

**From:** [Garie Thomas-Bass](#)  
**To:** [Historic District Commission \(Staff\)](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Lafayette Park Historic District Application from Detroit Thermal  
**Date:** Friday, May 9, 2025 8:54:34 PM

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Dear City of Detroit Historic District Commissioners,

My name is Garie Thomas-Bass. My husband and I have been residents of Detroit, Michigan all of our lives (about 68 years) AND for 31 (thirty-one) of those years (and counting) we have proudly been residents of the Lafayette Park Historic District neighborhood area.

Today I am writing to state my very strong opposition to Detroit Thermal's application for a project in the Lafayette Park Historic District. I oppose the proposed project because it would definitely and irrevocably damage my neighborhood's historic landscape, which is a central component of my neighborhood's National Historic Landmark designation!!! (Not to mention that the strategic and beautiful landscaping was one of the MAJOR reasons we were drawn to live and stay in this area at all.)

The proposed project would generate a significant adverse effect on the historic landscape of my neighborhood. In fact, my research reminded me that this is a definite understatement. Please note that our location, here in Lafayette Park, is one of the historical and cherished locations that was designed by Alfred Caldwell..

\*... "During this period he (...Alfred Caldwell) also completed a number of landscape projects. Caldwell's landscape for Lafayette Park (1955-1963), an urban renewal housing project near downtown Detroit that Mies (**Ludwig Mies van der Rohe** (famous German architect)) designed with the developer Herbert Greenwald, was considered a model for urbanization. Today, its owners covet Lafayette Park, more because of the lush landscape in an urban setting even more than because of the modern building design."...

The landscaping defines our historic landscape, along with 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!

In addition, we know and have been reminded that work crews and their destructive equipment will need to return consistently for maintenance AND again every single time that repairs need to be provided to their underground steam piping. This, of course, means that even more damage and destruction will be added to ALL of the original and unfortunate installation damage that will, of course, definitely and sadly occur. This means that the destruction will continue consistently into the future from now until the steam piping or our amazing neighborhood no longer exists.

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,

Mrs. Garie Thomas-Bass (retired teacher, stationary engineer, and author)

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\*Quote from <!--[if !vml]-->

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<!--[endif]--> Author: Dennis Domer who is an Associate Professor Emeritus in American Studies and an Associate Dean Emeritus in the department of Architecture & Urban Planning at the University of Kansas.

Blessings TO you and Gratitude FOR you! Thank you for remembering to reduce, reuse, and recycle. Garie Thomas-Bass Thank you. Author of the books: A Season of Gratitude a Day at a Time (AKA: A giraffe named Gratitude). and Purposeful (Not Random) Acts of Kindness (AKA Beginning Steps for Overcoming Spoiled Brat-aholism) Available at places like: Amazon.com, BarnesandNoble.com, Thank you for your support. Peace. All is well.