

**From:** [Rob & Sally Ferree](#)  
**To:** [Historic District Commission \(Staff\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Sally Ferree](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Detroit Thermal Application in the Lafayette Park Historic District  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 13, 2025 1:30:37 PM

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May 13, 2025

Dear City of Detroit Historic District Commissioners;

As members of the Lafayette Park Historic District neighborhood, we have accepted responsibility to protect the integrity of the National Historic Landmark (NHL) designation of Lafayette Park/Mies Van der Rohe Historic District. It is the combined structures and landscape (now matured) that define this community and give it historic significance. It is our observation that the owners of the 186 units within the Lafayette Park townhouses and courthouses chose to reside here because of its significant and unique historic combination of community, structural architecture and landscape architectural design. In addition, there are those living in 584 residential units in each of the two Lafayette Towers, plus those living in the more than 300 units of Lafayette Pavilion included in the NHL footprint. All residents have a vested interest in continuing to support this planned NHL community. As such, I reject the proposed construction plans submitted by Detroit Thermal that do not fully and sympathetically address the inherent disruption, disturbance and destruction of this remarkable and national historically significant community.

The Detroit Thermal project, as proposed, should **not** proceed. DT has received nine violations (work performed without approval) in regard to this project from the City of Detroit Historic District Commission within the past two months, since March 17, 2025. DT must clear (resolve) all violations with the City of Detroit prior to proceeding with a project to provide steam to the 1300 Lafayette Building. Should DT choose to submit a revised plan, we believe at a minimum, that a detailed Construction Management Plan needs to be created to address the following issues to maintain preservation of Lafayette Park's NHL designation:

- <!--[if !supportLists]-->1) Laydown and equipment disturbance areas confined only to paved areas within the NHL footprint
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->2) Low impact construction techniques using hydroexcavation, lateral borings and/or hand-shovel excavations with overhead cranes to move heavy equipment and material from paved areas to piping placement sites
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->3) Minimization of disturbance areas to avoid damages to roots and plantings of mature specimen trees and shrubs within the NHL footprint
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->4) Daytime work only on weekdays, consistent with and sensitive to residential contractor constraints
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->5) Detailed landscape and hardscape restoration design plan consistent with the NHL designation and original Alfred Caldwell design
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->6) Placement of steam vent pipes outside of NHL footprint to prevent revocation of NHL status and thoughtful redesign of the steam vent pipes consistent with the original architectural designs
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->7) Detailed timeline and workday time restrictions (e.g., weekdays from 8 AM to 5 PM only) for excavation, construction and full restoration of paved areas and NHL designed landscapes
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->8) Detailed communication plan that combine spokespersons

from 1300 Lafayette (the Detroit Thermal client), DT, and Lafayette Park members/owners that specify communication methods and public meetings on a regular basis throughout the project timeline

<!--[if !supportLists]-->9) Provide long term financial assurance to protect restoration of NHL status for structures, landscape and hardscape in accordance with detailed plans provided by AIA licensed architects, urban planners and landscape architects consistent with the Mies Van Der Rohe building design, Ludwig Hilberseimer urban design and Alfred Caldwell landscape architecture designs and to ensure the replacement of damaged mature trees well after the completion of the DT project

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

Sincerely,

Rob and Sally Ferree

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