



STEVEN COHEN **TEAM**
BOSTON REAL ESTATE

BACK BAY STAKEHOLDERS' REPORT

SPRING 2021



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REAL ESTATE MARKETS AROUND THE COUNTRY

WHAT'S HOT, WHAT'S NOT, AND WHAT TO EXPECT IN 2021

COVID-19 has affected almost every aspect of our lives and has impacted real estate markets around the country. We asked some of the best and brightest among our Keller Williams colleagues — experts in their markets — what is hot and not in their real estate worlds, and what they foresee changing in 2021. Some common themes are evident in their analyses. If your impulse is to purchase property in a luxury second home market or in a prime suburb just about anywhere, then you will likely face some competition. For those who have long pined for a place in Manhattan or Miami, now may be the time to make your move. Here's what the experts have to say:

T H E E X P E R T S

PORTLAND



Sarita Dua The AskSarita Team
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WHAT'S HOT: The hottest areas are northeast and southeast Portland, where homes have good walk scores and are close to parks, coffee shops and local amenities. Folks are also buying second homes at the Coast or in Central Oregon (Bend, Sunriver, Black Butte, etc) since they cannot travel and can also work anywhere.

WHAT'S NOT: We are seeing much higher inventory in downtown, specifically with condos as people want lower density living due to COVID-19 precautions.

In 2020, people went from being home from 6-10pm and weekends to being home 24/7. Kitchens, outdoor space, and private rooms for Zoom calls become important. Your home was your office, your children's school, the gym, your meditation and yoga studio, and just about everything else. As a result, people opted to make changes, and also move if they truly needed a change (while taking advantage of low interest rates). The Portland area remains hot and is among the lowest cost West Coast markets.

Michael Minson Level Up Group
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WHAT'S HOT: Second homes in Wine Country (Napa and Sonoma).

WHAT'S NOT: Luxury condos in downtown San Francisco.

The San Francisco real estate market has been drunk on boutique wines and \$10 avocado toasts for the past 10 years. That party ended in March with lockdowns not seen since prohibition. The luxury condo market was hit especially hard. With HOA dues of \$1k and more, access to gyms, pools, and other amenities curtailed, nightlife and the food scene shuttered, and proximity to downtown suddenly less important, sales prices dropped 10% and rents fell 30%. Given the higher vacancy rates and with the prospect of a rebound in 2021, now is a great time to get a solid deal before the biotech party band starts playing.

SAN FRANCISCO

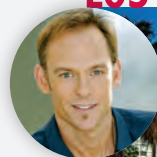


Michael Cogley Keller Williams Luxury Homes

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WHAT'S HOT: Larger space to accommodate new work-at-home situations and greater demand for outdoor space.**WHAT'S NOT:** Driving long distances from home to work.

Greater Los Angeles home values in 2020 outpaced those in 2019, increasing 11.7%, and the forecast for 2021 is equally as promising. LA dominates as a hub of innovation and higher education, drawing international investors and driving California's economy to its place as the 5th largest in the world. International buyers and those from dense metropolitan centers from coast to coast, focus on LA for its cultural, artistic, and architectural diversity. From hillside perches to sandy beaches, from walkable villages with shops and restaurants to urban downtown lofts, buyers are drawn to LA for the climate and the California Dreamin' lifestyle.

**LOS ANGELES****SAN DIEGO/LA JOLLA****Brian Cane** Cane Real Estate

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WHAT'S HOT: Single-family homes under \$1M with a private pool.**WHAT'S NOT:** Condos with limited outdoor space.

Record low mortgage rates paired with limited inventory and strong buyer confidence has created an incredibly competitive market for home buyers in San Diego. As the work-from-home trend has grown, buyers who are now able to work remotely are relocating to San Diego County from San Francisco, Los Angeles and other parts of the nation to enjoy the lifestyle advantages that San Diego provides. Housing demand in San Diego County was up 20% in 2020 over 2019, which is the highest level recorded since 2012.

Lowell Fulson III Lowell Fulson III & Associates Luxury Real Estate

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WHAT'S HOT: Mid Century style homes, medium-range priced homes (\$415k), and luxury homes.**WHAT'S NOT:** Cities like Desert Hot Springs and Thousand Palms lack favorable economic growth but are very affordable areas.

The Greater Palm Springs area is a phenomenal place to both visit and call home. Blue skies, vibrant palm trees on every corner, balmy weather, over 150 golf courses, hiking trails, and extraordinary backyard views of the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa mountains. Our market is hyper strong due to lower-priced homes, larger lots, and a vacation-like lifestyle year-round. Homeowners like me love the fact that we see 90% of blue skies all year-round. Because our 9 cities are not densely populated, and personal space is plentiful, buyers from all over the world choose the Coachella Valley to call home.

**PALM SPRINGS****PHOENIX/SCOTTSDALE****Kristan Cole** Kristan Cole Real Estate Network

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WHAT'S HOT: New and remodeled homes. There's also a low inventory for small multi-family properties which means we'll likely see those prices rise substantially in the coming years.**WHAT'S NOT:** Retail and commercial space have taken a huge hit as the government shut down dining and non-essential business. Most white collar workers have been told to work from home and many may never return to the office.

Despite nationwide job losses and shutdowns, the state is expected to add 25,000 jobs with an average annual salary of \$68,000 over the next 5 years. Arizona is a central distribution hub with access to 65,000,000 million people within a day's drive, and has a diverse economy and a robust university system that produces tens of thousands of skilled workers every year. Large companies like Northrop Grumman Corp, Dot Foods, Lucid Motors, and more are building manufacturing and office space in the state. Arizona is positioned for steady economic growth over the next decade and that means home prices will likely rise too.

Wendy Papasan Papasan Properties Group

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WHAT'S HOT: Turnkey, modern-styled properties in Central Austin with easy access to downtown. Investment properties anywhere in the Austin metro area under \$350k.**WHAT'S NOT:** Condominiums in lower demand than single-family homes.

With more people than ever moving to the Central Texas area (150/day) and a fraction of those moving away, investors are flocking to take advantage of massive year over year appreciation in home prices. Home prices spiked 23.8% in November, 2020! We are still relatively affordable compared to places like New York City and Silicon Valley and our Texas friendly attitude remains the same: welcome everyone, just don't forget to bring your flip-flops and appetite for tacos!

**AUSTIN**

CHICAGO



Josh Weinberg & Tommy Choi Weinberg Choi Residential

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WHAT'S HOT: Detached single family homes without neighbors and with more space, different living levels, and private outdoor space.

WHAT'S NOT: Luxury rental buildings, which shuttered high-end amenities due to safety measures. Many luxury renters instead graduated to homeownership over the past year.

We see a great opportunity for buyers to find deals in the downtown high-rise market. The River North, Gold Coast, and Streeterville neighborhoods have the highest levels of inventory in the city (12 months of supply) because of their dense population. With a lot of the world-class dining and shopping that these neighborhoods have to offer temporarily closed or limited due to the pandemic, prices declined. As vaccines become available, we know these conditions will be short lived, and by the summer and fall confidence and demand for those areas will be back and prices will slowly rise again.

Andy and Lesley Peters The Peters Company

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WHAT'S HOT: Suburban North Atlanta is benefitting from decentralization occurring in the urban areas of Atlanta due to COVID-19 concerns and demand for larger, more affordable homes.

WHAT'S NOT: Buckhead, a historically high priced community in metro Atlanta, is facing a rash of increased crime as well as density concerns with COVID-19.

