

From: [Biljana Lanier](#)
To: [Historic District Commission \(Staff\)](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] DENY Detroit Thermal application in the Lafayette Park Historic District
Date: Saturday, May 10, 2025 12:45:20 PM
Attachments: [IMG_5229.mov](#)

Dear City of Detroit Historic District Commissioners,

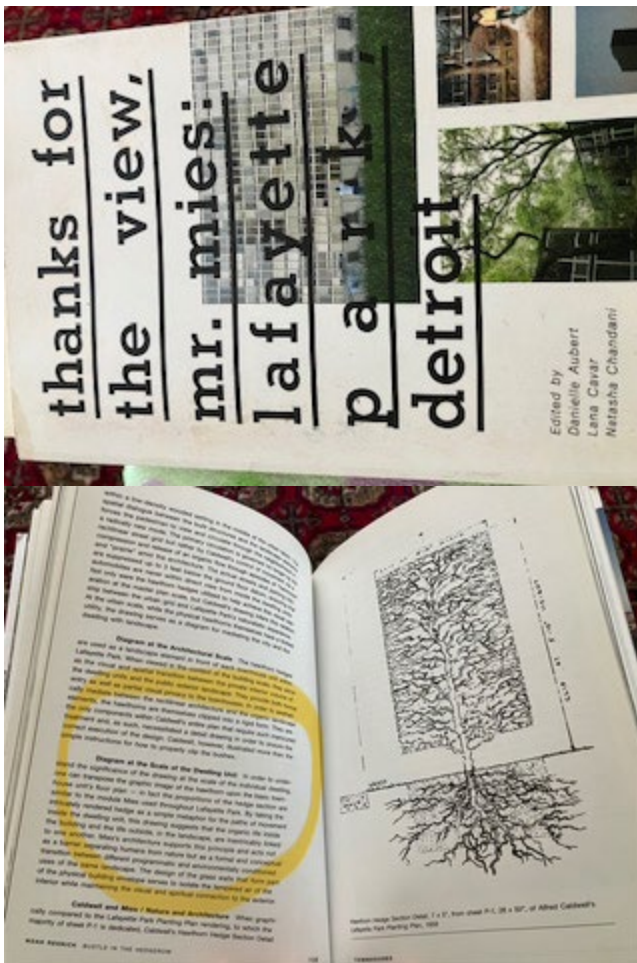
I am a resident of the Lafayette Park Historic District neighborhood. I am writing to state my strong opposition to Detroit Thermal's application for a project in the Lafayette Park Historic District. I oppose the proposed project because it would irrevocably damage my neighborhood's historic landscape, which took 60 years to mature in this current state and which is a central component of my neighborhood's National Historic Landmark designation.

The proposed project would generate a significant adverse effect on the historic landscape of my neighborhood. This is an understatement. The project will KILL and damage mature trees that define our historic landscape, shrubs and planting beds. The project plans to convert 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. This is not the only area of our historic landscape that will be damaged. A smaller section, located near Lafayette Avenue, that also contains mature trees, shrubs and plantings is also identified as "disturbance" with "restoration in-kind." Our 60-year-old landscape cannot be "restored." It took 60 years of time, investment, and stewardship to become what it is today.

"Restoration in kind" will be a few pieces of grass turf and a few perennial plants? What about damage that shows possibly months or even years later (which, based on arborist's estimate is inevitable to happen, given the scope of this project)?? I am sure, based on current behavior and disregard of Detroit Thermal, the "kindness "will be long forgotten by then!

The plans submitted for this project by Detroit Thermal demonstrate its lack of understanding and respect for my neighborhood's historic status. This lacking is also demonstrated 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 eight months, misrepresenting the size, scope, and schedule of the project, performing work without required permits, abandoning construction fencing and materials for over eight months, and refusing to share plans or talk to our community. 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.

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 homes. I have no confidence that the impact on our historic neighborhood was considered in the development of these plans.



This horticultural jewel can not be repaired with “restoration in kind” in a quick and thoughtless fix. This is just a small illustration what it took to plan and design this park. Many others surely exist in your on archives.

Detroit Thermal was not even aware(as they claimed) of the historical classification of this park. That tells us who we are dealing with.

Residents of 1300 Lafayette were not aware how the project was to be executed. They were sold the **cheapest plan** and they accepted without realizing that good price for them comes at the expense of their neighbors and their property, as well as the whole community, given the **significance of this park for local residents (including the residents of 1300 Lafayette) and City of Detroit which was recently classified as Michelin Travel Guide at the 3 star level-in which Lafayette Park was certainly featured as architectural and horticultural significant site to visit.**

I am asking that the Detroit Historic District Commission reject Detroit Thermal’s application to prevent it from irreparably harming our historic neighborhood, consequence of which span far beyond “few bushes down and some grass damage” as Detroit thermal is trying to cleverly present, deliberately omitting details and scope of the project, that even they may not know at this point, as it involves “exploratory digs” to assess the state of old underground pipes .In fact, that was the only comment given to curios local residents once they dug through our precious park and playground last summer, then left the mess behind without any , ANY explanation! Picture enclosed.



This is a picture/video of would-be the entrance to the construction zone, which would involve bringing and parking very heavy equipment, truck, concrete for cementing the pipes after the connection underground is established, and **potentially do it all over again in the future, if any problems arise (which they inevitably do when construction is done anywhere).** **Similar damage would be done across between building 15 of Nicolet Coop and coming from the middle of Lafayette park, which is beyond our own grounds and ventures into the city property.** **What restoration in kind is possible to this damage? There must be another way to placing steam pipes and release vents under the streets, where they belong.**

Thank you kindly for your time and your commitment to serving the residents of Detroit and preserving the city's historic places.

Sincerely,

Biljana Lanier
1416 Nicolet Place
Detroit
504-458-5212