

From: meredithsimpson@me.com
To: [Historic District Commission \(Staff\)](#)
Cc: [CouncilMemberSheffield](#); [Bruce Simpson](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Detroit Thermal Application in the Lafayette Park Historic District
Date: Tuesday, May 6, 2025 5:43:19 PM

Dear City of Detroit Historic District Commissioners,

I am a resident of the Lafayette Park Historic District neighborhood, writing here to express my opposition to Detroit Thermal's application for their destructive utility project running through the heart of 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 our National Historic Landmark designation.

The proposed project would severely damage and/or kill mature trees, shrubs and perennial plantings that define our historic landscape. The project plans to convert the most sensitive and most beloved portion of our landscape into a work site. 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 and is many decades old. I have attached a couple of images to provide a visual reference. And this is not the only area that will be damaged. A smaller section, located near Lafayette Avenue, that also contains mature trees and shrubs will be irreparably harmed. Our over 60-year-old landscape cannot be "restored." It took decades of patience, investment and stewardship to become what it is today—a sanctuary in the heart of our city.

The plans submitted for this project by Detroit Thermal demonstrate its lack of understanding and respect for this neighborhood's historic status. In fact, Detroit Thermal has been working in our neighborhood without HDC approval 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 us and/or provide information to our co-op boards in response to concerns. They have left equipment, fencing and debris idle and unsupervised for months on end. 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 mid-century homes.

I am asking that you please reject Detroit Thermal's application to prevent it from irreparably harming our historic neighborhood.

Thank you very much for your time, and your commitment to preserving this city's historic places.

Sincerely,

Meredith Simpson
1352 Nicolet Pl., Detroit



