

HERITAGE CITATION HO1B

Heritage Overlay number: **HO502**

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

Map:

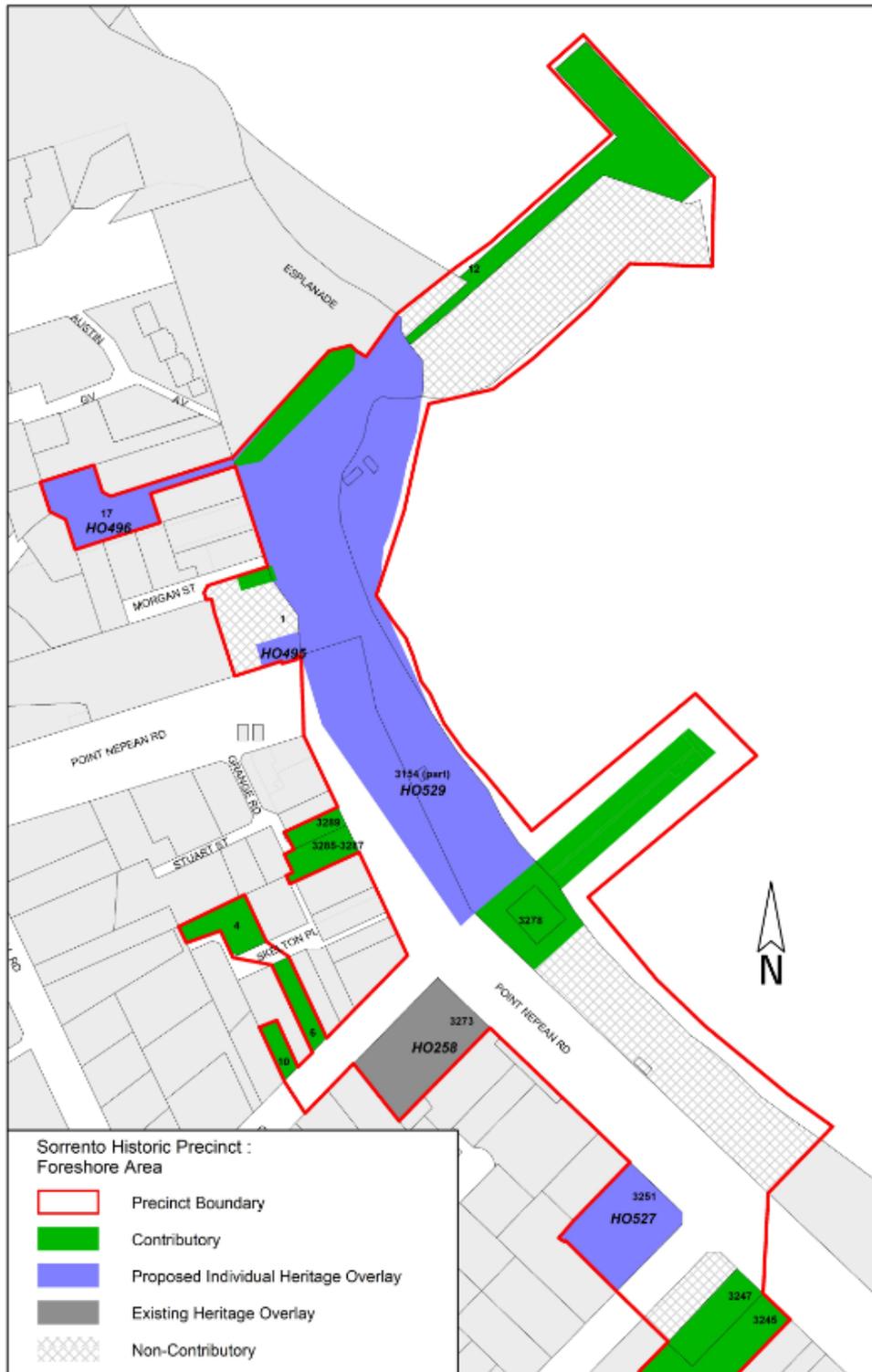


Table: Individually significant and contributory properties –

Number	Street	Grading
6	Coppin Road	Contributory
10	Coppin Road	Contributory
1	Esplanade	Individual HO495
1	Esplanade	Contributory
12	Esplanade (Sorrento Pier excluding Searoad Ferry Terminal)	Contributory
17	Esplanade	Individual HO496
3154	Point Nepean Road (Foreshore)	Individual HO529
3154	Point Nepean Road (Bandstand)	Individual HO529
3245	Point Nepean Road	Contributory
3247	Point Nepean Road	Contributory
3251	Point Nepean Road	Individual HO527
3273	Point Nepean Road	State significance VHR H1899
3278	Point Nepean Road (site of former tearooms and original alignment of sea baths jetty)	Contributory (VHI H7821-0141)
3285-3287	Point Nepean Road	Contributory
3289	Point Nepean Road	Contributory
4	Skelton Place	Contributory
	Sorrento Tramway Reserve	Contributory

Description:

The Foreshore Area of the Sorrento Historic Precinct is formed from the Sorrento Pier, (excluding Searoad Ferry Terminal) foreshore landscaping, bandstand, memorials, site of former tearooms and original alignment of sea baths jetty (listed on the Victorian Heritage Inventory as H7821-0141) and significant buildings facing the Bay along Point Nepean Road from 3247 Point Nepean Road to 17 Esplanade. The area is covered by HO1, Sorrento Historic Precinct and subject to Clause 22.17 Sorrento Historic Precinct Policy.

The precinct area follows both sides of Point Nepean Road as it gradually curves along the Bay toward the Sorrento Pier. Above the foreshore rises a headland with a small public reserve above the Esplanade that interprets the starting point of the former Steam Tramway. Esplanade drops down to join Point Nepean Road past the entrance to Dalwhinnie, also associated with the tramway and Morgans fish and chip shop and the former Mornington Hotel. On the beach in front of The Anchorage is the site of former tearooms and original alignment of sea baths jetty, which has been rebuilt a number of times since 1875, but has remained in the same location.

The foreshore area extends from the public car park in front of the ferry terminal entrance, in an open landscaped area with bollards, sea wall, seats, toilets, war memorial and bandstand. Large Norfolk Island pines line the edge of Point Nepean Road. Along Point Nepean Road, houses are located on higher ground with uninterrupted views to the Bay. These houses are a mix of styles and periods but limestone dwellings predominate facing the Bay. In Coppin Road and Skelton Place there are houses which are smaller timber holiday homes.

