

MINSON AVENUE DESIGN GUIDELINES

SHIRE OF NORTHAM



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PREPARED FOR:
Shire of Northam

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Minson Avenue Design Guidelines form part of a wider Shire of Northam planning exercise including a Townsite Master Plan. The work is being undertaken in the context of the projected population growth and the increasing importance of Northam as a regional centre in the Wheatbelt.

On a broad scale the guidelines seek to facilitate appropriate forms of development and introduce a mixed land use approach by way of an increased presence of residential land uses and compatible commercial development within the town centre. While much of the precinct has been developed for commercial and retail activities there are some sites available for standalone mixed use (including residential and commercial) development.

Mixed use developments typically involved a residential component being built above commercial components; however in this instance co-location of these uses on the same lot is acceptable, typical examples however are as follows:

- Dwellings/apartments above shops, offices, showrooms, cafes; and
- Dwellings and offices above shops and cafes.

The benefit of mixed use development is the provision of:

- Housing diversity and choice catering for different markets;
- Increased social interaction and activity;
- Opportunities to work and reside within close proximity;
- Reduce car dependency within the urban centre;
- Enhance security through increased activity and passive surveillance;
- Increased vibrancy and pedestrian movement;
- Increased sustainability and functionality;
- More opportunities for interaction with the built form; and
- Creation of a sense of place and a sense of identity.

The Minson Avenue Design Guidelines have been developed in order to both encourage and facilitate development of land between Minson Avenue and Fitzgerald Street. It is recognised that Fitzgerald Street is and will continue to be the principal retail and commercial street within the Northam townsite. The guidelines are intended to assist with the consolidation of Fitzgerald Street in this role.

The guidelines seek to increase vibrancy and amenity of what is the principal activity area within the townsite. With the increasing importance of the Northam town centre in the context of increased population, commercial functions and tourism opportunities the town site will need to build upon its existing strengths and facilitate development which both complements the traditional and historic nature of the town site, as well as providing for innovative development and diversity.

The area accommodates a wide range of commercial and retail uses including shops, restaurants, taverns, offices and repair workshops and caryards. New commercial and retail uses are encouraged along with residential uses to consolidate established uses. The design guidelines are also intended to minimise any undesirable impacts between existing uses and future development.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The following core objectives have been indentified to guide the nature of future development within the Precinct:

- a) Encourage appropriated scaled mixed residential and non-residential development;
- b) To ensure that the amenity of the locality is enhanced;
- c) Encourage development which both complements the existing style and character of adjacent commercial areas along Fitzgerald Street as well as improving the quality of the built form on Minson Avenue;
- d) Improve the quality of the Minson Avenue frontage and reduce the impact of parking provision;
- e) Encourage pedestrian orientated development within the Town Centre, particularly the Minson Avenue frontage;
- f) Ensure appropriate measures are in place to control the bulk and scale of buildings along the Minson Avenue Frontage;
- g) Improve the quality of the Minson Avenue built environment;
- h) Ensure development acts to recognise the importance of the Avon river to the amenity of the local area, and building on this strength to promote tourism activity;
- i) Ensure the promotion and harbouring of increased pedestrian movement through the built form and streetscape provisions;
- j) Create a vibrant, diverse and attractive town centre for Northam; and
- k) The integration of a range of land uses, activities and places to interact.

3.0 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Guidelines are intended to provide clear guidance as to desirable forms of development and land uses within the area.

The guidelines address the following areas:

- Setbacks;
- Building Design and Layout;
- Service Areas;
- Landscaping;

- Car Parking;
- Vehicular Access; and
- Pedestrian movement.

Unless otherwise stated within the design guidelines, the provisions of both the operative Scheme and Residential Design Codes apply.

4.0 TOWN PLANNING SCHEME

The Minson Avenue precinct area is subject to the provisions of the Shire of Northam Town Planning Scheme No. 5 (“TPS 5”) except where otherwise stated within the Guidelines.

In accordance with TPS 5 the zoning of the Minson Avenue precinct area is Town Centre.

With respect to the zoning table, it is anticipated that Multiple Dwellings will be a permitted use under the Town Centre Zone as part of the current scheme review process for draft Local Planning Scheme No.6.

It is intended that the preparation of these guidelines be adopted as a Local Planning Policy under TPS 5 and in addition be the inclusion of the overall Precinct as a special control area as designated under Shire of Northam Local Planning Scheme No. 6 which is under review by Department of Planning for consent to advertise to the public.

