities. However, I began to focus on the millennial generation because of the attendees at Gainesville Modern events.

Gainesville Modern began to notice that community engagement was really only with the older demographic (40-60 is probably the general age that attended events) and not with the current generation that makes up the largest portion of Gainesville, a University town. According to 2012 census data, the ages 20-34 made up approximately 87.8% of

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the Gainesville population of 124,981 people.\textsuperscript{20} The question became “how can we better engage?,” or maybe even introduce, Mid-century Modern and its preservation to the next generation, in order to arm them with awareness of this architectural resource and in turn, preserve many of the buildings that might someday be replaced.

From discussions with attendees who were millennials, most were unaware of the resources around them, not knowing that such buildings not only depict a break with tradition in the fields of design and architecture, but also embody the socio-cultural values of the United States after World War II. According to Jester and Fixler, “Between 1945 and 1980 the volume of the global built environment more than doubled relative to all that had been constructed in the course of human history. The vast quantity and uneven quality of this heritage—much of which falls into the category of ordinary everyday Modernism.”\textsuperscript{21} Millennials are surrounded by buildings that reflect Mid-century roots, but go unnoticed because of the sheer amount, their current state of decay, and their lack of “historic” feeling. By understanding the perception of the current generation on the socio-cultural values associated with Mid-century Modern, preservationists can work to better raise awareness for these architectural resources. Lewis Mumford notes, “Every generation revolts against its fathers and makes friends with its grandfathers.”\textsuperscript{22} This philosophy directly correlates with targeting the millennial generation for the preservation of Mid-century Modern because the “Baby Boomers” are often


uncomfortable with the idea of any architecture built during their lifetime as “historic.”

The millennial generation is removed enough in years from the Mid-century time period (late 1940s-early 1970s) that architecture of the Recent Past is less of an issue with age than with earlier generations. Longstreth notes:

Much of the initiative comes from people in their late 30s and 40s who have witnessed the destruction or denaturing of work that they remember as new from childhood. For others who were infants or not even born in 1966, probing into the mid-20th century may seem as a natural a course of action as protecting the work of earlier centuries.\(^{23}\)

Therefore, millennials could become the leaders in preserving modern.

Also, it is important that preservationists capitalize on the popularity that the Mid-century time period is currently experiencing in the entertainment and design industry. The acclaimed television show \textit{Mad Men} has helped reintroduce Mid-century design and culture to a new generation and piqued interest in the late 1950s and early 1960's. Retro is popular, Mid-century houses are featured on HGT\textsc{v} (Home and Garden Television) and in magazines, and nostalgia is idealized as a connection with the past. Discussing the popularity of Mid-century, Houzz, an online website providing a platform for home design, decorating, and remodeling ideas, asks, “What is it about midcentury modern design that has so many of us in a decorating tizzy? In this digital age of innovation and technology, why are we scouring flea markets, antique stores and the Internet in search of pieces that were designed 50 to 60 years ago?”\(^{24}\) Houzz boils down the reasons to psychology, the need for simple designs to balance chaotic lives, nostalgia, and the response to Apple’s popular sleek designs. Professor of design at

\(^{23}\) Longstreth, “When the Past becomes the Present,” 214.

OCAD University in Toronto, Gord Peteran notes, “Every period throughout history has been partly influenced by history. Humans tend to paint a cozy picture of the past...Especially for the generation that missed it, 1960 seems like an exciting, sexy time. Note the popularity of everything from Star Trek to Superman.” Popular culture references are introducing modern to millennials; therefore preservationists should parallel this introduction with the significance of preserving modern heritage.

In order to better understand millennial’s perception of modern architecture, first a framework of issues affecting preservation of modern heritage was developed from Prudon’s book, *The Preservation of Modern Architecture*. The perceptual issues dealt with the basic problems of age (are these really ‘historic?’), aesthetics (often perceived as ugly), and importance (modern is ubiquitous), so accordingly the questions in the survey were then built around these identifications with characteristics of millennial’s values kept in mind. This allows the survey to focus on modern’s obstacles of preservation and how they could relate to, or possibly be solved by, the millennial generation. A sample population was assembled from University of Florida students in Gainesville, Florida, through advertisement on social media websites, such as Facebook and Instagram, as well as through e-mail and student networking. Word was spread through students and alumni to others in order to further the survey’s reach. The assessment of the survey, through cross tabulation and content analysis, will lead to a better awareness of how the millennial generation perceives both historic preservation and Mid-century Modern heritage in particular. This can then be translated to other

25 Ibid.
communities interested in public perception that intend to engage the next generation of stakeholders in their preservation decisions.

This study is comprised of five chapters. The first introduces why preservationists should engage the members of the millennial generation and work to understand their perception of historic preservation and modern heritage, as well as tackles issues related to both the field and preserving modern in particular. The second provides in depth research on Mid-century Modern heritage, characteristics of millennials, and how the preservation field is currently working with this generation. There is not much study on millennials and modern together, so chapter three discusses the methodological approach to studying this relationship and subsequent development of a survey to test millennial’s perception of modern heritage. Chapter four analyzes the findings from the survey through content analysis and reports developed through the Qualtrics online platform. The overall perception of the millennials who participated in the survey indicates that age and aesthetics do not define modern’s worthiness of preservation and a strong majority of millennials think modern should be preserved. The final chapter provides insight into what the millennial generation likes and dislikes about modern heritage, as well as suggestions on how to better engage them with preservation and recommendations for future research into the topic.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

As the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 approaches its fiftieth anniversary, the preservation movement faces a new set of challenges, among which are engaging the next generation in preservation and how to advocate and preserve the variety of resources from the post-war period. Previous studies have focused on engaging millennials in city planning and understanding their idea of heritage value, therefore this thesis works to further this investigation by keying into current preservation issues, such as perception of modern heritage. While preserving modern architecture has its own set of technical challenges, public perception is the key to any preservation effort.¹ This research aims to identify essential interests and values associated with millennials that parallel preservation philosophy and that could be better utilized when conducting advocacy campaigns associated with conserving modern resources.

Modern Movement

Defining Modernism is the subject of much debate between scholars in architectural theory and philosophy. Modern heritage is pluralistic, with no one exact definition, and often viewed as a discourse, or the result of discussion and debate between architects during the early twentieth century that continued and expanded after the Second World War.² Resulting in part from the Industrial Revolution, technology was


a key aspect of life and a progressive atmosphere dominated social reform. Theodore Prudon writes, “This forward-thinking generation in Europe, scarred by the devastation of World War I, embraced modern architecture, seeking to improve the quality of life through the buildings and spaces of the workaday world.”\(^3\) In his book, *Modern Architecture Since 1900*, William Curtis, also argues, “The very conception of a ‘modern architecture’ implied a frank engagement with the new social and technological realities brought by industrialization. It also implied the rejection of superficial imitations of past forms, and a more ‘direct’ or ‘honest’ portrayal of the contemporary world, if not a vague anticipation of a better future.”\(^4\)

Forerunners of Modernism include Adolf Loos, Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Gropius and the Bauhaus, and Le Corbusier. These architects worked to create architecture with clean lines that often eschewed ornamental references to the past and that utilized new, experimental building materials and technology. According to Prudon, “In the years following the early modern movement, modern architecture, with its links to social improvement, aesthetic change, and technological innovation, translated into a visible sign of modernity that redefined the built fabric throughout Europe and in parts of the Americas, Asia, and Africa.”\(^5\) After World War II, the United States adopted modern architecture, not only for its utilitarian purposes, but because of its economy of construction and functionality.\(^6\) Modern architecture provided a solution for the need for

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\(^6\) Ibid.
affordable housing due to the post-war baby boom, and housing for returning GI’s, and it also indicated the United States’ optimism about the future.

Preserving Modern

In his book, *Dictionnaire raisonné* (1854), Viollet-le-Duc notes the definition of restoration, as “Restoration: the word and the thing are modern. To restore a building is not to repair or reconstruct it; it is to reestablish it in a complete condition which may have never existed at any given moment.” This does not mean that he would add details that never existed, but rather an accumulation of details that were changed over time. While Viollet-le-Duc’s theory represents what preservation philosophy calls the “scrape” method, as opposed to traditionalist John Ruskin’s “anti-scrape,” his ideas foreshadow central tenets essential to preserving modern architecture. Prudon describes this idea, stating, “A renewed interest in Viollet-le-Duc’s work as well as a new focus on design intent and the fundamental goals of preservation for modern buildings has once again created a relevant preservation discourse.” Traditional preservation philosophy, usually following Ruskin’s teachings, tends to be preoccupied with the authenticity of materials, a particular challenge in the case of modern materials, which were exceedingly experimental with a resulting short life-span. However, modern

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8 According to Prudon, the anti-scrape movement was “named for its opposition to the scraping away of layers of original materials (whether plaster or weathered stone).” Prudon, *Preservation of Modern Architecture*, 46.

9 Ibid.
architecture preservation practices challenged this notion, providing continued debate in current scholarship and practice.\textsuperscript{10}

The paradox of conserving modern is also a philosophical debate in the field of historic preservation. Thomas Jester and David Fixler acknowledge this arc, arguing that historic preservation and the Modern movement have parallel histories, beginning as far back as the French Revolution and growing steadily through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.\textsuperscript{11} This came together with the introduction of the first international conservation agreement, the Athens Charter for Restoration of Historic Monuments. Fixler and Jester add:

Two years later another Athens Charter, this one concerning the Functional City, codified the principles and mission of CIAM, the International Congress of Modern Architecture, as the official mouthpiece of what has come to be called the Modern movement. These two documents together began to crystallize a contemporary design ethos that defined “traditional” architecture as heritage, positing it as the “Other” to which Modernism was a contemporary—and by extension, future—foil. Thus were articulated two of the primary movements that would have significant and lasting impact on the global built environment of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{12}

Accordingly, as modern architecture challenged and even rejected previous architectural movements and styles, so did the preservation of modern architecture. Other authors have also contributed to this debate, continuing to single out Modernism’s complex discourse as the need for an evolution in preservation philosophy. The tenth International DOCOMOMO Conference (International committee for documentation and


\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
conservation of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the modern movement),
appropriately entitled *The Challenge of Change: Dealing with the Legacy of the Modern
Movement*, discusses modern’s liminality in preservation. In a contributing article,
Andrea Canziani writes:

> On the one hand the problem seems to be the paradox of holding back the
> modernistic ideas of flexibility, functionality and transitoriness, on the other
> hand the main dilemma is about how to preserve a structure made of
> experimental details, new materials, short life-expectancy solutions. These
> paradoxes have been really challenging for conventional restoration
> practices and theories, because they have been stretched to their limits
> and even beyond. So far that the XX Century’s buildings seem to be so
different from other kinds of historic building that they need a different
> approach and “Modern Heritage Restoration” has been set as a quite
> distinct discipline, based on its own conservation practices.\(^\text{13}\)

Preservationists, internationally, are still attempting to define the approach to conserving
modern, while expanding and evolving traditional preservation philosophy.

