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CONSERVATION | HERITAGE

Heritage Review

Sorrento Pier

Updated 28 November 2023

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1.0 Introduction

This report was prepared for Parks Victoria. It provides an overview of the heritage values of Sorrento Pier with the purpose of informing the development of a Local Port Area Plan. The brief for this report called for the following:

- Review the existing cultural heritage values as defined in Victorian Heritage Register, Heritage Inventory listings and heritage overlay;
- Provide a summary history of the development and use of the place;
- Investigate if there are any Heritage studies yet to be implemented, outstanding VHR nominations, confirm that Heritage Victoria is satisfied that the VHIs are mapped correctly, and investigate if any reviews are underway or planned;
- Review and summarise policies in existing reports & surveys;
- Summarise any permit policies and exemptions declared under the Heritage Act; and
- Consult with key heritage groups to build on and synthesise the cultural heritage values associated with the place.

2.0 Study Area

Sorrento Pier is situated within the Mornington Peninsula Shire. It is located approximately 200 metres north-east of the Sorrento's main commercial street (Ocean Beach Road) and is accessed from the Esplanade, via Point Nepean Road. The study area is limited to areas that are managed by Parks Victoria with a primary focus on Sorrento Pier (as shown in figure 1 below).



Figure 1 Aerial photograph of Sorrento Pier and its environs. The study area boundary is marked by a dashed yellow line.

3.0 Sources of Information

This report was informed by a site inspection and a review of the following documents and historical sources:

Primary Sources

- Age*
- Herald*
- State Library of Victoria picture collection (online)
- Historical aerial photographs (sourced from Landata)
- Public Works Department (Ports and Harbors [sic] Division) Drawing Register
- Victorian Government Gazette*

Secondary Sources

- Victorian Heritage Database
- Mornington Peninsula Planning Scheme* (Clause 43.01 - Heritage Overlay, and Clause 15.03 - Heritage).
- Sorrento Foreshore Precinct Statement of Significance - February 2022* (Incorporated Document to the Mornington Peninsula Planning Scheme).
- Panel Report Mornington Peninsula Planning Scheme Amendment C262morn Part 2 - Blairgowrie, Sorrento and Portsea Heritage Review* (April 2021).
- Mornington Peninsula Heritage Review, Area 3: Volume 1 - Key Findings and Recommendations* (Heritage Alliance, February 2019).
- Mornington Peninsula Heritage Review, Area 3: Volume 2 - Citations* (Heritage Alliance, February 2019).
- Mornington Peninsula Planning Scheme Searoad Ferries - Sorrento Terminal Building and Associated Uses and Works Incorporated Document October 2017*.
- Panel and Advisory Committee Report Mornington Peninsula Planning Scheme Amendment C209 and Advisory Committee - Sorrento Ferry Terminal Upgrade* (5 December 2017).
- Sorrento Ferry Terminal Upgrade, 10 Esplanade, Sorrento, Victoria: Cultural Heritage Management Plan 14542* (Biosis, 17 November 2016).
- Mornington Peninsula Shire Thematic History* (Graeme Butler & Associates, edited by Context Pty Ltd, July 2013).
- Heritage Information: Pier and Jetties of Port Phillip* (Robin Crocker & Associates, 2004)
- Australian Dictionary of Biography*.
- George Selth Coppin 'Father of Sorrento': A Brief History* (Janet South, 2004).
- Holiday Business, Tourism in Australia Since 1870* (Jim Davidson and Peter Spearritt, 2000).
- Shire of Flinders Heritage Study: Inventory of Significant Places* (Context Pty Ltd with Carlotta Kellaway & Helen Lardner, Updated 1997).
- Tram to Sorrento* (Arthur Winzenried, 1984).

4.0 Heritage Listings

Victorian Heritage Register

The study area does not include any places in the Victorian Heritage Register. Nor are there any Registered sites within the immediate environs of the study area. Heritage Victoria do not have any record of Sorrento Pier having been nominated for entry in the Register.

Victorian Heritage Inventory

There are no Victorian Heritage Inventory listings within the study area. There are two Heritage Inventory sites within the environs of the area: 'Bakers Lime Kiln', located just off the Esplanade to the south west of the ferry terminal (HI Number H7821-0029); and the Sorrento Seawall, located on Sorrento Beach to the south of the ferry terminal (HI Number H7821-0138) [noting that the seawall was demolished in 2017 and replaced with a new structure].



Figure 2 Aerial photograph showing Heritage Inventory listings in the environs of Sorrento Pier (shaded blue).

Source: Mapshare.

Mornington Peninsula Shire

Sorrento Pier forms part of the Sorrento Foreshore Precinct, which is listed on the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay as HO502. External paint controls, internal alteration controls and tree controls do not apply under HO502.

Sorrento Park, and the foreshore proximate to the boat ramp, are within the Sorrento Cliff Top Precinct (HO503). HO403 has external paint controls and tree controls (for Sorrento Park, Hotham Road and Point Nepean Road Street trees).

The main approach to Sorrento Pier, along the Esplanade, is located within the Sorrento Foreshore and Bandstand Precinct (HO529). HO529 has external paint controls and tree controls (applicable to the Norfolk Island Pines).



Figure 3 Aerial photograph showing Heritage Overlay sites within the environs of Sorrento Pier.

Source: Mapshare.

National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

Sorrento Pier is not listed on the register of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria). The Trust have a file on Sorrento Park but it is not a classified place.

5.0 History

Sorrento was not named as such until the late 1860s, and was given the name after the Italian coastal town of the same by Charles Gavan Duffy (1816-1903), an Irish emigrant who was a member of Parliament and Premier of Victoria from 1871-72.¹ Duffy was also a prominent early landholder on the peninsula, having first bought land near Point King in 1863.

Duffy and George Selth Coppin were instrumental in the development of Sorrento as a seaside resort town. Irish émigré Coppin (1819-1906), comic actor, entrepreneur and Parliamentarian, first came to Melbourne in 1854.² He is reputed to have observed the coastal site from on board a ship returning to Melbourne in 1866, noting the advantages of the area. Having purchased land, Coppin chartered a steamer from Melbourne to Sorrento, inviting prominent politicians and businessmen to visit in order to appraise them of the potential of the area. He formed the Ocean Amphitheatre Company, the Sorrento and Queenscliff Steam Navigation Company, the Sorrento Continental Hotel Company and the Sorrento Tramway Company, selling shares in these to investors, and the town was soon being developed with amenities for holidaymakers.³

Given that a Government Census showed that Sorrento and Portsea had only 22 occupied houses with 98 inhabitants in 1871⁴, it seems that Coppin used his influence to facilitate the government contract for the construction of the pier in 1870. A newspaper article of the time commented:

The natural beauties and advantages of the place are great and many. The pleasant bay, with its graceful arc of shining sand and shells...These are attractions which the excursionist appreciates. But his feelings of delight become almost painfully overwhelming when he finds that the works of nature have been supplemented by the works of Government...

*If you travel, as I did, from Melbourne by steamer to that Eldorado of watering-places, the chances are two to one that you meet en route for Sorrento a somewhat portly gentleman, with heavy jowls [ie George Coppin]... You recognise him as one of the present incorruptible and artless race of Victorian statemen, and reflect (without prejudice) that he blossomed into statesmanship about the same time that a certain steamship company blossomed into life...Arrived at the jetty, a thoroughly substantial and expensive structure, built at the expense of a paternal Government...*⁵

The contract for construction of the pier was awarded to Turnbull and Carter for £1,333 in 1870 with a further three contracts for additional sums awarded in 1871 and three in 1872 for completion.⁶

¹ 'Charles Gavan Duffy', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/duffy-charles-gavan-6346>

² 'George Selth Coppin', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/coppin-george-selth-3260>

³ Janet South, *George Selth Coppin 'Father of Sorrento': a brief history*, 2004 pp.31-32.

⁴ 'George Selth Coppin', <https://nepeanhistoricalsociety.asn.au/history/the-characters/#coppin>

⁵ 'A paternal Government at Sorrento', *Age*, 24 April 1875, p. 7.

⁶ *Victorian Government Gazette*, Contract 1006 23 September 1870, Contract 404 27 January 1871, Contract 74 22 September 1871, Contract 1132 3 November 1871, Contract 821 1 March 1872, Contract 1380 17 May 1872, Contract 1418 21 June 1872.

The first regular first-class steamer service was established between Queenscliff and Sorrento in 1872, bringing day trippers and tourists down the bay to the newly built jetty.⁷ A sketch of Sorrento in 1873 shows the long, straight form of the structure extending into the bay (Figure 4).

