



Outlook

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**[EXTERNAL] Lafayette Park Historic District Application from Detroit Thermal**

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**From** Jessica Prost <jessicalprost@gmail.com>**Date** Mon 6/30/2025 6:31 PM**To** Historic District Commission (Staff) <hdc@detroitmi.gov>**Cc** Raymond Prost <raymondaprost@gmail.com>

Dear City of Detroit Historic District Commissioners (and all those reading this letter),

My heart aches as I write this letter. The towering trees outside my window are more than just greenery - they're the guardians of our community's history and my children's playground. Every morning, my children and I watch cardinals dart between branches and squirrels chase each other up trunks of trees that have stood for decades. These aren't just trees; they're living monuments of the historic landscape architecture designed by the renowned Alfred Caldwell - the very essence of what earned our neighborhood its National Historic Landmark designation.

The proposed Detroit Thermal project threatens to take a good number of these precious trees we've worked SO HARD to keep. What Detroit Thermal fails to acknowledge in their plans is the devastating long-term impact of heavy machinery on our mature trees. Arboricultural science clearly demonstrates that heavy equipment compacts soil around tree roots, cutting off oxygen, crushing fine root structures, and inevitably leading to slow death - even for trees they claim to "protect." This scientific reality is absent from their assessment.

The historical significance of Lafayette Park's landscape architecture cannot be overstated. Caldwell's vision of harmonious integration between urban living and nature is precisely what makes our neighborhood historically significant. This project would irreversibly damage this historic integrity, contradicting the very purpose of our historic designation.

Despite initial promises of collaboration, Detroit Thermal has REPEATEDLY excluded our community from discussions, detracting from progress and collaboration that would likely have prevented both of these meetings in the first place. They scheduled critical meetings during a holiday week, demonstrating disregard for genuine community input. We understand the importance of providing heat to neighboring buildings, but numerous alternative pathways exist that would preserve our historic landscape while meeting infrastructure needs. Just look at the larger park - there are so many other pathways they can take that aren't through a lived-in neighborhood.

I implore you to reject Detroit Thermal's application and protect the historic integrity of Lafayette Park. The Historical District Ordinance exists precisely to prevent such permanent damage to historically significant landscapes like ours.

Thank you for your time,

Jessica & Raymond Prost  
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