

May 4, 2022

1100 S. 5th Street, Ste. 319  
Milwaukee, WI 53204  
P: 414.220.0530

To the honorable Chair and Commissioners,

The Milwaukee Preservation Alliance supports the nomination of the A.O. Smith Corporation Headquarters Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places. We concur with the nominators that the district is eligible under Criterion A for its contributions to Engineering and Industry during its use by the A.O. Smith Corporation.

The A.O. Smith Corporation Headquarters Historic District housed A.O. Smith's executive offices, global headquarters, and their prize-winning Research and Engineering Departments. While initially notable for their contributions to the automotive industry, A.O. Smith applied their innovative welding techniques to other industries and played a significant role in both World Wars. Of the buildings included in the nomination, we especially wish to highlight the importance of Building 65, commonly referred to as the Research and Engineering Building. Built in 1931, it is one of the first, if not the first, buildings in the world with full-height curtainwalls of plate glass in aluminum frames, and the first to use aluminum for this purpose. The building also contains perhaps the finest Art Deco lobby in Wisconsin. Throughout the rest of the campus, the Olmsted Brothers, master landscape architects, implemented a 1931 landscape planting plan which stretched from the east facade of Building 65 to 27th Street. This planting plan is still partially intact and is an important part of the campus's nomination.

Finally, the district retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance and has similar integrity to other listed and eligible properties in the area, while having a similar or greater impact on Milwaukee's industrial development. For these reasons, MPA urges your support of this nomination.

Respectfully,  
Tim Houge  
Jeremy Ebersole  
Milwaukee Preservation Alliance