

IDENTIFIER	HOUSE		
Other/s	Craymer House (former); <i>Humara Ghur</i>		
Address	146-148 Winmalee Road BALWYN	Date/s	1931 (house) 1932 (garden)
Designer/s	Unknown (house) Edna Walling (garden)	Builder/s	Owens & Hams
Theme/s	6.3.2 Creating prestigious residential areas 6.7.1 Making homes for the upper classes 6.7.4 Establishing private gardens/backyards	Heritage Group	Residential Building (Private)
		Heritage Category	House
		Heritage Status	-
Intactness	Good	Significance	Local
Condition	Good	Recommendation	Include in HO as individual place



Extent	To title boundaries	Survey date	4 May 2016
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History

This house was built in 1931 for retired Anglo-Indian merchant Samuel Craymer (who died soon after its completion) and his Australian-born second wife, Lilian. Born in Simla in north-eastern India, Samuel Lindsay Brice Craymer (1859-1931) spent much of his adult life as a merchant with the East India Company, which required frequent travel between India and Great Britain. He was sometimes accompanied by his wife, the former Maria Bowden (1864-1918), whom he married in Calcutta in March 1884. After her death in 1918, Craymer continued to travel between India and Great Britain. On one trip in 1928, he met a young Australian nurse, Lilian Kate Dove (1892-1985), who had arrived in London in March of that year. Leaving for Australia in September, she was joined by Craymer two months later. On 14 December, they married in Melbourne.

Intending to build a grand new house, the Craymers acquired a large block on the south side of Winmalee Road, then one of Balwyn's most prestigious residential addresses. On 25 March 1931, the City of Camberwell issued a building permit for a "ten roomed brick and timber dwelling" worth £2,767. While the architect is not cited on the permit card, the builders were listed as Owen & Hams. A partnership between Bruce Rees Owen (1904-1995) and Arthur Stanley Hams (1897-1953), the firm was based in Martin Street, Heidelberg. During the 1930s, Owen & Hams did construction work for a number of leading Melbourne architects including Edward F Billson, Clifford Cummings and A C Leith & Bartlett. The Craymers' new house was nearing completion, if not completed, by 25 August 1931, when a second permit was granted for a fibro-cement garage. Worth £100, this contract was also executed by Owen & Hams. Sadly, Samuel Craymer died barely six weeks later, on 2 October, aged 71 years. A newspaper notice, reporting his death at *Humara Ghur*, Winmalee Road, Balwyn, shows that the house was named prior to his demise: a Hindi term translating simply as "My Home".

The widowed Lilian Craymer lived alone in the house for some years. In 1932, she engaged garden designer Edna Walling to prepare a landscaping scheme. Walling's plan depicts a garden dominated by dense clusters of mature trees, interrupted by stone pathways that connected formal elements including a long rectangular front garden (with beds of herbaceous perennials and a stone seat at either end), a semi-circular grassed terrace (partially enclosed by a dwarf wall), a smaller garden to the side (with hexagonal pool and paved area with pergola), and an enclosed circular flower garden to the rear. A vegetable garden and poultry shed were also indicated at the far end of the garden. The scheme is known to have at least been partially implemented. In 1938, the grounds of *Humara Ghur* served as the venue for a garden fete held as part of the 'Prince and Princess Carnival' held by a local church (*Argus*, 29/10/1938:6).

In February 1941, Lilian Craymer married Eric Hatswell, a widowed postmaster from Goulburn, NSW, whose wife Monica had been killed in a plane crash in late 1939. Hatswell took up residence in *Humara Ghur* with son Graham and daughters Monica, Frances and Joan. Over the next few years, the property hosted social events that included more garden fetes (two of which, in 1945 and 1956, raised funds for a local Anglican kindergarten) and engagement parties. Hatswell's daughters Frances and Joan married in 1944 and 1949 respectively, and his son Graham in 1945. In 1954, he and Lilian offered the house for sale at auction, but it was passed in at £11,000, two thousand pounds short of the reserve. It was later sold privately and the Hatswell moved to Ringwood, where Eric died in 1965. The next owner of *Humara Ghur* was radiologist Dr Howell Hosking and his wife Joan, who remained there until at least the 1980s. During that time, they made a number of changes to the property. Building permit records confirm that two new carports were added in 1970 and 1971, and a concrete swimming pool in 1984. By the mid-1990s, the property had been further improved by the construction of a large hip-roofed wing to the rear of the house, and a tennis court.

