

Modern-style house that caused stir during its review lists at \$12.5 million in Palm Beach

Two-story house with contemporary-style architecture is under construction on the North End at 218 Debra Lane, a street filled with one-story homes.



Darrell Hofheinz
Palm Beach Daily News

Published 6:02 a.m. ET Jan. 26, 2022



A rendering depicts a contemporary-style house under construction at 218 Debra Lane on the North End. Approved by Town Hall in 2019 over some neighbors' objections, the property was just listed at \$12.5 million. [LaBerge & Ménard](#), Courtesy [Town Of Palm Beach](#)

An under-construction contemporary-style house at 218 Debra Lane has entered the market at \$12.5 million, a little more than two years after the Architectural Commission [debated](#) whether the design would be too big for its street on the North End of Palm Beach.

The review board ultimately approved the two-story design in a split vote in October 2019.

At the time, the couple who proposed building the house — Andrew and Milla Russo — expected to use it as their own residence, Andrew Russo said Tuesday. But their family's plans have changed and they have decided to remain in his hometown of Jupiter, where they have lived for decade.

Steve Wynn: [Casino mogul lists Palm Beach investment estate for nearly \\$38 million](#)

Seaside condo: [This condo lists at \\$19.95 million, almost a record asking price in Palm Beach](#)

Board says no: Architecture panel kills ‘massive’ house designed for North End street in Palm Beach

From the archives: Neighbors gain more time to review proposed houses in Palm Beach

During the board’s review of the house in 2019, a few neighbors said they feared the size of the Russos’ house would overwhelm other homes on the streets.

But the majority of the board members disagreed. They said they liked the scale of the residence and applauded its architecture, which nods at contemporary homes built during the mid-20th century. They approved of its sharply slanted roof lines, natural materials, distinctly horizontal profile and walls of glass facing the swimming pool.



A rendering of the house being built at 218 Debra Lane shows its slanted roof, clerestory windows and lushly landscaped yard. LaBerge & Ménard, Courtesy Town Of Palm Beach

“Overall, the design of this house is very befitting and very nice for the area,” said Commissioner Alexander Ives.

The Russos paid \$1.5 million for the property in June 2019. The new house, being built by Sciame Homes, was designed by Daniel Ménard of LaBerge and Ménard.

The Russos, Ménard told the architectural board, initially approached him about designing a custom home in a style common on the island — British West Indies or Dutch Colonial, for example, or perhaps one with Art Deco influences.

But recognizing the character of Debra Lane, Menard said, he instead suggested a house that might look as if it began with a 1950s bungalow and then grew over time with a couple of additions, including a “modern family room” facing the pool.

Ménard made efforts to keep the house from appearing too tall, he said, even though it had to meet new higher flood-plain standards. He lowered the roof wherever possible, carefully sited the two-story component and emphasized the house’s horizontal lines, he said.



A rendering shows the interior planned for a house just listed for \$12.5 million at 218 Debra Lane on the North End of Palm Beach. Courtesy [Illustrated Properties](#)

The Russos’ sales listing mentions the well-equipped island-style kitchen designed by Downsview with custom cabinets, a La Cornue gas cooktop and professional series Thermador appliances.

Renderings show contemporary-style interiors with wood accents, glass doors and expansive clerestory windows to bring in natural light. The house will have white oak wood flooring throughout, the listing says.

*

Darrell Hofheinz is a USA TODAY Network of Florida journalist who writes about Palm Beach real estate in his weekly “Beyond the Hedges” column. He welcomes tips about real estate news on the island. Email dhofheinz@pbdailynews.com, call (561) 820-3831 or tweet @PBDN_Hofheinz. [Help support our journalism. Subscribe today.](#)



Palm Beach homes: Panel OKs modern-style house for 218 Debra Lane

The Russos, who are real estate agents with Illustrated Properties, co-listed the house on Friday in the Palm Beach Board of Realtors Multiple Listing service. They expect to complete construction in time for a buyer to use it next season, the listing says.

“The shell is up. The walls have been framed out with studs. The roof is on,” Andrew Russo said.



With a total of 4,508 square feet, a house just listed for \$12.5 million is under construction at 218 Debra Lane. *Nicholas Defelice, Elite Real Estate Photography, Courtesy Illustrated Properties*

The four-bedroom house replaced one that was built in 1953 on the south side of Debra Lane at the corner of Laurie Lane. The house will have 4,508 total square feet of living space, inside and out, on a quarter-acre lot.

Over the past several years, residents of Debra Lane have repeatedly told the Architectural Commission that any new houses approved for the narrow street should be carefully scaled and designed to complement the one-story homes built there in the 1940s, '50s and '60s.