

HERITAGE CITATION EAST SORRENTO PRECINCT

Heritage Overlay number: **HO488**

HERMES No. XXXXX

Place Name: East Sorrento Precinct:

Address: Hiskens St, Newton Ave, St Pauls Rd, Rose St, Bowen Road, Sorrento

Place Type: Precinct

Level of Significance: LOCAL

Recommendation: Local HO schedule

Map:



Table: Individually significant and contributory properties

Number	Street	Grading
27	Bowen Road	Contributory
35	Bowen Road	Contributory
3	Hiskens Street	Individual HO97
10	Hiskens Street (part)	Contributory
15	Hiskens Street	Contributory
16	Hiskens Street	Contributory
3	Newton Avenue	Contributory
5	Newton Avenue	Contributory

7	Newton Avenue	Contributory
11	Newton Avenue	Individual HO152
12	Newton Avenue	Contributory
14	Newton Avenue	Contributory
15	Newton Avenue	Contributory
19	Newton Avenue	Contributory
20	Newton Avenue	Contributory
3199	Point Nepean Road	Contributory
3211	Point Nepean Road	Contributory
3213	Point Nepean Road	Individual HO179
1	Rose Street	Contributory
8	Rose Street	Contributory
9	Rose Street	Contributory
12	Rose Street	Contributory
5	St Pauls Road	Individual HO232
15	St Pauls Road	Individual HO233
19	St Pauls Road	Contributory
21	St Pauls Road	Contributory
24	St Pauls Road	Contributory
38	St Pauls Road	Contributory
40	St Pauls Road	Contributory
44	St Pauls Road	Contributory
50	St Pauls Road	Contributory
60	St Pauls Road	Contributory

Description:

The East Sorrento Precinct is an area of mixed residential housing, in an undulating area between Point Nepean Road and Melbourne Road and bordered by Salonika Street on the east and Bowen Road on the west. Within this residential precinct is a wide range of housing styles which reflect periods of development of housing and subdivision in Sorrento.

The landscape is heavily vegetated and the east-west streets, Hiskens and Rose Street and Newton Avenue are meandering, narrow informal streets whilst Bowen Road and St Pauls Road are two-lane bitumen but still do not have made pavements or kerbing. Distant views of the Bay can be had along St Paul's and Bowen Road.

The landscape rises towards Rose Street and St Pauls Road, and slopes down to Bowen Road, before rising again to Constitution Hill. The majority of buildings are single-storey, free standing houses with gardens on large suburban allotments. The first subdivisions in the area appear to have been done by local developers such as the Stringer and Cain family. The oldest buildings are concentrated around the corner of St Pauls Road and Point Nepean Road and Rose Street, closest to the foreshore.

The housing is notably diverse with some very intact examples of Late Victorian, Federation, Inter- War and Post war housing styles, some significant limestone buildings and a range of single storey building types in weatherboard, brick, concrete and cement sheet. Overall the precinct has a seaside character enhanced by the informal streets and dense vegetation cover.

Statement of Significance:

What is significant?

The East Sorrento Precinct is significant to the Shire of Mornington Peninsula. It includes properties between Point Nepean Road and Melbourne Road, Salonika Street and Bowen Road, in an area known as East Sorrento. It contains an intact and diverse collection of housing which demonstrates the important phases of Sorrento's residential development from the 1880s to 1980s.

The following buildings are individually significant to the precinct and have individual heritage overlays. 11 Newton Ave HO152, 3 Hiskens Street HO97, 5 St Pauls Road HO232, 15 St Pauls Road HO233, and 3213 Point Nepean Road, HO179. The buildings, views and streetscapes contribute to the significance of the precinct.

How is it significant?

The East Sorrento Precinct is of local historical, aesthetic, architectural and social significance to the Shire of Mornington Peninsula.

Why is it significant?

The East Sorrento Precinct is of historical significance for the role it played in the early development of the township of Sorrento, as a tangible illustration of the history of subdivision, development and changing population in Sorrento, from largely permanent residents involved in fishing, lime burning or early tourism to absentee home owners from suburban Melbourne. The intactness of the precinct and its ability to demonstrate key themes in Sorrento's history through its early buildings, streetscape and setting is rare on the Mornington Peninsula and demonstrates a continuity of development from the 1880s to the present day that is highly valued by the local community. (Criteria A, B & G)

