

SARATOGA RACE COURSE CULTURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY

PHASE TWO:

Cultural Landscape Inventory & Architectural Resource Survey of the Frontside & Back Yard



Produced by:

LANDMARK CONSULTING &
MARTHA LYON LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE LLC

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SARATOGA RACE COURSE CULTURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY PHASE TWO - THE BACK YARD

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As with the previous study phase, our research involved visiting the numerous local repositories of archival materials. At the Saratoga Room at the Saratoga Springs Public Library, both head librarian, Teri Blasko, and volunteer research assistant, Victoria, welcomed us back, opened their Race Track files to us and responded to our questions and communications via email as we tried to piece together the development history of the various buildings and spaces. We returned also to the Saratoga Spring History Museum where John Connors pulled out the relevant prints from the George Bolster photo collection, and to the National Museum of Racing where Beth Sheffer and Allan Carter provided us with access to the written and photographic files relating to the Saratoga Race Course back yard and frontside. Each of these librarians, curators and archivists were welcoming, informative and genuinely interested in our work which contributed to our research efforts in a positive way.

Finally, we are grateful to have been able to work collaboratively with Turnberry Consulting, specifically Isabelle Taylor in the UK office who was also conducting extensive research on the Race Course site. Isabelle's thoughtful reviews of our work, sharing of sources and friendly dialogue on the factors that contributed to various phases of development have contributed to our thorough understanding of our subject matter. Paul Roberts, likewise provided constructive feedback and direction for our study, while also keeping us informed of potential issues, concerns or developments as they relates to NYRA's vision for this area of the Race Course in the future.

Lastly, our gratitude to Samantha Bosshart, Executive Director of the Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation, for overseeing and administering this important project with the help of many active SSPF board members. We appreciate the opportunity to work in a collaborative manner with the individuals listed above to produce this final report for the second phase of the Cultural Resources Inventory of this great historic race course.

Project Background

In September 2010, Landmark Consulting in collaboration with Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC completed the first phase of the Cultural Resources Inventory which focused on the cultural landscape over the 350+ acres and on the architectural resources limited to the backstretch barns, dormitories and facilities buildings. Overall more than 100 structures were surveyed and documented, and the historical development and current condition assessment was organized in a comprehensive manner. This inventory is part of the formal franchise agreement of NYRA being named the operator of the Saratoga Race Course. However, it was an unfunded state mandate with the Saratoga Race Course Local Advisory Board appointed to oversee and ensure that the inventory was conducted. With the first phase of work, Saratoga Spring Preservation Foundation worked on behalf of the Local Advisory Board to conduct this work by raising the funds to hire the consultants, present findings to the public and produce the report.

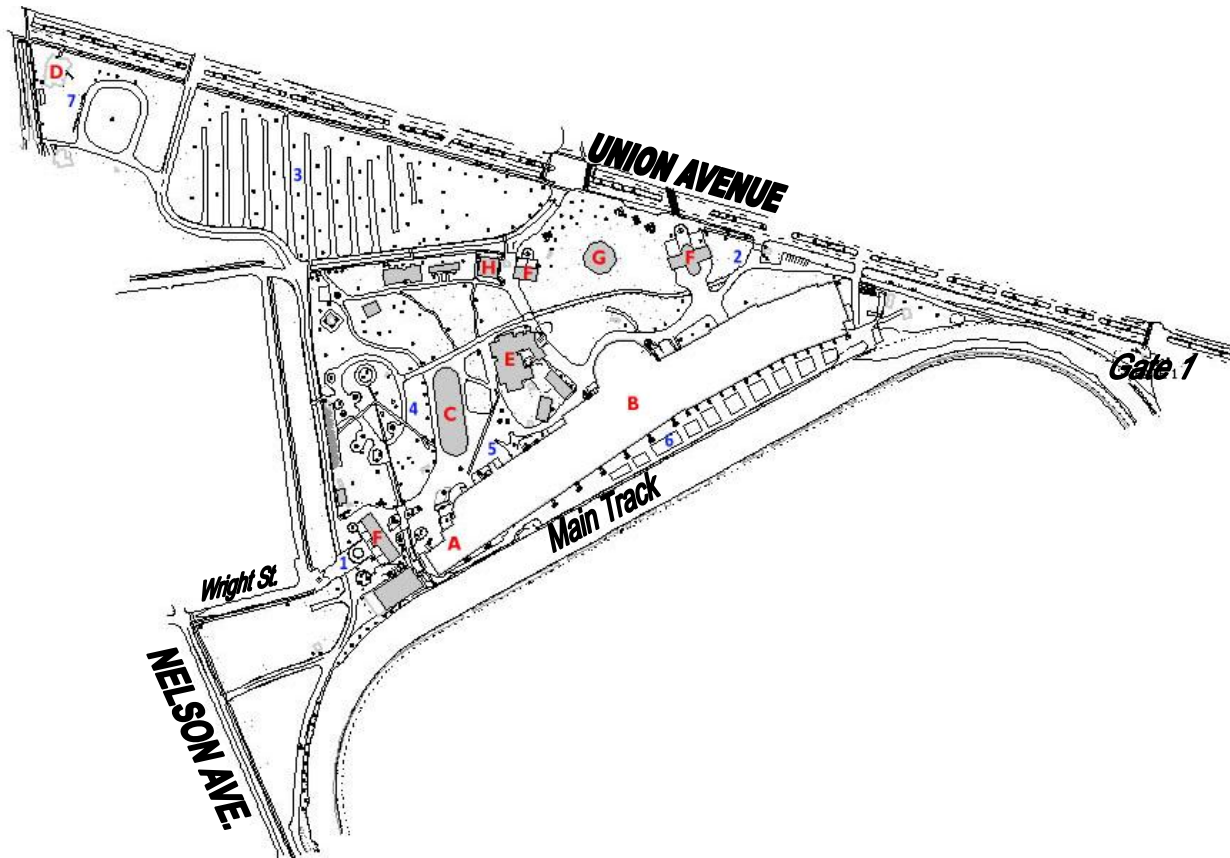
Within a month of the completion of the first phase, it was understood among the players involved, which included the Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation (SSPF), New York Racing Association (NYRA) and their development planning consultant, Turnberry Consulting, that the more public “frontside” and “backyard” structures and spaces which the general public associated with the character of Saratoga Race Course were the next priority. For the purpose of this study the frontside is defined as the area the south side of the Grandstand and Clubhouse such as the apron and track while the back yard is considered the triangular area to the north and west of the Clubhouse and Grandstand and bounded by Union and Nelson Avenues. It was felt that these areas needed to be surveyed, documented and assessed to better prepare NYRA for future improvements that would likely be funded by the impending VLT revenue (video lottery terminals) at Aqueduct race course.