Additional works to the jetty in the late 1870s included the 'extension of T head' in 1877 at a cost of £613 and 'erecting goods shed' in 1879 at a cost of £195.⁸ A newspaper report from November 1877 commented that 'The Sorrento Company have been making improvements for the landing of passengers from their steamer, the jetty having been extended 50 feet on either side, and being now very commodious'.⁹ The T-shaped termination to the jetty and the small shed are both visible in a sketch from 1886 (Figure 6).

Coppin's Sorrento and Queenscliff Steam Navigation Company bought the Golden Crown steamer, which was one of the earliest steamers docking at Sorrento as part of the Port Phillip excursion trade, importing the ship from New Zealand in 1874. Another of Coppin's companies, the Sorrento Tramway Company, linked the front and back beaches via a tramway constructed in 1889-90, and connected with the steamers via at the pier.¹⁰

In the decades around the turn of the twentieth century, the most well-known steamers servicing Sorrento were the Ozone (beginning service in 1886), 80 metres long and able to carry up to 1600 passengers; the Hygeia (1890), 92 metres long and licensed to carry over 1600 passengers; and the Weeroona (1910), 95 metres long accommodating 1900 passengers.¹¹

In order to accommodate such large vessels, as well as the lime trade, additions worth £379 were made to the pier in 1887 (refer Figure 7). Further additions and alterations at a cost of £584 took place in 1889, with additional contracts for additions and repairs in 1890, raised fender work in 1891, extension of the jetty head in 1893 and extension of the tramway along the jetty head in 1906 (refer Figure 13).¹²

The *Illustrated Guide to Sorrento on Sea* published by the Sorrento Progress Association in 1917 described other recreation opportunities offered by the pier:

Visitors to Sorrento who are fond of boating and fishing are exceptionally well provided for. Sailing and motor boats leave the Pier at intervals during the day for sailing and fishing cruises round the Bay. Fish are always plentiful, and the charges are very moderate. Rowing boats may be hired from the fisherman...

The annual Easter Regatta was another popular event pre-World War One, with a yacht race from Williamstown to Sorrento.

⁷ Jim Davidson and Peter Spearritt, *Holiday Business, Tourism in Australia since 1870*, 2000, p. 34.

⁸ *Victorian Government Gazette*, Contract 2041 18 May 1877, Contract 1735 7 March 1879.

⁹ *Herald*, 19 November 1877, page 2.

¹⁰ Arthur Winzenried, *Tram to Sorrento*, 1984.

¹¹ 'Morrington Peninsula Paddle Steamers of Port Philip Bay', <http://www.discovermorringtonpeninsula.com.au/fascinatingfacts/paddle-steamers.php>

¹² *Victorian Government Gazette*, Contract 2372 9 December 1887, Contract 2812 1 March 1889, Contract 3328 27 June 1890, Contract 2949 17 April 1891, Contract 2878 17 June 1892.

The bay steamers continued to conduct a passenger service to Sorrento until the 1930s. The Ozone was forty years old when it was sunk as a breakwater off St Leonards in 1925. The Hygeia was scrapped in 1932 and sunk off the Heads.¹³ With increasing car ownership and rising economic hardship, there was only enough patronage for the Weeroona to continue operating through the 1930s. Eventually it too ceased service, being sold to the US Navy in 1942.¹⁴

In 1951, works were undertaken to recondition the pier by the Public Works Department. A £10,200 tender was accepted for '*Dromana stone to build a mole leading to the jetty*'. These repairs to the head of the pier were intended to '*save future maintenance costs and combat erosion*'.¹⁵ A series of photographs from the early 1950s show the newly constructed mole (Figure 20 to Figure 22).

In 1953 John Farnsworth established the Sorrento-Portsea-Queenscliff Ferry Service which linked the Mornington and Bellarine Peninsulas with a regular schedule during the summer months. The service was discontinued after the introduction of the vehicular ferry service running between Queenscliff and Sorrento in 1983. The Sorrento Ferry Terminal, amenities block and car parking was constructed in 1987.¹⁶ Land reclamation occurring around 1995 widened the car apron at the terminal.¹⁷

Today the ferry route operates between Queenscliff on the Bellarine Peninsula and Sorrento on the Mornington Peninsula using the MV Queenscliff and the MV Sorrento.

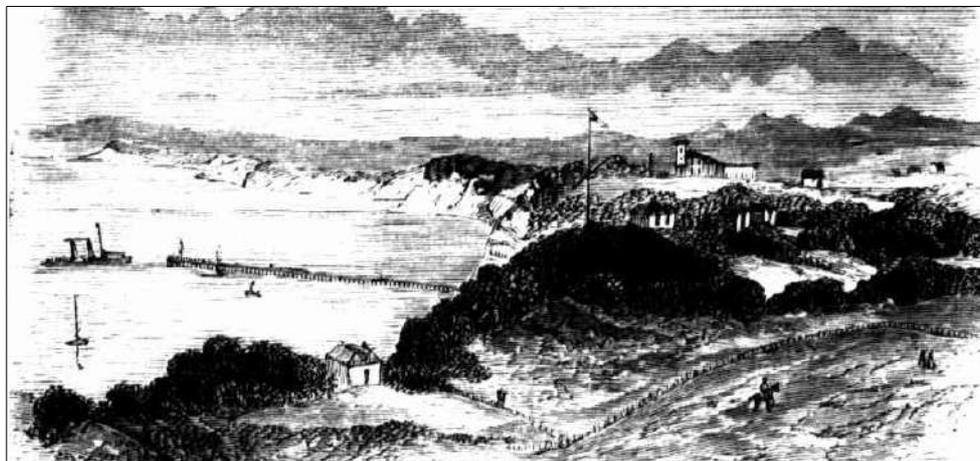


Figure 4 Sketch of Sorrento, 1873.
Source: *Illustrated Adelaide Post*.

¹³ Context Pty Ltd (ed.), *Mornington Peninsula Shire Thematic History*, 2013, p.72

¹⁴ 'Mornington Peninsula Paddle Steamers of Port Phillip Bay'
<http://www.discovermorningtonpeninsula.com.au/fascinatingfacts/paddle-steamers.php>

¹⁵ 'Sorrento Jetty to be Repaired', *Age*, 23 May 1951, p.5

¹⁶ Context Pty Ltd (ed.), *Mornington Peninsula Shire Thematic History*, 2013, p.73

