INTRODUCTION

The modern movement, since almost a century ago, meant a vision of a technological future, but now that we are actually living in a technological age, definitions have changed. Modern architecture in the 1990s has distinguished itself from its modernist predecessors by being part of a broader cultural movement. Being modern today is not a question of style but of a cultural shift. There have been deeply rooted changes to the way we live and work today. These changes have made modernism, for many people, a means through which to escape their fast-changing working and living patterns. The new modernist home is tailored to the new needs of the 1990s. The rigidity of simplistic understanding of ‘newness’ is now challenged. Instead, the new modernist home is sensual, practical, and must accommodate human, everyday needs. New modernism today reconciles simplicity with the emotional, spiritual and physical needs of comfort. They appeal to us sensually in order to balance the stresses of modern living.

The spirit of innovation continues as architecture tries to expand its approach to accommodate ever-changing demands. New modernism is discussed here as the next stage in the continuation of the modern movement. Although some writers may consider that modernist architecture was arguably over by the time of the Second World War, in 1940, I consider it here as part of the continual evolution of the modern movement.

New modernist homes in the 1990s will be analyzed as part of the next stage in the continuation of the modern movement. The analysis of the modern home begins, firstly, from the very heart of the beginning of modernism - Le Corbusier’s 1914 ‘Dom-ino’. It then traces some significant houses or housing projects, which have had the greatest impact on the development of the modern home throughout the modern movement. Framed in their socio-economic or cultural context, their modernist ideals and aesthetics would be discussed. On understanding the quintessential spirit of modernism and the modernist aesthetic, this paper then focuses on the new modernist homes of today, its response to its new needs and desires, and to the situational context in the 1990s.

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1 An upper case ‘m’ tends to be used by writers who regard modernism as an aesthetic style, whereas those who have a broader definition of the modern tend to favour a lower case. For this reason I have used the latter.