Statement of Significance:

What is significant?

The Sorrento Historic Precinct Foreshore Area, part of the existing HO1, Sorrento Historic Precinct, includes private properties along the south side of Point Nepean Road from number 3245 to 3289, Skelton Place and Coppin Road. The foreshore on the other side of the roadway extends from the Sorrento pier, (excluding Searoad Ferry Terminal) with the former Steam Tramway reserve above, down Esplanade to meet the Point Nepean Road corner. Included in the precinct is the foreshore landscaping, memorials, bandstand and the site of former tearooms and original alignment of sea baths jetty.

The Sorrento Historic Precinct Foreshore Area retains the early alignment and arrangement of Point Nepean Road and Esplanade and contains significant buildings and infrastructure from the earliest period of development of the township to the present day. The early infrastructure of Sorrento Pier, site of former tearooms and original alignment of sea baths jetty and historic Steam Tramway, remain in the same locations, and possibly retain some intact fabric. The arrangement of public open space on the foreshore preserves important views to the Bay and pier and is largely intact.

The buildings, remnant infrastructure, views and landscape contribute to the significance of the precinct.

How is it significant?

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

Why is it significant?

The Sorrento Historic Precinct Foreshore Area is of historical significance for the role it played in the early development tourism and the lime industry of the Mornington Peninsula. The precinct preserves the original alignment of Sorrento Pier which illustrates the early development of the Peninsula, and the importance of sea transport in developing both tourism and the lime industry on the Peninsula from 1860s until the present day. (Criterion A)

The Sorrento Historic Precinct Foreshore Area is of historical significance for the role it played in the early development of the township of Sorrento as a tourist resort. The intactness of the precinct and its ability to demonstrate the key themes through its early buildings, landscape setting and infrastructure is rare on the Mornington Peninsula and demonstrates a continuity of development from the 1860s until today that is highly valued by the community. (Criteria A, B & G)