¹⁷ <https://www.searoad.com.au/About-Us>

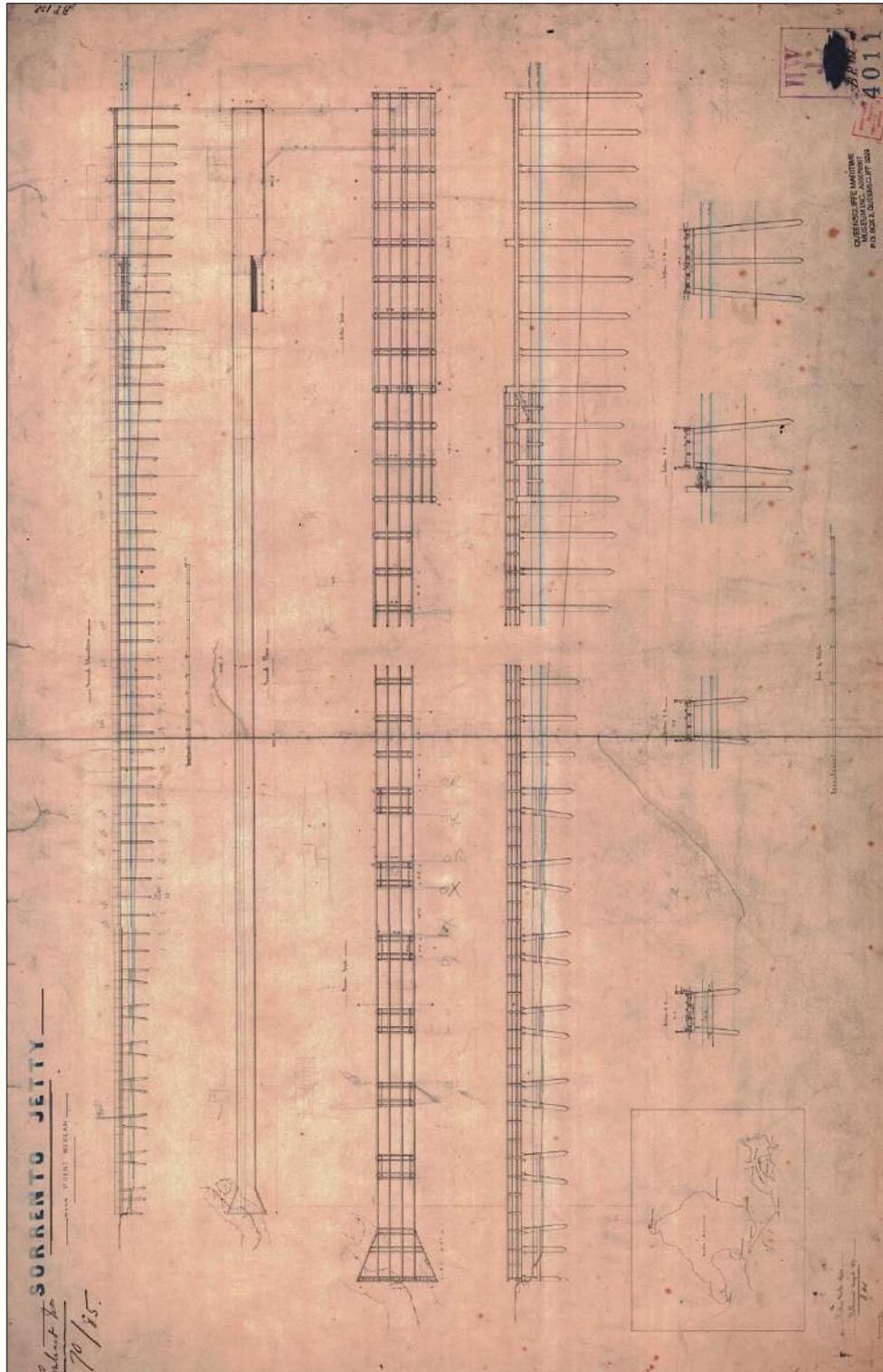


Figure 5 An 1870 contract drawing for Sorrento Pier.
Source: Nepean Historical Society

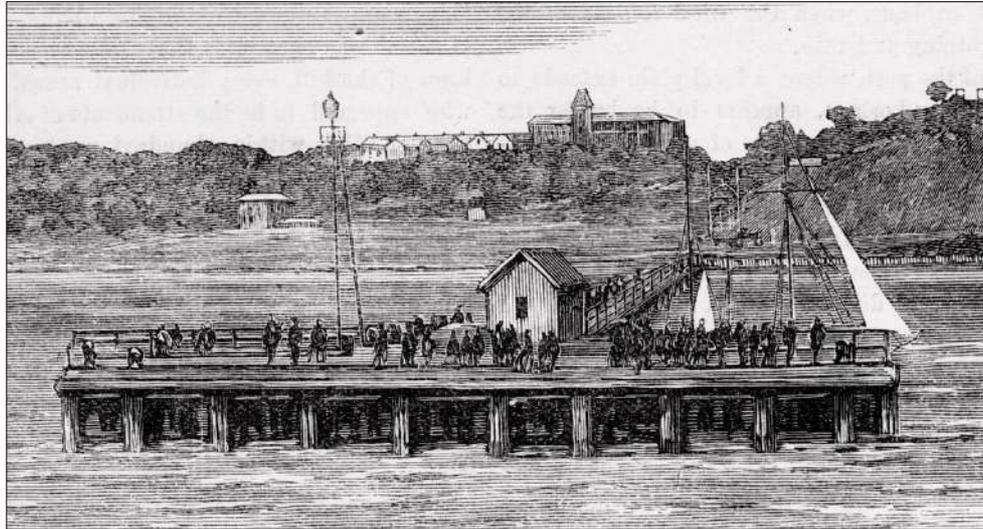


Figure 6 Sketch of Sorrento and Pier after the addition of the T-head and goods shed, 1886.
Source: State Library of Victoria.

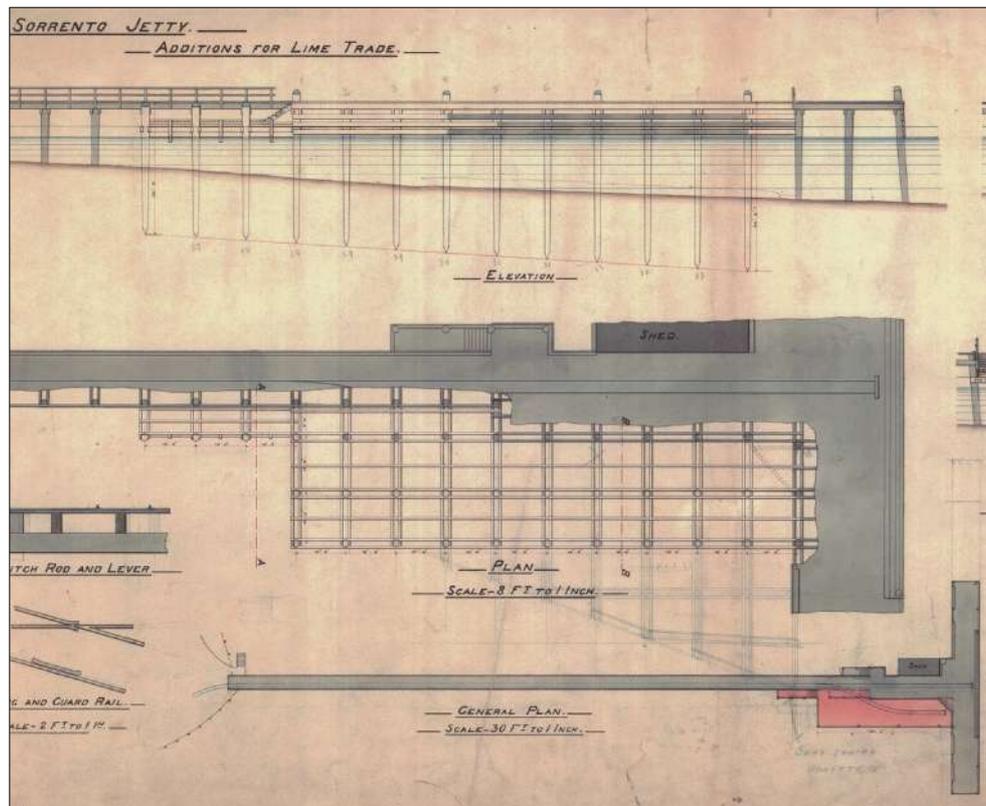


Figure 7 1886 drawings for enlargement of the deck to Sorrento Pier for the lime trade.
Source: Nepean Historical Society



Figure 8 The steamers Ozone and Hygeia at berth, c.1890.
Source: State Library of Victoria.

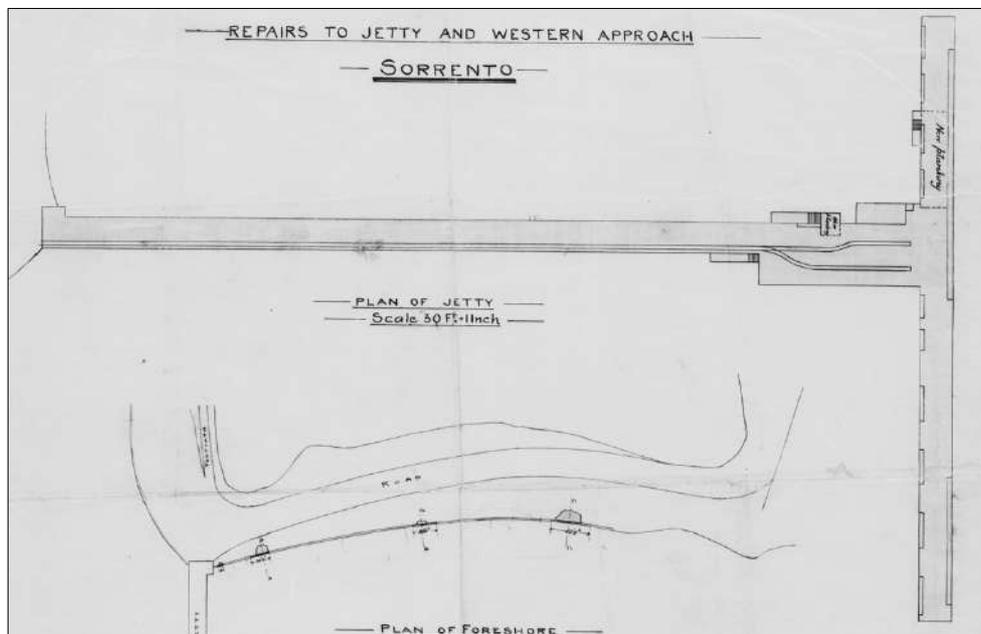


Figure 9 An 1899 plan of Sorrento Pier showing replacement of planking to part of the west arm.
Source: Parks Victoria.

