

From: [Seth Saeugling](#)
To: [Historic District Commission \(Staff\)](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Opposition to Detroit Thermal's Application – Lafayette Park Historic District
Date: Tuesday, May 6, 2025 1:13:10 PM

Dear Commissioners of the Detroit Historic District Commission,

I am a resident of the Lafayette Park Historic District, and I am writing to express my firm opposition to Detroit Thermal's proposed project within our neighborhood. The project poses an irreversible threat to the historic landscape that is a core element of Lafayette Park's National Historic Landmark designation.

The anticipated damage to our historic landscape is severe. Mature trees, shrubs, and long-standing plantings that give our neighborhood its unique character will be destroyed. The project specifically targets the most treasured section of our landscape for use as a construction site, an area clearly labeled "disturbance" with promises of "restoration in-kind." However, such restoration is impossible; our landscape's character is the product of six decades of growth, care, and dedication — it cannot simply be replaced.

Moreover, another portion near Lafayette Avenue—also rich with mature vegetation—is similarly marked for disturbance. The cumulative impact would significantly undermine the integrity of our historic environment.

Detroit Thermal's submitted plans reflect a fundamental disregard for the importance of our historic designation. Their prior work in the neighborhood further demonstrates this: over seven months, they have removed the majority of a mature magnolia tree, damaged other plantings, and declined to meaningfully engage or provide information to residents, despite multiple requests.

Additionally, I am deeply concerned that the installation of new steam vents and the undertaking of deep excavations near the foundations of historic homes will further compromise the neighborhood's character. The lack of consideration for these risks in the project's planning is evident.

For these reasons, I urge the Detroit Historic District Commission to reject Detroit Thermal's application in order to protect the historic and cultural fabric of our community.

Thank you for your attention and for your ongoing efforts to safeguard Detroit's historic neighborhoods.

Sincerely,
[Member Name]
[Member Address]
[Member Phone Number]

Version 2:

Re: Strong Opposition to Detroit Thermal's Proposed Work in Lafayette Park Historic District

Dear Detroit Historic District Commissioners,

As a resident of Lafayette Park Historic District, I am writing to voice my strong opposition to Detroit Thermal's application for proposed work in our neighborhood. The project, if approved, would cause irreparable harm to the historic landscape — a defining feature of our National Historic Landmark designation.

The extent of the potential damage cannot be overstated. The project would destroy mature trees, shrubs, and planting beds that have been carefully maintained over the past 60 years. The most delicate and cherished area of our historic landscape is designated as a "disturbance" zone with a vague promise of "restoration in-kind" — an unrealistic proposal, as the unique landscape we enjoy today took decades of growth and stewardship to achieve.

In addition, a separate section near Lafayette Avenue, home to more mature plantings, is also slated for disturbance. These actions would result in profound and lasting harm to the integrity of our neighborhood's historic character.

Detroit Thermal's plans reveal a troubling disregard for the significance of our historic status. This disregard is evident not only in the current proposal but also in Detroit Thermal's conduct over the past several months: they have removed much of a mature magnolia tree, damaged surrounding landscaping, and have consistently refused to meet with residents or address our concerns despite repeated outreach.

Beyond the landscape destruction, I am concerned about other serious risks — including the introduction of new steam vents and the risk posed by deep excavations near historic foundations. It is clear these threats were not adequately considered in Detroit Thermal's planning.

I respectfully request that the Detroit Historic District Commission deny this application to protect the irreplaceable historic landscape and spirit of Lafayette Park.

Thank you for your dedication to Detroit's historic communities and for your thoughtful consideration of this matter.

Thank you,

Seth

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