



[EXTERNAL] Detroit Thermal Application in the Lafayette Park Historic District

From Dan Wiest <dfwiest@comcast.net>

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To Historic District Commission (Staff) <hdc@detroitmi.gov>

Dear City of Detroit Historic District Commissioners,

I'm sure you have received more than a few emails with similar templates. While I concur with the template provided, I would like to emphasize the at best spotty reputation of Detroit Thermal. Please take anything they submit with a grain of salt. Their initial claims on the project were that the work would be pretty straight forward with little disruption to the neighborhood. While I realize there are always discoveries as work progresses, there was little or no communication with the neighborhood until the recent stop-work order forced their hand. The recent presentation at the DHC community meeting was last minute, amateurish, and insincere. I have witnessed more than a few projects that promised little disruption only to have constant repairs done that interfere with community life for the long-term. This is not what I wish upon my fellow co-op members who are immediately adjacent to the site. I am not sure if this is the type of consideration that falls within your purview. If it is, please include it in your decision.

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.

The proposed project would generate a significant adverse effect on the historic landscape of my neighborhood. Detroit Thermal acknowledges that the project will kill and damage mature trees, shrubs, and planting beds that define our landscape. The project plans to convert the most sensitive and most beloved portion of our historic landscape into a work site. The work area impacts dozens of mature trees, dozens of shrubs, countless flowers and ground-covering plants, and raised beds that makeup our community garden. Detroit Thermal's plans fail to provide adequate tree protection. Detroit Thermal's own plans identify 47 mature trees in the project area and propose removing mature trees, shrubs, and raised beds in our community garden.

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. Despite promising to meet with our neighborhood after the public hearing on May 14th, Detroit Thermal developed and submitted new plans with no input or engagement from me or my neighborhood. Detroit Thermal has been working in my neighborhood for more than nine months. During that time, it has cut down most of a mature magnolia tree, damaged shrubs and flowers, and damaged an original bench near the playground.

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, which is not historically appropriate, to prevent it from irreparably harming the Lafayette Park Historic District.

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

Sincerely,

Daniel Wiest

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