

HISTORIC PROPERTIES COURSE OUTLINE

Instructor: Sara Rosenfeld, Coldwell Banker, Cambridge Mass Ave. Office sara.rosenfeld@nemoves.com

Guest Speakers:

- J. Brandon Wilson, Executive Director, Somerville Historic Preservation Commission
bwilson@somervillema.gov
- Kostas Ligris, Esq., Ligris & Associates kligris@ligris.com
- Brad Stearns, General Contractor, former member and now consultant to the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission csabrads@comcast.net
- Kristi Chase, Preservation Planner, Somerville Historic Preservation Commission
kchase@somervillema.gov

With a special thank you to Casey McNeill Preservation Planner Intern, Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning & Community Development, for her assistance.

I. Welcome and Introductions - Sara Rosenfeld, Instructor (9:00-9:15am)

- Overview of Course
- Availability of Resource Material

II. Overview of Historic Districts and Historic Preservation Commissions (9:15-10:00am)

J. Brandon Wilson, Executive Director of the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission

- What is a “Historic Property”
- What is a National Register Property or District (NRD)
- What is a Local Historic Property or Local Historic District (LHD)
- What is the Difference between the Two Types of Districts
- Value of Local Historic Districts
- Benefits of Local Historic District to Owners
- How is a Local Historic District Created
- Who Administers Local Historic Districts
- What Does the Preservation Commission Review
- What Types of Alterations/Construction are Exempt from Review
- Case Study Example - Somerville Historic Preservation Commission
 - Member composition; assistance available
 - Meeting schedule, format, publicizing
 - Typical” application; decision timing
 - Criteria for Local Historic District Property Designation
 - Missed Opportunities - Lessons Learned
 - Realized Opportunity - Working with the SHPC
 - Preservation Awards Program – Before and After Examples
- How to Research and Present a Historic House

II. Legal Aspects of the Historic Ordinance - Kostas Ligris, Esq. and former Commissioner of the Fort Point Channel Landmark District for the City of Boston (10:00-10:45am)

- Deed Covenants
- Registry of Deeds and Attachment
- Historic Preservation Law vs. Historic Resource Law
- Tax Benefits of Owning a Historic Property
- Demolition Delay
- Regulations and Zoning- Relief of Local Laws

COURSE BREAK (10:45-11:00am)

III. Common Problems and Solutions for Old Houses – Brad Stearns, General Contractor (11:00-11:45am)

- Windows - One of the Biggest Concerns
- Other Common Problems
 - Sagging Floors
 - Bad Sills, Corner Posts, and Bug Infestation
 - The ENEMY: Water, Fungus, and Bugs
 - Chimney and Masonry Repair
 - Poor or No Insulation
 - Roofing, Siding and Flashing
 - Lead Paint
- Construction
 - Foundation Forms - basements, crawl spaces, slab on ground
 - Framing Types - platform frame, balloon frame, plank and beam frame
 - Window Styles
- Restoration Instead of Replacement
 - Plaster vs. Sheet Rock- not controlled by a historic commission, but helpful to know for the selling process
 - Gutters
 - Wood Porches and Details
 - Windows

V. The Role of the Real Estate Professional, Sara Rosenfeld, Instructor, former member of the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission (1985-1995) (11:45am-12:15pm)

- Know where to Find Information - See Website Reference Sheet - DO YOUR HOMEWORK!
- Massachusetts Historical Commission vs. Individual Local Historic Preservation Commissions
- Historic Maps (after 1850 with names and house footprint)
- Local Libraries, Museums and Historical Societies
- Avoiding Myths and Old Wives' Tales
 - Old Houses vs. New Houses
 - Help from Historic Preservation Commissions

- Legal and Control Concerns about the Commission
- Expense Concerns versus Simple Solutions

A. The Role of the Listing Agent

- Determine if the property is designated as “Historic” by the local commission versus listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or both, and understand the different designations and implications
- If property IS designated, speak to the locality’s historic preservation commission to get the details or check the City/Town website
- Understand the effect on the property’s VALUE – The big debate!
- Understand the significance of a Historic District that contains multiple properties versus single building districts when only that house is historic
- Make sure to insert disclosures on Listing Sheets and MLS: “This Property is subject to the City of (Town of) _____ Historic Preservation Ordinance”
- Do a special marketing effort - the more research presented, the better - sell the unique details and historic significance of a given property and in some cases, the overall district
- Understand the different styles of houses and how to describe their significant features, e.g. for help go to www.oldhouseweb.com/stories/Features/Architectural_Housing_Styles

B. The Role of the Buyer’s Agent

- Don’t rely on the Listing Agent - Do your Homework!
- Determine if the property is designated as “Historic” by the local commission versus listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or both, and understand the different designations and implications
- If property IS designated, speak to the local historic preservation commission representative to get the details or check the City/Town website. FOR YOUR KNOWLEDGE, find out any important details about the specific property
- Have your buyer speak directly or e-mail the representative for the local commission as they do a better job explaining the process than YOU!
- Include on offer an additional disclosure, “Buyer acknowledges receipt of the information that the property is subject to the City of (Town of) _____ Historic Preservation Ordinance. Buyer is advised to contact the City of (Town of) _____ Historic Preservation Commission for further information.”
- Educate your buyer - direct them to websites and other relevant resources
- Help your buyer select the right home inspector. If don’t know one, ask your fellow agent who has listed or sold a historic home in the past
- When go to the local building department, be sure that they fully understand the community’s historic district ordinance, know about designated properties’ exemptions from certain building code regulations, and recognize the need for a Certificate (of Appropriateness/Non-Applicability/Hardship) from the local commission *before* issuing a building permit for a designated property.

VI. How to Determine House Styles and Architectural Features of Differentiation, Kristi Chase, Preservation Planner, Somerville Historic Preservation Commission (12:15-12:55pm)

- Overview of House Styles
- Range of Window Styles
- Variety of Roofing Materials and Shapes

VII. Final Remarks (12:55-1:00pm)

Remember PRESERVATION = GREEN! Restore, recycle and reuse existing materials where possible!

Continue your Education!

- Attend a public hearing sponsored by your local historic preservation commission to become better educated about the overall process and how they review cases and make decisions
- Visit the websites on the Resource Sheet and others; subscribe to the available e-newsletters
- Find out about the Historic Real Estate Program offered by the National Trust for Historic Preservation which is designed to provide real estate professionals with the marketable advantage benefits of historic properties. For more information, go to www.preservationnation.org Annual membership is only \$20 and includes a monthly issue of *Preservation Magazine*
- Take advantage of events and programs offered by local historic preservation commissions and historical societies, such as walking tours, bike tours, self-guided brochures, speaker series, and community reenactment events. For more information check the websites of various governmental entities, university departments, and private organizations, as well as the adult education courses offered in many communities.

Please be sure to hand in your course evaluation sheet at the conclusion to help us improve the material and plan future courses. Thank you for attending and for your interest in the topic!