Unlike the scope and funding of first phase of work which was pieced together and gradually expanded as funding became available, Turnberry Consulting expressed the importance and urgency of the second phase and as such arranged for nearly full funding of the Phase 2 scope by NYRA. SSPF was able to secure an additional grant amount from the Arthur Z. Solomon Charitable Trust, the initial supporter of the first phase of work. In early November while NYRA announced that a VLT operator for the new racino at Aqueduct race course in Queen had been approved (Genting New York LLC), Landmark Consulting signed a contract with SSPF to proceed with Phase 2 of the Cultural Resources Inventory. The parameters of this Phase 2 “Back Yard” study was the survey, assessment and treatment recommendations for those structures and natural spaces bound by Union Avenue on the north, the main race track on the south, Gate #1 on the east and the western boundaries of the track property along Nelson Avenue & High Street to the Wright Street Gate. More specifically, the architectural resources to be studied within these boundaries included:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| A. The Clubhouse | E. Jockey House and Complex |
| B. The Grandstand | F. Three Admission Gate Structures |
| C. The Saddling Shed | G. The Mutuel Pavilion |
| D. The Reading Room at 148 Union Avenue | H. The Restroom Pavilion |

The landscape resources to be studied under this scope of work included:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Wright Street Entrance | 4. The Paddock & Saddling Area |
| 2. Union Avenue Entrances & Back Yard East Section | 5. Clubhouse & Grandstand Entrances |
| 3. The Autopark Area | 6. Main Track Apron |
| | 7. Reading Room property |



Phase 2 Cultural Resources Inventory Project Boundaries

Simultaneously yet unrelated to the inventory, NYRA began a search for design consultants through an extensive request for proposals (RFP) process for professional firms – engineers, architects, landscape designers, and preservation architects that could prepare feasibility studies for improvements at Saratoga, once VLT revenue began to accrue. This process started with an RFP for Execution Architect Services in October 2010 issued by Gardiner and Theobald, Inc., the New York City –based owner’s representative that would be providing project and cost management services to NYRA. This was then followed by a handful of other RFPs in November 2010 for a number of disciplines including Preservation Consultants, Landscape Architects, Structural Consultants, Civil Consultants, Planning and Zoning Consultants, Environmental Consultants, Surveyors, LEED/Sustainability Consultants, etc. In mid-March 2011, NYRA made the awards and announced the new consultant team to work on the Capital Projects Strategy. This strategy will strive to undertake a series of studies to identify the most appropriate courses of action for spending the portion of VLT revenues which will be allocated for capital expenditures. While the studies will look at all aspects of the three NYRA tracks, it has been emphasized by the NYRA Board of Directors that a lion’s share of the early investment monies will be spent at Saratoga Race Course. The team of consultants will be involved in a review of the existing frontside facilities, carrying out intensive level analysis and master planning exercises to identify priority projects for improvement. Once VLT money becomes available and a budget number is known, more detailed feasibility work will be carried out. NYRA plans to be prepared with development projects already on the drawing boards. It has been continuously reported that the most pressing projects include new housing for backstretch workers; improving the quality and safety of the horse barns; and improvements to the patron spaces along the track.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

It is still considered crucial that the cultural resource inventory efforts be completed prior to any work beginning and that the findings and recommendations be used to inform and influence the future improvement and expansion plans so that the historic structures and landscapes are protected and the historic character enhanced. To this end, Turnberry Consulting, SSPF, Landmark Consulting and Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC have been communicating in a collaborative manner on the aspects of the Saratoga Race Course that make it unique and worthy of its significant distinction. On February 14, 2011, this team participated in a workshop with members of the SSPF board and Saratoga Springs community to discuss what makes Saratoga Race Course special and what would be defined as success in terms of improvements. As a follow up of this dialogue a “design charrette” is planned for early May 2011 at which members of the selected consultant teams and NYRA personnel will be present. Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation will present the findings of this Phase 2 Inventory and Assessment in an effort to make those that will be responsible for planning the future improvements aware of the preservation issues and concerns, challenges and opportunities.

Project Goals

It remains a goal of this cultural resources inventory to make a persuasive argument for pursuing a balanced approach to the preservation and modernization at Saratoga. It has been asserted that Saratoga is unique as the host of the nation’s premier race meet and most lucrative on NYRA’s year-round calendar, yet the aging facility needs significant investment to stay competitive on a global market. The historic track with its architectural character and potential to capitalize on its heritage brand has the unique ability to pull in significant revenue both for the race season and throughout the year. However, the inventory findings have made it clear that expansion efforts over the last half-century have been less than superior and there has been serious deferred maintenance. As a result, the race course property is showing signs of deteriorated condition that will require much attention and expense in coming years.

The information gathered as a result of Phase 1 & 2 of this cultural resource survey provides important baseline data about the Saratoga Race Course. It can only be valuable if it is shared with NYRA and their consultants, the Local Advisory Board, the State Historic Preservation Office, and the public. The historical development of the structures and landscape shed light on when, how, and why Saratoga changed over the last 160 years. This evolution is important to the overall story of this nationally-renowned race course. The history and assessment also provide much insight to the lessons learned over the years, through times of incredible growth and periods of decline in the racing industry and in Saratoga. It is a major goal of this project that the New York Racing Association will be able to use this valuable information to make informed decisions when making capital improvement plans, restoration, as well as planning and budgeting for maintenance. It is also intended that the Local Advisory Board and the State Historic Preservation Office will also be able to use this information when reviewing proposed projects, and lastly that SSPF will be able to use this effort to maintain a good working relationship and advisory role with NYRA over the coming decades.

Methodology

In November 2010, the consulting team of Kimberly Konrad Alvarez of Landmark Consulting and Martha Lyon of Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture (MLLA) began this second phase of the Cultural Resource Survey of the Saratoga Race Course. From the beginning and throughout the project, Turnberry Consulting and SSPF have defined the areas to be studied, shared thoughts regarding priorities and Landmark Consulting and MLLA have provided progress reports based on their research and assessment findings.

