

ITEM #: 12
DATE: 01-24-23
DEPT: P&H

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES ELIGIBILITY FOR CRANFORD APARTMENT BUILDING AT 103 STANTON AVENUE

BACKGROUND:

The City has received a request from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for a recommendation of National Register eligibility for the Cranford Apartment Building, located at 103 Stanton Avenue (See Attachment A-Location Map and Attachment B-Photograph of Cranford Apartment Building). **The property owner (deed holder) is “103 Stanton LLC.” It is requested that the City Council provide direction for the Mayor in responding to a request from SHPO.**

As a Certified Local Government (CLG), the Mayor and Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) are to review National Register nominations for any property inside the boundaries of the City. Nominations are submitted to SHPO, and a copy of the nomination is then provided to the CLG for review and comment.

The State Historical Society of Iowa is required to provide the City with a 60-day period for the review from the date the nomination is received. A copy of the nomination was received on December 12, 2022. **The State Nominations Review Committee (SNRC) will consider nomination of the Cranford Apartment Building at its meeting (by Zoom) on February 10, 2023.**

Alexa McDowell, Architectural Historian, prepared the nomination for the property owner. The complete National Register Nomination, including photographs of the Cranford Apartment Building, are available on the City’s website at the following link:

[National Register of Historic Places - Ames | City of Ames, IA](#)

The Narrative Statement of Significance emphasizes that:

“The Cranford Apartment Building is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in association with Alda Wilson who was directly involved in development of the project to build the Cranford and who was the project architect and construction supervisor. Wilson exemplifies the advancements made by women in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the areas of education, the professional arena, and women’s rights. Because the purpose of the Cranford Apartment Building (housing for women), the development of the project by the Faculty Women’s Housing Company (a predominantly female development group), and the role of Alda Wilson (a woman)

as architect and construction manager, the Cranford Apartment Building is the best local resource to call attention to the history of women's rights in the early 20th century."

The completed nomination forms include a "Statement of Significance" of the Cranford Apartment Building (See Attachment C – Statement of Significance).

The preparer of the nomination selected **National Register Significance "Criterion A"** as the basis for the nomination. **"Criterion A" are those properties that are associated with events that have made significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. (See Attachment D – Excerpt of National Register Bulletin No. 15, pages 12-13)**

The City's Historic Preservation Commission met on January 9, 2023, to review the nomination and receive public comment. Alexa McDowell (Architectural Historian and preparer of the nomination), the property owner, and apartment manager were present to address any questions from the Commission. There were no members of the public present.

The Historic Preservation Commission voted 7-0 to find that the Cranford Apartment Building (103 Stanton Avenue) meets "Criterion A" and recommended National Register eligibility to the State Nominations Review Committee.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve a motion directing the Mayor to sign the Certified Local Government National Register Nomination Evaluation Report Form finding that the nomination of the Cranford Apartment Building (103 Stanton Avenue) to the National Register of Historic Places meets National Register Significance "Criterion A" and recommends National Register eligibility to the State Nominations Review Committee.
2. Approve a motion directing the Mayor to sign the Certified Local Government National Register Nomination Evaluation Report Form finding that the nomination of the Cranford Apartment Building (103 Stanton Avenue) to the National Register of Historic Places does not meet National Register Significance "Criterion A" and recommends National Register ineligibility to the State Nominations Review Committee.
3. Defer action on this request and refer it back to City staff for additional information.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Information provided in the application provides the basis for a determination of significance according to “Criterion A.” Supporting the Nomination allows for the property owner to seek Historic Tax Credits administered by the State in support of their planned renovation for the building. **Listing on the National Register does not establish local landmark status or require conformance to local design standards or guidelines.** Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No.1, as described above.

ADDENDUM

An individual property cannot be included on the National Register of Historic Places unless the owner of the property wants the listing. Such a property owner would need to notify the Bureau of Historic Preservation in writing if the property owner objects.

