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- Zoning, Neighborhoods, and Development Committee
- Capital Improvements Committee
- Frank P. Zeidler Public Service Award Selection Committee
- Historic Preservation Commission
- Historic Third Ward Architectural Review Board
- Joint Committee on the Redevelopment of Abandoned and Foreclosed Homes
- Public Transportation, Utilities and Waterways Review Board



ROBERT J. BAUMAN
ALDERMAN, 4TH DISTRICT

MEMBER

- Judiciary and Legislation Committee
- Public Works Committee
- Steering and Rules Committee
- Housing Trust Fund Advisory Board
- Transportation & Infrastructure Services (TIS) Committee of the National League of Cities
- Wisconsin Center District (Board Member)

Alderman Robert Bauman statement regarding the Historic Preservation Commission's recommendation to designate the Milwaukee Arena and Miller High Life Theater as Historic Sites

*Designation will ensure full transparency and require public input regarding
future development proposed for the sites*

November 3, 2025

Today, Milwaukee's Historic Preservation Commission voted unanimously to recommend to the Common Council that the Milwaukee Arena and Miller High Life Theater (former Milwaukee Auditorium) be designated as historic sites. This recommendation will be considered by the Common Council's Zoning, Neighborhoods and Development Committee in the coming weeks. The committee will then make a recommendation to the full Common Council.

Questions have been raised regarding whether historic designation will prevent the owner of the Arena and Miller High Life Theater (the Wisconsin Center District) from demolishing and redeveloping these two sites. The answer is **NO**.

Under Milwaukee's Historic Preservation Ordinance, historic designation **does not preclude demolition** but does require the property owner to seek a certificate of appropriateness ("COA") permitting demolition. An application for a demolition COA would first be heard by the Historic Preservation Commission. If the application is denied by the commission, the property owner can appeal that denial to the Common Council. That appeal would first be heard by the Zoning, Neighborhoods and Development Committee, which would then make a recommendation to the full Common Council.

The demolition COA process would provide for at least two opportunities for public hearings before both the Historic Preservation Commission and the Zoning, Neighborhoods and Development Committee thereby ensuring transparency and public input. Finally, the elected Common Council would make such a decision involving two iconic Milwaukee public buildings after hearing from stakeholders and the public.

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I support historic designation of the Arena and Miller High Life Theater because there is little doubt that both buildings qualify for historic designation under the criteria set forth in the Historic Preservation Ordinance. I also support a thorough and transparent review of any future plans to demolish or substantially modify these buildings which would be required under the Historic Preservation Ordinance as a result of designation. These two public buildings have been part of the city's built environment and have played critical roles in the civic life of Milwaukee for generations. Stakeholders and regular citizens should be able to weigh in on any future demolition plans. Historic designation ensures this would happen.

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