

From: [Ursula Lord](#)
To: [Historic District Commission \(Staff\)](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL]DWS Outdoor Classrooms--Permanent Status Approval
Date: Wednesday, May 11, 2022 1:09:45 PM

Dear Historic District Commission of Detroit

Please approve our Outdoor classrooms for permanent status. My Name is Ursula Lord and I am a grades teacher at DWS, currently teaching 4th grade. I began teaching in the outdoor classrooms in the beginning of 3rd grade. For 2 school years now these outdoors have been a saving grace to our school and the Detroit community. These structures, so well designed as part of the exterior landscape, not only extend our educational environments but strongly support the community by hosting many community events and summer camps. Please consider that:

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- 1. The shelters are professionally designed and sited, built by parent volunteers with quality materials, and are an appropriate addition that integrates into the school's outdoor environment through the use of natural materials and transparency. Not a single tree or shrub was affected by the work, and important view corridors were carefully preserved.*
- 2. The property has always been a school, and like any other school, has always had an active, busy, and child-focused exterior landscape. The property has expanded and changed many times over the years to introduce new play equipment, welcome a larger student body, and fulfill our Detroit-based mission, and has never been frozen in time.*
- 3. The school takes great care in the maintenance of its exterior landscape, and has slowly transformed the former vacant lots on the east side of Burns into a beautiful enclave called Quietland. Though charming and beloved by our children, this is not a rigidly preserved historic landscape, nor is it either historically or currently a park-like setting, but instead is and will remain an active area for education, growth, and outdoor play.*
- 4. Waldorf is a school focused on developing children who are deeply connected to the natural world, as such these structures have become central to accomplishing our educational mission.*
- 5. The shelters have been well received in the community and have reflected well upon the school and the Indian Village Historic District both locally and in national media.*
- 6. The shelters have maintained the school's enrollment, and thus broadened its ability to serve the children of Detroit. The school offers robust accessible tuition programs, in which nearly half its students participate.*
- 7. The shelters have provided opportunities for community celebration, growth and engagement, through hosting of festivals, plays, day camps, scouting groups, garden tours, art shows, and many other activities that attract Detroiters to the district*

Please consider that these shelters have been an imperative expansion for a healthy continuation of educating our children and of fostering healthy community life. Not knowing what the future holds, what other health conditions or restrictions may befall our society, the shelters in the natural outdoor surroundings have proven to be physical and psychological life

savers.

Please approve these beautiful spaces for a permanent status.

With Gratitude,

Ursula Lord
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