The East Sorrento Precinct is of aesthetic significance as a place with particularly fine examples of Late Victorian, Federation, Inter War, Post War and Late Twentieth century housing styles that are representative of their period. Many of the houses exhibit a rare degree of intactness and are set within blocks which are unsubdivided, some very large and heavily vegetated. The east-west roads are meandering and have close vegetation, informal parking, lack of paths, kerbing and gutters. The undulating landscape, views to the Bay, dense vegetation and varied building stock adds to the character of the precinct. (Criterion E)

The East Sorrento Precinct is of aesthetic significance for its collection of intact limestone buildings dating from the 1870s. These buildings are constructed from locally sourced limestone and form a vernacular building tradition on the Peninsula which is unique and highly significant. (Criteria B & E)

The East Sorrento Precinct has well-preserved housing stock which demonstrates the principal characteristics of Sorrento housing, ranging from small limestone and timber cottages, from the Late Victorian and Federation period, to Inter War bungalows and villas to modest Post War holiday homes of the 1950s and 60s, to architect designed modernist houses of the 1970s and 80s. (Criterion D)

The East Sorrento Precinct is of significance for its association with a number of people who played an important role in the development of Sorrento and/or had strong associations with shaping the fabric and character of the area, including: the extensive Dark family, Jane and Nellie Clark, William Webster, the Watts family and John Watson. (Criterion H)

History:

Sorrento

The land of which Sorrento is a part is Boon wurrung/Bunurong country. The Boon wurrung/Bunurong are a predominantly coastal people whose traditional lands encompass some 7,800 square kilometres of territory around Western Port Bay and the Mornington Peninsula. The Boon wurrung/Bunurong are members of the Kulin nation who have lived in and managed their country for thousands of years. The Boon wurrung/Bunurong traditional way of life was interrupted at the turn of the nineteenth century when they made contact with sealers from Van Diemens Land and then in 1802, British sailors on board the *Lady Nelson* who were exploring Port Phillip Bay. [Butler & Context, 2012:14-19]

In September 1836, under pressure from the number of illegal occupations and squatting which had occurred, the Port Phillip land district was proclaimed open for settlement, allowing for the sale of Boon wurrung / Bunurong lands, claimed by the Crown, to be sold at auction to Europeans. Sorrento was occupied by European settlers quarrying and burning lime, fishing and practising limited agriculture. The lime burning industry was vital to the development of the Peninsula and Melbourne. In 1803 the settlers of Sullivan Bay used local lime to construct chimneys. In June 1839 John Fawkner was advertising Nepean lime for sale in Melbourne. [Port Phillip Patriot and Advertiser 22 July 1839.] Lime was transported on small lighters to boats moored out in the Channel between Sorrento Pier and the Baths. Later it became common to build kilns on the foreshore where bagged processed lime could be run out on small jetties to boats. [Hollinshed, p.51]

Limestone was not only an important industry on the Peninsula it has also had a lasting impact on the heritage of the area with small cottages, large public buildings, schools, hotels and mansions built from the local limestone. Nepean limestone is a vernacular tradition on the Peninsula with two distinct styles of limestone construction with early buildings being built entirely of limestone and later ones built with red brick quoining. Limestone is the dominant fabric of the northern end of Ocean Beach Road.

By the 1860s Point Nepean was recognized as not only a sublimely beautiful landscape with easy access to the Bay and the Ocean, but as a place for holidaying and respite from Melbourne. As early as 1868 George Selth Coppin(1819-1906) was planning to develop the town as a place for tourists. He purchased 225 acres and subdivided it into small allotments for shops and houses. By 1874 he had his own steamship company and then built the Continental Hotel in 1875 to accommodate them. Another influential developer of Sorrento was Charles Gavan Duffy MLA (1816-1903), who developed his 600 acres for gentleman's cliff-top villas which still line the edge of the Bay. It also laid out the alignment of Point Nepean and Hotham Roads and reserved Sorrento Park overlooking the jetty and Bay. [Thematic history, 2012, p.22]

By the 1890s the township and the commercial precinct had developed further with new civic facilities such as a post office and a mechanics institute. Shops had developed on the west side of Ocean Beach Road, including Stringers Stores, the Athenaeum Theatre, the Oriental Coffee Palace and a small building (now occupied by Sportsgirl) at 54 Ocean Beach Road constructed in

1894. It was at the turn of the century that the great majority of commercial and residential buildings were constructed on both sides of Ocean Beach Road and many of these still exist. Between 1900 and 1910 a large number of buildings were constructed along Ocean Beach Road, to accommodate tourists. Many permanent and holiday homes were constructed in this period, as were schools and businesses. [Lardner, 2015, p.-21]

The 20th century development of Sorrento has been marked by an increase in private home ownership accompanied by increasing densification and subdivision. The wealth of Melbourne's middle class after WW1 and increasing car ownership resulted in more holiday makers visiting the Peninsula, and investing in their own piece of seaside paradise. In later decades, there has been an increase in permanent residents retiring to the seaside and seeking a sea change. In recent years the increasing ease of renting properties on the internet, has led to a boom in the holiday rental market and two and three lot subdivision of existing properties.

