



NATIONAL TRUST
for HISTORIC PRESERVATION®

Protecting the Irreplaceable™

RICHARD MOE
PRESIDENT

June 30, 2005

The Honorable Tom Barrett
Mayor
City of Milwaukee
City Hall
200 East Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202-3570

Dear Mayor Barrett:

National Trust for Historic Preservation Executive Vice President David Brown visited the City of Milwaukee for the first time in May of this year. He was impressed with the variety and quality of Milwaukee's historic resources, particularly the nationally significant Pabst Brewery Historic District.

During that visit he was informed that developers, with apparent political support, are moving forward with a proposal for new development that requires demolition of 20 of the 28 contributing buildings, in effect destroying the Pabst Brewery Historic District. In conversations with our Midwest Regional Office director, the developers indicated they have abandoned their pursuit of federal and state historic tax credits, and have no interest in considering alternative plans that would save the historic integrity of the Brewery District as a whole, or even in significant part.

Wispark LLC (Juneau Partners LLC) said they have studied the site and it is cost-prohibitive to save and rehabilitate the buildings. While this is a private development project, the threat to historic resources of this magnitude and quality deserves the closest scrutiny. The developer to date has produced no public evidence to support this assertion.

The PabstCity project as currently proposed is particularly unfortunate for Milwaukee, since other cities such as Minneapolis, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Denver have all used the rehabilitation of former industrial sites to spur economic revitalization.

The National Trust has found that well preserved landmarks and districts are attractions people seek in a city, and are catalysts for other development. By applying ever more broadly the principles of preservation as economic revitalization and

~~The Honorable Tom Barrett~~



*Recipient of the National
Humanities Medal*

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embracing a preservation ethic as a value system by which livable neighborhoods - and great downtowns - are made, city after city has found preservation to be their most effective revitalization strategy. In addition to generating an improved quality of life, preservation has become a powerful economic engine that creates jobs, a greater return on investment over time, and more local income. Research has shown:

- SKIP
- For over thirty years, historic preservation has been a key component in almost all successful downtown revitalization strategies anywhere in the United States.
 - Of the cities experiencing the most success with economic development efforts, the vast majority (15 of 20 surveyed) had the greatest amount of historic preservation activity across the country.
 - The large cities that have the least success in attracting and maintaining jobs also have the most dismal historic preservation record.
 - Cultural tourism is an international growth industry and historic resources are among the strongest community assets for attracting visitors thus generating even more revenue locally.

SKIP

The National Trust believes that the loss of Milwaukee's Pabst Brewery District would be a huge waste of community assets, and others agree. The C. H. Johnson Consulting, Inc. May 2005 final report to the City of Milwaukee, entitled *Proposed Economic Development Project: PabstCity*, recommend: "The historic Pabst Brewery context is an attractive and novel concept for users, and a perfect fit within the fabric of Milwaukee. The more the historic nature of the buildings can be brought into the new project (without hurting the economics of the project), the more novelty it will provide for the users." In other words, the more historic buildings that remain, the more successful the development project will be.

This was also reinforced by the City Comptroller, Mr. W. Martin Morics, in his June 1, 2005 memo to the Zoning, Neighborhoods & Development Committee, when he recommends "a full-scale effort" to take advantage of the potential \$10-\$20 million in Federal Historic Tax Credits for PabstCity. This infusion of federal capital into the project will likely be lost if so little of the historic district remains.

→ The National Trust has offered to work with Wispark LLC, the Historic Preservation Commission, and Aldermen Bauman and D'Amato to bring the considerable resources of the Trust to bear on this project, including historic tax credits, loan funds, and new markets tax credits available through our National Trust Community Investment Fund.

Restoration of the Historic Third Ward, Old World 3rd Street, and Brewers Hill are wonderful examples of historic rehabilitation in Milwaukee. The City needs to

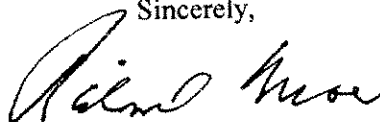
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replicate these successes as a broad-based policy. Demolition of Pabst Brewery historic buildings could rob the city of its real future. Demolition is forever. Gone with it will be the opportunity to employ preservation as a revitalization tool.

For almost 150 years, the Pabst Brewery complex helped define Milwaukee itself. It is an integral part of the City's heritage and its national identity. To see the historic complex come alive again as a mixed use neighborhood and visitor destination is the most fitting way to sustain and celebrate what Milwaukee is - a blue ribbon city.

Warmest regards.

Sincerely,



Richard Moe

RM:gs

Cc: Alderman Willie L. Hines, Jr., Common Council President
Alderman Ashanti Hamilton
Alderman Joe Davis, Sr.
Alderman Michael S. D'Amato
Alderman Robert J. Bauman
Alderman James A. Bohl, Jr.
Alderman Michael McGee, Jr.
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