



## REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

### 11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in November 1996 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

The wording of this document has been adapted from 'Grandstand, York Racecourse Conservation Plan', prepared by Laura Gray for the York Beverley Turf Club Inc. in November 1998, with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

#### PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 8.1.1 Playing and watching organised sport
- 8.1.2 Betting
- 8.5 Forming associations

#### HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 404 Community services and utilities
- 405 Sport, recreation and entertainment

#### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\*

The grandstand, tote building (original), and committee rooms (former), of *York-Beverley Racecourse*, with their rectilinear form and gambrel hipped roofs clad with painted corrugated iron, are good examples of the vernacular style of timber buildings predominant throughout regional Western Australia constructed in the first half of the twentieth century. (Criterion 1.1)

*York-Beverley Racecourse* contributes to the picturesque rural landscape at the foot of Mount Bakewell on the outskirts of York. (Criterion 1.3)

*York-Beverley Racecourse* comprises a range of historic buildings, facilities and features, which form a significant cultural environment. (Criterion 1.4)

#### 11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

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\* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, Richard; Irving, Robert and Reynolds, Peter *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

*York-Beverley Racecourse* is associated with the growth and development of York into an important rural centre during the second half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century.

*York-Beverley Racecourse* is associated with the development of racing in regional Western Australia, and specifically in the Avon Valley, since 1846. (Criterion 2.2)

*York-Beverley Racecourse* is the oldest operating regional racetrack in Western Australia, having held race meetings every year since 1846 (except 1994), and since 1846 has been the home to the York Jockey Club, the oldest regional race club in Australia, established in 1843. (Criterion 2.2)

### **11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE**

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### **11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE**

*York-Beverley Racecourse* is highly valued by the York community and the wider Western Australian community for the significant racing meetings and associated cultural activities held there, sometimes attracting thousands of people at one time, which have taken place every year since the late nineteenth century, with the exception of 1994. (Criterion 4.1)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12. 1. RARITY**

*York-Beverley Racecourse* is one of the few remaining regional racecourses in Western Australia incorporating a grandstand, and is rare as a racecourse incorporating timber buildings and as a racecourse constructed in the interwar period.

### **12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

The grandstand, tote building (original) and committee rooms (former) of *York-Beverley Racecourse* are representative examples of vernacular style timber buildings constructed in the first half of the twentieth century predominant throughout regional Western Australia. (Criterion 6.1)

The grounds and buildings of *York-Beverley Racecourse* represent a range of activities and customs associated with the horseracing industry. (Criterion 6.2)

### **12. 3 CONDITION**

Overall *York-Beverley Racecourse* is in fair to good condition. The structures are mostly sound, except for the committee rooms (former) that is in a derelict condition.

### **12. 4 INTEGRITY**

*York-Beverley Racecourse* has retained a high degree of integrity, as it continues to provide the venue for the racing calendar in the York-Beverley

region. Changes have taken place over the years to facilitate the continued use of the place as the focus of the activities of the York Beverley Race Club.

## **12. 5 AUTHENTICITY**

The 1920s buildings at *York-Beverley Racecourse* remain mostly intact with minimal interventions over the years to facilitate upgrades and ongoing use. No structural alterations have been made to the 1920s buildings, nor do any of the changes impact on the original fabric of those places, except the tote building (original) that evidences minor intervention for the access of course machinery. *York-Beverley Racecourse* demonstrates a high degree of authenticity.

## **13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

Supporting evidence has been taken from 'Grandstand, York Racecourse Conservation Plan', prepared by Laura Gray for the York Beverley Turf Club Inc. in November 1998.

Key sections used: 3.0 Documentary Evidence (pp7-27), 4.0 Physical Evidence (pp28-54), 5.0 Analysis of Evidence (p 55), 9.0 The Place (p 60) and 10.0 Retention of Significance (pp61-64)

Additional Physical Evidence was provided by Laura Gray in March 2004.

