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# Sorrento Athenaeum



B6735 Athenaeum

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## Location

20 - 36 Ocean Beach Road,, SORRENTO VIC 3943 - Property No B6735

## Municipality

MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE

## Level of significance

State

## Heritage Listing

National Trust

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 7, 2008

The Sorrento Athenaeum was constructed in 1894 for local entrepreneur Isaac Bensilum, and designed by J F Gibbins, and is architecturally and historically significant at a State level as an early and unusually ornate and generally intact privately built 19th century theatrical hall, a rare building type. The auditorium features a large cornice and pilasters, three deep plaster domes, set into a ceiling of gridded/floral plasterwork, which also lines the proscenium wall, the Athenaeum auditorium is particularly decorative, and has something of the character of a major theatre.

Originally accommodating visiting theatrical companies and personalities during the summer season, as well as dances, balls and bazaars, films were also shown from at least the mid-1920s.

The building is architecturally significant because of its largely original auditorium, and the two storey facade, built of local limestone with brick dressings (unfortunately painted over). It is also of note as an important element in the Back Beach Road Streetscape, despite the addition of a cantilevered verandah and almost complete alteration of the ground floor facade in the 1930s.

Classified: 03/06/1996

Other Names Sorrento Cinema, Atheneum Theatre,

Hermes Number 66336

Property Number

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*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/>*