



## Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report

### LIVING WITH HISTORY

**HPC meeting date: 6/12/2017**  
**Ald. Robert Bauman District: 4**  
**Staff reviewer: Tim Askin**  
**PTS #114262 CCF #170105**

**Property** 3215 W. STATE ST. Concordia Campus, Concordia Historic District

**Owner/Applicant** THE USA IN TRUST FOR FOREST      Mr. Chris Hau  
COUNTY POTAWATOMI      Quorum Architects, Inc.  
COMMUNITY      3112 W. Highland Blvd.  
WGEMA LEASING LLC      Milwaukee, WI 53208  
3215 W STATE ST #300      Phone: (414) 265-9265  
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**Proposal** Build a new playground for Woodlands East school on the vacated parcel located on the Southwest corner of W. State Street and N. 31st Street. The project will consist of a securely locked iron fence, natural materials playground, major landscaping with a raingarden, tree removal/trimming, noisemakers, black and white boards, and a half basketball court. The applicants also presumably intend to demolish the existing playground on the interior of the campus.

**Staff comments** The Potawatomi's tenant, Woodlands School East, desires a new and better playground with more natural light than their present one. This proposal abandons the existing playground in a dark corner of the interior campus and moves it out to the edge of the campus along State Street.

This has been approved by Department of City Development as a minor alteration to a Detailed Planned Development; therefore, any further discretionary review falls upon this Commission.

The implied intent to use natural materials for playground equipment and seating, as well as the enhancement of the existing natural context is satisfactory and meets guidelines, conditioned that there is no visible or exposed PT wood on site.

While not directly part of the Commission's purview, a neighboring single-family property owner has filed an objection to this application. Some of the owners concerns are easily addressed and one minor alteration already has a verbal commitment from the architects. That change is that the Chime and Bell play set located on the south fence facing the adjacent house would be better located on the north fence along State Street to reduce residential noise and as courtesy to the adjacent residence.

The applicant also intends to build the fence directly on the lot line, as is their right. Unfortunately, the neighboring property is also directly on the lot line and the fence would cause significant issues with maintenance access and potentially egress from bedroom windows. The majority of the house's service access and mechanicals are located on this side including gas and HVAC making maintenance highly difficult or impossible. Room must be left for ladder, scaffolding, and utility access.

Under Concordia new construction guideline C.1. Siting, "New construction must reflect the traditional siting of buildings in the district. This includes setbacks [and] spacing between buildings." Staff would therefore request that the Commission to require that the fence be moved north from the lot line to at least a distance of 6' from the outside wall of the house.

Staff also has significant reservations about the proposed safety grates on the school building facing the proposed basketball court in the to-be-converted loading dock driveway. While the grates proposed at the rear of the loading dock (north elevation) are set back enough from the street and below grade to be only a minor alteration, those on the school building itself are inappropriate and staff would recommend that the applicant present an option that is less damaging to the historic building both aesthetically and physically. Staff has no objection to the actual basketball court.

**Recommendation**

Recommend HPC Approval with conditions

**Conditions**

1. No exposed pressure-treated wood
2. Move chime and bell playset to State Street frontage
3. Present alternatives for safety glazing or security screens along the basketball court.
4. Move south fence line at least 6' from the side wall of the adjacent residence.

**Previous HPC action**

**Previous Council action**