

## Sorrento Commercial Precinct Statement of Significance - February 2022

**Heritage Place:** Sorrento Commercial Precinct

**PS ref no:** HO501



**Table:** Individually significant and contributory properties –

Name	Number	Street	Significance	Built date
Nairn	10	Constitution Hill Road	Contributory	1923
Kinver	12	Constitution Hill Road	Contributory	1889
Continental Hotel Ballroom (former)	14	Constitution Hill Road	Contributory	1904
	16	Constitution Hill Road	Non-contributory	
The Continental Hotel	1-21A	Ocean Beach Road	State significance VHR H1896	1875
Stringers Stores	2-4 & 6-8	Ocean Beach Road	Individual HO517	1886 & 1892
Sorrento Post Office (former)	10-16	Ocean Beach Road	Individual HO518	1905

Name	Number	Street	Significance	Built date
Oriental Coffee Palace (former)	18-24	Ocean Beach Road	Individual HO519	1887/8
Shopfront	23	Ocean Beach Road	Contributory	1902/3
Athenaeum	26	Ocean Beach Road	State significance VHR H2227	1894
Shopfront	27-29	Ocean Beach Road	Contributory	1910
Shopfront	31-33	Ocean Beach Road	Contributory	1911
Shopfront	35-37	Ocean Beach Road	Contributory	1905
	38-40	Ocean Beach Road	Non-contributory	
	42	Ocean Beach Road	Non-contributory	
Shopfronts	43-51	Ocean Beach Road	Contributory	1933
Shopfront	46-48	Ocean Beach Road	Contributory	c.1930s
	50	Ocean Beach Road	Non-Contributory	
	52	Ocean Beach Road	Non-Contributory	
Shopfront	54-56	Ocean Beach Road	Contributory	
	58	Ocean Beach Road	Non-Contributory	
	62-66	Ocean Beach Road	Non-Contributory	
	68	Ocean Beach Road	Non-Contributory	
	76	Ocean Beach Road	Non-Contributory	
	78	Ocean Beach Road	Non-Contributory	
Shopfront	80-98	Ocean Beach Road (part)	Contributory	1945
Shopfront	100-102	Ocean Beach Road	Contributory	c.1920s
	102A	Ocean Beach Road	Non-contributory	
Former house	104	Ocean Beach Road	Contributory	1923
	108-118	Ocean Beach Road	Non-Contributory	

Name	Number	Street	Significance	Built date
	120	Ocean Beach Road	Non-Contributory	
Gannawarra	128-136	Ocean Beach Road	Contributory	1904/5
	138	Ocean Beach Road	Non-Contributory	
Carmel	142-146	Ocean Beach Road	Contributory	1904/5
Shopfront	148-152	Ocean Beach Road	Contributory	1906
Former house	154-164	Ocean Beach Road	Contributory	1905
Medical Centre	166-168	Ocean Beach Road	Contributory	1910
Quamby	3317	Point Nepean Road	Contributory	1910
	3335	Point Nepean Road	Non-contributory	
Stringers Corner Park	3366	Point Nepean Road	Contributory	

### What is significant?

The Sorrento Commercial Precinct includes historic properties on the northern side of Ocean Beach Road which extends from Melbourne Road to the corner of Point Nepean Road. The precinct continues from the Sorrento foreshore to number 51 on the southern side of Ocean Beach Road and on Constitution Hill Road, includes numbers 10-14.

The Sorrento Commercial Precinct retains the early alignment and arrangement of Ocean Beach Road, which was first developed by George Coppin as the primary tourist and commercial area on the Peninsula, from 1875. It contains individually significant buildings and a collection of contributory buildings, former lodging houses, a hotel, a former theatre and post office as well as shops from 1875 to 1945. The streetscape at the Bay end of Ocean Beach Road has a distinctive character which is enhanced by the many elegant designs in limestone and brick. The wide street reflects the presence of a steam tramway which has now gone, and the streetscape arrangement preserves important views to the foreshore and the Bay.

The contributory and significant buildings, views, vistas and streetscapes contribute to the significance of the precinct.