The Sorrento Historic Precinct Foreshore Area demonstrates the principal characteristics of the Late Victorian, Federation and Inter-War periods of development, including the low scale of Sorrento as a seaside village, elements of the natural topography and the retention of a wide foreshore boulevard. It retains buildings and landscaping which demonstrate typical Late Victorian, Federation and Inter-War features. (Criterion D)

The Sorrento Historic Precinct Foreshore Area is of aesthetic significance for its collection of intact limestone buildings dating from the 1870s to 1927. 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 Sorrento Historic Precinct Foreshore Area is of aesthetic significance for the combination of natural topography, historic buildings, foreshore landscape and views of the Bay. The seaside resort character is enhanced by the landscape setting, the arrangement of the Norfolk Island pines, the location of the site of former tearooms and original alignment of sea baths jetty, the site of the former Steam Tramway and the Federation bandstand contributes to this significance. (Criterion E)

The Sorrento Historic Precinct Foreshore Area is of significance as a focus for social and tourist activity since the 1860s. The foreshore area preserves early infrastructure which enabled communication and transport for the isolated early communities of the Peninsula. The foreshore has social significance as it preserves the Sorrento War Memorial and a Federation bandstand built by the community which is highly valued by them. The foreshore area has been a place of social gatherings and celebrations for the community since the 1870s. (Criterion G)

The Sorrento Historic Precinct Foreshore 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: George Selth Coppin, C. Morgan, Ralph Marsden, Henry Watts and John Boswell Clark. (Criterion H)

History:

Sorrento:

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 (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, 2015:21]

Thematic History:

Jetties and piers were of key importance to the development of the Peninsula where overland transport was impossible. Supplies were needed for new industries, lime, timber-getting, grazing, fishing, and the associated settlements. Jetties started as crude timber structures built of rough sawn or split desking set on pole framed trestles and remained so for their lifetime with many renewals and some extensions. Most of the structures were referred to as jetties by the Public Works Department when they were built but some have since attracted the more grandiose title of piers. The Sorrento jetty for example was built in 1870-1, by Turnbull and Carter (1870) for 1333 pounds and J. Stewart (1871) for 434 pounds for completion, allowing the steamers to berth. (Before this a small jetty was used to land bagged lime onto limecraft in front of the limestone cottage next to the former Mornington Hotel) A familiar sight was that of thousands of holiday-makers leaving vessels such as the Ozone, Hygeia and the Weeroona and trooping down the jetty to the beach. The Sorrento tramway, built by Coppin's Sorrento Tramway Company, connected the pier with the Back Beach via Ocean Beach Road. [Butler & Context 2012:68 and 69]

Ferries played an important role in the development of tourism in the nineteenth century. As early as 1868, George Coppin, actor, philanthropist and land developer, was trying to develop Sorrento as a seaside resort town. In early 1870, in order to promote his upcoming landsales he chartered a paddle steamer and invited politicians, investors and publicans aboard to accompany him down the bay. Unfortunately, the chartered paddle steamer ran aground at Point King not far from its destination and passengers had to be taken off in rowing boats, but the steamer service was gradually improved. Coppin promoted Sorrento as a resort town by investing 14,000 pounds in an excursion steamer to provide a regular service from Melbourne.

George Coppin was managing director of the Sorrento Tramway Company Limited, which built a horse and steam powered tramway in 1889 as a vital ancillary to water transport. The tramway linked the steamer service with the nearby picturesque ocean beach, specifically The Ocean Amphitheatre. Coppin also built the Continental Hotel and, in an effort to attract visitors to these key sites, he devised the steam tram to connect the jetty to the Back Beach via Ocean beach Road. This was immensely successful. The tram operated until 1920 when two steam engines and six carriages were operational. [Butler & Context, 2012:71]

Apart from facilities provided by the boarding houses and resort hotels, some recreational structures were built on public land in the Victorian and Edwardian eras. Among the early examples were the sea baths that allowed for enclosed bathing prior to the popularity of open-sea bathing at Portsea, Mornington and Sorrento. The Sorrento kiosk and tearooms, on the foreshore, was once connected to Coppin's popular sea baths. Another foreshore structure, the Sorrento bandstand, was built in 1902 from designs by the builder WJ Croad. [Butler & Context, 2012:162]

The Thematic History has a detailed section on the history of sea bathing on the Peninsula which provides context to the history of the development of the Sorrento foreshore. Among the mainstream early Peninsula beach resorts, Portsea, Sorrento and Mornington were popular seaside holiday locations from the 1870s, all with public sea baths.

