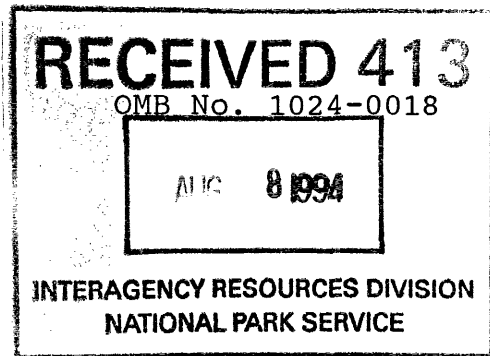


1084

NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 10-90)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM



=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name Edwards, Walter J. and Frances W., House

other names/site number N/A

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number 1621 N.E. Grand Boulevard not for publication N/A  
city or town Oklahoma City vicinity N/A  
state Oklahoma code OK county Oklahoma code 109  
zip code 73117

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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      nationally      statewide X locally. ( N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Baker Wade July 25, 1994  
Signature of certifying official Date

Oklahoma Historical Society, SHPO  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property      meets      does not meet the National Register criteria. (      See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register Edson A. Beall 9/8/94  
     See continuation sheet.  
 determined eligible for the National Register  
     See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register  
 removed from the National Register

other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Entered in the  
National Register

for Signature of Keeper Date  
of Action

=====

5. Classification

=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>  2  </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
<u>  2  </u>	<u>  0  </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

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

=====

6. Function or Use

=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: single dwelling

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: single dwelling

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

=====

7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Tudor Revival

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE--sandstone

roof ASPHALT

walls BRICK

METAL--Aluminum

other N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====  
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 a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: BLACK  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance 1941-1943  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates 1942  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

=====  
8. Statement of Significance (Continued)  
=====

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Edwards, Walter J.

Edwards, Frances W.

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====  
9. Major Bibliographical References  
=====

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: N/A

=====  
10. Geographical Data  
=====

Acreage of Property Less than 1 (one) acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>14</u>	<u>639200</u>	<u>3927790</u>	3	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
2	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	4	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>

N/A See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

=====  
11. Form Prepared By  
=====

name/title Dianna Everett, Consultant  
organization Everett Research Services date December 1, 1993  
street & number 2510 Countrywood Lane telephone 405-348-4272  
city or town Edmond state OK zip code 73003

=====  
Additional Documentation  
=====

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage  
or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

=====  
Property Owner  
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Goldie Dinwiddie

street & number 1621 N.E. Grand Blvd. telephone 405-424-4135

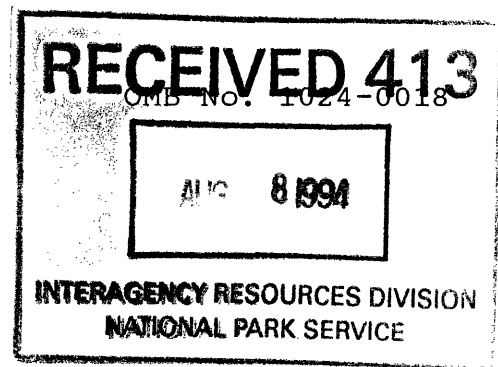
city or town Oklahoma City state OK zip code 73117  
=====



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National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

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Edwards House  
name of property  
Oklahoma, Oklahoma  
county and State

