

HERITAGE CITATION HO1C

Heritage Overlay number: HO503

HERMES No. XXXXXX
 Place Name: Sorrento Historic Precinct: Clifftop Area
 Address: Sorrento
 Place Type: Precinct
 Level of Significance: LOCAL
 Recommendation: Existing HO1 to be amended to reflect new mapping and citation.

Map:

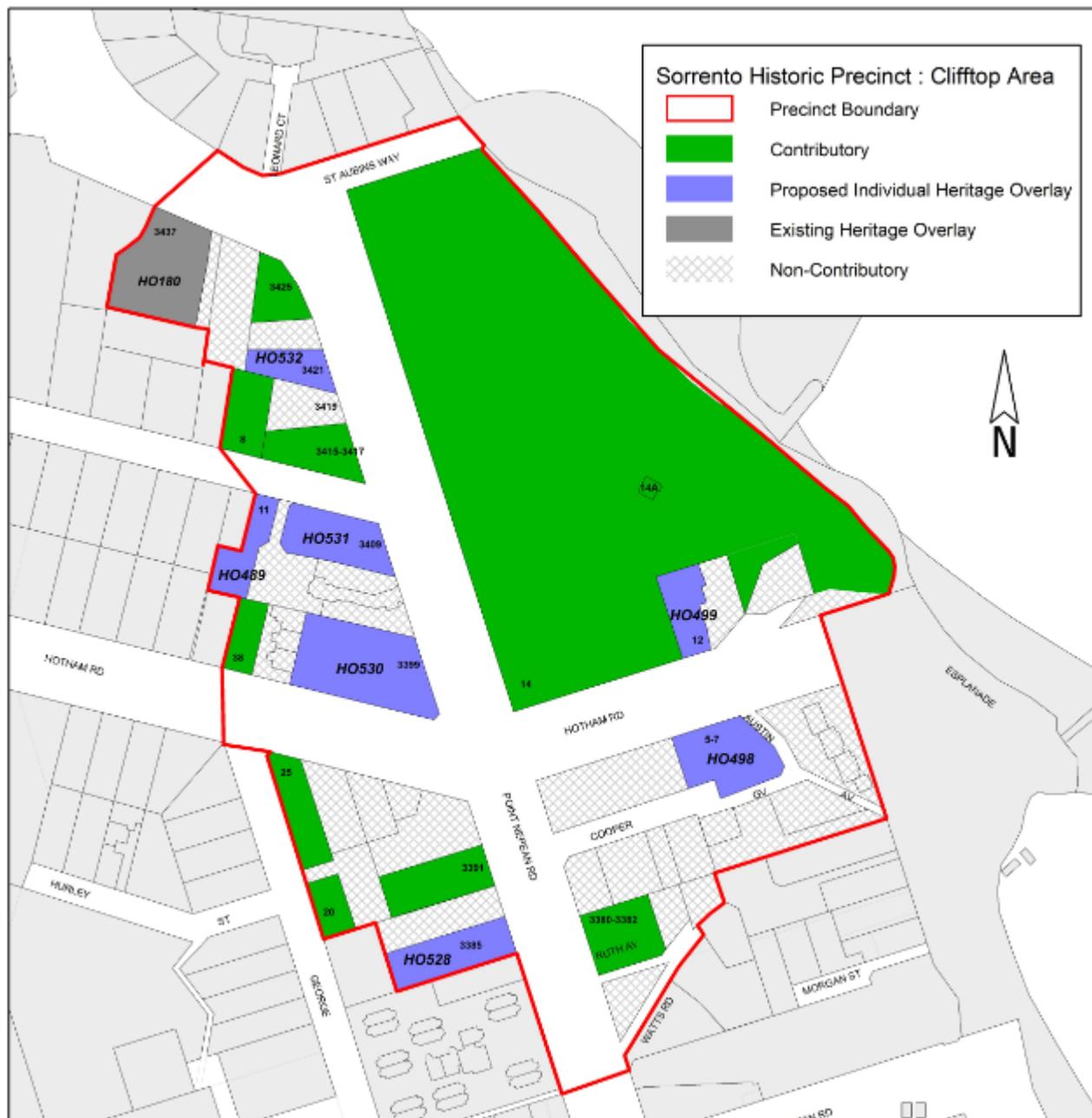


Table: Individually significant and contributory properties –

Number	Street	Grading
8	Boroondara Road	Contributory
11	Boroondara Road	Individual HO489
20	George Street	Contributory
5-7	Hotham Road	Individual HO498