According to population and employment forecasts, the Atlanta Regional Commission estimates that Metro Atlanta will add 2.9 million people by 2050, pushing the 21-county region's population to 8.6 million. Friendly cost of living, manageable weather, and the world's busiest airport have created a nice oasis for corporate relocations, business expansion, and job creation. Given the continuously shrinking inventory supply, the Atlanta real estate market is strong with prices continuing to rise.

ATLANTA



MIAMI BEACH



Oliver Davis Live Work Play Miami Group

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WHAT'S HOT: Homes with great yards or patios for outdoor living and dining.

WHAT'S NOT: Busy condos with shared access and amenities such as elevators, community pools, gyms, and lobbies.

It's a tale of two cities. Single family homes and boutique condos with outdoor space and home offices are hot! Buyers moving from other large cities with colder climates has resulted in increased demand and limited inventory. Large condominium inventory with greater supply and reduced demand has resulted in price compression, presenting a good opportunity for the savvy buyer who has vision for the post COVID-19 future. Condo owners are ready to sell and buyers have been able to negotiate as much as 15% off the list price in some areas.

Brandon Green Brandon Green

brandongreen.com | brandon@brandongreen.com | 202-350-9777

WHAT'S HOT: Properties with private outdoor space, as well as large home office spaces previously "nice to have" now as important as the kitchen.

WHAT'S NOT: Buildings with common heating and AC systems.

Talk of people fleeing the urban centers has not materialized in the Washington DC real estate market. While some formerly vibrant neighborhoods are much quieter now, particularly in the downtown business core, the sense of community has strengthened and led to some record sales in neighborhoods right outside the business district. Most of the protests in 2020 were in areas without much residential inventory so the effect on the market was negligible. Sales overall have been strong in almost all areas of Washington DC real estate, perhaps with the exception of the \$3M and up market which has been softer this year.

WASHINGTON, DC



NEW YORK



Nicole Gary The Nicole Gary Team

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WHAT'S HOT: Outdoor space, downtown Manhattan, and Brooklyn. Anything with private outdoor and home offices.

WHAT'S NOT: Studio apartments, rentals, and amenities. People want space and they want to own a piece of Manhattan, not rent.

Manhattan took a huge hit due to COVID-19 since it is a large, dense city. Many fled the city at the beginning of the pandemic and the real estate market was shut down for 15 weeks. It was slow to come back, but since Thanksgiving we have seen an uptick of buyers and many more contracts signed over \$4M. Our normal active inventory levels are between 4,800-5,200. We got up to 9,600 active units. We're now back down to around 8,000; a sign that the gap is closing. We have hit the bottom, and buyers are taking advantage of the opportunity to own a piece of the Big Apple.

BOSTON

Steven Cohen Steven Cohen Team

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WHAT'S HOT: Private outdoor space, Prime locations, Upper level brown-stone 3 bedroom condominiums under \$2.5 million, Entry level and mid-range suburban single family homes.

WHAT'S NOT: High rise condominium towers, Lofts without divisible space, Properties in need of renovation.

We can't remember a time when more profound societal change has taken place, with less clarity as to how that change will enduringly affect the real estate market. In the face of headwinds that have impacted urban markets across the country, Boston real estate has shown its characteristic resilience. LINK's 2020 Annual Sales Summary reveals that while the number of recorded Boston property sales dropped by 12% year over year, the median price per square foot paid declined by just 2%. These stats are in line with a pattern established during past economic downturns, including the tech bust of 2000, the period following 9/11 and the great recession of 2008-2009. One has to go all the way back to the recession of 1989-91 to find a time when prices meaningfully declined in Boston and that was before the city had fully emerged as an enclave for the professional class.

Neither we as individuals nor our housing market will emerge from the pandemic in the same place that we started. COVID-19 is not impacting real estate buying behavior in a vacuum but rather in tandem with evolving social forces, economic trends, and a technological revolution. Every generation places its own print on the housing market as a reaction to its collective life experience. And so while the appreciation rate for certain categories of property (what's hot) will likely outpace others (what's not), Boston as a whole will continue to grow and thrive.

It has been just over a century since the influenza pandemic of 1918 killed 675,000 Americans or 2.8% of the population. Human suffering and economic disruption on a massive scale followed the outbreak and numerous parallels between the 1918 pandemic and COVID-19 can be drawn. According to Federal Reserve Bank economist Thomas Garrett, "Society as a whole recovered from the influenza quickly but individuals who were affected by the influenza had their lives changed forever." While for many the human dimensions of COVID-19 are profound and will be long lasting, the shock to the economy could be much more fleeting.

Americans endured an extremely difficult few years a century ago, suffering through both a pandemic and a world war simultaneously. People must have drawn deeply from their reserve of faith and determination to press on through their hardships. Let us remember, though, that what followed that difficult chapter in American history was a direct reaction to it, the Roaring Twenties. Then, as now, new technologies showed promise and delivered on it with many innovations, among them the television, penicillin, and the cheeseburger. Interest rates were low and hopes were high for a return to normalcy. The 1920s were a time of great optimism and rebirth, not to mention significant growth in property prices. Like then, we can imagine that when we emerge from the COVID-19 crisis, we will do so with gusto. As Mark Twain once wrote, "History doesn't repeat itself, but it often rhymes."



LUIS GAMARRA

A TALE OF SELF-MADE OPPORTUNITIES

The Steven Cohen Team's newest member and Rental Specialist, Luis grew up in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. Always a dreamer with a competitive streak, he never let the lack of an opportunity get in his way. When he was 7, he tried out for his school's track team. While he didn't make it, he didn't give up and convinced his coach to give him a little extra time to train. He not only made it on his school team, he went on to join the state team and succeeded all the way to nationals. He was one of the fastest kids in Bolivia by the time he was 9 years old. When he was 8, Luis auditioned his way to a high-schoolers-only talent show. It was the first time he had performed in front of more than 1,000 people and, while he recalls being nervous, he also remembers that at that moment he realized he loved music and being on stage. Luis learned at a young age that it was up to him to work hard to create his own opportunities, instead of waiting for other people to hand them to him.

This philosophy has followed him his entire life, including when he was lucky enough to win the U.S. Diversity Immigrant Visa Lottery Program when he was 18. His family was supportive of his decision to leave home, but couldn't help him financially. "I was working three different jobs, studying full-time, learning business administration, refining my English, and it was my first time being without my family," Luis says. "It was all up to me, so I had to grow up pretty quickly. At the same time, it was amazing because I learned so much." By the time he was 19, he was a front of house supervising manager at one of the restaurants where he worked, and he was auditioning for American Idol.

"I made it to Hollywood Week," Luis recalled. "I met Mariah Carey, Randy Jackson, and Ryan Seacrest. It was very special because my family came all the way from Bolivia for that audition and my dad, who's a businessman and singer, got to sing "Without You" in front of his idol, Mariah Carey." While he got cut from the competition at that point, the fact that he'd gotten that far on his first try was enough for Luis to pursue music professionally. He was accepted to Berklee College of Music and made it through his first semester with financial aid from his family. With hard work and a wide variety of projects, he'd secured a 90% scholarship by his second semester. One of those projects was Bolivian Sounds, which brought Berklee to Luis' home country for the first time in the form of auditions and scholarships.

