

*The Recent Past Preservation Network*

<http://www.recentpast.org>

Recent Past Preservation Network; accessed February 3-9, 2005

The Recent Past Preservation Network (RPPN) is a nonprofit organization established in 2000 to maintain the momentum generated by the 1995 and 2000 National Park Service "Preserving the Recent Past" conferences and other events that focused on less than 50-year-old cultural resources. Its goal is to utilize new technologies to educate and mobilize the cultural resource community in an effort to preserve and document fast disappearing modern buildings and landscapes.

In keeping with this mission, the RPPN website is the primary means of communication for the organization and a wide variety of information is presented. The site is attractively designed and easy to navigate. The homepage presents information on endangered resources, such as the Beekman Theater and Cinema I & II in New York City and W. A. Sarmiento's Glendale Federal Savings Building in California, and the most recent information on each threatened property.

One of the most intriguing pages is the National Windshield Survey page. Interested parties are invited to submit images and information about recent past resources. Entries are organized by property type such as domes, Lustron houses, bowling alleys, or Cold War-era resources. There are also entries for a number of architects and firms associated with the Modern Movement, such as Welton Becket, whose firm had an enormous impact on Southern California in the 1950s and 1960s. This will be of particular interest to anyone needing contextual information about a particular building type or historical aspect of the recent past.

The Resources page will also prove of interest to both professional preservationists and to volunteer advocates. RPPN has collected a significant

amount of information on efforts to save and recognize recent past sites, including references to the 2,000+ recent past properties that have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places. There is also extensive information on working with National Register Criteria Consideration G, which requires that recent past resources be exceptionally important at the national, state, or local level in order to qualify for the National Register. RPPN does not offer publications for sale nor do they produce hard copy publications. An outstanding topical bibliography developed by Richard Longstreth of George Washington University is available on the website.

On the Network page, RPPN lists local points of contact for recent past issues—an interesting and innovative idea. RPPN is a membership organization and maintains an Internet list serve for those who join. Joining RPPN can be accomplished online and is quite simple. (Even a computer-phobe like your humble correspondent had no difficulty.) Just click on the Join link. Sponsor-level members are given space for information and advertising their mission/services. Otherwise, the RPPN site is free of advertising and pop-ups.

Recent past resources are likely to become more of an issue as time moves forward. The 50-year threshold for National Register consideration is already at 1955, squarely in the middle of the Modern Movement. The RPPN website is an excellent resource for those uninitiated in the recent past and those more familiar with the topic. Preservationists of all stripes will find much to ponder here and will come away with a greater appreciation for these under recognized and fast disappearing resources of the last half of the 20th century.

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