The framework of this Cultural Resource Survey and the subsequent phases of work reflect the four-pronged approach of the initial Saratoga Race Course Preservation Coalition (Inventory, Protect, Plan and Oversee). The second phase of the cultural resource survey endeavored to complete a smaller area but one containing some of the most historically significant resources, bringing the mandated historic resources inventory closer to full completion. This phase focused on the area first developed in the 1860s, altered in the 1890s, and then rebuilt at the turn of the 20th century. Much of the structures and landscape elements dating to these significant periods are still intact. This work involved the identification of the resources within the study areas, researching the historical development of the race course site, documenting and assessing the existing conditions of the structures and landscape, determination of period(s) of significance, and developing general recommendations for treatment of the landscape and architecture.

It has been the consultants' approach and intention to produce a product that can be used by NYRA when making future planning decisions and by the local advisory board and State Historic Preservation Office when reviewing proposed projects. The information is also intended to be useful for the purpose of writing a National Historic Landmark designation.



View of Main Track “Apron” looking west, c. 1951. (Saratoga Springs History Museum, George Bolster Collection, H. B. Settle, photographer).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Process

Following almost immediately after the completion of the first phase of the Cultural Resource Inventory in the fall of 2010, the consulting team of Kimberly Konrad Alvarez of Landmark Consulting and Martha Lyon of Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture worked out the scope and extent of work to be completed during the second phase of the Inventory through collaborative dialogue with Samantha Bosshart, Executive Director of the Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation and NYRA's planning consultant, Paul Roberts of Turnberry Consulting. The focus of the continuation of the inventory was narrowed down to the study of the architectural resources located along the track and in the back yard spanning to the Reading Room at the corner of Union and Nelson Avenues as well as key landscape spaces within this back yard area. Overall, the priority structures to be documented included the c.1892-1968 Grandstand, the c.1928 Clubhouse, the c.1902 Saddling Shed, the c.1890-2000 Jockey Complex, the c.1905 Reading Room house, the c.1985 Mutuel Pavilion, the c.1988 Restroom Pavilion, and the three c.2000 admission gate structures. Likewise the roughly 40-acre landscape area was divided into seven sub-areas according to their distinct functions. They included the Wright Street Entrance; the Union Avenue Entrances and Back Yard East Section; the Autopark Area; the Paddock and Saddling Area; the Clubhouse and Grandstand Entrances; the Main Track Apron; and the Reading Room property.



Architectural Resources

For the architectural resources, this phase took a slightly different approach in the identification of the resources within the study areas. Unlike the resources in the first phase which fell into a select number of building types with similar surrounding landscape elements, each structure in the Phase 2 area was unique and for most included a complex development history or evolution which required careful research and investigation of physical fabric. For example the Grandstand currently occupies 385,000 square feet, it is five times its original size in width and length, and can be divided into five distinct sections based on five major periods of expansion. The Clubhouse and Jockey Complex, as well as the Reading Room to a lesser degree, all have similar development patterns and need to be divided into segments according to their evolution in order to be assessed. Despite the complicated growth of each structure and the extensive changes in the landscape over the past century, much more extensive research was conducted in Phase 2 with primary and secondary written, printed or photographic sources. This research allowed for a comprehensive development history to be pieced together.



Landscape Resources

The historic research has uncovered details on the chronological development of the landscape and architecture, as well as important associations with persons, events and cultural traditions. Of particular note, a significant portion of the research on the development of the back yard involved the review of a large collection of original drawings and maps in the possession of NYRA and stored on the second floor of the Facilities Department offices in West Horse Haven. These drawings and maps ranged in date from Charles Leavitt's 1901-02 plans for the rebuilding of the site to the most recent work in 2000 on the Jockey House and Admission Gates. The rolled drawings were in no particular order, in less than ideal environmental conditions and were not catalogued in a searchable way. In the process of going through all the drawings, they also were organized them according to locations and created a database to serve as a record and finding aid of what exists. Since many were relevant to the areas that we were studying, digital scans were made and where the original was in poor condition, copies printed. Many of these graphics have been included in text of the report to illustrate the development and conditions of the subject areas. The existing conditions of the structures and landscape were further documented with digital photography and assessed with a determination of period(s) of significance for each building or area and general recommendations for treatment of the landscape and architecture.

For the architectural resources, each assessment includes extensive digital and historic photography, a narrative building description, and either assigned a period of significance as a whole or per segment with recommended treatment approach as defined by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. Each building or building segment has been identified by name, original construction date, designer, function and includes a bulleted list of character-defining features, preservation concerns and notable conditions. As with the first phase of the inventory, the intention of this work has been to establish a framework for better understanding the development of the complex, the historic character and architectural significance in order to better guide the efforts to protect what is truly important. For the landscape resources, the assessments contain historic and digital photos, a summary of the area's historical development, a description of the character during the period of significance, documentation and map of the existing landscape features, analysis of features remaining from the period of significant and preliminary recommendations for preservation treatment adhering to the Secretary of the Interior's *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*.

Findings & Assessments

The research, documentation and preliminary assessments revealed several recurring themes, but brought forth the important consideration of the period of significance and the question of historic character. The period of historical significance for the public structures of the backyard which include the Grandstand, the Clubhouse, the Old Saddling Shed, the Jockey House, and the Reading Room, was felt to span between 1892-1940. These public structures, with the exception of the Reading Room, replaced some original c.1864 buildings in 1892, and these structures remained despite the rebuilding and reorientation of the main track in 1901-1902. The Grandstand underwent its first substantial expansion in 1901 when it was lengthened by with the original builder, thus retaining the same type of construction, materials and detailing. The Saddling Shed was built at this time. The existing clubhouse built in 1928 replaced the c.1892 building. The Reading Room was built as a residence c. 1905. During the span of time from the last decade in the 19th century until the end of the Second World War, the buildings reflected a human scale that complemented the site and retained much of the original hierarchy of importance of function or use by their size. For example, the Clubhouse and Grandstand retained a human yet significant scale in comparison to the other structures on the site. At the same time, each building retained its individuality both in terms of footprint and function. While there remained some segregation of spaces, the site retained some degree of transparency from the backyard or even the entrance gates to the track where the action was. Today, the buildings all meld together with blurred lines of what function each serves. The massing and proportions as a result are excessive and overwhelming without a clear sense of direction or orientation. More importantly despite an constant association of Saratoga with its treasured racing heritage and architectural character, a great percentage of the historic style, character and fabric has been and continues to be masked, altered or lost, thus compromising the very heritage that makes it unique and treasured. Specific examples of typical compromising of features include the following:

- *Loss of Style and Character.* During their first fifty years, most of these structures retained a large portion of their original materials, character-defining features and clearly asserted their architectural styles whether it was Carpenter Gothic, Queen Anne, Stick Style, Shingle Style, Colonial Revival or Arts & Crafts. As repairs, maintenance or alterations have been made, there has not always been an understanding of what the character-defining features or design intent was, and as a result some of these features have been lost, incompatible designs or styles have been added or applied, and the character compromised. The use of paint color, while considered to be a subjective or aesthetic taste, played a significant role in the Late Victorian architectural styles. Inappropriate paint choices such as the use of white on a Late Victorian shingle style structure which would have originally employed dark, rich colors can have a dramatic impact on the character.
- *Loss of Human Scale, Mass & Proportions.* In the first quarter of the 20th century each building retained its own separate footprint and was connected to other buildings by a series of convenient and attractive pathways. It wasn't until the late 1930s that the first effort to "connect" adjacent buildings and to change the massing or proportion of any one structure occurred. Both the Grandstand and Jockey House began a series of expansions in the 1930s which by the 1970s had doubled or tripled their original footprints. These expansions have made it difficult to "read" the original buildings, note original fabric and most importantly have resulted in the great loss of human scale.
- *Removal of Historic Fabric.* As buildings have been expanded, adapted to new uses and been renovated for current or modern amenities and operations, the incremental loss of historic fabric

and integrity has been allowed to occur. In some instances, it has been the case that this loss was the only option, but more frequently it is a case of insensitive approaches, methods and lack of understanding of the inherent value embodied in the original materials or design. The issue to be aware of here is that if the same approach that has been taken in the last 60+ years continues, the architectural integrity of these buildings will be lost beyond retrieval, stripping with it, Saratoga Race Course's architectural character and significance.

- *Significant Changes in Use.* Prior to the 1930s, new structures were built when the need for space for new uses developed. This kept the uses clearly separated, and the programming of the site and buildings comprehensible. In the late 1930, '40s and onward, however, the need for space for new uses such as pari-mutuels, concessions, restrooms, etc. were addressed by fitting them into existing buildings, resulting in either over-programmed spaces or the constant conversion of the structure from one use to another. The old Saddling Shed is one example of this where the gradual conversion of the interior space from stalls to mutuel windows, and then to offices has resulted in a highly significant structure retaining no semblance of its original purpose and the great loss of historic fabric and character.
- *Inappropriate Material Choices.* A significant amount of work has been done on the back yard buildings – both new and old – in the last half of the 20th century. Where prior to WWII, most work involved routine maintenance or repairs, since then there has been a pattern of continuous renewal, replacement and rebuilding. As has been typical through much of American society, there has been a distinct shift at the race course from use of enduring, quality materials in building and repairs to the use of cheap (in terms of durability), mass-produced, residential grade building products. When the site was “refurbished” by Whitney at the turn of the 20th century, there was a commitment to making the best investment in the site, structures and racing organization. While it is acknowledged that Whitney as well as his predecessors spared no expense on the race course, they also embraced the philosophy that the expense for high quality design, materials and craftsmanship would pay for itself in the long run ensuring the vitality and endurance of the race track for future generations. The approach took a “build to last” philosophy. Since the proliferation of mass-produce and engineered products after WWII, this philosophy of building to last has been scrapped. Unfortunately this has been evident in the treatment of most additions, renovations and repairs at the Saratoga Race Course since 1955. There is a striking dichotomy between the conditions of building fabric or designs that date from the 1890s-1910 and those that date from the 1960-1980s. In most cases, the materials or designs that are 100 years old are in better condition than those that are 25-50 years old. (*i.e. plywood, pressure-treated woods, EPDM roofing, PVC piping, mass-produced lattice, replacement windows, aluminum pipe framing or railings, vinyl awnings/canopies, asphalt roofing, concrete, latex paints, etc.*)
- *Insensitive introduction of utility systems/equipment.* Again over the last 50 years, the buildings have all be upgraded or retrofitted with utilities or equipment to meet new technologies, offer new comforts or amenities or meet modern building codes. Where originally the clubhouse and grandstand had minimal or very concentrated electrical or plumbing services, today wires, pipes and other utility equipment snake throughout the buildings. In the mid 1980s, NYRA embarked on a comprehensive effort to introduce and improve fire protection services with hardwired alarm systems, sprinklers and a variety of emergency equipment. The approach and result of this effort unfortunately has been indicative of the way most of the system installations have occurred. Likely because of the shear expense of the equipment and installation, very little effort was spent in the design phase of the project to plan how the equipment could be added having a minimal adverse

impact on the historic fabric of the older structures. Countless historic buildings, from the small rural house museums to the grandest of landmarks, have been successful in introducing sprinklers, exit signs, fire escapes or other second means of egress, with appropriate planning and consideration of the historic character of the buildings. The introduction of electric, plumbing, data wiring, mechanical systems (elevators, escalators, HVAC, etc.), emergency equipment (lights, alarms, fire stairs) and fire protection equipment (standpipes, sprinkler runs, shut offs, valve houses/rooms) has not been successful in any historic building on the race course property simply because there has not been any effort to include the consideration of the historic character into this work.

- *Introduction of “temporary” structures; completely out of character.* Lastly, as is mentioned below with the landscape, there is a lot more clutter in the backyard space than existed during the period of significance. For the most part this is because of the introduction of numerous “temporary” or secondary structures like the “At the Rail” tent built on a platform covered with “outdoor carpeting” (Astroturf) or the many canopied concession or merchandise stands. In addition the expansive network of canopies constructed of semi-permanent aluminum pipe frames and seasonal vinyl coverings appears to have been an effort to try and redefine “the front door” of most structures where alterations and additions have made the original entrances obsolete. The lack of a design standard and character for these recently introduced structures has the accumulated effect of further reducing and compromising the historic character of the site.