Andrea Inglis write in *Beside the Seaside* of the gradual change from exclusive use by the wealthy, as occupiers of marine villas or as hotel guests, to a popular gathering place where swimming was at first contained in public sea baths, built from the 1860s. Later in the 20th century, bathing became more informal, along with dress, meaning that mixed sex-bathing on public beaches was emerging. Bathing boxes or changing cubicles were more in demand along the public beaches. Gradually the communal sea baths fell into disrepair and were dismantled to free the beach for public mixed sex bathing. Rare examples of the type remain at Middle Brighton. [Butler & Context, 2012:158]

One popular beach amenity featured in publicity for the Shire over many decades was the sea baths. Public sea baths were developed at Portsea (1870), Sorrento (1876) and Shire Hall Beach, Mornington (from late 1870s). The Sorrento baths are marked on the Nepean parish plan as built on a jetty as an extension of Coppin St (still a small jetty there today): early images show a small structure at the end of a timber jetty. Another public baths site in Mornington was located at Mothers Beach at the end of Main Street. [Butler & Context, 2012:159]

History of the Place:

During the 1870s and 1890s and into the first decade of the 20th century, a cluster of commercial buildings was constructed along the Esplanade to service holiday-makers and residents. Many of these early commercial buildings remain and form an important part of Sorrento's heritage. As well as the buildings, the formal landscaping of the foreshore was begun, sea baths were built and the Sorrento Jetty was rebuilt to accommodate passenger steamers.

The buildings and features dating from before 1900, in the Late Victorian period includes:

- Sorrento Pier, (1870)
- Former Mornington Hotel, 1 Esplanade (1876)
- Sorrento Steam Tramway (1889)
- The Anchorage, 3273 Point Nepean Road (1873)
- North Esk, 3251 Point Nepean Road (1880)
- Sorrento Foreshore, 3154 Point Nepean Road (1870-2015)
- Site of former tearooms and original alignment of sea baths jetty , 3278 Point Nepean Road (1875, 1921, 1990, 2016)
- Mosspennock, 3247 Point Nepean Road (1877)

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

- Dalwhinnie, 17 Esplanade (1913)
- House, 3285-3287 Point Nepean Road (1903)
- House, 3289 Point Nepean Road (1903)
- Bide-a-wee, 6 Coppin Road (c.1900)
- Bandstand, 3154 Point Nepean Road (1902)
- House, 4 Skelton Place (c.1900-1920)

In the Inter-War period much of the foreshore remained the same, although there were numerous changes to the arrangement of the streetscape with the rise of the motor car tourist and the removal of the steam tram in 1921. Parking was created along Esplanade and Point Nepean Road, three buildings in this period are significant:

- Morgan's shop, 1 Esplanade (1927)
- House, 10 Coppin Road (c. 1930s)
- Chattanooga, 3245 Point Nepean Road (c.1922)

New buildings have been constructed at the bottom of Point Nepean Road behind the former Mornington Hotel and new furniture, toilets, and paved areas have been constructed in the foreshore, and the site of former tearooms and original alignment of sea baths jetty have been rebuilt and altered a number of times.

This foreshore area of the Sorrento Historic Precinct is closely associated with George Selth Coppin, his development of the passenger steamer service to Sorrento, the steam tramway and his own property. At 3273 Point Nepean Road, sited on a rise overlooking the pier and foreshore was Coppin's own house, The Anchorage (1873) which is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register, and is built of local limestone. Next door is North Esk (1880) the limestone mansion of the former Premier Sir James Service. On the other side of it is the limestone house Mosspennock (1877) which was built by Mr Tayton and A Noah and extended by the Thompson family in 1897, now with an additional storey added.[Personal Comm.Taranto family] Next door is the altered Inter-War house called Chattanooga (1922). Further along past Coppin Road is another group of small limestone houses overlooking the foreshore and a small timber cottage behind at 4 Skelton Place, (c.1900-1920) 3287 Point Nepean Road (1903) is one of about six properties that Ralph Marsden built in Sorrento to let to tourists. Next door at 3289 Point Nepean Road (1903) is

another limestone house built for the local Morgan family, who built and ran a shop at 7 The Esplanade (1927) which replaced an earlier building. Just up from Morgans, beside the alignment of the steam tramway is Dalwhinnie, 17 The Esplanade (1913) built as the home of the tramway manager, by the Sorrento Tramway Company.

