



GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
MICHIGAN STRATEGIC FUND  
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

MARK A. BURTON  
PRESIDENT

Tuesday, January 5, 2021

Dr. Tareq Ramadan  
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, 2155 Old Main  
Wayne State University  
4841 Cass Avenue, Detroit, Michigan 48201

Dear Dr. Ramadan,

Thank you for submitting an *Architectural Properties Identification Form* for the Wilfred and Ruth Little House, 4336 Williams Street, Inkster, Wayne County, Michigan, to the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Based upon the information provided with the identification form, the Wilfred and Ruth Little House appears to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under National Register Criterion A under the theme of Ethnic Heritage: Black and possibly under the theme of Social History. The primary significance of the property is derived from its association with Malcolm X (Malcolm Little, el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz), the younger brother of Wilfred Little. Malcolm X arrived at the Wilfred Little House in 1952 as Malcolm Little. Malcolm was paroled and transferred into the custody and supervision of the Michigan Parole Board after completing a shortened prison sentence in Massachusetts. Prior to Malcolm's arrival, Wilfred Little, known then as Wilfred X, had become the minister of Nation of Islam Temple No. 1 in Detroit, which had been established in the 1930s. Wilfred and other family members introduced Malcolm to the Nation of Islam while Malcolm was in prison. Malcolm wrote in his *Autobiography* that "this Muslim home's atmosphere sent me often to my knees to praise Allah. My family's letters while I was in prison had included a description of the Muslim home routine, but to truly appreciate it, one had to be a part of the routine." Witnessing and taking part in these routines were transformative for Malcolm. It was also at this time that Malcolm received his "X" from Elijah Muhammad. The "X," Malcolm wrote, "symbolized the true African family name that he never could know." Malcolm X was named assistant minister of Temple No. 1 in the summer of 1953. Shortly thereafter, Malcolm was sent to Boston and other east coast cities by Elijah Muhammad.

The significance of Malcolm X is not limited to the Nation of Islam. He was one of the most significant figures in the twentieth century Civil Rights movement, and his life, words, and deeds continue to inspire and influence people around the world.

Malcolm X was born in Nebraska and spent much of his early life in Lansing and Mason, Michigan. Most, if not all, of the properties associated with him have been demolished. Though the National Register of Historic Places typically requires properties significant for their association with significant persons (Criterion B) to be associated with their working life, the



National Register accommodates properties under Criterion B that are pivotal in their life. The Wilfred and Ruth Little House was such a property in the life of Malcolm X.

Despite the deterioration of the property, the property appears to possess historic integrity. The property remains in its original location and its design remains unaltered and reflects the “minimal traditional” style in mid-twentieth-century housing. Window openings remain in place, though windows have been covered or removed. The interior of the house is also deteriorated, but the spatial organization of the house remains. Wall coverings in many locations and the utility and mechanical systems have been removed, but the wall structures remain and continue to convey the historical spatial arrangement of the interior of the house. The spaces where Malcolm Little observed the familial rituals and routines of the Muslim home remain and illustrate the significance of the property his evolution to Malcolm X, thus conveying the historic integrity of the property.

We encourage you to prepare a National Register of Historic Places nomination (a 10-900 registration form, photographs, maps, etc.) for this property. A National Register nomination should provide a historic context that discusses the Civil Rights movement in Detroit, the development of the Nation of Islam both in Detroit and nationally, and life and impact of Malcolm X.

If you have any questions about this opinion or the National Register of Historic Places program, please do not hesitate to contact me at [WalshT@michigan.gov](mailto:WalshT@michigan.gov).

I look forward to working with you on a National Register nomination for the Wilfred and Ruth Little House.

Sincerely,



Todd Walsh  
National Register Coordinator  
Michigan State Historic Preservation Office