

**DEL ORO, LATE ROLLESTON  
HOUSE  
2-4 KILWINNING STREET, BENDIGO**

**SURVEY DATE: 1991-2**

**PLANNING SCHEME NUMBER: 32**

**STUDY GRADING: B**

**CONSTRUCTION DATE: 1892**

**FIRST OWNER : CRAWFORD, GEORGE**



**CITATION:**

**History**

Builder, swordsman and mining investor, George Crawford, commissioned this house in 1892, possibly to W C Vahland's design.<sup>1</sup> Crawford lived there until the 1930s, when Mrs. Mary Crawford (widow?) was the listed occupier. Robert S Crawford succeeded her into the late 1930s and Alexander Hamilton followed in the

1 Butcher & Flanders p.151

**BENDIGO & EAGLEHAWK HERITAGE STUDY-SIGNIFICANT SITES  
GRAEME BUTLER & ASSOCIATES**

1940s-60s.<sup>1</sup> George H Crawford was born at Gateshead, Newcastle-on-Tyne, in 1847, the son of Charles Crawford.<sup>2</sup> In 1853 the Crawford family came to Melbourne, spending three years there.<sup>3</sup> In 1856 the family moved to Bendigo, where George's father established a building and contracting firm.<sup>4</sup> George returned to Melbourne in 1869 to work as a builder but, on his father's retirement 2 years later, he returned to Bendigo run the family business.<sup>5</sup>

It was for his mining interests, however, that George Crawford was best known. He was the director of many mining companies, including the Shenandoah, the North Shenandoah, Fortuna Hustlers, Summerhill, Frederick the Great, Sebastian and the British New Chum Gold Mining Company.<sup>6</sup> He was a member of the Bendigo Mine Owner's Association and the Legal Managers' Association, of which he was elected president in 1889.<sup>7</sup> The Government appointed him to represent the Mine Owners' Association of Victoria on the Royal Commission on Gold Mining in 1889 and to the Board of Inquiry as to Mining Managers' Certificates.<sup>8</sup>

Crawford was appointed returning officer for the Northern Province of Victoria in the Legislative Council in 1876, and for the Sandhurst Electorate in the Legislative Assembly in 1886.<sup>9</sup> He retired from the former in 1890, and the latter in 1893 to travel to England to float the Frederick Great Gold Mining Company.<sup>10</sup> Crawford owned a great deal of property in the Bendigo district.<sup>11</sup> A Crawford biography of the period credits Del Oro as 'one of the finest private houses in Bendigo'.<sup>12</sup>

### Description

The house is now a large one, with the 1972 and 1940 additions extending across a wide frontage and to a substantial depth, the walls being punctuated by room and window bays and an highly ornamental return convex-roof and iron verandah. Two colour brickwork is used with cemented quoining and architraves at openings, to provide much decorated elevations to at least three sides. Taking on the hipped roof Italianate form, the house once possessed strict symmetry, with tall dichrome brick chimneys on either side of an elevated widow's walk in the roof (now gone). The central roof gable, with its oculus vent and iron cresting, is echoed by a shallowed verandah gable, with intricate detailing in the tympanum of the entry archway under. Iron friezes are panelled, the bellied iron balustrading survives and the verandah steps are swept to either side in a grand flourish in their progress to the street. Similarly the entry has panelled sidelights and a segment-arched toplight. Outbuildings of the house period face Palmerston Street and some mature exotics survive in the garden.

Internally, the Crawford family added new false-ceilings and cornices in c1939-40, using a geometric Moderne styling.<sup>13</sup>

### Landscape

Fence and gates of interest but majority of garden is of more recent origin. Plants of some significance include 'Cedrus deodara'.

### External Integrity

Major additions were made at the rear and side in c1940 and c1972,<sup>14</sup> including enclosing the side verandah and creation of a porch entrance to the other side. Only part of this work is visible from Kilwinning Street.

The ornate iron widow's walk has been removed from the roof, glass details replaced and the boundary (picket?) fence replaced in two-colour brickwork. The iron verandah balustrade panels are reputedly reproductions made by a former owner from the Rifle Brigade Hotel, replacing one of a turned pattern.<sup>15</sup>

### Context

The house is on a prominent and elevated site overlooking Palmerston Square and hence is the focus of many views approaching from Carpenter Street. It is a contributing element in the Quarry Hill precinct which is characterised by its many late 19th and early 20th Century sites and its proximity to the Bendigo Railway Yards.

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|----|------------------------------|
| 1  | D1915- 62                    |
| 2  | Kimberley, op.cit., p.260    |
| 3  | ibid.                        |
| 4  | ibid.                        |
| 5  | ibid.                        |
| 6  | ibid.                        |
| 7  | ibid.                        |
| 8  | ibid.                        |
| 9  | ibid.                        |
| 10 | ibid.                        |
| 11 | ibid.                        |
| 12 | Butcher & Gregson, p.122     |
| 13 | see Butcher & Gregson, p.122 |
| 14 | BSA DRP450                   |
| 15 | Butcher & Gregson, p.123     |

### **Significance**

Architecturally, although altered, the street view of this house still provides a significant architectural contribution to the city and its ornamentation is distinctively of the area. As a prominently sited and large structure, it is a major element in the valuable Quarry Hill residential precinct.

Landscape, the garden in its present form is of no historic significance but contributes to the house as a setting.

Historically, the house has a long association with the Crawford family and particularly George Crawford, who epitomises the self-made entrepreneur who accumulated wealth from both the goldfields and his trade. His recognition by public organisations and government is a further indication of his significance.