12	Hotham Road	Individual HO499
14	Hotham Road	Contributory
25	Hotham Road	Contributory
38	Hotham Road	Contributory
3380-3382	Point Nepean Road	Contributory
3385	Point Nepean Road	Individual HO528
3391	Point Nepean Road	Contributory
3399	Point Nepean Road	Individual HO530
3409	Point Nepean Road	Individual HO531
3415-3417	Point Nepean Road	Contributory
3421	Point Nepean Road	Individual HO532
3425	Point Nepean Road	Contributory
3437	Point Nepean Road	HO 180

Description:

The Cliff-top Area of the Sorrento Historic Precinct extends from the headland above Sorrento Pier to the end of Sorrento Park where the car park and entrance to the public boat ramp is located. On the other side of Point Nepean Road is located an area known locally as the S-bend. This area was laid out by CG Duffy in the Bella Vista Estate and was the first location of the township of Sorrento before Ocean Beach Road became the centre of retail activities. The only surviving commercial building from this period is the former butcher's shop at 3421 Point Nepean Road. On either side of the former butcher's shop are late Victorian residential buildings associated with well-known local families.

On the corner of Point Nepean Road and Hotham Road there are a number of significant limestone buildings, including the former Sorrento Police Station and the former Anglican Vicarage. On the other side of Hotham Road are more humble buildings from the Inter-War period, behind the commercial area of Ocean Beach Road. Near Stringers store is the Inter-War Sorrento Masonic Centre and across the road the two-storey arts and crafts Acton Hill which is similar to Sorrento House, opposite Sorrento Park.

Hotham Road to the south of Point Nepean Road and the area of the S-bend is heavily treed, with very large deciduous trees on the roadway and along Sorrento Park. Sorrento Park has large significant trees and also preserves views to the Bay in a traditional C19th public landscape. This gives the streets in this part of the precinct a very enclosed feeling which is contrasted to the north end of Hotham Road which is very exposed and wide with uninterrupted views of the Bay.

The area is covered by HO1, Sorrento Historic Precinct and subject to Clause 22.17 Sorrento Historic Precinct Policy.

Statement of Significance:

What is significant?

The Sorrento Historic Precinct Cliff-top Area, part of the existing HO1, Sorrento Historic Precinct, includes properties which were laid out in the original Bella Vista subdivision by CG Duffy & W. Cockburn in 1873. It preserves buildings, streetscape alignments and landscapes from the Late Victorian through to the Inter-War period and demonstrates the earliest period of Sorrento's development as a township.

The buildings, streetscape and street trees, views and landscapes contribute to the significance of the precinct.

How is it significant?

The Sorrento Historic Precinct Cliff-top Area, is of local historical, social, aesthetic and architectural significance to the Mornington Peninsula Shire.

Why is it significant?

The Sorrento Historic Precinct Cliff-top Area is of historical significance for the role it played in the early development of Sorrento. The precinct preserves the original alignment of Point Nepean Road, which was laid out to maintain larger cliff-top villa allotments by CG Duffy & W. Cockburn. Sorrento Park (1870), the former Police Station (1892), the site of the first Post Office and Sorrento Hotel (1872) and the former butcher's shop (c.1876), illustrate this earliest period of development in Sorrento. (Criteria A)

The Sorrento Historic Precinct Cliff-top Area is of historical significance for the role it played in the early development of the township of Sorrento. The intactness of the precinct and its ability to demonstrate the key themes through its early buildings, streetscape alignment, and landscape is rare on the Mornington Peninsula and demonstrates a continuity of development from the 1870s until today that is highly valued by the community. (Criteria A, B & G)

The Sorrento Historic Precinct Cliff-top Area demonstrates the principal characteristics of the Late Victorian, Federation and Inter-War periods of development, with Sorrento Hotel the landmark building located on the top of the headland with Sorrento Park opposite following the natural topography down to the boat ramp on the Bay. It retains buildings, street trees and landscaping which demonstrate typical Late Victorian, Federation and Inter-War features. (Criterion D)

The Sorrento Historic Precinct Cliff-top Area is of aesthetic significance for its collection of intact limestone buildings dating from the 1870s to 1916. These buildings are constructed from locally sourced limestone and form a vernacular building tradition on the Peninsula which is unique and highly significant. There are also significant Federation buildings in the Arts and Crafts style, as well as small domestic scale timber buildings. Sorrento Park preserves a Victorian style public garden, views of the Bay, trees and garden features which are significant. (Criteria B & E)

