

About ASWD

The Architectural Salvage Warehouse of Detroit (ASWD), a nonprofit salvage and resale organization, was started in response to the tremendous amount of waste being generated in the demolition of houses in Detroit and its suburbs. In 2004, over 2,600 housing units were demolished in Detroit and over 4,000 were demolished across Southeast Michigan. The US EPA estimates that only about 20 to 30 percent of Construction and Demolition debris is recovered for reuse and recycling.

ASWD decided on a mission to save what we could of our historic regional materials, to salvage perfectly good architectural materials and put them in the hands of those who can use them and to create jobs and training for those interested in learning the skills of deconstruction. Our earnings are to go to historic preservation projects that we initiate and in grants to other historic preservation organizations that we partner with in projects.

Locally, ASWD is pioneering the deconstruction process, which maximizes the diversion of materials from landfills by using a systematic process in which up to 85% of materials can be salvaged for reuse or recycling for a secondary use. ASWD's work conserves historic architectural components, energy, and material resources, while creating 'new jobs' at a ratio of 5 to 1 compared with demolition. ASWD provides training and employment opportunities for local residents. In our first few months of deconstruction operations, we have trained eleven deconstruction members, and partnered with Youth Build Detroit to expose dozens of young construction apprentices to the deconstruction process.

ASWD has expanded collaborations to Focus Hope, Wayne State University and The University of Detroit Mercy, School of Architecture to formalize training and educational partnerships to enrich the economic prospects of Detroit's youth and neighborhoods. In addition we operate a retail warehouse that is integrated into an emerging arts district in a heavily disinvested Detroit neighborhood. The warehouse facilitates local access to affordable building materials for the long-term residents, newly arrived young families, and local entrepreneurs that are revitalizing the neighborhoods that surround our warehouse. Through outreach and local press coverage we have expanded our customer base to all metro Detroit suburbs. Our work is at the nexus of environmental protection and urban economic empowerment.

We began outreach in 2003, educational speaking engagements in 2004, and deconstruction and resale in the spring of 2005. We are a young organization, but have built a large number of organizational relationships and have a growing list of supporters. WE hope that you will consider joining those supporters by becoming a member of ASWD, by donating materials to our warehouse, by volunteering in our warehouse or at deconstruction sites or by using our deconstruction or materials skimming services.

ASWD's work can play an important role in retaining and expanding the material wealth and environmental health of this community, enhancing local sustainability by conserving material resources and promoting economic development and job creation.