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Historic Town Drive

The town sites of Northam, York and Beverley were reserved by the Lands Department as early as November 1830. Development was slow, and it was not until 1879 that Northam was declared a municipality. In the early 1890s, both York and Northam campaigned for the government to commence the proposed Yilgarn railway from their respective towns. Northam won the battle and while the gold fields railway was under construction, gold discoveries were made in Coolgardie (1892) and Kalgoorlie (1893). As a result, Northam developed rapidly as a major railway, agricultural and commercial centre.

The growth of Northam brought about layout changes in the town, the new railway line extending from West Northam station through the town. A land and building boom accompanied the increase in population, especially after 1895, as new housing, business premises and public buildings were erected throughout the town. New estates were opened up on the east, west and northern sides, '... each with its particular character'. In contrast to what were considered 'working class' developments was the development which occurred on the hill above the eastern end of town, Northam's 'nob hill'. During the 1890s and early twentieth century this area was firmly established as the most prestigious part of Northam.



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1. Library and old Town Council Offices 298 Fitzgerald St (HCWA Ref. no. 10907)

The distinctive library and Town Council offices were designed by the Western Australian architect Ivan Ivanoff in the Brutalist style. The library was completed in 1971 (renovated in 2011/12), followed by the Council offices in 1974. These offices replaced the previous offices on the corner of Glebe Street in 1974.

Water Corporation Building 263 Fitzgerald St (HCWA Ref. No. 1866)

This building started in 1913 as the Northam Lands Office; it became the Office for the Country Water Supply in 1957; and in 1985 it was taken over by the WA Water Authority (now the Water Corporation)

2. The Northam Advertiser 245 Fitzgerald St (HCWA Ref. No. 1860)

This building housed the local newspaper office since it first started as the Central Districts Advertiser in 1893. The Northam Advertiser, as it was later called, was influential in the rise and fall of eminent Northam politicians, such as George Throssell and James Mitchell. The founding editor, J.T. O'Reilly was a controversial character, and the newspaper has now played a significant role in the development of Northam for more than a century. One of the editors was Hal Colbatch, who served a very brief term as Premier of WA. Production of the newspaper (now named The Avon Valley and Wheatbelt Advocate) is nowadays carried out in other premises further along Fitzgerald Street.

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3. Post Office 221 Fitzgerald St (HCWA Ref. No. 1867)

The Post Office was built in 1909, replacing the earlier building in Hawes St. You may notice that today, the clock tower is empty, however the clock from the original Post Office was moved to this site during construction, but was removed after deterioration in 1957.

4. Commercial Hotel 188 Fitzgerald St (HCWA Ref. No 1864)

The two storey Commercial Hotel was built by local builder, Michael Cody- a colourful Irishman. He had considerable business interests in Northam, being owner of the Grand Hotel as well.

5. Commonwealth Bank 181 Fitzgerald St (HCWA Ref. No. 1871)

This two storey bank building was constructed in 1923 in the popular Art Deco style with neo-classical influences. This is the only example of this type of building in Northam.

6. Westpac Bank 161 Fitzgerald St (HCWA Ref. No 1872)

The Bank of NSW opened a branch in Northam in 1909 in rented premises. In 1915, the Bank moved into these premises with manager's quarters attached; constructed at a cost of £2,713. In 1927, the building was altered to accommodate the increase in business following the amalgamation of Bank of NSW and Western Australian Bank.

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8) New Directions – ANZ Bank – Union Bank 133 Fitzgerald St (HCWA Ref. No 1861)

The Union Bank constructed this building in 1905/6 at a cost of £2,186, with a new balcony following in 1911. The Union Bank merged with the Bank of Australasia to form the Australia New Zealand Bank Ltd in 1951. Another merger took place in 1970 between the English Scottish and Australian Bank to form the Australia and New Zealand Banking Group.

10) Farmer's Home Hotel (DOME)- Shamrock Hotel 112 Fitzgerald St (HCWA Ref. No. 1865)

The Farmer's Home, a two storey stone and iron structure, was built by a Mr J. Ainsworth. George Throssell purchased the property, intending to build a hotel. Initially he was refused a licence to sell alcohol, but the licence was granted in 1866. The hotel changed owners a few times, and trade was affected by the strength of the Temperance movement in Northam. Joseph O'Hara bought the Farmer's House in 1891, with plans to make it the best hotel in town. Major extensions were added and the name was changed to the Shamrock Hotel, before being purchased by DOME in 2015, renamed and restored.

