

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of PropertyHistoric name: Detroit Association of Women's Clubs BuildingOther names/site number: Lennane, William, House

Name of related multiple property listing:

The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. LocationStreet & number: 5461 Brush StreetCity or town: Detroit State: MI County: WayneNot For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

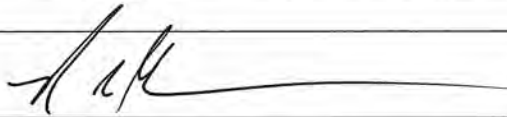
I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B C D

	SHPO	October 23, 2024
Signature of certifying official/Title:		Date
<u>Michigan State Historic Preservation Office</u>		
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government		

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In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

**State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

X entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

James Gabbert
Signature of the Keeper

12/2/2024

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

☒

Public – Local

☐

Public – State

☐

Public – Federal

☐

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Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
District	<input type="checkbox"/>
Site	<input type="checkbox"/>
Structure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Object	<input type="checkbox"/>

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

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6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

SOCIAL/clubhouse

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL/clubhouse

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19th AND 20th CENTURY REVIVALS: Georgian Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK, STONE: Limestone

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Detroit Association of Women's Clubs Building is located at 5461 Brush Street, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan. The building is about three and a half miles north from the Detroit River in the eastern block of the East Ferry Avenue Historic District (NRHP 1980). The building is located at the southwest corner of Brush Street and East Ferry Avenue and the building footprint is a rectangular shape. The building faces east toward Brush Street and is situated on a rectangular lot measuring sixty-seven feet by one-hundred-and sixty-one feet, bounded by (using cardinal directions) East Ferry Avenue on the north, an alley separating the block from the campus of the College for Creative Studies on the south, the home at 314 East Ferry Avenue to the west, and Brush Street to the east. It was constructed in 1913 (City of Detroit permit #8425) and is a two-and-a-half story tall, red brick clad Georgian Revival style residential building with stone trim and details. The building was designed by the Detroit architectural firm of Smith, Hinchman & Grylls, and it is thirty feet wide and ninety-six feet long. The exterior design reflects the popular Georgian Revival style and incorporates the use of decorative brick flat arches, block modillion cornices, and rooftop gabled dormers. Most of the windows are double-hung six-over-one units with flat brick arches. The building has some additions including a wheelchair ramp leading to the front door at the Brush Street façade (1987), and another addition

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is the fire escape on the south façade. These alterations do not significantly impact the building's architectural integrity overall. The Detroit Association of Women's Clubs building remains in its original location and retains many original materials and character-defining features that illustrate Smith, Hinchman & Grylls' use of classical styles and exhibits the workmanship from its period of significance. At some point in the building's history, the north façade's porch entry door was bricked up. The setting has changed somewhat since 1913 but remains a residential and institutional area which continues to convey the historical feeling of the property. The property possesses historic integrity and continues to convey its architectural and historic significance.

Narrative Description

Setting and Environment

The Detroit Association of Women's Clubs building (or simply the DAWC) is located at 5461 Brush Street (original address was 326 East Ferry Avenue¹), in Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan, about three and a half miles north from the Detroit River in the second block of the East Ferry Avenue Historic District (NRHP 1980). The building is situated within an urban neighborhood setting, although to the south is a prominent Detroit educational institution. The building faces east toward Brush Street and is situated on a rectangular lot bounded by (using cardinal directions) East Ferry Avenue on the north, an alley separating the block from the campus of the College for Creative Studies on the south, the home at 314 East Ferry Avenue to the west, and Brush Street to the east. The building occupies the central west side of the lot at the southwest corner of East Ferry Avenue and Brush Street measuring sixty-seven feet by one-hundred-and sixty-one feet. The lot has an elevation in grade raising to support the building on the Brush Street (east) side of the property. The building is thirty (30) feet wide and ninety-six (96) feet long. Seven concrete stairs and a wheelchair ramp lead to the front entry door. The building's secondary façade, the northern façade, faces toward East Ferry Avenue. The western façade (the rear façade) of the building faces the east side of the adjacent residential property at 314 East Ferry Avenue and has a chain link aluminum fence and hedge separating portions of the property line. A narrow concrete walk leading to the basement door is at the west side of the property line. The south façade of the building faces the paved alley between East Ferry Avenue and the block-long parking structure for the College for Creative Studies. The south façade's southeast corner has a two-story wood clapboard-clad back porch at the kitchen and sleeping porch above.

¹ Most of Detroit's roads, including East Ferry were referred to as "Avenue" on Sanborn maps, permit records, and in census data from the 1800s through the 1950s. At some point, most of the avenues were renamed to "streets." The name East Ferry Avenue will be used in this nomination because of the precedent set in the East Ferry Avenue Historic District, National Register of Historic Places nomination form of March 10, 1980.

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The Detroit Association of Women's Clubs (DAWC) building is bordered by a perimeter sidewalk on two sides, at the north and east, and a grass berm is at the East Ferry Avenue curb that contains a large multi-trunk deciduous linden tree. The sidewalk at the Brush Street (east) side of the lot is at the curb. The DAWC has newer foundation plantings that edge the north and east facades, including at each side of the front staircase and wheelchair ramp on Brush Street. A grass lawn surrounds the building on each side. A two-sided State of Michigan historic marker is at the northeast corner of the lot. There is a secondary street sign for "Dr. Rosa L. Gragg Blvd." in the berm in front of the building at the southwest corner of Brush Street and East Ferry Avenue.

The north façade of the building faces East Ferry Avenue, a residential street, where many of the homes were converted to institutional uses, the homes have green lawns and occasional trees planted in the lawns and at the berm. The homes on East Ferry Avenue are mainly from the 1910s and 1920s, large in size, and two-and-a-half-stories in height. Directly north of the DAWC Building on the opposite side of East Ferry Avenue is a four-unit, two-and-a-half story townhouse development constructed in 2003-2004 (designed by the architectural firm Archive DS for the Hubbell Group). To the south of the DAWC Building is a paved alley adjacent to the Walter and Josephine Ford campus of the College for Creative Studies (CCS). The Ford campus of the College for Creative Studies extends southward along Brush Street to Frederick Douglass Street to the south and John R. Street to the west. Just to the south of the DAWC, along Brush Street is a concrete alley, and the four-story, block long parking structure for CCS. The brick and concrete parking structure was completed circa 1999 and is sited with a very short grass setback from the alley and Brush Street. To the southwest of CCS is the landmark Detroit Institute of Arts museum located at 5200 Woodward Avenue.

Exterior

Overview

The Detroit Association of Women's Clubs (DAWC) building was constructed in 1913 and is a two-and-a half story tall, rectangular plan, Georgian Revival style residential building with classical details. The building is side gabled with its front entry on the Brush Street side of the home. The exterior design reflects the popular Georgian Revival style with detailing such as a Classical surround with Doric pilasters at the entry door, an entablature and a modillion cornice over the entry door. The home is veneered in dark red brick laid in running bond pattern. Each side of the home has basement-level windows, some have a below-grade semi-circular bricked window well. There is a two-and-a-half-story recessed, matching shorter gabled extension of the building at the south façade. There are three pedimented gabled dormers on the east side of the flank gable roof, and four pedimented dormers on the west side (rear façade) of the flank gable roof. A wide brick chimney is at the north end of the gable. The east façade (front façade) facing Brush Street, has an asymmetrical window and entry placement. There are large six-over-one unit double-hung wood windows with brick flat arches over the windows on each facade. An outstanding feature of the building is the large one-story wood porch at the north façade.

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East façade (front façade)

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The DAWC Building faces Brush Street, and the main façade, the east façade, is the most highly decorated of the building. The east façade is asymmetrical with the main entry door at the southern side of the center of the façade. The main entry door is distinguished by a Classical surround with Doric pilasters on each side of the entrance, the door is enframed by a light-yellow painted wood surround with the address 5461 in black numbers above the entry door. Above the pilasters is an entablature with a block modillion cornice, and below the cornice is a sign with the name "Detroit Association of Women's Clubs." A modern sconce light fixture is at the south side of the entry door.

The front façade has two groups of triple windows on each side of the entrance at the first floor. There are limestone windowsills beneath each window; the original wood windows are double-hung six-over-one units painted light yellow. A brick flat arch lintel is above each window set. Two grouped casement two-over-three smaller windows are at the north side of the entry door on the first and second stories of the front facade. The second floor has three sets of paired windows, as well as another paired six-light casement window to the north of the central windows. All of the wood window elements are painted light yellow. At the ground level, there is a below-grade, semi-circular well, lined with brick, that brings light to the basement window at the front facade. The brick window wells are at several other basement windows of the house.

There are three pediment-gabled dormers with single round-arched one-over-one windows on the east side (front façade) of the flank gable roof, the dormers are sided with light-blue slates, likely the original roof material. The windows in the dormer have a round keystone arch flanked by engaged square pilasters at each side. A block modillion cornice runs under the eaves on the east and west facades. The block modillion-supported cornice is constructed of wood and painted light yellow. The east façade cornice has a return and wraps a portion of the building's south side and is continued on the set-back extension. The front façade is approached by a set of seven concrete stairs constructed with red brick cheek walls, due to the higher elevation of the home from the sidewalk of Brush Street. The staircase is comprised of four steps, then a long concrete landing, and then three steps to the concrete porch. Each side of the staircase has a black wrought-iron railing. At the south side of the entrance is a concrete wheelchair ramp (installed in 1987; City of Detroit permit #42653) that is approached from the Brush Street sidewalk and makes a turn to the south that then returns to lead up to the concrete front porch. There are black wrought-iron railings on each side of the wheelchair ramp. Both the staircase and wheelchair ramp lead to the same concrete porch. The original front door has been replaced with a newer steel paneled black single-leaf front door. There are light-yellow painted aluminum gutters and downspouts on each façade. These alterations do not significantly impact the building's architectural integrity overall.