Summary

The Walter J. and Frances W. Edwards House, located at 1621 N.E. Grand Boulevard, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, is a one and one-half story self-contained vernacular Tudor Revival-style cottage of irregular rectangular plan, with intersecting gable roof and front and rear stoops. A decorative foundation is constructed of uncoursed, random-sized sandstone blocks, the walls are veneer of cream-colored brick, and the roof is covered with composition shingles. Seven windows are shaded by original awnings made of wood laths; five are covered with steel louvre security shutters. Above the front entry is a clipped gable and a smaller gable, in the southeast corner is an original second-floor balcony having a cover added in 1982. The home sits on Lots 1-6, Block 1, in the northeast corner of Hassman Heights Addition, an area of smaller but similar homes (Tudor Revival cottages, pre- and post-WWII "Minimal Traditional," National Folk, and ranch style houses) built during the 1938-1970 period. The property is bounded on the south by Lot 7, on the west by Lot 13, on the north by N.E. 16th Street, and on the east by Grand Boulevard. The grounds are large and well landscaped. The home's interior includes a kitchen, a foyer (enclosed porch), three public rooms, and two bedrooms on the first floor, and three bedrooms on the second floor. The only outstanding decorative elements are a built-in china cabinet in the dining room and a carved wooden mantelpiece in the living room. A two-bay, hipped roof, cream-colored brick garage sits southwest of the house and is contemporaneous. The property is in fairly good condition. Minimal alterations include addition of aluminum siding in the north gable end and along the fascia on all four facades. Original exterior woodwork remains above the rear entry and at the two main entries. The home has more than adequate integrity of setting, location, design, materials, and workmanship.

Description

The Walter J. and Frances W. Edwards House, located at 1621 N.E. Grand Boulevard, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, is a vernacular Tudor Revival-style cottage built in 1941-1942. The home occupies Lots 1-6, Block 1, Hassman Heights, a residential neighborhood. Completed in the 1950s, Hassman Heights has changed little since that time. It is an area of small but similar homes (Tudor Revival cottages, pre- and post-WWII "Minimal Traditional" style, National Folk style, and ranch style houses) built during the 1938-1970 period. The Edwards House is bounded on the south by Lot 7, on the west by Lot 13, on the north by N.E. 16th Street, and on the east by Grand Boulevard. When in the 1930s and 1940s Hassman Heights was laid out along and west of N.E. Grand, Grand was a typical boulevard: two double-lane asphalt roads separated by a grassy median, the whole street being in excess of 200 feet wide. In the 1950s the federal and state governments chose this portion of Grand to be the route of Interstate 35. Fortunately, Grand Boulevard was wide enough to accommodate both city street and four-lane interstate highway. A grade separation or crossover was

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retained at 16th Street and at 10th Street (the interstate runs under 16th Street and 10th Street), but 15th through 11th no longer cross Grand. A two-lane, two-way street was constructed on each side of the interstate and is the present-day Grand Boulevard from 23rd Street to 12th Street. This required using a small strip of the setback along the east and west sides of Grand. Because the highway runs below the grade of city streets, the expansive view from the Edwards House across Grand Boulevard is similar to the original.

The Edwards House is a one and one-half story self-contained residence of irregular rectangular plan. On the ground floor the house plan is in two basic parts: the east or front half contains the public rooms--living, den/office, dining, with three bays or projecting corners; and the west half contains bedrooms and kitchen areas.

This dual plan is illustrated in the roofline: The east or front half is covered by a steep, full-height, cross-gabled roof, and the rear section is covered by a less steep, lower-level hipped roof. Tall chimneys, complicated roofline, steep roof, and multiple gables give the house an imposing aspect and identify its style as Tudor Revival. The home's roofline is distinguished by a steep and varying roof-line height, by varying eave heights, by the absence of overhang, and by a small dormer on the south and a balcony in the southeast corner. On the east (front) facade, the line of the north-south cross gable is interrupted by a visually dominant, central clipped gable that slopes steeply into a curve at the southeast eave line, and by a smaller one-story gable that projects from the clipped gable. On the south facade the shape of the house is visually complicated: on the east end, at the corner, the roof is cut away into a small balcony that opens into an upstairs bedroom; a tall external front chimney rises here, in the east wall of the cutaway area; in the center of the south facade the roof is more gently sloped, taking on a "shed" appearance; and on the west end the roofline dips downward into a hipped style, with a hipped dormer projecting from the roof. On the north facade there are also multiple gables and a varying roof height; on the east end of the north facade the roofline consists in a large full-height gable joined to a projecting smaller one-story gable from which projects an extremely tall end-wall chimney; on the west side of the north facade the roof dips down into a hipped style. The roofline on the west facade is an uncomplicated hip with no rake. A small porch, also hipped, overhangs the eave line over the kitchen door and shelters a small, three-step concrete stoop.

