

**Dallas Landmark Commission
Landmark Nomination Form**

1. Name

historic: Juanita Craft Home
and/or common:
date: October 14, 1999

2. Location

address: 2618 Warren Avenue
location/neighborhood:

block: A/1694 lot: 5 land survey: tract size:

3. Current Zoning

current zoning:

4. Classification

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> district | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public | <input type="checkbox"/> occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> agricultural | <input type="checkbox"/> park |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> private | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial | <input type="checkbox"/> residence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <input type="checkbox"/> both | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress | <input type="checkbox"/> educational | <input type="checkbox"/> religious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site | Public | Accessibility | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | Acquisition | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes:restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> in progress | <input type="checkbox"/> yes:unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial | <input type="checkbox"/> other, specify |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> military | |

5. Ownership

Current Owner: City of Dallas
Contact: Julie Pearson, AIA **Phone: 214-670-1427**

Address: 1500 Marilla L2FS City: Dallas State: TX Zip: 75201

6. Form Preparation

Date: October 14, 1999
Name & Title: Angela Calvin, Urban Planner
Organization: City of Dallas, Planning and Development, Historic Preservation
Contact: Phone: 214-670-1497

7. Representation on Existing Surveys

Alexander Survey (citywide) local state national National Register
H.P.L. Survey (CBD) A B C D Recorded TX Historic Ldmk
Oak Cliff TX Archaeological Ldmk
Victorian Survey
Dallas Historic Resources Survey, Phase ___ high ___ medium ___ low

For Office Use Only

Date Rec'd: _____ Survey Verified: Y N by: _____ Field Check by: _____ Petitions Needed: Y N
Nomination: Archaeological Site Structure(s) Structure & Site District

8. Historic Ownership

original owner:
significant later owner(s):

9. Construction Dates

original:
alterations/additions:

10. Architect

original construction:
alterations/additions:

11. Site Features

natural:
urban design:

12. Physical Description

Condition, check one:

___ excellent
x good
___ fair

___ deteriorated
___ ruins
___ unexposed

___ unaltered
___ altered

Check one:

___ original site
___ moved(date _____)

Describe present and original (if known) physical appearance. Include style(s) of architecture, current condition and relationship to surrounding fabric (structures, objects, etc). laborate on pertinent materials used and style(s) of architectural detailing, embellishments and site details.

The Juanita Craft house, located at 2618 Warren Street, in South Dallas, is a modest, one-story wood-frame house, designed and constructed in the Craftsman's Bungalow style.

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The Craftsman style houses were inspired primarily by the work of Greene and Greene, two brothers who practiced architecture together in California in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century. They designed simple Craftsman-type, modest yet intricately detailed houses, called bungalows, which were typically one-story, with large front porches, wide eaves, exposed roof rafters, decorative beams and braces, a low pitched but interesting roof form, front and possibly side gables, and tapered square columns supporting the roof. This modest house type with its relatively open plan and intricate detailing was publicized extensively in popular magazines and pattern books, thus familiarizing the rest of the county with this style. This Craftsman 'bungalow' style of house immediately caught the attention of the public and became the most popular and fashionable small house type in the country; every community and city has neighborhoods of this house type. Minor adaptations were made to reflect differences in climate, available or commonly used materials and cultural mores within a region.

The Juanita Craft house is a typical example of this Craftsman Bungalow style with its partial width front porch, pyramidal hipped roof with intersecting front gable over the porch, exposed rafter tails and triangular knee braces at the gable, one over one wood double-hung windows, and novelty siding. It has been painted white, which is typical within its neighborhood.

The house originally contained a living room, located at the front of the house, kitchen, 3 bedrooms and a bath. A small addition has been made to the rear of the house, which enlarged the bathroom. The original interior finishes remain - drywall walls and ceilings, pine floors and simple wood trim which has been painted.

Modifications have been made to the exterior of the house over the years but these changes do not detract from its historic character. Extensions have been made to the original porch at each side; at the left side, the porch floor has been extended, new double 4x4 wood columns added at the outside corner and where this extension adjoins the original porch structure, and a almost flat corrugated translucent roof has been added. The extension at the right side also has a corrugated translucent roof; the sidewalk leads one into this covered area at the front door. It appears that the original columns have been removed from the front porch, and replaced with the previously mentioned double 4x4 wood columns. A flush wood door has replaced the original front door.

The porch has been enclosed with a wood siding half-wall, with Plexiglas above to the underside of the roof structure. It is understood that this porch enclosure was constructed at the direction of Juanita Craft, and provided her with a larger porch, where she and guests could sit outside and enjoy the outdoors while protected from view from the street and possible harm.

The front walk is concrete, with its surface pressed or stamped to look like concrete, and painted

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white. A brick flower bed has been built up, surrounding this porch. This brick enclosure is about 15" high, and is painted white.