5.0 OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

A number of opportunities and constraints have been identified which must be taken into account in development within the Minson Avenue Precinct, these are as follows:

- A majority of the overall precinct is located within the 1 in 100 year floodplain;
- Topography (sloping from Fitzgerald Street down to Minson Avenue);
- There are a number of heritage listed buildings in Fitzgerald Street;
- Potential land use conflicts exist between future residential uses and established commercial activities (entertainment, car repair workshops);
- Fitzgerald Street is well established as the town’s main retail, entertainment and commercial locality;
- Minson Avenue adjoins the river foreshore and public open space reserves;
- Established foreshore activity includes the visitors centre, Riversedge Café and Sound Shell amphitheatre;
- There is a shortage of medium and higher density and short stay accommodation in Northam;
- Minson Avenue is dominated by public parking in some areas;
- The potential for the redevelopment and revitalisation of a number of sites; and

- The potential for increased tourism access by train from Perth.

6.0 THE TOWN CENTRE PARKING STRATEGY

The Shire of Northam's draft Town Centre Parking Strategy identifies a high demand for on-street parking on Fitzgerald Street and an underutilisation of on-street car parking along Minson Avenue. The Strategy also identified key issues relating to community awareness of available public car parking supply, inconsistent signage, low quality of line marking and existing signage, wayfinding and car parking management and enforcement. Conditions set by the Town Centre Parking Strategy should be implemented in conjunction with built form and landscaping requirements to ensure the overall improvement of the area in terms of its amenity, safety and pedestrian access.

The Strategy recommends the use of cash-in-lieu payments for car parking as part of the land development process to encourage a higher density compact development. It states:

This policy would also facilitate developments which, due to a number of financial, physical and urban design constraints, cannot provide sufficient self-contained parking at a reasonable cost or if at all. This mechanism could also encourage the creation of strategically located public parking facilities which could be efficiently shared by a range of users in a cost effective manner and would discourage the proliferation of smaller and inefficient parking facilities.

7.0 MINSON AVENUE / AVON RIVER FORESHORE PLAN

Prepared by Hames Sharley in 1995, the Foreshore Plan for Northam Town Centre included the Minson Avenue precinct; this is illustrated in Figure 1 below. This Plan addressed a range of functional and landscape improvements and continues to provide a vision for the future development of the town centre.



Figure 1. Hames Sharley Foreshore Plan

8.0 THE PRECINCT

The Precinct is bounded by Minson Avenue, Fitzgerald Street, Beavis Place and Peel Terrace. The precinct stretches the length of what is considered the main activity strip of the Northam town site and includes a mix of commercial and retail activities. Four Sub-Precincts have been identified in having different characteristics and development potential; please refer to the Minson Avenue Design Guidelines Plan (MADG Plan) on the following page.

8.1 SUB-PRECINCT 1

Sub-precinct 1 is the most northern section of the main strip and consists largely of commercial activity in the form of car related businesses (Beaurepaires and Holden Dealership).

The sub-precinct is strategically located within close proximity of the train station and the Minson Avenue frontage lies opposite the Shire's Swan Breeding Enclosure within Bernard Park as well as the foreshore reserve. The sub-precinct includes a number of commercial premises on Fitzgerald Street and motor vehicle sales and parts premises similar to businesses located on adjacent street frontages.

This sub-precinct is considered suitable for the introduction of medium density residential land uses as part of a mix use redevelopment of the Holden Dealership site. The area is identified for redevelopment is identified on the MADG Plan as **3a**, refer to Figure 2 below, in addition the area between the Holden Dealership and Nind Street provides some scope for infill residential development.

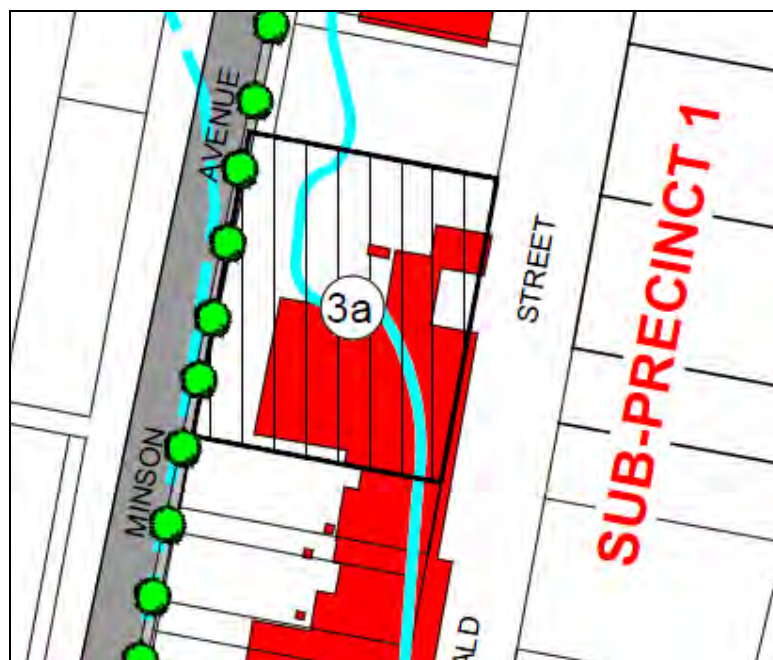


Figure 2. Redevelopment Site 3a

Heritage Listed Buildings

- 1a - Shamrock Hotel
- 1b - Hailsham Building
- 1c - Northam Travel
- 1d - Commercial Hotel
- 1e - Toyworld