North façade (East Ferry Avenue façade)

A prominent feature of the building is the one-story porch that extends across a portion of the north façade facing East Ferry Avenue. The concrete porch deck rests on a concrete and brick

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foundation. The porch has a flat roof supported by three round wood Doric columns at each northern corner, and square Doric pilasters adjacent to a round Doric column are at each side of the brick façade walls. A wood balustraded railing surrounds the porch on all three sides (there is no way to access the porch). A small light fixture is centered in the porch ceiling. The porch has been painted light yellow, matching the paint color of the windows, door surrounds and other architectural details on the building. (Originally, the porch had a wood balustraded railing with ball cap newel posts surrounding the second story of the porch perimeter. These railings were removed by 2013.) On the east side of the north façade of the building, there was a porch door that has been bricked up; a cast stone threshold, with a flat arch above remain. The home's chimney is centered on the north façade and the brick chimney protrudes above the gabled roofline. The chimney stack features two decorative limestone triangular caps at the second story. To either side of the chimney on the second story are three-over-two double-hung windows, and two round arched double-hung one-over-one wood windows with a limestone sill are at the attic level. West of the porch on the first floor of the north façade are horizontal paired wood three-over-three windows with a limestone sill. All windows of the home have a brick flat arch. The block modillion-supported cornice returns are on both the east and west side of the north façade roofline.

South façade (alley facing façade)

The south façade is on the wing that is set back from the home's main block. The south façade has a black metal fire escape that rises four stories on the wing (installed in 1987; City of Detroit permit #42653). The south façade of the wing (or extension) matches the main block of the home in materials and detailing, although it is smaller in scale and set back from the front Brush Street facade. A modillion cornice runs along the east and west sides of the extension, and the gabled eaves match the main block's south façade gable. The main block's south facade has a first-story window that is a side-by-side wood four-over-four paned leaded window with a limestone sill. A brick flat arch is above the window. Directly above the first-floor window is a second-story window that also has a brick flat arch and limestone sill. The second-story wood window is three-over-two, double-hung over a single pane lower window. At the second story of the extension is a wood six-over-two window with a divided lower pane window. At the attic level on the third story is an access door that leads out to the fire escape. A basement-level window is at the base of the extension. There is a two-story wood back porch containing Doric pilasters and a square Doric column at the southwest corner of the home. The wood porch pilasters are flush with the south façade although the porch projects from the west facade. The two-story wood back porch is clad in clapboards. The first story of the back porch is accessed by three concrete stairs that have black wrought iron railings on each side. There is a short light-yellow wood railing with bannisters at the south and west sides of the back porch. A large milk or ice chute is at the center of the back porch rear wall, and the back entry door is at the east side of the porch. The back door on the porch is comprised of an aluminum screen door, and a windowless metal security door; a brick flat arch is over the lintel of the back door. The second story of the back porch has two wood three-over-two double-hung windows that have a single-pane lower sash. The back porch has a flat roof.

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West façade

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The west façade of the building is a secondary façade, but it features the same materials and details as the other facades. At the southern corner of the west façade is the projecting two-story rear wood porch. The wood porch has two wood windows at the west side of its first story, and two windows on the north side of the second story. The windows of the rear porch have storm windows over the original wood three-over-two upper sash and single pane lower sash windows. There is a flat-roofed, projecting wood clapboard-sided bay for the first-floor kitchen at the west façade. This projecting bay has four wood windows. The west façade has one basement level window (no window well), and a back entrance door between the projecting wood bay and porch. The back entrance door on the west façade is a basement stair landing entrance; it has an aluminum screen door, and a wood door with a three-over-two window. Storm windows cover all of the original wood windows.

A group of three double-hung three-over-two wood windows over a single pane sash are at the north side of the west facade. A flat brick arch is above all of the windows, which also have a limestone sill. A smaller double-hung window is at the first story of the west façade. A large nine-light vertical wood window illuminates the center staircase at the stair landing. The vertical wood windows have small-pane leaded-glass windows that pivot inward, although there is a storm window over the entire window grouping. There are two leaded-glass transoms above each of the long windows. Paired double-hung windows are at the second story's north side and there are two smaller double-hung windows at the other side of the staircase window. Most all of the windows of the south façade have storm windows. The same wood block modillion cornice is across the west façade with returns at the north and south facades. The attic level has four irregularly placed pedimented dormers, three with a gabled roof, and the southern-most one with a rounded roof. All dormers have light-blue slate cladding and double-hung wood windows. The roof is covered in grey asphalt shingles.

Interior

Entering the building from the front entry door on Brush Street is a narrow vestibule at the entrance. There is wood-paneled wainscot in the vestibule and a brown, beige, and white variegated ceramic tile floor and a single-light glass and wood inner door. A large central hallway connects the vestibule entry to the other rooms of the first floor and the central grand staircase. To the north of the vestibule is a small room with a taller wood wainscot and built-in bench. There is no door to the small room, although it has a double window at the eastern wall. North of the small room is the former living room, now converted to the use of the Detroit Association of Women's Clubs. The living room entry is composed of dark stained oak woodwork and at the south side of the room there is a multi-pane glass and wood French door. The living room has had the plaster walls, molding, and ceiling painted white, a dark-stained wood base is intact, and the floors are hardwood tongue-and-groove oak. The fireplace is centered in the living room's north wall; the fireplace is approximately six feet tall with a dark stained oak dentiled mantle and jambs, dark-green square tiles surround the fireplace opening and the front hearth. The living room's French door surrounds and floor base are dark stained

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oak. A full-length portrait of Rosa Slade-Gragg hangs at the west wall of the former living room, and the former living room walls are lined with awards and commendations to Rosa Slade-Gragg. At the center of the main hallway is the grand central staircase. The staircase has a dark varnished oak balustrade and newel post. The steps are tiled with black square vinyl tiles and metal nosing. South of the central staircase are three short steps that descend to a landing before a small powder room.

The former dining room at the south side of the first-floor plan retains original stained oak wainscot, stained wood ceiling beams and a wood picture rail on the western wall. An adjacent butler's pantry has glass-door built-in oak cupboards. The butler's pantry connects to the kitchen at the west side of the room. On the western kitchen wall is a steel door with no windows that leads to the back porch. At the west side of the first floor is a service staircase, a basement staircase, and large storage closets. There is a bathroom on the south side of the first floor that was added for wheelchair accessibility.

The second story is accessed by the grand central staircase. The staircase has a dark varnished oak balustrade, and the steps are tiled with square vinyl tiles and metal nosing. A radiator is at the landing of the staircase. A three-part vertical oak window with leaded glass panes (four-over-eight) and three transoms with four-over-three leaded glass panes are at the staircase landing. The staircase walls are paneled in dark stained oak wainscot. A hallway runs the length of the second floor from north to south. There is a sleeping porch at the south side of the second floor that is clad with vertical wood siding, painted yellow. The sleeping porch has wood flooring, and a wood ceiling that is painted white. Three former bedrooms on the east side of the second story were combined to provide one large meeting room. A bedroom on the northwest side of the second story was converted to an office, once used by past club president Rosa Slade-Gragg, and current officers today. The office retains its original integrity, size, and proportions, and has the original wood windows in place. The floor of the second story is finished with oak tongue-and-groove plank flooring. The walls of all rooms of the second story are plaster. A bathroom is at the center of the west side of the second story, and it retains its original white hexagonal ceramic tile flooring. The floor of the second story hall and other rooms is finished with oak tongue-and-groove plank flooring. The walls and ceilings of the second story are plaster.

The third-floor attic level is accessed by a single, turned wood staircase. Ceilings and walls of the third-floor rooms are finished in plaster painted white or cream colors. A hallway divides the third floor and runs from north to south. The smaller former staff bedrooms are now vacant, and a former staff kitchen and bathroom are extant on the west side of the third floor. An attic room at the south side of the third floor is unfinished: the brick chimney is visible at the north wall, terra cotta speed tile is on other walls, there are wood rafters, trusses, and beams at the ceiling of the attic. There are wood rafters, and the attic rafters have been painted white. The third floor is illuminated by the dormer windows on the east and west façade roofs as well as arched windows at the north and south facades. The attic flooring is finished in tongue and groove wood flooring.

The basement fills the full floor plate of the building; it has brick foundation walls, painted beige. The building has a full-size wood door for the basement at the west façade; there are wood

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stairs leading down to the basement. The basement-level windows are wood with steel security bars on the interior. The basement serves as storage space, and it houses the heating system as well as a hot water tank. There is a nonfunctioning half-bathroom in the basement.

Historic Integrity

The Detroit Association of Women's Clubs Building retains historic integrity in each of the seven aspects: integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Beginning with an analysis of the integrity of location and setting, the DAWC Building conveys its sense of place through its historical location on East Ferry Avenue and Brush Street. The DAWC Building has never been moved, and its relationship to both East Ferry Avenue and Brush Street remains the same as it has historically, since Rosa Slade-Gragg viewed the building from her home across East Ferry Avenue in 1941.

The DAWC Building retains integrity of design through its form, plan, space, structure, and classical details of the Georgian Revival style. Aside from replacement doors, the exterior appears virtually unchanged from its appearance during its occupation by the DAWC. The interior of the building is highly intact, reflecting its original floor plan and most of the original interior finishes. The integrity of the setting of the DAWC Building is mostly intact due to the surrounding character of the historic properties on East Ferry Avenue. The home to the west of the DAWC remains in place and unchanged, the attached townhouses to the north, across East Ferry Avenue (2003-2004) were constructed to match the massing and scale of the homes on East Ferry Avenue. There are vacant lots to the northeast and to the east across Brush Street, but the relationship between building and open space is not out of character for the neighborhood. Topographically, the rise of elevation of the site of the DAWC Building has stayed intact. Vegetation such as the foundation plantings and the street tree on East Ferry Avenue are similar to those in historic photos of the building.

The DAWC Building possesses integrity of materials as it is highly intact since and retains the key exterior and interior materials dating from the period of historic significance. For example, the windows are the original wood windows and the original door surrounds, wood porch, and wood dentiled cornice are intact. Additionally, the original brick is in place with the original mortar, the limestone sills are in place on every window of the building. The DAWC Building is a historic resource with features and materials that date from the time of construction and into the period of significance: 1940-1973. The integrity of workmanship is expressed in the physical evidence of the brickwork, woodwork, and limestone components of the exterior of the DAWC Building. The workmanship reflects the expression of the Georgian Revival style as interpreted by the top-level craftsmen of early twentieth-century Detroit.