National Register status in no way limits the right of the property owner to preserve, alter, or even demolish the property. There are no requirements for property owners to take any action regarding the use of their property, provided that no Federal license, permit, or funding is involved.

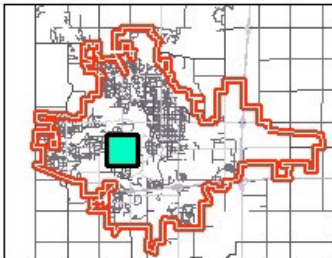
The power to protect a National Register property is limited to local design guidelines and to a review of those projects which are funded wholly or in part by the federal government and which impact, directly or indirectly, listed properties. National Register status does not mean that a property cannot be destroyed by a highway, by Urban Renewal, or by some other project. It does mean that before a federal agency can be involved in any way with such a project (e.g., funding, licensing, or authorizing it), the federal agency must consider alternatives by which the National Register properties might be saved from destruction.

There are four (4) National Register Criteria used to determine historic significance for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The criteria relate to a property's association with important events, people, design of construction, or information potential. The National Register criteria recognize these values embodied in buildings, structures, districts, sites, and objects. The four (4) criteria are as follows:

- Criterion A – Properties that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- Criterion B – Properties that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- Criterion C – Properties that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- Criterion D – Properties that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Attachment A

Location Map



Location Map

103 Stanton Avenue



Attachment B
Photo of Cranford Apartment Building



Attachment C

Statement of Significance-Page 1

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
NPS Form 10-900

OMB No. 1024-0018

Cranford Apartment Building
Name of Property

Story County, Iowa
County and State

Statement of Significance

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).

Statement of Significance

The Cranford Apartment building is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A. The resource is locally significant as a rare representative of a privately developed, mixed-use property completed by an incorporated group of women for the express purpose of providing housing for the female faculty and students at Iowa State University. The project was undertaken by the Faculty Women's Housing Company, which was incorporated in 1922 "to acquire real estate, to build, construct, maintain and operate apartment houses and other similar structures, and to do and transact all business connected with or incident to any or all of said purposes".¹ The Cranford Apartment building was the first and only known building constructed by the company; the Faculty Women's Housing Company owned and operated the Cranford until 1953. The building had four retail businesses on the ground floor and thirty residential units on the second through fourth floors capable of housing fifty to sixty women.

In contrast to typical residential apartment buildings of the era, the design character of the Cranford Apartment ties it to the university residence halls, which are located in close proximity across Lincoln Way. The Cranford reflects the form and stylistic tendencies adopted by the university's architect in the design of its early 20th century residential halls. In contrast to the typical historic apartment building, which is characterized by a rectangular form, flat roof, and limited stylistic elements, the Cranford exhibits an overall design character of a traditional revival style complete with pitched roof, roof dormers, projecting pavilions with expressive gable ends, multi-story bay windows on the façade (north), and multi-story box bays on the rear (south). In this way, architect Alda Wilson, designed an apartment building with a design character aligned with that of the university's early 20th century residential halls. The architect's design is highly successful in this way, despite the fact that the Cranford Apartment building includes commercial businesses on the ground-floor.

The Cranford is the only historic apartment building in Ames with a design character that clearly reflects the influence of the university designs for residential halls. The number of historic apartment buildings in Ames is limited and those identified for comparative analysis follow the more typical design approach. Only the Cranford Apartment building expresses a character in keeping with the residential halls being constructed in the era contemporaneous to construction of the Cranford.

The Cranford Apartment building is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in association with Alda Wilson who was directly involved in development of the project to build the Cranford and who was the project architect and construction supervisor. Wilson exemplifies the advancements made by women in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the areas of education, the professional arena, and women's rights. Because the purpose of the Cranford Apartment building (housing for women), the development of the project by the Faculty Women's Housing Company (a predominantly female development group), and the role of Alda Wilson (a woman) as architect and construction manager, the Cranford Apartment building is the best local resource to call attention to the history of women's rights in the early 20th century. In that association, the

¹ "Notice of Incorporation of Faculty Women's Housing Company," *Ames Daily Tribune and Times*, May 03, 1922: 05. Sections 9 – 11 page 12

Attachment C

Statement of Significance-Page 2

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Cranford demonstrates the practical impact of women working to elevate the education and future of women at a time just after passage of the 19th amendment securing the right to vote and long before a woman was able to have a bank account or access credit.

