



## Idaho News

# Symposium takes closer look at Boise's modern buildings

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VIDEO Preserving the past

BOISE -- Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, but when it comes to building designs from the 1950s and 60s -- some find that a bit challenging.

That's why a group of preservationists in Boise are trying to generate aesthetic appreciation for some unlikely buildings.

The Idaho Transportation Department building is a perfect example.

To many it's unremarkable, maybe even ugly -- to others, it's not only stylish, it's significant.

It was designed in 1961 by renowned local architect Charles Hummel.

Nearly 50 years later, a symposium was held inside to discuss its legacy and that of other local buildings from this period -- not just commercial structures around town, but also mid-century modern homes, with their low roofs and linear design.

Architects and designers came from all over the West and beyond to discuss preservation.

The message seems to be -- you don't have to love it...just leave it.

"What's important? What's important now? What's going to be important? What's going to represent the 1950s and 60s in 20, 30, 40 years? How are we going to see those types of buildings if all of them are gone, we won't be able to talk about them," said Dan Everhart, architectural historian.

"I think our job is to translate that and deepen that into a public awareness that says, why would think about tearing that down, let's at least explore creative alternatives to reuse it and recycle it," said Anthena Hartig, National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Those at this sold-out symposium took a three-hour bus tour of local homes and building representative of this era.

Fortunately, there's been a renaissance or sorts, which could not only save, but restore many mid-century buildings.

Among those is the Modern Hotel in the Linen District, which is appropriately where all the attendees are staying.