

February 22, 2022

Chairman Perez and members of the committee,

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

On behalf of the Milwaukee Preservation Alliance, I would like to support the City Clerk's Office – Historic Preservation Commission request to accept and expend a Certified Local Government grant to fund "Modern Houses of Worship: Not Necessarily Steeples." Milwaukee is known as the City of Steeples, and these older church buildings are an important part of the City's built environment and cultural heritage. Many of these buildings were previously surveyed through the 1996 survey of the same name.

They are not, however, the only religious buildings in the City with cultural or architectural significance. The proposed survey seeks to broaden our understanding of the religious, cultural, and architectural experience in Milwaukee by expanding on the Christian, Eurocentric, early 20th Century and prior focus of the previous survey by highlighting the importance of non-Christian, non-White, and more modern religious buildings. This focus on equity will tell a more complete story of Milwaukee, ensuring that the stories of those too often left out of our historic narrative are given a voice. It will similarly recognize the value to the community of sites of religious expression built after the 1910s, ensuring that these treasures from the more recent past are properly documented.

Finally, by identifying and inventorying these properties, many of which are in communities of color that have been left out of past efforts, the proposed survey will help provide easier access to funding tools such as Historic Tax Credits that could help the stewards of these community assets in future efforts to restore and preserve the places that form the cornerstones of their neighborhoods. In the end, a fuller, richer understanding of our City's history and a more vibrant future for the community will result.

Thank you for your service to the people of Milwaukee.

Respectfully,

Jeremy Ebersole
Executive Director