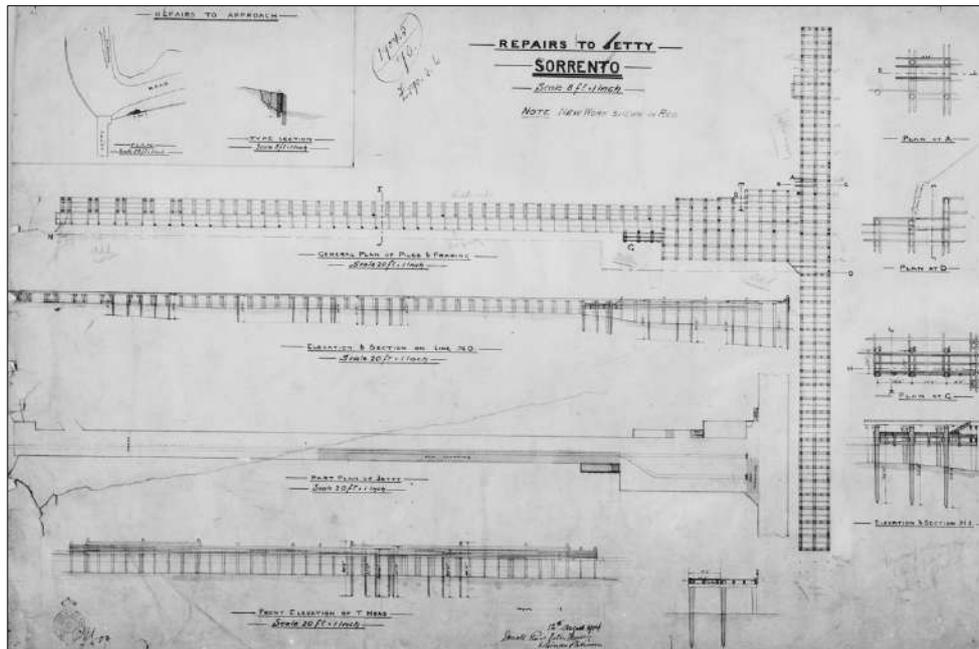


Figure 10 A 1904 plan for repairs to the Sorrento Pier, also appearing to involve pile replacement as well as new planking.
Source: Parks Victoria.



Figure 11 View of the pier, with the goods shed at right, c.1904.
Source: State Library of Victoria.



Figure 12 Postcard of the pier, c.1905.
Source: State Library of Victoria.

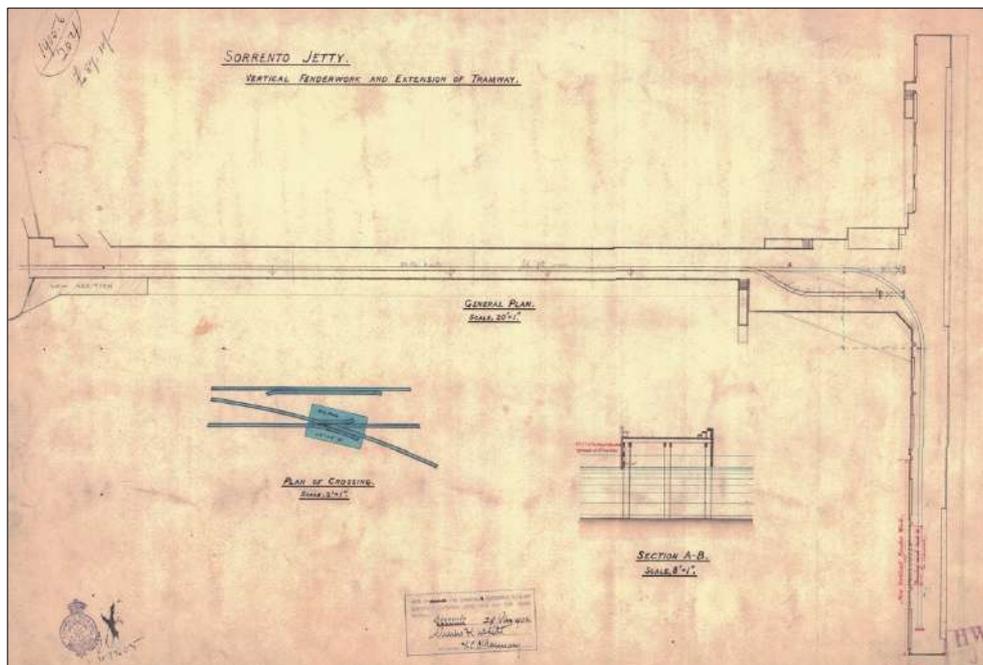


Figure 13 1905 drawing for extension of the tramway along the pier head.
Source: Nepean Historical Society

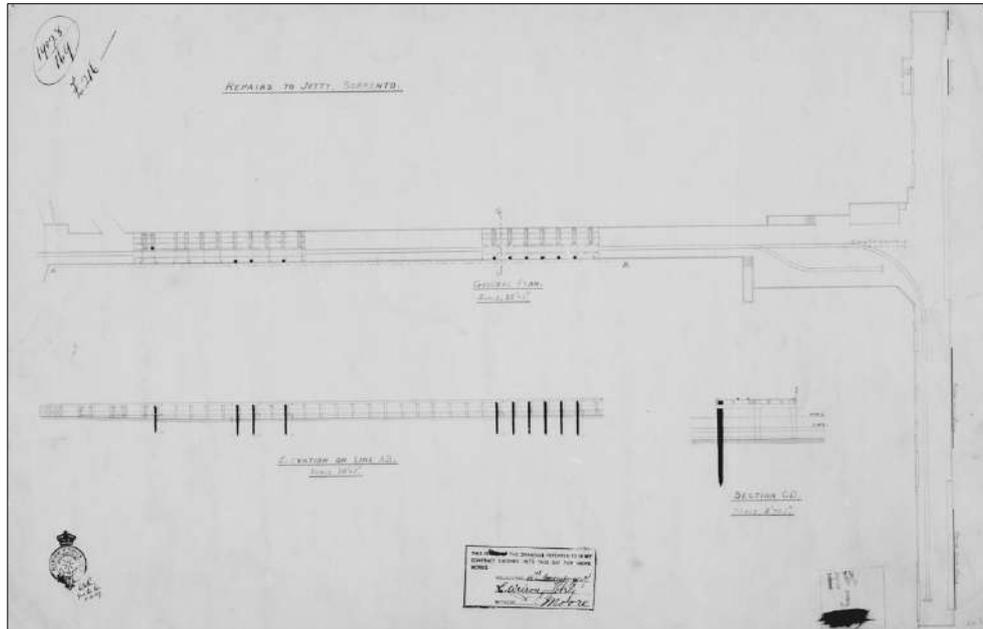


Figure 14 A 1907 drawing for repairs to the pier, presumably limited to replacement of piles.
Source: Parks Victoria.

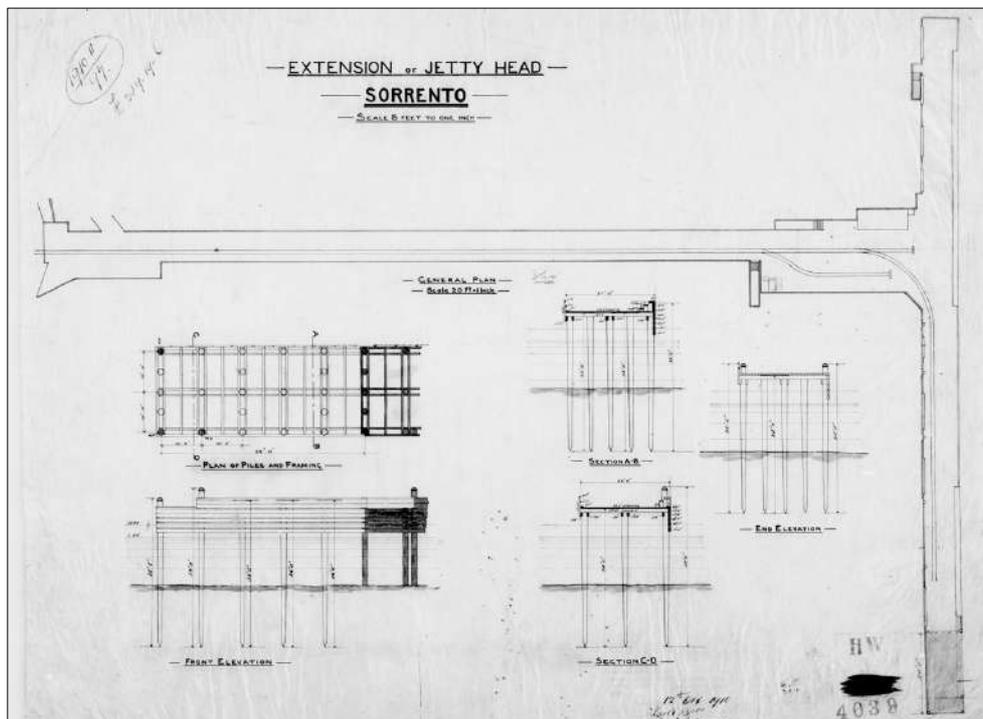


Figure 15 A 1910 drawing showing an extension to the east arm of the T-head.
Source: Parks Victoria.