In the United States, the field of historic preservation was standardized and
brought to a forefront with the establishment of the National Historic Preservation Act of
1966. Prudon notes that this “began to move preservation efforts from the domain of
private advocacy and philanthropy to that of the government. Until that point,
government preservation efforts had focused largely on protecting vast realms of the
natural environment…”\(^\text{14}\) Since modern, as an architectural movement, ended in the
early 1970s in the United States as it became considered mainstream, the late 1960s is
often perceived as a rejection of modernist architecture and an appreciation of prior
architecture, especially in the face of urban renewal. This set the stage for questioning

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by both preservationists and the general public, why preserve modern, if it was the very
catalyst for preservation in the United States? Preservationists have grappled with this
question from the very beginning. While some inside the field continue to challenge
preserving modern, Randall Mason argues, “Preservation, at its roots, was about an
engagement with modernity, not a rejection of it.”15 In 1992, Richard Longstreth’s essay
“When the Present Becomes the Past,” discusses the irony of preserving modern and
discredits it. He notes:

Reacting both to modernist design and the very nature of decentralized
development, preservationists often found widespread support for their
assertions that the contemporary building lacked the character, scale,
variety, and even the sense of purpose possessed by the standard
products of earlier generations…Twenty-five years later, of course, much
of what was then seen in the present tense has begun to assume the aura
of the past…Seldom does the landscape created during the post-World
War II era still seem young. The changes that have occurred may be more
of a matter of perception than reality, but often the fabric itself has been
altered in conspicuous ways, sometimes beyond the point of easy
recognition. Popular interest in the environment of the recent past is thus,
not surprisingly, on the ascent.16

Longstreth has since updated this scholarship, noting that preserving modern is on the
rise today as a widespread grassroots-driven activity, but that much more work is still to
be done, especially in regards to modern vernacular.17 The title of his article, “I Can’t
See It; I Don’t Understand It; And It Doesn’t Look Old to Me,” is telling of the current
challenges that modern faces, both inside the field of preservation and to the general
public.


17 Richard Longstreth, “I Can’t See It; I Don’t Understand It; And It Doesn’t Look Old to Me,” *Forum Journal* 27:1 (Fall 2012), 35.
Other factors that affect preserving modern are extensively discussed in Theodore Prudon’s book, *Preservation of Modern Architecture*. Prudon notes that functionality, obsolescence (both functional and physical), design intent, and especially perception, are major challenges when communicating a modern building’s significance to the public. Also, professional and public opinions do not always coincide, with professionals noting the architectural significance and design, and the public focusing on function and aesthetics. Thus, perception is the cornerstone to any preservation debate and it is what professionals and the public agree on that is assigned heritage value.\(^{18}\) Prudon writes, “In the United States, support for preservation has always been tied to perception: the perceived value of a building or place (whether visual, historic, cultural, or otherwise) is in the present and as it is directly related to both the past and the future.”\(^{19}\) Therefore, it is essential to understand the perception of a particular building and how to relay its significance to the public, so that selection and demolition are not “based solely on subjective criteria such as dislike or negative association.”\(^{20}\)

**The Millennial Generation**

The millennial generation consists of those born between the early 1980s and the early 2000s.\(^{21}\) Current scholarship on the millennial generation is extensive, by researchers, bloggers, and millennials themselves. This research is mostly disseminated online, as this generation frequently communicates through the internet


\(^{19}\) Ibid.

\(^{20}\) Ibid., 28.

and social media.\textsuperscript{22} While some experts have pinned the generation as entitled or self-absorbed, most experts describe millennials as creative, optimistic, and open-minded.\textsuperscript{23} This contradictory nature is typical of generational research, as experts may draw different conclusions while studying millennials because it is near impossible to make generalizations that apply in every case to 84 million people.\textsuperscript{24} Also, Haydn Shaw, author of \textit{Sticking Points: How to Get Four Generations Working Together in the 12 Places They Come Apart}, notes that this paradoxical nature is representative of millennials as well.\textsuperscript{25} He explains, “They often seek to balance competing values so their responses appear contradictory…I predict that some of the contradictions will resolve themselves as the millennials get older and are forced to make tradeoffs, but I don’t think most contradictions will…They want both.”\textsuperscript{26}

In October of 2014, the President’s Council of Economic Advisers put together a publication entitled \textit{15 Economic Facts About Millennials}, since the millennial generation now currently occupies the largest portion of population in the United States and will continue to influence both economic and social policy for decades to come.\textsuperscript{27} The White


\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.

House adds, “What’s more, the largest millennial one-year age cohort is now only 23.”\textsuperscript{28}

This research provides insight into the character, interests, and goals of the millennial generation. Among these facts, several are relevant to the purposes of preservation. These include:

- Fact 1: Millennials are now the largest, most diverse generation in the U.S. population
- Fact 2: Millennials have been shaped by technology
- Fact 3: Millennials value community, family, and creativity in their work
- Fact 4: Millennials have invested in human capital more than previous generations
- Fact 5: College-going Millennials are more likely to study social science and applied fields
- Fact 14: Millennials are less likely to be homeowners than young adults in previous generations
- Fact 15: College-educated Millennials have moved into urban areas faster than their less educated peers\textsuperscript{29}

The report then provides research on each of these claims. While the first five facts present possible sympathetic tendencies toward preservation, the last two could present challenges. The introduction notes, “This is the first generation to have had access to the Internet during their formative years. Millennials also stand out because they are the most diverse and educated generation to date: 42\% identify with a race or ethnicity other than non-Hispanic white…[and about] 61\% of adult Millennials have attended college…”\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 5.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 2.

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 3.
Millennials’ connection with their community and family also distinguishes them from previous generations. The report provides an example, writing, “For instance, high school seniors today are more likely than previous generations to state that making a contribution to society is very important to them and that they want to be leaders in their community.”

Also, almost 50% of millennials surveyed by Monitoring the Future stated that it was “quite or extremely important” to live close to friends and family, as compared to 40% of Generation X and 29% of baby boomers. This connection with community also translates into other charitable work. Tom Petruno’s article in the *Los Angeles Times* recently examined millennials’ interest in investing for social good, a market reaching almost $6 trillion over the last decade. “Socially responsible” investing is geared toward supporting businesses and organizations which hold society and environment above all and purposely treat local communities well. These are values that strongly resonate with millennials.

Also, an interview with Zac Johnson, head of Youth Marketing at Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals, and coordinator of the extremely successful charity event, Dance Marathon, reveals millennials’ ability to fundraise for a cause in which they believe. He notes that millennials are fundraisers and not necessarily donors, but

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31 Ibid., 9.

32 Ibid.


34 Ibid.
engaging them is essential in engaging the community.\textsuperscript{35} He also adds, “Millennials are all about the experience. What they’ve been able to gain from the experience of helping a cause…it’ll be the value of that experience that they will then tie to your cause. They will help support your cause even more because there’s something in it for them.”\textsuperscript{36}

**Historic Preservation and Millennials**

Many of the defining characteristics and values that millennials hold align with the mission and purpose of historic preservation, among which are a connection with local community, sense of place, and sustainability. However, the National Trust for Historic Preservation recently discovered that almost 15 million people in the United States are “regularly engaged in multiple preservation related activities (volunteered, attended a town meeting, signed a petition, etc), yet may not consider themselves preservationists.”\textsuperscript{37} Among the 15 million, 50% fall into the group of “young activists” or “green go-getters.”\textsuperscript{38} These values are echoed by young preservationist, Daniel Ronan, who often writes for the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s blog, *PreservationNation*. He believes that millennials are the key to evolving preservation standards and the field’s relevance to the future. He defines preservation as the “triple bottom line” and would like to see the field more closely associated with economic,


\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 15-18.
social, and environmental renewal. He notes that in order to better engage millennials in terms of historic preservation, the field needs to embrace its complexity, and “[think] of it in multifaceted terms, being open to innovative approaches, and refocusing on saving the local, community places that matter.” He explains this further, stating, “As a millennial, I believe our generation is consumed with personal identity and experiences. As much as I try to sidestep this generalization, I see it as a reason why folks my age seek community so much. When we advocate, we are often innovative and think outside convention.”

Another young preservationist and previous intern to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Aria Danaparamita, a contributor to the PreservationNation blog, sums up Ronan’s ideas on millennial engagement. In her article, “New Voices, New Approaches: Young Preservationists Speak Up,” she describes what she heard at the 2013 National Preservation Conference when speaking with the next generation. She notes, “On significance: community and place-making...On methods: breaking the formal...On ideas: out-thinking the traditional.” Consequently, millennials’ values and interests line up with those of preservation. In order to spread the word about this, the preservation field needs to approach the next generation with non-traditional engagement techniques.

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40 Ibid.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid.
Recently, after questioned as to whether millennials care about historic preservation, vice president for corporate responsibility at American Express, Tim McClimon, proposed a shift in traditional perception of preservation as well, agreeing with what Ronan identified as the complexity of the field. While McClimon quoted the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s research that there is not any “real difference in level of interest or involvement between millennials and other segments of the population,” he also discovered a blog called “Glass House Conversations,” a site of the National Trust, where millennials reflected on their unique values and design aesthetics. He notes:

These characteristics—a concern about sustainability, a greater value placed on making and repairing things oneself, and the implications of a throwaway culture—seem to fit clearly and easily into the goals of historic preservation…Accordingly, it may be that the words used to describe the work of preservationists and historical societies and organizations with Millennials could focus more on sustainability and adaptive re-use and the environmental impacts of restoring vs. rebuilding—rather than on preserving buildings for their original purposes or maintaining structures and streets for the sake of preserving them for future generations.

A shift in communicating how preservation is a tool for managing change in the environment, and perhaps a broadened approach, is needed in order to further preservation’s relevance for future generations.

Several studies have recently gauged millennials’ definition of heritage and what values they associate with it. A 2009 study in New Brunswick, Canada, entitled “Heritage Colloquium on the Values and Attitudes of Young People towards Heritage,” provides what they call a “framework for thinking about heritage policy from a youth

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44 Ibid.
perspective.” By surveying millennials, 21inc, the contracted company, found that heritage is dynamic and that “There’s a difference between preserving heritage and clinging to it so much we don’t let others in.” While noting that the responses by participating stakeholders were complex, they were able to deduce patterns in order to create a framework around:

1. **Identity** - Heritage is the combination of factors from the past that define a person and a people. “According to me, the word heritage represents the combination of factors such as culture and language that make us who we are.” Participant from Bathurst, NB

2. **Relationships between yesterday, today and tomorrow** - How the past affects the present, with an emphasis on relationships as the primary mechanism of influence. “To me heritage has two components: 1. knowledge of history; and 2. understanding the connection between that history and its influence on my current perspectives and decisions.” Participant from Saint John, NB

3. **Recognize and Celebrate History and Culture** - It’s important to recognize our history…and how it influences culture. “Heritage to me signifies a recognition and celebration of our history with an emphasis on culture. There is a strong focus on maintaining things of historical significance.” Participant from Bathurst, NB

These themes emerged throughout the responses collected. In regards to the future of heritage, the study notes that it was best valued when combined with activities that related to their lives now. They noted, “A heritage home would have more value if utilized as a venue (a home, museum or gallery, for example) than if left simply to look at. Marrying heritage with modern uses to enhance the aesthetic and innovative environment is an important direction for heritage and heritage conservation.”

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45 Report on the Findings from the Heritage Colloquium on the Values and Attitudes of Young People towards Heritage (New Brunswick, Canada: 21inc, June 20, 2009), 5.

46 Ibid., 6.


48 Ibid., 19.
Another study conducted by Clarification & Mediation, Inc with Civic Strategies, Inc for the Atlanta Regional Commission, also focused on engaging millennials in order to understand the generation’s future wants and needs in the city. According to them, their results paralleled national studies describing millennials’ values and interests, as well as confirmed that this generation has different perspectives than earlier generations on issues such as “mobility, living and work arrangements, environmental sustainability, quality of life, and education.”

