

NEIGHBORHOODS WITH

contemporary homes

▶ MOHICAN HILLS

When people think about architecture around Washington, D.C., "they think colonial," says real estate agent Michael Shapiro. "What I try to tell people is there's actually a lot of midcentury houses here." Wander through Mohican Hills, about a mile and a half from Glen Echo, and you'll find lots of angular modern homes with big windows and gently sloping roofs tucked amid the trees and hillsides. "What people were doing in Mohican Hills was ahead of its time," Shapiro says. "Architects built these houses with a lot of glass and set them into the landscape to connect the indoors and outdoors." Winding streets curve past wooded lots where the low-slung houses look out over forested hills. Some of those midcentury modern houses have been replaced by a mix of architectural designs, but many remain in place, preserved in all their *Mad Men* style, and finding new generations of admirers.

▶ BRADLEY PARK

When the construction company Matthews-Schwartz teamed up with modern architect Eason Cross to build Bradley Park in Bethesda in 1966, they faced a challenge. As in the group's other neighborhoods, Mohican Hills and Wynkoop, the rolling landscape made it difficult to find places suitable for construction. "But they were known for designing houses on properties that had been considered challenging," says Clare Lise Kelly, a preservation planner and architectural historian with the Montgomery County Planning Department. The work of the designer and builders paid off: Cross won the 1967 Best Residential Design award from the American Institute of Architects and *House & Home*. Some of the original houses have been torn down and replaced, but many are still there: boxy homes with big eaves, balconies and lots of glass, surrounded by hills and trees. As these homes turn 50, they're just starting to be seen for their historic value, says Kelly, who recently wrote *Montgomery Modern*, a book examining buildings like these. "They're distinctly designed houses," Kelly says. "When you're looking out through those big windows, it feels like nature is coming into your living space."

▶ DRUMALDRY

Homes built in the '70s often don't receive much attention. That's a shame when it comes to Drumaldry, a unique neighborhood of 104 homes with wood siding and shake-shingle roofs near Wyngate in Bethesda. Architect Nicholas A. Pappas designed Drumaldry homes in the California style in the early 1970s, using lots of glass and clean lines. "People are looking for simpler and cleaner," says Andy Coelho, an architect who lives in Drumaldry. "Modern houses have that look. I think it's getting more and more popular." The houses are close together, but each has a brick fence for privacy. Pin oaks planted throughout the neighborhood create a sense of unity. Walking paths connect to nearby neighborhoods. "It was such an intentional design for the way people live," says Barbara Nalls, a real estate agent who lives there. "I don't know why people don't appreciate that more." Inside, houses have high ceilings, lots of windows and open floor plans. "All of that gives a real sense of space and light that belies the size of the house," Nalls says.