



CITY OF MONROVIA HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Overview of the HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

The City of Monrovia has created an Historic Preservation Program to benefit both property owners of qualified properties and many generations of Monrovia residents to come. The centerpiece of the program is the recognition of qualified properties as Historic Landmarks and/or as a Contributor to an Historic District. Along with the responsibility of helping preserve the legacy of Monrovia, owners of Historic Landmarks and Contributors are eligible for several exciting incentive programs, including property tax relief via a "Mills Act" contract.

This guide is meant to help lead you through the application process for Historic Landmark designation as well as the request procedure for a "Mills Act" contract. However, if any part is not clear, feel free to call the Planning Division Staff at (626) 932-5565 Monday through Thursday from 7 am to 6 pm for assistance.

HISTORIC LANDMARK – Designation Procedure

- A. Begin by coming to the Planning Counter during City Hall hours (Monday through Thursday, 7 am to 6 pm) and talking to a Planner. A Planner will be able to answer any preliminary questions you may have. You **MUST** be the property owner to nominate a property for designation. You need to receive our handout packets on Historic Landmark Designation. This packet includes the fees required to file, a blank Nomination Form, a sample completed Nomination Form and, most importantly, a list of the seven Criteria for Evaluation which is the qualification for an Historic Landmark.
- B. Age is **NOT** the sole criterion for qualifying as an Historic Landmark. The Historic Preservation Commission and the City Council determine whether a property qualifies to be an Historic Landmark by using the Criteria for Evaluation. The property must meet at least one criterion to qualify. The applicant must prove that the criterion is met by thoroughly researching and documenting the property and carefully and completely detailing that information on the Nomination Form.
- C. The Nomination Form is based directly on the State of California Department of Parks and Recreation Historic Resources Inventory Form (aka DPR 523). This form was adopted to ensure complete resource documentation and statewide uniformity. The form must be completed by the applicant fully and completely. Many of the entries are simple, but each must be substantiated based on reliable and verifiable resource materials. The most care should be taken with the "Description" section and the "Statement of Significance". The latter is the entry where you make the case for meeting one or more of the Criteria for Evaluation. Planning Staff can assist you on how to use the form and have some information. If you still need more help, we recommend contacting outside organizations, such as the Monrovia Old House Preservation Group.

The Affidavit of Ownership must be signed by the current owner(s) and notarized.

- D. Once you have reached the point where the research is done, and you feel comfortable that you have shown that your property meets at least one of the Criteria for Evaluation, and the forms are complete, you can submit the nomination to the Planning Division along with the appropriate fees and required items (i.e. photos, affidavit, etc.). The Planner will check that all the items are there, set up a time to evaluate your property, and tell you the time of the next meeting.
- E. The nomination will be presented to the Historic Preservation Commission at a regular meeting. This is a public hearing. The Commission will take testimony, deliberate the nomination's merit and either recommend approval, recommend approval with corrections or recommend denial. The corrections may be a more thorough description, a change in the significance statement, etc. Any recommendation for approval is now embodied in the Nomination Statement and forwarded on to the City Council.

The City Council will also hold a public hearing, take testimony, and deliberate the merits of the Nomination Statement as forwarded from the Historic Preservation Commission. The City Council will either approve, approve with corrections, or deny the nomination. Any approval will be embodied in the Designation Statement (in the form of a Nomination Form) and will become the central preservation document for the Commission and Staff to follow in the future. It is recommended that you attend both the Historic Preservation Commission meeting and the City Council meeting.

- F. State law requires that all historic property designations be recorded at the county recorder's office within 30 days. The Designation Statement must be delivered by you to the Los Angeles County Recorder's Office at Imperial Highway and Norwalk Boulevard in Norwalk (12400 East Imperial Hwy, Norwalk). The City requires that a certified copy be delivered back to us immediately after recordation. The cost of a certified copy is upwards of \$60.00. Additional copies may be desired by you for your records and will be required for submittal with any Mills Act Contract submittal to the county tax assessor's office. The recording of the Designation Statement is free, but the County Recorder's office often needs to be reminded of this.

MILLS ACT CONTRACT – Request Procedure

The Mills Act, named after the Senator who introduced it, is a state law that allows cities and counties to enter into contracts with owners of listed historic properties which bind the owner to certain preservation requirements and conditions and which compels the county tax assessor to recalculate the property tax assessment according to a special formulation which takes the age and historic value of the property into account. Each contract is individual and unique, with the possibility of specific conditions to perform work required, however a set of standard conditions used by Staff and the Historic Preservation Commission is available at the counter.

Staff cannot guarantee that the reassessment will result in any reduction of property taxes, however the financial worksheet provided should assist you in evaluating the likelihood of a reduction.

The City is currently accepting Mills Act Contract request applications concurrent with Historic Landmark Nominations, but Historic Landmark or Contributor status (in Historic Districts) is required for completion of the contract process.

- A. Obtain the Mills Act packet from Planning Staff. It contains an application and a financial analysis worksheet. If you need assistance, Planning Staff can provide some help. This financial worksheet will help you evaluate whether a tax reduction is likely and helps the City to track potential tax changes.
- B. When you have finished the financial evaluation and completed the application, submit these along with the required fees and any other items to Planning Staff. The Planner will set the request for the Historic Preservation Commission agenda.
- C. At a public hearing, the Historic Preservation Commission will take testimony, deliberate the merits of the request and the work program and either recommend approval, recommend approval with corrections or conditions or recommend denial to the City Council.
- D. The recommendation will be taken up by the City Council at a public hearing. They will take testimony, deliberate the merits of the request and the work program. The City Council will either approve or deny the contract. It is recommended that you attend both the Historic Preservation Commission and City Council meetings.
- E. Once the final contract is approved by the City Council it must be signed and notarized. The City Clerk will assist in notarization of the contract. Please call ahead for an appointment with Linda Proctor at (626) 932-5505. The Mills Act Contract must be recorded with the county recorder. The county tax assessor will not accept an unrecorded contract. The Los Angeles County Recorder is located at Imperial Highway and Norwalk Boulevard in Norwalk. There is a recordation fee for the Mills Act contract, upwards of \$ 15. Certified copies must be obtained for return to the City and for filing with the tax assessor. There is a fee for certified copies, upwards of \$60.
- F. Filing the necessary paperwork with the county tax assessor is the sole responsibility of the property owner. The South El Monte district office of the assessor's office accepts Mills Act contracts in person. The paperwork needs to be filed with the office at 1190 Durfee Avenue, South El Monte. Contact Sharonda at their office at (626) 527-2158. Currently, there are no fees for filing with the Tax Assessor's office. The deadline for consideration in the next assessment cycle is the previous December 31.

The Planning Division staff hopes these directions help you through the process. However, if you have any questions, you can speak to a planner by calling (626) 932-5565 Monday through Thursday, 7 am to 6 pm.