During the period of historical significance for the landscape, which spans 1864-1940, the back yard and main track apron reflected a scale that complemented the size of the site and the fewer number of buildings. At the same time, the landscape accommodated the functions required of a heavily visited sports facility (attendance for the 1938 season, for example, totaled nearly 250,000), including parking, admissions booths, refreshments, a paddock, and viewing of horses before, during and after races. Today, the same amount of land houses the same functions, but also supports many other activities. As a result, the back yard and main track apron are no longer of a comfortable human scale. Specific out-of-scale features include the following:

- *Contents of the Landscape.* During the period of significance, the back yard housed far fewer activities, with race viewing and betting more centralized (limited to the betting ring, grandstand, and clubhouse). All patrons watched the races from inside the buildings or the apron area, and the back yard functioned as an entry point, meeting spot and horse-viewing area only. Today, the landscape supports many more functions, but has not increased in size, and as a result is too small to accommodate them. Additions to the landscape since 1940 include numerous concession stands, benches and picnic tables, shopping booths, pari-mutuel stations, restrooms, a children’s playground, many simulcast stands, and parking spaces for large race-related service vehicles.
- *Circulation.* Up until 1940, entrances into the race course were limited to two along Union Avenue, with a smaller drop-off entrance for clubhouse patrons only, accessed from Nelson Avenue. Paths led patrons directly from Union Avenue to the grandstand, clubhouse, field stand, and betting ring, and vehicular traffic remained at the race course periphery. Today, numerous roads and paths thread throughout the back yard, leading to concession stands, restrooms and pari-mutuel stations. This network emerged bit by bit, with new routes added every few years as patrons developed “wear paths.” As a result, much of the back yard landscape has been turned into paved surface, reducing the amount of green space and having a harmful effect on the trees.

- *Planting.* Through most of the race track's first 150 years, planting within the back yard consisted of tall deciduous and evergreen trees, turf lawns, and ground-level planting beds. The height of the trees complemented the grandstand and clubhouse structures and provided shade for patrons and horses. Today, many of the tall trees have died or are diseased and much of the turf has been lost or replaced with hard surfaces (contributing to the loss of the trees). Lack of a re-planting plan has resulted in a tree population in decline, without newer trees emerging to replace older ones. Also, newer shrubby plantings, particularly around the entrances, has introduced a more domestic scale to the landscape and produced conflict with the period of significance.
- *Site Details.* Up until the 1940s, site amenities such as seating, fencing, bollards and building canopies were used sparingly, or did not exist at all. Fencing stood largely at the perimeter of the property, and consisted of one material. Temporary roping cordoned off the horse path, separating patrons from horses and jockeys. Canopies – made of un-patterned canvas material (not striped) – marked entrances to buildings, but did not string throughout the back yard. Today, site furnishing of all styles, materials, and sizes fill the back yard. Wood picnic tables clutter the remaining lawns, and permanent single row & double row fencing (reconstructed in 2010) lines the horse paths. Fencing materials include chain link, wood picket, wood rail, and steel picket. Paving consists of bituminous asphalt, stamped asphalt, stamped concrete, poured concrete, and stone dust. And overhead canopies, supported with a mix of framing materials and threaded above the walkways leading from the entrances to the clubhouse and grandstand buildings, foul the airspace of the back yard.

Summary Recommendations for Future Improvements and Expansion

The Recommendations chapter of this report notes the universal preservation concerns that impact the buildings and the back yard landscape. In general they involve the cluttered appearance, the indifferent and clumsy introduction of mechanical systems and equipment, the negative impact of additions to original, historically significant structures and spaces, and the lack of a cohesive aesthetic that reflects the architectural heritage of the race course. While it is acknowledged that the track patrons of the early 21st century are different from those of the early 20th century, there remains the perception or expectation that Saratoga Race Course reflects an elegant architectural and cultural heritage. Unfortunately, actions taken over the last half century have not endeavored to protect this historic character at all costs. As a result the historic and architectural integrity of the site has been incrementally altered and highly compromised. The following are a summary of the highest priority items that NYRA should address regarding the buildings and back yard area. The focus of this approach is on how the historic character and more importantly the integrity can be restored, preserved and protected in conjunction with NYRA's future improvement and expansion plans. Although the suggestions were compiled without knowledge of NYRA's program of uses for the back yard, the items were devised with the assumption that NYRA agrees with and endorses the period of significance as spanning 1864-1940. It is strongly urged that the period and hierarchy of significance and program of uses be defined, endorsed, and factored into any improvements or expansion efforts.

Suggestions for the Landscape:

Re-think the Wright Street Entrance.

During the period of significance, the Wright Street entry area was reserved as a drop-off for clubhouse patrons only, and the horse path (the "shoot") led in a straight line from the paddock to the track. When the new clubhouse was built in 1928, the path was placed under the building. It retained this alignment until 1977 when NYRA relocated it just inside the newly constructed Wright Street entry gate building. The new configuration results in a tangled web of circulation, with vehicles, pedestrians

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Image of horse path through Clubhouse, prior to 1977. (Saratoga Springs Public Library, Saratoga Room Collection)

and horses cramped into a single undersized area. The layout of features compromises the safety of all involved. To remedy this problem, NYRA should restore the vehicular circulation pattern devised by Leavitt in 1902; remove the general admission gate; create a drop off for clubhouse patrons; create a handicapped parking area; and re-route the horse path (in conjunction with a clubhouse restoration).

Remove and Consolidate Structures From and Within the Back Yard.

NYRA has, over the past several decades, gradually filled the back yard, paddock area, and north portion of the main track apron with numerous small structures, arranged haphazardly. These include concession buildings and stands (both temporary and permanent), simulcast television umbrellas, picnic tables, a children's playground, para-mutuel windows, benches, trash bins, overhead utility lines and appurtenances, and long stretches of overhead canopies, supported by an array of piping materials. Because the number and placement of these structures was never part of an overall site plan, NYRA crews added them at random. Once in place, patrons began accessing them by crossing over the back yard lawns, compacting the soil, damaging the trees, and creating wear paths. To "neaten" the paths, NYRA covered them with permanent, impervious pavement. The more NYRA added little structures, the more wear paths were formed, and the more paved surfaces resulted. And, the many new paths resulted in many more crossings of the horse path, and to control conflict between patrons, NYRA erected endless stretches of fences. By removing and/or consolidating these structures, NYRA can recapture the back yard's character as it was during the period of significance. Critical to this de-cluttering effort will be the re-location of the children's play equipment and picnicking area away from the back yard.



Illustration of the vast number of features in the Back Yard, the expanse of pathways and loss of grass lawns.

