

## CONTINENTAL HOTEL



CONTINENTAL HOTEL  
SOHE 2008



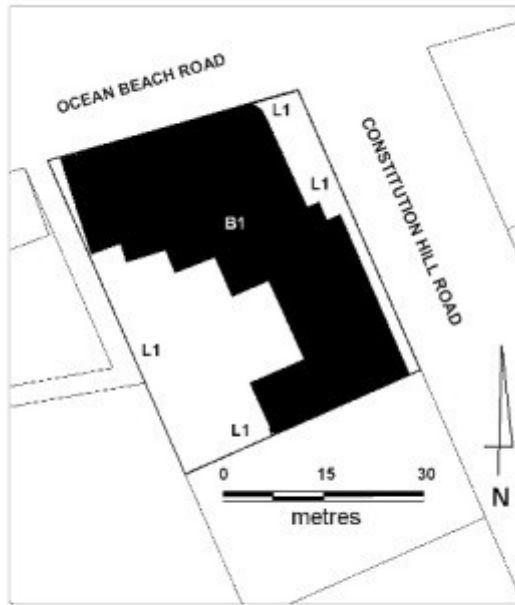
1 Continental Hotel



cotinental hotel ocean beach  
road sorrento side view she  
project 2003



cotinental hotel ocean beach  
road sorrento top floor view  
she project 2003



Continental Hotel Sorrento - Plan

---

## Location

1-21 OCEAN BEACH ROAD SORRENTO, MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE

## Municipality

MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1896

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO257

## VHR Registration

October 12, 2000

## Heritage Listing

## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 4, 2022

### What is significant?

The Continental Hotel in Sorrento was established in 1875, for the Sorrento Hotel Company under the directorship of comedian, politician, philanthropist and businessman George Coppin (1819-1906). The Continental Hotel is constructed in a simple Victorian Italianate style using locally quarried limestone. The Continental Hotel is a four storey building which includes the mansard roofed tower, return balcony on the upper levels and two storey section to the rear of the building. The building has undergone some major changes, with a Moderne style renovation to the street front of the ground and first floors which includes a roof top deck.

### How is it significant?

The Continental Hotel is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

### Why is it significant?

The Continental Hotel is of historical significance to the State of Victoria for its associations with George Coppin businessman, politician and entrepreneur whose enterprise was largely responsible for the development of Sorrento from the 1870s to the 1890s as a seaside resort. Coppin established a number of business ventures associated with the Continental Hotel such as the steamer service from Melbourne and the Sorrento tramway to encourage tourism to Sorrento.

The Continental Hotel is of architectural significance to the State of Victoria as a relatively intact example of the type of hotel development popular in the later years of the nineteenth century providing accommodation, entertainment and associated hotel services for wealthy city tourists. The Continental Hotel, constructed of local limestone, is important as a landmark building for the seaside town of Sorrento as it is situated on a prominent site at the entry to the town.

## 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 alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object.
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.
3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.
4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.
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.

#### Exterior

- \* Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
- \* Removal of extraneous items such as air conditioners, pipework, ducting, wiring, antennae, aerials etc, and making good.
- \* Installation or repair of damp proofing by either injection method or grouted pocket method.
- \* Repair or replacement of fences and gates.
- \* Regular garden maintenance.
- \* Installation, removal and replacement of garden watering systems.
- \* Laying and repair of gravel toppings to the driveways.

#### Hotel Interior

- \* Works to front bar area, commercial kitchen and associated dining areas provided that the existing masonry structure of the building core remains in place.
- \* Refurbishment of the residential areas provided that the existing masonry structure of the building core remains in place.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of curtain track, rods, blinds and other window dressings.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and other wall mounted artworks.
- \* Removal of paint from originally unpainted or oiled joinery, doors, architraves and skirtings.
- \* Painting of previously painted walls and ceiling provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of the original painting or other decorative scheme.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and flexible floor coverings.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of ducted, hydronic or concealed radiant type heating provided that the installation does not damage existing skirtings and architraves and provided that the location of the heating unit is concealed from view.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of kitchen benches, cupboards and fixtures including sinks, stoves, ovens refrigerators, dishwashers etc and associated plumbing and wiring, provided that the existing masonry structure of the building core, including the old stove alcove, remains in place.
- \* Refurbishment of existing bathrooms, toilets and or en suites including removal, installation or replacement of sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, wall and floor coverings provided that the existing masonry structure of the building core remains in place..