Character-defining projections include the one-story front gable that accommodates a bay for a small foyer and a main entry door, facing south, on the east or front; the one-story gable that accommodates a bay for the chimney on the north; an extended corner bay in the southeast corner (den/office), which provides the floor for the balcony; the porch roof over the stoop on the west side; the front chimney that rises in the east; and the end wall chimney that rises in the north. With these gabled projections, the irregular

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rectangular plan actually gives the house twelve corners.

Windows in the Edwards House are also typical of Tudor Revival. Generally set in pairs, the windows are of the double-hung variety, with wooden sashes and facings and multiple-pane glazing, in 6 over 1 and 8 over 1 pattern. The woodwork is original; removable aluminum storm windows have been added over the original wooden windows. In the north facade, first floor, (moving from east to west) are a single window in the projecting foyer (covered with metal shutter), two single windows in the chimney bay (flanking the chimney), a triplet that illuminates the living room, a pair for the dining room, and a small pair for the kitchen; there are no second-floor windows. In the east facade (moving from north to south), there is a pair of windows in the chimney bay, a pair of windows in the foyer (covered by metal shutters), a south-facing entry door in the projecting foyer bay, an east-facing entry to the den/office, and a pair of windows to the south of the entry; there is one pair of windows in the second floor, under the gable. In the south facade on the ground floor there is a pair of windows (on the south side of the bay) and a single window (on the west side of the bay) that light the den/office, three separate single windows for central bedroom and bath, and another pair, for the southwest bedroom; on the second floor there is the balcony door on the southeast, a small single window, a pair, and a dormer pair, for two bedrooms and bath on the second floor. In the west facade are two single windows to the south (covered by metal shutters) and one (uncovered) single window to the north of the rear entry; there are no second-floor windows on the west.

Decorative brickwork and stonework also give the house a distinctive appearance. The decorative foundation is constructed of uncoursed, random-sized sandstone blocks. The joint between the stone foundation and the brick veneer walls varies in height on all facades, giving the foundation line an "undulant" appearance; at the corners, the stonework rises steeply upward to a height of about three feet. The veneer walls are constructed of cream-colored, rough-textured brick. Decorative brickwork includes: a soldier course at all horizontal eave lines; all window sills; a short corner post on the front stoop; three rows of corbelled brick in the center of the main (north) chimney; and an arched doorway and two windows on the east side in the projecting enclosed foyer. All of this work is typical of Tudor Revival style.

Other original decorative features include wood-lath awnings that shade seven windows; wooden knee braces that support the porch cover over the rear stoop; removable steel louvre shutters that secure five windows; wooden multiple-light panel doors in both front entries and in the rear entry; decorative steel railings that enclose the concrete stoop at the main entry; and steel handrails placed at the sides of the concrete rear stoop. A new aluminum awning replaces an original one above the front entry, and a small, steel "carport-type" cover was added over the second-floor balcony in 1982. Original tongue-and-groove paneling remains in the ceiling of the rear porch

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cover and around the south-facing main entry door.

The Edwards House's interior is typical of homes of the 1940s era. The floor plan includes small kitchen, large dining and living rooms, den, and two bedrooms with bath on the ground floor, and three bedrooms and bath upstairs. The principal decorative elements of the era, wood floors, are presently covered with carpeting and linoleum. Other decorative elements include a carved mantelpiece in the living room and a built-in china cabinet in the dining room. There has been no rearrangement of interior spaces, and the interior is in good condition.

To the southwest of the house sits a contemporaneous two-bay garage with hipped roof. On the east side are two aluminum overhead doors, of recent vintage; on the north, a slab-type wooden door and an original wooden-sash, two-light window give access to a storage room. A similar window is placed in the west wall. The garage is constructed of balloon framing with veneer of large yellow brick.

The large lot is dotted with mature landscaping, and the portion south of the garage is fenced with chain link. Air conditioning units sit north of the house. A concrete driveway with basketball goal separates the house from the fenced area.