### **13. 1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

For a discussion of the Documentary Evidence, refer to the 'Grandstand, York Racecourse Conservation Plan', prepared by Laura Gray for the York Beverley Turf Club Inc. in November 1998.

### **13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE**

For a discussion of the Physical Evidence, refer to the 'Grandstand, York Racecourse Conservation Plan', prepared by Laura Gray for the York Beverley Turf Club Inc. in November 1998.

The following additional information was prepared by Laura Gray in March 2004:

*York-Beverley Racecourse* comprising the race track, grandstand, tote building (original) and bar area, JM Smyth pavilion, original committee rooms (former), stable shelters and associated yards, track elements and grounds, is located on Spencer's Brook Road, 3 kilometres north of York on the northern outskirts of the town. An unsealed gravel road gives access across the railway line to the entry of *York-Beverley Racecourse* with the race track directly ahead, and access to the stables and yards immediately on the southwest (left), and entry to the tote area and grandstand, further along and on the southwest (left), closer to the race track.

The entry to the course enclosure is defined by a wrought iron archway with the words 'York Jockey Club' also in wrought iron, across the arch. Trackside of the arch is a ticket box.

The built elements on the site are aligned along a north east/south west axis, parallel with the home straight of the race track, with Mt Bakewell forming a backdrop to the site. From the entry into the course enclosure, the tote and bar area, including the tote building (original), is on the south east, connecting to the grandstand. Beyond the grandstand, a few metres setback is all there is to the JM Smyth Pavilion, and then some 20 metres to the committee rooms (former).

Horse enclosures enclose the perimeter of the site to three sides except the race track frontage. The race track frontage is delineated by a track rails, and steel framed cyclone mesh fences define the winners circle and other specific trackside areas. The steel framed starting box tower is within the winners circle, that is entered through a wrought iron arch with the words 'Officials only', directly aligned with the photo finish element on the inside rail. Also within the winners circle area is a small plinth with commemorative plaques attached.

The race track has a steel framed barrier rail around the exterior and interior perimeters. The track is grassed, and the interior area is cleared with no buildings or plantings. On the outside perimeter of the track at the south and north ends of the home straight, are two steel framed towers with commentary boxes perched at the top.

*York-Beverley Racecourse* does not display characteristics of the architectural styles described in *Identifying Australian Architecture*.<sup>1</sup> The grandstand, tote building (original), and committee rooms (former), are all of a similar rectilinear form with gambrel hipped roofs, clad with painted corrugated iron, typical of the vernacular style of timber buildings predominant throughout regional Western Australia from the early 1900s though to the 1950s.

The grandstand at *York-Beverley Racecourse* is an imposing structure of two storey proportion. It comprises an extensive tiered seating arrangement on the race track side, with commentary boxes each side, and underneath are the jockeys rooms, toilet facilities, and at the rear, kitchen and dining extensions. The timber structure is clad with painted shiplap weatherboards, and the decking is predominantly spaced reeded decking replacing makeshift sheets of marine ply in 2002, although original timber boards remain insitu in the top levels. Some interior alterations have taken place overtime, but the main area that access the undercover tote area retains the original layout and function.

The undercover tote and bar area is an expansive open area adjoining the grandstand. It has extensive steel trusses supported by steel posts, except the area in the northeast corner that is the tote building (original), that is defined by timber posts, remnants of lattice valance, and the hipped roof. The north east end of the original tote has had some intervention to accommodate the access of the barrier rails. The covered area adjoining the tote building (original) and the grandstand is of no heritage significance.

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<sup>1</sup> Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture Styles and terms from 1788 to the present*. Angus & Robertson Publishers, Sydney. 2001.

The committee rooms (former) is a single storey timber framed weatherboard and corrugated iron clad building with corrugated iron infill above weatherboard dados to two sides. The roof is hipped with gambrel details and clad with painted corrugated iron as for the grandstand and original tote building. The interior shows evidence of infill timber stud walls lined with asbestos, and ablution fitouts that have since been damaged and/or removed.