While there are other built resources in Ames (specifically at Iowa State) with historic ties to the story of the pursuit by women to attain an advanced education, to excel in their chosen profession, or to advocate for women's rights, the known resources have transient, singular associations, whereas the Cranford Apartment building represents the coming together of a variety of exemplary women within an era that coincided with the years when women were granted the right to vote. The Carrie Chapman Catt Center, which is housed in the Old Botany building (now named for Catt) is one such example. While the building and the center that now occupies the building bears the name of one of the most significant leaders of the Women's Rights Movement, Carrie Chapman Catt is not historically associated with the building. As a result, the building does not represent her work in the area of women's rights. Additionally, although Old Botany is the building in which Prof. Julia Colpitts and Prof. Ada Hayden taught classes, there is no evidence to suggest that Old Botany is the historic resource that best illustrates the contributions made by either women.

Alda Wilson was the second woman graduate of Iowa State College's (now Iowa State University) civil engineering program in 1894. Although Alda Wilson's story and contributions in history are sometimes overshadowed by the accomplishments of her older sister, Elmina Wilson, Alda stands as the third woman in the United States to obtain a civil engineering degree, one of the rare few to work as a professional after completing her education, and she assumed an important position at Iowa State University as the first female head of the university's first all-woman drafting class. As architect and construction supervisor of the Cranford Apartment Building, Alda Wilson was responsible for designing a multiple-unit dwelling for female faculty members and female students, providing the amenities required of that demographic, and realizing the goals of the Faculty Women Housing Company to provide both affordable housing for women and commercial spaces. Finally, Alda Wilson was an active participant in the women's suffrage movement, working closely with Carrie Chapman Catt to advance a woman's right to vote. With this raft of accomplishments, Alda Wilson is a significant figure in women's history in the United States and, as an Iowa native and graduate of the Iowa State College, has direct ties to Ames. The Cranford Apartment building is the best local representative of the work and impact of Alda Wilson. The building represents her skill as an architect and serves as tangible evidence of her contributions in the areas of architecture, advancement of education for women in the late 19th century, and women in the professional workplace of the early 20th century.

Finally, the Cranford Apartment building is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A. The resource is locally significant in association with the history of women's rights. The Cranford represents the expansion of residential housing for women on the campus of Iowa State College (now, Iowa State University), being completed as one answer to a long-term housing shortage specific to women students and female faculty members. The project was undertaken by a group of women with various associations with the university; members of the development group itself were all faculty members, some also being wives of faculty members. The architect was the second woman graduate of the school's civil engineering program with a history of involvement in the women's rights movement. Placed in service just two years after ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which assured women the right to vote, this group of women made a tangible contribution to supporting women desirous of attending or working at Iowa State. By undertaking construction of the Cranford Apartment building at a time when women were prevented from having a bank

Attachment C

Statement of Significance-Page 3

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account or being extended credit, a limitation solved by including a man among the incorporating members for the purpose of securing the necessary financing.

As a residential property designed for women faculty and students, the Cranford Apartment advanced the efforts of the women's movement to support education and employment in professional positions (e.g., professors, engineers, and architects). By way of evidence supporting the importance of the building's role in that regard, the Cranford became home to some of the most significant of the university's female faculty and students including renowned conservationist and Professor of Botany, Ada Hayden; Professor and Dean of the Junior College, Maria "Millie" Roberts; Professor of Botany, Julia T. Colpitts; and mathematician, Anna Helen Tappan.²

The Cranford Apartment building retains a generally good degree of historic integrity as it relates to design and materials with the historic mixed-use function retained. With historic location retained, the resource's historic association to the Iowa State University campus and to the historic Lincoln Highway is retained. Retention of the historic association with the university's residence halls is of particular importance given that the case for registration relates to the building's association with that institution and its 20th century women's residence halls.