Millennials value walkability, public transit, mixed-use development, and a desire to live closer to the city center. In sum, the survey and interview process found that millennials identify quality of life as a key factor in where they live and work. The study finds, “Atlanta millennials describe quality of life as interesting, culturally diverse communities that are easily accessible by foot or by transit.”

In an interview, a millennial explained quality of life:

> To remain vibrant and thriving, we must be concerned with communities that are walkable, green, appreciate historic preservation and use smart developments as a planning premise. Young people are looking for urban high density settings that offer a high quality of life. Young people move to a particular place because of the quality of life issues.

This is even further stressed, as William Fulton argues that “millennials perhaps more than earlier generations are ‘making locations based on their idea of quality of life’” rather than job availability and advancement.

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49 New Voices: Engaging Millennials at the ARC Table (Atlanta: Atlanta Regional Commission), 2.
50 Ibid., 14.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid.
Success with millennials and preservation so far has utilized the aforementioned non-traditional engagement techniques and has helped expand the definition of historic preservation. Some thriving campaigns include events at historic bars, pop-up shops (renting a small storefront or building and advertising a cause), and ‘wearing’ the building (utilizing sandwich boards or posters depicting the building and walking around the city). In Cincinnati, Ohio, established preservationists are approaching millennials for new methods to engage the community. The Cincinnati Preservation Association (CPA), the oldest preservation association in Cincinnati, held a charrette “Pitch Party” in which millennials presented different ideas about community building.\textsuperscript{53} Diana Tisue, co-leader of Cincinnati Preservation Collective (CPC) notes, “While CPA has been the group for preservation in Cincinnati for now 50 years, we are trying to capture the digital generation through grassroots organization and activism.”\textsuperscript{54} She adds that the CPC is a way of introducing preservation to younger people and that this “‘young energy’ has been able to bring together a core group of millennials with various skill sets including graphic design, event management, and specialized expertise in history and architecture.”\textsuperscript{55}

Cincinnati also recently saved their Union Terminal due in part to a pop-up shop campaign by the National Trust and the use of social media, such as Instagram, with


\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid.
the hashtag #VoteYesUT.\(^56\) Union Terminal was listed on the 2014 National Trust’s 11 Most Endangered Historic Places List.\(^57\) In order to raise awareness about a restoration program, the National Trust, along with local millennials, introduced a pop-up shop to communicate plans with the community and encourage members to vote yes to rehabilitation funding on the ballot and save the terminal. The pop-up created an experiential space for visitors to “learn more about the restoration plan, add their memories to a community story wall, pledge their vote, and even step inside Union Terminal’s iconic murals.”\(^58\) The pop-up proved to be wildly successful, spreading the word about the issue, and engaging a community in preserving a cultural monument.

**Engaging Millennials with Modern Heritage**

While there are significant contributions in scholarship concerning engaging millennials with historic preservation and the need to redefine the field, there is a void of information and study about how to engage millennials with modern heritage. Millennials’ perception of modern is still a mostly open question. While both preservationists and bloggers have weighed in on perceptions of preserving modern architecture, several are beginning to call for the next generation to take on preserving modern. Published on January 27, 2015, in the *Preservation Leadership Forum*, Elaine Stiles argues that the suburbs, a mid-century explosion of planned communities, “will


\(^58\) Stevens, “Introducing the National Trust’s First Pop-Up.”
become a growing part of a new preservation reality.”  

She also adds that future preservationists must know how to deal with this resource, as “A better understanding of the suburbs—both past and present—will be essential for the 21st century preservationist.”  

Of course, preserving modern presents significant challenges of perception. As one blogger, Aaron Renn, who publishes the blog, *The Urbanophile*, posed about modern architecture:

> Today, it is so difficult for us to appreciate and see the significance of these structures. We’re prisoners of our own age. It is incumbent for us to be able to step outside ourselves, to see us as people 50 or 100 years from now might. What might they value in buildings? Might they not see the mid-century period as historic in its own right? It’s easy to imagine that they could. Indeed, it seems rather likely…Similarly, a new generation of people passionate for mid-century architecture could lead the way in reclaiming these structures for the present, and pumping new life into these faltering neighborhoods as well.

His views accurately depict what preservationists have expressed for years. A new generation, removed enough from the time period to consider it nostalgic, however, has begun to yearn for modern design. This is good news for preservation, because style has proven to be cyclical. If millennials are not engaged, *The Urbanophile* warns, “If new blood isn’t attracted into them as the current generation of residents disappears, it’s a recipe for ruin in broad tracts of America today. Convincing people of the value of mid-century architecture is a way to not only help preserve the city, but for people [to] get quality architecture and a suburban lifestyle at a reasonable price.”

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60 Ibid.


62 Ibid.
In order to engage millennials, preservationists need to key into their nostalgia, a topic widely discussed on blogs. Originally published on OpedSpace, a website for young professionals to debate current important issues, the article “Millennials, Nostalgia, and Urban Preservation: Why We Clamor for a Past We Never Had,” discusses why it makes sense that millennials are looking to the past for hope for the future.\(^\text{63}\) She opens with, “For a generation that grew up with unparalleled accessibility to the past, memory has never been more appealing. We immerse ourselves in the appropriated memories of previous generations…”\(^\text{64}\) Weissmann reasons that millennials fixate on the past because of anxiety about the future and that this leads to a recreation of physical landscapes of the past—historic preservation.\(^\text{65}\) While she is not convinced that millennials want to be completely involved in preservation, she notes, “Growing up with the world’s knowledge at our fingertips, millennials expect a certain level of efficiency and expediency. Though we may pay lip service to preservation, what we seek is reassurance about the future, primarily through the validation of our visceral nostalgia.”\(^\text{66}\)

However, even though Weissmann rejects the idea of millennials liking modern architecture, other studies and blogs have identified nostalgia as the reason this generation is actually flocking toward Mid-century Modern design. National Public Radio recently provided a special series that included a segment entitled, “Midcentury


\(^{64}\) Ibid.

\(^{65}\) Ibid.

\(^{66}\) Ibid.
Furniture + Grandkid Nostalgia = Modern Trend.” The craze of collecting modern furniture by millennials is due to the fact there are plenty of Mid-Century resources available and that “people tend to like what their grandparents liked and reject the taste of their parents.” This is reverberated throughout other design communities, as the Eames lounge chair was recently considered one of the “8 Must-Haves for your Home in 2014” by Boston Design Guide Blog. Therefore, there is hope for millennials’ connection with modern.

Popular culture has recently exploded with mid-century references in design, furniture, fashion, music videos and television. Commenter on the The Urbanophile blog, Baz, writes:

As for mid century’s relevance to today’s modern design—open an issue of Dwell, any issue. Flip through those pages. You’re now looking at images staged with furniture by Knoll, Herman Miller, Nelson, Noguchi, Saarinen. These mid century designs are just as relevant in today’s modern spaces as they were 50-60 years ago. Good design is timeless.

Mid-century Modern has definitely received a lot of reference in design recently and introduced millennials to a time in which they can connect.

The television show, Mad Men, on AMC, has also become a leader in connecting millennials with 1960s culture. The show has received much praise, including four Golden Globes, 92 other wins, and 271 nominations. Its popularity, sometimes called

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69 “Preserving Our Mid-Century Heritage”

the “Mad Men Effect,” rippled through both the design and fashion industry, creating collaborations with stores like Banana Republic and Manhattan Home Design. A preservation blog, Bricks + Mortar reflects on this phenomenon, noting:

Sometimes it seems like Mad Men single-handedly made mid-century styles popular again. Each week for six seasons, millions of viewers have turned in as much for the furniture, art interior design, clothes, make up, and hair as for the storyline...It’s undeniable that mod is back in a big way. And its popularity has been a boom for preservation. Mid-century buildings are suddenly cool again. Preservation organizations have harnessed the power of pop culture by throwing Mad Men themed fundraising events and awareness campaigns. The series has become a touchstone around which to discuss preservation and preservation issues. Mad Men itself even joined the conversation when it featured the demolition of Pen Station in Season 3, which was the birth of the modern preservation movement in the US.

The success of Mad Men denotes a definite interest in mid-century culture since its debut in 2007. Director of color marketing for Sherwin-Williams, Jackie Jordan also discusses Mad Men’s impact on connecting the masses with mid-century, adding, “There have always been a group of people, typically more designers and architects, who’ve been more interested in midcentury modern design than the average consumer. But when you start to see things in the public eye, like Mad Men, people notice the details of the furniture and accessories and seek them out.” Since its debut, clients have been contacting designers to recreate the “Mad Men look,” says Darlene Molnar, an interior designer.


72 Ibid.


74 Ibid.
throwback to a period representative of a brighter future. This time in history was about
touches of luxury, but nothing over-the-top or in-your-face, and that's the way the
market is going today. People are looking for the sultry interiors show in *Mad Men.*”

Other television shows are also hoping to key into *Mad Men*’s impact on Mid-
century Modern with other previously hard to love architectural styles, such as
Brutalism. An article by Amanda Kolson Hurley entitled, “BBC’s *The Game* Does for
Brutalism What *Mad Men* Did for Mid-Century Design,” addresses this impact, asking,
“*Mad Men,* which first aired in 2007, helped push the long-percolating revival of mid-
century modern design into the mainstream (as a glance at any homewares catalog
today will prove). Could *The Game* signal a comeback, a similar wave of nostalgia, for
the Brutalist era?” Whether they realize it or not, modern heritage has surrounded and
shaped the millennial generation.

Recognizing perception as one of the key aspects of historic preservation in the
United States, scholars are moving to evolve modern preservation techniques and
engagement strategies. Modernist architecture is causing preservationists to reevaluate
their standards and seek a more inclusive philosophy. The next generation, the
millennials, seems to identify with not only the tenets and social responsibilities of
historic preservation, but also those of Modernism and the quality of life that it offers.
Mid-century Modern design aesthetics has infiltrated popular culture, influencing
millennials’ fashion, music, television, and furniture. Both professionals in the field and

75 Ibid.

76 Amanda Kolson Hurley, “BBC’s *The Game* Does for Brutalism What *Mad Men* Did for Mid-Century
http://www.citylab.com/design/2014/12/bbc-s-the-game-does-for-brutalism-what-mad-men-did-for-mid-
century-design/383585/.

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bloggers interested in the subject are calling for action, by engaging millennials in preservation, and especially the preservation of modern architecture. However, in order to really understand how to communicate the significance of modern heritage, first preservationists must understand millennials' perception.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

This thesis explores how to engage millennials in the preservation of modern heritage by first attempting to understand their perception of the field of historic preservation and then, specifically, of modern heritage and its preservation. By conducting a survey to really gain insight and utilizing a mixed-methods approach with both qualitative and quantitative data, the researcher is able to better gather socio-cultural and experiential values regarding how millennials perceive modern heritage.¹ Jeremy Wells notes the importance of a qualitative approach, especially “if the research question seeks meanings or subjective data.”² Since perception is directly tied to a subjective opinion, interpretation, or impression and as Theodore Prudon notes that perception is the “perceived value of a building or place (whether visual, historic, cultural, or otherwise)”, it is essential to include a qualitative approach.³

By utilizing a values based perspective, so as to understand what people value about the building or place, and evaluating the publicly held ideals of this architectural heritage as opposed to a design based approach (focused on the architectural design) or fabric-centered significance (focused on material authenticity), this research takes a contemporary stance and employs what Jeremy Wells calls “people-centered architectural conservation.”⁴ Wells identifies traditional methodological practices in

² Ibid.
preservation as disconnected between experts and everyday people, an issue that has long plagued preservation, making it seem elitist instead of populist. He adds:

If the goal of historic preservation is to save places for the benefit of all people, perhaps we ought to engage a methodology that determines historical significance based on how everyday people value historic places rather than relying solely on the traditional objective, expert values upon which historic preservation has frequently relied. Preservation is not about saving places to benefit architectural historians, or architects, or for that matter, preservationists. The buildings, places, and landscapes that we value so highly are of benefit to everyone and, ultimately, improve human flourishing. It is critical, therefore, to understand how historic places contribute to human flourishing and existing assessments of historical significance are not up to this task.