The integrity of feeling of the DAWC Building is the expression of the historic sense of character for this landmark of Detroit African American history. The sense of feeling is exactly as it was when the building was used by the African American women of Detroit who reflected their feeling of status and accomplishment in the purchase of the building in 1941. Additionally, the DAWC Building has integrity of association due to the building being a direct link that

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recalls the purchase of the historic property by an African American women's organization. The association of the building and its ownership and stewardship by the Detroit Association of Women's Clubs is in place to this day.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☒ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ETHNIC HERITAGE/ Black
SOCIAL HISTORY/Civil Rights

Period of Significance

1941-1973

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Slade Gragg, Rosa Leontyne

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Smith, Hinchman & Grylls

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Detroit Association of Women's Clubs Building located at 5461 Brush Street in the city of Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan, is significant under National Register Criterion A and B under the themes of Ethnic Heritage: Black, and Social History: Civil History at the local level of significance. The house is significant for its long association with the Detroit Association of Women's Clubs (DAWC), an important social institution and social organization for Black women's clubs in Detroit. The DAWC Building was constructed in 1913 and first owned by William Lennane, who resided at the home with his family. In 1941 the home was purchased by the DAWC under the leadership of Rosa Leontyne Slade-Gragg. The "Period of Significance" reflects the initiation of the ownership of the home by the DAWC in 1941 to 1974, the fifty-year mark. This closing date is used since the importance activities of the DAWC continue to the present and no other specific date could be ascertained. This Period of Significance includes the DAWC's important activities and contributions of the DAWC that continue to the present. No specific date could be identified to end the period of significance. The building embodies and illustrates important aspects of the history and historic significance of the DAWC and its long history of important contributions in the city of Detroit. This property would fit into the "Buildings, subtype "Social Institution" category of the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) submission *The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit* authored by Ruth Mills and Saundra Little of Quinn Evans in 2021.

The DAWC Building is located in the East Ferry Avenue Historic District, listed in the National Register in 1980. The East Ferry Avenue Historic District is nominated as significant under Criterion C as an intact, turn-of-the-century, upper class residential streetscape illustrating a variety of architectural styles popular from the 1880s through the first decades of the twentieth century, as well as for its later associations with Jewish and African American history in the City of Detroit. In 1982 the City of Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board designated the East Ferry Avenue Historic District (a local Detroit district) which includes the DAWC.

The building is also significant under National Register Criterion B for its association with Rosa Leontyne Slade-Gragg, an important figure in local, state, and national social and Civil Rights history. Rosa Leontyne Slade-Gragg (1904-1989) was one of the most significant African Americans of mid-twentieth-century Detroit, and she was nationally significant as a civil rights and women's activist who advocated for the rights of African American women. Slade-Gragg was an advisor to three United States Presidents and was appointed to several federal commissions. In 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed her to the Board of the National Volunteer's Participation Committee of Civil Defense, a national advisory board. Slade-Gragg was appointed to the Status of Women's Commission, the National Women's Committee on Civil Rights, and the Commission on Employment of the Handicapped by President John F. Kennedy. President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed her to the Citizens Committee on Community Relations, and the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services. Rosa Slade-Gragg was also appointed to significant commissions in Michigan and

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Detroit; in 1943 Michigan Governor Murray Van Wagoner appointed her as advisor on race relations to the Michigan Office of Civil Defense. In 1949 she was appointed President of the Commission of the Department of Public Welfare by Detroit Mayor Eugene Van Antwerp. She held these commissions while she was president of the DAWC where she maintained an office and was organizing the association into its new home. One of her many accomplishments included founding the Slade-Gragg Academy of Practical Arts in Detroit which operated from 1946 to 1952.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

East Ferry Avenue - history

Ferry Avenue first appeared in City of Detroit records in 1874. Ferry Avenue was named after Dexter M. Ferry, seed merchant and president of the D.M. Ferry Seed Company which had nurseries further east on what became Ferry Avenue. The subdivision was platted in 1886, and lots were sold with construction regulations described in the property deeds. No building in Ferry's subdivision was to be erected within three feet of the side lot line, and all buildings had to be single-dwelling houses built of brick, stone, or hollow tile with cement face construction. The land on the second and third blocks east of Woodward Avenue was considerably less expensive than those closer to Woodward, but East Ferry Avenue was still considered to be a fashionable place to live. After the first block of Ferry Avenue was filled, new houses were constructed in the second block between John R. and Brush Streets.

In the first block of East Ferry Avenue east of Woodward Avenue, a change began in the 1920s as the homes were converted for institutional usage. The Charles L. Freer home (71 East Ferry) was sold to the Merrill-Palmer Motherhood and Home Training School in 1921. By the early 1940s all the houses on the south side of East Ferry Avenue between Woodward Avenue and John R. Street were owned by the Merrill-Palmer Institute. In the 1920s other institutions moved into the neighborhood, such as the Detroit Young Men's Christian Association at 235 East Ferry in 1926.² By the mid-1930s and early 1940s, East Ferry Avenue again experienced a population shift, as African Americans moved to the area. Several notable African Americans resided in the two blocks of East Ferry between John R. and Beaubien, although racial restrictive covenants prevented African Americans from owning property in the block of Ferry Avenue east of Brush until the passage of the federal Housing Act of 1949. Restrictive deed covenants began in Detroit in the 1920s when White neighborhood associations adopted restrictive deed covenants to keep African Americans out of their neighborhoods. The *Detroit Free Press* noted in 1945, "nobody knows how many hundreds of restrictive covenants and neighborhood agreements there are in Detroit binding property owners not to permit Negro occupancy. The number increased greatly

² Francis S. Del Rosario, *East Ferry Avenue Historic District, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan*, Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Mid-Atlantic Region, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, HABS No. MI-311, October 26, 1984.

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in response to the Negro search for new residence areas. There are said to be 150 associations of property owners promoting these agreements.”³

As noted in the *Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit* survey report:

African Americans in Michigan have long suffered discrimination and segregation, in many cases just as severe as that in the South. The practice of *de facto* segregation, segregation that is not formalized by law but is imposed by social agreement, created invisible barriers based on race that could not be crossed. In Detroit, Woodward Avenue was one such accepted color line and African Americans, the majority of whom lived to its east, were unable to purchase property, establish businesses, or eat in restaurants in downtown Detroit west of Woodward Avenue until the 1950s. *De jure* segregation, segregation by race imposed by formally adopted laws or policies, was also practiced in Detroit. One such example was the federal policy of “redlining” adopted by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) for mortgage loan and housing construction programs in the 1930 and 1940s. Excluded from participation because they were branded as “high-risk loans,” a decision based solely on race, African Americans were unable to take advantage of the same home buying opportunities as Whites. Thus, they were unable to fully participate in the growth of the middle class that defined Detroit in the years immediately following World War II. In the city of Detroit during that period, a strong adherence to housing segregation imposed by racially restrictive ordinances adopted by White neighborhood associations led to racial discrimination in other areas: education, employment, the use of public accommodations, and criminal justice for the city’s Black population. Thus, segregated housing is considered the primary civil rights issue that faced Detroit in the twentieth century.⁴

Beginning in the 1940s on East Ferry Avenue, health institutions, businesses, clubs, and educational facilities were established by African Americans primarily for use by African Americans. Fairview Sanatorium of 404-412 East Ferry was owned by Dr. Robert Greenidge (404 East Ferry Ave. is demolished). Greenidge was the first African American radiologist in the City of Detroit and one of the founders of Dunbar Hospital, Detroit's first African American hospital, on nearby Frederick Street. The founding of African American medical institutions as alternatives to white hospitals was necessary because of the discrimination that existed which prohibited African American doctors from treating even their own patients in White hospitals. Third Baptist Church (582 East Ferry Avenue), founded in 1931, purchased the religious building from the B’nai Israel congregation in 1935 and has remained there to this day.

³ James Haswell, “Numerous Pacts Bar Negro Residents.” *Detroit Free Press*. March 17, 1945, p. 7.

⁴ Ruth Mills, Sandra Little, “*The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit, Survey Report Part 1: Historic Context*,” December 2020, p. 40.

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Another significant Detroit African American institution was the Household Art Guild Employment Agency, located at 431 East Ferry Avenue; it was directed by William H. Phillips to train African Americans in the domestic trades. Additionally, 431 East Ferry Avenue was home to Bertha Hansbury and Mrs. Johnson's Music Foundation, the successor to the Hansbury Music School on Frederick Street. The Lewis Business School at 200, 222, and 263 East Ferry Avenue and John R. Street, directed by Violet Lewis, was staffed by African Americans to train African Americans in business skills at that location in 1941. Another organization on East Ferry Avenue, Omega Psi Phi (Nu Omega Chapter) fraternity, contributed to the history of African Americans on the street. Established at Howard University in 1911, Omega Psi Phi was the first national Greek letter fraternity established at what was then called a Negro university. A local chapter was established in Detroit in 1923; the undergraduate chapter at Wayne State University began fifteen years later. The fraternity purchased the house at 235 East Ferry in 1942 and remains there today. The Mediterranean style house at 246 East Ferry Avenue was originally the residence of Charles Steinberg; it was constructed in 1916 and designed by architect Alvin Harley. Later the home became the residence of the Reverend Dr. James F. Jones, nationally known as Prophet Jones, an African American televangelist preacher. For most of the second half of the twentieth century, the building housed the Fritz Funeral Home, an African American-owned business that was well known in the community for many decades.

It is significant to note that the house at 5450 John R. Street (also addressed as 222 East Ferry Avenue), at the southeast corner of East Ferry Avenue and John R. Street, one block west of the DAWC Building, was purchased by an African American institution in 1941. The home at 5450 John R. Street was constructed for James Murphy (architect Frank E. Carleton in 1910) and it is remarkable for its African American history. In 1941 the Murphy home was sold to Violet T. Lewis to establish the Lewis College of Business in Detroit. The Lewis College of Business was an African American business school that trained African American women in typing, shorthand, accounting, filing, English, math, and proficiency with office machines. The school was licensed by the State of Michigan Board of Education. There is a State of Michigan historic marker at the northwest side of the lawn recognizing the history of the Lewis College of Business building.

These pioneering efforts of notable African Americans on just the two blocks of East Ferry Avenue between John R. and Beaubien Streets beginning in the late 1930s was indicative of the necessity for the establishment of alternate institutions and facilities to serve African Americans. Several of these institutions, businesses, and clubs remain intact and in use. The African American history of the Detroit Association of Women's Clubs at 5461 Brush Street, Rosa L. Slade-Gragg, and East Ferry Avenue will be detailed below.