Thematic History:

Construction of holiday home and weekenders steadily increased in the inter-war period and then again in the post-World War Two years, particularly on the west coast. However, by the 1980s the majority of seaside houses in the southern parts of the Peninsula, at Merricks Beach, Balnarring Beach and Point Leo were still used as holiday homes or weekenders with few permanent residents. This situation has now changed, with an increase in permanent populations in most localities since the beginning of the 21st C. This has seen the conversion of larger holiday homes into permanent residences and the loss of many smaller homes. [Butler & Context, 2012:108]

Modern holiday homes are among the most distinctive architectural heritage of the Peninsula. They are important for their links to innovative designers and the established figures for whom they were typically built. Elements of the design have been copied at beachside resorts around Victoria.

The Inter-war Peninsula holiday house became the symbol of basic Victorian seaside houses until well past this construction era. It was a single-storey bungalow on a small beach allotment, often with a detached garage and built with cheap materials such as timber, concrete block or fibro-cement sheet.

Many of the holiday homes, which make up a large proportion of the Peninsula buildings today, were clad with fibro. The architectural journals of the day advertised it as a rot and fireproof, cheap and easily handled cladding material, suitable for use in beach houses, for both walls and roofing. Another new building material was the concrete building block. These could be easily made on the site with the aid of a block making machine, often equipped with different block profiles, such as a rusticated or vermiculated pattern, achieved by inserts into the casting chamber. [Butler & Context, 2012:111]

History of the Place:

East Sorrento Precinct consists of portions of Crown allotments 77, 78, 81 and 82 on land originally alienated by C.G Duffy in 1872. It is one of the earliest areas subdivided for housing in Sorrento. It is close to the pier, and between Melbourne and Point Nepean Roads which were the first roads into the Peninsula. An 1890s plan of the area, indicates large, fenced allotments with sparse housing between Bowen and St Pauls Road. A track to a paddock indicates what might be the beginning of Hiskens Street. [SLV Maps C437 (P) 1890] Number 5, St Pauls Road is one of the earliest houses in the precinct, built in 1887.

In 1900, Preston Estate between Salonika and St Pauls Rd was advertised for auction. On the subdivision plan, Rose Street is truncated, which explains the narrow lane at the St Pauls Road end. This subdivision includes properties 9, 8 and 12 Rose Street. [VNEP A263Ires c1900, NHS] A 1928 auction plan for Two Beaches Estate on the corner of St Pauls Road and Melbourne Rd shows the arrangement of houses, and names Hiskens Street, but calls Newton Avenue, Cain Street. Many of the houses listed in this precinct on Hiskens, Newton, Bowen and St Pauls Road were probably present by the time this plan was drawn. [VNEP A11712 Ires 1928, NHS] A 1930s auction notice for Bellevue Estate shows properties subdivided on the west side of Salonika Street and includes 1 and 9 Rose Street and possibly 12 Hill Street. [VNEP A260Ires c1930s, NHS]

We can assume from these plans and a 1931 Ordnance Survey plan for Sorrento, that the form and arrangement of housing in East Sorrento was similar in 1931 to what is seen today. Bowen Road, St Pauls Road and Salonika Street form the main North-South boundaries of the precinct with Newton Avenue and Hiskens Street the main East-West streets. [Sorrento 1931 Ordnance Survey, SLV]

The majority of houses included in this precinct were built before 1940. Most early houses from 1887 to 1910 were built for permanent residents, such as 5,15, 60 St Pauls Road, 32 Bowen Road and 3213 Point Nepean Road. This reflects the history of the period and subdivision of marginal agricultural land and gentlemen's estates into smaller housing developments. These subdivisions lead to the infill development of large allotments and the creation of holiday houses and smaller house lots. The only commercial building in the whole precinct is Dark's grocery store, built 1929. Its presence in Bowen Road indicates the popularity of this area in the Inter War period. Further shops were built at the end of St Pauls Road in the Post-War period.