The house retains much of its original fabric - the bungalow form, most of its exterior doors and windows, and trim.

Also on the site was a guest house, but this is no longer there. The remainder of the lot is vacant of buildings or structures. A four-foot high chainlink fence is at the perimeter of the lot at the rear property line, and side yards.

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13. Historical Significance

Statement of historical and cultural significance. Include: cultural influences, special events and important personages, influences on neighborhood, on the city, etc.

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Juanita Jewel Craft, the granddaughter of slaves, William and Amy Black Shanks, and the daughter of David and Eliza Shanks, was born on February 9, 1902 in Round Rock, Texas (Burrow 1994). An only child, born into an era that afforded little opportunity to blacks or women, she was to become one of the most influential civil rights advocates of her time. Craft, a firm believer in education and the right to pursue opportunity, dedicated her life to improving the rights of all through a lifetime of community service and NAACP leadership (Juanita Craft Collection).

Early in life, David and Eliza Shanks exposed their daughter to the spirit of advocacy through a variety of educational experiences. Advocates of the political and civil rights of blacks, the Shanks family encouraged the discussion of racial and social issues of the day. News of lynchings, burnings, and shootings, were frequent topics of family discussions. At an early age, Juanita was influenced by the words of speakers like Booker T. Washington and President Theodore Roosevelt. High school field trips to legislative sessions in Austin further encouraged the inquisitive young woman's interest in politics and human rights (Burrows 1994).

In 1918, the secure environment of the Shanks family was shaken by the tragedy of segregation. Mrs. Shanks, suffering from tuberculosis, was escorted on a Jim Crow train by sixteen year old Juanita to a San Angelo sanitarium. Upon arrival, Mrs. Shanks was denied admission because of her race. Nursing her mother for two months in a tent pitched in the backyard of a resident; Juanita nursed her mother even as her condition worsened. Nine days after the two returned to Austin on a segregated coach, Eliza Shanks died at the age of thirty-six. Her mother's death gave Juanita first hand exposure to the senselessness and tragedy of segregation. The incident ignited her resolve to break down the barriers of racial discrimination (Burrows 1994).

Juanita went on to pursue a college education. Although residing only a few blocks from the University of Texas campus in Austin, racial barriers prevented her from attending. She enrolled in Prairie View Normal and Industrial School resenting the segregated education she was forced to accept. Craft studied dressmaking and millinery, later obtaining a teacher's certificate from Samuel Huston College, a teacher's training school for blacks (Burrows 1994).

Arriving in Dallas in March 1925, Juanita struggled to survive. Typical of the Jim Crow era, Dallas maintained rigid racial lines that barred blacks from white schools, lunch counters, and other public facilities. Jobs were in short supply, but eventually, Juanita found work as a bellmaid at the Adolphus Hotel. While her father felt her work was beneath her, Juanita maintained a quiet dignity. She observed the lives of many of the wealthy, famous, and

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infamous visitors of the time including Charles Lindbergh and Eleanor Roosevelt. Juanita often boarded many black entertainers, including Duke Ellington and Louie Armstrong, who performed at the Hotel, but were not allowed rooms (Burrow 1994).

By 1935, Juanita had used her strong work ethic to create a stable life and again turned her focus towards advocacy by joining the NAACP. A firm believer in the Constitution, Craft was drawn to the NAACP because of the organization's strategy of using the courts to address injustices. She held various roles in the organization over the next five years. Craft lead membership drives, organized new branches, and traveled the State promoting the NAACP. Under her leadership, The Dallas NAACP expanded its membership from 1,200 to 7,000 in four years. Craft's impressive leadership was noted and in 1946, she was designated state organizer as well as director of youth councils (Burrows 1994).

During Craft's early years in the NAACP, she worked for the good of many groups. She worked with NAACP supporters in the fight to require the Dallas school board to pay black and white teachers on the same pay scale. She also organized youth to raise money and protest for the integration of the University of Texas at Austin. While supporting these and other important legal battles of the 1940s, Craft also worked diligently to inform and educate blacks on the important issues being fought by the NAACP (Burrows 1994).

Through her work with the NAACP, Craft became an important community leader. Craft participated with a variety of civic and professional organizations. In 1946, she was recognized as "one of the most progressive women in Texas". The same year, she became the first black woman in Texas to be deputized as a poll tax collector. Her successful and energetic introduction to politics led to Craft being elected Democratic Precinct Chair, a position she would hold for the next 23 years, in 1952 (Burrows 1994).