Description

Set at an angle to the street on a large allotment, the house at 146-148 Winmalee Road, Balwyn, is a two-storey brick dwelling with pale-coloured rendered finish and a low hipped roof of terracotta pantiles, with narrow eaves, slatted timber linings and plain chimneys to the east and west sides. Designed in the Mediterranean style, the house has a symmetrical street façade dominated by a tripartite loggia at ground level with a recessed balcony directly above. The loggia, which comprises three round arches and a pair of Roman Doric columns, opens onto shallow steps flanked by rendered plinths. The balcony above has a moulded sill and incorporates an elongated cartouche motif. Flanking these centrally-placed openings are pairs of rectangular windows with multi-paned timber-framed double-hung sashes, projecting sills and louvred timber shutters painted in a pale green tone. The windows along the two side elevations are similarly treated, although not all of them have louvred shutters, and some have single pane sashes rather than double-hung ones.

The house has a formal landscaped setting that is believed to retain at least some of Edna Walling's scheme from 1932 (see discussion under 'Integrity'). The street boundary is marked by a retaining wall of uncoursed stone, with ornate black-painted metal gates across the driveway, which extends around to the rear of the house. The western boundary of the property is marked by a very large cypress hedge, and a mature eucalypt tree is evident in the back yard.

Integrity

The house itself appears substantially intact, although the original garage no longer exists. Aside from a small glimpse of the current garage, the rear extensions (c.1990s) are not visible when the property is viewed from the street.

It is understood that Walling's landscape remains partially intact. In her 1998 book, Walling expert Trisha Dixon noted that "small segments remain", mentioning the twin herbaceous borders and the semi-circular stone wall directly in front of the house. The massive hedge along the western boundary is demonstrably original, as it is indicated on Walling's garden plan. Recent aerial photographs show that most of the back yard is now taken up by the rear extension, tennis court and swimming pool. No trace appears to remain of the large circular garden bed, the hexagonal pond or the paved area with pergola. According to the *City of Boroondara Significant Tree Study* (2001), a large Lemon-scented Gum tree (*Corymbia citriodora*) in the backyard dates from c.1932 and is a notable remnant of Walling's original scheme.

Historical Context

This part of Balwyn, centred on Fitzgerald Street, the east ends of Yarrbat Avenue and Winmalee Road, and contiguous portions of Narrak and Union Roads, began to develop as a prestigious residential area in the late nineteenth century. This trend continued into the early twentieth century and peaked during the inter-war period when wealthy Melburnians (including doctors, solicitors, retailers and merchants) built large residences, typically set well back from the street on large allotments. After the Second World War, several of these properties were subdivided for closer residential settlement. Currently retaining its reputation as Balwyn's most prestigious residential address, the area has been somewhat transformed since the 1980s, with many of the original houses extensively altered, enlarged or simply demolished and replaced.

Comparative Analysis

With its simple forms, pale rendered finish, arcaded loggia, shuttered windows and low hipped roof clad in terracotta tiles, this house is a textbook example of the eclectic but understated architectural style defined by Apperley *et al* as Inter-War Mediterranean. Popularised by Sydney architect and academic Professor Leslie Wilkinson from 1918, the style became prevalent in more temperate parts of Australia in the 1920s and '30s. However, it rarely manifested itself in Balwyn and Balwyn North, or more broadly across the former City of Camberwell, where prevailing tastes in inter-war domestic architecture favoured the more widely accepted Californian Bungalow, Tudor Revival and Moderne idioms.