11. Mayberry and Hammond Offices – Bank of Australasia 85 Fitzgerald St (HCWA Ref. No. 1858)

This building was constructed in 1918 on the same site as the previous Bank of Australasia building purchased in 1910. The new building cost £3,300. In 1943, a decision was made to close the Northam branch of the bank and the premises were sold to Goldsborough Mort and Co for only £1,500.

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12. Old Shire of Northam Council Offices - National Bank 55 Fitzgerald St (HCWA Ref. No 1858)

The Northam branch of the National Bank of Australia opened in July 1888 as the first bank in Northam, managed by Anthony Madden. The original National Bank building appears to have been a substantial single storey residence purchased in 1889. It included offices, stabling and residential facilities. In 1895 a new brick frontage was added in front of the residence. In 1908, another new building was positioned immediately in front of the old building. The National Bank occupied the front building until 1938. When the bank moved to new, more modern premises in 1940, the Fitzgerald Street building stood vacant for some time. The building was sold to Mrs V Chidlow in 1941 for £1,630. The building was later taken over by the Shire of Northam and housed the Shire Council Offices from c.1978 until c.2000.

13. Avon Car Upholsterer – Northern House - Old Throssell's Emporium 11 Peel Terrace (HCWA Ref. No. 10891)

The Throssell Emporium was central to the economy of Northam during its operation. The building had large cellars and was the first building in the district to have local iron veranda posts and lacework. Throssell took advantage of the many hopeful diggers who passed through, and many bought their supplies in Northam. George Throssell was a major influence in all spheres of life in Northam, and this commercial outlet was one of his earliest ventures. He retired from business in 1890. Later the decline in popularity of Peel Terrace led to the relocation of Throssell, Son and Stewart to Fitzgerald Street. The Big Store, as it was called, closed in 1914, and the firm closed in 1916.

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14. St John's Church and Hall 11 Wellington St (HCWA Ref. No. 1891)

The church was built in 1885 -90 from local stone, and the hall was built later in 1897 with even later addition at the rear. St John's was not the first Anglican Church in the district- St James' Church, on the Katrine Rd, was the earliest in 1851. When the focus of the district moved to Northam town, plans for a new church were made. The foundation stone of St Johns' was finally laid in 1889 by Bishop Dr H. H. Parry. St James' Church was closed and later demolished in 1904. A second St James' Church was built in 1911 to serve the needs of the Anglicans in West Northam.

15. Old Girl's School – East Northam Primary School Wellington St (HCWA Ref. No. 1881)

Constructed in 1878, this early building stands in Wellington St, originally intended to be the main street of Northam, and maintains most of its original structure, including the jarrah floors. The building was used as a school for both boys and girls until a new state school was built in 1900. Hugo Throssell VC was a pupil at this school in the early part of the century.

16. Old Post Office and Postmaster's Residence 33 Wellington St. (HCWA Ref. No. 1892)

In 1873, Thomas Wilding was subcontracted by George Throssell to build the town's first official permanent Post Office on the corner of Wellington and Hawes St, at that time a main thoroughfare. Prior to this, postal services were conducted from private residences. With the building of the new Post Office in 1909, the land and buildings were transferred to the Dept of Defence and the old Post Office became the training centre for the 28th Infantry Battalion and the Drill hall for the Army Reserve. The building was used by the Army until 1976. AVAS renovated the buildings and planted gardens between the Post Office and the Old Girl's School.

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17. Northam Guest House – Clearview House – Temperance Hall and Hostel 51 Wellington St (HCWA Ref. No. 1889)

The present Northam Guest House consists of two distinct buildings, constructed at different times. The two storey brick structure with a steeply pitched gabled roof was the Temperance Hall built c1889. The other building was the Temperance Hostel. It is unclear whether it incorporates any aspects of the original Bushman's Home built in 1877. The place is significant because of its association with the Hope of Northam Good Templar Lodge formed in 1874. The movement was supported influential local people like George Throssell, H. Morrell and James Byfield. The Temperance Hostel was used as an isolation hospital during the pneumonic influenza epidemic in 1919.

18. St Joseph's Church 77 Wellington St (HCWA Ref. No. 1897)

The present St Joseph's Church replaced an earlier church between 1877 -79. The growth of the Catholic community in Northam led to the establishment of a separate parish, distinctive from Newcastle (Toodyay) in the 1890s. The old church became inadequate, and plans for a new church were drawn up and fundraising carried out. The result was the opening of the new church in 1902. The St Joseph's convent was established in 1890 and the first parish priest, Father Treacy was installed soon after. A new St Joseph's school opened in 1912.