- \* Installation, removal and replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed.
- \* Installation, removal and replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.

|                         |                             |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Construction dates      | 1875,                       |
| Heritage Act Categories | Registered place,           |
| Other Names             | CONTINENTAL SORRENTO HOTEL, |
| Hermes Number           | 6081                        |
| Property Number         |                             |

---

## History

### Contextual History:

#### George Coppin

George Coppin was born at Steyning in Sussex, England on 8 April 1819 into a theatrical family. His father was disowned by his family for abandoning his medical studies to join a band of strolling players. As a young child, George was part of the world of the travelling theatre, and by the age of 16 had chosen acting as his career. In 1842, with actress Maria Watkins Burroughs, he left England for Australia, arriving in Sydney on 10 March 1843. Coppin negotiated a season at the Royal Victoria Theatre and with his profits, bought a hotel. This venture failed and he left Sydney for Hobart in January 1845. He soon formed his own company, playing in Launceston and then Melbourne and Adelaide. Coppin prospered in Adelaide, with interests in a hotel, racing and copper mining. In 1848, Maria, with whom he had lived since 1842, died after a brief illness.

In 1851, the exodus from Adelaide to the Victorian goldfields and the collapse of Coppin's mining investments caused his insolvency. He left for the goldfields himself and soon realised the opportunities for the theatre in Geelong, where successful miners formed appreciative audiences. He was able to pay his Adelaide creditors in full by 1853.

In the same year he left for a visit to England where he engaged tragedian G. V. Brooke for an Australian tour. Returning to Melbourne in December 1854, Coppin held a successful season in the Queen's Theatre. Brooke arrived in February 1855 to play Othello. In July 1855, Coppin opened a prefabricated building he had purchased in Manchester as the Olympic Theatre, locally known as the Iron Pot. Brooke and Coppin went into partnership later that year, and soon controlled the Olympic, the Theatre Royal, the Cremorne Gardens Amusement Park, Astley's Amphitheatre (later the Princess Theatre) and four hotels. Coppin married Brooke's sister-in-law, Harriet Hilsden, nee Bray in August 1855.

Coppin was instrumental in the foundation of the Victorian Humane Society, the St. John's Ambulance Service, and the Australasian Dramatic and Musical Association: and he became the first grand master of the Freemasons in Victoria. He established free dispensaries in Richmond and in 1885, with the Rev. Charles Strong, formed the Improved Dwellings and Lodging House Company to erect a tenement for working class families between Lonsdale and Little Bourke Streets. It was later converted to a lodging house for single men known as Gordon House.

Coppin's career as a politician, first in the Richmond Municipal Council, and later in the Victorian Parliament brought him into contact with many influential men in business and political circles.

#### Sorrento

Sorrento was the site for Victoria's first settlement in 1803, when David Collins on HMS Calcutta landed at Sullivan's Bay. He attempted to found a penal colony with three hundred convicts but by 1804 the party was removed to Van Diemen's Land.

The exact date of permanent settlement at Sorrento is not known but limeburning was being carried on in 1840 and a number of limeburning kilns were established along the shore by 1855.

In 1870, Coppin brought a group of businessmen to Sorrento by steamer to interest them in the development of the town as a tourist destination. He became involved in a number of public and commercial ventures to develop the town. He instigated the Ocean Amphitheatre Company (1874), the Sorrento & Queenscliffe Navigation Company (1874), the Sorrento Continental Hotel Company (1875), the Sorrento Tramway Trust (1875), the Ocean Park Trust (1875), the Mechanics Institute Trust (1876) and the Sorrento Park Trust (1874). His companies purchased most of the township area of 225 acres, subdividing it into household blocks for re-sale, and built six demonstration houses.

