



MPA
MILWAUKEE PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

September 5, 2025

Historic Preservation Commission, City of Milwaukee

RE: Pabst Neon Sign Proposed Replacement

To the Chair and Commissioners -

On behalf of the Milwaukee Preservation Alliance, I am writing to encourage the Commission to REJECT the proposal to replace the historic Pabst neon sign with LED rope lighting.

Milwaukee has an extremely limited supply of irreplaceable, inimitable neon signage, and the Pabst sign is a highly visible example of this dying art. There is a current nationwide push for LED replacements, often touted as the more economical solution, but as we know - the greenest sign is one that already exists. A quick internet search shows that there are multiple neon artisans in the Milwaukee area - Signarama, Sign Effectz Inc, Electric Eye Neon, Bauer Sign & Lighting - that appear capable of handling the scale of the Pabst sign restoration and who I am sure would relish the opportunity to work on such a significant piece of history.

The impact of replacing the sign with LED rope lighting is the erasure of history. There is a uniqueness to the Pabst's sign that draws attention and value, and can be used as a way to bond with the past for current and future generations. The Pabst sign in particular is a cultural touchstone, a suspended piece of public art, and grounds the public to exactly where they stand - within the footprint of history. Neon is incredibly historically significant, and its continued push to extinction will only harm the campus that has worked so hard to preserve everything else around it.

Thank you for your consideration,

Emma Rudd

Executive Director, Milwaukee Preservation Alliance

About Milwaukee Preservation Alliance

Milwaukee Preservation Alliance is a non-profit organization devoted to promoting stewardship and awareness of the historic, cultural, and economic value of Milwaukee's built heritage. MPA aims to strengthen Milwaukee's neighborhoods by advocating for and promoting their unique cultural spaces and architectural assets in order to foster a strong and vibrant community as well as demonstrating the link between historic preservation and viable economic development.

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