Some local families, such as the Clark sisters, Nellie and Jane had purchased four lots in what was Cain Street before 1919, and appeared to sell them on before building. Some families bought large allotments and subdivided them between family members - John Gordon Browne, who owned Pinehill on Rose Street and his wife built Ellembee (named for their daughter Leslie Maitland Browne) adjoining it on Point Nepean Road. Some Melbourne investors purchased a number of lots such as William Roe who owned six lots on St Paul's Road and Clements Langford and his wife, Rose. Other local families lived in East Sorrento and members of their family also built houses in the same precinct. The Dark family lived in a number of properties in the area, including in Hiskens Street, Newton Avenue, Bowen Road and St Paul's Road. Alexander Russell a limeburner built his own limestone house on St Pauls Road.

The buildings dating from 1870-1900, in the Late Victorian period includes:

- Kimberley (1899) 11 Newton Avenue HO152
- House (c.1890-1910) 12 Newton Avenue
- House (c.1890-1910) 14 Newton Avenue
- House (1893) 19 Newton Avenue
- House (1892) 3 Hiskens Street HO97
- Lystra (1887) 5 St Pauls Road HO232
- Narollah (1896) 15 St Pauls Road HO233
- Attanagh (1896) 60 St Pauls Road

The buildings dating from 1900-1920 Federation period includes:

- House (c.1900-1920) 27 Bowen Road
- House (c.1900-1910) 5 Newton Avenue
- House (c.1900-1920) 7 Newton Avenue
- House (c.1900-1920) 10 Hiskens Street
- House (1913) 15 Hiskens Street
- Rose Cottage (c.1890-1910) 9 Rose Street
- Pinehill (c.1890-1910) 8 Rose Street
- Pine Cottage (c.1890-1910) 12 Rose Street
- House (c.1900-1920) 21 St Pauls Road
- House (1915) 38 St Pauls Road
- Olinda (1919) 40 St Pauls Road
- House (1915) 44 St Pauls Road
- Ellembee (c.1911-1915) 3199 Point Nepean Road
- House (c.1890-1910) 3211 Point Nepean Road
- Franklin (c.1890-1910) 3213 Point Nepean Road HO179

The buildings dating from 1920-1940 Inter-War period includes:

- Former Darks Grocery Store (1929) 35 Bowen Road
- House (c.1920-1930) 3 Newton Avenue
- House (1921) 15 Newton Avenue
- House (1935) 20 Newton Avenue
- House (c.1920-1940) 1 Rose Street
- House (c.1920-1930) 24 St Pauls Road

The buildings dating from 1940-1960 Post-War period includes:

- House (1954) 50 St Pauls Road

The buildings dating from 1960-1990 Late Twentieth Century period includes:

- House (1973) 16 Hiskens Street
- House (1982) 19 St Pauls Road

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Bellevue Estate, Sorrento, VNEP A260 Ires c.1900. Source, Nepean Historical Society

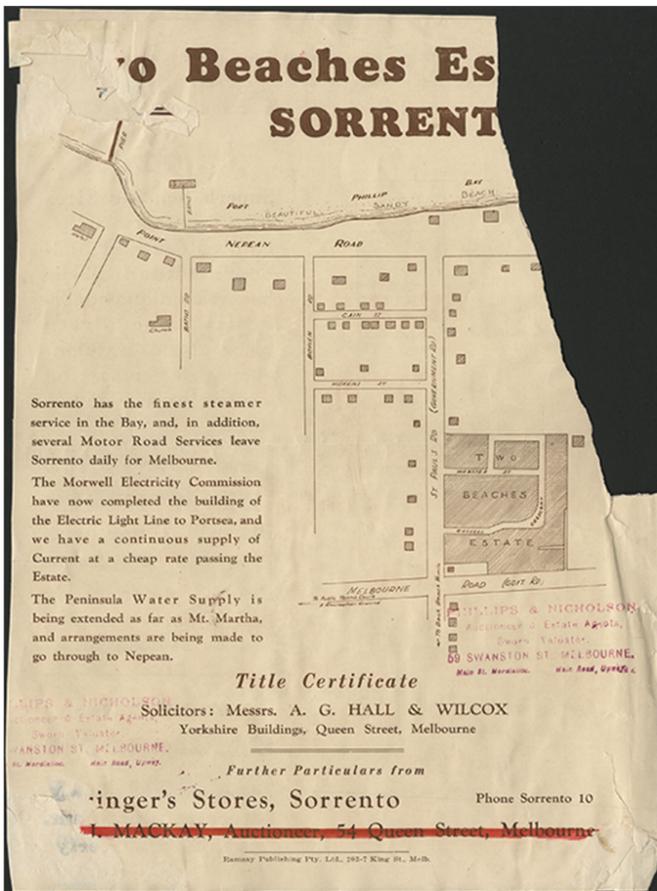
PLAN OF SUBDIVISION ST. PAUL'S ESTATE, SORRENTO, BEING ALLOTMENT 79^a, PARISH OF NEPEAN, COUNTY OF MORNINGTON.

