
ST. JUDE'S

Heritage Conservation Area

Randwick's earliest church and civic buildings together with some fine groups of nineteenth and twentieth century houses.

This area falls into two distinct precincts. One is the historic St Judes grouping. The other is the residential precinct centred on Alison Park and the intersection of Cook and Frances Streets.

What is the area's significance?

Aesthetic Significance:

The St Judes precinct is an outstanding building grouping centred on early church and civic buildings. The church and civic groupings are prominent on Randwick's original main thoroughfare, the Frenchman's Road.

The church group includes two notable early stone buildings, set in open grounds, with St Jude's cemetery in the background. Each of the three main buildings in the group is significant in its own right, namely St Judes Church, the Rectory, and the former Borough Council Chambers. The buildings and their setting have changed little since the time they were built. The civic group consists of the late nineteenth century Town Hall, the buildings of the former Randwick Public School, and a fire station. These buildings remain distinctive despite the presence of a number of more recent buildings.

The Alison Park precinct survives as a notable grouping of late nineteenth and early twentieth century houses. The building stock is a rich mixture of types, ranging from small semis and row houses, to Victorian terraces, Federation and Inter-War cottages, and grand mansions on generous allotments. Alison Park provides an important focus, as does the intersection of Cook and Frances Streets.

Immediately adjoining the church group there is a fine three storey terrace known as "Avonmore", overlooking Alison Park. This terrace precedes the Federation and Inter-War housing to the north and west. The row is an outstanding Victorian grouping in its own right. Such grand London style terraces are rare for the Sydney region.

Particularly prominent in the Federation housing area is the ornate home at the Cook and Frances Street intersection. This building has achieved landmark status and is prominent on approaches from both streets. Despite intrusions by a number of Post-War flat buildings, and some unsympathetic alteration to older houses, this grouping persists as one of the best preserved examples of Federation housing in Randwick.

Historic Significance:

The establishment of St Judes Church assisted Simeon Pearce's promotion of Randwick as a semi-rural retreat for the Colony's elite. The church symbolised the strength and stability of the new community. The church, cemetery and grounds continue as a clear reminder of the original English village model Pearce sought to imitate.

The establishment of the Borough Council was another of Pearce's initiatives. The council was one of the first established in the Colony. The later Town Hall, close by, marked the considerable progress of the early municipality.

The 1883 public school was typical of many established following the passing of the Public Instruction Act. The Act made education “free, compulsory and secular”. The route of the former tramway, now part of the school grounds, has considerable historical interest. The tramways greatly assisted the establishment and growth of the settlement. Its boundaries are still well marked by fencing and different landscape treatments.

Housing in the Alison Park precinct is representative of the range of housing types and styles built in the City during the Late Victorian and Federation periods. The grander homes are in keeping with Simeon Pearce’s original ambitions for the area, but the presence of smaller and simpler cottages adds to the historical interest and diversity.

Social Significance:

The church, school and civic precinct remains a major community focus and its institutions have been held high in local esteem for over 100 years.

The mixture of grand homes and simple cottages is notable as a continuing record of the area’s rich social mix.

Themes Represented;

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

- Speculation and promotion
- Government and institutions
- Promotion of culture, religion and education
- Recreation, entertainment and leisure
- Transport and communications
- Suburbanisation

The following themes are indirectly represented:

- Modifying the landscape

