

From: [Perkinson, James](#)
To: [Historic District Commission \(Staff\)](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Lafayette Park Historic District Application from Detroit Thermal
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:14:38 PM

Re: Detroit Thermal Application in the Lafayette Park Historic District

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. The proposed project would irrevocably damage my neighborhood's historic landscape, which is a central component of my neighborhood's National Historic Landmark designation.

The project would generate a significant adverse effect on the historic landscape of my neighborhood. This is an understatement. It will kill and damage mature trees that define our historic landscape, shrubs and planting beds while converting the most sensitive and most beloved portion of our historic 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. The project would additionally target a smaller section, located near Lafayette Avenue, that also contains mature trees, shrubs and plantings that is also identified as a "disturbance" area promising "restoration in-kind." But our 60-year-old landscape cannot be "restored." It took 60 years of time, investment, and stewardship to become what it is today.

What all of this demonstrates is Detroit Thermal's lack of understanding and respect for my neighborhood's historic status. That "lack" is reinforced 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.

My opposition to the project is amplified by further concerns over damage resulting from the installation of new steam vents and the proposed deep excavations near the foundations of our historic homes. I have no confidence that the impact on our historic neighborhood was considered in the development of these plans.

In consequence, I strongly beseech the Detroit Historic District Commission to 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,

Dr. James W. Perkinson

1341 Nicolet Place
313-673-2143

--

James W. Perkinson
Professor of Social Ethics,

Ecumenical Theological Seminary
Special Lecturer in Communication Studies,

Oakland University

<https://www.palgrave.com/us/book/9781403967862>

Shamanism, Racism, and Hip-Hop Culture

<https://www.palgrave.com/us/book/9781403965844>

White Theology: Outing Supremacy in Modernity

<https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9783030149970>

Political Spirituality for a Century of Water Wars

<https://www.palgrave.com/us/book/9781137332271>

Messianism Against Christology: Resistance Movements, Folks Arts, and Empire

<https://www.palgrave.com/us/book/9781137507006>

Political Spirituality in an Age of Eco-Apocalypse

<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-59471-7>

Political Spirituality in the Face of Climate Collapse

Of Monsters, Megaliths, Mules, and Muck

I acknowledge the Traditional Peoples on whose land I now work and live: the Ojibwa, Ottawa, and the Potawatomi and later Wendet/Huron