FOR TERMS AND FULL PARTICULARS,
APPLY TO THE OWNER,
JOHN CAIN,
LIME AND CEMENT MERCHANT,
NORMANBY ROAD, SOUTH MELBOURNE

St Paul's Estate, Sorrento VNEP A271 Ires before 1920. Source, Nepean Historical Society



Preston Estate, Sorrento VNEP A263 Lres c.1900. Source, Nepean Historical Society



Auction Plan VNEP A11712 Ires 1928. Source, Nepean Historical Society

Thematic Context: (Graeme Butler, 2008 and Context Pty Ltd, 2012)

Theme 7: Building settlements and towns

Theme 7.8: Designing and building mansions, houses and holiday shacks

Sources:

Shire of Flinders Rate Books

Wills and Probate records

Land Title certificates

National Archives of Australia files on Whitehall
 Nepean Historical Society files on local families and maps
 Hollinshed, Charles, Goss, Noel and Bird, ECF, 1982, *Lime, Land, Leisure; Peninsular History in the Shire of Flinders*
 Graeme Butler & Associates, Context Pty Ltd (editors), 2012 *Mornington Peninsula Shire Thematic History*
 Context Pty Ltd, 1992, 1997, *Flinders Heritage Study*

Comparative precincts:

The Ranelagh Estate, Mount Eliza listed on the Victorian Heritage Register, is a large planned, residential garden suburb estate from the 1920s, designed by Walter Burley Griffin and Saxil Tuxen. It has exceptional houses and landscape elements from the 1920s-1970s. The mixed nature of housing there is similar to East Sorrento but East Sorrento is more eclectic and was not a planned estate with a single urban design intent.

HO1 Sorrento Historic Precinct Residential Area at the Back Beach end of the Ocean Beach Road is the most comparable area in Sorrento. It contains buildings of similar date range and stylistic periods and was occupied by both local families and holiday makers from Melbourne.

HO317 Station Street Precinct, Somerville

This precinct has representative housing dating to circa 1890-1945. This collection of Federation and Inter-War houses in both timber and masonry is a precinct of comparatively well preserved suburban houses in Somerville. It has some comparisons to East Sorrento but was mainly owned and developed by locals.

HO318 Crib Point Precinct

This precinct of houses and a single timber church is representative of the development of the town after the Flinders Naval depot was established post WW1. The housing estate was developed by a local fisherman and designed by Saxil Tuxen who also designed Ranelagh Estate. The houses were all built between 1915 and 1929 and mostly were occupied by locals.

HO92 Hansens Lane, Beach Houses Precinct, Balnarring Beach

This precinct of small, cheap beach houses developed in the Inter War period and has some comparisons to East Sorrento in its informal layout and street character. It is characteristic of the first beachside weekender suburbs in the district. The small informal cottages are set among native vegetation close to the water.

HO333 Cook Street Flinders Precinct

This town centre precinct is most comparable to Sorrento Historic Precinct Commercial Area. The precinct contains a mix of church, Post Office, public hall, shopfronts and houses with infill buildings from the twentieth century. It is significant for the important evidence it provides of a pattern of development from the 1860s. Similar to Sorrento it retains evidence of early allotment patterns and demonstrates continuity from the time of first subdivision, and early development of tourism and local services.

Recommendations:

Extent of curtilage:

The whole of the precinct as outlined by the accompanying map

Significant elements or design features:

Single storey residential character, common setbacks and street alignment. New development or works should retain a level of vegetation cover and landscape setting for each property. Informal nature of roads and paths should be retained.

Extent of fabric to be retained:

All of the Late Victorian, Federation, Inter-War, Post-War and Late C20th fabric.

Schedule:

External Paint Controls	No
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Fences and Outbuildings	No
Prohibited uses	No
Incorporated plan	-
Aboriginal Heritage Place	No

Other recommendations:

Recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as a new precinct with its own HO, to the extent of the whole precinct as defined by the accompanying mapping.