

From: [Anthony Ross](#)
To: [Historic District Commission \(Staff\)](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Detroit Thermal Application in the Lafayette Park Historic District
Date: Monday, May 12, 2025 7:14:19 PM

Dear City of Detroit Historic District Commissioners,

I am a resident of the Lafayette Park Historic District neighborhood and an SOI-qualified historian with 8+ years of experience in the historic preservation field.

I am writing to state my strong opposition to Detroit Thermal's application for a project in the Lafayette Park Historic District.

As you know, Lafayette Park is a special place. Visitors come from around the world to see this unique collection of modern architecture. And the community has been vigilant in maintaining the district's integrity.

All of which is why the neighborhood has obtained special National Historic Landmark status, as one of a select group of historic properties that represent an outstanding aspect of American history and culture.

As a historian and a Detroiter, I am shocked by the possibility that this project could proceed, irrevocably diminishing the district's integrity as well as the city's architectural legacy.

We deserve a thorough review process, consideration of alternatives, and consultation regarding minimization and avoidance efforts. These efforts should be led by qualified professionals and shaped by community input.

Whether you're an architectural historian or just someone who takes a stroll through Lafayette Park, you know that the landscape is a central component of what makes this place significant. It is just as important as the steel and bricks that comprise the structures.

The significance of modernist minimalism is inextricable from its natural setting. As Mies van der Rohe said, "We must beware not to disrupt [nature]... we should attempt to bring nature, houses, and human beings together into a higher unity."

Detroit Thermal does not seem to understand this. They have already cut down most of a mature magnolia tree, damaged shrubs and flowers, and refused to provide information to my neighborhood in response to our concerns.

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,

Anthony Ross, Ph.D.
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