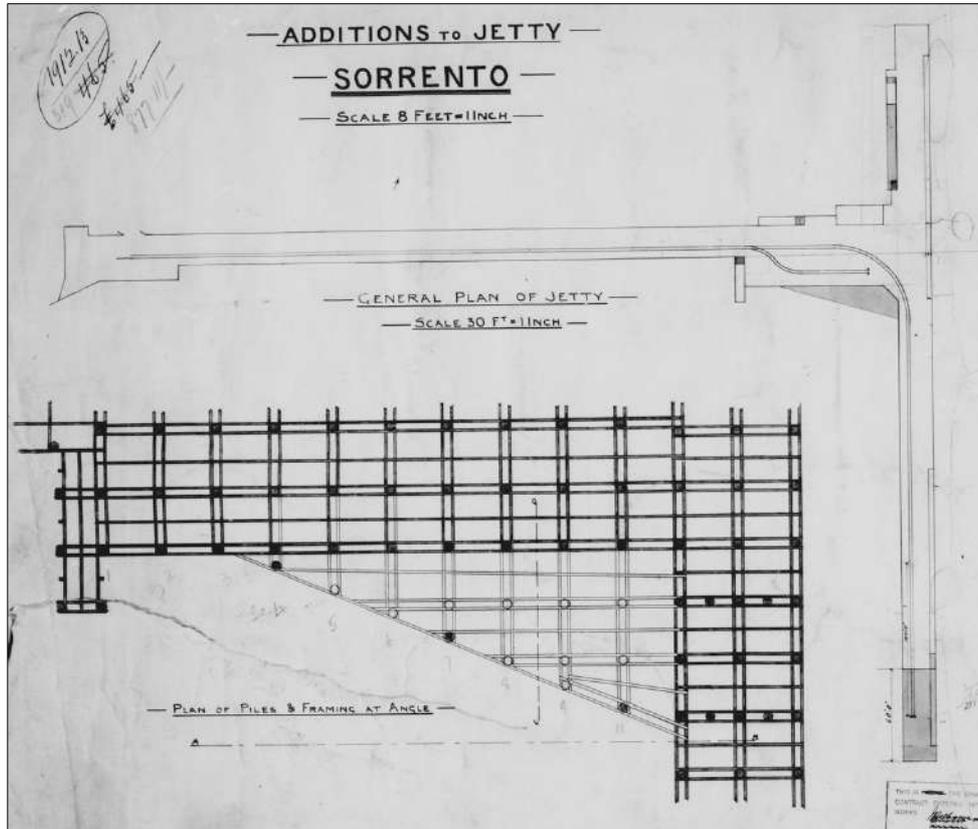


Figure 16 A 1912 drawing showing extensions to the deck (at the junction of the T-head) and to the end of the east arm.
Source: Parks Victoria.

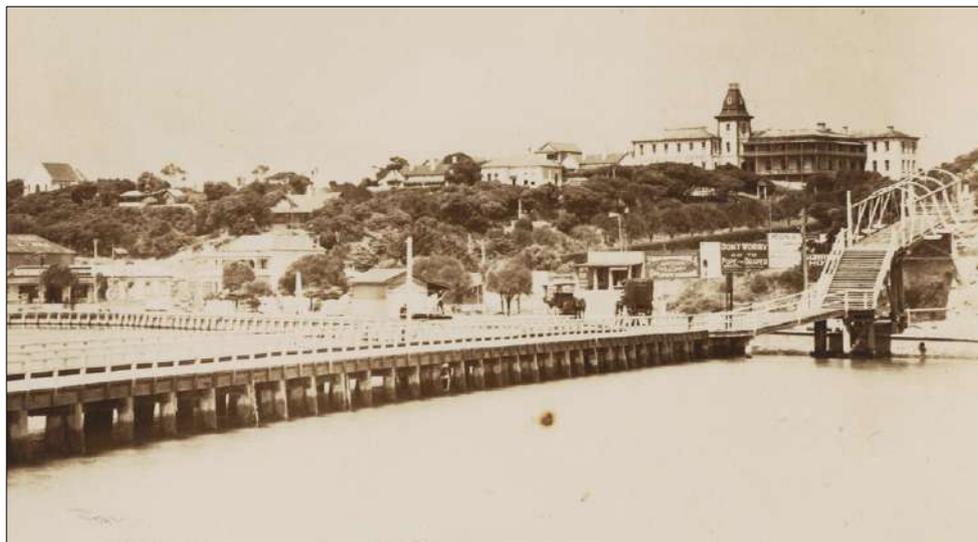


Figure 17 View from the pier looking towards the town, c.1923.
Source: State Library of Victoria.



Figure 18 Oblique aerial image, c.1925-40.
Source: State Library of Victoria.

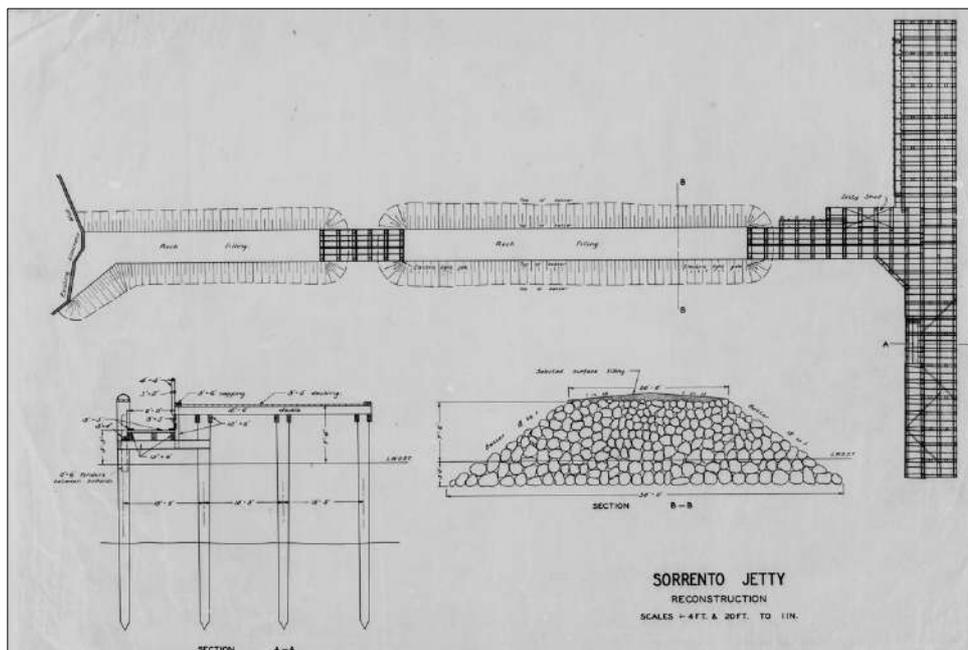


Figure 19 A 1952 drawing for the replacement of most of the pier with a rock mole.
Source: Parks Victoria.



Figure 20 *View of the pier following the construction of the mole, early 1950s.*
Source: State Library of Victoria.

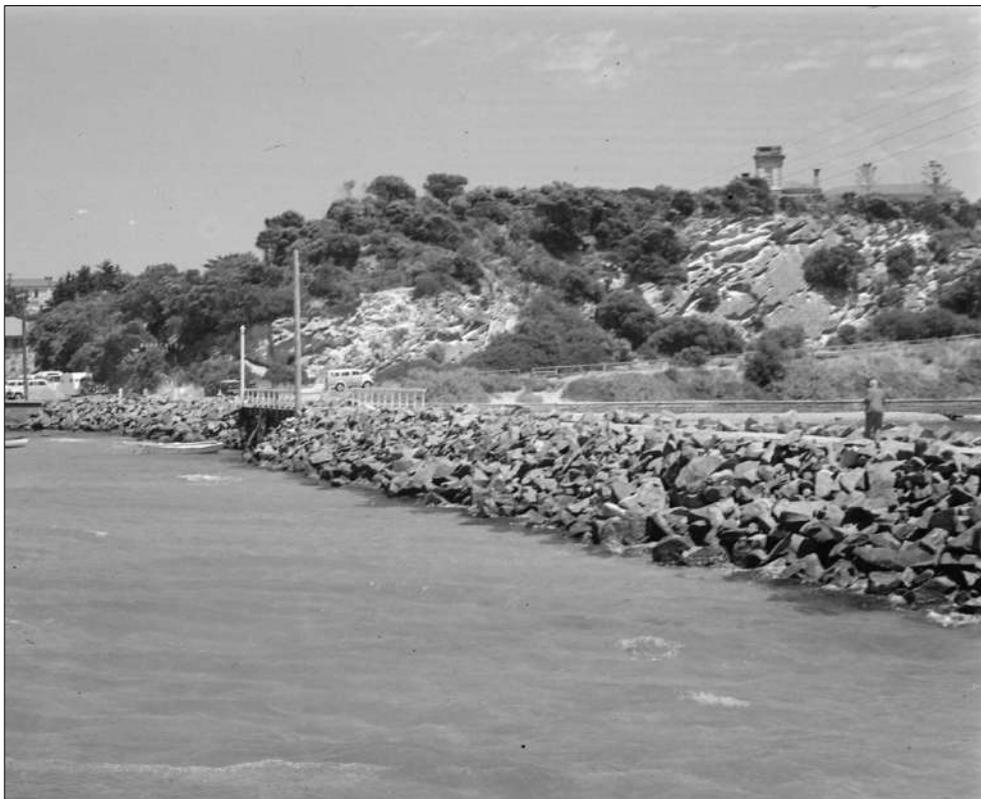


Figure 21 *The west side of the mole, early 1950s.*
Source: State Library of Victoria.