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5461 Brush Street

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The house at 5461 Brush Street was constructed in 1913 for William Lennane Sr. (1863-1939), his second wife Mary E. McCarthy, and their four sons: William E., Charles R., Walter Arden, and Edwin P. Lennane.⁵ Lennane owned a construction contracting firm for large scale paving, sewers, and concrete projects. His firm was involved in building the Michigan Central Depot, laying railroad tracks, and is credited as the first Detroit contractor to use steam shovels and concrete mixers.⁶ In 1915 when the Lennane house was completed, the home had the address of 326 East Ferry Avenue, although its main entrance faced Brush Street. Other nearby homes were given an address on East Ferry Avenue although their main entrance and front façade faced a different street (ex: the 1910 James Murphy House at 222 East Ferry and John R. Street.)



Detroit Association of Women's Clubs clubhouse, undated photo, courtesy of the Detroit Association of Women's Clubs.

Following approval from the City of Detroit Board of Zoning Appeals, City of Detroit building permit #15837 was issued on August 18, 1942, for the renovation of the home from “residential” to a “private clubhouse.” Several exterior renovations to the DAWC Building can be noted; these renovations are found in an undated historic photograph in the collection of the DAWC (at left). The three dormer windows at the eastern (front) façade each had an upper pane with lancet-arched tracery. The second story of the porch on the north façade had a wood balustrade surrounding the

edge, distinguished by Doric newel posts with a ball finial. The upper porch railing was removed in approximately 2013.

The Social Uplift Movement and Women's Clubs

As noted in the *Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit* MPDF survey report, African American women in Michigan had a long history of organizing to address social welfare issues in the African American community, particularly among women, children, and the needy. The National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Frances Harper Inn stated that Black women's clubs, like so many other clubs of the era, were popular and effective means of both social interaction and political advocacy. Often referred to as the “Golden Age of Fraternity,” the years following the Civil War until around 1920 saw a massive rise in large, voluntary memberships in associations in the United States. In the post-Civil War years, many of the men's fraternities functioned as mutual aid societies, collecting dues to pay for services for their members, as there was no social service infrastructure in the United States at this time. With rising industrialization and urbanization, these

⁵ William Lennane Sr. and his first wife Anna [McWilliams] Lennane, never lived in the Brush Street home together, given that Anna passed away in 1905. Documents such as the East Ferry Avenue National Register nomination erroneously stated that Anna Lennane (1864-1905) lived in the home. William and Mary Lennane of Detroit married in 1915.

⁶ Obituary for William E. Lennane, *Detroit Free Press*, June 18, 1939.

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organizations helped manage their members' transformations to the new era. Men joined organizations that emphasized Victorian masculinity and unity separate from society, politics, and the economy. Most of these fraternities excluded women as a central part of their organizational identity. One of the earliest women's clubs, a White women's club, was formed in 1868 when a group of women journalists were excluded from a New York Press Club dinner for Charles Dickens they helped organize. The excluded women formed the Sorosis Women's club. This club, setting a pattern for other White women's clubs, provided opportunity for women whose education and background prepared them for activities from which they, by virtue of their gender, were excluded.⁷

The following African American social institution history is from the National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Frances Harper Inn.

The national legacy of Black women's clubs like the Christian Industrial Club began in the pre-Civil war days, with a Boston-based benevolent society that supplied clothes and shoes to slaves escaping via the Underground Railroad. After the Civil War, Black women's clubs addressed the needs of Blacks migrating to the cities, specifically with social needs like orphanages, schools, and churches, but also addressed social inequities in the face of racial prejudice. Two separate national organizations, the National League of Colored women, headed by Mary Church Terrell and the National Federation of Afro-American Women, headed by Margaret Murray (Mrs. Booker T.) Washington combined in 1896 into the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), with Terrell as president. The local clubs that comprised the NACW organized on behalf of social service to the less fortunate in their cities, hosting nurseries, kindergartens, working girl's homes, club houses, orphan girl's homes, and homes for the aged and infirm. Across the country, the idea of social uplift underscored the work of the innumerable women's clubs of this era. White women's clubs in the early twentieth century advocated to their elected representatives for changes like public bathhouses, better and safer playgrounds, and other issues pertaining to the cleanliness and safety of children and home. Black women's clubs were less likely to petition governments for help with their communities, as few social programs were directed at Blacks. Instead, the clubwomen galvanized the work and energy of their own people. While White women worked on behalf of the already uplifted, Black Women's clubs were formed to protect vulnerable young women, help Black children get educated, and help young mothers with the challenges of childrearing.⁸

The MPDF indicates that Black Detroiters approached the struggle for civil rights through different avenues during the context period (1900-1976), including social and political institutions. Social institutions ranged from clubs housing the social welfare activities of Black women in the early twentieth century to fraternities that sponsored civil rights activities to a YMCA that offered programs and facilities to Blacks. Such institutions often leased space

⁷ Karren Yurgalite, National Register of Historic Places nomination, *Frances Harper Inn*, February 2023, p. 18.

⁸ Ibid.

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within existing buildings, from churches to office buildings. Others, such as the DAWC, moved into repurposed residential dwellings.

In 1921 a group of eight Detroit Black Women's clubs formed the Detroit Association of Women's Clubs (DAWC) under the leadership of Veronica Lucas. The DAWC was officially organized on April 8, 1921, and the member clubs of the DAWC were a variety of educational, philanthropic, and social organizations that worked as part of the Black uplift movement of the early twentieth century. The Black uplift movement espoused the belief that education and economic success would enable African Americans to integrate and gain acceptance in mainstream society.⁹ Black women's clubs took on the work of social uplift to foster racial equality. Detroit's early Black women's clubs like the Detroit Study Club, founded by the pre-migration Detroit elite, focused on cultural literary themes. Soon after the turn of the century, however, these club women turned their focus to urban reform and racial uplift, while still maintaining their social rituals of teas, dances, and card parties that reinforced their higher social status than the working-class women they were reaching out to.²⁴ Michigan's Black clubwomen, mostly excluded from the White women's clubs, addressed the concerns unique to their communities to improve the image and status of Black women."²⁵

With this background, the DAWC had formed to foster educational, philanthropic, and social programs that the women in the organization championed. Their purpose was to "promote charitable, educational, religious, social activities, and community uplift, and to aid in the solution of racial problems."¹⁰ The Detroit club was affiliated with the Michigan and the National Association of Women's Clubs (NACWC). Black women formed their own women's

⁹ As stated in the MPDF, in the early twentieth century, two dominate philosophies emerged that influenced how African Americans approached the struggle to obtain equal rights. Booker T. Washington, the African American educator who developed the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, advocated for the Black uplift movement; Washington promoted education in the trades and the establishment of African American-owned business as the means of gaining economic success. Author and sociologist W.E.B. DuBois, founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), took a more radical approach advocating for Black Nationalism; that of unity among all Black people no matter their country of origin. DuBois believed that by organizing as a monolithic group, African Americans could achieve greater political and economic strength, which would better able them to challenge inequality and demand their rights. Both philosophies strongly influenced the civil rights activities of Detroit's African American community prior to World War II. In Detroit, much of the early work of the city's African American leaders during the early twentieth century was based on the ideology of "racial uplift," the idea that Black economic, material, and moral "progress" would work to diminish White racism.

¹⁰ Notes from the "History of the Michigan State Association of Black Women, 1955." Holcomb, Johnson, and Macklin. State of Michigan Archives 60-14, Box 1. MUS84-500-11. Resource Planning Protection Process for Context of Black Women's Philanthropic Organizations. 1983 (Black Sites 1). Michigan State Historic Preservation Office, Lansing, MI. Ruth Mills, Saundra Little, Multiple Property Documentation submission "The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit," December 2020.

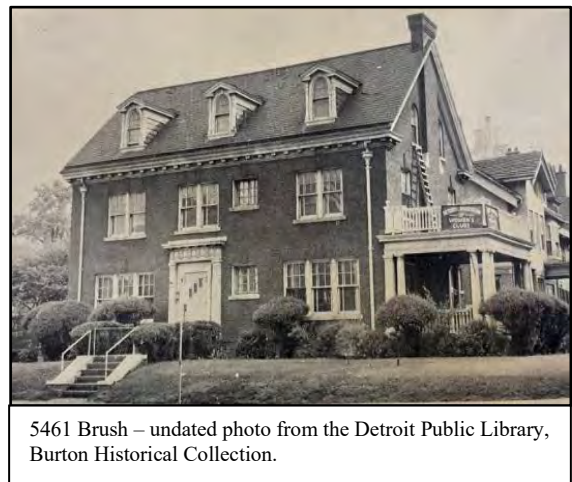
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clubs in the segregated years of the turn of the century to better their community, and because women's clubs formed by White women generally excluded them. Beginning with eight clubs, membership at the DAWC peaked in 1945 with seventy-five clubs and three thousand members. The NACWC's motto, "Lifting As We Climb," was adopted by the Detroit club. Some of the DAWC member clubs of the 1920s and 1930s included the "Current Topic Study Club," the "Entre Mous Club," the "Willing Workers Club," and the DAWC's own educational committee. The DAWC's overarching charitable fundraising to assist Detroit's African Americans was often documented in the *Michigan Chronicle* newspaper.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the DAWC held its monthly board meetings at the Phyllis Wheatly Home; a nursing home for elderly African American women (558 East Elizabeth Street) that had a large meeting room. In 1940, Rosa Slade-Gragg (1904-1989) was elected club president and saw the need for the DAWC to have its own clubhouse; she launched an aggressive search for a clubhouse and started an ambitious fundraising campaign to pay for it. After many false starts, dead-end leads, and disappointments, Rosa Slade-Gragg, who lived at 459 East Ferry Avenue (extant), recalled that "I used to lie in bed at night and look out the window of my bedroom at the Lennane house," she said, "I thought it was very elegant and beautiful, but there was a restriction against blacks owning property on Ferry between Woodward and Brush."¹¹ Rosa Slade-Gragg's vision to locate the DAWC on East Ferry Avenue was viable because other African American organizations were locating on East Ferry including the Omega Psi Phi fraternity, the Lewis College of Business, and the Fairview Sanitarium, an African American hospital established in 1930. The asking price for the house was more than \$24,000 according to Rosa Slade-Gragg, and she negotiated it down to \$12,000. In less than a year, the DAWC women raised a downpayment of \$2,000. In 1941 the Lennane heirs sold the house at 326 East Ferry Avenue to the



Detroit Association of Women's Clubs for use as headquarters. In order to avoid the racial restrictive covenant on East Ferry Avenue, the address was changed to a Brush Street address. Slade-Gragg and her husband, J. Robert Gragg, took out a second mortgage on their family home (459 East Ferry Avenue), on her husband's laundry and tailoring business, as well as on the Gragg's car and even their home furnishings to provide funds for the downpayment for the building. The club paid off the mortgage on the home in just three and a half years including taxes, interest, and new furnishings. The DAWC has remained in the building since that time, and continues their programs, events, and fundraisers from the building to today.

