From: Mathew Leedee
To: Historic District Commission (Staff)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Opposition to Detroit Thermal's Proposed Project – Lafayette Park Historic District
Date: Tuesday, May 6, 2025 6:11:07 PM

Dear Members of the Detroit Historic District Commission,

I am a resident of the Lafayette Park Historic District and am writing to express my deep concern and strong opposition to Detroit Thermal's application for work within our historic neighborhood. Their proposed project threatens to permanently damage the historic landscape that is vital to our community's National Historic Landmark status.

The project would cause major disruption to our irreplaceable landscape. Mature trees, shrubs, and long-established planting beds — the elements that give Lafayette Park its historic character — are at serious risk. The plans call for construction in the most sensitive and cherished areas of our neighborhood, labeling them "disturbance" zones with a promise of "restoration in-kind." However, it is impossible to recreate a landscape that has developed over 60 years through natural growth and community stewardship.

This is not limited to one site. Another significant area near Lafayette Avenue, equally rich in historic plantings, is also marked for disturbance. The cumulative loss would alter the historic fabric of Lafayette Park beyond repair.

Detroit Thermal's submitted plans — and their prior actions — demonstrate a disregard for the historic significance of our neighborhood. Over the past seven months, they have damaged our environment by removing much of a mature magnolia tree, harming shrubs and flowers, and consistently refusing requests for communication and engagement with residents.

Further, I am concerned about the potential installation of new steam vents and deep excavation work near the foundations of our historic homes, introducing additional risks that appear to have been overlooked in the planning process.

Given the serious and irreversible threats to our historic district, I respectfully urge the Commission to reject Detroit Thermal's application.

Thank you for your attention and for your dedication to protecting Detroit's historic neighborhoods.