

Announcement

Keeping It Modern: A Getty Foundation Initiative to Preserve 20th-Century Architecture

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For over 30 years, the Getty Foundation has developed, awarded, and overseen grants that advance the greater understanding and preservation of the visual arts in Los Angeles and throughout the world. This support includes scholarly research and conservation related to architecture of all types and eras. Most recently in 2014, the Foundation launched Keeping It Modern, an international grant initiative focused on the conservation of architecture of the modern movement from around the world.



Figure 1 Sydney Opera House Exterior (Source: Jack Atley).
Figure 2 Henry Luce Memorial Chapel (Source: Tunghai University).

Modern architecture—known for its towering glass-walled skyscrapers, sculptural profiles, and innovative construction materials—is one of the defining artistic expressions of the previous century, and it is increasingly at risk. Architects and engineers often used experimental materials and novel construction techniques to create their inventive forms and advance new architectural ideals. Yet these cutting-edge building materials and structural systems were often untested and have not always performed well over time. In addition, heritage professionals do not always have enough scientific data on the nature and behaviour of modern buildings to develop the necessary protocols for their conservation and care. Keeping It Modern addresses these challenges by funding model projects that can point the way toward new methods and standards for the conservation of modern architecture.

Each year the Foundation awards approximately 10 grants for Keeping It Modern projects. Proposals pertaining to preservation of significant 20th-century buildings undergo a competitive review process by international experts in the field and are selected for their architectural importance and potential to advance conservation practices related to modern architecture. Planning grants, which represent the majority of funding in this initiative, are offered for research and planning projects that involve specialists from multiple disciplines and may include the study of historical documentation; research on the historic fabric of the building; physical analysis and testing of original materials used in construction, such as their properties and performance under specific conditions; the development and testing of technical solutions; and preparation of technical drawings, budget estimates, and schedules of work. Planning projects may also

include the development of comprehensive management plans, for cyclical maintenance and long-term care. Implementation grants are offered for exceptional projects related to internationally recognised buildings that advance the conservation of modern architecture in significant ways and have the potential to serve as models for the conservation of other 20th-century buildings.

To date, Keeping It Modern has supported the preservation of more than 40 buildings in over 20 countries



Figure 3 The Gandhi Bhawan in Chandigarh, India (Source: Vanicka Arora).

and regions globally. The Foundation is committed to the continued international scope of the initiative, particularly in areas such as Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Central and Eastern Europe—where there are abundant examples of important modern movement buildings and relatively fewer grant projects to date. In Eastern Asia, for example, there have been two successful proposals. Tunghai University in Taiwan region received a Getty grant to develop a comprehensive conservation plan for I.M. Pei's and C.K. Chen's Henry Luce Memorial Chapel. The project included in-depth research into the history of the buildings construction, materials, and past conservation efforts, as well as analysis and testing to provide much-needed weather proofing and climate control in the region's typhoon-prone environment. The plan is nearly complete and has resulted in a local listing designation for the building, the first for a modern structure in the area. More recently in 2017, the Japan Sport Council was awarded a Getty grant to produce a conservation management plan for modern architecture of Yoyogi National Gymnasium. The building will serve as an Olympic stadium for the second time in 2020, and its stewards are using Keeping It Modern support to ensure that any updates to the site, which was first constructed for the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo, meet current heritage standards.

In Southeast Asia, Keeping It Modern grants are supporting three projects in India, one of which is Gandhi Bhawan at Panjab University in Chandigarh designed by the Swiss architect Pierre Jeanneret, cousin and disciple of Le Corbusier. Architectural conservation specialists have completed in-depth archival research and technical analysis, including laser scanning, and an echo sound survey of the concrete surfaces. The work resulted in a detailed set of documentation drawings and virtual three-dimensional models that form part of a comprehensive conservation management plan.

Applications are currently being accepted for the 2019 funding cycle. Nonprofit or charitable organisations from around the world are eligible to request support for the conservation of significant sites that are publicly owned and serve a public function. Grant support is not available for privately held or commercial properties. Projects that focus on deferred maintenance, rebuilding, or major reconstruction of lost fabric fall outside the scope of the initiative. To learn more, visit www.getty.edu/foundation/initiatives/current/keeping_it_modern.