After these values are recognized and assessed, they can be used as tools to connect professionals in the preservation field with everyday people who use the buildings. Preservationist Randall Mason, notes, “The stakeholders of social values are usually members of the public who have not traditionally participated in our work or had their opinion taken into consideration.” Since millennials are the up and coming generation, it is important to understand their perception and the values they associate with preserving modern so that preservationists can better engage them in their decisions on how to approach these resources. Also, rather than focusing solely on the importance of preserving Mid-century Modern because it is ‘historic’ or because of its ‘high-style’ architectural significance by well known designers, this research serves to raise awareness of the underrepresented vernacular Mid-century Modern heritage.

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5 Wells, “Historical Significance,” 2.
6 Ibid.
A survey was selected as the method to collect data. Using the University of Florida’s access to online platform, Qualtrics, a survey was created and disseminated online through e-mail, personal communication with colleagues, and popular social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. The last question on the survey asked how the respondent obtained it, in order to understand the most effective form of communication among millennials. Initially, the survey was distributed via text message to colleagues of the researcher, without mention of social media. A majority of those who received it then shared it on their own personal social media accounts. The researcher posted it on her social media accounts-- Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter-- with the hashtags (#) modern, millennials, and preservation for others to see if they associated with those topics. These posts were also reposted by other friends, students, and alumni of the University of Florida in order to further the survey’s reach.

In order to develop the survey, questions were built around a framework of issues affecting preservation of modern heritage (Appendix A) that was developed from Prudon’s book, Preservation of Modern Architecture. The perceptual issues were summed up under the categories of age, aesthetics, and importance. These are perceptions that Prudon and others have previously identified based on anecdotal experiences, but not scientific data. Accordingly, the questions in the survey were then grouped with these identifications (age, aesthetics, and importance) so that during analysis, positive and/or negative answers could relate directly to a perceptual issue. Also, while building these questions, characteristics of the millennial generation were considered and special care was taken to remove any expert language or preservation jargon. Any specialized terms, such as ‘historic place,’ ‘preserve,’ or ‘Mid-century
Modern’ were defined for the respondents. The survey was intended to be taken in 10-15 minutes, in hopes that millennials would finish the whole survey. It was also designed so that images would be compatible to view on cell phones.

The original framework of questions was modified into blocks (Appendix B), grouping the questions thematically around demographics, historic preservation in general, issues related to preserving modern, aspects of Mid-century Modern, and finally, communication (how the participant heard about the survey). Each of these sections was explained to the respondent to provide direction while answering the questions. A total of 27 questions were created, including multiple choice, extended response, and visual preference questions for the final version of the survey (Appendix C). In every multiple choice question, an option of ‘other’ and a space to type a short response was available in case the respondent had a different idea than those offered, unless the response was yes or no. These questions did not allow for an extended response, in order to force decisions amongst a range of options. Specific questions, such as asking the definition of historic preservation, were designed to be viewed one at a time, so that respondents were not influenced by response options to other multiple choice questions. All responses were anonymous.

**Block One: Demographics**

The demographics block asked basic demographic information, but expanded on age and education in order to better understand the respondent. There were five possible answer choices for age, breaking the millennial generation into groups, such as college-age, young professional or professional student age, late twenties to early thirties, early to mid-thirties, and ages not associated with the generation. Ages 18 through 35 were considered millennials (those born between the early 1980s and early
2000s), whereas ages 36 or higher were not identified in the millennial generation. This question also provided a note on the survey’s intent to test the millennial generation, so respondents could either self-select out, or be identified in the 36+ group. Additional attention to level of education was also considered with multiple response choices, since millennials are the most educated generation thus far in United States history.\(^8\) Also, this section asked what the respondent’s major in college is or was, if they had attended, to see if this background could have influenced their responses.

**Block Two: Historic Preservation**

The second block asked general questions about the field of historic preservation, including its definition and purposes. This section did not refer to preservation of buildings specifically, but rather used the term ‘historic place’ in order to present a more broad aspect of preservation. A historic place was noted to include interiors, buildings, landscapes, and neighborhoods. Also, the term ‘preserve’ was explained in a broader sense than as a traditional preservation treatment, defined by the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards*, and instead meant utilizing an existing historic place instead of demolishing it and putting something else in its location. In the case of the multiple choice responses in this block, careful consideration was taken in order to design responses that were important to both the recently evolved philosophy in preservation and characteristics of millennials.

**Block Three: Issues Related to the Preservation of Modern Architecture**

The third block focused specifically on buildings and issues related to the preservation of modern heritage. This especially tested age, aesthetics, and importance

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with a visual preference question based on each perceived challenge. The same images were used in each question for analysis comparison and the respondent could select multiple images as a response. Four images were chosen to represent different ages and styles or movements of architecture in the United States. Additionally, each image was a vernacular residence that was not well known, featured a frontal elevation, a similar size, similar daylight, photographed in color, and had an absence of people and cars. The houses were also either listed on the National Register of Historic Places or in a registered historic district.

The first choice, the Maria Mitchell house in Nantucket, Massachusetts, was chosen to represent early American architecture from the late eighteenth century to early nineteenth century. It was also chosen because of its simplicity in ornament and because the building materials depict a rich patina of age, allowing a response choice for any respondent who based their ideas on purely “looking old.”

The second choice, a Victorian house in Brightman, Ohio, was selected to represent the Queen Anne style of architecture from the early twentieth century. A Victorian house was especially important for the visual preference section, since style and taste in architecture have proven to be cyclical. Victorian houses were rejected and demolished with the introduction of modern architecture in the United States, but were later appreciated and considered historic.

The third choice option, a Mid-century Modern house in Las Vegas, Nevada, was chosen to represent key characteristics of modern vernacular houses during the mid twentieth century. The key characteristics include an angled roof, open car port, cast block screens, a mix of materials on the house, and bright colors.
Finally, the fourth choice option, a craftsman bungalow in Winston Salem, North Carolina, was selected to represent an architectural style that was directly in between the Victorian era and Modern movement. It also preceded the modern house by only 30 years. This specific house was chosen because of its clear craftsman style characteristics, among which include tapered columns, simple, geometric ornament, and its gable roof with dormers.

**Block Four: Mid-century Modern Architecture**

The final block gauged millennials’ perception of modern heritage and built upon one another in a logical progression of information provided. Since there is not much research on this connection, each multiple choice question was followed with a response section for the respondent to explain his or her reasoning. The researcher suspected that most millennials would be unaware of the term ‘Mid-century Modern,’ so the first question asked the respondents to define it. Then, the next question contained some introductory text, noting that Mid-century Modern architecture was built after World War II, from the late 1940s to early 1970s in America. Additionally, a set of six images were used to explain the term further, since there are a range of characteristics associated with it. This served to educate the respondent, as well as solicit existing perceptions and opinions. The images represented different types of residences that are considered Mid-century Modern, including houses with eccentric roof lines, like a butterfly roof and flat roof, floor to ceiling plate glass windows, and a classic ranch house. After the different representations and brief explanation of Mid-century Modern, the respondents were asked what they thought of the architecture; including the answer choice “I appreciate it, but do not like it.” This is an important choice, reminding the respondent that there is a difference between liking and appreciating.
This section also presented a question about the relationship with modern design influence on popular culture today and whether this connection enhanced the respondent’s appreciation of Mid-century Modern. Four images were provided, featuring a variety of popular culture references that are currently circulated in the media. These images included a 1964 Lucky Charms cereal box that was released again in 2014, a \textit{GQ} magazine photo shoot of the main characters in AMC’s hit television show, \textit{Mad Men}, a scene from Katy Perry’s “This is How We Do” music video, and an Eames lounge chair from a design magazine.

Finally, the last question on the survey, with the exception of how the respondent heard about it, was whether or not the respondent thought Mid-century Modern was worth preserving. This question provided a culmination of all the preceding questions, and directly asked what a millennial thought about preserving modern. This question was essential in understanding the perception of modern heritage by millennials and allowed the respondent to explain in his or her own words.

By surveying millennials on their perceptions of historic preservation and the values they associate with preserving modern, this thesis captured important information that is lacking in the field of historic preservation and furthers the work of engaging the next generation. The survey results were assessed utilizing content analysis and cross tabulation, since most of the questions have a long response component. Also, using the \textit{Qualtrics} online platform, reports were created using the filter and drill-down options. Some quantitative analysis is possible with the multiple choice questions, allowing percentages to generalize most cited responses; however
the focus of the survey is to analyze overall perception. Trends and conflicts of millennials’ perception will be discerned through this analysis.
CHAPTER 4
SURVEY RESULTS

This chapter analyzes the findings from the survey intended to gauge the millennial generation’s perception of modern heritage and the field of historic preservation in general. A primarily qualitative approach was utilized to better understand the socio-cultural values that millennials associate with preservation. Since the survey instrument had a variety of questions, including multiple choice, extended response, and visual preference, some quantitative data is useful to summarize overarching trends with responses; however, the focus of the survey was to capture a qualitative perception regarding the preservation of modern heritage.

The survey was launched using the University of Florida’s access to online platform, Qualtrics, on January 20, 2015 and closed on February 9, 2015. The survey was disseminated through conversation with friends and colleagues and social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The link to the survey was posted by the researcher and shared multiple times by other users, so as to gather a larger and more diverse sample population.

A total of 220 responses were recorded, with a 68% completion rate. A majority of the dropout responses occurred after the demographics section and before the general preservation section, with the completion rate decreasing from 97% to 75%. After this, the dropout rate was much smaller, with only a couple respondents dropping out on each of the extended response questions. The researcher expected this and all attempts were made to prevent respondents from skipping questions, including character requirements for the extended response questions. A total of 149 respondents participated in every question.
Since a dropout rate is present, after each question’s analysis the sample size will be provided (for example, n=220) in order to orient the reader and provide a basis for comparison. Also, since the survey allowed respondents that did not identify with the millennial generation to participate, analysis reports were generated excluding those responses.

To create reports, filters were added in the survey to select out all responses indicated by a particular age group. Also another entire report was created that utilized the drill down function, breaking each response down into the age groups that selected it. Only 30 of the total 220 respondents did not identify as millennials; however, their answers paralleled many of the millennials’ responses, most importantly including nostalgia for times past and a personal connection with the architecture.

Facebook was indicated to be the most successful communication tool among millennials, with 61% of respondents saying they heard about the survey through the social media platform (n=149). The next best was through a friend or colleague, with approximately 56%. This was most likely through text messaging, since the survey was compatible with cell phones. Several respondents indicated more than one option of communication.

