MG 75

Mansion Neighborhood Association Papers

1971-1994

2.5 lin. ft., 3 boxes

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.
### Series I. MANSION NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION - GENERAL RECORDS, INFORMATION AND PRINTED MATERIALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Historic Mansion District information</td>
<td>1974, n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>MNA general information</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Membership and committee lists, directories</td>
<td>1983-88, n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>MNA brochures and brochure drafts</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>MNA Bylaws</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>MNA memos</td>
<td>1984-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>MNA budget</td>
<td>1986, 1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>MNA board meeting minutes</td>
<td>1984-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>MNA general meeting minutes</td>
<td>1980-87, n.d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Crime committee, neighborhood crime issues</td>
<td>1984-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>Executive committee meeting minutes</td>
<td>1984-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Housing committee, general</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>Housing committee, auction of 81 Grand Street</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Open Spaces committee</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Social committee</td>
<td>c. 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>Youth committee, Philip Street parks</td>
<td>1984-90, n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td>Zoning committee, zoning issues</td>
<td>1984-87, n.d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Series III. HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

20  Community Development, general  1979-85, n.d.
21  Neighborhood Strategic Area project  1978-79, n.d.
22  Mansion Neighborhood Strategy Area report  1978
24  Innovative Housing Program  1979-83, n.d.
26  Community Development Block Grant Program  1980-94

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
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
36  Civic center proposal- non-MNA reports  1984
37  Civic center proposal- clippings  1984
Series V. CITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD MATERIALS, NON-MNA PRODUCED

39  Report on the Committee on South Mall Environ     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