Simplify Circulation Throughout the Back Yard.

Once the many little structures and multiple functions have been consolidated into fewer buildings, NYRA can then focus on cleaning up the maze of roads, paved pathways, and horse paths weaving throughout the back yard. As a rule, NYRA should make every attempt to reduce the number of pedestrian, vehicular and horse conflicts throughout. The simplified circulation plan should include a streamlined vehicular roadway system; pedestrian walkway system connecting to the buildings; a preserved horse path with modified edges; and a hierarchy of road and path materials, selected from a defined palette of landscape materials (discussed below), with an emphasis on porous paving throughout.



Current attempt to provide direction in Back Yard.

Establish and Implement a Palette of Landscape Materials.

Critical to improving the look and feel of the back yard, including both buildings and landscape, will be the development of a coordinated palette of building and landscape construction materials, including plant materials. The buildings and landscape must work together and complement one another, and the established palette will help assure this happens. Whenever possible, materials to be used in the landscape should be (1) appropriate to the period of significance, (2) able to sustain themselves and thereby minimize maintenance, and (3) durable, so that NYRA will not need to be continually replacing them. Included in the palette should be paving materials, fencing materials, planting materials, site furnishings and signs.

Replant Trees and Foundation Borders.

Perhaps the greatest loss to the back yard – and one of its most historically beloved features – was the grove of deciduous and evergreen trees for which the Saratoga Race Course became nationally famous. Immediately after racing began in the 1860s, it appears that the course owners began aggressively planting trees throughout. The grove appeared in photos dating to the 1890s, and continued to shade the landscape throughout the 20th century. The loss of the tall shade trees has occurred largely over the last 20-30 years, and the number of activities – and vehicles – has increased in the back yard. Today, while many mature trees remain, hundreds have perished, and NYRA has not replaced them. In addition, the lush layers of plantings that once grounded the grandstand and clubhouse buildings, and edged the main track rail, have been removed. In some spots, domestically-scaled shrubs have been introduced, and in others, pavement directly abuts the building foundations. To revive the historic plantings at Saratoga, NYRA should refrain from paving around the roots of mature trees, commission a qualified arborist to conduct an assessment of the existing trees; implement a tree re-planting program; and re-establish the plant beds that once stood at the bases of the grandstand and clubhouse.

Suggestions for the Architecture:

Consider options for “deconstructing” massive building complexes.

In the last 50 years, there has been the continuous effort of linking adjacent buildings throughout the back yard. This was perhaps done in an effort to provide convenient travel from point A to point B for the race patrons, Jockeys, and NYRA personnel; however the result has been the loss of the open-air summer resort atmosphere and the increase in building mass. The Grandstand and the Jockey Complex are two examples of this where an individual could pass through five different structures or building campaigns without ever being outdoors. In order to restore the historic character and with it the architectural integrity of the site, the insignificant links should be removed and efforts should be made to separate one structure from its neighbor, where feasible and safe. As part of this “deconstruction” effort, original open porch spaces that have been infilled and made solid should be reopened. Not only would this restore the original appearance and architectural integrity but it would contribute to the decreased massing that is necessary in the Back Yard.

Strip away much of the canopies.

As part of the late 20th century mind set of providing a covered link between every structure, “temporary” or seasonal canopies have been installed all over the backyard and attached to nearly every façade. Historically there were a handful of canvas awnings, the retractable type, that allowed for shading on the south and west side windows and entries. In the 1930s the rear extension off the Grandstand included rounded canopies at the entry points, more as a means of indicating a direction in, than for the purpose of shade. Instead the dense tree canopy from the healthy trees provided the shade when needed. Today vinyl fabric canopies stretch from admission gates to the grandstand and clubhouse, surrounding each concession, mutuel pavilion, are present at the Jockey House and fully

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

cover the rear roof terrace, that was originally intended to be open-air and open to the summer weather. Unfortunately, these *seasonal* canopies consist of removable fabric, but permanent aluminum framing. In some cases the aluminum frames have been anchored to copper flashings on the roofs and have contributed to corrosion. In other areas, they are set into the ground into concrete footings. It is urged that despite these “permanent” frames, that the canopies be removed or greatly reduced in quantity. The purpose of the canopies should be simply to indicate an entry point or to provide a small and occasional shade from the summer sun where no other shade is provided.



An example of one area of dense canopy coverage.

Define an exterior aesthetic based on construction periods and styles.

Starting in the 1940s and continued with universal application in the late 20th century, the buildings whether dating to the 1890s or the 1990s were all painted white with green trim and in some cases accented with bright red to match the red & white striped canopies. For many, the white, red and green colors are associated with the aesthetic of Saratoga Race Course. In fact the NYRA and Saratoga logo that has been used since the 1960s includes these colors and reference to the striped awnings. However, the plethora of historic images dating from the 1890s, the early 1900s when Whitney presented the new and improved Saratoga race course and up to the Second World War, white paint was a rare sight. In fact, white was a rare color choice for Late Victorian or Shingle style structures, which the Grandstand, Clubhouse and other early structures were designed in. It is suggested that instead of applying a universal color scheme to all the buildings regardless of age and style, that an exterior aesthetic and paint schemes be defined based on the style and age of a building. For example the c. 1892 structures should stand out from the 20th century structures where possible with a rich, darker, Victorian-era color scheme. This allows patrons to recognize that these are older and distinguish them from contextual, but recent structures. For recent structures, a complementary but unique color palette should be defined and applied. Not only does this approach restore the historic and architectural appearance in the back yard, it provides an opportunity to educate the patrons on the architectural heritage of the site and foster an appreciation for the preservation efforts of NYRA.



Without a define exterior aesthetic that is based on architectural history and understanding by maintenance staff of why and where certain paint colors should be applied, situations like this result where the historic stained shingles are partly coated with the universal “white paint.”

Define “front doors” – entry points.

As mentioned earlier, the existing canopies throughout the back yard have been used in a clumsy way to lead the public from point A to point B. This has been necessary due to the fact that the constant expansion to alleviate congestion and connection of the buildings for user convenience has actually caused the original entries to be obscured or lost altogether. The progression through the back yard from the admission gates towards seating or dining in the Grandstand or Clubhouse is confusing because of the lack of a “front door” or main entry point. It is suggested that NYRA and their consultants look closely as where and how they’d like race patrons to enter each structure, and then

delineate a clear and even monumental “main door.” This will go a long way in clearing up some of the mass confusion associated with the Back Yard.

