

## KEENELAND'S ARCHITECTURE THROUGH THE YEARS

### An international inspiration

Keeneland was named a National Historical Landmark during its 50<sup>th</sup> racing season in 1986, selected for its valuable illustration of United States heritage. This designation followed years steeped in Kentucky tradition and fine architectural decisions.



The original building that John Oliver “Jack” Keene constructed on property that was deeded to the Keene family in 1783 was intended to be the Keene homestead. Constructing the home became a labor of love. Refusing to work with a set of blueprints, he built his dream with a singular vision and vivid memories of the architecture he fell in love with during his years as a horse trainer in Russia.

The limestone blocks used in the construction were quarried on the Keene farm. No detail was too minute for Keene’s careful eye. He meticulously supervised each chisel strike and approved or rejected each stone’s careful placement. Keene, whose financial resources had been stretched to the limit in this mammoth endeavor, was hit hard by the Depression and was forced to abandon his dream and sell his beloved track.

When the Keeneland Association purchased 147.5 acres of Keene’s farm in 1935, the property included the partially built Keene mansion, a training track and the farm’s primary stables. Soon after the purchase, the Keeneland Association — anxious to finish the mansion and convert it into a clubhouse — commissioned a design contest for area architects.

Robert McMeekin, a graduate of the University of Kentucky and MIT, won the contest that launched his relationship with the Keeneland Association. His design included two large porch additions and a grandstand constructed entirely of wood at the request of Major Louie Beard, a founder of the Keeneland Association. Later, noted international architects Froelich, Kow and Gong of Beverly Hills would ensure that Keeneland’s physical growth would remain seamless.

William (Billy) Baldwin, noted interior designer of the 1940s and 50s, designed the clubhouse’s original interior. Original artwork and wall hangings are still located in the clubhouse today.

Today, the Keeneland complex encompasses 921 acres, including the race course, sales pavilion, 48 barns that can house more than 1,600 horses, five dining rooms, and the original Keene mansion that now serves as Keeneland’s clubhouse.

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## Timeless Architecture Beckons Hollywood

In November 2002, Hollywood descended on central Kentucky to film *Seabiscuit*, the blockbuster Universal studios film based on the wildly popular book by Laura Hillenbrand. Keeneland provided the setting for the legendary match race between Seabiscuit and War Admiral. The race actually took place at Pimlico Race Track in Maryland in 1938. However, the film’s producers, Kathleen Kennedy and Frank Marshall, chose Keeneland as the backdrop for the pivotal match race because of the track’s beauty and timelessness.



“We wanted a race track that had not been too modernized,” said producer Kennedy, whose list of Hollywood producing credits includes *E.T. The Extra Terrestrial*, *Jurassic Park*, *Twister*, and the *Back to the Future* trilogy, to name just a few. “Kentucky may be one of the most beautiful places I’ve ever seen,” Kennedy said.

Only a few cosmetic changes needed to be made to transform Keeneland into Pimlico, circa 1938. One notable change to the Keeneland landscape was the large “Pimlico” signs atop Keeneland’s infield tote board. Other changes included a faux finish line pole with an old-fashioned finish line strung above the track; a judge’s stand at the finish line; green and white tents in the infield; and a temporary “paddock” that was constructed on the clubhouse lawn. In addition, there was green and white bunting throughout the grandstands and in the winner’s circle that was later incorporated into Keeneland’s live race meetings.

## Expansions through the years

### Racetrack

The most extensive track renovation project in Keeneland history took place during the spring and summer of 2006 and were ready by the fall race meeting. The highlight of the project was the installation of a Polytrack surface and its signature vertical drainage on the main track. Keeneland used the Polytrack installation as an opportunity to reconfigure the track’s turns to make them wider and more symmetrical, therefore making them safer, and to lengthen the stretch.



As a result of the renovation, more patrons now have a trackside experience on the more than 13,000 square feet that was added to the trackside apron in the grandstand, enough to accommodate approximately 2,660 additional spectators. Additionally, 4,300 square feet was added to the clubhouse lawn to accommodate approximately 860 more fans.

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Keeneland's existing infield tote board was replaced by one of the most technology advanced systems in the country. The new unit comprises five separate sections with more than 1,500 digital LED tiles that provide crisp, clear color video, photos and mutuel graphics. The entire tote board is mobile and each section can be disassembled and reassembled as needed and is available for rental to other sporting venues. More than 15 miles of conduit was installed underground, allowing Keeneland to take advantage of new high-definition technologies and radio frequency technologies.

Other changes include improvement of the lighting around the track for training hours; installation of new irrigation and drainage systems; installation of a modern safety rail and enhanced landscaping.

### **About Polytrack**

Keeneland is the third North American racing facility to feature Polytrack as its main racing surface. Turfway Park in Florence, Kentucky, installed the surface in August 2005, and Woodbine in Toronto, Ontario, began racing on Polytrack in the fall of 2006. Keeneland installed Polytrack on its training track in 2004.



Revolutionary in its design, Polytrack is an entire system, encompassing a specially designed top layer that works in tandem with a unique vertical drainage structure. The top layer—which comprises silica sand, fibers and recycled materials--provides a soft cushion for the horse and rider. It is covered in a wax coating that allows water to flow freely through the top surface to the sub layers below and helps avoid a freezing or inconsistent racetrack--even in inclement weather.