Council Sites

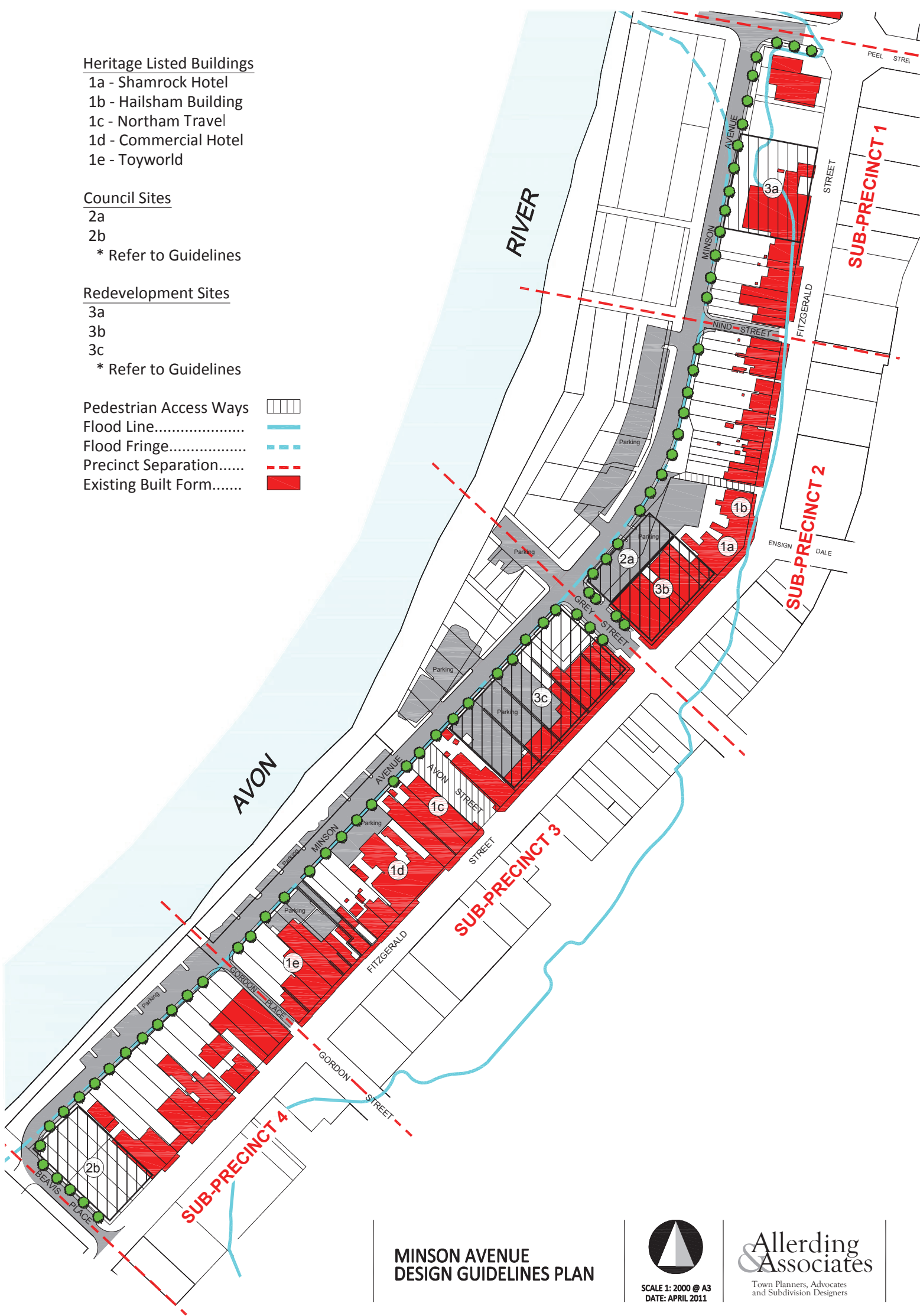
- 2a
- 2b
- * Refer to Guidelines

Redevelopment Sites

- 3a
- 3b
- 3c
- * Refer to Guidelines

Pedestrian Access Ways

Flood Line.....	
Flood Fringe.....	
Precinct Separation.....	
Existing Built Form.....	



MINSON AVENUE DESIGN GUIDELINES PLAN



SCALE 1: 2000 @ A3
DATE: APRIL 2011

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Given the proximity to the train station, the precinct provides an opportunity for strong pedestrian links between the station, the Fitzgerald Street commercial strip, Minson Avenue and the river forshore. This pedestrian strip should provide a clear path and consist of high quality landscaping in creating a desirable movement corridor. This precinct should also recognise its importance to tourism in Northam due to its proximity to the train station. Particular significance should be placed upon this precinct in terms of containing a diversity of uses and a pedestrian friendly streetscape as mentioned above incorporating uses which would likely be accessed by a tourist population, (restaurants, shops etc).