¹¹ Margie Reins Smith, "The resolute ladies of E. Ferry," *Detroit News Michigan Sunday Magazine*, December 12, 1982, p. 31.

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The Detroit Association of Women's Clubs was one of the first Black organizations in Detroit to own their headquarters building. In the 1940s, banks routinely denied loans to Blacks, making the acquisition especially notable for an African American woman. Very significant to the DAWC's ownership of the building was that there were racially restrictive covenants that prohibited blacks from purchasing on Ferry's first block east of Woodward. Under Rosa Slade-Gragg's leadership, the Association had the official address of the building changed from 326 East Ferry Avenue to 5461 Brush Street in order to complete the purchase of the building, and avoided the racial covenant on East Ferry Avenue.¹² While the north façade porch door was never the home's main entry door, club history endures that the DAWC moved the entry door from the East Ferry Avenue porch (the north façade) to the Brush Street elevation. However, the City of Detroit East Ferry Avenue local historic district report, the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) East Ferry Avenue report, and *Detroit News* article from December 12, 1982, record that the porch entry door was bricked up after a fire in 1976.¹³ City of Detroit Building Department permit #98691 was issued on December 18, 1973 for \$10,000 of fire repairs, so it is possible that the porch entry door was actually enclosed at that time.

Many of the events held at the DAWC were significant in the lives of African American Detroit women. Josephine Harreld Love (1914 - 2003), founder and director of the Heritage Museum and Fine Arts for Youth (at 110 East Ferry Avenue) had a memorable first introduction to the DAWC Building for one of its first events in 1941. Love's sister-in-law arranged for a wedding reception at the DAWC for Josephine and Dr. W. Thomas Love when they returned from their honeymoon. "On the day before the party the former owner of the house [the Lennane family] demanded that all the carpeting and furniture be removed immediately, leaving the house bare. Somehow everything returned to normal the next day with substitute furnishings put in place and looking as if they belonged there."¹⁴

In a 1954 article that reflected on the DAWC's thirty-third anniversary, the club described itself as the mother organization of Detroit's women's clubs, and that it was "born out of the errors of the post-slavery period in America."¹⁵ Rosa Slade Gragg was in attendance along with retiring president Pearl Harris, incoming president Martha Brandon, and Jeanette Welch Brown, an activist. Brown had spearheaded the movement for the conversion of exclusionary tennis courts to be converted to become William A. Peck Park and recreation center (at Kirby and Brush Streets). William A. Peck Park remains today, although it no longer has a recreation center

¹² Ibid.

¹³ City of Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board, *East Ferry Avenue Historic District Final Report*, enacted December 9, 1982.

¹⁴ Michael Hodges, "East Ferry: Avenue of Dreams: Part Three African American Achievement: Middle-class blacks create an oasis," *Detroit News*, July 11, 2001, p. 6 D.

¹⁵ "The Detroit Association of Women's Clubs Celebrates 33rd Year," *Michigan Chronicle*, May 1, 1954, pg. 20.

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Some of the DAWC's most significant programs of the mid-twentieth century included aid to needy families, hospitals, home and children's programs, heart and cancer research drives, as well as community activities such as "Keep Detroit Beautiful," and United Community Services fund drives among many others. The DAWC had a "mammoth" March of Dimes fundraising program supporting prenatal care units and its early programs fighting polio. The DAWC women conducted programs that involved visiting the sick in hospitals such as the Eloise Psychiatric Hospital in Westland, Michigan, and local nursing homes, as well as collecting clothing for the needy. During the mid-twentieth century, the Detroit Association of Women's Clubs became a conglomerate joining over thirty African American organizations that dealt with a wide range of socio-economic problems plaguing African Americans. Programs included assistance to unwed mothers, to needy children, and financial assistance to the growing NAACP. The Common Council of the City of Detroit recognized the significant work of the Detroit Association of Women's Clubs in 1961 resolution in which the council recognized the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the DAWC and forty years of the members' volunteer time, advocacy, and charitable work.



Michelle Ann May and her father, Leon May, at a recital at the DAWC in 1965.

The Detroit Association of Women's Clubs (DAWC) has no record of using the name "The Detroit Association of *Colored* Women's Clubs" on its official documentation, or in contemporary news articles. Although the national organization was named the National Organization of Colored Women's Clubs, the word "colored" was not used by the organization in Detroit (it is not known exactly when the DAWC joined the national organization).¹⁶ At its peak in 1945, the DAWC included over seventy clubs, and it had over 3,000 members. In 1986 the DAWC had a membership of twenty-two clubs and about six-hundred

members.¹⁷ In addition to advocacy and activism, the DAWC hosted weddings, receptions, recitals, and cotillions in the club building, and it became a significant part of the social lives of African American Detroiters. The DAWC continues today and sponsors charitable projects and scholarships for the African American community of Detroit. The Detroit chapter is still involved with the charitable activities and scholarships for the education of African American women.

The African American historic sites in Detroit were just beginning to be recognized in the late 1970s. In 1979, Preservation Wayne (now Preservation Detroit), a historic preservation advocacy organization in Detroit, along with the State of Michigan History Division, prepared a National Register of Historic Places nomination for the East Ferry Avenue Historic District. In 1982 the

¹⁶ The National Association of Colored Women's Clubs was a significant organization that was organized in 1895 in response to a racist, vitriolic newspaper organization in Missouri. The organization began with a conference and mission statement created in response. A report from the 1899 National Association of Colored Women stated that there were six clubs from Michigan who were members of the national group.

¹⁷ Peter Gavrilovich, "Women's clubs deserve honors," *Detroit Free Press*, October 26, 1986, p. 3.

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City of Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board authored the East Ferry Avenue Historic District Final Report which includes the DAWC Building. Local designation in Detroit provides for a review for any exterior modifications in the East Ferry Avenue local historic district. An expansion plan by the Center for Creative Studies (the name of the college at the time) located on East Kirby Street, to the south, threatened the block of East Ferry Avenue on which the DAWC Building sits with demolition. Hilanius Phillips, then a senior planner at the City of Detroit's Community and Economic Development Department, advocated for preservation of the buildings on East Ferry Avenue, and on Frederick Street to the south.¹⁸ Also significant was a Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) report, *East Ferry Avenue Historic District, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan*, was completed by Community and Economic Development Department of the City of Detroit in 1984. These historic preservation tools were enacted to protect the East Ferry Avenue properties, and to recognize the important African American history embodied within them at a time when encroaching institutions threatened the historic buildings.

A ceremony was held in 1986 when the DAWC organized and financially backed the installation of a Michigan Historical Marker at the front lawn of the DAWC property. In 1990 and 1991 a rash of thefts of state historic markers in the East Ferry Avenue neighborhood resulted in the loss of the DAWC marker.¹⁹ The DAWC members, undeterred by the loss of the marker, raised funds once again, and a new marker was installed in 1997. In 2019 a City of Detroit secondary street sign commemorating Rosa Slade-Gragg with the name "Dr. Rosa L. Gragg Blvd." was installed at the southwest corner of East Ferry Avenue and Brush Street at the property of the DAWC, further recognizing the significance of the DAWC and the important contributions of Rosa Slade-Gragg.

Rosa Leontyne Slade-Gragg

Introduction Paragraph

Rosa Leontyne Slade-Gragg (1904-1989) was one of the most significant African Americans of mid-twentieth-century Detroit, and she was nationally significant as a civil rights and women's activist who advocated for the rights of African American women. Rosa Slade-Gragg was an advisor to three United States Presidents: in 1942 President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed her to the National Volunteer's Participation Committee of Civil Defense, a national advisory board where she was the only African American woman. Slade-Gragg was appointed to the Status of Women's Commission, the National Women's Committee on Civil Rights, and the Commission on Employment of the Handicapped by President John F. Kennedy. President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed her to the Citizens Committee on Community Relations and the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services. During the Kennedy and Johnson era, Gragg visited the White House thirty-two times. Rosa Slade-Gragg was also appointed to significant

¹⁸ Herb Boyd, "He tries to save past for blacks," *Detroit Free Press*, March 7, 1979, pg. 16D.

¹⁹ Susan Watson, "Thieves are stealing pieces of history," *Detroit Free Press*, February 8, 1991, p. 16.

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commissions in Michigan and Detroit, beginning in 1943 Michigan Governor Murray Van Wagoner appointed her as advisor on race relations to the Michigan Office of Civil Defense. In 1949, she was appointed President of the Commission of the Department of Public Welfare by Detroit Mayor Eugene E. Antwerp. Slade-Gragg held these commissions while she was president of the DAWC and was organizing the association into its new home. Slade-Gragg was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Paul Quinn College of Waco, Texas, and an Honorary Doctor of Laws from Monrovia College of West Africa in Liberia. Her civil rights activism continued through her later years as she worked for the improvement of Detroit and the nation's African American community.

Rosa Leontyne Slade-Gragg

Rosa Slade-Gragg was involved in the betterment of all facets of life for African Americans of mid-century Detroit and the nation. She served as president of the Detroit Association of Women's Clubs (1940-1958) and during her tenure she became president of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs (1958-62). Additionally, Rosa Slade-Gragg is nationally significant as a civil rights and women's activist who advocated for the rights of



Rosa Slade-Gragg, 1962
Photo by Cecil Stoughton, White House
Photographer

African Americans. Born in 1904 in Hampton, Georgia, she was the daughter of Reverend and Mrs. Willis O. Slade. Rosa Slade was the eldest in a family of seven children – all college graduates. She graduated summa cum laude from Morris Brown College in Atlanta with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1920, and later won the Rosenwald scholarship to study for one summer at the Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama. Rosa Slade began her career as a teacher in 1920, and then as principal of a small high school in Eatonton, Georgia, and eventually became principal at a larger Atlanta high school. Later, she was named head of the English department of Central Park College in Savannah, Georgia, where she met James Robert Gragg Sr. of Detroit. She married James R. Gragg (1926-1956), a laundry and tailoring business owner, in 1926 and the

couple moved to Detroit.²⁰ In the 1930s, Slade-Gragg worked towards a master's degree and took courses at Wayne University, Detroit (now Wayne State University), and the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, where she received additional credits in the field of education. James and Rosa Gragg had one son, James R. Gragg Jr. in 1928, who graduated with honors from Howard University, received a law degree from Wayne State Law School in 1962, and went on to become a judge.