After a brief, post-graduation stint at Miami's Warner Music Latina, Luis made his way back to Boston and was offered a managerial position at the popular Barcelona Wine Bar & Restaurant. At the same time, his parents





reached out. They wanted to invest in the U.S., and Luis was in charge of making that happen. "It was a big opportunity and responsibility to have all of my parents' savings in my hands," he said. "I had to make sure I was making the right decision."

His parents were looking for an investment that would not only appreciate with time, but would also generate a steady income each month. After some research, he realized real estate was the way to go. With the help of great agents, Luis was able to purchase a 9-bedroom home a few blocks from Boston College. Going through the home buying process, he realized this was something he wanted to do himself. "Just like I was able to help my parents, I want to eventually do the same for other hardworking people in Latin America who want to invest in the U.S. but don't know how." Fresh off the rush of his first property purchase, and studying to get his own real estate license, Luis shared these developments and his ambitions with a regular at Barcelona, Steven Cohen.

"I used to see him with his family often, but we'd never spoken about real estate before, so I had no idea it was something he was involved in," Luis said. "At first, I asked him to be my mentor while I studied, and he agreed. He said I reminded him of himself, with how driven and serious I was." As the Covid-19 pandemic swept the world, Luis found himself with little to do but study every day for three months until the testing sites were open. He passed on his first try and, excited, let Steven know.

"He invited me to catch up and, at the time, I didn't think anything of it," Luis said. "I went to the office, not thinking it would be for an interview." Offered a position as a rental specialist, he has quickly learned the Boston rental market and exceeded all his expectations. "It showed me how much you can achieve if you work hard," he said. "It also showed how our team lives up to the trust our clients place in us as we strive to achieve new goals and milestones even in what is one of the most difficult periods in Boston's real estate history."

Even with his new career set to take off, Luis is driven to do more. He is not only a successful real estate agent, but an entrepreneur and working musician, as well. While studying for his real estate license, Luis created a cleaning company that focuses on fair pay and provides quality of life and work for its employees. Eco Residential Cleaning pays \$6 to \$8 more than the average hourly rate most Boston cleaners receive, and uses Better Life natural cleaning products for the health of both cleaners and clients. In

December 2020, Luis released a new song he promoted on the number one TV show in Bolivia and participated in a Christmas special organized by Coca Cola. "I get to go from being in my suit and writing formal emails, to meeting with my dancers, learning choreography, and doing live shows," Luis said. "Life is all about seizing opportunities and making the most of every one."

For more information:

About Luis, visit stevencohenteam.com/ourteam.

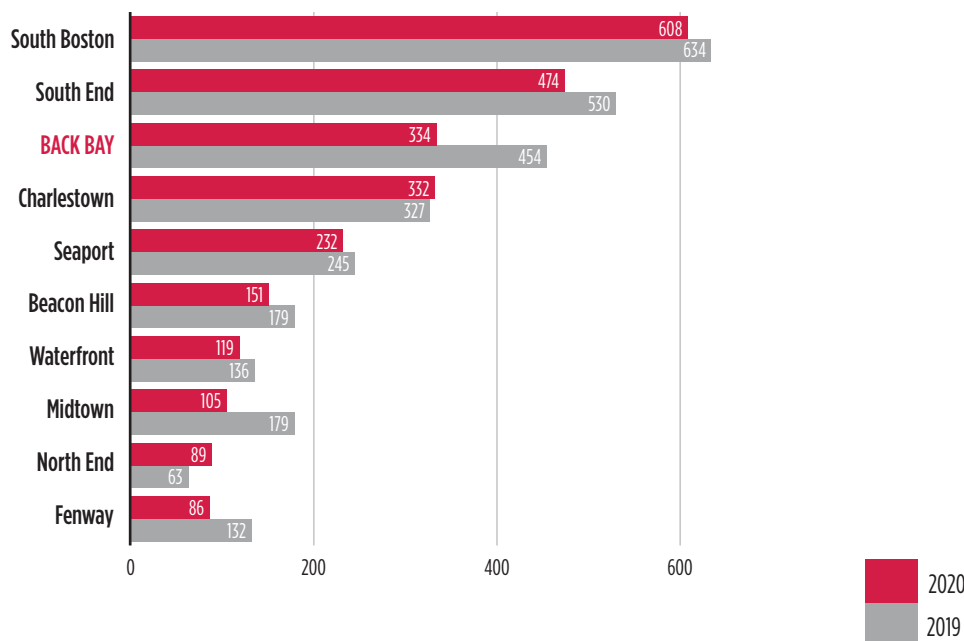
About Eco Residential Cleaning and prices, visit ecoresidentialclean.square.site.



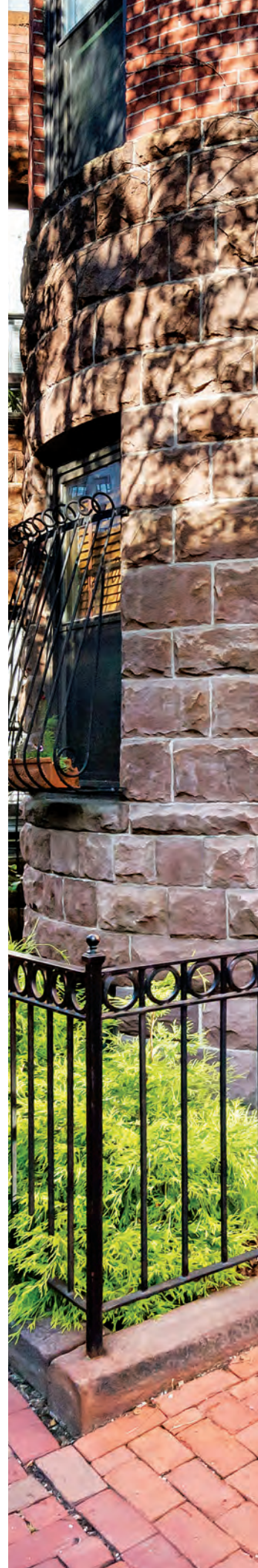
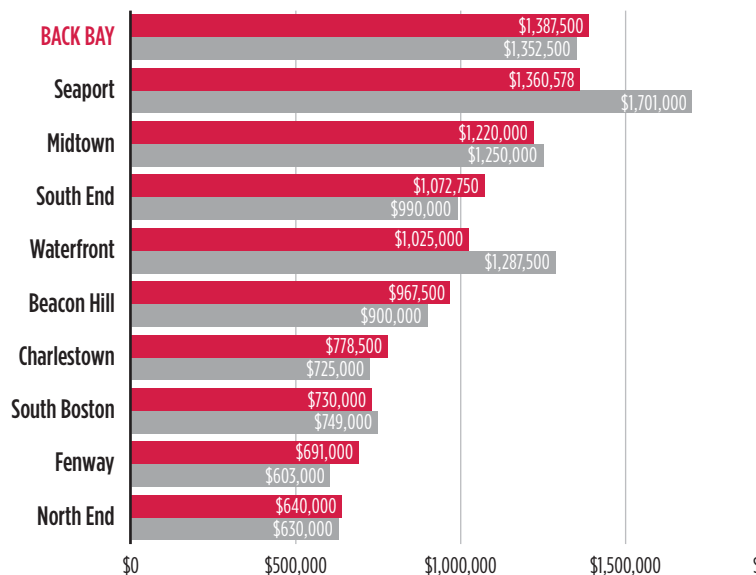
BOSTON'S TOP 10 NEIGHBORHOODS IN 2020

Although there was an almost universal decrease in the number of sales in 2020 compared to 2019, some of Boston's top-performing neighborhoods experienced a notable increase in median sale price. Back Bay, the city's most expensive area for the past year, saw a median sale price increase of over 2.5%.