The 1950s began a new decade of work for the Dallas civil rights and community worker. It also brought the death of her husband, Johnnie Edward Craft in the Jim Crow section of Baylor Hospital—a basement, filled with clanging steam pipes. Her husband's death brought back memories of the death of Juanita's mother. Fueled by the anger of losing yet another loved one in degrading surroundings brought on by race and reminded once again of the events of her life that had been shaped by the hand of segregation, Craft committed her life to the civil rights struggle. She would later say it was hard times, during these early years, not a particular person that inspired her in the long struggle for equality (Burrow 1994).

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It was also during the 1950s that Craft moved from Cochran Avenue in North Dallas to the home most associated with her life at 2618 Warren Avenue in South Dallas. An area filled with racial tension, it was often the site of bombings. Eleven bombings occurred between February 1950 and July 1951. Despite the violence, the small white house became her home. It was often used as a boarding house, with Mrs. Craft living in the converted double garage in the rear. Living frugally, and supporting herself through sewing and rents collected from boarders, Craft continued her spirit of volunteerism and community service in her new community (Burrow 1994).

Craft's new focus led her to belief that the future of the NAACP lay with black youth. Young people loved and respected the energetic and intense Craft. She instilled confidence and determination in all she worked with. Never raising her voice, Craft maintained a calm and reasonable manner with the youth. Her home became the gathering place for young people from all over Dallas. Her sense of humor, quick wit, and belief that "a child's life can be a closed door or an open sky. It's my duty to let children see how big the sky is." endeared her to all she knew (Burrow 1994).

Believing that "politics controls the air that you breathe", Craft emphasized the importance of advocacy with the young members of the NAACP. Under her advisement, Craft exposed them to more than the disadvantaged environment they knew. Young people worked on encouraging students to stay in school, traveled to cities across the country meeting other black youth as well as famous leaders, entertainers, and athletes, and spoke to groups about the importance of voter education and registration. These youth with young people from across the country were to become instrumental in preparing black students for school integration by preparing them for the prejudice and hate they would encounter (Burrow 1994).

Juanita Craft was instrumental in many of the victories won against segregation through her work with Texas youth. Craft's encouragement of Joe L. Atkins to apply for admission to North Texas State College in Denton led to the school's desegregation. Craft and her youth council led the desegregation of the State Fair of Texas. While, not alone in their fight, this determined group, led by Craft, raised the awareness of the injustice of segregation state-wide through investigations, picketing, and the distribution of handbills detailing the behavior of fair vendors. Although it took over a decade, and a change in times, Juanita Craft and her youth group led one of the earliest efforts against segregation at the Fair (Burrow 1994).

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1960 found Juanita Craft in a more political role as liaison between the white and black communities in Dallas. While continuing her NAACP activities, Craft also began to participate in activities that were aimed at bridging the gap towards greater racial understanding. A member of such groups as the Tri-Ethnic Committee (an evolution of the Committee of 14, a group organized to peacefully desegregate Dallas), Craft worked closely with notable Dallasites, John Stemmons, Jack Evans, former State Senator Mike McKool, and former State Representative Paul Ragsdale. During these years, Craft was invited to the White House by President John F. Kennedy and President Lyndon Johnson (Burrow 1994).

Although the 1960s brought the militancy of the SNCC and the black power movement, Craft remained dedicated to changing the system from within. Craft responded to criticisms of her as a classic integrationist by saying, “The system denied me food, shelter, a place to use the restroom. Rather than give up or go downtown and throw a rock at a bank, I decided to work and change the system... Build a bridge—then carry them over to your side.” This belief led to Craft shifting from protests to the board room and conference table. Many Dallas leaders acknowledge Craft’s influence and the critical role she played in keeping the peace in Dallas during these turbulent times (Burrow 1994).

During the 1960’s, Craft’s honors increased. She received the Sojourner Truth Award and the NAACP merit award. She was also identified as one of the top ten Dallas Women News Shapers, one of the ten Outstanding Women of the Year, and one of the three Women Doers. In 1969, she received the City’s most prestigious civic award for her work in dismantling fraudulent trade schools in Dallas. Cited as the “moving force” behind the investigation into schools that were falsely luring poor black men and women in search of education to Dallas, Craft received the Linz Award, an award presented annually to the Dallas citizen judged to have done the most for the community for no monetary compensation. On her 72nd birthday, the Park and Recreation Board unanimously voted to rename Wahoo Park and Recreation Center (4500 Spring Avenue) in her honor. The crowd gathered for the celebration was a testament to her work. In her address to the gathering she noted that less than fifty years ago, blacks and whites could not be gathered in the same park. The park further exemplified the spirit of Juanita Craft by providing services to both young and old (Burrow 1994).