Alterations

Minimal alterations include the addition of aluminum siding on the upper half of the north gable end wall and as fascia board on all four facades. The original material in this particular gable appears to have been wood; the other three gables are bricked from ground to peak. Original exterior woodwork remains visible under the porch roof above the rear entry and below filled-in side lights at the foyer entry. The aluminum balcony cover and aluminum main entry awning were added in the 1980s. These alterations do not seriously detract from the overall appearance and integrity of the building, as its principal materials, brick and stone, as well as the other decorative elements such as awnings and shutters, are unaltered and in good condition. The Edwards House maintains adequate integrity of design, workmanship, materials, setting, and location to enable it to convey its historical significance.

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Summary

The Walter J. and Frances W. Edwards House is significant within the context of the ethnic/minority heritage of Oklahoma City. As one of the earliest homes constructed in the first Black housing development in the city, the house symbolizes the struggle of Black people for the opportunity to obtain adequate (if not integrated) housing within the Oklahoma City community. It is also significant for its association with two historically important individuals, Walter J. and Frances W. Edwards, who were pioneer entrepreneurs and also pioneered Hassman Heights, the location of the Edwards home, in the 1930s. The Edwards House maintains sufficient integrity of feeling and association, as well as design, materials, workmanship, location, and setting, to enable it to convey more than adequately its historical significance.

Historical Significance

In 1889 the central portion of Oklahoma, called the Unassigned Lands, was opened for settlement by land run. Among the thousands who "made the run" were more than two hundred Black Americans, and many staked their claims to homes in Oklahoma. At this time Oklahoma Territory and Indian Territory, the two political divisions of present Oklahoma, sheltered a fairly large population of Black persons. In Indian Territory there were already a number of all-Black towns, and several new all-Black towns grew up in the Unassigned Lands area after the opening. By 1900, the Black population of the Twin Territories numbered more than 55,000.<sup>1</sup> Oklahoma City, founded during the Run of 1889, also immediately became home to 300 Black persons. The Oklahoma City Black population grew to 1,200 by 1899 and to nearly 7,000 by 1910, when it comprised 10 percent of the city's population.<sup>2</sup>

In the territorial years Oklahoma and Oklahoma City seemed to be a land of opportunity, a promised land, for Black as well as for white. In large and small communities a small but active class of Black merchants and professionals grew, and the Black working class grew apace. Blacks held territorial offices and also served in the territorial legislature. Juries, schools, and churches were often integrated.<sup>3</sup>

However, after the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) the cloud of racial oppression that covered the United States settled also upon Oklahoma. After 1897, schools, juries, and public facilities were segregated by legislative fiat, despite the vigorous efforts of Black politicians, businessmen, professionals, and a few sympathetic white allies. In 1907, at the time of statehood, the very first enactment by the new state legislature was a "Jim Crow" law that codified segregation in schools, public facilities, and transportation.<sup>4</sup>

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By that time, given the growing intellectual environment of racism, de facto racial segregation was becoming part of Oklahoma's and Oklahoma City's social life. In the first twenty years after the Run, Blacks lived in three "residential areas": between Washington and Choctaw Avenues, south of downtown; along West 1st Street; and along the Canadian River near the Santa Fe Railway tracks.<sup>5</sup> All were in the North Canadian River flood plain, an extremely undesirable living environment. As the population grew, Blacks moved away from the river at every opportunity. Around the time of World War I the Black population was growing and expanding southwest, south, and northeast of downtown, mainly south of 10th Street. The "core" of the Black community lay in the neighborhoods around N.E. 2nd Street.<sup>6</sup>

In the economic sphere, the white community had closed the doors of opportunity to Blacks, offering employment that was limited to service jobs and unskilled labor. Meanwhile, by the time of World War I Oklahoma City's Black population developed a full-fledged economic community parallel in nearly every aspect to the white community--with entrepreneurs, business owners, professionals, and middle- and lower-class working people. Commercial areas grew up to serve the burgeoning population. Most Black-owned businesses and professionals concentrated their enterprises in the "core" area around N.E. 2nd Street, Stiles, and Central.<sup>7</sup>

