

From: [Emily Linn](#)
To: [Historic District Commission \(Staff\)](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Email in support of the permanent approval of Detroit Waldorf School's Outdoor Structures
Date: Wednesday, May 11, 2022 1:11:22 PM

Dear members of the Detroit Historic District Commission,

I am writing to you in support of the permanent approval of the outdoor structures that have been erected by the Detroit Waldorf School School on its playfields fronting on Burns and Fischer streets.

I am a Detroit resident and own two retail stores in city (City Bird and Nest in Midtown), grew up in Detroit in Berry Subdivision near the Waldorf School, am an alumna of the school, and my children attend there currently.

In this regard I make the following points to you:

- The School has lovingly preserved its building and grounds for many years faithful to the historic Albert Kahn design. The property has always been a school and as such has always had an active and child-focussed exterior landscape. It has expanded and changed over the years to accommodate a larger student body or introduce new play equipment, while always staying true to the building and ground's historic aesthetic and the school's Detroit-based mission. As a former student at the school myself and as a current parent, I have observed this evolution over time.
- The School is focused on developing children who are deeply connected to the natural world, and as such the structures have become central to accomplishing this part of the School's educational mission. My own children have greatly benefited from their experience in nature at the school, throughout the pandemic and currently.
- The structures are beautiful, designed by professional architects and built by parent and faculty 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. No trees or shrubs were affected by the structures being built, and the open space has been enhanced for the School and the community. New plantings have been made to further enhance the landscape and the important view corridors were carefully preserved. The structures were built in response to the pandemic, but have become an important part of the School's programming as the pandemic has eased.
- 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.
- The structures 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. The New York Times published an article praising the structures.
- The structures have helped maintain the School's enrollment, and thus

broadened its ability to serve the children of Detroit. The School offers robust tuition assistance to nearly half of its students. The School has an active DEI initiative.

- The structures have provided opportunities for celebration, growth and engagement for and with the larger community and have been used for various festivals, plays, day camps, scouting groups, garden tours, art shows, and many other activities that attract visitors to the City.

I urge your support of the permanent approval of the structures. Thank you for your consideration.

Emily Linn

Emily Linn
(313) 445-0952

City Bird
www.citybirddetroit.com

Nest
www.nestdetroit.com

Belle Isle to 8 Mile
www.belleisleto8mile.com

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