

From: [Lily Mendoza](#)
To: [Historic District Commission \(Staff\)](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Detroit Thermal Application in the Lafayette Park Historic District
Date: Wednesday, May 7, 2025 12:06:49 AM

Dear City of Detroit Historic District Commissioners:

I am a resident of the Lafayette Park Historic District neighborhood and I am writing to register my unequivocal opposition to Detroit Thermal's application for a project in the Lafayette Park Historic District. If approved, the proposed project threatens to cause irreparable damage to our neighborhood's historic landscape—a feature central to its National Historic Landmark designation.

Not only will the proposed project kill and damage mature trees that define the area's historic landscape (including the shrubs and community garden that will likewise be adversely impacted), it also plans to convert the most sensitive and most beloved portion of our historic landscape into a work site. This area is the jewel of our historic landscape. And this is not the only area of our historic landscape that is under threat of damage. Project plans acknowledging the damage, placed a designation on the entire area as “disturbance” with “restoration in-kind.” Included in this identified area is a smaller section, located near Lafayette Avenue, that also contains mature trees, shrubs and plantings. I cannot emphasize enough that our 60-year-old landscape is not one that can simply be “restored” after being irreparably harmed. It took 60 years for the trees and the shrubs and all the other plant beings to take root and establish themselves in this historic landscape making the place what it is today; "restoration in-kind" is simply presumptuous and displays the lack of regard for the land's integrity and ancestral memory.

The plans submitted for this project by Detroit Thermal demonstrate its lack of understanding and respect for our neighborhood's historic status. In the first place, these plans were developed with no input whatsoever or engagement from the residents of the affected community. Detroit Thermal has been working in our 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 the residents and/or provide information in response to our concerns.

Quite apart from the aforementioned concerns, I fear that the project could also 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. It doesn't appear that any consideration at all was given to how such highly-impactful construction activities might impact the historic character of our neighborhood.

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,

Lily Mendoza
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