The former Mornington Hotel built by John Boswell Clark in 1876, remained in the Clark family until 1952, and was built on the site of an 1850s limeburners cottage, opposite the jetty that was inhabited by the Watts family for a time, before they moved into Dalwhinnie. On Coppin Road are two timber houses from the Federation and Inter-war period which are more humble holiday houses without bay views, typical to holiday homes in Sorrento.

Coppin built the Sorrento Sea Baths in 1875. They were operated by Erland Erlandsen, a Danish sailor who arrived in Sorrento in 1890. The Erlandsens lived at a house they built at 15 Esplanade (now demolished). He operated the baths until 1937 when his son, nicknamed Tally, took over. Tally founded the Sorrento sailing club and was a cuta fisherman. The original baths were demolished in 1986. [Hone, Jane, *Mornington Peninsula Magazine*, January 3, 2016.

<http://www.morningtonpeninsulamagazine.com.au/people-places/2016/1/3/the-original-sorrento-sea-baths>] The former Sea Baths jetty is listed on the Victorian Heritage Inventory as H7821-0141, presumably because the site retains the remains of posts or footings. In 1990 the jetty was rebuilt, and the foreshore kiosk and tearooms were completely destroyed in a fire and rebuilt in 2016 as a restaurant, on the same site.

The foreshore area is an open grassed reserve between Point Nepean Road and the high-water mark. According to an early photograph by JW Lindt, the seawall had been constructed before 1903. A bandstand was built here in 1903 by WJ Croad, who was a foundation member of the Sorrento Recreational Reserve and Foreshore Park. Later on in the 1920s, trees were planted in a formal arrangement along the roadway. In 1921 a War Memorial in granite was dedicated to the men who served in World War I (1914-1918) and World War II (1939-1945).



Photo of the Sorrento foreshore taken from the tramway above the Esplanade showing the foreshore area, post 1902. The photo shows the tearooms, The Anchorage, North Esk, 3287 and 3289 Point Nepean Road, Mornington Hotel and Morgans hardware shop. Undated and unsourced photo from; Hone, Jane, *Mornington Peninsula Magazine*, January 3, 2016.

<http://www.morningtonpeninsulamagazine.com.au/people-places/2016/1/3/the-original-sorrento-sea-baths>



Charles Daniel Pratt 1892-1968, photographer [ca 1925-1940]. Source State Library of Victoria

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

- Theme 5: Establishing Communications
- Theme 5.2: Moving People and Goods by Sea
- Theme 11: Becoming Melbourne's Playground
- Theme 11.1.2: Establishing beach and foreshore amenities

Sources:

- Personal Communication Taranto family, 1 April 2019
- 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:

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 Sorrento but was mainly owned by locals rather than developed for tourists.

HO333 Cook Street Flinders Precinct

This town centre precinct is comparable to Sorrento Historic Precinct Foreshore 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.

HO289 Tyabb Residential, Commercial & Civic Precinct, Tyabb

Land, trees and buildings including memorials, trees, private homes, railway station and weatherboard commercial buildings in Tyabb. Is comparative in terms of the different types of buildings and landscape elements and buildings from different periods in the centre of Tyabb, dating from first settlement to Inter-War.

HO228 and HO55, Mornington Pier and Mornington Public Park, Mornington foreshore

Site of early infrastructure, rebuilt numerous times and foreshore landscaping of a similar date to Sorrento.

Recommendations:

Extent of curtilage:

The whole of the precinct

Significant elements or design features:

Limestone Late Victorian, Federation and Inter-war buildings, landscaping and trees on foreshore, bandstand and memorials, site of former tearooms and original alignment of sea baths jetty, former steam tram reserve above the Esplanade, the Sorrento Pier, (excluding Searoad Ferry Terminal).

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.