

---

# RACECOURSE PRECINCT

## Heritage Conservation Area

*A number of early buildings surround the historic track itself, while Doncaster Avenue includes some fine groups of nineteenth and twentieth century houses.*

The Racecourse Precinct includes Randwick Racecourse and all properties on the eastern side of Doncaster Avenue, which adjoin the racecourse at the rear.

---

### What is the area's significance?

#### ***Aesthetic Significance:***

The Racecourse, together with Centennial Park and Moore Park, further to the north and east, forms one of the largest areas of open space in the eastern suburbs of Sydney.

The Racecourse provides an outlook for parts of the suburb of Randwick on higher ground to the east, and the University of NSW South Wales, to the south. The major built features of note are the stands, particularly the 1910 Members Stand, and the oval shaped course. Other racecourse buildings are located behind the stands in the north-west corner of the site, and close to the street frontages. The large modern grandstand is out of scale with its older neighbours but has become a local landmark.

The frontages to Alison Road, Wansey Road and High Street have avenue plantings of Port Jackson and Moreton Bay Figs, Plane trees and Brush Box, which enhance the visual amenity of these streets. In the north-west corner of the site there are Canary Island Date Palms and formal garden plantings.

The residential properties on the eastern side of Doncaster Avenue form a straight street frontage almost a kilometre in length, with a predominantly Victorian and Federation period character. This housing is representative of the larger Kensington precinct, on either side of Anzac Parade.

The most common building types are one storey Federation period detached and semi-detached houses. These mostly stand on narrow lots and have consistent setbacks and verandah and roof designs. There are also a large number of Victorian period one and two storey houses, and two storey terraces. The unity of the streetscape is disturbed to some degree by Post-War period three storey flat buildings, but to a lesser degree than the remainder of the historical Kensington precinct.

#### ***Historical Significance:***

The racecourse is historically significant for its early reservation as an official racecourse, in 1833. It has been in continuous use as a racecourse since the first regular meetings held in 1863. This is probably the longest period of any racetrack in Australia. The racecourse retains much original fabric from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is the best preserved Victorian and Federation period racetrack in Sydney.

Randwick Racecourse developed in parallel with the present City of Randwick. The racecourse, and the many stables and workers' cottages in the surrounding area, demonstrate the process of development of the racing industry, and its importance to the commercial life of the district. This includes housing and stables on some of the properties fronting Doncaster Avenue.

The residential properties on Doncaster Avenue demonstrate the process of suburbanisation which took place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This was the first part of Kensington to develop, and has a higher proportion of Victorian housing as a consequence. The housing (Victorian/Federation) is representative of the first stage of Kensington's suburban development, prior to West Kensington (Federation/Inter-War). The street also has a close connection with the racecourse and the racing industry.

***Social Significance:***

Randwick Racecourse is held in high esteem by members of the Australian Jockey Club, the racing industry, and past and present race-goers. Royalty has visited the facility on several occasions, giving the course special prestige in Australian thoroughbred racing. The physical environment of 'Royal Randwick' is an important part of the experience of a race day.

Doncaster Avenue shares a close physical and visual link with the racecourse. It is a major route for pedestrian access to the racecourse. Doncaster Avenue is also appreciated by the community as part of an important local period landscape and streetscape.

**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

The following themes are indirectly represented:

- Speculation and promotion
- Transport and communications
- Suburbanisation

