

**From:** [Ben Colman](#)  
**To:** [Historic District Commission \(Staff\)](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Lafayette Park Historic District Application from Detroit Thermal  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 13, 2025 10:09:45 PM

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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 is central to our 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.

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 seven months. 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.

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,

Benjamin Colman

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