Overhaul all systems & equipment installations.

It is acknowledged that the late 20th and early 21st century demands technology, systems, and code compliance in a way that was not a priority 100 years ago. As a result there is a need to introduce a variety of systems, equipment and services to the buildings in order to meet modern requirements. This is always a tricky endeavor when working with historic structures where mechanicals were not an original consideration in their design and construction. However, although tricky, the successful introduction of systems and equipment is not impossible. It just requires extensive planning, careful execution and a wide-spread understanding among all players involved that the original fabric of the historic structure has significant value, is generally irreplaceable and must be approached in a sensitive manner. The goal of introducing systems into a historic structure and landscape is to minimize the visibility particularly in the highly significant spaces, and for the installation to be fully reversible in the event that they equipment or system needs to be upgraded or that it may no longer be necessary.



With the need for track related offices, service vehicles, and utilities the current solution has been to fill the back yard and ground floor areas around the Grandstand and other structures with trailers, utility & media vehicles, generators, and other support items that detract from the historic character of the Back Yard.

electric and utilities, offices, parking, facilities, and general operational functions that by default have been located in this hub of activity. In an effort to reduce the scale and massing within the back yard, it is recommended that NYRA and its team of consultants assess how to relocate any number of functions, services and utilities below grade or off-site, rather than continuing the practice of adding yet another layer of visual clutter to the site.

Conclusions

In summary, efforts to preserve the race course’s historic character should center on de-cluttering the back yard and apron landscapes. Redevelopment should aim to reduce the number activities, simplify the circulation, adhere to a coordinated palette of historically-sensitive details, and restore the plantings to an appropriate scale. The preservation efforts for the buildings should likewise focus on de-cluttering the buildings both on the interior and exterior. This may involve consolidating utilities into inconspicuous chases, stacking services as original designs had done to concentrate certain systems in one location, but on several levels, and to consider new equipment options that are either more

Consider expansion below grade.

As the landscape assessment has noted, the amount of area defined as the Back Yard has not grown since the early 20th century, yet the program has nearly quadrupled. With this increased programming comes the increased need to meet fire protection codes, to accommodate service equipment, supplies and vehicles, and for bigger service and operations spaces. For example, when the Grandstand was enlarged in 1902, there was a single kitchen and a small number of concession counters on the ground floor. Today there are more than 50 locations where food, beverages or other refreshments are prepared or served. As a result there is a need for handling deliveries, food storage, etc. within an already tight area. This is compounded by the nature of above ground

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

appropriate to the design character in appearance, or are smaller or can be visually discreet with sensitive placement. Redevelopment or further expansion of the NYRA property should adhere to an established set of design guidelines and a preservation philosophy that aims to preserve what remains of the original structures, and enhances the historic character rather than detract from it. Lastly, in the case of both landscape and architecture, it is strongly urged that an emphasis be placed on the authenticity of this 150+ year old race course. This requires the adoption of a new mindset – one that treasures, respects and protects that which is real, and which avoids the temptation to create a replica without historic validation.

Because the Race Course property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the documentation of this report clearly indicates that there is overwhelming historic significance, the overarching recommendation coming out of this survey is that all current and future actions by NYRA, comply with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* and *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*. It is recommended that the principle guidelines, preservation standards and practices laid out and published by the Secretary of the Interior and the National Park Service be consulted and applied to all efforts to maintain, repair, replace or design new additions or alterations. These guidelines provide a consistent philosophy that proves to be beneficial in making important decision about the property.

24 Preservation Briefs
Technical Preservation Services
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Heating, Ventilating, and Cooling Historic Buildings
Problems and Recommended Approaches

Sharon C. Park, AIA

- »History of Mechanical Systems
- »Climate Control and Preservation
- »Planning the New System
- »Overview of HVAC Systems
- »Diagnosing the new system
- »Systems Performance and Maintenance
- »HVAC Do's and Don'ts
- »Conclusion
- »Bibliography

NOTE TO OUR USERS: The web versions of the *Preservation Briefs* differ somewhat from the printed versions. Many illustrations are new, captions are simplified, illustrations are in color rather than black and white, and some complex charts have been omitted.

The need for modern mechanical systems is on to undertake work on historic buildings. Such work includes installing a climate control system with humidification. Decisions to install new HVAC or climate control systems should be based on the need to provide specialized environments for operating or displaying museum collections. Unfortunately, objects within the building are sometimes given greater priority than the building itself. In too many cases, applying modern standards to historic buildings has proven detrimental to historic preservation.

This *Preservation Brief* underscores the importance of balancing the preservation objectives with interior climate control. It is intended as a technical guide to calculate tonnage for heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems in historic buildings and recommends approaches to damage associated with installing and maintaining modern mechanical systems.

Historic buildings are not easily adapted to house modern mechanical systems. Careful planning must be provided early on to ensure that modern mechanical systems are sensitive to the design character in appearance, or are smaller or can be visually discreet with sensitive placement.

36 Preservation Briefs
Technical Preservation Services
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Protecting Cultural Landscapes
Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes

Charles A. Birnbaum, ASLA

- »Developing a Strategy and Seeking Assistance
- »Preservation Planning for Cultural Landscapes
- »Developing a Historic Preservation Approach and Treatment Plan
- »Developing a Preservation Maintenance Plan and Implementation
- »Recording Treatment Work and Future Research Recommendations
- »Summary
- »Selected Reading

NOTE TO OUR USERS: The web versions of the *Preservation Briefs* differ somewhat from the printed versions. Many illustrations are new, captions are simplified, illustrations are in color rather than black and white, and some complex charts have been omitted.

Cultural landscapes can range from thousands of acres of rural landscape to a small homestead with a front yard of less than one acre. Like historic districts, these special places reveal aspects of our country's origins through their form and features and the ways they were used. Cultural landscapes reveal much about our evolving relationship with the natural world.