Top 10 Boston Neighborhoods by Number of Sales

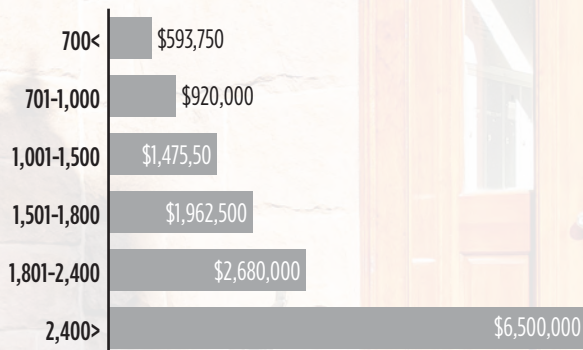


Top 10 Boston Neighborhoods by Median Sales Price

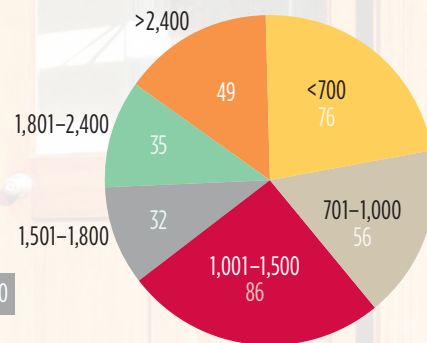


FOCUS ON BACK BAY IN 2020

Back Bay Median Sales Price by Square Footage



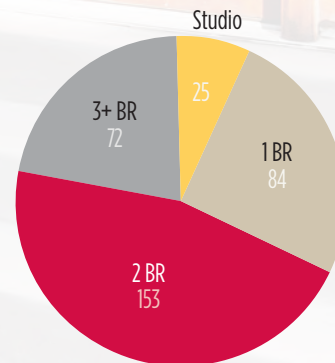
Back Bay Number of Sales by Square Footage



Back Bay Median Sales Price by Number of Bedrooms



Back Bay Number of Sales by Number of Bedrooms



20 MOST EXPENSIVE BACK BAY SALES IN 2020

	ADDRESS	SALE PRICE	PRICE /SF	TYPE
1	One Dalton Four Seasons #6102	\$34,000,000	\$4,499	CONDOMINIUM
2	One Dalton Four Seasons #5801/5802	\$31,000,000	\$3,955	CONDOMINIUM
3	One Dalton Four Seasons #5702	\$16,905,000	\$4,072	CONDOMINIUM
4	One Dalton Four Seasons #5502	\$16,650,000	\$4,015	CONDOMINIUM
5	Four Seasons @ 220 Boylston St. #1515	\$16,500,000	\$4,102	CONDOMINIUM
6	One Dalton Four Seasons #5601	\$13,500,000	\$3,653	CONDOMINIUM
7	One Dalton Four Seasons #5004	\$12,286,900	\$2,981	CONDOMINIUM
8	One Dalton Four Seasons #4602	\$12,280,000	\$2,816	CONDOMINIUM
9	175 Beacon Street	\$11,750,000	\$1,407	SINGLE-FAMILY
10	The Mandarin @ 776 Boylston St. #W12-A	\$11,500,000	\$3,569	CONDOMINIUM
11	208 Beacon Street	\$10,750,000	\$1,588	SINGLE-FAMILY
12	One Dalton Four Seasons #3801	\$10,650,000	\$3,308	CONDOMINIUM
13	One Dalton Four Seasons #4201	\$10,625,000	\$3,301	CONDOMINIUM
14	The Carlton House @ 2 Commonwealth Avenue #11-B/-C/-D	\$1,050,000	\$1,713	CONDOMINIUM
15	The Converse Mansion @ 348 Beacon St. #5	\$9,900,000	\$2,735	CONDOMINIUM
16	One Dalton Four Seasons #5202	\$9,750,000	\$3,311	CONDOMINIUM
17	One Dalton Four Seasons #4702	\$9,569,000	\$3,251	CONDOMINIUM
18	100 Beacon Street PHB	\$9,326,000	\$2,284	CONDOMINIUM
19	One Dalton Four Seasons #4502	\$9,250,000	\$3,143	CONDOMINIUM
20	117 Beacon Street #2	\$9,250,000	\$1,836	CONDOMINIUM

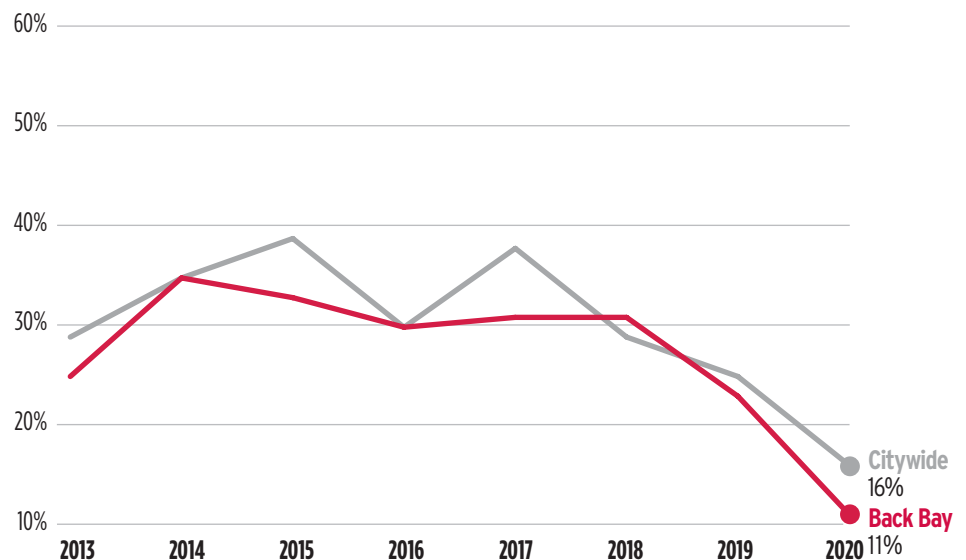
*Average price per square foot among the 20 most expensive Back Bay Sales for 2020: **\$3,077***

BACK BAY INVENTORY AND SALES OVER ASKING PRICE

Five Year Price Index: Back Bay v. Citywide



Sales Over Asking Price for Past Eight Years: Back Bay v. Citywide



Source: LINK Boston



STEVEN COHEN TEAM

MEET THE REAL ESTATE ECONOMISTS OF CHOICE

The Steven Cohen Team provides expert insight, guidance and representation for discerning residential property buyers and sellers in Boston's Back Bay and adjacent neighborhoods. Our unmatched experience in the local real estate market, long-term approach to customer service, and coordinated teamwork make us an industry leader in Back Bay and beyond.

Now, more than ever, you need a real estate professional with skill and experience.