Figure 22 *View of the head of the pier, early 1950s.*
Source: State Library of Victoria.



Figure 23 *Aerial photograph showing the pier in 1957.*
Source: www.landata.vic.gov.au



Figure 24 Aerial photograph, 1989.
Source: www.landata.vic.gov.au



Figure 25 Aerial photograph, 2005. Note the boat ramp has been constructed by this time.
Source: www.landata.vic.gov.au

6.0 Description

Sorrento Pier has a T-shaped head of timber construction, located at the end of a stone mole that is approximately 100 metres in length. The mole was constructed in 1951, replacing most of the early timber pier. Originally formed by random stone rubble, the mole has been re-faced in dressed stone. The Sorrento Ferry Terminal, abuts the south side of the mole with a large asphalt paved car parking apron created from land reclamation in the 1987 and widened in 1995.

The *Pier and Jetties of Port Phillip* report describes the Sorrento Pier has having been 'reconstructed' 1998-2002 although the extent of these works is not known.¹⁸ According to the same report, 9 metres of the south-eastern head were demolished, and a 9 metre long extension made to the north-western head.¹⁹ Changes have also been made to the width of the deck at the T-head junction (east of the goods shed). Minor works were undertaken in 2022, including replacement of some timber elements and installation of new steel ladders and plastic mesh decking to the lower landing.²⁰

It is not clear how much of the pier's original or early timber fabric survives although it can reasonably be assumed to have been renewed over time – there are several drawings from the late nineteenth and early twentieth showing replacement of planking and piles (refer section 5 of this report). Documentary evidence indicates that the existing gable roofed, timber framed goods shed was erected in 1879. The shed seems little changed from its appearance in historical photographs, but its timber fabric may have been replaced. Signage, lighting, handrails and the small shelter on the north-western head are modern. The boat ramp and associated stone breakwater, located to the north-west of the pier, are understood to have been constructed in the 1990s.



Figure 26 Aerial photograph of Sorrento Pier. The dashed yellow line shows the approximate plan form of the jetty at its greatest extent in the late 1890s.

¹⁸ *Heritage Information: Piers and Jetties of Port Phillip*, p.52.

¹⁹ *Heritage Information: Piers and Jetties of Port Phillip*, p.52.

²⁰ <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/projects/recently-completed-projects/sorrento-maintenance-project>



Figure 27 Sorrento Pier viewed from the cliff top lookout.



Figure 28 View from the Esplanade looking north-east towards the pier (left) and ferry terminal (right).



Figure 29 View along the pier from the foreshore entrance.



Figure 30 View of the pier where it transitions from the stone mole to the timber T-head.



Figure 31 *The goods shed. Note that it is largely unchanged from its appearance in the c1911 photograph (figure 9).*



Figure 32 *The north-western head of the pier.*



Figure 33 *The south-eastern head.*



Figure 34 *View from the pier looking towards the foreshore. Note the stone mole replacing much of the original timber pier.*



Figure 35 (left) *A c1920s photograph showing the jetty constructed using timber piles, crossheads, beams and timber deck.*

Figure 36 (right) *Current jetty construction detail remaining similar to that shown in the 1920s photograph.*



Figure 37 *The ferry terminal viewed from the pier.*



Figure 38 View from the boat ramp looking south east towards Sorrento Pier.



Figure 39 View from Sorrento Beach looking north-east towards the ferry terminal and Sorrento Pier.

7.0 Previous Heritage Assessments

Municipal Heritage Studies

Sorrento Pier formed part of the Foreshore Precinct, as identified in the *Shire of Flinders Heritage Study* (1992). The Foreshore Precinct extended eastwards from the pier to a point ending near St Pauls Road. The precinct was classified as a place of regional significance, as follows:

The foreshore area has great aesthetic significance which is remarkably intact in its historical features. The nature beauty of this area has been historically appreciated and enhanced by the public and private building development, allowing maximum public use of the site while not overwhelming the seascape. This is an important precedent which should be acknowledged in future plans for the area. Excessive private tourist development would be detrimental to the heritage character of the area.

A large portion of the built development surrounding the beach has historical significance in its associations with key individuals in the development of the fishing and tourist industries in the town.

The *Shire of Flinders Heritage Study* also provided the following set of objectives of relevance to the study area:

Retain public pedestrian use and links to other foreshore areas (Pier, Tea rooms, Bandstand, site of the former tramway platform, beach and surrounding area) in keeping with the historical use of the Esplanade by:

- Preventing the reduction of recreational space for parking provision;*
- encouraging pedestrian use of the pier and the Esplanade in any Council works in the area;*
- retaining public access to the whole of the pier and the Bandstand;*
- maintaining passive recreational access to the area, for example as informal, picnic space without construction of special purpose facilities;*
- maintaining existing landscape of open space lawn areas with pine plantings*
- preserving the historical character of the existing structures of the Pier, Tearooms, and Bandstand as isolated features in the landscape; and*
- preventing new development from overwhelming these historic landmarks.*

Mornington Peninsula Shire have recently undertaken a review of its past heritage studies to identify any gaps. For the purposes of the review, the municipality was divided into four areas. Sorrento was included in Area 3 - refer *Mornington Peninsula Heritage Review Area 3* (Heritage Alliance, July 2019, revised February 2022). The Review aimed to provide a level of confidence to the Council and the community that all reasonable steps have been taken to identify, research and assess every heritage place within the study area which should be protected for their local significance, including for total coverage, progressively surveying, recording and mapping all streets, roads and areas in Area 3.²¹ It was prepared in close consultation with a reference group that included representatives of the Nepean Historical Society and the Mornington Peninsula Branch of the National Trust.

²¹ *Mornington Peninsula Heritage Review Area 3, Volume 1, p.2.*

The Review split the existing Sorrento Historic Precinct (HO1) into four separate areas. Sorrento Pier was included in the Sorrento Foreshore Precinct. The ferry terminal was excluded from this area. For the purposes of the Review, places within precincts were identified as either an Individual HO site, contributory or non-contributory. Sorrento Pier was identified as a contributory place – that is to say it was not found to be individually significant. The rationale for this is not explained in the Review, but may be on account of the heavily altered state of the pier.

Council sought to implement the recommendations of the *Mornington Peninsula Heritage Review* under Amendment C262mornPt2. The Panel found that the changes to the Sorrento Historic Precinct (as discussed above) were appropriate and justified.²² The Panel's preferred version of the Foreshore Precinct statement of significance was adopted by Council and made an incorporated document to the Mornington Peninsula Planning Scheme (*Sorrento Foreshore Precinct Statement of Significance February 2022*), reproduced in full below.

What is significant?

The Sorrento Foreshore Precinct is significant to the Shire of Mornington Peninsula. It contains private properties along the south side of Point Nepean Road from number 3245 to 3289, 4 Skelton Place and 6 and 10 Coppin Road. Past Point Nepean Road the precinct includes 1, 12 and 17 Esplanade. The foreshore on the other side of Point Nepean Road extends from the Sorrento Pier, (excluding the modern Searoad Ferry Terminal) to the site of the former tearooms and the original alignment of the sea baths jetty. Included in the precinct is the trees, foreshore landscaping, memorials, and bandstand.

The Sorrento Foreshore Precinct 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, the site of the former tearooms and the original alignment of the sea baths jetty, historic Steam Tramway alignment, and Baker lime kiln remain in the same locations, and possibly retain intact, sub-surface fabric. The public open space on the foreshore has been the site of community events and celebrations for 150 years and preserves important views to the Bay and pier.