Overall, millennials indicated a positive response in both the historic preservation and the preservation of modern heritage. Though most did not necessarily deem it as historic or aesthetically pleasing, based on visual preference alone, a majority still believed in preserving modern for future generations and because of its importance in representing American culture after World War II. A detailed breakdown of the survey follows.
Demographics

Sixty percent of the respondents in the millennial generation identified with the age group of 23-27 (n=183).\textsuperscript{1} The second largest group was age 18-22, with 21% of the respondents, followed by 26-32 with 12% and 33-35 with 11%. Since the millennial generation spans 20 years, it is not unexpected that the largest participating group is directly in the middle.\textsuperscript{2} An overwhelming majority of the respondents were female, with 146 female respondents representing almost 80% of the total participation (n=183). Eighty-seven percent of the respondents identified as white, with Hispanic or Latino and Asian/Pacific Islander representing around 5% each, and black or African American with 1% (n=183). Two respondents chose the ‘other’ option, also represented as 1%.

Almost 99% of the respondents attended college at some point, and only 3% did not earn a degree (n=183).\textsuperscript{3} Approximately 41% of the respondents held a bachelor’s degree, 24% received a master’s degree, and 22% were currently enrolled in college. The majority of respondents currently in college identified with the 18-22 age group. The 23-27 age group had the greatest diversity in education, with 3 respondents having some college experience, 9 currently enrolled in college, 54 with a bachelor’s degree, 33 with a master’s degree, 10 with a doctorate degree, and 2 not having attended college (n=112). These results parallel the national education levels with millennials, as the most educated generation thus far in United States history.\textsuperscript{4}

\textsuperscript{1} Less than one percent identified as ‘other.’ See Figure 4-1.

\textsuperscript{2} According to the White House Council of Economic Advisors, published in 2014, “…the largest Millennial one-year age cohort is now only 23.” 15 Economic Facts About Millennials, 5.

\textsuperscript{3} See Figure 4-2.

\textsuperscript{4} The White House Millennials report notes, “About 61 percent of adult Millennials have attended college…” 15 Economic Facts About Millennials, 3.
The college majors associated with the respondents were also quite diverse, ranging from social sciences, such as psychology, marketing, and international politics to the arts, with a few musical theatre majors and studio art majors (n=183). However, many of the majors were associated with the hard sciences, including biology, animal sciences, and multiple types of engineering. There were only a few majors that directly related to historic preservation, including sustainability, urban planning, architecture, interior design, and a master’s of historic preservation.

The majority of the respondents were from cities all over Florida, however several other states were represented, including Kansas, Illinois, Oklahoma, California, Texas, Alabama, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Montana, New York, and Rhode Island (n=183). The survey also reached respondents from other countries, among which include Canada, the United Arab Emirates, China, England, Greece, and Brazil.

**General Perceptions on Historic Preservation**

The general consensus on the definition of historic preservation, question 7, included key actions of maintaining, restoring, preserving, conserving, protecting, preventing, and saving aspects of the past (n=140). These actions were mentioned throughout the responses, across all the age groups relating to the millennial generation. While some answers went into great detail, only a few respondents mentioned that they ‘guessed’ or ‘supposed’ the definition. Other important key words or phrases included historical significance, historical value, landmarks, cultural significance, cultural heritage, and keeping for future generations to learn about or enjoy. While many responses discussed buildings in particular, a majority of responses

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5 See Figure 4-3, a word cloud with the most populous phrase responses.
discussed historic preservation in broader terms, including both tangible and intangible heritage. Key words in this case involve art, artifacts, documents, places, texts, tradition, customs, relics, events, and memories. A range of responses included “keeping old things around,” to “Preserving things that occurred in the past to be remembered by those in the future…Things such as events, memories, and items,” and “Seeking to preserve, conserve, and/or protect buildings, landmarks, monuments, sites, and intangible heritage (such as oral traditions) of historical, cultural, and/or architectural/design significance.”

A majority of millennials, almost 56%, responded that they would most want to preserve a historic place, question 8, for its “sense of place, which gives character/meaning to a city or neighborhood” (n=136). This answer was most selected across the age groups, as well. The second choice, with almost 24%, was “keep the historic place for its original purpose for its place in history and for future generations.” The third choice was “to see a historic place adapt for a new purpose in the community,” and the last choice was sustainability. These selections were also reflected across each age group, with all the respondents agreeing with the popularity ranking. Only 2 respondents used the ‘other’ option and provided responses such as “It is more beautiful,” and “I think all of the above.”

In regards to the purpose of preservation, question 9, approximately 56% of respondents (n=136) chose that “it is important to keep historically significant places around for future generations” and “preservation makes economic sense to restore rather than construct new.” Forty-two percent selected only the first response,

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6 See Figure 4-4.
preserving for future generations. Only 4 respondents, or almost 3%, selected only economic reasons and no respondents selected that they did not agree with the purpose of preservation. Of the 2 respondents that selected “other,” each noted that preservation should be on a case by case basis, with flexibility on preservation philosophy.

Respondents were also asked how they defined the term “historic” in question 10. Again, some responses were more in depth than others, but only two respondents (n=133) supplied the answer of “old” or “old stuff.” If respondents did use the term ‘old,’ they qualified it. For example, one response said, “Old with respect to time. Important with respect to history.” Another added and provided an example, “Old and important. It can’t just be old to be historic. It has to have some sort of character or interesting history (ie George Washington visited here frequently).” Key concepts utilized in this definition included significant, past, meaningful, value, memory, important, from a previous generation, cultural significance, and defined an era. Interestingly, respondents usually either defined historic relative to an age or range of ages, such as older than 20, 50, 70, or 100 years, or with qualities, including “Something of a previous time period that encapsulates the design, lifestyle, importance, etc of the era it was born in.” If a respondent did choose an age, a majority chose older than 50 years, and a few noted that this was because the National Park Service “defines historic as 50 years or more.”

**Issues Related to Preserving Modern Heritage**

The next section of the survey delved into perceptual issues directly related to preserving modern heritage. The previous question 10 which asked respondents to define ‘historic’ is directly connected to question 11, which asks at what age a building is considered historically significant. The answers to this question indicate how millennials
define ‘historic,’ with 36% responding “age does not factor in historic significance” and almost 35% responding “at least 50 years” (n=133). Twenty-three percent of the respondents replied that a building must be at least 100 years or older, and only 1 respondent thought that a building should be at least 150 years or older. Two respondents responded with 25 years or younger and 5 respondents selected the ‘other’ option. Those who did choose ‘other’ noted that age is a relative term, context was needed in order to define historically significant, and that normally they would choose 50 years, but there were exceptions. However, similar to the differing responses when defining the term ‘historic,’ not all of the age groups agreed across the board. Most respondents in the 18-22 age group believed that to be considered historic a building had to be at least 50 or 100 years old. While most of the respondents in the 23-27 age group chose that age did not factor in historic significance (31 respondents), 28 respondents chose at least 50 years and 19 respondents chose at least 100 years. Both the 28-32 and 33-35 age groups were tied between at least 50 years and age is not a factor. Therefore, though the largest percent of millennials surveyed, 36%, decided that age does not factor in significance, the age groups were split across each group, between this response and at least 50 years.

Thirty-five percent of millennials surveyed stated that an “important event happening at the particular building/site” was the quality that they would most associate with historic architecture in question 12 (n=133). However, overall look/design aesthetics was a close second with 29%. Almost 20% of the respondents answered with “association with particular culture,” whereas less than 10% answered “age of building.”

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7 See Figure 4-5.
Eight respondents chose the ‘other’ option, with a majority noting that they wanted to choose all of the choices as their answer.

For the visual preference section, respondents were able to pick multiple responses, and most did. The first visual preference, question 13, of this section asked which building or buildings would the respondent identify as “historic.” Almost 82% of the respondents selected the Victorian house as historic, followed by the Early American house with 63%, the Mid-century Modern with almost 41% and the Craftsman with 32% (n=133). Approximately 11% of the respondents selected the answer “I do not consider any of these buildings as historic.” It was surprising to discover that more respondents selected the Mid-century Modern house over the Craftsman house and that the Early American house was not selected more than the others, provided that it is definitely the oldest.

In regards to which building or building was aesthetically pleasing in question 14, almost 86% of the respondents selected the Craftsman, followed by approximately 77% choosing the Victorian, 45% selecting the Quaker, and only 29% picking the Mid-century Modern (n=133). The option of none of the buildings being aesthetically pleasing was only selected once.

Considering which buildings were worthy of preservation, question 15, 86% of the respondents selected the Victorian, 69% selected the Early American, 51% selected the Craftsman, and almost 44% selected the Mid-century Modern (n=133). Approximately 7% answered, “I do not consider any of these buildings worthy of preservation.”
It’s important to note for the visual preference section, that respondents were much more likely to choose multiple houses for being worthy of preservation, followed by aesthetically pleasing, over those that they would identify as historic. Each question had the same amount of respondents, (n=133) however question 15 asking about worthiness of preservation had 341 selections, as opposed to aesthetics with 315 selections and historic with 304 selections. The respondents were also more likely to say that none of the buildings were historic, compared to those who responded with the same “I do not consider any of these buildings” on the basis of aesthetics and worthiness of preservation. This furthers the opinions gathered from the earlier question 12 asking about the quality most associated with “historic” architecture, with most respondents noting that an important event defined its historic nature, followed by overall look. Visual preference questions do not provide any context, so respondents were less likely to choose the images as historic. This was later echoed in extended responses, as a few respondents explained their reasoning for how they answered previous questions. One respondent added, “I did not have information on the buildings shown, so I could not determine if they were significant enough...”

Since the respondents had the option of choosing multiple images for their answers, they were more liberal, and more likely, to choose all or most of the options when judging worth of preservation on the basis of visual preference only. This is especially important for preserving modern, since aesthetics and the idea of being historic are essential perceptual issues.

**Millennials’ Perception of Modern Heritage**

The final section of the survey focused specifically on Mid-century Modern heritage and provided some of the most polarizing responses from millennials. Overall,
the perception of modern heritage, both past and present influence, was positive, however those who disagreed, did so vehemently.

First, the respondents were asked to define Mid-century Modern architecture themselves in question 16 (n=129). Respondents typically approached question 16 in three different ways, either by noting a time period range, such as “Building style that was popular during the 40s to 60s,” describing it in terms of characteristics associated with the architecture, such as “clean lines, geometric shapes, sharp angles,” or by relating it to culture, such as “1950s era domestic architecture, i.e. Levitt Town, sprawling post war suburbs, etc. Also, Mad Men-esque furniture comes to mind.”

Another respondent answered only “West Elm,” a popular store that bases its furniture and décor on Mid-century Modern design. Others associated the term with Frank Lloyd Wright, noting, “Frank L. Wright…single story…sprawl…tacky…low pitched roofs” and “I would define it as the movement inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright. Maybe characteristic with low, open spaces and a concentration on the linear.” Wright was the only architect mentioned across the age groups. Other key words or phrases most often used included clean, harsh, or straight lines, geometric, unique, bold color, glass, futuristic, and post WWII. Fourteen of the respondents answered that they were unfamiliar with the term Mid-century Modern or had no idea what it meant, while several others provided a guess or assumption. In this case, a respondent wrote, “I don’t know much about it, but I think it tried to be minimalistic and ‘capture the modern spirit?’ Often trying to be innovative for the sake of innovation. Not connected with historical architectural traditions. Not very beautiful but sometimes novel and interesting.”