Contact us today: 617-861-3636



LIST



Steven Cohen
PRINCIPAL & LISTING SPECIALIST



Zach Jay
LISTING SPECIALIST



Josh Leibowitz
LISTING SPECIALIST



Kevin Concannon
DEVELOPMENTS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

BUY & RENT



Barrie Stavis
BUYER SPECIALIST



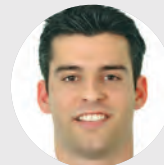
Kate Wood
BUYER SPECIALIST



Nicole Spencer
BUYER SPECIALIST



Mei Salas
SHOWING SPECIALIST



Josh Leibowitz
RENTAL SPECIALIST



Luis Gamarra
RENTAL SPECIALIST

SUPPORT



Tim McCarthy
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS



Margaret Marder
LISTING & TRANSACTION MANAGER



Chrystyna Kassaraba
TRANSACTIONS COORDINATOR



Bruce Withey
MARKETING DIRECTOR



Anastasia Yefremova
COMMUNICATION &
PUBLICATION SPECIALIST



Natasha Nelson
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY ABOUT US

"...very happy and pleased with the level of professionalism, the **knowledge of the market**, the area and the process, they made everything so easy and they were **extremely responsive to every demand**, to every question and even last minute requests."

"I cannot praise the Steven Cohen Team enough for the **service and support** they provided us while selling our Boston condo and purchasing another, all as the **Covid-19 pandemic** was descending upon us."

"We are **very pleased** with the Steven Cohen Team. We didn't know how this would work out during the pandemic, but **all went smoothly**...There was **minimal disruption** to our lives during showings and inspections."

"The **service** we received from...the entire Steven Cohen Team of Keller Williams Realty was **outstanding and unsurpassed**."

"I have had **an exceptional experience** with the Steven Cohen Team, from start to finish...They were attentive and supportive, with **close attention to the details**. I cannot recommend them highly enough."

THE STEVEN COHEN TEAM IN 2020

A YEAR IN REVIEW

#4 among 3,000+ New England Keller Williams associates for **Contracts Written Volume**

#68 among 186,000+ Keller Williams Realty International associates **worldwide**

\$150+ million in sales volume in 2020

Top Real Estate Producer in *Boston Magazine* for **2020**

#1 Boston LocalBest Agents for **2020**

#2 on the 2020 Large Teams **by Volume** for Massachusetts list in **America's Best Real Estate Professionals**, as advertised in the *Wall Street Journal*

#5 on the 2020 Large Teams **by Transaction Sides** list in **America's Best Real Estate Professionals**, as advertised in the *Wall Street Journal*

NOTABLE STEVEN COHEN TEAM BACK BAY LISTING

168 MARLBOROUGH STREET #3

Set in the heart of Back Bay, this exquisite direct-access elevator penthouse duplex with a private terrace and parking offers the finest standard of living on one of Boston's most coveted streets. Enter an expansive arched-entry living room with soaring ceilings and a beautiful center fireplace surrounded by custom built-ins. Perimeter moldings extend from the oversized bow front windows across the entire living level, with gleaming hardwood floors throughout. The living room flows effortlessly to a formal dining area opposite a half bath, the space perfect for entertaining. A well-appointed granite and stainless steel chef's kitchen/family room comes with a center island and breakfast bar, further enhanced by an additional fireplace and a wall of custom built-ins. The upper level features a large master suite with an elegant en-suite bath, as well as two walk-in closets for ample storage. Walk out on this level to a stunning private terrace with sweeping views and a built-in irrigation system. A large second bedroom is also on this level, complete with an en-suite bath and beautiful views out to the terrace. Central air conditioning throughout and private exterior storage room. Full direct-access deeded parking space included. All this just steps from Back Bay's finest restaurants, shops, and all the city has to offer — a true masterpiece not to be missed!

BEDROOMS: 2

BATHROOMS: 2.5

SIZE: 2,107 sq. ft.

BUILT: 1900





MEET A BACK BAY HISTORIC LANDMARK

THE AYER MANSION AT 395 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE

Nestled among Back Bay's Jacobean, Queen Anne, Italianate, and Neoclassical buildings is the pale granite and limestone, Neoclassical Revival-style Ayer Mansion. The overall austere facade is broken up by intricate glass and ceramic tile mosaics and the organic shapes of the brackets, which are a clear deviation from traditional styles. In 2005, the Ayer Mansion was designated a National Historic Landmark in recognition of its standing as one of only three surviving examples of residential interiors designed by Louis Comfort Tiffany, and the sole example of an interior designed by him at the time the building was built, rather than as a part of a remodeling.

The Ayer family story begins with brothers James Cook Ayer and Frederick Ayer, who rose from poverty and made their fortunes in the mid-19th century by building a successful patent medicine business. Eventually, the younger brother, Frederick, entered the textile manufacturing business in Lowell and Lawrence and founded the American Woolen Company with his son-in-law, William Madison Wood. In 1897, Ayer established a Boston office in the Ames Building on State Street. He commissioned architect Alfred J. Manning and designer Louis Tiffany to build a mansion at 395 Commonwealth Avenue for himself, his second wife, Ellen Barrows (Banning) Ayer, and their children. Ayer devoted a lot of time to plan all the details of the mansion and its use as a setting for the artifacts and furnishings he and his wife collected throughout their travels to Egypt, Turkey, and elsewhere in the Middle East.

The mosaics wrapping around the exterior of the otherwise stark building are a rainbow of orange, red, and gold glass and stone tesserae set into a cement matrix and constitute the only known examples of Tiffany-designed exterior ornaments to remain in situ. Some of the repeated geometric compositions — reflecting the influence of Byzantine mosaics claimed by Tiffany Studios in an early 20th-century promotional brochure — as well as elements of the mosaic medallions and panels recur on the interior of the mansion. The doors are framed by engaged columns sheathed with opalescent and foil-backed glass mosaic set in a lead framework, topped by glass-mosaic capitals of stylized acanthus leaves. Tiffany's contributions to the interior of the Ayer Mansion are concentrated at the first floor public entry spaces. Most private spaces within the mansion were treated with typical Bostonian restraint, contrasting with the more theatrical sensibility Tiffany displayed in the mansion's public and circulation areas.

The Marble Hall, which occupies approximately half of the building's width, derives its name from its brilliant white marble wainscoting, white marble mosaic floors, and





white marble fireplace. Each design element is bordered with mosaic bands in blue, green, gold, white opalescent, and foil-backed glass. Receding square arches frame the entrance to the former dining room, which was removed and altered to serve as a chapel. The Victorian drawing room features Louis XIV decor with an eclectic molded plaster ceiling, and a three-foot-high paneled wood wainscot surrounded by a paneled wall. The Tiffany-designed stained glass transom screen in the center window features an intricate, Byzantine-influenced geometric design with an autumnal palette of rich orange and green glass with accents of yellow, rose, carmine, and white-opalescent glass. The library's entire perimeter is embellished with an elaborate, 11-inch deep, carved wood frieze. Each panel is a unique composition featuring the bookplates of famous men.

An apse in the Marble Hall opens to a white marble imperial stair illuminated by a four-by-twenty foot Tiffany laylight. The eight-panel laylight incorporates a variety of glasses in a lead matrix with the same color scheme found in the Marble Hall mosaics. Missing pieces were replaced by rare surviving glass from the stocks of Tiffany Studios now in the collection of the Neustadt Museum of Tiffany Art. A magnificent trompe l'oeil glass mosaic, a tour de force of Tiffany's mosaic technique, is centered on the east wall of the stair.

