



WISCONSIN  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

August 29, 2017

Erik Brooks  
Miller Coors  
4251 State Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53208

Dear Erik,

The Wisconsin Historical Society conducted a tour of the Gettelman Brewery complex June 30, 2017 to assess the historic value of the four buildings and provide feedback to MillerCoors regarding potential reuse or relocation. Those present were Jim Draeger, State Historic Preservation Officer, Kelly Frawley, Director of Facilities Planning and Management, Dan Freas, Director of Old World Wisconsin, and Dan Stephans, Former Chief State Architect, State of Wisconsin. This letter is a summary of the Society's findings related to the Gettelman Brewery complex and a recommendation to consider relocation of the Gettelman farmhouse.

Due to its long brewing history and its continual industrial innovations, the Gettelman Brewery is significant to the history of brewing in Milwaukee. The remaining buildings on the MillerCoors campus represent portions of that story; other Gettelman Brewery buildings have been lost through expansion or renovation, which is typical of large industrial complexes. Of the remaining buildings, the most significant is the Gettelman farmhouse, which represents an early pioneering era of Wisconsin brewing. Very few buildings of that age still exist in Wisconsin and the farmhouse is uniquely able to tell the story of brewing in an era when entrepreneurs were brewing local beer from local ingredients for a local market.

Any possible reuse of the Gettelman buildings is complicated due to their location. It is unlikely the remaining buildings in the farmhouse cluster would be good candidates for residential reuse, and commercial reuse would likely be limited to businesses closely associated with MillerCoors.

Of the four Gettelman buildings in the complex, the farmhouse offers the greatest potential to be relocated. Its relatively small size and the fact that it remains in good condition suggest that the farmhouse could be moved, repurposed and preserved. Relocating any building is costly and logistically difficult, but it may represent a solution for all parties. The remaining buildings are likely too large to efficiently relocate and reuse.

The Society recommends that MillerCoors consider moving the Gettelman farmhouse in order to preserve a significant Wisconsin historic structure, celebrate both MillerCoors' and Gettelman's rich brewing histories, and increase the public presence of the farmhouse.

The farmhouse is largely intact and in generally good repair. It has significant historic fabric remaining and is in restorable condition. Window sashes have been removed (which were likely replacements given the age). The brick work is in good condition, showing limited signs of damage, poor repair, and some degradation of the brick in small areas.

If you have any additional questions or if I may be of further assistance, please contact me at (608) 264-6464 or [jim.draeger@wisconsinhistory.org](mailto:jim.draeger@wisconsinhistory.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Draeger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jim" and last name "Draeger" clearly distinguishable.

Jim Draeger  
State Historic Preservation Officer