See Figure 4-6, a word cloud with the most populous phrase responses.
After the respondents were asked to define Mid-century Modern themselves, the survey explained the definition used in this thesis and provided visual examples, as an education treatment. Question 17 included six images that depicted different types of vernacular residences that represented a range of characteristics associated with Mid-century Modern. The respondents were then given a Likert range of responses for their like or dislike of Mid-century Modern architecture, based on the provided images. Almost 37% of the respondents chose, “I appreciate it, but I do not like it” (n=128). However, a close second choice, with 27% of respondents, was “I like it,” followed by approximately 19% which said that they loved it. Sixteen percent disliked it.

In question 18, in which they were asked to explain their responses, the millennials tended to explain that while it was not their style, they appreciated the architecture for its place in history (n=128). A majority of the responses followed the format, “I personally do not find it aesthetically appealing, but…” Each qualified their response because they could see why others might enjoy it and acknowledged the period’s significance. For example, one respondent answered, “It’s just not something that meshes with my taste, but who am I to say that my taste is better than anyone else’s?” This mirrors the visual preference questions in which millennials were less likely to choose the Mid-century Modern house as aesthetically pleasing, but later a larger percentage considered it worthy of preservation. They used phrases like unique, defines the period, and looks interesting. Many also included that they would not want to live there because they did not consider it cozy. A majority of those who did not like it noted key phrases such as too angular, low roof, ugly, and that the architecture seemed cold.

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9 See Figure 4-7.
Others liked it because they distinguished that it was unique and not “cookie-cutter” like today’s houses. Personal connections caused respondents to appreciate the architecture more, as well. One respondent noted:

My parents were born during the mid century modern era, so I’ve seen pictures of interiors and their houses that were built during that time. I also grew up in a somewhat historic town that appreciates MCM. The fashion company I work for is decorated in MCM and names MCM as our brand aesthetic. After being exposed to MCM I like it for the craftsmanship, clean, bold, and geometric characteristics.

Others enjoyed the architecture because of the nostalgic relationship with their grandparents. For instance, one respondent added,

I love it because it tells me so much about the American culture at the time (but I guess most architecture does). I think its close enough to my generation that I can relate to it and understand how my grandparents were living this time. I also like the creativity in the style, very bold.

And finally, those who were maybe on the fence about Mid-century Modern provided some insight, writing, “The more I learn about it, the more I start to like and understand it."

The following question 19 attempted to reveal a connection between some aspects of popular culture today that are influenced by and reference Mid-century Modern heritage. Four images were provided, depicting a Lucky Charms cereal box from 1964 that was released again, a GQ photo shoot with the characters of Mad Men, a scene from a Katy Perry music video, and an interior featuring an Eames chair.

Respondents were asked if these pop culture references helped them better appreciate the significance of Mid-century Modern culture and design. Sixty-six percent of the respondents (n=128) stated that the images helped. Of those, most said it helped them to imagine what happened in those spaces. For instance, respondents noted, “Seeing people living within the mid-century modern designs makes it more relatable,” and “It is
more diverse than one would think, it plays a role in more than just houses it shows their way of life and sense of style throughout the time period." A majority felt that they needed context related to the exterior architecture in order to understand and relate more to the culture and these images supplied them with it. One respondent noted, "They help place the time period and culture that these buildings were in. The fashion and lifestyles fit the architecture." Another noted, "I feel that knowing more of culture as a whole helps you appreciate it better, rather than the architecture alone." Also, respondents especially mentioned *Mad Men*, saying it was influential in their understanding. One respondent felt a connection with marketing to the millennial generation, noting, "...It seems that companies are latching on to the fact that this generation is intrigued by mid-century culture, or at least this generation feels a connection to that period of time and feels a desire to recreate aesthetics and social practices from the mid-century." It should also be noted that some of the respondents answered that it did not help them better appreciate Mid-century Modern because they were already aware of these pop culture references.

However, some respondents answered negatively or missed the meaning behind the question. While these were few and far between, they stuck out because the respondents seemed so against the idea of pop culture referencing something historically significant or were completely against the culture in the time period itself. Some of these responses include, “Not familiar with them, and the period generally makes me a little sick I have to be honest. From a sustainability perspective we are talking about the celebration of modern consumerism…” and “They don’t because they remind me of the lack of choices for women of the time.” Some respondents were
turned off to the question because of pop culture in general. Some of these responses include, “Pop culture doesn’t mean much to me,” or “…I don’t need pop culture references to appreciate history. I think it’s sad that people need pop culture references of past cultures and designs in order to appreciate it…” Another added, “I’m not much for pop culture and I believe people can have their own options so it doesn’t sway my dislike of it just because they like it.”

The final question to the survey, question 21, asked whether respondents thought Mid-century Modern architecture was worth preserving. This question had an overwhelmingly positive response, with 85% signifying that it was worth preserving (n=127). When asked to explain their answers, most were positive, noting that future generations should be able to enjoy the architecture and that it is part of the United States’ history. However, again, quite a few respondents qualified this statement and were quick to note that not all of it should be preserved, but on a case by case basis and only if something historical happened at that site. Key words and phrases include significance, for future generations, meaningful, representative of culture, and unique. Some responses reflecting this include, “Just like any other time period which is characterized by a certain style or architecture, mid-century modern architecture should be preserved as having a significant impact during some of the most booming years in the US” and “It’s just as worthy as other architectures. How can we rank cultural significance with the intention to preserving some and not others?” Respondents also tended to take themselves out of the situation, noting that others either in the present or

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10 See Figure 4-8.
future might like the architecture and that its aesthetics should not interfere with its worth of preservation. For instance, one respondent replied:

It marks a time in our history that is worth understanding and remembering. Even though I might not identify it as ‘historical’ upon seeing it, there will be a generation who does and they will rely on this architecture to understand the differences and similarities between themselves and past generations. No part of history should be forgotten based on personal tastes.

Most respondents agreed with this general idea. Those that did not think it was worth preserving tended to state that it was ugly or not historic enough, and that they thought older or more traditional styles of architecture were more worthy of preservation. Some said it did not have value at all, was not unique enough, or is not sustainable because it is largely single family. One respondent even went as far as to say, “Preserve it very very minimally, but only for the same reason we preserve concentration camps—‘NEVER AGAIN.’” However, once again, these responses were only a small percentage of the 15% who stated it was not worthy of preservation, and this stance did not reflect the majority of the millennial generation surveyed.

In general, the survey provided key insight into the perceptions held by the millennial generation related to historic preservation and modern heritage. While some respondents could not get over its age, aesthetics, or lack of perceived importance, a strong majority of millennials supported the preservation of modern heritage. Overall, respondents either identified with a 50 year age or no age requirement at all to classify this architecture as historic, and did not allow aesthetics to charge their opinion of its worth. Therefore, millennials’ distinct characteristics and socio-cultural values might lead to a successful relationship, with this generation becoming the leaders in preserving modern.
Figure 4-1. Age Breakdown of Millennial Respondents (n=184)
Figure 4-2. Respondents' Level of Education (n=184)
Figure 4-3. Word Cloud on the Definition of Historic Preservation (n=141)
Figure 4-4. Millennials’ Response on Why They Would Most Want to Preserve a Historic Place (n=136)
Figure 4-5. Millennials’ Response on What Quality They Most Associate with “Historic” Architecture (n=133)
Figure 4-6. Word Cloud on the Definition of Mid-century Modern Architecture (n=129)
Figure 4-7. Millennials’ Response on What They Thought about Mid-century Modern Architecture (n=128)
Figure 4-8. Millennials on Whether Mid-century Modern Architecture is Worth Preserving (n=127)
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION

The goal of this thesis was to begin a conversation of engaging the millennial generation with the preservation of modern heritage, by first attempting to understand millennials' perception of the field in general and then, specifically, preserving modern. In general, millennials responded that modern architecture was worthy of preservation, even though they did not always consider it historic or aesthetically appealing. They tended to take themselves out of the situation and look at it from another person’s point of view or future generations' point of view, allowing them to value modern heritage while not necessarily liking it. This is important to preserving modern architecture, since scholars and bloggers alike have noted that Mid-century Modern is often judged on aesthetics alone. As the field of historic preservation grapples with conserving the multitude of post-war resources now at 50 years of age, its preservation philosophy is also evolving due to the implicit challenges championed by the very nature of modern architecture. Theodore Prudon comments on this, noting, “It would only be fitting for an architecture that once sought to change the world to also effect changes to the perceptions and methods of preservation.”¹

To engage a wider range of stakeholders, the field must continue its relevance to the next generation—the millennials. In order to understand millennials' socio-cultural values associated with modern heritage and its preservation, a framework was created based on key perception issues effecting the preservation of modern resources, which include age, aesthetics, and importance. The resulting survey keyed in on values

already proven important to millennials by national trends, such as quality of life and a sense of community, and sought their opinion on the essential perceptual issues challenged by modern architecture. Overarching themes of millennials’ responses started to depict a wider perception held by the generation.

While, of course, it is near impossible to make generalizations that reflect the values of every member of the millennial generation, this survey acted as an initial attempt in understanding millennials’ perceptions on modern heritage and utilized larger, national studies for guidance on what millennials tended to value. Overall, millennials who participated in the survey held positive views of both the field of historic preservation, and especially preserving modern. Millennials’ viewpoint on the essential question, “what is historic?” influenced their perception of preserving modern and provided keen insight into how they would choose what was worthy of preservation. Also, while millennials did not find modern the most aesthetically pleasing when compared to three other vernacular housing types on a strictly visual basis, they did not allow the aesthetics to color their judgment on whether the resources were significant of preservation, as a striking majority, 85%, agreed that modern is worthy of preservation.

Characteristics and Values of Millennials

Since many studies have previously attempted to characterize millennials’ interests and values, the researcher utilized these to test what the millennials who participated in this survey valued most. For example, the question asking respondents why they would MOST want to preserve a historic place, provided multiple choice responses that prior research indicated millennials already valued, whether they associated it with historic preservation, or not. The response to this indicated that the
majority of millennials valued community most, as they chose that historic places “give
certainty or meaning to a city or neighborhood.”

Experts and other studies pinpoint millennials as the largest, most diverse, and
most educated generation thus far in United States history.\(^2\) Also, millennials were
shaped by technology, as the first generation growing up with the Internet and social
media as a major form of communication.\(^3\) This generation also seems to value family,
community, and quality of life, over most other aspects, including work life.\(^4\) While
seemingly rejecting their parents’ culture and embracing their grandparents’, millennials’
values reflect nostalgia for a simpler time.\(^5\)

The data collected by the survey reflects these larger, national trends. In fact, in
the extended response sections, millennials often identified key ideas that experts and
bloggers alike have long discussed, such as nostalgia, marketing modern in popular
culture, this generation’s specific connection to the 1950s and 1960s, and their
grandparents’ houses/furniture. A majority of the respondents accessed the survey
through the internet, either through Facebook or a friend. Also, while those surveyed
did not necessarily represent ethnic diversity, respondents did have diverse
backgrounds regarding education fields. Only two participants out of 183 surveyed on
the question had not attended college at some point and 41% already held bachelor’s
degrees. Also, millennials’ sometimes contradictory responses, such as age either

House, October, 2014), 2-5.

\(^3\) Ibid., 3.

\(^4\) Ibid., 2.

nostalgia-modern-trend.
being a factor in historic significance or not and wanting to preserve modern, but noting that they did not consider it their style or want to live in it, parallel the paradoxical nature of millennials. Community, support for historic preservation (no respondent indicated that they did not agree with the purpose of the field), sense of place, and a broader approach to preserving modern reflect not only what millennials are trending toward, but also the field of historic preservation.