The Sorrento Historic Precinct Cliff-top Area is of aesthetic significance for the combination of natural topography, historic buildings, streetscapes and views of the Bay. The Victorian seaside character is enhanced by the landscape setting, the landmark arrangement of the Sorrento Hotel, the former Police Station within Sorrento Park, the treed avenue of Hotham Road and large deciduous trees along Point Nepean Road and views of the Bay from Hotham Road and Sorrento Park, contributes to this significance. (Criterion E)

The Sorrento Historic Precinct Cliff-top Area is of significance as a focus for social and tourist activity since the 1870s. The Cliff-top area preserves the landmark Sorrento Hotel (1872) possibly the earliest limestone building in Sorrento and the first tourist hotel on the Mornington Peninsula. The Cliff-top has social significance as it preserves the earliest designed public park on the Mornington Peninsula which has been a site of public activity, celebration and recreation since the 1870s (Criterion G)

The Sorrento Historic Precinct Cliff-top Area 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: Walter Stringer, Josiah Hiskens, CG Duffy & W.Cockburn, George Morce, John Farnsworth and GB Wilson. (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, 1982:51]

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. [Butler & Context, 2012:22]

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 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, 2015:21]

Thematic History:

The Shire of Flinders Heritage Study 1992 defined a significant area of marine villas as making up the Sorrento Cliff Top Residential Area, sited on the raised land formation between the Sorrento pier and Point King on the northern side of Point Nepean Road. At the eastern end of this area, the Sorrento Hotel presents a prominent landmark. Charles Gavan Duffy, who later was a significant influence on the changing shape of Sorrento, first bought land in 1863 near Point King and maintained a cottage and kiln on the site where Boyd had previously operated a kiln. Ten years later, Duffy purchased 600 acres of land extending from Point King to The Sisters. Duffy, and neighbouring landowner W. Cockburn, subdivided their combined holdings to create the Bella Vista Estate. [Butler & Context, 2012:30]

Like Rye and Portsea, Sorrento's early history was associated with fishing and lime burning. From the 1840s, there was lime burning in an area known as the S-bend where Ted Sullivan's loading road from his jetty was located. This was the outlet for the lime Sullivan burned in his kiln close by the Hotham Road. Although Sorrento and Portsea were the first major lime burning centres, from the 1850s they were surpassed by Rye and Rosebud. With the exception of the kilns, most of the buildings associated with the lime burning and fishing beginnings of the town were of a fragile construction and there are now few remains from this era. The kilns became a ready source for building stone and the many fishermen's huts, mostly located on public land along the foreshore, being progressively removed, the last being demolished in the 1960s. [Butler & Context, 2012:90]

Sorrento's development as a resort town in the 1880s and early 1900s further transformed the seaside landscape with a diverse mix of building development which compares with Portsea. In both these townships, the comparative wealth of property owners altered the profile of the land due to the plantings of exotic species in significant clusters. Many private gardens contain established conifers and oaks and other deciduous species. The plantings at Sorrento park are a good example of this nineteenth century attempt to gentrify the landscape according to popular Victoria-era tastes, dotted with established plantings of oaks, elms and mainly pines, including trees grown from seed collected at Lone Pine, Gallipoli.

Sorrento Park was set aside in the Bella Vista Estate as a public reserve and was gazetted in 1870. It was sown with trees provided by Baron von Mueller, the government Botanist and Director of the Botanical Gardens. Originally Easter Monday sports were held on the Sorrento foreshore and later in the Sorrento Park where an athletics track and a cycling circuit were established in 1889. [Butler & Context, 2012:140]

History of the Place:

The first building constructed in this cliff-top area of Sorrento was the limestone and brick Sorrento Hotel (1872) built three years before the Continental Hotel and a landmark building located on a high headland overlooking the Pier and the Bay. Originally the hotel gardens ran to the edge of the cliff and views from the rooms extended to Arthurs Seat. The Sorrento Hotel is possibly the earliest limestone building on the peninsula, constructed by John Farnsworth who was later responsible for constructing a number of large limestone buildings for wealthy gentleman on the cliff-top. Its use of brick quoining with the local limestone was possibly learnt from Farnsworth's home state of South Australia where limestone and brick quoining were common in Adelaide and Gawler.

The Bella Vista Estate was laid out in 1873 and incorporated the site of a police station, post office and public park. The street alignment which had an S-bend in Point Nepean Road, allowed for larger allotments along the cliff-top on the north side of Point Nepean Road. The township formed here prior to the development of Ocean Beach Road by George Coppin. The Wilson's butcher shop (c.1876) was eventually enticed to move from the S-bend to Ocean Beach Road in 1903. The Wilson family had purchased the 1 acre block on the S-bend prior to 1877, and operated a slaughter yard, for their burgeoning butchery business. The Wilsons also built the house Yaringa right on the bend in circa 1885 and similarly to the Hiskens family next door, used the house as a rental property.

