

Albany Institute of History & Art  
Library

**MG 75**

**Mansion Neighborhood Association Papers**

1971-1994

2.5 lin. ft., 3 boxes

- Series I. Mansion Neighborhood Association- General Records, Information, and Printed Material (1974-89)
- Series II. Mansion Neighborhood Association- Committees and Committee Activities (1983-90)
- Series III. Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Projects (1978-94)
- Series IV. Neighborhood Issues and Activities (1974-87)
- Series V. City and Neighborhood Materials, Non-MNA Produced (1971-89)
- Series VI. Miscellaneous (1977-89)

July 1998

### **Biographical Note**

The Mansion Neighborhood Association (MNA) was formed in 1974 and incorporated in 1975. Located in Albany's historic Mansion District, it comprises residents of Ashgrove, Bleecker, Charles, Eagle, Elm, Grand, Hamilton, Madison, Myrtle, Park, Philip, Trinity, Van Zandt, and Wilbur streets. As stated in an undated MNA brochure, the association seeks to:

- act as a voice for neighborhood concerns
- foster neighborhood pride
- organize and implement neighborhood improvement projects
- eliminate blight and substandard housing

Directed by a corps of officers, the MNA is divided into several committees, each of which leads neighborhood activities in such areas as crime prevention, housing, youth, or zoning. Although the Association organizes social activities, summer youth programs, and neighborhood clean-ups, one of its most significant contributions is to the rehabilitation of Mansion area buildings. Since its inception, and in cooperation with the Capital Hill Improvement Corporation (CHIC), the Mansion Neighborhood Association has encouraged and been involved in the sale and rehabilitation of deteriorating historic Mansion buildings to be used for low to moderate income housing. The Association's activities also include the assessment of neighborhood traffic and parking issues, the pursuit of municipal improvements such as new sidewalks and park maintenance, and the petitioning of city leaders on current issues.

### **Scope and Content Note**

The Mansion Neighborhood Association Papers span the period from 1971-1994 and contain a variety of correspondence, memos, reports, newspaper clippings and other materials relating to Albany's Mansion neighborhood. The collection was donated to the Albany Institute Library in 1998 by Mark P. Yolles, who served as president of the Association for several years in the 1980s.

Upon their arrival at the library, the MNA papers were examined for any existing order or organization. When no such order could be established, the collection was arranged in six series according to subject: MANSION NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION- GENERAL RECORDS, INFORMATION, AND PRINTED MATERIAL; MANSION NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION- COMMITTEES AND COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES; HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS; NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES; CITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD MATERIALS, NON-MNA PRODUCED; and MISCELLANEOUS.

Series I. MANSION NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION- GENERAL RECORDS, INFORMATION, AND PRINTED MATERIAL (1974-89) contains the majority of documents produced by the MNA during the course of its daily activity, excepting correspondence (which is organized by subject). The series includes general information about the Mansion District and

the MNA, MNA brochures and monthly newsletters, committee and membership lists, the MNA's 1979 bylaws, and minutes from the Association's board and general meetings. It is this series that reveals the organization of the Association and its activities and goals.

Series II. MANSION NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION- COMMITTEES AND COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES (1983-90) is organized by committee and contains the correspondence, minutes, listings and other records of each committee. The committees represented include: crime, executive, housing, open spaces, social, youth, and zoning. Although the contents of most committee folders are straightforward, the housing committee requires further explanation. The housing committee's materials were neatly foldered when they arrived with the rest of the collection, and therefore were not disassembled and rearranged. Likewise, housing-related materials that were scattered throughout the rest of the collection were not added to the housing committee's papers, but were instead collected and grouped into their own series, Housing and Community Development Projects. The user is advised to consult both locations when searching for housing, community development, or rehabilitation records.

