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## **H.H. Buhne Jr. House Gets a Facelift Through Eureka's Mills Act**

The owners of the Historic H.H. Buhne Jr. house, at 1413 D Street in Eureka, have completed the largest project listed in their Mills Act contract, painting the exterior of their c. 1903 two-story late Queen Anne style Victorian. In 2007, Jessica and David Bigger entered into the Mills Act Property Tax Abatement Program with the City of Eureka. It is a program for homes that are historically significant locally, regionally or nationally. Owners of Mills Act Homes can save anywhere between 20% and 60% off their property taxes. See California's [Office of Historic Preservation](#) for program details.

In exchange for an itemized list and an estimated cost of restoration and maintenance projects, the Biggers received a significant reduction in their property taxes. If they were to sell, the tax break would pass on to the new owners. Since the agreement, the Biggers have continued to maintain the home's character and integrity, as well as make several upgrades beyond their agreement. A few notable projects completed were the restoration of redwood floors and double hung windows, installation of a new forced-air furnace and an instant water heater.

Prominent figures associated with the house like past owners H.H. Buhne Jr., Robert Porter, Albert M. Dinsmore, and H.M. Mercer, contribute to the home's historical significance. H.H. Buhne Jr., son of Captain H.H. Buhne who founded Eureka in 1850, became a very successful businessman. He started off as a clerk at Humboldt County Bank and later took over his father's timber business. Robert Porter went in on a multiple partnership in a ranch holding and later bought out most of his partners. Albert M. Dinsmore, a dentist by trade, became the proprietor of Dinsmore Jewelry and the president of the Ferndale Chamber of Commerce. He also served two terms as a Humboldt County Supervisor. H.M. Mercer, the home's builder, built many of the historic homes in Eureka, as well as a few important commercial buildings.

"Eureka has an exceptional inventory of historic structures that provide a sense of place that very few California cities can claim. The Mills Act is an important tool that property owners can utilize to ensure our heritage can be enjoyed for years to come. The Biggers have completed many restorative projects to their home, both inside and out. The work performed through the Mills Act has resulted in the preservation of Victorian architecture that is worthy of community pride," said Humboldt County Senior Planner, Rob Wall, who was intimately involved with the Mills Act contract back in 2007.

Aside from its historical significance, the H.H. Buhne Jr. house boasts many original architectural features. It has an original pantry; stain glass windows, antique sinks, redwood pocket doors, high ceilings, simple decorative trim and posts on the exterior, and redwood gutters. In addition, this home has large light-filled rooms, a huge kitchen, and a gravity toilet, all unique features rarely seen in Victorians.

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