

From: [Milana Duthie](#)
To: [Historic District Commission \(Staff\)](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Lafayette Park Historic District Application from Detroit Thermal
Date: Monday, May 12, 2025 10:55:26 PM

Dear City of Detroit Historic District Commissioners,

I am writing as a resident of the Lafayette Park Historic District to express my vehement opposition to Detroit Thermal's application for infrastructure installation within our historic neighborhood. This project threatens the very foundation of our National Historic Landmark designation and has been developed without any community input or consideration.

The proposed project would cause devastating and permanent damage to our historic landscape. Detroit Thermal plans to convert our central landscape area—the crown jewel of our community—into a massive construction site requiring deep excavation through extensive portions of our cooperative's grounds. This area contains more than 40 mature trees (some 60 years old), carefully cultivated shrubs, perennial gardens, our sprinkler system, and sections of our playground.

Project plans euphemistically label these areas as "disturbance" with "restoration in-kind," but this grossly minimizes the reality. Our 60-year-old landscape cannot be "restored" after such invasive work. The mature trees that define our historic character cannot be replaced—they represent six decades of growth, investment, and dedicated stewardship. Once destroyed, this living historic fabric is lost forever, potentially jeopardizing our historic designation status.

Detroit Thermal has demonstrated a troubling disregard for our historic designation throughout this process:

- They developed these plans with zero engagement from our community despite the significant impact on our property.
- They have already been working in our neighborhood for over seven months, during which time they have damaged a mature magnolia tree, destroyed shrubs and flowers, and consistently refused to address our concerns or meet with residents.
- Their current application shows no understanding of the historic significance of our landscape or the irreversible consequences of their proposed excavation.

I am deeply concerned about additional threats to our historic integrity, including the installation of new steam vents and the potential structural impact of deep excavation near the foundations of our historic homes. This infrastructure is being installed not to benefit our community, but to provide utility cost-savings to another building outside our property.

I strongly urge the Detroit Historic District Commission to reject Detroit Thermal's application to prevent irreparable harm to our nationally recognized historic neighborhood. This project, if permitted, would permanently destroy elements of our landscape that cannot be recreated or replaced at any cost.

Thank you for your dedication to preserving Detroit's historic treasures and for your consideration of our community's concerns.

Sincerely,

Milana Duthie
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