

# Ellerslie Racecourse



## Property Services

### Special Project Strengthening / Restoration

**Location**  
80 Ascot Ave, Remuera

**Client**  
Auckland Racing Club

**Value**  
\$6 Million

**Consultants**  
Architects /  
Young & Richards

In addition to a horse race or two, the crowd who celebrated 2018 Melbourne Cup Day at Ellerslie got to witness something else: a rebirth. Following a \$6 million upgrade, the 1857 racecourse has been transformed into a world-class venue, with new stables and a central warm-up ring, veterinary boxes, a trainers' café and a function room. Yet for all the cutting-edge upgrades, the aesthetic centrepiece of the new Ellerslie is a restored 1913 totalisator.

Nine years in gestation, the Ellerslie project saw Haydn & Rollett working particularly closely with architects Young & Richards at the design stage. The guiding principle for the revamp was to bring the public much closer to the horses, as is the case at many of the world's most famous racecourses.

It began with the removal of two-thirds of the existing indoor stables. At this stage, the team hit a snag in the form of three buildings that had been demolished years ago and buried on site. Their removal and subsequent decontamination added several weeks to the programme, although ultimately Haydn & Rollett was able to accelerate other aspects to achieve handover on time.

The heart of the project was the construction of 126 tie-up outdoor stalls for the horses. Arrayed along three sides of the parade ring, they were inspired by a German prefabricated system used at Karaka, and built using a particularly durable South American hardwood call Cumaru. For racegoers previously unable to see the horses up close and personal, it makes for a thrilling change. As Auckland Racing Club's Chief Executive Paul Wilcox put it, the public is now able to get a "greater sense of the energy and passion that thoroughbred racing is all about".

Meanwhile, the tin façade of Ellerslie's landmark Sir George Julius-designed 1913 totalisator – the first all-mechanical tote in the world – was sent to specialists in Wellington for restoration. It has been reinstated centre stage, while the rest of the tote has been recreated in plaster and weatherboard.

The stables and tote building flank a parade ring made of a novel non-slip rubberised surface that had to be painstakingly hand-laid using trowels. And that particular job neatly sums up this project for Haydn & Rollett. It's not every day a construction company gets involved in building stables, and there were plenty of unknowns, yet the project team achieved a terrific result. Ellerslie just got a new lease of life.