

# SIR THOMAS BENT STATUE



SIR THOMAS BENT  
STATUE SOHE 2008



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H02023 1 tommy bent statue  
h2023 aug2002



H02023 tommy bent mrs  
memorial fountain aug2002



H02023 tommy bent staue  
plinth h2023 aug2002



Tommy Bent Statue August  
2002



Tommy Bent Statue Plaque  
1980



H02023 tommy bent extent oct 2002

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### **Location**

NEPEAN HIGHWAY BRIGHTON, BAYSIDE CITY

### **Municipality**

BAYSIDE CITY

### **Level of significance**

Registered

### **Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number**

H2023

### **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO257

### **VHR Registration**

February 13, 2003

### **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

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### **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on - February 19, 2003

What is significant?

Following the death of Sir Thomas Bent (1838-1909), Brighton Council raised money by public subscription to commemorate the memory of its most famous politician. The 2.9m high bronze statue of Bent was unveiled in 1913. It was designed by the sculptor Margaret Baskerville and cast by CW Marriott.

Bent left school at the age of 13 to work with his father in their market garden. By the time he was 21 Bent owned his own market garden, at 23 he became Brighton's first rate collector, and at 24 he was elected to the Moorabbin Road Board. His background and experience in local affairs enabled him to be elected as Member for Brighton in the Legislative Assembly of Parliament at the age of 33, a position he held for 32 years.

Bent was an infamous but able politician. His work included tenures as Minister for Railways, Vice- President of the Board of Land and Works, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly (1892-94), Treasurer and then Premier of Victoria (1904-09). At the local government level he was elected Mayor of Brighton on ten occasions.

Bent saw nothing wrong in using political power for personal profit, and having invested heavily in real estate he used his public position and local knowledge for personal gain. There were many scandals associated with his name, particularly in government land deals, the duplication of Brighton's railway, and the re-routing of the tramline from St. Kilda past properties he owned.

In 1892 a select committee of Parliament dealt with charges of corruption against Bent. Whilst he was cleared of any financial gain, it censured him strongly for unconstitutional behaviour, cast suspicion on many of his dealings and did not entirely clear him of all the allegations.

The statue is mounted on a tall granite plinth and is now located beside a busy intersection on the Nepean Highway in Brighton. Beside the statue is a memorial drinking fountain dedicated to the memory of Bent's second wife, Elizabeth. The granite memorial has four piers supporting a canopy embellished with a cusped arch. A bronze medallion held by two cherubs depicts in low-relief a bust of Elizabeth Bent.

In 1980 the statue and fountain were moved to their current location from their original position in the middle of the Nepean Highway.

How is it significant?

The statue of Sir Thomas Bent is of historic and social significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The statue is historically significant for commemorating Bent's long, active and infamous political career in Victoria. He was responsible for many important speculative ventures both within his electorate and in the wider context of Victoria. Although not without thought for personal gain, Bent was a committed advocate of public utilities, railways, roads, tramways and gasworks.

The statue is historically significant as the first large public commission given to a woman sculptor in Victoria. This work helped the sculptor, Margaret Baskerville, preserve her name as Victoria's first professional woman sculptor.

The statue is socially significant as testimony to the late nineteenth century land boom and the financial and political corruption and scandals that accompanied it.

## **Permit Exemptions**

### **General Exemptions:**

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices

without a permit, but you must [notify](#) the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

### Specific Exemptions:

General Conditions: 1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object. General Conditions: 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible. General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

#### Exemptions

##### Landscaping:

1. Repairs, conservation and maintenance to hard landscape elements (other than the statue and fountain), including asphalt and gravel paths, edging and fences.
2. Installation, removal or replacement of garden watering and drainage systems.
3. Regular garden maintenance and re-planting

Construction dates            1913,

Heritage Act Categories    Registered place,

Hermes Number                12614

Property Number

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### Extent of Registration

1. All the land marked L1 shown on Diagram 2023 held by the Executive Director.
2. All the structures marked as follows on Diagram 2023 held by the Executive Director:  
B1 Bronze statue with granite pedestal; B2 granite memorial fountain

*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*