
THE SPOT

Heritage Conservation Area

Groupings of nineteenth and twentieth century residential and commercial buildings including the outstanding Art Deco Ritz cinema.

The Spot Conservation Area consists of the commercial centre on Perouse Road and St Pauls Street, and surrounding residential areas.

What is the area's significance?

Aesthetic Significance:

The Spot is a large precinct exhibiting an interesting diversity of streetscapes. In the commercial centre the facades are mostly two storeys, continuous and built to the street alignments. They create a distinctive urban space, particularly at the curved corner of Perouse Road and St Pauls Street. The most common building styles of the commercial buildings are Victorian Italianate and Federation Free Classical. There are also Inter-War Art Deco style buildings. The Randwick Ritz, at No39 St Pauls Street is an excellent example of an Inter-War Art Deco style cinema.

The residential areas contain representative groupings of buildings from the Victorian, Federation and Inter-War periods.

Residential buildings from the Federation period are the most common. Most are Bungalow style. The row of detached houses at Nos 77-93 Perouse Road is only one example of several excellent groupings of Federation period detached or semi-detached houses in the conservation area.

There is a concentration of Victorian period houses in the western half of the conservation area, north of Barker Street and west of Perouse Road. Some are Italianate style detached houses. There are several rows of Filigree style two storey terraces, which give streetscapes such as St Pauls Street, a distinctive character.

The most common types of Inter-War period residential buildings are California Bungalow style detached and semi-detached houses, and two or three storey residential flat buildings. A large number of the Inter-War period flat buildings are in the western half of the conservation area. However, the most intact grouping of Inter-War period buildings is on Hardiman Avenue. These buildings are detached houses or flat buildings, and are characterised by their liver brick external walls and fences.

Tree plantings, such as the Moreton Bay Figs in St Pauls Street, make a major contribution to the visual quality of streetscapes in the conservation area.

Historic Significance:

The Spot Conservation Area has historic significance for its origins as "Irishtown", a poor working area on the fringe of Randwick Village, dominated by Irish Catholics. It came to be considered a settlement in opposition to Simeon Pearce's "Struggletown", the housing area he developed for his own workers. The original group maintained a long association with the area and contributed to its strong sense of local identity.

The original shanties, located along Perouse Road, have long since disappeared. The redevelopment of The Spot, in the late 1800's, was an attempt to clear the temporary dwellings of Irishtown and displace the inhabitants.

The Spot is now a cohesive residential and commercial neighbourhood. It demonstrates the later processes of large scale urban subdivision and development, which began after the establishment of the tramway route between Randwick and Coogee in 1883. The commercial centre developed around a tram stop at the intersection of Perouse Road and St Pauls Street. The Inter-War period flat buildings demonstrate the intensification of land use which resulted from increases in population and scarcity of other land for subdivision.

The design of the Victorian, Federation and Inter-War period dwellings and commercial buildings, and their range of types, are representative of contemporary lifestyles and economic conditions.

Social Significance:

The Spot is a popular local name for the precinct and there is a strong sense of individual identity, dating back to its origins as "Irishtown". The precinct remains something like a suburban "village". The existing neighbourhood character has social significance for local residents and the general community. The conservation area continues in its traditional residential and commercial use.

Themes Represented:

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

- Speculation and promotion
- Industry and commerce
- Transport and communications
- Suburbanisation

The following themes are indirectly represented:

- Modifying the landscape
- Promotion, culture, religion and education
- Recreation, entertainment and leisure