The Period of Significance is 1922-1953, the year the building was placed in service through the year in which the Faculty Women's Housing Company sold the property. The period best embodies significance as a representative of the original function as housing for female faculty and students and during which the majority of the residents remained female. The period also includes Alda Wilson's association with the resource. The Significant Date is 1922, the year the building was placed in service.

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

(Iowa SHPO Additional Instructions: For properties not nominated under Criterion D, include a statement about whether any archaeological remains within or beyond the footprint of the property were assessed as part of this nomination under the subheading **Archaeological Assessment.**)

The Cranford Apartment building draws significance as a representative of a private residential development completed by an incorporated group of women (Faculty Women's Housing Company) for the express purpose of providing housing for female faculty and students at Iowa State University. The building was owned by the Faculty Women's Housing Company through 1953 and remained a majority occupied by women through that time. The building's general design character aligns with the university residence halls constructed contemporaneous to the Cranford with the use of the Tudor Revival style more aligned with Greek letter houses constructed adjacent to campus during the 1920s and later. As a residential property designed for women faculty and students, the Cranford Apartment advanced the efforts of the women's movement to support

² Anthony Capps, *Campustown. A Brief History of the First West Ames* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2016), 60.
Sections 9 – 11 page 14

Attachment C

Statement of Significance-Page 4

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National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
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education and employment in professional positions. The building continues to serve as a mixed-use property with upper story housing for Iowa State students.

As it relates to setting and association, integrity of both are very good. The resource remains situated adjacent to the historic Lincoln Highway (Lincoln Way), in Campustown (the university's commercial center), and across the street from Iowa State University (Iowa State College). The Cranford was constructed for the express purpose of providing housing for female faculty and female students of Iowa State College with retail businesses on the ground floor designed to provide services (e.g., hair salon, coffee shop) for faculty and students. The location across the street from the university campus, in an area that was evolving to fill the university's housing shortage and as part of the small area that was becoming the school's commercial core (Campustown), is directly connected to the historic context for which the building derives its primary significance.

Historical Background: Iowa State College and Women's History

Iowa State University was established by Iowa legislative action on March 22, 1858 as Iowa Agricultural College and Model Farm. In 1862 the Iowa legislature accepted the provision of the Morrill Act, which was awarded to the college in 1864, establishing it as a land grant institution focused on the ideals of higher education made available to all. When the first official class graduated in 1872 there were 24 men and 2 women. The college was renamed Iowa State College of Agricultural and Mechanical Art in 1898 and was again renamed in 1959, at which it became Iowa State University of Science and Technology.³

Classes in engineering and liberal arts and sciences were offered beginning in 1869, with civil engineering and mechanical engineering begun in 1871. Classes in drawing, railways, sanitation (later environmental engineering), and surveying were initially offered in the civil engineering curriculum. The college's first graduating class in 1872 included three civil engineering students – all men.

The first woman to receive a bachelor's degree in civil engineering at Iowa State College was Elmina Wilson, elder sister of Alda Wilson. Graduating in 1892, Elmina Wilson was not the first in the nation to receive a bachelor's in civil engineering (that honor goes to Elizabeth Bragg of California).⁴ She was, however, the first in the nation to receive a masters of science in the same field, having received the degree from Iowa State College in 1894. In that same year, Alda Wilson completed her undergraduate studies in civil engineering and received her bachelor's degree from the college. The 1894 class in civil engineering had four students: three men and Alda Wilson.⁵ Class sizes increased modestly (up to fifteen students) in the years that immediately followed. Because the first names of graduates were commonly limited to initials, identifying gender is difficult. However, class photos (which include all departments), makes it clear that the number of female students remained a very small percentage of the student population in all areas of study except home economics.⁶

³ "Iowa State Sesquicentennial: History of Iowa State." Iowa State University. <https://digital.lib.iastate.edu/online-exhibits/iowa-state-sesquicentennial>. Retrieved 06/21/2022.