A **cultural landscape** is defined as a geographic area, including buildings and other structures, natural resources and the wildlife therein, associated activity, or person or exhibit aesthetic values.* There are many types of cultural landscapes, not just historic sites, historic design, or vernacular landscapes. These are defined as:

Historic landscapes include gardens and community parks, boulevards, rural communities, institutional grounds, cemeteries, battlefields and zoological gardens. They are composed of a number of character-defining features which, individually or collectively, contribute to the landscape's physical appearance as they have evolved over time. In addition to vegetation and topography, cultural landscapes may include water features, such as ponds, streams, and fountains; circulation features, such as roads, paths, steps, and walls; buildings; and furnishings;

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties
with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings

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|----------------|---|
| 10-697-E | Saratoga Race Track, 148 Union Avenue (Reading Room), 10/30/1944, East Elevation |
| 10-697-NW | Saratoga Race Track, 148 Union Avenue (Reading Room), 10/30/1944 |
| 10-697-N | Saratoga Race Track, 148 Union Avenue (Reading Room), 10/30/1944, North (front) Elevation |
| 11-208 | Saratoga Race Track, 148 Union Avenue (Reading Room), 5/6/1946, West Elevation |
| 62-280 | Reading Room (Rear of Building), Union and Nelson Avenues, October 2, 1962 |
| 3354/1 | No Title, probably 1915, shows Back Yard with new Elm plantings |
| 3354/4 | Detail of W. S. Kilmer (Swamp Root) Family, 1916-1924 (2 versions, 1 an enlargement of the other) |
| 6015/1 | Entrance to Race Course from Union, ND |
| 6015/2 | Union Avenue (ND) |
| 7536 | Saratoga Race Track, Entrance Ticket Booth for MGM Studios (not for betting), 3/15/1934 |
| 8948/2 | Saratoga Race Track Trolley Platform at Clubhouse, 12/13/1938 |
| 8948/3 | Saratoga Race Track Trolley Platform/Station at Clubhouse, 12/13/1938 |
| 9463/3 | Saratoga Race Track Landing Platform at Clubhouse, 12/13/1938 |
| 9547/29 | Paddock, 8/3/1940, going to post |
| 9803/10 | Saratoga Race Track, 8/9/1941, going to post |
| No # | Fountain next to Clubhouse |
| No # | Paddock, by Hank Myers, 8/1/1949 (vertical) |
| No # | Paddock by Hank Myers, 8/1/1949 (horizontal) |
| RT2 #10-121 | Saratoga Race Track, Paddock Area, 8/1942 |
| RT2 #10-121-16 | Grandstand, August 1942 (shows timber posts around the track) |
| RT2 #8754/4 | Grandstand/Clubhouse entrance, August 28, 1937 (shows plantings and planting beds) |
| RT2 #8754/15 | Grandstand with people (shows plantings and beds), August 5, 1937 |
| RT2 #9304/8 | Fountain, 1946 |
| RT2 #11.345.1 | Grandstand and rail/track (inside rail all white), 1946 |
| RT2 #55-344-2 | Saratoga Racetrack Montage, 1955 |
| RT2 #D71/15 | Saratoga Race Course, c. 1900 |

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- RT3 #D-71-40/3 Infield and Racetrack Grandstand without people (taken from across the lake), 1928
- RT3 #5941/1 Saratoga Racing Association, Ice Storm, 2/23/1929
- RT3 #5941/2 Saratoga Racing Association, Ice Storm, 2/23/1929
- RT3 #5941/3 Saratoga Racing Association, Ice Storm, 2/23/1929
- RT3 #5941/5 Saratoga Racing Association, Ice Storm, 2/23/1929
- RT3 #6014/1 Race Track Clubhouse, 1928?
- RT3 #6014/2 Race Track Clubhouse, 1928
- RT3 #6014/4 Clubhouse, 1928, shows paving, iron fence
- RT3 #9436/4 Entrance to Clubhouse, August 28, 1940
- RT3 #D71-40/11 Infield (shows swans)
- RT3 #9436/1 Saratoga Race Track Clubhouse, 8/28/1940
- RT3 #9436/2 Saratoga Race Track Clubhouse, 8/28/1940
- RT3 #9436/3 Saratoga Race Track Clubhouse, 8/28/1940
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- Survey 8061-3 CC Cook, 1935-Infield from inside Clubhouse
- Survey 8061-9 CC Cook, 1935, Entrance to Clubhouse from Back Yard
- Survey 8061-18 CC Cook, 1935, Saddling Shed
- Survey 8061-19 CC Cook, 1935, Infield

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- 1995.1.2088 Pre-1909 image of horses on track with old (fancy) judges' stand in background
- 1995.1.2104 Post 1909 row of horses in apron walking past judges' stand
- 1995.1.2106 Start of horses, view of GS & judges stand in background
- 1995.1.2136 Post-1909 image of horse in track - GS & JS in background
- 1995.1.2197 Samuel D. Riddle (owner of War Admiral) @ Saratoga 1937 in CH??
- 1995.1.2209 Patrons in walking ring area - sitting on grass and benches
- 1995.1.2216 Horses & Jockeys heading for track - view from above (where??)
- 1995.1.2218 Patrons in Paddock area, 1950-60?
- 1995.1.2222 In paddock behind walking ring
- 1995.1.2228 Walking path from Saddling Shed
- 1995.1.2229 View down onto horse path to track
- 1995.1.2232 Horses taking jumps - GS and BR in background
- 1995.1.2306 People in CH boxes - Aug. 1974
- 1995.1.2339 Repairing track- view from east curve
- 1995.1.2343 Back terrace of CH
- 1995.1.2345 Clockers in GS
- 1995.1.2347 View down apron to the west)
- 1995.1.2353 Track from the west -note extent of grass and iron fence & gate)
- 1995.1.2355 Mrs. Clare inspecting track repairs - FS and Pinkerton Bldg in background
- 1995.1.2361 Gardener pruning flower boxes
- 1995.1.2362 Gardener pruning urn plantings
- 1995.1.2371 Saddling/walking ring - white fencing 1969
- 1995.1.2380 View out from under GS
- 1995.1.2704 Three men on bench (O'Neill, Burn, Shaw)

- 1995.1.2710 Man and Woman walking west from CH (Jess Lewinshon and Lillian Russell, 1906)
1995.1.2715 "Giving a horse tip" - men on bent wood bench (F. Ambrose Clark, W. B. Hayes, 1905)
1995.1.2661 View of CH drop off platform with topiaries
1995.1.2662 View east down grassy apron with old CH, GS and JS - pre-1909
1995.1.2663 View of horses being bridled adjacent to judges' stand

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"Entrance to Race Course," 1900-1915
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"Saratoga Race Track," ND
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"Union Avenue," ND
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"Union Avenue, Looking East," ND

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