Sub-layers include porous macadam and dense aggregate rock that provide a solid foundation while vertical drainage pipes carry water away from the track. Together, these elements provide a safer, more consistent racing surface compared to a conventional dirt track.

Statistics are showing that Polytrack is a safer racing surface for horses and jockeys. Its soft surface is kinder to horses' joints and legs. A Polytrack surface remains consistent regardless of weather. Comparatively, with a conventional dirt track, weather--especially rain and cold temperatures that can cause a racetrack to freeze and thaw--can produce dangerous conditions on a racing surface. Since installing Polytrack, Turfway Park has improved safety, increased the number of starters, and greatly decreased the number of cancelled racing dates due to track condition or weather.

### ***Clubhouse and Grandstand***

Keeneland's clubhouse has undergone a series of renovations since it was originally remodeled in 1935, with major expansions and remodeling projects 1963, 1976, 1984, 1998 and 2000. In the spring of 1963, construction to link the clubhouse and grandstand began. The linked structure increased the grandstand capacity from 3,849 to 7,000. In 1976, a 300-foot section of the grandstand was torn down and reconstructed with concrete and steel.

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Sixteen new saddling stalls and a 40,000-square-foot addition to the rear of the grandstand were constructed in 1984. Other additions during the project included 74 mutuel windows, seven food service stands, three bars, restrooms and a view of the paddock. Nearly 100 tons of stone were dressed and placed into 17 arches throughout the clubhouse area.

In 1998 Keeneland completed a \$5.8 million renovation of the grandstand's west end. The first and second floors were enclosed; new restaurant areas, a sports bar and restrooms were constructed; and the exterior of the west end received new patios created from Kentucky river stone. Following the fall meet, the entire clubhouse and dining room area was renovated. The new clubhouse rooms feature commissioned artwork by André Pater, who created a series of 12 pastel paintings depicting Keeneland's history through the silks of horse owners who have been instrumental throughout Keeneland's history. Works by Frank Farrell, Richard Stone Reeves and Peter Williams also are displayed in the clubhouse.

In 2000, Keeneland enclosed the first floor of the clubhouse and renovated the interior to include more than 100 television monitors and a complete heating and cooling system.

### ***Keene Barn and Entertainment Center***

The Keene Barn was erected by Jack Keene in 1940 to resemble the barn and residence that later became the Keeneland clubhouse. The structure was converted into an entertainment center in 1997, when a 10,000-square-foot addition completed the current 1,000-person-capacity Keene Barn. Today, the structure is available for rental to the public and is used for entertaining and annual Keeneland events.

### ***Sales Pavilion***

The first sale occurred on Keeneland's property in 1943, under a tent. The current sales pavilion was designed in 1969 by renowned Beverly Hills architect Morio Kow of Froehlich, Kow and Gong Architects. The building includes a 650-seat pavilion and auction area that has hosted world-famous horse owners and trainers for a generation. The walking ring, which showcases horses during Keeneland's four annual sales, was installed in 1980.

In 2000, a beautifully appointed 13,000 square-foot outdoor walking ring was constructed to provide protection from the elements while giving our sales customers an opportunity to view the horses one last time before they enter the sales pavilion. The walking ring features a copper, clerestory roof designed especially for lighting and ventilation purposes. It sports the same beautiful Kentucky limestone veneer found throughout Keeneland's grounds and is equipped with special rubber pavers chosen especially for sure footedness and to accommodate tender horse hooves.

Keeneland's sales operation debuted its most recent expansion in the fall of 2005. The pavilion now includes a 5,000-square-foot space for the repository, new and larger conference rooms and a kitchen to service the renovated dining areas. Hi-speed wireless Internet access is available throughout the facility, which also features a new business center, upgraded sound system and larger press box.



### ***Keeneland Library***

In 1938, Robert McMeekin completed the design of Keeneland’s library at no cost to the Association as a sign of appreciation. The library was originally a part of Keeneland’s clubhouse and then its administration building.



In July 2002, Keeneland unveiled a new 10,000-square foot library designed by Morio Kow. The library, which houses Keeneland’s extensive book, publication and photo collection, reflects Keeneland’s traditional limestone structure style and is adorned with sculptures by such noted artists as Isidore Bonheur.

The library does not sport the two-over-two stonework found in Keeneland’s grandstand and clubhouse. Instead, the architects wanted to emulate the stonework found in the historic Keene barn and Keene home, located adjacent to the Library. Stone masons needed more than two weeks and the construction of three 4’ x 8’ “practice” walls before architects and project management were satisfied with the library’s façade. The edge of each stone was hand-chiseled to emulate the look found in the architecture of the historic Keene barn and homestead.

Special elements were incorporated into the architecture to ensure the longevity of the various collections, including incandescent lighting in the rare book room because florescent lighting—over a period of time—can cause damage to paper and books; a temperature- and humidity-controlled system; a FM200 fire prevention system that does not use water to douse flames and instead forces the oxygen out of the space to extinguish the fire.

The Library’s other architectural features include a “starburst” design found at the top of the entrance borrowed from the Keene Barn detail; stone dormers and copper roof edge. Inside, the Library is fully wired for computer access at each reading/work table and features black walnut, honed-finish granite countertops and paneled cathedral ceilings.

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