The mansion's elliptical stairwell rises from the second floor hall all the way to the fifth floor, where it ends at an elliptical skylight. A 1930s inventory lists a now lost fifth floor "sky parlor," almost certainly of Tiffany's design, which was filled with souvenirs from the Ayers' travels. The mansion was originally equipped with an elevator, which allowed guests to bypass the family's private chambers and gave direct access to the fifth floor glass-ceilinged sky parlor. Tiffany's use of the building's height and vertical circulation with the design of this lost room speak of his designs for Manhattan penthouses, including his own residence.

In the years after Ayer's death in 1918, the Mansion was used for medical offices, as a chapel, a dormitory, and more. The decorative plaster ceilings and walls of the drawing room were covered with a dropped ceiling and burlap paneled wall treatments, the Tiffany skylight in the stairwell was concealed with plywood, and only five of the seven stained glass panels on the exterior of the building remain. The mansion was joined with the neighboring building at 397 Commonwealth Avenue in 1971. In 1977, the library was renovated into a chapel and, in the early 1990s, additional space on the ground floor was added for a second chapel.

Restorations began in 1998 with the drawing room. The drop ceiling and false walls were removed, the original plaster ceiling was restored, and the wood wainscoting and paneling were recreated from historic photographs. The Tiffany skylight on the stair landing was carefully restored in 2001, alongside the original paint treatments in the front hall and the gallery on the stair landing. The front facade of the house was restored in 2013 and the four center decorative stone mosaic panels on the balcony — lost since at least the 1960s — were recreated and reinstalled on their original limestone backings. The orange coating caused by pollution obscuring the facade was carefully removed, as was the flag pole added in the 1930s. Mosaics were regouted and missing elements were recreated and reinstalled. Now home to the non-profit Bayridge Residence & Cultural Center, the Ayer Mansion is open monthly for scheduled public tours and by appointment as well as during its annual lecture series and other public events.

Sources: Back Bay Houses, National Register of Historic Places

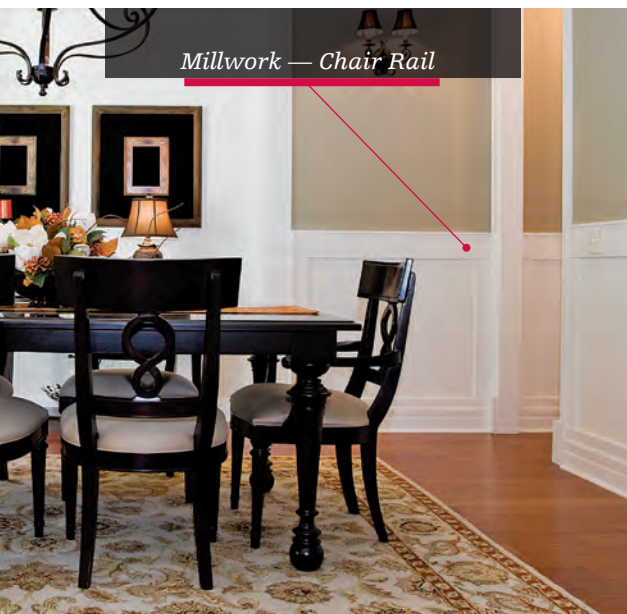
THE VICTORIAN DESIGN PRIMER

DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE DICTIONARY FOR YOUR 19TH-CENTURY HOME

Victorian architecture refers to work built during the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901). At that time, preferences moved away from the rationalism that defined the Georgian era and toward a more romantic aesthetic. As a result, Victorian architecture encompasses a number of romantic styles such as Italianate, Gothic Revival, Colonial Revival, and more. Boston's oldest neighborhoods — including Back Bay, Jamaica Plain, and the South End — are living, breathing examples of this type of 19th-century style. We've taken it upon ourselves to give you but a few examples of the details that make Victorian architecture what it is; some of them you may be familiar with, others you might have seen every day in your own home but never put a name to.



Millwork — Cased Opening

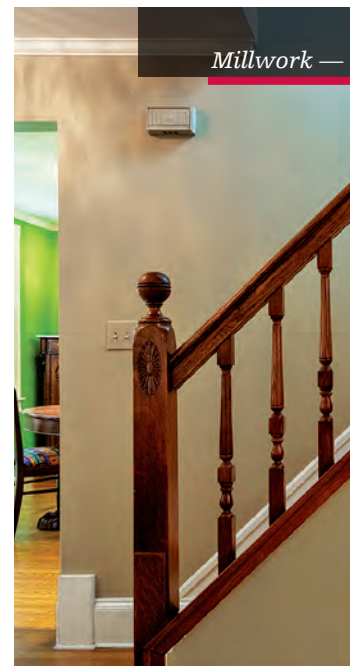


Millwork — Chair Rail

MILLWORK

Victorian millwork typically includes elaborate combinations of shapes and profiles, frequently involving standardized profiles, fretwork, and turnings once made by steam-powered machines.

- **Base** — molding applied where floor and walls meet, forming a visual foundation.
- **Base cap** — decorative molding installed flush against the wall and top of an S4S (surfaced on 4 sides) baseboard.
- **Cased opening** — an interior opening without a door that is finished with jambs and trim.
- **Casing** — molded or surfaced-four-sided pieces of various widths and thicknesses for trimming out door and window openings.



Millwork —



- *Corner blocks* — square blocks used in place of mitering the sides and head casing.
- *Cove* — molding with a concave profile used at corners, particularly as a ceiling cornice.
- *Chair rail* — wooden molding placed along the lower part of the wall to prevent damage.
- *Crown* — highest part of built-in or wall, often above eye level, usually the upper trim or molding on interior walls.



Millwork — Crown Molding

- *Dentil block* — a smaller rectangle block which can be spaced closely together in a series or in a sequence with molding and projecting like teeth as used in cornice, front entrances and mantels, and crossheads.
- *Door stop* — molding nailed to faces of the door frame to prevent the door from swinging through.
- *Entablature* — the superstructure of moldings and bands which lie horizontally above columns, resting on their capitals.
- *Handrail* — hand support in a stairwell.
- *Jamb* — top and two sides of a door or window frame.
- *Nosing* — rounded edge of a stair step.
- *Panel mold* — a decorative pattern, originally used to trim out raised panel wall construction. Most useful fabricated as a frame, surrounding attractive wall coverings for a paneled effect on walls.
- *Picture rail* — an elegant way of hanging artwork on hard-to-penetrate plaster walls. 1.5" to 2" strips of molding that adhere to walls and run horizontally around the room, typically at the height that aligns with the tops of any window panes or just above. Sometimes the picture rail can almost blend in with the crown molding, placed only a few inches from the ceiling.
- *Rosette/plinth block* — rosette is a decorative block in the upper corner of windows and doors. Plinth is the base block which is placed on both sides of the door resting on the floor.



Handrail



Millwork — Rosette



Decorative Plaster Moldings

- *Tongue & groove* — lumber machined to have a groove on one side and a protruding tongue on the other side, so that pieces fit snugly together with the tongue of one fitting into the groove of the other.
- *Wainscoting* — lower interior wall surface (usually 3-4 feet above the floor) that contrasts with the wall surfaced above it.
- *Window sill* — interior trim member serving as a window frame sill cap.
- *Lintel* — a structural horizontal support used to span an opening in a wall or between two vertical supports. It is frequently used over doors, windows and fireplaces. Lintels are generally used for load-bearing purposes, but they can also be decorative. In the case of windows, the bottom span is more commonly referred to as a sill.