Series III. HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (1978-94) documents the MNA's efforts at preserving, rehabilitating and renewing the neighborhood's buildings and its unique character. The series consists of correspondence and agreements between MNA and other community organizations, applications for funding, and letters to city officials concerning community development issues. Projects that the MNA was involved with include: Neighborhood Strategic Area Project, Urban Renewal Project, Innovative Housing Program, and the Community Development Block Grant Program. Folder 27, which contains materials about the auctioning of the old Philip Schuyler High School, illustrates the MNA's close scrutiny of the sale and use of neighborhood buildings.

Series IV. NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES (1974-87) contains correspondence, memos, reports and clippings about neighborhood and city issues, such as traffic and public safety, which concerned Mansion neighborhood residents but fell outside of one specific committee's realm. Also included are flyers and other notifications about neighborhood and city events, such as Neighborhood Olympics or MNA potluck dinners. Of note in this series are a collection of correspondence, reports and clippings about the proposed civic center (now the Pepsi Arena) to be built in downtown Albany. This grouping of 1984 documents outline the controversy surrounding the proposal.

Series V. CITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD MATERIALS, NON-MNA PRODUCED (1971-89) are a grouping of city-related reports not produced by the MNA. Included are the Mayor's Strategic Planning Report of 1985 and information about the Neighborhood Resource Center.

Series VI. MISCELLANEOUS (1977-89) includes correspondence and other records that are unrelated to the above series, such as thank you letters, requests for support, and flyers and newsletters from other area organizations.

Box    Folder**Series I. MANSION NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION - GENERAL RECORDS, INFORMATION AND PRINTED MATERIALS**

1	1	Historic Mansion District information	1974, n.d.
	2	MNA general information	n.d.
	3	Membership and committee lists, directories	1983-88, n.d.
	4	MNA brochures and brochure drafts	n.d.
	5	MNA Bylaws	1979
	6	MNA newsletters	1980-89, n.d.
	7	MNA memos	1984-87
	8	MNA budget	1986, 1987
	9	MNA board meeting minutes	1984-87
	10	MNA general meeting minutes	1980-87, n.d.

**Series II. MANSION NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION- COMMITTEES AND COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES**

	11	Crime committee, neighborhood crime issues	1984-89
	12	Executive committee meeting minutes	1984-87
	13	Housing committee, general	1983
	14	Housing committee, auction of 81 Grand Street	1984
	15	Open Spaces committee	1984
	16	Social committee	c. 1985
	17	Youth committee, general	1985, 1986, n.d.
	18	Youth committee, Philip Street parks	1984-90, n.d.
1	19	Zoning committee, zoning issues	1984-87, n.d.

Box   Folder

**Series III. HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

2	20	Community Development, general	1979-85, n.d.
	21	Neighborhood Strategic Area project	1978-79, n.d.
	22	Mansion Neighborhood Strategy Area report	1978
	23	Urban Renewal Project	1980, n.d.
	24	Innovative Housing Program	1979-83, n.d.
	25	Mansion Neighborhood Area Rehabilitation Corporation	1979, 1980, n.d.
	26	Community Development Block Grant Program	1980-94
	27	Philip Schuyler High School building, rehabilitation of	1984-86, n.d.

**Series IV. NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES**

	28	Miscellaneous MNA neighborhood activities	n.d.
	29	Historic Albany House Tour	1984-87
	30	Traffic and parking	1979-87
	31	Neighborhood safety, sanitation, and environmental issues	1984-87
	32	Neighborhood clean-up	1985, 1987, n.d.
	33	City and neighborhood clippings	1974-79, n.d.
	34	Civic center proposal- MNA correspondence and memos	1984
	35	Civic center proposal- MNA reports	1984
3	36	Civic center proposal- non-MNA reports	1984
3	37	Civic center proposal- clippings	1984

Box   Folder

**Series V. CITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD MATERIALS, NON-MNA PRODUCED**

38	Neighborhood Resource Center	1984, 1989, n.d.
39	Report on the Committee on South Mall Environs	1973
40	Survey of Black History of the South End, Albany, NY	1971
41	Mayor's Strategic Planning Committee	1985

**Series VI. MISCELLANEOUS**

42	Miscellaneous correspondence	1978-89
43	Miscellaneous	1977-86