The following built elements contribute to the significance of the precinct:

#### Late Victorian:

- Two storey buildings in limestone, some with brick quoining elements, most with later shopfronts under skillion post- verandahs.
- A single storey shop in limestone with timber windows and skillion verandah.
- Large limestone four storey Continental hotel with square tower, verandahs and brick quoining to sections. 1930s ground floor additions to streetscape and new shopfront addition to south.
- Skillion post-verandahs to front facades, with iron and timber decoration.
- Hipped and gable corrugated iron roofs, unpainted, hidden behind parapets.

#### Federation:

- Freestanding houses setback from the street, in limestone with brick quoining. Some are asymmetrical with projecting front gable and prominent windows in gable ends. Verandahs in both skillion and bullnose and ornate moulded timber front doors with sidelights.

- An elegant former Post Office, with brick and stucco walls, a distinctive side arrangement to street and verandah with timber decoration.
- Two storey buildings in limestone, some with prominent brick quoining elements, most with later shopfronts under skillion post-verandahs.
- Single storey weatherboard and masonry asymmetrical houses with projecting gables.
- Hipped and gabled corrugated iron roofs, some very prominent. (Some roofs have been reclad with red colorbond which is inappropriate.)

Inter-War:

- Face brick two storey building with multiple shopfronts below single post-verandah (which should be cantilever) and apartments above.
- Hipped and gabled corrugated iron roofs, some behind raised parapets, some painted or reclad with red colorbond (which is inappropriate).
- Freestanding brick / limestone shop with raised parapet, cantilever verandah and glass shopfront windows framed with metal mullions.
- Single storey weatherboard houses with asymmetrical façade and projecting gable.

### **How is it significant?**

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

### **Why is it significant?**

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The Sorrento Commercial Precinct is of historical significance for the role it played in the early development of the township of Sorrento as well as the establishment of Sorrento as a tourist resort. The intactness of the precinct and its ability to demonstrate these two key themes through its Late Victorian, Federation and Inter-War buildings, streetscape and setting, 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 Commercial Precinct demonstrates the principal characteristics of the Late Victorian, Federation and Inter-War periods of development, including the low scale of a seaside village, following the natural topography and a wide boulevard constructed to accommodate a steam tramway. It retains single and double storey commercial buildings which demonstrate typical Late Victorian, Federation and Inter-War forms, siting and features, constructed predominately from local limestone. (Criterion D)

The Sorrento Commercial Precinct is of aesthetic significance for its large collection of intact limestone and brick buildings dating from the 1870s to 1915 and constructed by locally prominent builders such as William Croad. These buildings are constructed from locally sourced limestone and brick and form a vernacular building tradition on the Peninsula which is unique and highly significant. (Criteria B & E)

The Sorrento Commercial Precinct is of aesthetic significance for the combination of natural topography, historic buildings, streetscape qualities, vistas and views of the Bay. The seaside village character is enhanced by the landscape setting and mix of low scale and imposing two storey historic buildings. Ocean Beach Road sits on a high point above the foreshore and offers views to the Bay and west towards the vegetated dunes of the Back Beach. The entrance to Ocean Beach Road is particularly distinctive with the landmark four storey, limestone Continental Hotel (1875), on the south side and Stringers Stores (1886), on the north side. Buildings from the 1890s to 1940s in limestone and brick also contribute to this aesthetic value. The streetscape qualities include the broad tree-lined street and pavements, the open park on the north side which provides vistas over the foreshore and the predominately two storey scale of development. (Criterion E)

The Sorrento Commercial Precinct is of significance as a focus for social and commercial activity for both residents and tourists since the establishment of the township. Historically, most local retail and food services were and continue to be concentrated in Ocean Beach Road. This long association is reflected in the level of community attachment to the area and many campaigns to conserve and improve the area. The Ocean Beach Road Commercial Area has landmark qualities which uniquely identifies Sorrento for the community and tourists alike. (Criterion G)

The Sorrento Commercial Precinct is of significance for its associations 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 Coppin, James Tayton, the Wilson family, Stringer family, William Hughes, Isaac Bensilum and William Joseph Croad. (Criterion H)

**Primary source**

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*Mornington Peninsula Heritage Review, Area 3; Volume 2 – Citations; Heritage Alliance, July 2019, revised February 2022*

This document is an incorporated document in the Mornington Peninsula Planning Scheme pursuant to section 6(2)(j) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*