Rosa Slade-Gragg and the Detroit Association of Women's Clubs

Rosa Slade-Gragg joined the Detroit Association of Women's Clubs in 1926; initially in the "Current Topic Study Club," and as time went on, she became more involved. Just a couple of years later, in 1928, she became a representative (board member) to the DAWC, and then in

²⁰ Sandra D. Davis, "Local women mingled with presidents, became judges," *Detroit Free Press*, February 15, 1989, p. 10.

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1933 she was elected a delegate to the Michigan State Association of Colored Women Clubs. She became a representative to the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs in 1938. At the same time, Slade-Gragg worked on DAWC programs to assist unwed mothers, needy children, and the growing NAACP (the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Rosa Slade-Gragg was elected president of the DAWC in 1940 and at that time the DAWC members were meeting in the nursing home for elderly African American women known as the Phyllis Wheatley Home (558 East Elizabeth Street, Detroit). Mrs. Gragg rallied club-member support for a clubhouse and started an ambitious fund-raising campaign to pay for it. In 1940, she and her family lived in a home at 459 East Ferry Avenue, just across the street and a few houses east from the Lennane house. "I used to lie in bed at night and look out the window of my bedroom at the Lennane house," she said. "I thought it was very elegant and beautiful, but there were restrictions against blacks owning property on Ferry between Woodward and Brush."²¹

The Lennane house was listed at a sale price of \$24,000, and a group of doctors had shown interest in purchasing the building for \$15,000, but the Lennane heirs did not want to sell the home to have it be converted to a clinic. In 1940 the DAWC had a building fund of exactly \$252, recalled Rosa Slade-Gragg in a newspaper interview. After many false starts, dead-end leads, and disappointments, she ended up negotiating with the Lennane heirs. "They were intrigued by my determination to purchase a building for the organization," Slade-Gragg stated. "We settled on a price of \$10,000." The Lennane property on the corner of Brush Street and East Ferry Avenue was purchased by the DAWC for \$14,000 less than the original asking price. In less than a year the women raised \$2,000 for a down payment and moved the DAWC into the former Lennane house on April 2, 1941.²² The DAWC members fundraised and paid for decorating, renovation work, and operational expenses of their new clubhouse, and recognized the donors' contributions on a large wood painted board that still hangs in the building's living room.

Because of the racial covenants that restricted African Americans from residing west of Brush Street and east of Woodward Avenue on East Ferry Avenue, Gragg had the address of the building changed from 326 East Ferry Avenue to 5461 Brush Street. The Graggs mortgaged their own house on East Ferry Avenue, their furniture, car, and Mr. Gragg's laundry and tailoring business to help with the down payment on what became the Detroit Association of Women's Clubs building. In a *Detroit News* story, Slade-Gragg stated that "The purchase of that clubhouse was a demonstration in self-help. We raised the money ourselves with minimal help from white people. We paid off the mortgage within three and a half years, including taxes, interest, and furnishings. Even the Urban League and the NAACP were in rented buildings in those days."²³

From approximately 1940 to 1958, and perhaps longer, Rosa Slade-Gragg maintained an office in the DAWC Building on the second floor at the northwest side of the building. The office space retains its integrity today with the same dimensions, proportions, and original windows; it is still

²¹ Margie Reins Smith, "The resolute ladies of E. Ferry," *Detroit News Michigan Sunday Magazine*, December 12, 1982, p. 30.

²² Ibid. p. 31.

²³ Ibid, p. 31.

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used as a club office today. While involved in the DAWC in the 1940s, Rosa Slade-Gragg was elected chairman of the State Educational Loan Fund of the group, and she raised the largest sum of money for scholarship awards in the group's history. She became program chairman of the Michigan Association of Colored Women's Clubs, and in 1951 was elected to represent the Department of Women in Industry for the club's Central Regional Association. She was the financial auditor of the Central Regional Association of Women's Clubs while she was the national chairman of Public Affairs, and then national chairman of the Constitutional Committee for the NACWC. She ran for the office of president of the NACWC in 1957 and took office in 1958.

Rosa Slade-Gragg's involvement in the NACWC catapulted her into the national spotlight. Beginning in 1958, she was elected president of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, and she moved to Washington D. C. One of her initiatives while president was advocating for legislation designating the Frederick Douglass House at Cedar Hill in Anacostia, Washington D. C. as a National Historic Site to be operated by the National Park Service. Frederick Douglass (1818-1895) was born into slavery in 1818, he escaped as a young man and became a leading voice in the abolitionist movement. Douglass was appointed marshal for the District of Columbia by President Rutherford B. Hayes in 1876 and he authored the last of his influential autobiographical books while he lived in the house at Cedar Hill.

In 1961, Slade-Gragg launched a restoration program for the Frederick Douglass Home at the Cotillion Room of the Sheraton Park Hotel in Washington, D. C. Speakers at the event were prominent historians including Dr. Mordecai Johnson, Dr. Benjamin Quarles of Morgan State College, Dr. Joseph K. Douglass, adopted grandson of Frederick Douglass, Senator Philip Hart (D-Michigan), and others. In that year, the organization raised \$10,000 for the Douglass Home restoration and grounds. Restoration expenses were a major drain on the NACWC finances, though. As one example, the roof at the Frederick Douglass estate was replaced at a cost of over \$653, an expensive project for the organization.²⁴ Slade-Gragg saw the continued financial drain that the Frederick Douglass Home would likely create for the NACWC in future years, and also that the home's maintenance was not a direct mandate or objective of the NACWC. Under Slade-Gragg's leadership a bill was introduced in Congress for the Frederick Douglass Home to be designated a National Historic Site. After Slade-Gragg's advocacy and years of efforts, the bill was approved by Congress, and then signed into law by President John F. Kennedy on September 5, 1962.²⁵ The Frederick Douglass House was owned and maintained by the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs for over forty-six years (1916-1962), and today the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site remains open to the public, maintained by the National Park Service.



Rosa Slade Gragg and President John F. Kennedy, signing the Frederick Douglass house bill, September 5, 1962

²⁴ LaVonne Leslie, *The History of the National Association of Women's Clubs, Inc.: A Legacy of Service*, Xlibris U.S., 2012.

²⁵ "Frederick Douglass Bill Is Approved by President," *New York Times*, September 5, 1962.

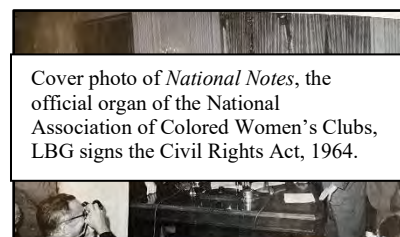
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A significant sidenote to the Frederick Douglass House story is that in 1962, as part of Slade-Gragg's advocacy efforts for the home, she arranged for an 1865 engraved portrait of Abraham Lincoln by William E. Marshall (1837-1906) to be given to President Kennedy at the White House. The portrait was to be hung in the Lincoln Room. The NACWC added an inscribed plaque to the portrait stating: "Presented to the White House in Memory of Frederick Douglass by the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, Inc." President Kennedy remarked that this was the first time a Negro organization had presented a gift to the White House.²⁶ This is one of the most significant examples of Rosa Slade-Gragg's work to raise the profile of African American women and African American organizations at a time when Civil Rights in the United States was gaining power.

During her presidency of the NACWC, Slade-Gragg gave many presentations about the organization's initiatives, one example was at the Indianapolis Council of the National Council of Negro Women's meeting in June 1957.²⁷ At that time, Slade-Gragg spoke about her participation as a representative of the NACWC on the bi-partisan Hoover Commission which drafted a report on the organization of the U. S. Executive branch as it streamlined federal departments following World War II and the Korean War. Slade-Gragg was elected the sixteenth president of the NACWC, serving from 1958 to 1964 at the headquarters in Washington, D.C. (1601 R St. N.W., extant), after which time she was president emeritus. In 1966 the NACWC awarded her their distinguished service award for her outstanding contributions to the improvement of the status of women.

At the same time Slade-Gragg worked with the Detroit Association of Women's Clubs, the Michigan State Association, the Central Regional Association, and the National Association, she was receiving other appointments. Slade-Gragg's career in activism began in the late 1930s; she



was a board member of the Detroit Council on Fair Employment Practice; the council advocated against employment discrimination. Then beginning in 1941 she received appointments to significant commissions and boards. Rosa Slade-Gragg was an advisor to three U. S. Presidents. In 1941 President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed her to the National Advisory Board of the Office of Civil Defense where she was the only African American woman on the board. She was appointed to both the Civilian Defense Speakers' Bureau, and the War Information Committee in 1942.²⁸ The National Advisory Board of the Office of Civil Defense was charged with the responsibility of consulting with President Roosevelt on the creation of the nation's civil defense offices. Slade-Gragg worked closely with President Roosevelt, attending his speeches and she was included in events

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ "Rosa Gragg, Noted Clubwoman To Be ICNW Forum Speaker," *Indianapolis Recorder*, June 22, 1957, p. 5.

²⁸ "First Ladies of Colored America - No. 4," *The Crisis*, December 1942, p. 385.