8.2 SUB-PRECINCT 2

Sub-Precinct 2 contains minimal development on the Minson Avenue frontage and contains a considerable amount of public and private car parking.

The Shamrock Hotel is a key consideration within this Sub-precinct as well as the amenity of the open space along the Minson Avenue Frontage. It is envisaged Sub-Precinct 2 would accommodate mixed land uses included medium density and short stay accommodation.

Furthmore Sub-Precinct 2 is well placed to address the foreshore reserve which includes the Visitors Centre, Riversedge Café and the Sound Shell (Ampitheatre) being constructure by the Shire. As such, any development within Sub-Precinct 2 should take into consideration both the present and future planned activity on the foreshore and provide land uses which will complement large scale events and tourism as well as landuses which build on the value of the open space. Design of the Minson Avenue streetscape should also act to re-enforce the importance of the foreshore reserve. Passive surviellance will be important in this precinct in creating a greater perception of pedestrian safety in and around the foreshore area.

The Shamrock Hotel (identified as 1a on the MADG Plan) is listed on the Municipal Hertiage Inventory as a Category B building and is listed on the State register of Heritage Places. Category B buildings are defined as:

A place of considerable cultural heritage significance to the Shire of Northam that is worthy of recognition and protection through the provisions of the Local Scheme. Any proposed development affecting the site must be submitted to the Shire of Northam and referred to the Regional Wheatbelt Heritage Advisor for comment. Retention and conservation of the place is recommended.

Adjoining the Shamrock Hotel (1a) is the Hailsham building (identified as 1b on the MADG Plan). The Hailsham building is a Category C building, defined as follows:

A place of some heritage significance to the Shire of Northam. Retention of the place is encouraged and documentation of the place is required if retention not possible.

These guidelines are to be consistent with those definitions outlined above.

The Shire of Northam owns a number of lots within the overall study area, some of which provide an opportunity for redevelopment. Within Sub-Precinct 2, this includes the site currently used for car parking denoted as **2a** on the MADG Plan (see Figure 3 below); the site lies adjacent to the Northam Visitors Centre.

To capitalise on this strategic location it is proposed that the site remain as car parking with additional landscaping and improved pedestrian access to better provide for pedestrian flow and activity from the main street towards the visitors centre and the river foreshore. In the longer term this site would be suitable for redevelopment which includes residential uses at upper levels.



Figure 3. Council Site 2a and Redevelopment Site 3b

In addition to the Council owned site identified above, a number of privately owned parcels of land have been identified as potential redevelopment sites, these sites have good proximity to the town centre and are of significant size.

The land holdings are identified as **3b** on the MADG Plan and cover a number of land holdings, as identified in Figure 3 above, some of which have a secondary frontage along Grey Street. They are identified as having significant redevelopment potential and are serviced by the Council owned car parking (**2a**). Currently no built form addresses Grey Street which is a key movement corridor to the river foreshore; future redevelopment should incorporate active frontages to Grey Street. These built form frontages to Grey Street should replicate the shop frontages along Fitzgerald Street to create a greater sense of connection between Fitzgerald Street and Minson Avenue. Currently the built form characteristics of Fitzgerald Street are not apparent within the Minson Avenue streetscape. This lack of connection may deter pedestrians from accessing Minson Avenue and the foreshore as there is currently a lack of perceived pedestrian activity and safety the streetscape which does not promote pedestrian movement.

8.3 SUB-PRECINCT 3

Sub-precinct 3 facilitates the hub of commercial and retail activity in Northam and includes a retail mall, pedestrian connections to the foreshore and two hotels including the Fitzgerald and the Commercial.

The area is a vibrant part of the Town Centre and the main objective is to capitalise on the existing strengths and extensive range of commercial land uses in achieving a higher quality built form. A number of sites listed within the Municipal Inventory exist within Sub-Precinct 3 including:

- Northam Travel (Category B) (1c on MADG plan);
- The Commercial Hotel (Category B)(1d on MADG plan); and
- Toyworld Building (Category C) (1e on MADG plan).

The definitions of both Category B & C listed buildings are outlined under Clause 8.2 of the Guidelines.

A number of privately owned parcels of land have redevelopment potential and identified on the MADG Plan as **3c**, these sites are strategically located and are of significant size, refer to Figure 4 below.



Figure 4. Redevelopment site 3c

These landholdings are of significance due to their proximity to the main shopping mall within the town site and given the existing limited development. Mixed use development would be encouraged with a focus on maintaining the area as the core commercial and retail section of the town centre. The other precincts should make effort to re-enforce and support this hub by ensuring consistency of streetscape design.

