

Re: HDC2025-00243

Detroit Thermal Application to Perform Work in the Lafayette Park Historic District
(Extensive Excavation and Permanent Steam Line & Steam Stack Installation)

Commissioners of the City of Detroit Historic District Commission:

I am a resident of the Lafayette Park Historic District neighborhood and member-owner of the Joliet Townhouses Cooperative.

I am writing to state my strong opposition to Detroit Thermal's application for a project in the Lafayette Park Historic District. I oppose the proposed project because it would irrevocably damage my neighborhood's historic landscape, which is a central component of my neighborhood's designation as a local historic district and a National Historic Landmark.

The proposed project will cause a very significant adverse impact on their neighborhood, especially its historic landscape features. The project impact area is the very heart of our historic landscape and the beautiful, shaded community spaces envisioned nearly 70 years ago. There can be no doubt: the excavation required to install the steamline will kill and damage multiple mature trees. It will also destroy mature shrubs and planting beds. Detroit Thermal's characterization of this work as a "disturbance" that can be resolved with "restoration in-kind" is delusional. It took more than 60 years of time, investment, and stewardship for the landscape to become what it is today.

I am also concerned that the project will damage the historic character of our neighborhood in other ways, including by installing new steam vents and conducting deep excavation near the foundations of our historic homes. The plans submitted for this project by Detroit Thermal demonstrate its lack of understanding and respect for my neighborhood's historic status. The manner in which they have performed work to date further confirms my concerns. I have no confidence that the impact on our historic neighborhood was considered in the development of these plans.

I am asking that the Detroit Historic District Commission reject Detroit Thermal's application, its current form, to prevent it from irreparably harming our historic neighborhood. I encourage the Commissioners to press Detroit Thermal to evaluate alternatives and justify why the residents of Lafayette Park Historic District and the historic resources of the district should bear the cost of any project that so clearly prioritizes cost-effectiveness over the needs of our community and the resources that we, as a community, have protected and stewarded for decades.

Sincerely,

Eunice Yu
1401 Joliet