As such, there are relatively few truly pertinent local comparators to *Humara Ghur* at 146 Winmalee Road. The early influence of the Inter-War Mediterranean style can be seen in a few smaller-scaled examples from the 1920s, notably architect George Hallandall's own house at 10 Fitzgerald Street, Balwyn (1924), just around the corner from 146 Winmalee Road. Similarly double-storeyed but considerably more compact, it is broadly comparable in its low-pitched pan-tiled roof, rendered walls and symmetrical façade. A contemporaneous single-storey example at 168a Mont Albert Road, Canterbury (1923), designed by architect Lionel San Miguel for his own mother, is comparable in its smooth rendered finish, symmetry, shuttered windows and, particularly, its recessed entry porch with triple round-arched loggia. Slightly further afield, there is a large two-storeyed example at 3 Finsbury Way, Camberwell, albeit realised in a less sophisticated fashion, with classical detailing limited to a projecting columned porch. A Mediterranean character, often freely mixed with Spanish Mission or Georgian Revival influences, is also evident in some smaller single-storey dwellings, such as 460 Camberwell Road (1930).

The Craymer garden is one of many private residential commissions that Edna Walling received in what is now the City of Boroondara. There were eight in Kew, five in Hawthorn, four in Camberwell, three in Balwyn and one in Canterbury. Not all of these were realised and, of those that were, not all remain evident today. The Craymer garden is one of three that, as documented by Trish Dixon, were at least partly implemented and still remained evident in 1998. The other two are the Colville garden at 1045 Burke Road, Hawthorn East (1928) and the Whale garden at 3 Torrington Place, Camberwell (1937). The former has since been destroyed, while little appears to remain of the latter.

Grading and recommendation

Humara Ghur, at 146-148 Winmalee Road, Balwyn, is an individually significant heritage place in the City of Boroondara.

It is recommended for inclusion in the schedule to the heritage overlay of the Boroondara Planning Scheme. Tree controls are also recommended, in order to preserve the lemon-scented gum tree that remains from Walling's garden plan.

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

Erected in 1931, the house at 146-148 Winmalee Road, Balwyn, is a double-stored rendered brick house in the inter-war Mediterranean style, with a hipped pantiled roof and symmetrical façade with tripartite round-arched loggia, recessed first floor balcony and flanking bays of shuttered windows.

The significant fabric is identified as the exterior of the original house, excluding the 1990s rear additions. The remaining elements of Walling's garden scheme are also deemed to be significant, including both hard landscaping (paths, retaining walls and wrought iron gates) and plantings (notably the boundary hedge and the lemon-scented gum tree at the rear).

How is it significant?

Humara Ghur at 146-148 Winmalee Road, Balwyn, satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Boroondara Planning Scheme:

- Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics
- Criterion H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history.

Why is it significant?

Humara Ghur is significant as a large, notable and well-sited example of an inter-war house in the Mediterranean style that was popular in Melbourne the later 1920s and early '30s. The house exhibits most of the trademark characteristics of that style, including its pale-coloured rendered exterior, low-hipped roof with distinctive terracotta pantile, shuttered windows and a subtle touch of classical detailing in the tripartite loggia with round arches and Tuscan columns. The understated monumentality of the house is enhanced by its formalised landscaped setting that includes elements of a garden designed by Edna Walling. Sited at a slight angle to the street boundary, the house and its garden, which includes an eye-catching retaining wall of uncoursed stone and a massive cypress hedge, remain a striking element in the streetscape (*Criterion E*).

Humara Ghur is significant for its associations with celebrated Victorian garden designer Edna Walling, who prepared an ambitious landscaping scheme for the property in 1932 that was at least partly implemented, and of which key remnants are still apparent to this day. Although Walling is known to have received more than twenty private garden commissions in what is now the City of Boroondara, not all of these were implemented and some that were have since been destroyed. The Craymer garden is one of very few known to retain significant elements of Walling's original scheme (*Criterion H*).

Identified By

Built Heritage Pty Ltd

References

City of Camberwell Building Permits No 2,149, dated 25 March 1931, and No 2,331, dated 25 Aug 1931.

Edna Walling, "Garden Plan for Mrs S B Craymer, Winmalee Road, Surrey Hills [sic], Victoria", undated watercolour plan held in private collection, Melbourne (blueprint copy held by Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria).

MMBW Property Sewerage Plan No 187780. 3 pp, dated 1984-85 and 1995-96. Held by Yarra Valley Water.

Trisha Dixon and Jennie Churchill, *The Vision of Edna Walling* (Hawthorn: Bloomings Books, 1998), pp 48-51.

John Patrick Pty Ltd, "City of Boroondara Significant Tree Study", report dated May 2001 (revised Nov 2015), pp 225-26.