DECORATIVE PLASTER MOLDINGS

- *Ceiling roses* — a typically round, ornamentally designed decorative element affixed to the ceiling from which a chandelier or light fitting is often suspended.
- *Plaster cornicing/coving* — the plaster molding that covers the join between the ceiling and the walls, neatening it and enhancing the styling of the room.



Bow Window

WINDOW STYLES

- *Bay* — the overall structure consists of three openings; a picture window with two — usually smaller — windows on either side. Bay windows protrude farther from the wall out into the exterior space than bow windows, adding a bit more floor space on the interior. They are also generally not as wide as bow windows.
- *Bow* — the overall structure consists of four or five openings with a curved structure, creating a rounded appearance on the outside of the home. Bow windows let



Oriel Window



Bow Window

in more light since they have more glass panes than bay windows, and can be wrapped around the corner of a building, forming a unique turret shape on the outside and an enticing nook on the inside.

- *Oriel* — a form of bay window which protrudes from the main wall of a building but does not reach to the ground. Supported by corbels, brackets, or similar cantilevers, an oriel window is most commonly found projecting from an upper floor but is also sometimes used on the ground floor.

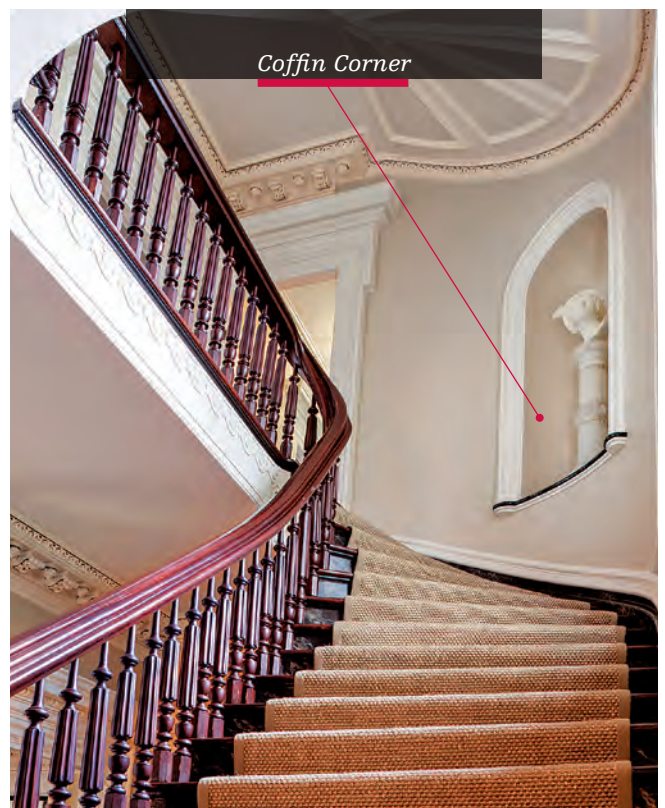
- *Dormer* — located on the sloped side of a roof, a dormer window brings natural light into an attic,

loft, or any room with a vaulted ceiling. It sits vertically in a framed structure that juts outward from the pitch of the main roof and features a little roof of its own above the window.

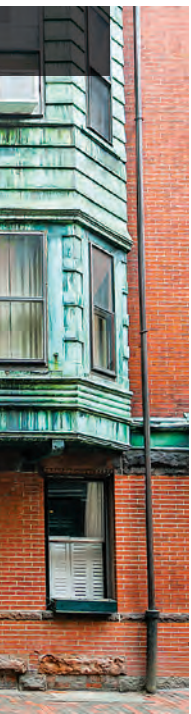
VICTORIAN FUN FACT OR FABULOUS FICTION?

- *Coffin corner* — a niche added to the top of the stairs to aid in the removal of heavy furniture or, according to rumor, a coffin. While largely debunked, there are stories that since Victorian people usually died at home and the body was laid out in the parlor on the first floor, the niche was meant to give a little "wiggle room" in maneuvering the coffin around the bend in the upstairs hallway and down the stairs.

The next time you come across one of these Victorian terms, you'll know exactly what it means!



Coffin Corner



A STRING OF SPRING PEARLS

FREDERICK OLNSTED'S EMERALD NECKLACE

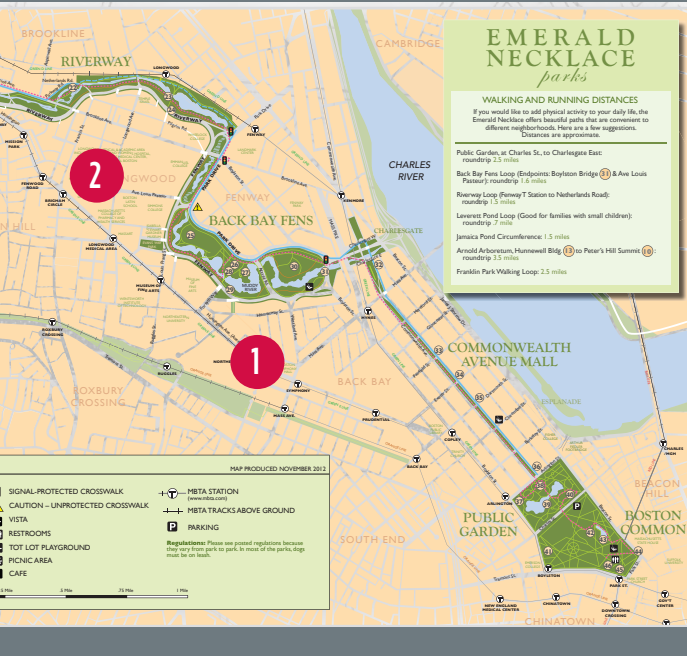
Strung across the heart of Boston, from Back Bay to Dorchester and extending all the way to Brookline, is the Emerald Necklace. The six land and water parks that comprise it were designed over 100 years ago by Frederick Law Olmsted himself, popularly considered the father of American landscape architecture. Today, shaded benches and a plethora of recreational activities attract over a million visitors to the Necklace each year. In charge of maintaining, preserving, improving, and promoting it is the Emerald Necklace Conservancy, a non-profit public-private partnership that includes community, business, government, and institutional representatives, as well as residential neighbors. Read on to learn more about the parks that make Boston's own string of green pearls.

1 BACK BAY FENS, ca. 1879 — The challenge in Back Bay was to restore the polluted saltwater marsh that flooded and threatened public health. Combining landscape architecture with sanitary engineering, Olmsted proposed to flush out the stagnant waterway and add plantings that would emulate the original marsh ecology of the Fenway area. His efforts transformed a foul-smelling tidal creek and swamp into a scenic pool with wooded banks. Today's Fens is very different from Olmsted's original creation, however. The 1910 damming of the Charles River changed the water from brackish to fresh, rendering his plantings unsupportable. Only two of the original bridges, the park's general boundaries, and some early trees remain of Olmsted's design.

It was landscape architect Arthur Shurcliff who added the Rose Garden, turned the focus to the Museum of Fine Arts on the east side of the park, and gave us the more formal landscape style popular in the '20s and '30s. The park is also home to the Fenway Victory Gardens, the last remaining of the 20 million victory gardens created nationwide during World War II to provide much needed fruit and vegetables. Today, it's a well-loved, 7.5-acre community garden.