Between the time of statehood and World War I, as general economic prosperity, population growth, and overcrowding encouraged Black families to move into newer neighborhoods, a climate of prejudice operated to stem the flow. Soon the city government passed a residential segregation ordinance restricting Blacks to south of N.E. 2nd Street. Later the boundary was placed at N.E. 4th Street. Still another rule virtually outlawed multiracial neighborhoods: It became illegal for a person to move into a neighborhood that was already 75% occupied by persons of another race.<sup>8</sup> Although ordinances of this type were declared unconstitutional in 1916, as late as 1930 the city still enforced segregation ordinances. Oklahoma City's last racially restrictive ordinance, declared unconstitutional in 1936, prohibited Blacks from living north of the south side of N.E. 8th Street.<sup>9</sup> This created a difficult situation of overcrowding for Black cityans, whose population by 1940 was approaching 20,000 persons restricted to a specific part of town.

Within this context of racial prejudice and "separate economic opportunity" a number of Black men and women worked diligently to develop the Black community and to challenge the status quo of segregation in Oklahoma City. Among them were Sydney Lyons, of the East India Toilet Goods and Manufacturing company, who made his fortune manufacturing toilet goods and selling them internationally; Percy H. James, who built a bottling plant and sold his soft drink, "JayKola," all across the state; Douglass High School band director Zelia Breaux, who taught and encouraged Black youth to become

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professionals in the performing arts; Roscoe Dunjee, pioneer editor of the Black Dispatch; and others too numerous to mention individually. Among them also were Walter J. and Frances W. Edwards.<sup>10</sup>

It appears that in the early 1930s Walter Edwards, who was a local businessman and developer, and others were prepared to challenge the city's segregation ordinance in a major way. Black Dispatch editor Dunjee was instrumental in offering a successful legal challenge to the most recent segregation ordinance, and in 1936 the Supreme Court struck it down. Shortly afterward, on June 8, 1937, Edwards purchased 33 acres of land in northeast Oklahoma City from C. T. Hassman, a white resident of the town of Tuttle. Hassman had earlier received approval on a plat for a housing addition to be built on this land. The plat was approved on June 14, and the deed transferring the property was filed on June 19. Presumably, the plat might not have been approved had it been filed by a Black developer. The proposed addition, Hassman Heights, lay just west of N.E. Grand Avenue, between Page and Grand and between N.E. 10th and N.E. 16th streets. It consisted in 290 residential lots.<sup>11</sup>

Not surprisingly, as part of the addition was still outside the city limits, the city subsequently declined to provide utility lines or paving, and the Edwardses paid for these amenities in 1937 when they began clearing the land. They hired an experienced construction foreman and directed him to hire and train young Black men as bricklayers, electricians, plumbers, and carpenters as houses were built. Edwards Real Estate Investment Company sold the homes primarily to Black families, and for the first two years, 1937-1939, the couple personally provided financing, at 6 percent interest, to prospective homeowners so that they could purchase the lots and arrange for contractors to build the houses. After a considerable political struggle, in 1939 Edwards was at last able to persuade the Federal Housing Authority to approve mortgage loans to Black persons. By 1940, forty homes in Hassman Heights had been completed and occupied.<sup>12</sup>

The Edwardses began construction on their own home as a "flagship" house at the northeast corner of the addition in 1941-1942, moving into the house in 1942.<sup>13</sup> By 1945 there were 70 homes, and by 1955, 120 homes of varying sizes and architectural styles had been built in Hassman Heights. To the north, across 16th Street and continuing across Grand, Edwards built fourteen more blocks of homes in "Edwards' Addition."<sup>14</sup> In this area there are larger homes, similar to Edwards's, that front on Grand, and there are smaller homes, similar to those in Hassman, on 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, and Page. By comparison to homes in both developments, the Edwards home is the largest (although only slightly larger than the average) and is the most elaborate and best preserved vernacular Tudor Revival style home in the addition.