8.4 SUB-PRECINCT 4

Sub-Precinct 4 contains predominantly single storey retail and some light industrial activity, it is considered that this Sub-Precinct could accommodate a more diverse mixed use development given the age of the buildings located within the precinct. Land uses encouraged would consist of residential and office developments as this Sub-Precinct exists as a transition towards some of the more commercial/office focused land uses within Northam, including the Shire's administration center and various government departments.

The Shire of Northam owns the site formed by a number of lots at the corner of Beavis Place, the site is identified as **2b** on the MADG plan, as per Figure 5 below. Strategically located near the town centre and having three frontages, the site provides for the opportunity for a significant landmark development. A landmark development in this location could provide a focal point for pedestrian movement which could ensure that each sub-precinct has a node of importance. Precinct one having the train station, precinct two the foreshore reserve and precinct three the heritage landholdings. This connectedness should provide greater appeal for pedestrian access. Site 2b should also consider that a tourist population may access the area by train, and by appealing to this market pedestrian movement could be advocated throughout the precinct.

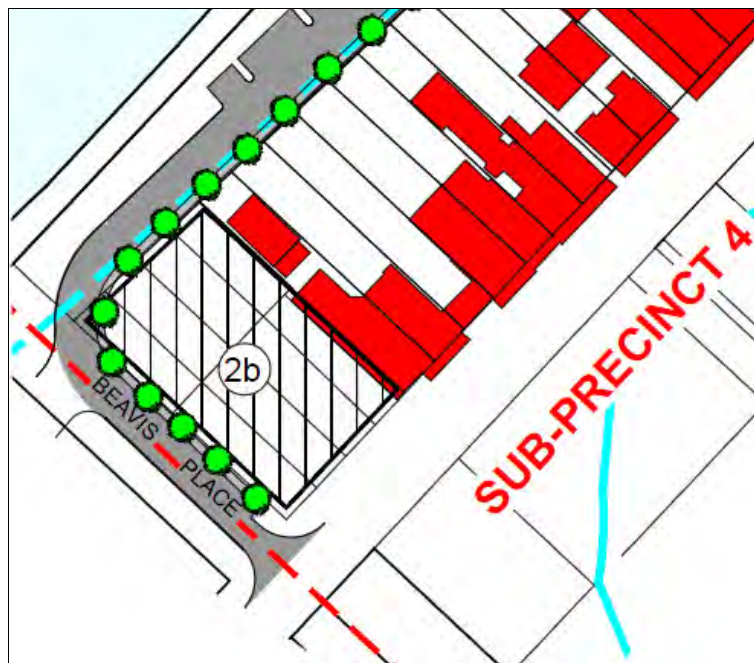


Figure 5. Council Site 2b

A mixed use development over the site would be suitable however given the proximity to the town centre, the emphasis should be on a higher density commercial or residential land uses.

9.0 MINSON AVENUE PEDESTRIAN ROUTE

The intent of the design guidelines is to both encourage and facilitate appropriate development within the Precinct, however it is noted that the Shire also has a role to play through the treatment of the Minson Avenue frontage. At present there is inadequate

pedestrian access on the southern side of Minson Avenue adjoining the commercial properties. It is also likely that development which would form a strong urban form to these properties on Minson Avenue will take many years to be established.

As such it is proposed that a pedestrian route be established, incorporating a pedestrian path, lighting and a landscape strip containing semi mature trees, on the land adjoining the commercial properties. This will:

- Provide a strong, attractive and cohesive edge to the Minson Avenue frontage;
- Encourage more people to walk along this frontage with the potential to provide a pedestrian link from the railway station to the Visitor Centre, foreshore, activities in precinct three and the 2b site in precinct four;
- Facilitate east-west movement of pedestrians from the existing path abutting the foreshore to the Minson Avenue frontage and City Centre through the strategic placement of pedestrian crossovers;
- Encourage more commercial development on this frontage;
- By creating a more attractive environment it will encourage more people to live in and visit the town centre; and
- Promote an image of a walkable, vibrant and safe pedestrian environment to be created that can be promoted to locals and visitors.

10.0 DESIGN CONTROLS

10.1 SETBACKS

- a) The setback for development from Minson Avenue, Fitzgerald Street and secondary streets is to be 0 metres.
- b) Buildings setback from property boundaries are to be well lit and designed to ensure that there is passive surveillance of areas between buildings and the property boundary are to be landscaped and remain permeable to ensure line of sight is maintained.

10.2 BUILDING DESIGN AND LAYOUT

- a) Development should have frontages to Fitzgerald Street and also address Minson Avenue. This is intended to maintain the traditional orientation of commercial uses to Fitzgerald Street while recognising the significance of the Minson Avenue frontage.
- b) Residential density shall be in accordance with the R-AC 3 coding of the Residential Design Codes. R-AC 3 zonings are intended for multiple dwellings within mixed use development and activity centres, in addition the zoning is intended whereby non residential code is applicable.

