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# REAL Talk

BEFORE YOU BUY, LEARN FROM A MID MOD REAL ESTATE EXPERT ABOUT THE KEY FEATURES TO LOOK FOR IN A MIDCENTURY HOME.

By STEPHANIE AGNES-CROCKETT | Photography by ATOM STEVENS



THE 4' X 8' WOOD PANELING HAS BEEN WELL CARED FOR AND POLISHED FOR A STUNNING LOOK. "PAINTING THE [HOME'S] CEILING MODERNIZES THE LOOK AND OPENS IT UP, BUT KEEPS TRUE TO MIDCENTURY MODERN STYLE," ADRIAN EXPLAINS, "AS OPPOSED TO COVERING THE TONGUE-AND-GROOVE PANELING."

**MAKING THE DECISION TO PURCHASE YOUR OWN MIDCENTURY HOME** is exciting, but it may become overwhelming if you're unsure of the specifics. To make an informed choice, you must be aware of key elements found in these homes and what that means for the long term.

Adrian Kinney has been selling homes for nine years and specializes in Midcentury Modern architecture. In addition to his real estate experience, he's also lived in a noted Cliff May home in the Denver area, experiencing life in a midcentury home first-hand. "The way these homes live and flow is truly remarkable," Adrian says. "Most of the time," he adds, "they need to be seen and lived in to really experience 'modernism.'"





(ABOVE) THE STUNNING ORIGINAL CABINETS IN THIS HOME ARE IN EXCELLENT CONDITION AND WOULD BE EASY TO DESIGN AROUND.

(LEFT) "THE FRONT DOOR IS ORIGINAL," ADRIAN SAYS, "BUT IT HAS BEEN PAINTED A BRIGHTER, MODERN COLOR. THIS IS A NOD TO ITS ROOTS, BUT ALSO A MOVEMENT FORWARD WITH THE TIMES!"



## OPEN SESAME

How can you recognize Midcentury Modern style? According to Adrian, midcentury homes thrive on connecting with the great outdoors, so openness is key. "Many rooms have their own door to [the] outside," he explains, "and sometimes even a wall of glass to connect the room to [the outdoors]."

In certain cases, Adrian adds, "there's even a private courtyard for each room and a larger one for the whole house." Clerestory windows also frequently appear in midcentury dwellings. Low-slung rooflines and large windows are other key elements in these properties.

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR

As you study your potential home, keep an eye out for original details. "They're great finds," Adrian says, "and translate to real value on resale, when shined up!" Specifically, look for craft details, such as "custom wood cabinets with distinctive handles: chevron or satellite pulls, or tulip or rounded door handles."

## SCRAP OR SAVE

TIPS FROM THE EXPERT ON WHAT TO SALVAGE AND WHEN TO START OVER.

**WOODWORK:** "I am a huge fan of saving the 4' x 8' wood paneling," Adrian says. "If it is faded, many times it can be stained and polished back up!" However, this is not always the case. "Unfortunately," Adrian explains, "if [the wood] was painted, and it was a lauan panel, it may be too thin to sand or strip. [In this case], new paneling would need to be installed."

**APPLIANCES:** "I love original appliances for their looks," Adrian states, "but unfortunately, they are not efficient, and most are very hard to repair, since many of the parts are no longer made." On the plus side, he points out, "there are appliances now that can be fronted and hidden in cabinets, or made to look original but have all new parts!"

**BATHROOMS:** Adrian recommends keeping "the original pink, blue and yellow tiles in the bathrooms." And, he says, "if you have an original vanity and sink, too, save them. Some can be retrofitted with new hardware, polished up and made to look new."





WITH A SEAMLESS CONNECTION BETWEEN INSIDE AND OUT, THIS HOME, ADRIAN NOTES, "REALLY MAKES THE BEST USE OF THE MODERNIST CONCEPTS!" IF YOU FIND A HOME LIKE THIS, HE ADVISES, "EMBRACE IT! MAYBE ADD IN YOUR OWN LITTLE TOUCHES HERE AND THERE, TOO."



You'll also want to inspect the ceiling for tongue-and-groove paneling, which fits the slats together like jigsaw puzzle pieces. "Midcentury Modern enthusiasts love tongue-and-groove ceilings," Adrian notes. "Plus the panels add a great deal of depth and character to the room."

### BIG TICKET ITEMS

Regardless of the style of the home, it's important to investigate what Adrian calls the "big ticket items." These include "roof, electrical, foundation, plumbing and sewer." Next in line are the windows and the heating/cooling systems. After you've determined what you need to repair, Adrian explains, you'll be in a better position to decide "which cosmetic items may have to be changed and which ones can be saved."

Whenever possible, Adrian recommends salvaging the home's original interiors. "[The homes] were built a certain way for a reason," he says, "and keeping to those roots will help create timeless designs that will not fall victim to passing trends."

### LANDSCAPE LOOKOUT

And, of course, you'll want to consider the condition of the yard. "Depending on your climate," Adrian says, "a mature and established landscape is always the best, as the new owner can get the secret from the previous owner, and just keep up the work!"

For a yard that's aesthetic and ecological, Adrian recommends water-efficient vegetation. "I always look to incorporate some sort of xeriscape or desert landscaping as a nod to Palm Springs," Adrian advises, "and also as a way to do my part to be as green as possible." ❁

(ABOVE) WHILE THE WALL STRIPE, SUBWAY TILE, RETRO VANITY LIGHT AND MODERN VANITY ARE WELL PLACED IN THIS BATHROOM, UPDATING THE FLOOR TILE WOULD BE THE FINISHING TOUCH. ADRIAN RECOMMENDS, "SEE WHAT OLD MAGAZINE ADS SHOWED ON THE FLOORS IN BATHROOMS, AND SEE WHAT IS AVAILABLE TODAY TO REPRODUCE THAT LOOK!"