

WHAT IS A MILLS ACT?

Having received designation, the owner may then apply for a Mills Act Agreement (MAA). The Agreement is a State law that allows cities to enter into contracts with the owners of historic structures which provide for reducing property taxes in exchange for the continued preservation of the property.

HOW IT WORKS

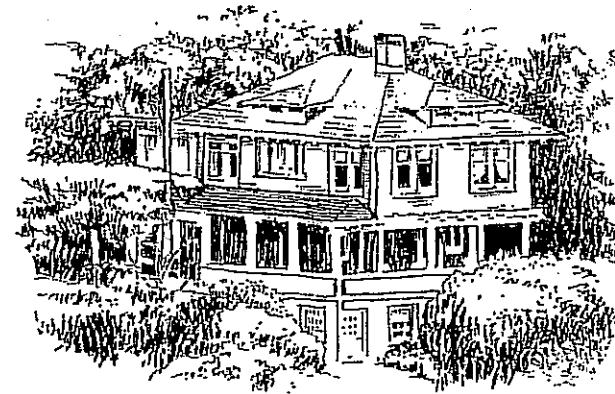
The MAA is an evergreen contract which is renewable each year unless the owner or the City elects to serve notice of non-renewal. In that case the MAA will terminate 10 years from date of the notice. If the property fails to live up to the requirements of the MAA or the owner elects to cancel, a penalty of 12½% of the property's market value will be assessed.

ADVANTAGES OF A MAA

- In most cases it lowers the tax rate, sometimes dramatically.
- Tax savings makes money available for maintenance or restoration.
- When property is sold, no reassessment occurs unless notice of non-renewal is served.
- New owners enjoy pre-existing rate, a selling point to potential buyers.
- Reduced tax rate remains in place despite any increase in value.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAA

1. Any interior or exterior changes to the property must be reviewed by the HPC.
2. The Secretary of Interior's Guidelines apply to interior and exterior changes to the property.
3. To ensure compliance, the City may request inspection of the property.
4. Property maintenance is a requirement of the MAA.



BELVEDERE IS UNIQUE

The Belvedere Historic Preservation program seeks to protect the important and often fragile historic resources that reflect the history and development of the city.

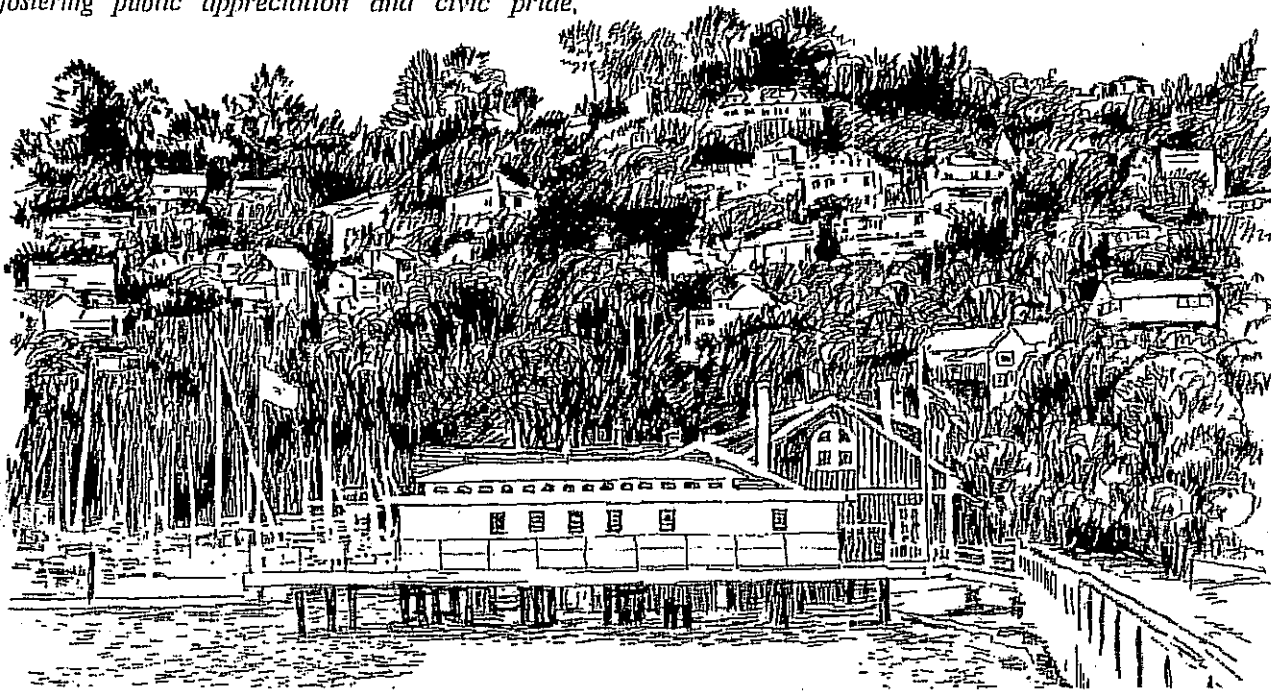
Most of us who live in one of our historic resources love them – their charm, their uniqueness and design.

Designation can be seen as a contribution to the ambience of our community. If you think you'd like to add your house to the City's historic inventory, applications are available at the front desk at City Hall, 450 San Rafael Avenue. A Fact Sheet with further explanation of the Mills Act is also available.

For other questions, call Marty Gordon at 435-3529 or Roger Felton at 435-0381.

Most of us realize the value of our historic resources. Their protection contributes to the livability and beauty of the City by encouraging diverse and harmonious architectural styles, fostering public appreciation and civic pride,

adding to the community's understanding of its connections with life and values of the past, all of which make Belvedere such an attractive and delightful community in which to live and work.



CITY SUPPORT OF PRESERVATION

The City committed itself to a formal recognition of these valuable properties when in 1993 it passed a Historic Preservation Ordinance. It is voluntary, and gives a measure of protection for historic structures by establishing an inventory and descriptions of properties, provides oversight of changes and allows designation as a historic structure.

In 2004 it reaffirmed its support by passing a measure to give designated properties a 50% discount in building-related permit fees and again in 2005 when it agreed to raise the cap on tax loss to the City for designated properties which had a Mills Act Agreement (MAA).

ADVANTAGES OF DESIGNATION

1. Helps preserve the City's valuable historic and architectural tapestry.
2. Use of State Historic Building Code in lieu of more stringent Uniform Building Code.
3. Architect members of HPC may meet with owners to plan changes, avoiding possible conflicts with the ordinance prior to submission to the Planning Commission.
4. A bronze historical plaque is available to all designated property owners.
5. Benefits future generations of owners.
6. Reduced permit fees.
7. Possible Mills Act Agreement tax savings.

HOW DESIGNATION HAPPENS

Historical designation requires the owner to file a request for designation at City Hall. The Historic Preservation Committee (HPC), using the following nationally recognized criteria, evaluates the property for inclusion on the City's historic inventory and writes a case report for the City Council. The property must meet a minimum of 3 of the following 9 criteria:

1. Age
2. Outstanding architecture
3. Outstanding example of a particular style
4. Work of an outstanding architect or builder
5. Outstanding craftsmanship
6. Association with a person, group or event in the City's history
7. Retains most of its original material and design features
8. Is a visual landmark; contributes to the character of the street or neighborhood
9. Is on the National Register of Historic Places

