

## designboom

*step inside the 1960s “prairie house” in oklahoma collaged in swirling cedar shingles*

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**the 1960 ‘prairie house’ in norman, oklahoma is an important piece of american architecture history.** the vision of architect **herb greene**, the abode references everything from primordial creatures to protective shelters and futurist objects, with its curved silhouettes and quirky, wood shingled surfaces. *‘feelings of pathos or tragedy arise out of the looming ‘wounded creature’ look of the image,’ greene describes in his writing ‘mind and image’. ‘suggestions of humor are afforded, mainly in the realization that the head of the creature is, after all, a man-made construction with intimations of comfort and shelter. in addition a feeling of protection is expressed by the sense of an enveloping coat of a mother hen’s ‘hovering over,’ as well as by the cavelike interior. the soft textures, human scale, warm color, and lifelike rhythms contribute to a feeling that the house is in some way human.’*

**greene’s iconic ‘prairie house’ caught the eye of austin hacker and bryan bloom, owners of local design/build firm OXBloom, who purchased the property more than 50 years after its original construction.** *‘what herb did out here on the wide open plains in the supposed wastelands of culture and design, is nothing shy of brilliance,’ austin and bryan tell designboom. ‘the place deserves to be brought back to its full glory so that the world can experience it — it’s a magical place.’*

**working closely with the architect, austin and bryan are paying close attention to the original details found throughout the dwelling.** the shingle-by-shingle process will see them accumulate a 3D scan of the house's external skin, so that when it comes time to remove the current iteration and replace it with an updated version, they'll have a digital map to closely follow.

*'herb is of the opinion that there are some adjustments to the skins layout that could improve its functionality, so we'll play with new patterns as we go,' they describe. 'if you read any of his writings you'll quickly realize that he's a deep believer in allowing art to develop rather organically, with ample room for tolerance to the initial design'*



**currently in the midst of this monumental undertaking, austin and bryan plan to open 'prairie house' up to the community of creatives in the area.**

*'there's a tight knit design community here, so with the university of oklahoma's college of architecture, along with herb's guidance, we're going to resurrect the place. ideally, it'll become a platform for the arts, as well as a lab that will act as an incubator and educational hub to promote the tenets on which herb based his own art. we're just a conduit to help promote the effort'.*

austin and bryan are paying close attention to the original details found throughout the dwelling. the team plans to restore 'prairie house' and open it up to the community of creatives in the area. the shingle-by-shingle process will see the restoration team accumulate a 3D scan of the house's skin.

images by mel willis