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with his family and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. Slade-Gragg said she considered the Roosevelts "very near, very dear, and very close friends."²⁹

Slade-Gragg said she never considered herself "political, but rather a public servant."³⁰ In 1961, President John F. Kennedy appointed her to three presidential commissions: the Commission on the Status of Women, the National Women's Committee on Civil Rights, and the Commission on Employment of the Handicapped. President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed her to the Citizens Committee on Community Relations, and the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services. During the Kennedy and Johnson era, Gragg visited the White House thirty-two times, perhaps the most significant was when she was in attendance as President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act on July 2, 1964. Slade-Gragg worked with and traveled with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. during the Civil Rights movement. "The strides we have made have been terrific," Gragg said to the *Detroit News*, "but yet again there's so much more to be done."³¹

Rosa Slade-Gragg was also involved in Michigan and Detroit public service; in 1943 Michigan Governor Murray D. Van Wagoner appointed her as advisor on race relations to the Michigan Office of Civil Defense. She acted as personal representative for the governor on several occasions. She was appointed president of the Department of Public Welfare later that year; the organization oversaw public assistance programs in Michigan.³² As president of that commission, Slade-Gragg was responsible for nearly 2,000 employees and a \$20 million operating budget. In 1949, Detroit Mayor Eugene Van Antwerp appointed Slade-Gragg to be a race relations advisor for the Detroit Department of Public Welfare,³³ where she was the only African American to serve on that council.

Some of her other leadership roles were as an instructor and vice president in the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (known as ASALH today) as vice president, and member of the Detroit Council on Fair Employment Practice, a member of the Civilian Defense Speakers' Bureau, and the War Information Committee. Slade-Gragg was involved in many organizations in her career; she was supervisor of the Michigan State Association of Colored Girls, member of the National Council of Negro Women, she served as president of the Women's Division of the Detroit Roundtable of Christians and Jews,, the board of advisors of the Detroit Institute of Commerce, the board of directors of the Detroit Civilian Defense Volunteer Office and as a member of the Service to Negro Troops Committee of the U.S.O. (United Service Organizations) and many, many other organizations.

²⁹ Davis, Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Rosa L. Slade Gragg, biographical information sheet; Detroit Public Library, Burton Historical Collection.

³³ "First Ladies of Colored America - No. 4," *The Crisis*, December, 1942, p. 385.

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Rosa Slade-Gragg's Accomplishments

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In 1946, Rosa L. Slade-Gragg founded the Slade-Gragg Academy of Practical Arts, the first Black vocational school in Detroit, set up as a non-profit educational corporation, to provide “training and guidance of men and women in skills and trades designed to prepare them for productive and socially useful lives.”³⁴ Slade-Gragg felt that the post-war demands for trained persons in the practical arts were not being met in the public educational facilities provided in the city of Detroit. The Slade-Gragg Academy, which operated at 455 East Ferry Avenue from 1946 to 1952, was open to all races and creeds and trained over 2,000 women, men and returning veterans during its years of operation. Among its class offerings were tailoring, upholstering, dress making, millinery, and sign painting as well as food service and production. The academy also offered classes in personality development, speech, and grammar. The college was licensed to offer instruction in certain trades by the Michigan State Department of Public Instruction and was approved by the Veterans Administration for the training of veterans. The Slade-Gragg academy promoted itself as the “Tuskegee Institute of the north” and by 1950 it had expanded to hold additional classes in a building at 3735 Woodward Avenue (no longer extant). Rosa Slade-Gragg’s brother James O. Slade (1925-1993) was a director and administrative staff of the academy which employed almost thirty people. The Slade-Gragg Academy was significant during a time when most of Detroit’s other vocational schools refused to accept African American students.

Rosa Slade-Gragg’s friend and ally was Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune (1875-1955), one of the most important African American educators, civil, and women’s right leaders, and government officials of the twentieth century.³⁵ It is interesting to note that both Bethune and Slade-Gragg moved from activism at the local level to being appointed to advise United States Presidents. Bethune founded the Daytona Beach Literary and Industrial School for Training Negro Girls in Florida, which eventually became the Bethune-Cookman college. Bethune founded many organizations over her lifetime, and risking racist attacks, led voter registration drives after women gained the vote in 1920. In 1924 she was elected president of the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs, and she was appointed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) as director of Negro Affairs of the National Youth Administration in the 1940s. Bethune was a leader of FDR’s “black cabinet” and was a friend of Eleanor Roosevelt. She became vice president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Persons (NAACP), a position she held for the rest of her life. President Harry S. Truman appointed Mary McCleod Bethune to the founding conference of the United Nations in 1945, where she was the only woman of color. Bethune’s life was celebrated with a memorial statue in Washington D.C. in 1974, and a United States postage stamp in 1985. Her final residence is now a National Historic

³⁴ Slade-Gragg Academy of Practical Arts, Bulletin 1950-1951 catalog.

³⁵ Smith, Jessie Carney, editor, *Notable Black American Women*, Book II, Gale Research, Detroit, Michigan, 1996 p. 256

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Site.³⁶ Mary McCleod Bethune was a very strong mentor and inspirational African American woman for Rosa Slade-Gragg who emulated her work advocating for African Americans.

Rosa Slade-Gragg was a steward (board member) of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church in Detroit (5050 St. Antoine Street, extant), the second oldest African American church in Michigan. A great deal of Slade-Gragg's volunteer time was spent at her church, where her organizing skills led in the establishment of a youth center. Slade-Gragg negotiated the purchase of a \$20,000 building that was also converted to house a library and archives of the history for Bethel A.M.E.³⁷ In addition, she served as the editor of the church's official publication, the *Bethel A.M.E. Recorder* and she was superintendent of the Young People's Department of the Sunday school in the 1930s and early 1940s.³⁸ She authored and directed two pageants on the history of the A.M.E. church and the history of African Americans in Detroit. Slade-Gragg remained a member of Bethel A.M.E. church for the duration of her life in Detroit. Later in her life, she received a "Women's Achievement Award" for her outstanding leadership in education and community involvement from the fourth Episcopal district Women's Missionary Society of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1982.

Slade-Gragg was active in organizations recognizing the history of Detroit and in planning celebrations in the city of Detroit. Slade-Gragg served on the Women's Committee for the 250th anniversary of Detroit (1951), the Detroit Bicentennial Committee (1976), the Detroit Historic Sites Committee, and the Detroit Historic Preservation Committee (predecessor of the city's Historic Designation Advisory Board). She also was a member of the Board of Trustees of Wilberforce University, an A.M.E.-affiliated Historically Black University in Wilberforce (once known as Xenia), Ohio. A significant connection for Rosa Slade-Gragg was when she was on the board of management of the Lucy Thurman Young Women's Christian Association (Y.W.C.A.) branch in Detroit (569 East Elizabeth St.), which was constructed for African American women. Lucy Thurman (1849-1918) was an African American women's rights activist and social reformer who was the Woman's Christian Temperance Union's only African American member at the turn-of-the-century.³⁹ She was also president of the National Association of Colored Women among many other organizations. The YMCA in Detroit was named in her honor in 1933, and many mid-century DAWC events were held at that location.

³⁶ Michals, Debra, "Mary McCleod Bethune" National Women's History Museum, <https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/mary-mcleod-bethune>

³⁷ Hunter, Braden, "Dr. Rosa L. Slade Gragg receives Detroit street renaming," *The Michigan Chronicle*, October 7, 2019.

³⁸ Leslie, LaVonne, PhD., *The History of the National Association of Women's Clubs, Inc.: A Legacy of Service*, Xlibris U.S., 2012.

³⁹ Lee, Maureen Elgersman, *Biographical Sketch of Lucy Thurman, 1849-1918* https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C3567719/biographical-sketch-lucy-thurman-1849-1918.

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Comparative Context

Rosa Slade-Gragg's impact in Detroit can most directly be associated with her time as president of the DAWC, and her remarkable Civil Rights action acquiring the house as the club headquarters. For eighteen years, from approximately 1940 to 1958, and perhaps longer, Rosa Slade-Gragg maintained an office in the DAWC Building on the second floor at the northwest side of the building. The office space retains its integrity today with the same dimensions, proportions, and original windows; it is still used as a club office today. The home that Slade-Gragg and her husband, Robert James Gragg, and son lived in at 459 East Ferry Avenue was part of their life at the beginning of their life in Detroit. The townhouse is still extant. At some time in the early 1950s, the Graggs moved to a house at 235 Arden Park Boulevard in Detroit (extant) where they lived out their lives. When Slade-Gragg was elected the sixteenth president of the NACWC, she served from 1958 to 1964 (for six years) at the headquarters in Washington D.C. (1601 R St. N.W., extant), after which time she was president emeritus. Slade-Gragg's awards and commendations were many: she was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Paul Quinn College of Waco, Texas, and an Honorary Doctor of Laws from Monrovia College in Liberia, Africa. Slade-Gragg received many other awards in her lifetime including one celebrating her as one of the "First Ladies of Colored America" from the NAACP's magazine, *The Crisis* in December 1942, which recognized her accomplishments among her peers. Another significant award was from the Michigan Republican Party for her leadership as a conservative woman. In 1941 she was named "Woman of the Week" by the *Michigan Chronicle* newspaper. Slade-Gragg was awarded for her service to the Lambda Kappa Mu Sorority in appreciation for her leadership in 1974. Another award was for recognition of her work in the fields of education, religion, and human relations for the "City Brotherhood Rally" in 1979. That same year, she received an award for her years of service to the National Council of Negro Women. The DAWC named club committees for her: The Rosa L. Gragg Flower Club, the Rosa L. Gragg Educational and Civic Club, etc. In June 1972, Slade-Gragg was honored at a testimonial reception organized by the Century of Progress Club (of the DAWC) titled "Dr. Rosa L. Gragg's Day" where more than two hundred Detroiters paid tribute to her for her leadership and contributions. Slade-Gragg was inducted into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame in 1987 for her work in the achievement of civil rights. Her archives are at the Burton Collection of the Detroit Public Library. Rosa Slade-Gragg passed away in 1989 at the age of eighty-six and is buried at Detroit's Elmwood Cemetery.

Lauren Gragg, granddaughter of Rosa Slade-Gragg, said her grandmother was able to cultivate allies even in spaces that were rarely open to African American women because she was able to make people feel that she shared their values. "It wasn't just a political affiliation or only wanting to serve a certain population...She woke up every morning and was driven by purpose," Gragg said. "Her purpose was to provide opportunities, especially for those who were underserved."⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Kim Trent, "Detroit Street That Rejected Rosa Gragg Will Wear Her Name," *Detroit Free Press*, October 10, 2019.