The buildings, remnant infrastructure, views, trees and landscape contribute to the significance of the precinct. The following built elements contribute to the significance of the precinct:

Late Victorian:

- Italianate mansions in limestone, verandahs with ornate iron lacework decoration, iron posts and slate roof.*
- Large two storey corner hotel in limestone with upper storey verandah.*
- Single storey symmetrical house in limestone with verandah, timber sash windows and timber doors.*
- Hipped and gable corrugated iron roofs, unpainted.*
- Timber jetty structures both below and above water.*

Federation:

- Single storey symmetrical houses in limestone with verandah in both skillion and with projecting gablet, ornate moulded timber front doors with sidelights.*
- Single storey weatherboard bungalows some with projecting gables, bay and multi-pane windows, rough-cast render and bargeboard decoration.*
- Hipped and gabled corrugated iron roofs.*

²² *Panel Report Mornington Peninsula Planning Scheme Amendment C262morn*, p.iii.

- Timber windows and doors.
- Timber bandstand with corrugated iron roof painted green.

Inter-War:

- A single storey shop in limestone with prominent parapet and skillion post-verandah.
- Single storey weatherboard house with projecting gables and side verandah in simple designs.
- Two storey stucco bungalow with tile roof and metal framed windows.
- Hipped and gabled corrugated iron roofs.

How is it significant?

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

Why is it significant?

The Sorrento Foreshore Precinct is of historical significance for the role it played in the early development of the tourism and lime industry of the Mornington Peninsula. The precinct contains Sorrento Pier which illustrates the early development of the Peninsula, and the importance of sea transport in developing the lime industry on the Peninsula from the 1860s until the present day, as well as an early lime kiln site, it was the location of an early limeburners cottage at 1 Esplanade (now demolished) The precinct demonstrates the early development of the township of Sorrento as a tourist resort with foreshore facilities, the Pier, the steam tramway site, an early hotel and sea baths. 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 Foreshore Precinct 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 with Norfolk Island pine trees. It retains buildings and landscaping which demonstrate typical Late Victorian, Federation and Inter-War features. (Criterion D)

The Sorrento Foreshore Precinct 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. The combination of natural topography, historic buildings, foreshore landscape and views of the Bay are of significance. The seaside resort character is enhanced by the landscape setting, the arrangement of the Norfolk Island pines, the location of the site of the former tearooms and the original alignment of the sea baths jetty, the site of the former Steam Tramway and the Federation bandstand, which contribute to this significance. (Criteria B & E)

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

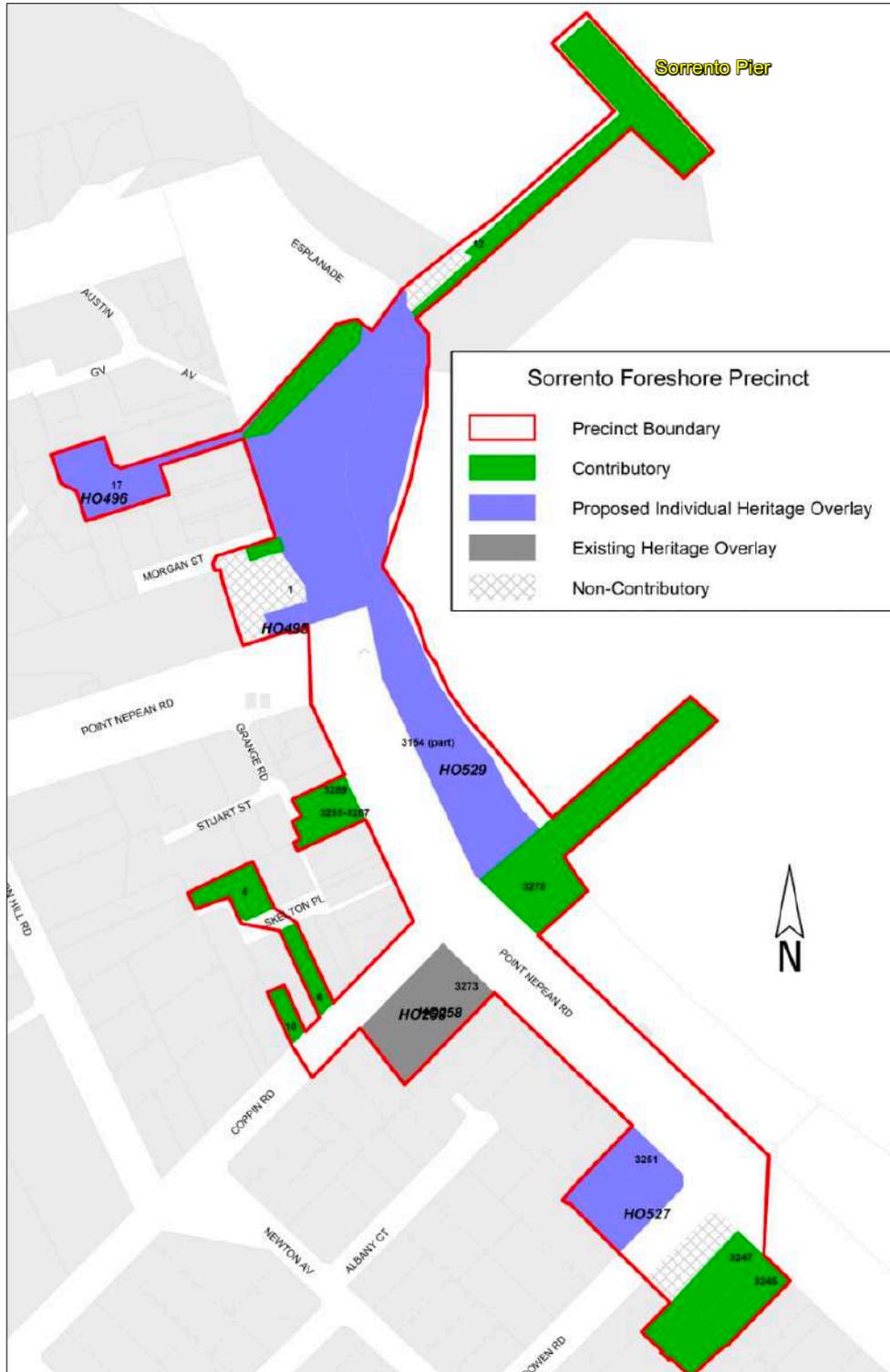


Figure 40 Levels of significance plan, extracted from the Incorporated Document 'Sorrento Foreshore Precinct Statement of Significance - February 2022'. Note Sorrento Pier is graded contributory.

Mornington Peninsula Shire Thematic History

A Thematic History was prepared by Context Pty Ltd for the Mornington Peninsula Shire in 2013. The Thematic History provides an overview of the evolution of the municipality's physical environment and is arranged according to historic themes. Chapter 5 addresses the theme of 'Establishing Communications' within which can be found numerous references to Sorrento Pier:

5.2.4 - Jetties and Piers

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 or fishing, and the associated settlements ...

Jetties started as crude timber structures, built of rough sawn or split decking set on pole framed trestles, and remained so for their lifetime with many renewals and some extensions. Most of these 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' ...

...Jetties on the bay were also associated with other recreational, settlement and cultural themes, for example the practice of day-tripping and holiday making on the Peninsula among Melbourne residents (See Section 5.2.5 Ferries and bay steamers ; Section 11.1 Going to the beach.) The Sorrento jetty for example was built in 1870-1873 by Turnbull and Carter (1870) for £1333 and J. Stewart (1871) for £434 for completion, allowing the steamers to berth. A familiar sight was that of thousands of holiday-makers leaving vessels such as the Ozone, Hygeia (1890-1931) and the Weeroona (1910-42) 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.

5.2.5 - Ferries and bay steamers

By 1865 steamers arrived in Schnapper Point from Melbourne twice a week, complementing the daily coach from Melbourne as a means of transport. In 1872 the first regular first-class steamer service was established between Queenscliff and Sorrento, bringing day trippers and tourists down the bay to the newly built Sorrento jetty (1871). Other coastal townships also benefited with steamers calling at Rosebud on their way to Portsea and Sorrento ...

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 land sales 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 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 ... 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 ...

... From the 1870s, bay steamers operated from Port Melbourne or Sandridge to Sorrento and Portsea, bringing day-trippers and tourists down the bay ...²³

²³ Mornington Peninsula Shire Thematic History, pp.68-72.

The Thematic History also provides the following summary of the significance of the theme 'Establishing Communications' relevant to the Sorrento Pier:

Moving goods and people by water

Water transport and its associated structures were highly significant to the Peninsula for both industry and tourism. Tourism down the Bay and Western Port was in turn highly significant to Melbourne's metropolis, for all classes of tourists, until the 1920s. Linked with this form of tourism are the many ancillaries: the boats, the jetties, piers, the access ways, landscaping, the boats crews and entertainers.²⁴

Piers and Jetties of Port Phillip

Heritage Information: Piers and Jetties of Port Phillip (Robin Crocker & Associates, July 2004) provides a summary of available heritage information on piers and jetties in Port Phillip managed by Parks Victoria. It was prepared as a reference tool for Parks Victoria staff to help ensure that heritage values are fully considered when planning maintenance, reconstruction or demolition works. The report included a datasheet for Sorrento Pier with the commentary on its significance and the implications of this on the management of the structure (reproduced below).

