
NORTH RANDWICK

Heritage Conservation Area

Federation and Inter-War housing associated with the development of Centennial Park.

A large area to the south of Centennial Park, originally reserved for water supply purposes, delaying its release for housing.

What is the area's significance?

Aesthetic Significance:

Centennial Park is one of Sydney's largest expanses of urban parkland and provides a much needed breathing space for Sydney's inner eastern suburbs. The park has high scenic and landscape significance. It has a strong rural character, but also incorporates remnant natural vegetation, formal garden areas, tree lined avenues, playing fields and formal and informal water features. The melaleuca wetlands are a distinctive and important character element. Notable architectural elements include two residences, several kiosks and shelters, magnificent sandstone entry gates, the perimeter palisade fence, reservoir fences and steps, statues and monuments and an amphitheatre.

The North Randwick precinct is significant for its persistent, strongly Federation streetscapes. The imposition of a varied subdivision pattern, on the north facing slopes adjoining Centennial Park, has created numerous internal views and vistas of special interest. The combination of street pattern, topography and native and cultural plantings, set off the areas original buildings to good advantage.

The heritage value of the area largely derives from its Federation and Inter-War housing, its predominantly single storey scale, face brick construction, dominant slate and terra cotta tiled roofs and well established cultural plantings. The mixed building stock adds to the area's interest, ranging from larger Federation houses on Darley Road to small semi-detached on Dangar Street. Whilst many buildings have been substantially altered, there has been, very little redevelopment relative to other parts of Randwick. Most buildings and streetscapes retain their essential period character.

Historical Significance:

Centennial Park has considerable historical significance. It originated as a Common, set aside by Governor Macquarie and later become the main source of Sydney's water supply. It was dedicated as a park to celebrate the first centenary of European settlement in Australia. It was also the focus of Sydney's celebration of Federation in 1901. Busby's Bore and the lakes persist as important visual reminders of the area's historical role as a water supply catchment.

The consistency of the architecture in North Randwick is partly a reflection of the unusual historical circumstances which delayed the release of the area for housing. Most of the area originally formed part of the Sydney Common. For many years it was reserved for water supply purposes. The eventual residential release saw the area develop reasonably quickly, despite the slow start in the 1890s recession. As a consequence, most housing dates from the early twentieth century. There are a few particularly notable examples of Victorian housing, as well as more numerous Inter-War houses. The latter filled in remaining empty lots in the 1920s and 30s.

The street and subdivision pattern is Victorian in origin, though the area developed over a long period. This has produced an interesting juxtaposition of Federation and Inter-War housing on often narrow Victorian allotments. There was a resultant modification of standard house designs to suit narrow frontages.

The continuing physical and historical connection with Centennial Park is important and gives special significance to houses fronting Darley Road. These buildings tend to be larger and grander, with more generous allotments. These allotments were created to help fund the establishment of Centennial Park.

The area still retains a few horse stables connected with the historic racing industry in the area. There are also historical and physical connections with the adjoining former tramway workshops.

Social and Historical Significance:

Centennial Park has a high social significance at a regional level. It remains one of the most popular recreation areas in the Sydney region.

Scientific Significance:

Centennial Park has special scientific significance for its natural values. It preserves remnant native vegetation and provides important wildlife habitat. The melaleuca wetlands are regionally significant.

Themes Represented:

The following historical themes, identified in the 1989 Randwick Heritage Study, are directly illustrated in the conservation area:

- Modifying the landscape
- Government and institutions
- Recreation, entertainment and leisure
- Suburbanisation

The following themes are indirectly represented:

- Transport and communications