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Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

South side of East Ferry Street, Lot 5, Block 27, Brush's Subdivision, Liber 17, Page 28, Plats, Wayne County Records.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the property historically and currently associated with the building.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Rebecca Binno Savage, Lead Architectural Historian
organization: City of Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board
street & number: 2 Woodward Avenue, Suite 218
city or town: Detroit state: MI zip code: 48226
e-mail: rebecca.savage@detroitmi.gov
telephone: (313) 510-4350
date: April 2024

Detroit Association of Women's Clubs Building
Name of Property

Wayne County, MI
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Detroit Association of Women's Clubs Building

Name of Property

Wayne County, MI

County and State

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Detroit Association of Women's Clubs building

City or Vicinity: Detroit

County: Wayne

State: Michigan

Photographer: Ryan Schumaker, Rebecca Savage

Date Photographed: June, 2022, and February, 2023

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Description: East elevation looking west

0001 of 0035

Description: East and north elevations looking southwest

0002 of 0035

Description: East and south elevations looking north west

0003 of 0035

Description: South and east elevations looking north

0004 of 0035

Description: South elevation of fire escape and rear entry, looking north

0005 of 0035

Description: West façade and entry porch looking south

0006 of 0035

Detroit Association of Women's Clubs Building

Name of Property

Wayne County, MI

County and State

Description: Southeast corner basement window well, looking northwest
0007 of 0035

Description: North façade and porch looking south
0008 of 0035

Description: First floor interior, vestibule, nook, looking northwest
0009 of 0035

Description: First floor interior, main hall and staircase looking west
0010 of 0035

Description: First floor interior, living room looking northwest
0011 of 0035

Description: First floor interior, living room looking west
0012 of 0035

Description: First floor interior, living room fireplace, looking north
0013 of 0035

Description: First floor interior, restroom, looking west
0014 of 0035

Description: First floor interior, dining room, looking northeast
0015 of 0035

Description: First floor interior, butler's pantry and kitchen looking south
0016 of 0035

Description: First floor interior, kitchen, looking west
0017 of 0035

Description: First floor interior, main staircase looking west
0018 of 0035

Detroit Association of Women's Clubs Building

Name of Property

Wayne County, MI

County and State

Description: Staircase landing, looking west

0019 of 0035

Description: Second floor interior, hallway, looking south

0020 of 0035

Description: Second floor interior, former bedroom, looking south

0021 of 0035

Description: Second floor interior, former bedroom looking north

0022 of 0035

Description: Second floor interior, Rosa Slade-Gragg office looking northwest

0023 of 0035

Description: Second floor interior, former bedroom looking northeast

0024 of 0035

Description: Second floor interior, sleeping porch looking southwest

0025 of 0035

Description: Third floor interior staircase, looking west

0026 of 0035

Description: Third floor interior, dormer window looking east

0027 of 0035

Description: Third floor interior, hallway looking south

0028 of 0035

Description: Third floor interior, former bedroom, looking south

0029 of 0035

Description: Third floor interior, former bedroom looking north

0030 of 0035

Detroit Association of Women's Clubs Building

Name of Property

Wayne County, MI

County and State

Description: Third floor interior, restroom, looking west
0031 of 0035

Description: Third floor interior, attic space looking east
0032 of 0035

Description: Basement, staircase to kitchen, looking west
0033 of 0035

Description: Basement, storage, looking northeast
0034 of 0035

Description: Basement, furnace, looking north
0035 of 0035

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
Tier 2 – 120 hours
Tier 3 – 230 hours
Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

Detroit Association of Women's Clubs Building

5461 Brush Street, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan
Lat.: 42.362591; Long.: -83.062960



 Detroit Association of Women's Clubs Building

Detroit Association of Women's Clubs Building

5461 Brush Street, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan
Lat.: 42.362591; Long.: -83.062960



Detroit Association of Women's Clubs Building





DETROIT ASSOCIATION
OF WOMEN'S CLUBS

5461



























Restroom



ROOM
WAY









































UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:	Nomination	
Property Name:	Detroit Association of Women's Clubs Building	
Multiple Name:	The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit MPS	
State & County:	MICHIGAN, Wayne	

Date Received:	Date of Pending List:	Date of 16th Day:	Date of 45th Day:	Date of Weekly List:
10/31/2024	11/15/2024	12/2/2024	12/16/2024	12/6/2024

Reference number:	MP100011153
Nominator:	SHPO

Reason For Review:

<input type="checkbox"/> Appeal	<input type="checkbox"/> PDIL	<input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue
<input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Photo
<input type="checkbox"/> Waiver	<input type="checkbox"/> National	<input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary
<input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission	<input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource	<input type="checkbox"/> Period
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> TCP	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years
	<input type="checkbox"/> CLG	

☒ **X** Accept ☐ Return ☐ Reject 12/2/2024 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:	Although already listed as part of a district focused on architecture, the DAWC building has significance independent of the district's importance. Significant in Ethnic Heritage and in Social History/ Civil Rights both for the club itself and for its association with Rosa Leontyne Slade-Gragg, an important national figure in Civil rights from the 1940s through the 1970s. POS 1941-73
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Recommendation/ Criteria	Accept / Criteria A & B
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Reviewer	<u>Jim Gabbert</u>	Discipline	<u>Historian</u>
Telephone	<u>(202)354-2275</u>	Date	<u></u>

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN STRATEGIC FUND
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

QUENTIN L. MESSER, JR.
PRESIDENT

Wednesday, October 23, 2024

Ms. Joy Beasley, Keeper
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Beasley:

The enclosed files contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for **Detroit Association of Women's Clubs Building, 5461 Brush Street, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan**. This property is being nominated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This nomination is a X New Submission Resubmission Additional Documentation Removal.

- 1 Signed National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
- 2 Locational maps (incl. with nomination file)
- 0 Sketch map(s) / figures(s) / exhibits(s)
- 2 Pieces of correspondence (incl. with correspondence file)
- 35 Digital photographs
- Other (incl. with nomination file): _____

State Historic Preservation Review Board

The Michigan State Historic Preservation Review Board reviewed the nomination materials at its meeting on Friday, September 20, 2024. The Review Board voted 9 to 0 to approve the nomination under National Register Criteria A and B and recommended the State Historic Preservation Officer approve the nomination.

Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credits

- X This property is not utilizing the Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credits
- This property is being rehabilitated using the Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credits. A preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.



Notifications

- ☒ Notification of the nomination was sent to the property owner(s) and chief elected official(s) on: Friday, August 16, 2024.
- ☒ No objections to the nomination were submitted during the public comment period.
- ☐ One or more objections to the nomination were received during the public comment period.
- ☐ One or more letters of support to the nomination were received during the public comment period.

Certified Local Government

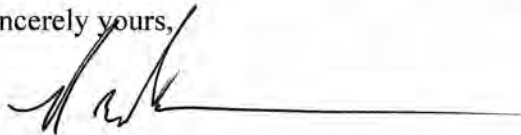
- ☐ The nominated property is not located in a Certified Local Government community.
- ☒ The nominated property is located in a Certified Local Government community. A copy of the local commission's review ☒ was ☐ was not received within 60 days, and ☒ is ☐ is not included with the correspondence file.

NPS Grant-Funded Submissions

- ☐ Not funded with an NPS grant
- ☐ Underrepresented Communities Grant
- ☐ African American Civil Rights Grant
- ☒ History of Equal Rights Grant
- ☐ Tribal Heritage Grant
- ☐ Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant
- ☐ Disaster Recovery Grant

Questions concerning this nomination should be addressed to Todd A. Walsh, National Register Coordinator, at (517) 331-8917 or WalshT@michigan.gov.

Sincerely yours,



Ryan M. Schumaker
State Historic Preservation Officer



Certified Local Government National Register Nomination Review Report

Please complete and return to: National Register Coordinator, Michigan State Historic Preservation Office, 300 North Washington Square, Lansing, Michigan 48913

Name of Property: Detroit Association of Women's Clubs Building

Address: 5461 Brush Street, Detroit, Wayne County

Owner(s): Detroit Association of Women's Clubs

Date Complete Nomination Approved by the SHPO: July 29, 2024

The Certified Local Government (CLG) agrees with the SHPO to expedite the review period for this nomination.

YES ☒ (date of agreement) _____ NO ☐

Calvin Jackson 09/12/2024
Printed Name & Signature of CLG Commission Chairperson Date

Printed Name & Signature of Elected Chief Official Date

Date(s) of commission meeting(s) when the nomination was reviewed: September 12, 2024

Date of written notice to property owner of commission meeting: September 4, 2024

The CLG provided the following opportunities for public participation in the review of this nomination: YES

Were any written comments received by the CLG? YES ☐ NO ☒

Was the nomination form distributed to CLG commission members? YES ☒ NO ☐

Was a site visit made to the property by CLG commission members? YES ☒ NO ☐

If yes, when? (H D A B) Board members did individual SITE VISITS

Did the CLG seek assistance of the SHPO in evaluating the eligibility of this property for the National Register? YES ☐ NO ☒

VERIFICATION of Professional Qualifications of Commission in accordance with 36 CFR 61, Appendix 1, of Michigan's Certified Local Government Program.

List those commission members who meet the 36 CFR 61 qualifications required to review this type of resource.

Commission Member	Professional Qualifications
1. <u>CALVIN JACKSON</u>	<u>PRESIDENT Indian Village H.D.</u> <u>RESIDENT</u>
2. <u>LOUIS FISHER</u>	<u>ARC HISTORIC</u>
3. <u>DR. CAROLYN CARTER, PHD</u>	<u>PUBLIC HISTORIAN /</u> <u>GENEALOGY</u>
4. <u>WILLIAM WORDEN</u>	<u>RESIDENT Indian Village ASSO</u> <u>HISTORIAN</u>
5. <u>THERESA HOLDER-HAGOOD</u>	<u>RESIDENT HISTORIC DISTRICT</u> <u>HISTORIAN</u>
6. <u>OSUALDO RIVERA</u>	<u>HISTORY PROFESSOR - U. OF M</u>
7. <u>MELANIE A. BAZIL</u>	<u>ARCHIVIST</u>

Was an outside consultant used? YES _____ NO X

If yes, provide the name and list the 36 CFR 61 qualifications the person meets: _____

The CLG Commission finds that the property meets the following National Register Criterion/Criteria for Evaluation: A E B

The CLG Commission finds that the property meets the National Register standards of integrity.
YES X NO _____

Recommendation of CLG Commission:

APPROVAL _____

DENIAL _____ (specify reasons on a separate sheet of paper)

Signature of Chief Elected Official _____

Date _____

Date of transmittal of this report to the SHPO _____

Date of receipt of this report by the SHPO _____