Summary of Significance

Significant heritage values related to historical association, particularly early development of Sorrento as destination for bay ferries.

Management Implications

Heritage value relates to historical association with early ferry/recreational use. Management should be sensitive to historic uses.

Heritage Victoria has requested that their staff be contacted if substantial works are proposed for any piers or jetties (including those not on the Victorian Heritage Register or Inventory) where artefacts may exist in adjacent waters, ie within about 25 m.

Amendment C209

Mornington Peninsula Planning Scheme Amendment C209 introduced a site specific planning control over a portion of Sorrento Pier and the foreshore to facilitate the redevelopment of the Sorrento Ferry Terminal - refer Incorporated Document *Searoad Ferries – Sorrento Terminal Building and Associated Uses and Works, October 2017*.

Biosis prepared by a brief report on the post-contact European heritage values for the area affected by the ferry terminal upgrade.²⁵ It drew the following conclusions:

The Activity Area has been used as a pier since the 1870s, with a tram operating between 1890 and 1921, which extended from the pier over Tramway Hill to the main street of Ocean Beach township. The retaining wall along the shore to the south-east of the pier was built by 1912 at the latest. The Sorrento Ferry Terminal was built in 1987 along with the terminal building, amenities blocks and car parking. Installation of utilities including drainage pipelines and

²⁴ *Mornington Peninsula Shire Thematic History*, p.82.

²⁵ Biosis, *Post Contact European Heritage, Proposed Upgrades to the Sorrento Ferry Terminal, Sorrento, Victoria Project No.21773*, p.2.

telecommunication cable would have caused considerable disturbance in the Activity Area. Therefore, the material culture remains associated with the early settlement and use of the area in the 19th and early 20th century is considered to have been largely removed.

Conservation Management Plans

No conservation management plans are known to have been prepared for Sorrento Pier or other sides within the study area.

8.0 Policy & Legislation

Heritage Act

As noted in Section 3 of this report, no part of the study area is listed in the Victorian Heritage Register or the Victorian Heritage Inventory. That said, under Section 123 of the *Heritage Act 2017* consent is required to disturb an archaeological site that is not recorded in the Inventory. An archaeological site is a place which:

- Contains buried evidence like an artefact, deposit or feature which is 75 years old or more.
- Provides information about past activity.
- Needs archaeological methods to reveal information about the place.
- Isn't associated only with Aboriginal use.

Further to this, Heritage Victoria has requested that they be notified if substantial works are proposed for any piers or jetties in Port Phillip Bay (including those not on the Victorian Heritage Register or Inventory) where artefacts may exist in adjacent waters, ie within about 25 m. As such, it is likely that Heritage Victoria would require a dive survey/maritime assessment before any works that might disturb the seabed in the vicinity of Sorrento Pier.

Local Planning Policies

The provisions of the *Mornington Peninsula Planning Scheme* relevant to heritage overlay places are those at:

- Clause 15.03-1S - Heritage Conservation
- Clause 15.03-1L-01 - Heritage Conservation Mornington Peninsula
- Clause 43.01 - Heritage Overlay

Clause 43.01 applies specifically to places included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay, which in the case of the study area is only relevant to Sorrento Pier. Inter alia, the purpose of Clause 43.01 is:

To conserve and enhance heritage places of natural or cultural significance.

To conserve and enhance those elements which contribute to the significance of heritage places.

To ensure that development does not adversely affect the significance of heritage places.

Clause 43.01 also has decision guidelines which the Responsible Authority will need to consider before deciding on an application:

- The Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.*
- The significance of the heritage place and whether the proposal will adversely affect the natural or cultural significance of the place.*
- Any applicable statement of significance (whether or not specified in the schedule to this overlay), heritage study and any applicable conservation policy.*
- Any applicable heritage design guideline specified in the schedule to this overlay.*
- Whether the location, bulk, form or appearance of the proposed building will adversely affect the significance of the heritage place.*
- Whether the location, bulk, form and appearance of the proposed building is in keeping with the character and appearance of adjacent buildings and the heritage place.*
- Whether the demolition, removal or external alteration will adversely affect the significance of the heritage place.*
- Whether the proposed works will adversely affect the significance, character or appearance of the heritage place.*
- Whether the proposed subdivision will adversely affect the significance of the heritage place.*
- Whether the proposed subdivision may result in development which will adversely affect the significance, character or appearance of the heritage place.*
- Whether the proposed sign will adversely affect the significance, character or appearance of the heritage place.*
- Whether the lopping or development will adversely affect the health, appearance or significance of the tree.*
- Whether the location, style, size, colour and materials of the proposed solar energy system will adversely affect the significance, character or appearance of the heritage place.*

Clause 15.03-1S seeks to ensure the conservation of places of heritage significance and has the following strategies, inter alia:

- Identify, assess and document places of natural and cultural heritage significance as a basis for their inclusion in the planning scheme.*
- Provide for the protection of natural heritage sites and man-made resources.*
- Provide for the conservation and enhancement of those places that are of aesthetic, archaeological, architectural, cultural, scientific or social significance.*
- Encourage appropriate development that respects places with identified heritage values.*
- Retain those elements that contribute to the importance of the heritage place.*
- Encourage the conservation and restoration of contributory elements of a heritage place.*
- Ensure an appropriate setting and context for heritage places is maintained or enhanced.*

Clause 15.03-1L-01 applies to an application to use or develop land that is either affected by a Heritage Overlay or abutting a Heritage Overlay. For places affected by the Heritage Overlay (as is Sorrento Pier), Clause 15.03-1L-01 provides the following strategies:

- Support landscaping that enhances the historic cultural landscape character of the heritage place.*
- Ensure signs are appropriate to the period and style of the heritage place.*

- *Facilitate opportunities for public access and on-site interpretation of heritage places, where appropriate.*
- *Where demolition is considered appropriate, support:*
- *The recording and documentation of heritage significance, such as the use of photographic records.*
- *The salvage, reuse, display and time capsuling of materials and artefacts of historic value.*
- *Support the continued original use of a building by enabling it to be upgraded to meet present day requirements and standards.*
- *Support an alternative use when the original use is no longer viable or is inconsistent with a heritage management plan.*

The Clause 15.03-1L-01 strategies for places abutting a Heritage Overlay are as follows:

- *Ensure development respects the values of the heritage place in terms of architectural form and layout including setbacks, size, height, materials, landscaping and colours.*
- *Support the replacement of non-contributory buildings with new development that responds positively to the historic context provided by any nearby heritage place.*

In addition to Clause 15.03-1L-01, consideration will need to be given to impacts on the significance of Sorrento Pier as identified in the Incorporated Document *Sorrento Foreshore Precinct Statement of Significance - February 2022* (refer section 7.0 of this report).

Clause 12.02-1S requires consideration of any coastal and marine management plan approved under the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018*. Sorrento has an approved Coastal and Marine Management Plan (December 2018). Section 3.3.2 of the Plan has the following objectives relating to European cultural heritage:

- *Protect and enhance the heritage values of the Sorrento foreshore.*
- *Improve community awareness of both European heritage and the Boon wurrung/ Bunurong culture and traditions.*
- *Any improvements to be non-intrusive, minimalist, consistent with the heritage values of the site and well designed bollards protective of the vegetation and integrity of the heritage site.*

9.0 Conclusion

The cultural heritage significance of Sorrento Pier is appropriately recognised by its inclusion in the Sorrento Foreshore Heritage Overlay precinct - ie it is a locally significant place. Given the extent of change that the pier has undergone, there is not a strong prima facie case for listing on the Victorian Heritage Register. Heritage Victoria should nonetheless be consulted if works to the pier have the potential to disturb archaeological material on the seabed.

The significance of Sorrento Pier mainly pertains to its historical associations with the ferry/recreational uses that facilitated the development of Sorrento as a seaside resort town. The pier and broader Sorrento foreshore are also recognised as having social significance as a focal point for tourist activity since the 1860s.

The architectural/aesthetic significance of the pier has been diminished by the demolition of a substantial part of the timber structure and changes to the setting resulting from the development of the adjacent ferry terminal. It also appears that the T-head has been subject to a number of changes and is much reduced from its late-nineteenth century extent.

The pier nonetheless retains an identifiable historical character, albeit limited to the timber T-head and goods shed, and the original pier alignment along the stone mole (but not the fabric of the mole). The incorporated document for the Sorrento Foreshore Precinct lists '*timber jetty structures both below and above water*' as attributes that contribute to the significance of the precinct. Similarly, the *Shire of Flinders Heritage Study* recommended that the 'historical character' of the pier be retained.