⁴ "Women's History Month: Civil Engineers Alda and Elmina Wilson," Iowa State University Special Collections blog, <https://isuspecialcollections.wordpress.com/2018/03/20/womens-history-month-civil-engineers-alda-and-elmina-wilson/>. Retrieved 06/20/2022.

⁵ Iowa State University. Engineering Department History. <https://www.ccee.iastate.edu/history/>. Retrieved 06/21/2022 and *The Bomb*, Iowa State Yearbook, (Nevada, IA: Representative Press, 1894), 63. Available online at https://digitalcollections.lib.iastate.edu/islandora/object/isu%3ATheBomb_7090#page/42/mode/2up. Retrieved 06/22/2022.

⁶ *The Bomb*, Iowa State Yearbook, (Nevada, IA: Representative Press, 1894), 43. Available online at

Attachment D

Excerpt of National Register Bulletin No. 15 (cover page)

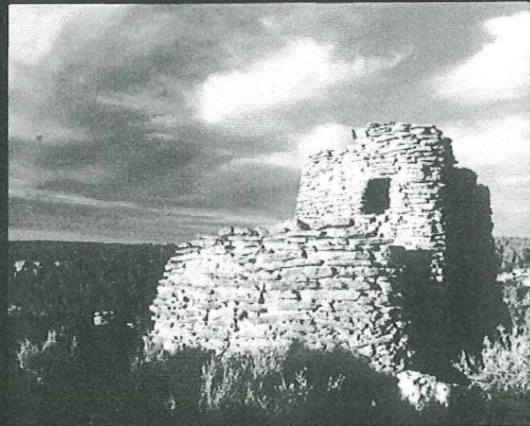
NATIONAL REGISTER BULLETIN

Technical information on the the National Register of Historic Places:
survey, evaluation, registration, and preservation of cultural resources



U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Cultural Resources
National Register, History and Education

How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation



Attachment D

Excerpt of National Register Bulletin No. 15 (continued)

CRITERION A: EVENT

Properties can be eligible for the National Register if they are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

UNDERSTANDING CRITERION A: EVENT

To be considered for listing under Criterion A, a property must be associated with one or more events important in the defined historic context. Criterion A recognizes properties associated with single events, such as the founding of a town, or with a pattern of events, repeated activities, or historic trends, such as the gradual rise of a port city's prominence in trade and commerce. The event or trends, however, must clearly be important within the associated context: settlement, in the case of the town, or development of a maritime economy, in the case of the port city. Moreover, the property must have an important association with the event or historic trends, and it must retain historic integrity. (See *Part V: How to Evaluate a Property Within its Historic Context.*)

Several steps are involved in determining whether a property is significant for its associative values:

- Determine the nature and origin of the property,
- Identify the historic context with which it is associated, and
- Evaluate the property's history to determine whether it is associated with the historic context in any important way.

APPLYING CRITERION A: EVENT

TYPES OF EVENTS

A property can be associated with either (or both) of two types of events:

- A specific event marking an important moment in American prehistory or history and
- A pattern of events or a historic trend that made a significant contribution to the development of a community, a State, or the nation.

Refer to the sidebar on the right for a list of specific examples.

ASSOCIATION OF THE PROPERTY WITH THE EVENTS

The property you are evaluating must be documented, through accepted means of historical or archeological research (including oral history), to have existed at the time of the event or pattern of events and to have been associated with those events. A property is *not* eligible if its associations are speculative. For archeological sites, well reasoned inferences drawn from data recovered at the site can be used to establish the association between the site and the events.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ASSOCIATION

Mere association with historic events or trends is not enough, in and of itself, to qualify under Criterion A: the property's specific association must be considered important as well. For example, a building historically in commercial use must be shown to have been significant in commercial history.