- c) The residential component of any mixed use development should be above the non-residential component unless it can otherwise be shown that the residential component would benefit the pedestrian movement or built form.
- d) Facades should be articulated to create interest and variety and minimise the visual impact of the building scale through activation using windows or other building openings. Blank walls are not acceptable. Development proposals are to include elevations to show details of façade treatments. Walls facing Minson Avenue should be consistent in an approach to create passive surveillance and increase amenity for pedestrians.
- e) Frontages to Minson Avenue shall address the street and encourage pedestrian movement through passive surveillance. If fencing is proposed it shall be to a maximum height of 1.8m and be 50% visually permeable. Vehicle access entry points are to provide adequate sightlines (1.5 m x1.5m).
- f) Despite the provisions of R-AC 3, buildings shall have a maximum height of 9 metres to the top of external walls, 10 metres to the top of a wall with a concealed roof and 12 metres to the top of a pitched roof. As outlined earlier, there are to be no blank walls facing Minson Avenue activation can be made by windows or other building design elements.
- g) Finished floor levels of commercial and retail buildings and habitable spaces within residential buildings shall be 0.5 metres above the 100 year floor level.

10.3 100 YEAR FLOOD LEVEL

One of the constraints which exists within the study area is the potential risk of flooding. Specifically along the Fitzgerald Street frontage the majority of properties within the study area have finished floor levels below the 100 year flood level. There is a need to balance the risks associated with the potential impact of flooding against the need for a consistent pedestrian environment on Fitzgerald Street.

Clause 6.3.2.3 of the Shire's Town Planning Scheme No. 5 addresses the flood risk as follows:

6.3.2.3 A minimum finished floor level of all buildings to be constructed within the flood fringe shall be 500mm above the designated 100 year flood level unless the Local Government considerd that a variation to this requirement can be justified and has paid due regard to the advice of the Department of Environment (now known as Department of Water) on the matter.

The Guidelines encourage development to be consistent with the above Scheme provision, however acknowledge that in the event that additions are proposed to an existing development that there is scope for the existing finished floor levels fronting Fitzgerald Street to remain subject to Council satisfaction and relevant referrals. In this instance stepped finished floor levels could be used and are indicatively shown as per Figure 6 under Clause 10.8 of the Guidelines.

10.4 SERVICE AREAS

- a) Any service areas backing on to Minson Avenue which form part of commercial developments shall address the Minson Avenue frontage. Openings are encouraged however if not proposed walls must be articulated to avoid blank facades.
- b) Any service areas backing on to Minson Avenue including bin storage and loading areas shall be screened to the satisfaction of the Shire, the use of landscaping is encouraged.
- c) Screening of service areas should ensure that the Minson Avenue streetscape is enhanced in terms of its amenity and appeal to pedestrians, with particular reference to the tourist population.

10.5 LANDSCAPING

- a) Landscaping should be used to provide a high quality streetscape along Minson Avenue. The landscaping is to be to the satisfaction of the Shire and the use of native species is encouraged.
- b) High quality landscaping is to be provided within any setback proposed to Minson Avenue within the carpark areas at a rate of one tree per 10 parking bays.
- c) Approved tree species should be used where appropriate and should not obstruct line of sight for pedestrians.
- d) Landscaping is to be a maximum of 0.75m in height to maintain pedestrian safety and sight lines.

10.6 CAR PARKING

- a) In recognition of the high demand for on-street parking on Fitzgerald Street and the underutilisation of on-street car parking along Minson Avenue cash-in-lieu payments for car parking as part of the land development process will be acceptable. The Cash-in-lieu payments will be placed into the Town Centre Car Parking Trust to be used for strategic car parking infrastructure.
- b) The Shire's decision to accept cash-in-lieu remains at its discretion and is not an automatic right. If cash-in-lieu payments are to be made, the onus is on the applicant to show that there is public parking available to serve the development within the locality.
- c) Where parking is provided on the Minson Avenue frontage for a Fitzgerald Street development the proponent shall provide a legible and easily accessible public accessway through the site.
- d) Carparking infrastructure should not inhibit the continuity of built form, landscape design and the amenity of the town centre precinct.

- e) Each residential development shall be provided with car parking bays as per the Residential Design Codes that is independent of non-residential parking areas. Commercial development shall be provided with parking bays as per the requirements of the operative town planning scheme.
- f) Within sub-precincts 1 & 2 the ground levels from Fitzgerald Street down to Minson Avenue are of a steeper nature than that within Sub-precincts 3 & 4. As a result, given the requirement for habitable rooms to exist 0.5m above the 1 in 100 year flood level, the opportunity presents itself for undercroft car parking. If this form of development is utilised it is important that the building design shall incorporate a distinct frontage and pedestrian access to Minson Avenue.
- g) In such case the frontage of the undercover parking should be screened as to not detract from the streetscape.
- h) Car Parking areas servicing commercial premises shall provide for Disabled access in accordance with the relevant Australian Standards to the satisfaction of the Shire.

