



Outlook

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**[EXTERNAL] Lafayette Park Opposition to Detroit Thermal's revised plan**

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**From** Susannah Goodman <goodman.susannah@gmail.com>**Date** Fri 6/27/2025 3:25 PM**To** Historic District Commission (Staff) <hdc@detroitmi.gov>

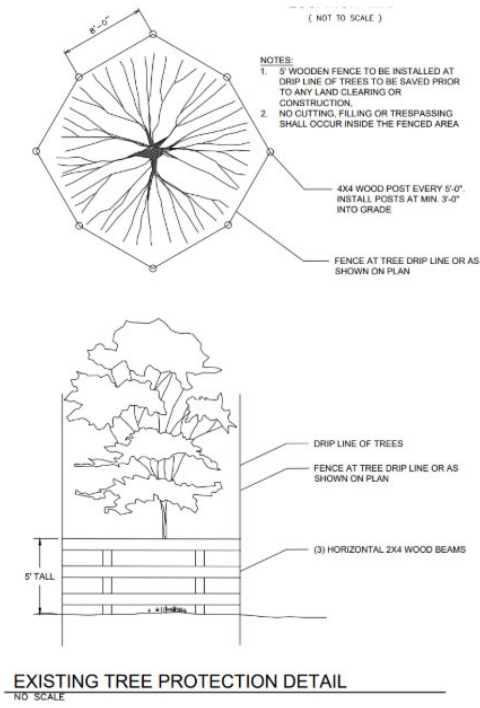
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Lafayette Park Opposition to Detroit Thermal's revised plan.pdf;

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 a central component of my neighborhood's National Historic Landmark designation. While the new plans from Detroit Thermal seem better, I have further concerns based on what has been submitted and our experience with Detroit Thermal thus far in the process.

First, there seems to be some internal inconsistency with their tree protection plan. This excavation may do irreparable harm to our mature canopy trees. Based on their arborist's recommendations, there should be protection from compaction within the drip-line of the canopy trees. However, the canopy shade patterns demonstrate that drip-line protection would exclude the entire excavation area.



Tree protection detail from Detroit Thermal's plans

View of canopy from inside the proposed excavation area

Second, they have removed the steam vents from the plan which had previously been identified as necessary for safety. The plan as submitted does not address the issue of burn danger from at-grade manhole covers. In light of the recent class action lawsuit against Detroit Thermal from burn victims in nearby Downtown, it is my hope that the HDC can inquire about the safety of these systems to residents. I have two young, curious children who touch everything in the landscape - I fear for their safety in the context of these new plans.

Third, I have significant doubts that the commitments made by Detroit Thermal in these plans as submitted will be adhered to. Detroit Thermal has abandoned work sites all over the city, including in our own neighborhood. Who will make sure the tree protection plan is adhered to? Who will make sure they fulfill their commitment to return the landscape to its current state? A community benefits process would create a binding document. Please ask them to sign a binding document with the HDC to ensure they follow-through on whatever plan is ultimately approved.

Finally, I find it deeply disturbing that Detroit Thermal has misled the residents at 1300 Lafayette so often and substantively. They sold the 1300 Co-operative a plan they did not have the rights or approvals to execute. They have evaded and shut down community engagement. They are the local face of a multinational utility corporation - they should not even be speaking as the "owners" of the property in this HDC approval process. This is not a NIMBY story, it's one of a multinational utility company steam-rolling neighborhoods' genuine concerns for safety and historic protections. Let's not set a precedent that allows them to do so without accountability.

I am asking that the Detroit Historic District Commission reject Detroit Thermal's application, which is not historically appropriate, to prevent it from irreparably harming the Lafayette Park Historic District. Thank you for your support in this matter.

Susannah Goodman

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Susannah Goodman