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The Edwards House compares well to other documented Black historical resources in the city. Hundreds of business buildings and homes in the original restricted Black neighborhoods have been razed over the past two decades. Extant are a very few buildings in the Harrison-Walnut neighborhood, in the "core" district around N.E. 2nd Street: In this area, the Sydney Lyons home, or Melvin Luster House (built 1926), is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, as is the Calvary Baptist Church (built 1903).<sup>15</sup> Along N.E. 2nd only five business buildings remain of the several blocks of buildings that once served the Black community. To the east, the residential area from 2nd through 8th, where the Edwardses' original home stood, was razed in the 1970s and 1980s for urban renewal. Some of this area is now industrial, some consists of new residences, and a portion is included in the medical district associated with the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center complex. The area along East Main Street, where Edwards's American Iron and Metal Company stood, is now a gravel pit. Hassman Heights, on the other hand, is still intact, and the Edwards House still provides visual evidence of the Edwardses' leadership role in extending the Black community into better, more affordable housing, further northeastward, along N.E. Grand Boulevard. In her later years Mrs. Edwards' real estate dealings were often conducted in her den/office.

Association with Significant Individuals

The Edwards House at 1621 N.E. Grand Boulevard is significant also for its association with Walter J. and Frances W. Edwards. Walter J. Edwards was a major developer of the Black business community in Oklahoma City. Born in Mississippi in 1893, Walter Edwards came to Wellston, Oklahoma, in 1907, the year of statehood. In 1915 he moved to Oklahoma City to work as a laborer in a junk yard. Edwards virtually personified the spirit of entrepreneurship. Within a few short years he owned a baggage-hauling company, a carpet-cleaning business, and an ice cream plant. In the 1920s he built two of Oklahoma City's very first drive-in gasoline filling stations. He lost everything in the Crash of 1929, but he got it all back selling scrap iron via Edwards Scrap Iron and Junk Yard (later American Iron and Metal, 800 E. Main). Subsequently, he expanded his enterprises to include a taxi line, an auto repair shop, and pharmacies.<sup>16</sup> Edwards's businesses employed hundreds of men and women, adding immeasurably to the economic well-being of Oklahoma City's Black community.

In 1930 Edwards married Frances Gilliam Waldrop, who had been his bookkeeper. Born in 1898 in South Carolina, Frances W. Edwards was the daughter of a rural school teacher. A college-educated woman, she had been in the real estate business in Wichita Falls, Texas, before coming to Oklahoma. She had played a major part in helping provide housing for that Texas community's Black population. Her expertise in real estate management led the



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energetic husband-wife team into a new enterprise--residential housing development.<sup>17</sup>

The economic climate was ripe for innovation, and one of the city's most urgent needs was for new housing for the growing Black population. In the 1930s and 1940s the Edwardses established two housing additions in Oklahoma City--Hassman Heights, and Edwards Addition, both northeast of downtown and west of (fronting on) N.E. Grand Boulevard. Mrs. Edwards handled the real estate transactions. Mr. Edwards provided the financing and directed construction. In July of 1937, Roscoe Dunjee, editor of the Oklahoma City Black Dispatch, noted that the purchase and development of Hassman Heights carried "a deep significance that should not be overlooked. Across the past 40 years no attempt has been made to acquire new territory for the city's Black population except in the lowlands of the North Canadian. . . Oklahoma City and Oklahoma City Negroes are to be congratulated on having in their midst an individual Black man who has the economic strength to go out and do this. . . ." <sup>18</sup> The Edwardses' pioneering efforts spurred other developers to build residential areas for Black citizens, and in the years immediately after World War II, Carverdale, Garden Oaks, and other additions were opened west, north, and east of Hassman Heights.<sup>19</sup>