The Sorrento & Queenscliffe Navigation Company was very successful in improving access to Sorrento. By 1876, three steamers were running to the town and were landing more than 1000 people a day. Later steamers, such as the Ozone, introduced in 1880, could carry eight hundred passengers, and the Hygeia, introduced in 1890, fifteen hundred.

#### History of Place:

##### The Continental Hotel

The Continental Hotel is historically important for its associations with George Coppin whose enterprises are accepted as implementing Sorrento's growth as a bustling seaside resort town for wealthy city tourists in the later years of the nineteenth century. The Continental Hotel was built by the Sorrento Continental Hotel Company under the directorship of entrepreneur George Coppin in 1875. Thomas Anderson is believed to be the builder. The designer of the building is unknown.

The Continental Hotel was developed as a response to the overwhelming demand for accommodation for the city tourists seeking a holiday at the growing seaside resort of Sorrento. Upon its construction, the Continental Hotel was advertised as the model of a modern tourist destination providing accommodation, entertainment and associated hotel services. Coppin established a number of associated business ventures to cater for the needs of visitors. Guests were provided with transport directly from the steamer to the hotel, with a guarantee of dinner in the elegant dining saloon upon their arrival. The verandahs and the tower offered guests a magnificent view of the Peninsula. The Continental Hotel has been operated by numerous owners and managers who have developed the building as needed to accommodate the changing requirements of guests. A separate ballroom was established on Constitution Hill Road in 1903, which was joined to the hotel by a footbridge.

The Continental Hotel is important as a landmark building for the seaside town of Sorrento. Constructed using locally quarried rock faced limestone, the Continental is a four storey building which includes the mansard roofed, prominent square tower, return balcony on the upper levels and two storey section to the rear of the building. The distinctive mansard roofed tower resembles those of some other boom period hotels, particularly the Ozone Hotel at Queenscliff (c1881). The building has undergone some major changes to accommodate the changing requirements of the tourist trade over time. The Moderne style renovation to the ground and first floors, including a roof top balcony incorporate an earlier addition to the street boundary. The building incorporates the original general store (c1882/1883).

Associated People: George Coppin, promoter and developer of Sorrento

### Assessment Against Criteria

a. The historical importance, association with or relationship to Victoria's history of the place or object

The Continental Hotel is historically significant to the State of Victoria because of its association with George Coppin as an influential figure in Victoria's history. Coppin's contribution to the political, cultural and social life of Victoria was evident in a large number of charitable, cultural, and business enterprises for over fifty years. The building is historically important at a State level in its relationship to the seaside resort of Sorrento and Coppin's role in its development.

b. The importance of a place or object in demonstrating rarity or uniqueness

n/a

c. The place or object's potential to educate, illustrate or provide further scientific investigation in relation to Victoria's cultural heritage

n/a

d. The importance of a place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as part of a class or type of places or objects

The Continental Hotel is a representative example of the type of hotel development popular in the later years of the nineteenth century providing accommodation, entertainment and associated hotel services for seaside tourists.

e. The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features

The Continental Hotel is important in exhibiting good design and an unusual integration of features in its variation of the Victorian Italianate style in local limestone construction characteristic of the Sorrento area.

f. The importance of the place or object in demonstrating or being associated with scientific or technical innovations or achievements

n/a

g. The importance of the place or object in demonstrating social or cultural associations

The Continental Hotel demonstrates social associations to the figure of Coppin within the local history of Sorrento, and on a state level, in the development of the seaside resort of Sorrento.

h. Any other matter which the Council deems relevant to the determination of cultural heritage significance

n/a

## Extent of Registration

Heritage Act 1995

### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the Heritage Register Number 1896 in the category described as a Heritage place: 2482 G 41 12 October 2000 Victoria Government Gazette Continental Hotel, 1Ð21 Ocean Beach Road, Sorrento, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council.

### EXTENT:

1. All the building being known as the Continental Hotel, Sorrento marked B1 on Plan 1896 held by the Executive Director.

2. All the land shown as L1 on Diagram 1896 held by the Executive Director, being part of Certificate of Title Volume 9347, Folio 049.

Dated 6 October 2000

RAY TONKIN

Executive Director

---

*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/>*