**Millennials’ Perception of Preserving Modern**

On the major modern preservation issues of age, aesthetics, and importance, millennials tended to be most strict on classifying a building as “historic,” since they define it in either terms of an age range or characteristics. This is mirrored when discussing how old a building must be to be deemed “historic,” as the two most popular answers were “at least 50 years of age” and “age does not factor in historic significance.” This split seems to be due to the fact that millennials either chose the overall look (design aesthetics) or that a significant event happened at that site in order to determine whether a building is considered historic.

Aesthetically, the Mid-century Modern house received the least amount of votes for the visual preference section. However, when shown six images depicting different types of modern residences, the perception was much more positive than negative. Though 37% of the respondents noted that they appreciated it, but did not like it, 27% and 19% liked it or loved it, accordingly, presenting almost 83% of the total response rate as recognizing the significance of modern architecture. Appreciating the architecture is counted as a positive response in this case, since later extended responses indicate that those who appreciated it chose to preserve it, even if they did not find it aesthetically pleasing. In regards to the importance of modern heritage, the
idea that the buildings were worthy of preservation deemed them as important, with 85% of millennials agreeing that this heritage should be preserved.

Also, for the most part, millennials indicated that today’s popular culture references helped put the architecture in context, especially the television show, Mad Men, which depicted a holistic view of the time period’s cultural heritage. Though some respondents did not agree on pop culture references, mainly for the fact that they were by their nature “popular” culture, a majority indicated that it helped them see how the fashions and lifestyles interacted in the spaces. Popular culture is also able to reach a wide array of audiences, further introducing Mid-century Modern’s influence, and making it available to those not only interested in the design field.

An accumulation of these values, with less focus on age and aesthetics, and more of a focus on modern’s representation of a part of American culture, are especially important to its preservation. It seems as if millennials were able to overcome their personal tastes, and grasp modern’s distinct cultural heritage tradition, and want to preserve the buildings that reflect this for future generations. While it is surprising that less millennials identified modern as aesthetically pleasing, given its popularity in the design and furniture world at the moment and its influence in popular culture, millennials as a whole tended to be less about their own personal likes and more about what others do and could possibly enjoy. While they might not always identify it as “historic” now, multiple respondents noted that “it will be one day, to someone.”

Recommendations for Future Research

Since the goal of this survey was to gain insight into millennials’ perception of preserving modern heritage, it only covered a few basic elements of its preservation. Given the general nature of the questions, other studies could hone in on specific issues
and reach further depths of why millennials indicated particular responses over others. It
would most likely be necessary to break each of the issues into their own study, so as to
not overwhelm the respondent or create a higher drop-out rate than this survey already
experienced. The mix of multiple choice, visual preference, and extended response,
could be lengthened, so as to require respondents to explain each of their answers.
This would be particularly helpful in the visual preference section, since sometimes it
seemed respondents did not use the same criteria for their choices or possibly picked
some at random. Though it is still important to gauge millennials’ preference of modern
compared to other architectural styles, it would also be interesting to have some visual
preference questions with all modern choices, ranging from building type and design
aesthetic.

Also important to the visual preference section, understanding the regional style
of the architecture where the respondent is from could provide richer feedback. For
example, not as many participants selected the Early American house as historic as the
researcher expected. This could be because this style is regional to New England and
possibly respondents were not aware of it or it did not reflect what they were
accustomed to. Though responses were recorded from many different states and even
several different countries, a majority of the participants were from all over Florida.

The popular culture question was also mostly hit or miss with respondents. Even
though pop culture as a whole will automatically turn off some respondents, it is still
important to test its influence, since the majority identified positively with its inclusion.
However, a few respondents completely misunderstood the question, mostly noting their
distaste for Lucky Charms or Katy Perry, rather than today’s influence of Mid-century
modern on pop culture. It could also be helpful to include pop culture from the time, and compare it to today or supplement today’s references.

While an online survey is probably the easiest forum to communicate with a wide range of millennials, a focus group would definitely enrich the data collected about millennials’ perceptions of preserving modern. Since some of the respondents were polarizing, either really loving modern or really hating it, it would be interesting to observe them discussing their likes and dislikes and how they came to their opinion. It would also provide more information from respondents who only answered “because I do,” or “because I like it.” In addition, it could possibly help those on the fence about modernism make a more informed decision.

Parallel studies could be conducted on other age groups, as well. While this survey focused on millennials solely, it did allow others from other generations to participate. Interestingly, from the 30 respondents who were not millennials, their responses were more similar to millennials, than different. It could be that the distance from Mid-century Modern in time is what is changing opinions, rather than the age of the respondent.

**Final Remarks and Recommendations**

Overall, much insight was attained into the perception held by millennials on preserving modern heritage. In order to better help preservationists communicate the significance of this architectural resource, it is essential for them to understand what millennials generally value and how they are beginning to perceive modern architecture, so that this can translate into an advocacy campaign to preserve modern.

So far, in order to better engage millennials with preserving modern, focusing on socio-cultural values and providing context of Mid-century Modern seems to help
millennials understand and connect to this time period. Also, realizing that Mid-century Modern is “more than just residential exteriors,” as one respondent noted, is important for creating a whole view of the culture and lifestyle which “fits the architecture.”

Providing experiences in which millennials can feel involved in a cause and utilizing non-traditional engagement techniques, such as experiential fundraisers, pop-up shops, or other innovative ways to connect the past to the future. Also, integrating preservation with other fields, in order to tap into people who do not consider themselves preservationists, but participate in preservation related activities, will further preservation’s reach to those who have a genuine interest. Centering preserving modern around communities, in order to build a sense of place and a broader understanding of a community’s identity and evolution, is especially important to engaging millennials, since they identified sense of place as the reason they would most want to preserve a historic place. Utilizing technology, social media, and strong graphic design to communicate with millennials about the significance, different causes and events, and what is happening in historic preservation, is essential, also, because these are their forms of communication. Finally, taking advantage of Mid-century Modern’s popularity and embracing popular culture as a resource can help connect with millennials today, since influences are resonating in all types of media.

With millennials understanding the significance of modern heritage, preservationists should capitalize on millennials’ connection to this particular time period and overall attitude on the purpose of historic preservation in order to approach the ever-challenging preservation of modern heritage. As millennials’ values align with not
only preservation philosophy, but modern philosophy as well, the relationship could provide rich preservation success for future generations to come.
APPENDIX A
ORIGINAL FRAMEWORK OF QUESTIONS DESIGNED AFTER ISSUES EFFECTING THE PRESERVATION OF MODERN HERITAGE

AGE
- Definition
- "Historic"
- Visual Pref

How do you define the term "historic"?

At what age do you think a property is considered significant?

What are qualities associated with "historic" architecture?

What feeling does a historic building give you?

Which building would you define as historic? (4 image comparisons)

AESTHETICS
- Overall Look
- Features
- Then vs. Now
- Visual Pref

Do you like this type of architecture? (Image for reference)

How would you describe the visual appeal of this architecture? (Image for reference)

Rank the features of this building based on visual appeal (Image with labeled features)

How do these two buildings compare to each other? (Historic vs. present day image)

Which building do you find most aesthetically pleasing? (4 image comparisons)

IMPORTANCE
- Abundance of Prop
- Context
- Visual Pref

Do you think Mid-Century Modern architecture is worth preserving?

Do the following cultural references help you to contextualize Mid-Century Modern architecture? (Images of advertisements, old photos in Gainesville)

Which of these buildings is most worthy of preservation? (4 image comparisons)
APPENDIX B
THEMATIC BLOCKS OF SURVEY QUESTIONS

Block 1: Demographic Information
- What is your age?
- What is your gender?
- What is your ethnicity?
- What is your level of education?
- What is/was your major in college?
- Where are you from? (City, State, Country)

Block 2: Historic Preservation
- How would you best define the term ‘historic preservation?’
- Why would you MOST want to preserve a historic place?
  (A historic place includes interiors, buildings, landscapes, and neighborhoods. Preserve in this case means to utilize an existing historic place instead of demolishing it and putting something else in its location.)
- Do you agree with the purpose of historic preservation?
- How do you define the term “historic?”

Block 3: Issues Related to the Preservation of Modern Architecture
- At what age do you think a building is considered historically significant?
- What is the quality that you would MOST associate with “historic” architecture?
- Which building or buildings would you identify as “historic?” (Visual Preference, 4 images)
- Which building or buildings do you find aesthetically pleasing? (Visual Preference, 4 images)
- Which building or buildings would you consider worthy of preservation? (Visual Preference, 4 images)

Block 4: Mid-century Modern Architecture
1. How would you define Mid-century Modern architecture?
2. What do you think of Mid-century Modern architecture? Explain.
3. Do these popular culture references help you better appreciate the significance of Mid-century Modern culture and design? Explain.
4. Do you think Mid-century Modern architecture is worth preserving? Explain.

Block 5: Communication
5. How did you hear about this survey?
First, the questions will collect basic demographic information.

6. What is your age? (Please note: This survey is intended to test the millennial generation, those born between early 1980s and early 2000s.)
   a- 18-22
   b- 23-27
   c- 28-32
   d- 33-35
   e- 36+

7. What is your gender?
   a- Male
   b- Female

8. What is your ethnicity?
   a- White
   b- Hispanic or Latino
   c- Black or African American
   d- Native American or American Indian
   e- Asian/Pacific Islander
   f- Other

9. What is your level of education?
   a- Some college, but did not earn a degree
   b- I am currently in college
   c- Bachelor’s degree
   d- Master’s degree
   e- Doctorate degree
   f- I did not attend college
   g- Other

10. What is/was your major in college? (If you did not attend college, please type ‘none’)

11. Where are you from? (City, State, Country)
Next, this section of the survey will ask you questions about historic preservation.

12. How would you best define the term ‘historic preservation?’

13. Why would you MOST want to preserve a historic place?
   (A historic place includes interiors, buildings, landscapes, and neighborhoods. Preserve in this case means to utilize an existing historic place instead of demolishing it and putting something else in its location.)
   a- Keep the historic place for its original purpose for its place in history and for future generations
   b- Sustainability- better for the environment to restore a historic place than demolish and construct new
   c- To see a historic place adapt for a new purpose in the community
   d- Sense of place- Historic places give character/meaning to a city or neighborhood
   e- Other-

14. Do you agree with the purpose of historic preservation?
   a- Yes, I think it is important to keep historically significant places around for future generations
   b- Yes, I think preservation makes economic sense to restore rather than construct new
   c- Yes, both A & B
   d- No, preservation holds back future growth and creativity in architecture/building construction
   e- Other-

15. How do you define the term “historic?”

This section of the survey focuses specifically on buildings and issues related to the preservation of Modern architecture.

16. At what age do you think a building is considered historically significant?
a- At least 150 years or older
b- At least 100 years
c- At least 50 years
d- 25 years or younger
e- Age does not factor in historical significance
f- Other- ________________________________

17. What is the quality that you would **MOST** associate with “historic” architecture?
   a- Overall look (Design Aesthetics)
   b- Important event happened at particular building/site
   c- Age of building
   d- Association with particular culture
   e- Other- ____________________________________________

18. Which building or buildings would you identify as “historic?”
   a-  
   b-  
   c-  
   d-  
   e- I do not consider any of these buildings as historic.

19. Which building or buildings do you find aesthetically pleasing?
I do not find any of these buildings aesthetically pleasing.

20. Which building or buildings would you consider worthy of preservation?

I do not consider any of these buildings to be worthy of preservation.
The next set of questions will ask you about Mid-century Modern architecture.

