



Living the House Dream: An Ask the Expert Series
January 30, February 27, and March 26, 2024
Historic Homeowner Resources

1.) Who Can Help Me Do the Work? – Contractors and Professionals

This is a common question and between the two resources below you can find a good start. It is important to always request references and view CV's or resumes before signing any contracts. WHALE maintains a list of local contractors and service providers on our website. Please note this resource list is not all inclusive. It represents only current individuals and businesses whose work WHALE is familiar with professionally. WHALE is not liable or responsible for the performance of anyone listed in the section. This is only a resource list.

<https://waterfrontleague.org/local-contractors/>

Preservation Massachusetts maintains a Consultant Directory on their website with professionals from across the preservation, restoration, construction, conservation, planning and consultation fields. This is a paid listing. A PDF and searchable database is available on their website:

<https://www.preservationmass.org/preservation-directory>

Ask Around! If you know someone who has had work done on their historic home, ask who they worked with.

2.) Where Do I Find Information? Partners and Resources

There are several places where you can learn more about the history of New Bedford, historical homes or research the history of your own home. If you are unsure of where to start, reach out to WHALE and we can assist or direct you to the best contact.

WHALE: www.waterfrontleague.org

Founded in 1962, The Waterfront Historic Area League, Inc. (WHALE) is a preservation non-profit and Community Development Corporation that focuses on the continued use of the city's architectural heritage to enhance community and economic vitality.

- Historic building rehabilitation
- Preservation and development consultation
- Historic tax credits

New Bedford Preservation Society: www.nbpreservationsociety.org

The New Bedford Preservation Society strives to heighten awareness, provide education and guidance and promote sensitive restoration and preservation of New Bedford's fine historic structures and the neighborhoods in which they are located. The society was founded in 1974.

- Historic Marker Program
- Educational Resources

New Bedford Historical Society: <https://nbhistoricalsociety.org>

The New Bedford Historical Society Inc. was founded in October 1996 and awarded 501(c)(3) status in September 1999 as a not-for-profit organization dedicated to documenting and celebrating the history, legacy and presence of African Americans, Cape Verdeans, Native Americans, West Indians and other people of color in New Bedford, Massachusetts. They are an all-volunteer grassroots organization.

- Nathan & Mary "Polly" Johnson House
- Abolition Row Park
- Black History Trail

New Bedford Preservation Historic Commission & New Bedford Preservation Planner:

<https://www.newbedford-ma.gov/planning/historical-commission/>

The New Bedford Historical Commission (NBHC) is the city authority responsible for community-wide historic preservation planning established in 1972. The NBHC is supported by the Preservation Planner through the Department of Planning, Housing and Community Development, which provides administrative assistance to the Commission and leads preservation planning activities and practices for neighborhood restoration, downtown and commercial district revitalization, and heritage tourism efforts that benefit the cultural and economic welfare of the community.

- Overview of Historic District & National Register District
- Design Review Guidelines
- Preservation Planning
- Laws, Policies and Guidelines

Massachusetts Historical Commission: <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcidx.htm>

The Massachusetts Historical Commission is the state regulatory agency for preservation, overseeing review, compliance, grants, surveys, planning, etc. as well as administering federal preservation programs in the state. It was established by the state legislature in 1963. The Commission consists of [17 members](#) appointed from various disciplines who serve as the State Review Board for state and federal preservation programs. The professional staff of the Commission includes historians, architects, archaeologists, geographers, and preservation planners. The state's preservation programs are administered through MHC's [Preservation Planning](#), [Grants](#), and [Technical Services Divisions](#).

-Search the MACRIS (Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System) database to see what information is available for your historic property. <https://mhc-macris.net>. This is a great tool for research.

-Use MACRIS Maps – Search by location and visually see historic information, districts, etc. in a map format. <https://maps.mhc-macris.net>.

- Grant Programs, Historic Tax Credit Programs, National Register of Historic Places, and more.

Preservation Massachusetts: www.preservationmass.org

Founded in 1985, Preservation Massachusetts is a statewide historic preservation education and advocacy organization dedicated to preserving the Commonwealth's historic and cultural heritage. They work with organizations, businesses and individuals in all 351 cities and towns.

- Preservation Action Center (and Preservation Directory)
- Circuit Rider Program
- Statewide Preservation Conference
- Historic Homeowner FAQ's (attached)

Historic New England: www.historicnewengland.org

Historic New England is the oldest and largest regional heritage organization in the nation. They engage diverse audiences in developing a deeper understanding and enjoyment of New England home life by being the national leader in collecting, preserving, and using significant buildings, landscapes, archives, stories, and objects from the past to today.

- Homeowner directed resources, such as the Preservation Easement Program
- Historic Homeowner knowledgebase such as paint colors, style guides, etc.

National Trust for Historic Preservation: www.savingplaces.org

For more than 70 years, the National Trust for Historic Preservation has led the movement to save America's historic places. A privately funded nonprofit organization, we work to [save America's historic sites](#); [tell the full American story](#); [build stronger communities](#); and [invest in preservation's future](#).

- Articles and educational resources
- How-To Guides
- Conferences and webinars

3.) Show Me the Money...

The #1 most asked question is, "Is there money for to help me restore my historic home?" The answer right now is, unfortunately no. Most grants and other preservation funding programs are for non-profits, municipalities, or other organizations. The state and federal tax credit programs are only applicable to income-producing property. Other communities have put programs in place, such as a historic homeowner loan program the city of Arlington put into place in the 1980's using CDBG funds. Currently, private homeowners in New Bedford need to seek traditional financing and/or learn by doing. Learning how to prioritize the work/restoration that is needed on your historic home can make the overall project more manageable and allow you to budget accordingly.

4.) Reading List

There are a lot of great books for learning about historic homes, from how to tell Georgian from Gothic Revival styles to best practices for doing the restoration work. These are great reference books. If you know one that is not on the list, let us know!

"Restoring Your Historic House" by Scott T. Hanson (2023) – www.yourhistorichouse.com

"A Field Guide to American Houses" by Virginia & Lee McAlester (1984)

“Old House Dictionary” by Steven J. Phillips (1994)

“How to Love and Care for Your Old Building in New Bedford” by Maximilian L. Ferro, AIA, RIBA (1977)

Steven Schuyler Bookseller - Steven Schuyler Bookseller pursues strong interests in rare publications "for the buildings trades and design professions. <https://www.rarebookstore.net>

Living the Old House Dream: An Ask the Expert Series

Visit www.waterfrontleague.org or www.rjdmuseum.org for details on each specific presentation and registration details.

January 30 – Anne Louro, Preservation Planner, City of New Bedford

February 27, Jeffrey Gonyeau, Preservation Consultant

March 26, Diana Henry, Historic Homeowner, New Bedford Historical Commission Chair

For more information or questions about this series:

WHALE – 508-997-1776 – emiranda@waterfrontleague.org

Rotch-Jones-Duff House Museum & Gardens – 508-997-1401 -