Josiah Hiskens, was the head teacher of Sorrento school for 21 years. He and his wife ran the school, were very active in the Sorrento community, and donated land to the Anglican Church. They built the limestone Illabarook (1878) and Maroondah (1901) The Hiskens do not appear to have ever lived in these houses as they also had land on the cliff-top close to Point King. The houses were lived in by other school teachers and rented to holiday makers.

On the corner of Hotham Road and Point Nepean Road is the significant limestone Inter-war former Anglican Vicarage (1916). On this site was an old Sunday School hall, now demolished, which was used as the Sorrento school for some years. Further down Hotham Road is number 38, a limestone Late Victorian cottage that was built in 1887 by the Stringer family and owned by them for

34 years. Between 1923 and 1970 the property was owned by William Schlipalius who ran Slippys Ice Cream, well-known locally for his mobile ice cream van.

Opposite Sorrento Park at 3409 Point Nepean Road is Sorrento House (c.1915) an Arts and Crafts two storey house that was built by Solomon and Rebecca Green as their grand holiday house. It included a limestone servant's quarters in Boroondara Road. In 1944 it was bought by a group of ex-servicemen and had additional wings added when it was converted to a rest house for returned servicemen. At 3380 Point Nepean Road, Acton Hill (1910) is another Arts and Crafts two storey house which might have inspired Sorrento House. It was built for local doctor, WB Broughton and was later owned by local Councillors. Opposite Action Hill is the Sorrento Masonic Centre built in 1929 with a restrained classical design on a rise in the road and is still in use by the community today.

The former Sorrento Police Station was built in 1892 and is an unusual Public Works Department design in brick, limestone and tile that is an ornate domestic free-style design. The site on the top of the headland continues to be used as a police station.

Up until c.1900 the concentration of buildings appears to have been isolated to the headland above the Sorrento jetty and the S-bend on Point Nepean Road. The buildings dating from before 1900, in the Late Victorian period includes:

- Sorrento Hotel, 5-7 Hotham Road (1872)
- former Sorrento Police Station, 12 Hotham Road (1892)
- Sorrento Park, 14 Hotham Road (1870)
- House, 38 Hotham Road (1887)
- Illabarook, 3415-3417 Point Nepean Road (1878)
- former Butcher's shop, 3421 Point Nepean Road (1876)
- Yaringa, 3425 Point Nepean Road (1885)

In the Federation period, there was another surge of activity. A high percentage of significant residential buildings date from this period including:

- Sorrento House and servant's quarters, 3409 Point Nepean Road and 11 Boroondara Road (c.1890 -1915)
- Acton Hill, 3380 Point Nepean Road (1910)
- House, 20 George Street (c.1900)
- Maroondah, 8 Boroondara Road (1901)
- House, 3391 Point Nepean Road (c.1890-1910)

In the Inter-War period much of the township remained the same, with new residential and community buildings. Some of these are significant, including:

- House, 25 Hotham Road (c.1920s)
- Sorrento Masonic Centre, 3385 Point Nepean Road (1929)
- Sundorne, 3437 Point Nepean Road (c.1923)
- former Anglican vicarage, 3399 Point Nepean Road (1916)



Plan of villa sites at Bella Vista Sorrento, Parish of Nepean. Note the areas circled, which shows the site of the police station, first post office and Sorrento Hotel, as well as the location of the butcher's shop at the S-bend. Source, State Library of Victoria



Photo of the Sorrento Hotel, Fred Kruger Photographer, between 1880 and 1882, Source, State Library of Victoria

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

Theme 2: Peopling the Mornington Peninsula
 Theme 2.6.2 Cliff-top villas

Theme 7: Building settlements and townships
 Theme 7.1: Selecting township sites and planning settlements
 Theme 7.8: Designing and building mansions, houses and holiday shacks

Theme 10: Developing the Peninsula's Cultural Life
Theme 10.2 Developing public parks and gardens

Sources:

Shire of Flinders Rate Books
Wills and Probate records
Land Title certificates
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 Sorrento but Sorrento is more eclectic and was not a planned estate with a single urban design intent.

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 parts of Sorrento but was mainly owned and developed by locals. It lacks the grand mansions, villas and substantial limestone public buildings of Sorrento, which are distinctive.

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

Significant elements or design features:

Late Victorian, Federation and Inter-War buildings, Sorrento Park, alignment of Point Nepean Road and Hotham Road and street trees along Hotham and Point Nepean Road.

Schedule:

External Paint Controls	Yes
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	Yes, Sorrento Park and Hotham Road
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.