21. How would you define Mid-century Modern architecture?

Mid-century Modern architecture is defined as architecture built after World War II, from the late 1940s to 1970s in America. There are a range of characteristics associated with this type of architecture. The following images depict different types of residences that are considered Mid-century Modern.

22. What do you think of Mid-century Modern architecture?
   a- I love it
   b- I like it
   c- I appreciate it, but do not like it
   d- I dislike it
   e- Other-
23. Please explain your reasoning behind your response to question 18. (What do you think of Mid-century Modern architecture?)

Mid-century Modern design influences popular culture today. The following images are currently circulated in popular culture and reference Mid-century Modern heritage.

Left: General Mills released the 1964 Lucky Charms cereal box design again in 2014.
Right: GQ photo shoot of the main characters in AMC’s hit TV show, *Mad Men*.

Left: Scene in Katy Perry’s “This is How We Do” music video.
Right: An Eames lounge chair featured in Boston Design Guide’s “8 Must-Haves for Your Home in 2014.”

24. Do these popular culture references help you better appreciate the significance of Mid-century Modern culture and design?
   a- Yes
   b- No
25. Please explain the reasoning behind your response to question 20. (Do these popular culture references help you better appreciate the significance of Mid-century Modern culture and design?)

__________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________

26. Do you think Mid-century Modern architecture is worth preserving?
   a- Yes
   b- No

27. Please explain the reasoning behind your response to question 22. (Do you think Mid-century Modern architecture is worth preserving?)

__________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________

28. How did you hear about this survey? Select all that apply.
   a- Facebook
   b- Instagram
   c- E-mail
   d- Friend or colleague
   e- Other
   __________________________________________________________

Thank you for taking this survey!
Questions 18-20


Question 21 (left to right, top to bottom)


Question 23 (left to right, top to bottom)

“Lucky Charms Cereal Box,” courtesy of author.


APPENDIX D
DEFENSE POWERPOINT

MODERN & MILLENNIALS
ENGAGING THE NEXT GENERATION WITH THE PRESERVATION OF MODERN HERITAGE

RESEARCH QUESTION

“The perception of the heritage value of a period’s architecture is the core of any preservation effort.”
- Theodore H.M. Prudon, Preservation of Modern Architecture

What is the millennial generation’s perception of modern heritage and its preservation?
SIGNIFICANCE

- Approximately 15 million people in the United States are engaged in preservation-related activities, but do not consider themselves as preservationists (National Trust for Historic Preservation)
- Need to evaluate a vast array of post-war resources that have reached the pivotal age of 50 years AND need to engage a wider range of stakeholders, especially the younger generations
- Millennial generation is next in line to shape not only the built environment, but American culture itself

With Mid-century Modern heritage currently celebrated in popular culture, perhaps strategies could be devised to advocate for both challenges, utilizing post-war resources to attract a younger generation to preservation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Modern & Millennials: Engaging the Next Generation with the Preservation of Modern Heritage
THE MODERN MOVEMENT

• Defining Modernism - pluralistic, viewed as a discourse, or discussion and debate between architects during the early 20th century that continued and expanded after WWII (Goldhagen)

• Technology, progressive social reform, forward thinking, improve quality of life

• “The very conception of a ‘modern architecture’ implied a frank engagement with the new social and technological realities brought by industrialization. It also implied the rejection of superficial imitations of past forms, and a more ‘direct’ or ‘honest’ portrayal of the contemporary world...” (Curtis)

• After WWII, the United States adopted modern architecture, not only for its utilitarian purposes, but because of its economy of construction and functionality (Prudon)

PRESERVING MODERN: EVOLVING PHILOSOPHY

“It would only be fitting for an architecture that once sought to change the world to also effect changes to the perceptions and methods of preservation.”

- Theodore H.M. Prudon, Preservation of Modern Architecture

• Viollet-le-Duc

• As modern architecture challenged and even rejected previous architectural movements and styles, so did the preservation of modern architecture

• Paradox of Preserving Modern

• Functionality, obsolescence (both functional and physical), design intent, and perception
THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION

- Born between early 1980s and the early 2000s, represents about one-third of total population in 2013 (largest cohort is only 23)
- Largest, Most diverse, most educated generation thus far
- Also characterized paradoxically, entitled or self-absorbed vs. creative, optimistic, and open-minded
- Shaped by technology, connection to community, socially responsible, experiential

MODERN & MILLENNIALS

"Every generation revolts against its fathers and makes friends with its grandparents." – Lewis Mumford

- Strong values of local community, sense of place, and sustainability
- Of the 15 million local preservationists, 50% fall into "young activists" or "green go-getters"
- Daniel Ronan, young preservationist, "Preservation as the triple bottom line," field needs to embrace its complexity, think of it in multifaceted terms, be open to innovative approaches, refocus on saving local, community places

Image Sources: AMC and TheChoy/Millenials Take Over: Community Building Through Preservation
METHODOLOGY

- Mixed methods - both Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches
- Supplementing traditional fabric-based approaches with “people-centered architectural conservation” (Jeremy Wells)
- Framework of issues affecting perception of preserving modern developed from Theodore Prudon’s Preservation of Modern Architecture
- Survey Instrument distributed online through Qualtrics platform and utilized social media to communicate with millennials
- Mix of questions, including multiple choice, visual preference, and long response
- Content Analysis and Reports through Qualtrics
DEVELOPMENT OF SURVEY QUESTIONS

AGE
- Definition
- "Historic"
- Visual Preference
- Overall
- Features
- Then vs. Now
- Visual Preference

AESTHETICS
- Amount
- Context
- Visual Preference

IMPORTANCE
- Which building would you define as historic? (4 image comparisons)
- Do you like this type of architecture?
- How would you describe the visual appeal of this architecture?
- Which building do you find most aesthetically pleasing? (4 images)
- Do you think Mid-Century Modern architecture is worth preserving?
- Do the following cultural references help you to contextualize Mid-Century Modern architecture?
- Which of these buildings is most worth of preservation? (4 images)

FINAL SURVEY QUESTIONS

Demographics
- Age
- Gender
- Education
- Occupation

Historic Preservation
- What was the building originally used for?
- Why would you consider it a historic building?
- What make[s] this building so important?

Issues Related to Preserving Modern
- What change(s) do you think have had the biggest impact on Mid-Century Modern architecture?
- What kind of preservation efforts do you think are needed for this building?

Mid-century Modern Architecture
- What changes have you noticed in the Mid-Century Modern architecture?
- What are some of the challenges of preserving Mid-Century Modern architecture?

Communication
- How do you believe Mid-Century Modern architecture can be communicated to a wider audience?
- How do you think Mid-Century Modern architecture can be more interactive?

Communication
- How do you think Mid-Century Modern architecture can be communicated to a wider audience?
- How do you think Mid-Century Modern architecture can be more interactive?
RESULTS OF SURVEY

DEMOGRAPHICS

- 80% of respondents were female
- 87% of respondents were White, followed by 5% Hispanic or Latino, 5% Asian/Pacific Islander, 1% Black and 1% other
- Diverse education, 41% received Bachelor's degrees
- Variety of educational backgrounds
- Mostly from all over Florida, but many from different states and different countries
PERCEPTION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Key Words Include:
- Maintaining, restoring, preserving, conserving, protecting, preventing, and saving aspects of the past
- Significance, value, landmarks, cultural heritage, future generations
- Broader terms—both tangible and intangible heritage

WHY PRESERVE? A MILLENNIAL’S PERSPECTIVE

- Keep the historic place for its original purpose for its place in history and for future generations
- Sustainability—better for the environment to restore a historic place than demolish and construct new
- To see a historic place adapt for a new purpose in the community
- Sense of place—Historic places give character/meaning to a city or neighborhood

Why would you MOST want to preserve a historic place?
ISSUES RELATED TO PRESERVING MODERN

- **Age:** 50 years (35%) vs. Doesn’t Factor in Significance (36%)
- **Aesthetics:** “It’s not my style, but…”
- **Importance:** “It’s just as worthy of preserving as other architectures. How can we rank cultural significance with the intention to preserving some and not others? (major—Measurement & Statistics)”

What is the quality that you would MOST associate with “historic” architecture?

![Pie chart with data]

VISUAL PREFERENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image Source</th>
<th>Historic</th>
<th>Aesthetics</th>
<th>Preservation</th>
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<td>63%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>69%</td>
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<td>77%</td>
<td>65%</td>
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<td>41%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>44%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=133
PERCEPTION OF MODERN HERITAGE

Participants approached response in three ways:
- Time period range
- Characteristics associated with the architecture
- Relating it to culture

Key Words Include:
- Clean, harsh or straight lines, geometric, unique, bold color, glass, futuristic, and post WWll.

Millennials on defining Mid-century Modern architecture...

1950s Architecture

- Characteristic: Classic Clean
- Color: Common Connection
- Construction: Built
- Design: Mid Century
- Exterior: Horizontal Ideas
- Innovation: Interior Lines
- Material: Majority Materials
- Movement: Modern Minimalism
- Presence: Mid-Century Modern
- Style: Traditional

Roughly shaped by significance, sleek design, smooth space, specifically spread, strong structure style.

What do you think of Mid-century Modern architecture?

Mid-century Modern architecture is defined as architecture built after World War II, from the late 1940s to 1970s in America. There are a range of characteristics associated with this type of architecture. The following images depict different types of residences that are considered Mid-century Modern.

Image Source: Internet, Alphonso Blog, homesrem.com, and HomeInnovation Blog
INFLUENCE OF POPULAR CULTURE

Do these popular culture references help you better appreciate the significance of Mid-century Modern culture and design?

- 66% said yes
- "They help place the time period and culture that these buildings were in. The fashion and lifestyles fit the architecture." (Industrial & Systems Engineering)

MILLENNIALS ON PRESERVING MODERN

- Unique, American culture, case-by-case, for future generations
- "It marks a time in our history that is worth understanding and remembering. Even though I might not identify it as "historical," upon seeing it, there will be a generation who does and they will rely on this architecture to understand the differences and similarities between themselves and past generations. No part of history should be forgotten based on personal tastes." (Musical Theatre)
ENGAGING MILLENNIALS WITH MODERN

- Focus on socio-cultural values and context of Mid-century Modern - "more than just residential exteriors!"
- Integrate preservation with other fields
- Provide experiences where millennials can feel involved in a cause
- Create a connection to the past and to the future
- Center around communities, to build a sense of place and a broader understanding of a community’s identity and evolution
- Utilize technology, social media, and strong graphic design
- Capitalize on Modern’s popularity - embrace popular culture
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

• Hone in on particular issues of age, aesthetics, and importance - Why do millennials respond the way they do?
• Visual Preference - Compare different types and aesthetics of modern
• Focus groups
• Parallel studies of age groups - Are millennials embracing modern better OR is modern better appreciated with age?
LIST OF REFERENCES


—. “I Can’t See It; I Don’t Understand It; And It Doesn’t Look Old to Me,” Forum Journal 27:1, (Fall 2012): 35-45.


New Voices: Engaging Millennials at the ARC Table. Atlanta: Atlanta Regional Commission.


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Cayley Champeau grew up in Lakeland, Florida and credits her early interest in architecture and historic preservation to her local environment of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Florida Southern College. Throughout her childhood, she has fond memories of visiting historic sites, such as the Biltmore Estate, and antiquing with her mother. She received her bachelor’s in art history with a minor in French and Francophone Studies in 2013 from the University of Florida. She received her master’s in historic preservation from the University of Florida, as well.