JM Smyth Pavilion is the members' facility that comprises the bar and dining room for the members. It is an imposing two storey brick and concrete structure with tiered concrete frontage that serves as a seating area. The tiered seating features extensive wrought iron balustrading, and the front of the building is predominantly extensive timber framed glazing, JM Smyth Pavilion is of little heritage significance.

The horse stabling enclosures are essentially steel framed with some timber roof elements, and clad with corrugated iron and more recent zincalume sheeting. Mid way along the rear perimeter of the enclosures are several timber framed stables that evidence an earlier period of construction. The timber framed stables may be of some heritage significance; the remaining stable enclosures are of no heritage significance.

The timber framed asbestos clad, skillion roof ticket box, entry arch and elements within the winners circle are of some significance, and the fences, rails, towers and other associated elements throughout the site are of little significance.

Overall *York-Beverley Racecourse* is in fair to good condition. There is no evidence of termites, subsidence or structural instability. The timber weatherboards of the grandstand are mostly in good condition, and 2002 works to the roof, balustrades and tiered seating contribute to the conservation of the place. The tote building (original) is in fair to good condition with much of the original structure has been retained, except for an intervention to access course machinery, and the adjoining covered area has a minimal impact, although visually it is somewhat intrusive. The committee rooms (former) are in poor condition with weathered and termite damaged timbers, and external and internal linings and unusable fittings damaged, and it is generally vacant and derelict. The stable enclosures are in good condition due to frequent use. The track, winners' circle and grounds in general are in fair to good condition.

### **13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION**

There are 41 racecourses or parts of racecourses listed on the HCWA database<sup>2</sup>. Twelve of these places are sites with no obvious race-related structures remaining. Of the other 29 places, only *Kalgoorlie Racecourse and Buildings* (P1326) is on the State Register. It was constructed in 1896 – 1920 of brick and iron and comprises a race track, ticket kiosks, totalisator building, refreshment pavilion, public convenience building, grandstand,

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<sup>2</sup> HCWA Database 1/4/04 and 4/5/05.  
Register of Heritage Places - Assessment Doc'n  
03/06/2005

coffee stalls, race steward's building, museum, luncheon rooms and caretaker's house.

Twenty-five of these 29 places were built before 1918 and three were built in the interwar period, including *York-Beverley Racecourse*. P11013 Racecourse Grandstand in Moora was constructed in 1927 and P13477 Racetrack, Recreation Ground, in Merredin was constructed in 1930 of brick and iron and includes a racetrack, associated buildings and a grandstand.

Only two of these 29 places are noted on the HCWA database as having buildings constructed of timber.

Three rural places are noted as having grandstands including 1326 *Kalgoorlie Racecourse and Buildings*, P3326 Northam Racecourse Buildings and P11013 Racecourse Grandstand in Moora.

P2170 *Gloucester Park* is on the State Register and includes a grandstand which is noted as being of no significance. P6123 Ascot Racecourse Complex has a grandstand which was constructed in 1903.

The grandstand of *York-Beverley Racecourse* is one of 16 grandstands on the database, and one of five constructed of timber. Four of these 16 grandstands are on the State Register, namely P2992 *Perth Oval*, P1326 *Kalgoorlie Racecourse and Buildings*, P0874 *Victoria Pavilion, Fremantle* and P7403 *Bassendean Oval*, of which the latter two are of timber construction.

*York-Beverley Racecourse* is one of the few remaining regional racecourses in Western Australia incorporating a grandstand, and is rare as a racecourse incorporating timber buildings and as a racecourse constructed in the interwar period.

#### **13. 4 KEY REFERENCES**

'Grandstand, York Racecourse Conservation Plan', prepared by Laura Gray for the York Beverley Turf Club Inc. in November 1998.

#### **13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

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