

## Elmer, Linda

---

**From:** Jeremy Ebersole <jebersole@milwaukeepreservation.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 29, 2020 2:45 PM  
**To:** Elmer, Linda; Askin, Tim; Hatala, Carlen; Historic Preservation Commission  
**Subject:** Letter of Support for File 200760 - HPC September 30, 2020  
**Attachments:** MPA comment - 200760 - HPC 9\_30.docx

Please add the following statement of support for File 200760 on behalf of the Milwaukee Preservation Alliance. Thank you!

To the honorable chair and commissioners:

The Milwaukee Preservation Alliance supports the Draft Mural Guidelines for Historic Properties in the City of Milwaukee and applauds the commission and staff for their hard work in developing these important guidelines. The proposed draft follows preservation best practices for the treatment of painted surfaces and historic properties. They provide fair and objective guidelines that balance the need for preservation of material and character of historic resources with sensible allowances that do not damage this material or character.

The proposed guidelines appropriately restrict introducing paint onto unpainted historic masonry, which is known to negatively impact the historic material. Similarly, the guidelines appropriately regulate murals that could have an adverse effect on the character of a historic site or district either by obscuring character-defining features or because of their size. The allowances provided for murals that do not cause these adverse effects offer balanced opportunities for mural art to enliven spaces without negatively impacting designated historic resources.

Additionally, MPA applauds the inclusion of mandatory maintenance plans and regulations on proper removal of murals to ensure that appropriate murals do not adversely affect historic resources once they have been approved and applied. Finally, we support the requirement for a COA for the removal of a mural, which ensures the removal does not damage the building material and acknowledges the significance that the mural could itself gain over time.

While we do support the draft guidelines, we do have two brief recommendations that may provide clarity:

- Mural is defined in the draft as "an artistic work applied to an exterior surface of a pre-existing structure," but IIf calls for murals on some historic properties to not be applied to the exterior surface of the structure but instead applied to a separate surface that is then applied to the exterior surface of the structure. This definition seems to prohibit murals as currently defined on these buildings and allow something without a definition (a non-commercial artwork applied to a surface that is applied to a building). This potentially presents a contradiction that could lead to confusion or a challenge. Perhaps a new term separate from "mural" is needed, like "historic painted masonry mural," or the definition of mural needs to be broadened to something like "an artistic work *appropriately* applied to an exterior surface of a pre-existing structure"?
- IIb allows murals on non-historic material on side, rear, or alley walls; but IIC allows murals on painted brick elevations without decorative features only for side walls (but not also rear or alley walls). It would seem that these locations should match for consistency and rear and alley walls allowed in IIC.

Thank you once again for your hard work on behalf of the people and places of Milwaukee.

Respectfully,

**Jeremy T. Ebersole** (he/him/his)

**Executive Director**

Milwaukee Preservation Alliance

1100 S. 5th Street, Suite 319, Milwaukee, WI 53204

(414) 220-0530 \* [milwaukeepreservationalliance.org](http://milwaukeepreservationalliance.org)

September 30, 2020

To the honorable chair and commissioners:

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

The Milwaukee Preservation Alliance supports the Draft Mural Guidelines for Historic Properties in the City of Milwaukee and applauds the commission and staff for their hard work in developing these important guidelines. The proposed draft follows preservation best practices for the treatment of painted surfaces and historic properties. They provide fair and objective guidelines that balance the need for preservation of material and character of historic resources with sensible allowances that do not damage this material or character.

The proposed guidelines appropriately restrict introducing paint onto unpainted historic masonry, which is known to negatively impact the historic material. Similarly, the guidelines appropriately regulate murals that could have an adverse effect on the character of a historic site or district either by obscuring character-defining features or because of their size. The allowances provided for murals that do not cause these adverse effects offer balanced opportunities for mural art to enliven spaces without negatively impacting designated historic resources.

Additionally, MPA applauds the inclusion of mandatory maintenance plans and regulations on proper removal of murals to ensure that appropriate murals do not adversely affect historic resources once they have been approved and applied. Finally, we support the requirement for a COA for the removal of a mural, which ensures the removal does not damage the building material and acknowledges the significance that the mural could itself gain over time.

While we do support the draft guidelines, we do have two brief recommendations that may provide clarity:

- Mural is defined in the draft as "an artistic work applied to an exterior surface of a pre-existing structure," but IIf calls for murals on some historic properties to not be applied to the exterior surface of the structure but instead applied to a separate surface that is then applied to the exterior surface of the structure. This definition seems to prohibit murals as currently defined on these buildings and allow something without a definition (a non-commercial artwork applied to a surface that is applied to a building). This potentially presents a contradiction that could lead to confusion or a challenge. Perhaps a new term separate from "mural" is needed, like "historic painted masonry mural," or the definition of mural needs to be broadened to something like "an artistic work *appropriately* applied to an exterior surface of a pre-existing structure"?
- IIb allows murals on non-historic material on side, rear, or alley walls; but IIc allows murals on painted brick elevations without decorative features only for side walls (but not also rear or alley walls). It would seem that these locations should match for consistency and rear and alley walls allowed in IIc.

Thank you once again for your hard work on behalf of the people and places of Milwaukee.

Respectfully,

Jeremy Ebersole  
Executive Director  
Milwaukee Preservation Alliance