

Dear City of Detroit Historic District Commissioners,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Detroit Thermal's application for a construction project in the Lafayette Park Historic District.

I have been a resident of the Lafayette Park Historic District neighborhood for decades. My wife and I have two amazing daughters who were born and raised here (and went to Chrysler School!) and are now adults. We were here before the neighborhood was designated a Historic District by the City of Detroit. Since then, it's been placed on the National Register of Historic Places and designated a National Historic Landmark. As you know, National Historic Landmark status is very rare and prestigious. This neighborhood is one of the most architecturally and historically significant places in the country and attracts visitors from all over the world.

The landscaping of the Mies van der Rohe Townhouses and Courthouses is a critical and integral element of its historic designation. The landscape, designed by world famous landscape architect Alfred Caldwell, is spectacular and has stood the test of time. The most significant and beautiful part of this landscape is the honey locust canopy. These trees have been lovingly nurtured by the residents of our community for over 60 years, and it shows. If you have not been here in person, I urge you to take a walk through the neighborhood. You will be blown away. Just yesterday, I had friends here from Berkeley California, famous for its many beautiful trees, including coastal redwoods. My friends commented that our tree canopy was "like paradise."

I urge you to keep this in mind when making your decision: Every one of the honey locusts is precious, and irreplaceable. The loss of even one of these trees would irreparably harm the historic character of the district. And the negative impact on property values throughout the neighborhood, including 1300 Lafayette, would be significant. Ask Detroit Thermal: are they willing to make a binding promise to indemnify and hold harmless our neighborhood from any damage to our historic landscape?

Detroit Thermal's latest application is inaccurate and incomplete. There are many mature trees that are missing, mislabeled, or mischaracterized as smaller than they are. *And nowhere does Detroit Thermal even try to address the long-term threat to these trees posed by having extremely hot steam pipes in close proximity to the tree roots.* This is a real threat. When Chrysler School was still using the steam utility, it was easy to see where the steam pipes ran underground in the Lafayette Plaisance Park because when it snowed, the snow melted above the pipes, revealing green straight lines while everything else was white and snow covered. I witnessed this myself many winters.

I sympathize with the need for our neighbors at 1300 Lafayette to have a permanent solution to their heating problem. But they were misled by Detroit Thermal, who promised an unrealistically cheap solution while ignoring the very real and very high costs to our historic neighborhood. In the process, they have created a rift between neighbors. Here, the cheap solution is not the best solution. There are alternate solutions – with realistic costs -- that must be explored.

Finally, Detroit Thermal promised in writing to this Commission that it would meet with representatives of the four Mies cooperatives before making its latest submission, but reneged on that promise. They have shown that they cannot be trusted.

I urge you to reject Detroit Thermal's application.

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

Sincerely

John Canzano

1330 Joliet Place.