

The Benson House, an Early Frank Gehry Residence and Calabasas Historical Landmark No. 2, Comes to the Market

Built in 1981 for law professor Robert Benson under complete creative freedom, the residence marks where Gehry's ideas about scale, material and form took shape

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, July 7, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Beyond Shelter Real Estate Group](#) announces the listing of [The Benson House](#), a 1981 residential work by Pritzker Prize-winning architect [Frank Gehry](#).

Designated as Calabasas Historical Landmark No. 2, the property has

come to market for only the second time in its history. Completed before Gehry's global commissions, including the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao and the Walt Disney Concert Hall, the house represents a formative moment when Gehry was quietly redefining domestic architecture in Los Angeles.

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The Benson House is one of my all-time favorite projects because the budget was so tight and so impossible.”

Frank Gehry

Designed for Robert "Bob" Benson, an Emeritus Professor of Law at Loyola Law School, his wife Lesley and family, the house emerged from a relationship built on trust and creative freedom. Benson, who served on the committee that brought Gehry the landmark Loyola Law School commission, offered the architect something more

valuable than a generous budget: complete creative license. "Whatever you want to do," Benson told him, "We will go for."

Rather than a single structure, Gehry broke the program into two vertical volumes clad in asphalt shingles, joined by a wooden walkway across the sloped site. Gehry achieved an economy of construction while producing an open arrangement of independent volumes resembling a deconstructed village. He compared the pairing to a Japanese sculpture of two stones almost



Frank Gehry - The Benson House, Calabasas Historical Landmark No, 2

touching. The taller volume holds the bedrooms; the smaller one holds the living spaces. The result is a home organized around the natural rhythm of daily life, with one building for gathering and one for rest and retreat, with the space between them serving as an outdoor room. The Getty Research Institute, which archives the residence, has described it as a rare early work from a moment when Los Angeles redefined architecture itself.

The Benson House represents an iconic chapter in the architect's residential legacy. As noted in Mildred Friedman's seminal monograph, Frank Gehry: The Houses (Rizzoli), it represents a pivotal era in which Gehry distorted, expanded and collapsed the traditional modernist box, shifting the entire paradigm of Southern California domestic architecture by splitting the home into distinct, geometric pavilions.

"Early Gehry residential works are exceptionally rare and they carry the same conceptual weight that his museums would later become known for," said JB Fung, listing agent and principal of Beyond Shelter Real Estate Group. "The Benson House perfectly encapsulates Gehry's early genius, showcasing how he completely disrupted traditional residential forms. The two-volume plan still works as intended, with space to gather and space to retreat. This is an opportunity to become the steward of an important chapter in architectural history."

Beyond Shelter Real Estate Group is a Los Angeles design-focused real estate team specializing in the representation of mid-century modern homes, historic properties and architectural residences for more than two decades. The team's work combines custom-tailored marketing with curated storytelling, emphasizing each property's architecture, history and relationship to the cultural landscape of Los Angeles.

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Living room of The Benson House with exposed ceiling beams



Aerial view of The Benson House by Frank Gehry showing two separate volumes

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