

From: [Drew Johnson](#)
To: [Historic District Commission \(Staff\)](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Lafayette Park Historic District Application from Detroit Thermal
Date: Tuesday, May 13, 2025 12:54:31 PM

May 13, 2025

Dear City of Detroit Historic District Commissioners,

I live in the Lafayette Park Historic District neighborhood. I am writing because I strongly oppose Detroit Thermal's application for a project in the Lafayette Park Historic District. I oppose the proposed project because it would carelessly destroy my neighborhood's historic landscape, which is as much a part of Lafayette Park's National Historic Landmark designation as the buildings that my neighbors and I live in.

Every day, I walk among the shared landscape of my neighborhood. The area affected by the proposal is a main pedestrian area. I walk my dog and watch the seasons change. I do not exaggerate when I say that every day, I am grateful for all the time and effort and resources that former and current residents have dedicated to keeping this place as beautiful as its architects intended it to be. I love that this beautiful place is not accessible only to us, but to the people of Detroit. The proposed project would not only tear through the place my neighbors and I call home but would do lasting harm to one of the city's singular and beloved places. In the short term, the area affected by the proposal will become an unusable work site. The longer-term effects are more troubling. The project will kill and damage mature trees and plants. Despite the proposal's mention of "restoration in-kind," our 60-year-old landscape cannot be "restored." Historical preservation is not simply a matter of going out and buying some new plants. There is no in-kind replacement for the many, many years of care, resources, and attention that have made the greenspace and the neighborhood of Lafayette Park what it is today.

The plans submitted for this project by Detroit Thermal show a lack of understanding and respect for my neighborhood's historic status. This is borne out in Detroit Thermal's work on the project so far. The work was sprung on the neighborhood, with no input or engagement from me or my neighbors. Detroit Thermal has been working here for more than seven months. During that time, it has already done significant damage to a mature tree, damaged shrubs and flowers, and has refused to adequately address the neighborhood's concerns. Given Detroit Thermal's lack of appropriate care for this historic site, I am concerned about the possibility that the project could cause other lasting damage. Deep excavation in the proposed area has the potential to affect the foundations of the neighborhood's historic homes, and important infrastructure. I have no confidence that these potential impacts were sufficiently considered in the development of these plans.

I am asking that the Detroit Historic District Commission honor the neighborhood's stewardship and reject Detroit Thermal's application.

Thank you for your time and your service to the residents of Detroit and the city's historic places.

Sincerely,

Andrew Johnson
1344 Joliet Pl.