The Edwardses used their hard-won dollars for other kinds of community improvement as well. They donated land for a public park on N.E. Grand, across from Hassman Heights, and also gave land for Edwards Elementary School, at the south end of the addition. In 1947 they built Edwards Memorial Hospital at 1612 N.E. Grand. They also helped raise money to purchase land for a church in the neighborhood. In the late 1930s and in the 1940s they built business buildings (a "strip" center) in the 1200 block of N.E. Grand and helped locate a grocery, a dry cleaners, and a lumber yard there. In 1940 Walter Edwards won the National Negro Business League's coveted Spaulding Award, given annually to its most outstanding member.<sup>20</sup>

Today, few resources exist to attest to the Edwardses' business and philanthropic activities; the exceptions are the Edwards House at 1621 N.E. Grand, and Edwards Park, in the 1500 block of N.E. Grand. The hospital and "strip" center have been razed. Edwards School, built in 1942, was enlarged in 1949 and again in the 1950s, leaving little of the original building visible. The Edwards House at 1621 N.E. Grand, as the flagship home of the addition and as Mrs. Edwards' last office location, is the best remaining objectification of the careers of these two individuals who were extremely significant in the economic development of Oklahoma City's Black community in the mid-twentieth century.

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1. U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of the Census, Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900: Population (Washington, DC: G.P.O., 1903), 553;
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3. Jimmie Franklin, Journey Toward Hope: A History of Blacks in Oklahoma (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982), 23-29, 31.
4. Ibid., 34, 44-46.
5. Miller, "Black Development Patterns," plate 1, p. 4; Steve Lackmeyer, "City Began with Housing Segregation," Daily Oklahoman, November 28, 1991.
6. Miller, "Black Development Patterns," 40; Entourage, Inc., Harrison-Walnut Historic Survey Report, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: A History (San Antonio, Tex.: N.p., 1984), 5-6.
7. Miller, "Black Development Patterns," 40; Entourage, Inc., Harrison-Walnut, 5-6.
8. Entourage, Inc., Harrison-Walnut, 5; Paul Lehman, "The Edwards Family and Black Entrepreneurial Success," The Chronicles of Oklahoma 64 (Winter 1986-87): 89.
9. "History of Oklahoma City's Black Population Trend," Black Dispatch, October 8, 1936; Lehman, "The Edwards Family," 89-90.
10. Franklin, Journey Toward Hope, 97-99.
11. Black Dispatch, June 10, 1937; Plat Map No. 2698, SE 1/4 Sec. 25 T12N R3W, and Index to Deed Records, County Clerk's Office, Oklahoma County; Book 510, p. 348ff, Deed Records, County Clerk's Office, Oklahoma County.
12. "Junk Man Wins National Honors," Black Dispatch, September 14, 1940; Lehman, "The Edwards Family," 88-89.
13. Interview with Goldie Dinwiddie, additional information contributed by Deborah Edwards Bonner, by Dianna Everett, November 8, 1993, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Polk's Oklahoma City Directory, 1941 (Kansas City, Mo.: R. L. Polk & Co., 1941); Polk's Oklahoma City Directory, 1942 (Kansas City, Mo.: R. L. Polk & Co., 1942); Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Negro City Directory, 1941-1942 (N. p.: n. p., 1941).

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14. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1955 (Microfilm, University of Central Oklahoma); Plat Map No. 2698, Oklahoma County.
15. National Register Files, State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
16. Black Dispatch, September 14, 1940; Lehman, "The Edwards Family," 93, 95.
17. Lehman, "The Edwards Family," 89.
18. Black Dispatch, July 1, 1937.
19. Entourage, Inc., Harrison-Walnut, 7.
20. Black Dispatch, September 14, 1940; Daily Oklahoman, October 5, 1937.

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- Lehman, Paul. "The Edwards Family and Black Entrepreneurial Success." Chronicles of Oklahoma 64 (Winter 1986-87).
- R. L. Polk's Oklahoma City Directory, 1941. Kansas City, Mo.: R. L. Polk & Co., 1941.
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, March, 1955.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The property consists in Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 of Block 1, Hassman Heights Addition, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma County, Oklahoma.

Boundary Justification

These are the boundaries as legally recorded in Book 6291, page 589, Deed Records, Oklahoma County, Oklahoma.