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Introduction

As residential appraisers, we deal sometimes with design in its most basic terms. Glaring inadequacies or gross superadequacies are commonly understood and properly reported by most appraisers, but nearly any real estate agent or developer will inform you that the market is sensitive to issues far more complex and subtle than many appraisers recognize.

Residential Design: The Makings of a Good House was developed for residential appraisers who wish to broaden their knowledge about residential design and the evaluation of design. Its purpose is to introduce participants to different types of residential architecture and demonstrate how past styles influence today's designs.

The seminar discusses both the exterior appeal of an improvement and its balance with the site as well as the floor plan, functionality, and aesthetics of interior design. Participants will learn about factors that shape residential design and discuss its evolution based on demographics and cultural changes. It is important for appraisers to recognize the different market segments and to understand if a floor plan reflects or does not reflect current market preferences for that segment.

Even though this seminar will not make you into an architectural designer, it will improve your competency and facilitate developing a keener eye for nuances that influence value in residential architecture and design. We hope it also sparks an interest in architecture and design that will continue to aid you in your appraisal business.

Overview

Seminar Description

Residential Design: The Makings of a Good House is designed to benefit residential appraisers of various skill and experience levels. All appraisers can benefit from an enhanced awareness of architecture and design as well as from keeping abreast of current market trends in housing floor plans and amenities.

The handbook consists of six parts, which are a mixture of lecture and in-class exercises. The exercises are not problems and case studies in the traditional sense since most of the issues involve judgment calls, and an effective solution in one appraiser's market may not work well in another appraiser's market. Participation by class members is vital to the success of this seminar since more knowledge is shared from the collective experiences of the participants than from a single instructor.

The seminar begins with an introduction to basic design principles in Part 1. The basics of good design apply to any type of product, so this information can be used in all areas of residential appraising. This introduction is followed in Part 2 by a historical structural overview of American architecture using three key elements—walls, roofs, and details—to see what historical changes created the construction methods and designs we know today. Part 3 continues with a historical overview of the evolution of American residential architectural styles starting “in the beginning ...,” based on the premise that it's difficult to understand architectural design now and know the direction it is headed in the future if you do not understand how it evolved.

Part 4 moves away from history and focuses on market issues, examining how evolving demographic segments and changing market preferences affect home design and ultimately, value. Part 5 continues this discussion with the most common consumer trends in housing design and delves into the task of determining what buyers want (or at least what they say they want) in the major aspects of a home. Part 6 concludes with a series of in-class exercises that put what you have learned to practical use. These exercises illustrate how various floor plans reflect or do not reflect market preferences and identify concepts that will help you develop a functional checklist for use on property viewings.

Learning Enhancements

The seminar has been designed with a variety of elements to enhance your learning experience.

- **Preview.** To give you a taste of what is to come, a Preview page begins each part and identifies learning objectives to consider as you move through the content.
- **Learning Objectives.** Each learning objective covers essential information you need to know to fully understand the concepts in the seminar. Look them over before each part begins so that you have a frame of reference as you move through the material. At the end of each part, reread the objectives. Are you able to perform what is stated? If not, this is the time to ask your instructor for help. Or, review the concepts that you do not understand.
- **Discussion Topics.** Discussion questions provide you with additional ideas to consider as you absorb what you are learning.
- **Examples.** A number of examples are scattered throughout the handbook to provide everyday illustrations of what you are learning.
- **In-Class Exercises.** These exercises provide you with additional hands-on practice as you absorb what you are learning.

Classroom Guidelines

To make the learning environment a positive experience for everyone attending, please follow these guidelines when class is in session.

- 100% attendance is required. No exceptions.
- Limit use of laptops and wireless devices to classroom projects.
- Communicate with business associates during break time instead of class time.
- Put away reading materials such as newspapers and books that are not used in class.
- Silence cell phones.
- Use recording devices only if prior permission has been granted.
- Refrain from ongoing conversations with those seated near you and other distracting behavior.

General Information

- **Breaks.** There will be one 15-minute break during the morning session and one 15-minute break during the afternoon session unless noted otherwise by the program sponsor. The lunch break is one hour. A meal is not provided unless specified in the sponsor's advertising or in your seminar confirmation materials.
- **Attendance sheets** will be distributed during class to verify your attendance during the morning and afternoon sessions. Attendance for the entire seminar is required.
- **Certificates of completion** will be distributed or mailed after completion of the program.
- **Materials required.** A calculator and ruler are required.