10.7 VEHICULAR ACCESS

- a) Vehicular access from Minson Avenue is to be limited to a single access point for each lot, reciprocal access arrangements may also be acceptable as determined by the Shire.
- b) Vehicular access to Fitzgerald Street should be limited to existing crossovers.
- c) Access from right of ways may be permitted if there is minimal negative impact on adjacent residential and commercial uses as determined by the Shire.
- d) Right of Way ("ROW") access should be promoted. An ROW access point would be an arrangement that could see the need for an access point from Minson Avenue be unnecessary. This may be in the form of creating a ROW between Fitzgerald Street and Minson Avenue to assist as a service lane and separation between land uses along Fitzgerald and development facing Minson Avenue.
- e) Traffic calming devices should be used to reduce the speed of cars around the proposed pedestrian access ways.

10.8 INDICATIVE DEVELOPMENT

With respect to the design criteria outlined above, please refer to the Figure 6, 7 & 8 below which provide indicative development concepts to provides guidance and assist with with communication between developers and the Shire of Northam, please note these are indicative and not to scale.

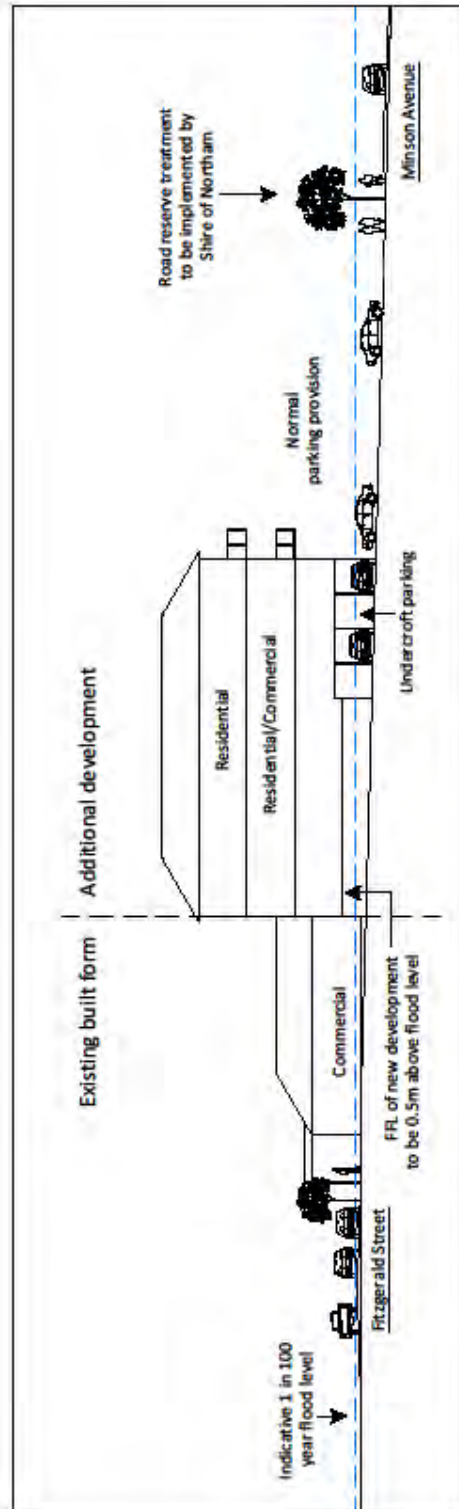


Figure 6. Indicative Elevation

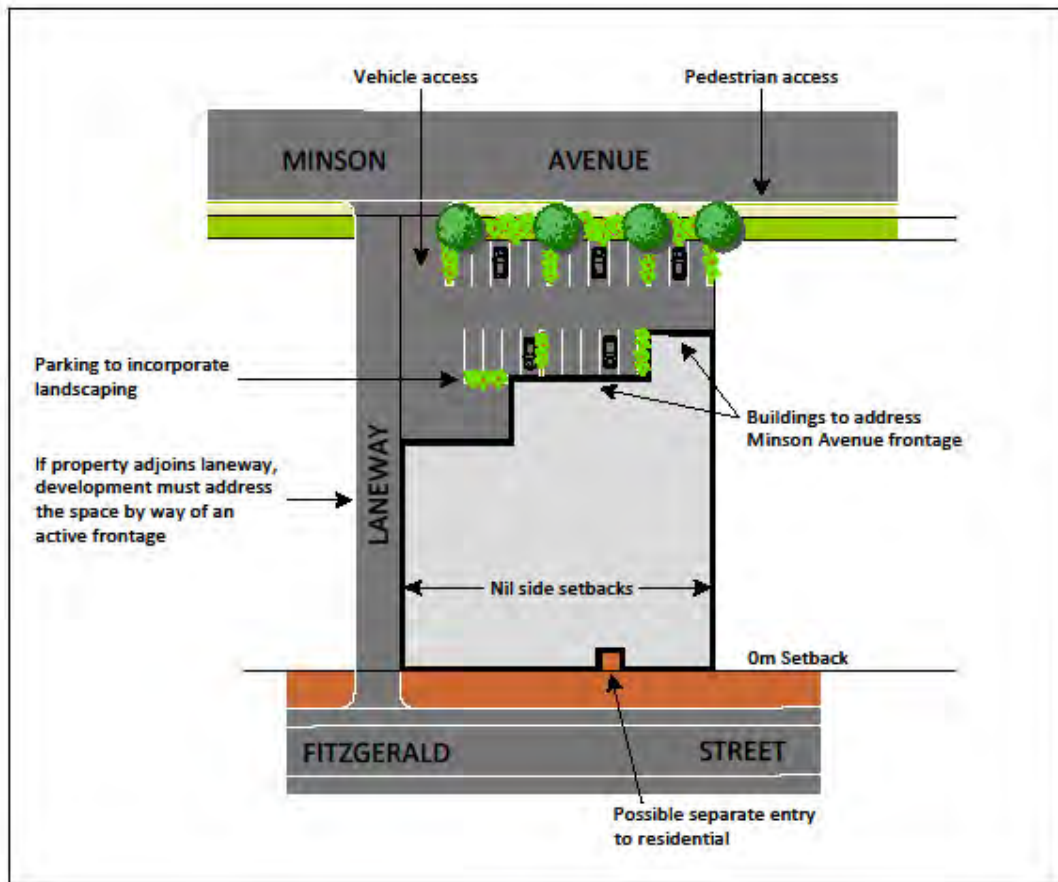


Figure 7. Indicative Footprint 1

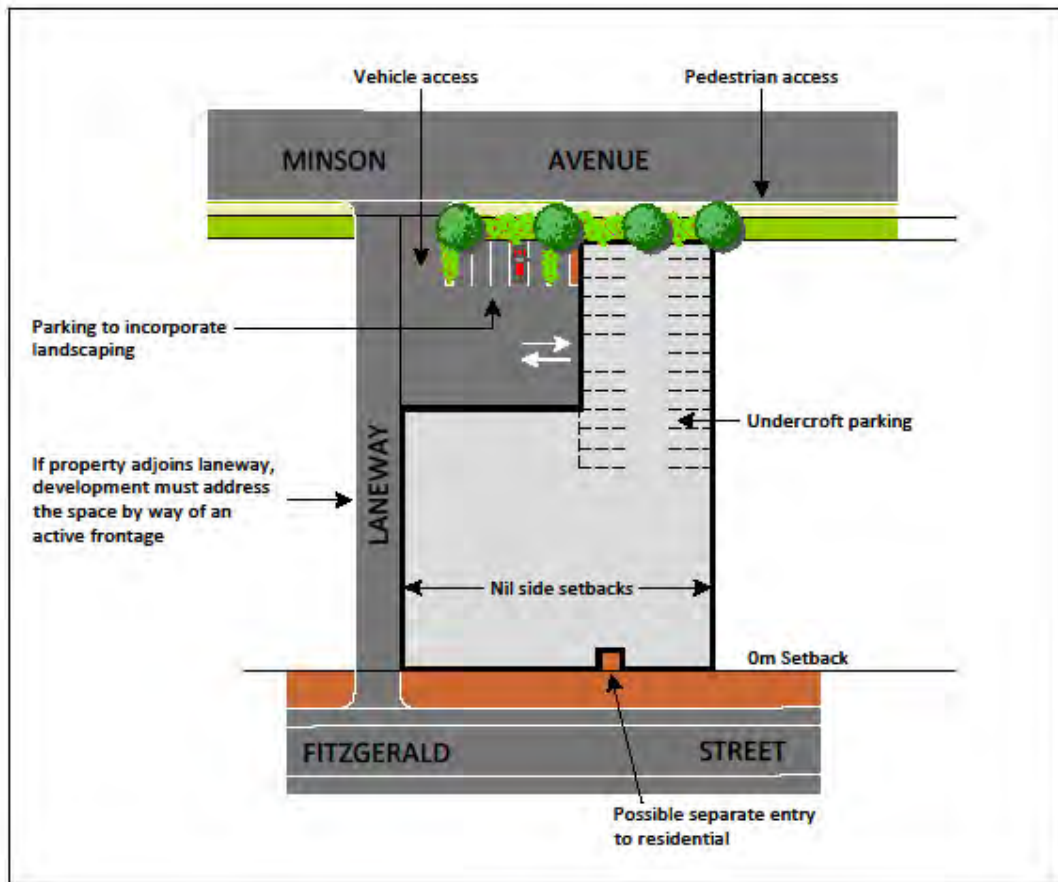


Figure 8. Indicative Footprint 2



MINSON AVENUE 3D MODELLING