EXAMPLES OF PROPERTIES ASSOCIATED WITH EVENTS

Properties associated with specific events:

- The site of a battle.
- The building in which an important invention was developed.
- A factory district where a significant strike occurred.
- An archeological site at which a major new aspect of prehistory was discovered, such as the first evidence of man and extinct Pleistocene animals being contemporaneous.
- A site where an important facet of European exploration occurred.

Properties associated with a pattern of events:

- A trail associated with western migration.
- A railroad station that served as the focus of a community's transportation system and commerce.
- A mill district reflecting the importance of textile manufacturing during a given period.
- A building used by an important local social organization.
- A site where prehistoric Native Americans annually gathered for seasonally available resources and for social interaction.
- A downtown district representing a town's growth as the commercial focus of the surrounding agricultural area.

Attachment D

Excerpt of National Register Bulletin No. 15 (continued)

TRADITIONAL CULTURAL VALUES

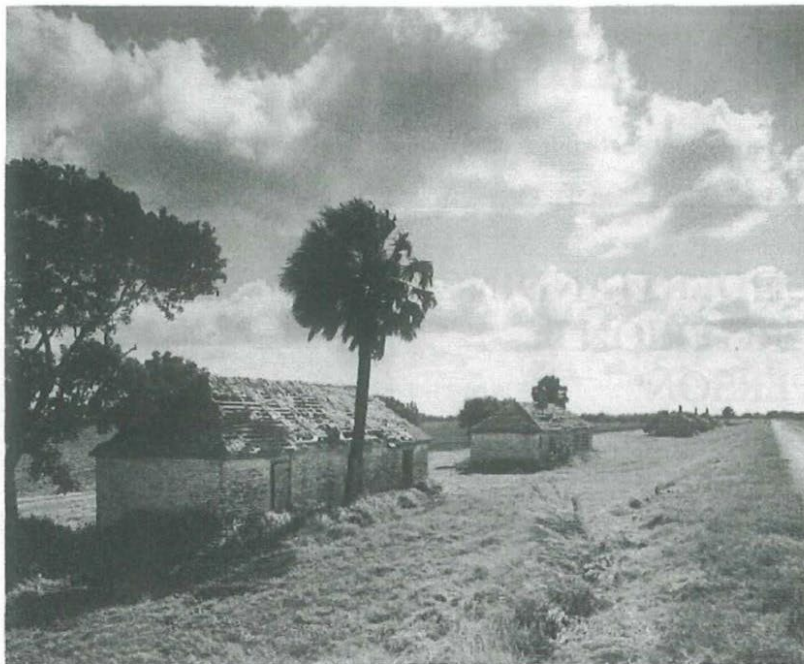
Traditional cultural significance is derived from the role a property plays in a community's historically rooted beliefs, customs, and practices. Properties may have significance under Criterion A if they are associated with events, or series of events, significant to the cultural traditions of a community.⁵

Eligible

- A hilltop associated in oral historical accounts with the founding of an Indian tribe or society is eligible.
- A rural community can be eligible whose organization, buildings, or patterns of land use reflect the cultural traditions valued by its long-term residents.
- An urban neighborhood can be eligible as the traditional home of a particular cultural group and as a reflection of its beliefs and practices.

Not Eligible

- A site viewed as sacred by a recently established utopian or religious community does not have traditional cultural value and is not eligible.



Criterion A - The Old Brulay Plantation, Brownsville vicinity, Cameron county, Texas. Historically significant for its association with the development of agriculture in southeast Texas, this complex of 10 brick buildings was constructed by George N. Brulay, a French immigrant who introduced commercial sugar production and irrigation to the Rio Grande Valley. (Photo by Texas Historical Commission).

⁵For more information, refer to *National Register Bulletin: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*.