2 THE RIVERWAY, ca. 1890 — This narrow, wholly man-made 34-acre park serves as a border between Boston and Brookline. This is the first landscape along the Necklace's linear green ribbon where we can still see Olmsted's original vision. A park in this area wasn't even in the initial design, but Olmsted suggested it to the Park Commission as a continuation of the public health improvements that came with the changes made to the Fens. Meant to look like it had always been there, the Riverway emphasizes a natural landscape with more than 100,000 plantings, steep banks, and wooded edges that preserve the area's pastoral feeling. Some of the most beautiful bridges in the Necklace can be found here, many designed by the





firm of H.H. Richardson, the famed 19th-century architect responsible for Trinity Church in Copley Square.

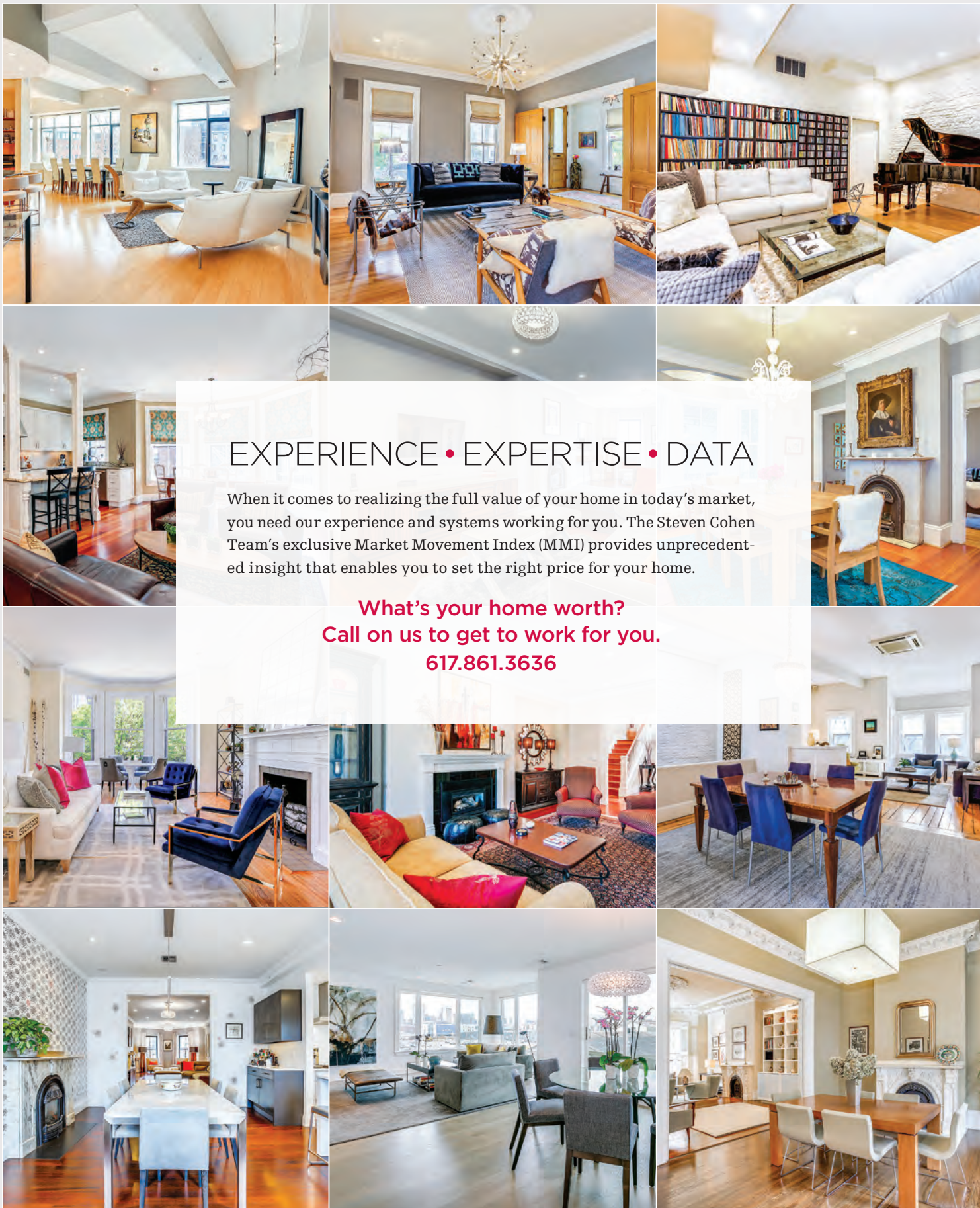
3 OLMSTED PARK, ca. 1891 — Originally named Lev-
erett Park, this part of the Necklace was intended to have
an educational function similar to the Arnold Arboretum.
Small pools were carved out south of Willow Pond Road
to be used as natural history exhibits, but the necessary
funds never materialized and most of the pools were filled
in. The park was renamed to Olmsted Park in 1900 to honor
its designer. Given the inherent beauty of the land, Olmsted
made relatively minor changes, especially compared to what
was done in the Fens and Riverway. He crafted a chain of
picturesque, fresh-water ponds alternating with natural
groves and meads with pathways and planting patterns
creating a series of dramatic vistas.

4 JAMAICA POND, ca. 1891 — In the late 18th and early
19th century, Jamaica Plain — at the time still considered
the country — was a popular spot for some of Boston's wealthiest residents to escape city
life. They built their summer homes around Jamaica Pond and an ice cutting industry de-
veloped not long after. When the land was purchased by the city, the homes and ice houses
were removed, and the area was restored to what Olmsted described as "a natural sheet of
water with quiet, graceful shores." Jamaica Pond plunges to more than 50 feet in depth, a
pure, glacial kettle hole. Natural springs make it the largest and purest body of standing
water in Boston, and Olmsted was said to be captivated by its "great beauty in reflection
and flickering half-lights."

He sought to preserve most of the existing vegetation, framing the pond with new trees,
shrubs, and paths. The boathouse and bandstand were added in 1912, providing facilities
for sailing, rowing, and summer concerts. Visitors can also apply for a permit and fish for
trout and salmon stocked by the state and raised in hatcheries every year. In October, the
annual lantern festival brings thousands of people for a walk around Jamaica Pond, their
lanterns recreating Olmsted's "flickering half-lights."

5 ARNOLD ARBORETUM, ca. 1872 — North America's first public arboretum and a Nation-
al Historic Landmark, Arnold Arboretum's existence is based on two unique partnerships.
First, Olmsted laid out the road system and overall planting scheme, while noted scientist
Charles Sprague Sargent collected and sited thousands of specimens by genus (or family).
Second, Harvard University curates the collections and maintains the landscape, while the
city, which owns the land and has leased it to the school for 1,000 years starting in 1882,
maintains the infrastructure. Today, the arboretum's 281 acres display over 15,000 plants,
including world renowned collections of maples, crabapples, lilacs and rhododendrons.

6 FRANKLIN PARK, ca. 1890s — At an impressive 527 acres, Franklin Park — named
for Benjamin Franklin — is the largest park in the emerald Necklace. It's located in the
geographical center of the city, connecting Roxbury, Dorchester, Jamaica Plain, Mattapan,
and Roslindale. Considered Boston's "country park," it has six miles of roads and fifteen
miles of pedestrian and bridle paths. The Franklin Park Zoo was completed in 1912, and
the numerous recreational facilities include tennis and basketball courts, baseball fields,
a cricket pitch, the region's premier cross-country track, and the 18-hole William J. Devine
golf course. Franklin Park is currently undergoing a Master Planning process to help inform
future projects and programming within the park.



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