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May 12, 2025

Detroit Historic District Commission  
Planning and Development Department  
Coleman A. Young Municipal Center  
2 Woodward Avenue, Suite 808  
Detroit, MI 48226

Dear City of Detroit Historic District Commissioners,

I am a resident of the Lafayette Park Historic District neighborhood. 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 National Historic Landmark designation.

I moved to Lafayette Park from Flint in 2019. After viewing several houses in and around Detroit, my family chose to live in the Nicolet Townhouse Cooperative in Lafayette Park. We chose our house because it afforded us a rare opportunity to live in a historic park in the city of Detroit. The landscape was the greatest factor in our decision to move to Lafayette Park.

The project proposed by Detroit Thermal would generate a significant adverse effect on the historic landscape of my neighborhood. This is an understatement. The project will kill and damage mature trees that define our historic landscape, shrubs and planting beds. The project plans to convert the most sensitive and most beloved portion of our historic landscape into a work site. The courtyard where my husband and I took our wedding photos, where children play, and where generations of families have gathered is planned to serve as a staging area for heavy equipment and materials. Project plans acknowledge damage to the landscape as the entire area is labeled as "disturbance" with "restoration in-kind." This area is the jewel of our historic landscape. This is not the only area of our historic landscape that will be damaged. A smaller section, located near Lafayette Avenue, that also contains mature trees, shrubs and plantings is also identified as "disturbance" with "restoration in-kind." Our 60-year-old landscape cannot be "restored." It took 60 years of time, investment, and stewardship to become what it is today. Detroit Thermal's plan to damage the historic landscape with a promise of replanting it shows a core lack of comprehension of historic preservation.

The plans submitted for this project by Detroit Thermal demonstrate its lack of understanding and respect for my neighborhood's historic status. This lacking is also demonstrated by Detroit Thermal's work to date in my neighborhood. These plans were developed with no input or

engagement from me or my neighborhood. Detroit Thermal has been working in my neighborhood for more than seven months. During that time, it has cut down most of a mature magnolia tree, damaged shrubs and flowers, and has refused to meet with me and/or provide information to my neighborhood in response to our concerns.

I am also concerned that the project could 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. I have no confidence that the impact on our historic neighborhood was considered by Detroit Thermal in the development of its plans.

I am asking that the Detroit Historic District Commission reject Detroit Thermal's application to prevent it from irreparably harming our historic neighborhood.

Thank you kindly for your time and your commitment to serving the residents of Detroit and preserving the city's historic places.

Sincerely,

Natalie Pruett