As Juanita Craft approached her later years, she showed no intentions of slowing down. During a White House visit to accept an honor from the National Association of Retired Persons in 1975, Craft noted that she was the youngest, at age 73, in the room. Inspired by the achievements of women as much as twenty years her senior, Craft returned to Dallas seeking

new challenges. Only a few weeks later, Craft announced her candidacy for the District 6 City

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Council seat, left open as the result of an unexpired term. Craft won the bitter contest, carrying all but two of the twenty-three voting precincts and splitting another by an 18-18 count (Burrow 1994).

Juanita Craft’s life came full circle with her journey into the political arena. She announced Her plans to run for City Council again, for a full term, at the Adolphus Hotel. Once a bellmaid who could not enter through the front door, Craft was once again within the Hotel walls, this time as the honoree of more than 230 officeholder, businessmen, and citizens of Dallas. She went on to win the election with 52% of the vote and served two terms on the City Council (Burrow 1994).

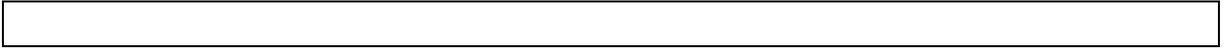
While in her 80’s, Craft still held a position of respect in the Dallas community. She continued to serve her community on various boards and committees. Craft also lectured and encouraged young people in her community. Her home, as throughout all of her years, was always open to school children. During their visits, she shared the stories of her life and the struggles of the civil rights movement. She recounted her childhood discussions with her family on the tragedies resulting from discrimination. She also shared the lawsuits and protests launched through her work with the NAACP. When asked by a young boy why did she become involved in the civil rights movement, Craft responded, “I was thinking of you and you weren’t even here.” (Burrow 1994).

On August 5, 1985, after a life of service to the City of Dallas and the black community, Juanita Jewel Craft passed away at Presbyterian Hospital. Several hundred people gathered to honor Craft at the Hall of State at the fairgrounds she once stood outside of in protest. Juanita Craft’s legacy lives on through the lives of the thousands of lives she touched. Craft’s statement in a child, the earth, and a tree of many seasons provides the best summary of her life, “I have no natural children, I have adopted the world.” (Burrow 1994).

14. Bibliography

Burrow, Rachel Northington. Juanita Craft. A Thesis Presented to the Graduate Faculty of Dedman College, Southern Methodist University, in Partial Fullfillment of the Requirements for the degree of Master of Arts with a Major in History. May 21, 1994.

Juanita Craft Collection. 1940-1985. Dallas Public Library.



15. Attachments

District or Site Map _____ *Additional descriptive material*
Site Plan _____ *Footnotes*
Photos (historic & current) _____ *Other:* _____

16. Inventory of Structures-Historic District Only (Page ___ of ___)

Please complete this form for each structure in a proposed historic district

a. Location and Name

b. Development History

Original owner: _____

Architect/builder: _____

Construction/alteration dates: _____

c. Architectural Significance

Dominant style: _____

Condition: _____

Alterations: _____

d. Category

Contributing _____ *Compatible* _____ *Non-contributing* _____
excellent example of an architectural style that is typical of the district; retaining essential integrity of design *supportive of the district in age, style and massing but is not representative of the significant style, period and detailing, or area of significance typical of the district* *intrusive; detracts from the character of the district*

e. Statement of Significance

Juanita Craft, one of the most influential civil rights advocates of her time, dedicated her life to improving the rights of all through a lifetime of community service and NAACP leadership. Her contributions to the City of Dallas extended over fifty years and touched the lives of everyone who met her. Her home symbolizes the dedication she had for improving her community and the lives of her children.



Designation Merit

- A. Character, interest or value as x part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City of Dallas, State of Texas or the United States.***
- B. Location as the site of a significant historical event.***
- C. Identification with a person or x persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the city.***
- D. Exemplification of the cultural, x economic, social or historical heritage of the city.***
- E. Portrayal of the environment of a group of people in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style.***
- F. Embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or specimen.***
- G. Identification as the work of an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the city.***
- H. Embodiment of elements of architectural design, detail, material or craftsmanship which represent a significant architectural innovation.***
- I. Relationship to other distinctive x buildings, sites or areas which are eligible for preservation according to a plan based on historic, cultural or architectural motif.***
- J. Unique location of singular physical characteristics representing an established and familiar feature of a neighborhood, community or the city.***
- K. Archaeological value in that it has produced or can be expected to produce data affecting theories or historic or prehistoric value.***
- L. Value as an aspect of community x sentiment of public pride.***

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Recommendation

The Designation Task Force requests the Landmark Commission to deem this nominated landmark meritorious of designation as outlined in Chapter 51 and Chapter 51A, Dallas Development Code.

Further, the Designation Task Force endorses the Preservation Criteria, policy recommendations and landmark boundary as presented by the Department of Planning and Development.

Date:

***Victoria Clow, Chair
Designation Task Force***

***— Jim Anderson, Urban Planner
Historic Preservation***