19. Northam Town Hall and Lesser Hall cnr Wellington St/ Gordon St (HCWA Ref. No. 1877)

Designed by Henry J. Prockter and constructed between 1897 -98, the Town Hall has been called Northam's most grandiose building. The Northam Town Hall is not located in the main precinct of the town, probably because of strong rivalry between factions favouring East Northam against West Northam, resulting in a compromise. Cost overruns meant the original design was not fully implemented. A supper room was added in 1901, and the grand Italianate style facade was added in 1904. A proposed

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clock tower was never built. The original pressed metal ceiling was replaced in 1918 by an impressive jarrah ceiling during repairs to the building. This building is on the State Register of heritage Places, on the Register of the National Estate, and is classified by the National Trust.

20. Northam Court House and Police Station 118 Wellington St (HCWA Ref. No. 1890)

Northam Court House, built in 1896-7, is a typical example of the work of George Temple Poole, the Colonial Architect at that time. The design is similar to other Court Houses being built at the time, at Beverley and Toodyay for example, reflecting a period when expansion following gold discoveries at Kalgoorlie promoted government building in significant country towns.

The Police Station was erected on a 7 acre site on the corner of Fitzgerald, Gairdner and Wellington Streets which had been set aside for use by the police since 1866 and where an earlier Police Station had been built in that year. Prior to that, a building in the northern part of the town had been leased as a police station. Northam's first police constable was appointed in 1852 and there were complaints over a number of years about the lack of a lockup. Part of the original stable wall still exists in front of the Police Station.

21. Railway Institute 182 Wellington St (cnr Morrell St) (HCWA Ref. No. 1898)

The hall was constructed in 1897-8 and was the social centre of the West Northam railway and working class area of Northam. The Railway Institute was established with the active support of prominent Northam citizens and the Women's Temperance Movement. It was the first railway institute in Western Australia. In 1917 the Railway Institute and the WA Railway and Tramway Institute amalgamated, and trade courses were offered at the centre. The Railway Institute played an important role in the social structure for the railway workers and others who used the facilities. The billiard room (timber) was added in 1940. It was used as a library, meeting place, concert and ball venue. Part of the building is currently leased to the West End Convenience Store.

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22. St James Church cnr Wellington St and Morrell St (HCWA ref. no. 1899)

The first Anglican Church in the Northam district was the first St James' Church, built on the outskirts of the town in Hawes Street, 1851-55. Dissatisfaction later arose among the Anglicans living in the town about the distance of the church from the town. Church services were then held in the Mechanics Institute, and in 1889 St John's Church was built. St James' Church was demolished in 1904. To service the Anglicans in West Northam, a new St James' Church was built in 1911.

23. Colonial Tavern - Club Hotel - McCarthy's Hotel including the stables 197-201 Duke St West Northam

The brick stables building has a two-storey central section with a hipped roof, and single storey wings on either side, each with low pitched corrugated iron roofs. The hotel, which started as McCarthy's Hotel, was the eighth and last hotel opened in Northam in the 1900s. It competed with the Grand Hotel as the railway workers hotel. It became the Club Hotel in 1910. The stables behind the hotel were important as the hotel had its own horse cab which would meet the passenger trains at the old Northam station in the 1920s. Later the named changed to the Colonial Hotel.

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24. Grand Hotel 426 Fitzgerald St

Built in 1896 by Michael Cody, the Grand Hotel was located close to the West Northam Station, and catered for passengers and railway workers. Located prominently on a corner site, as is typical of many country pubs, the two storey hotel maintains the wooden verandahs with the decorative timber work. Many other country hotels built in the same period no longer have their verandahs intact.

25. Old Railway Station -Historical Precinct of Northam Fitzgerald St West (HCWA Ref. No. 1859)

The former Northam Railway Station and Goods Shed consists of a double gabled iron-clad Class 1 Goods Shed built in 1897 and a Federation Free Style, single-storey, brick, iron and timber station building built in 1900. The original station became an important marshalling yard and junction for the emerging Eastern Goldfields. Thousand of gold prospectors passed through Northam. The station was built opposite the Grand Hotel and these two buildings were the centre of the West Northam district. Use peaked during WWII and the Korean war when thousand of servicemen were transported to and from the Northam Army Camp. For 80 years the station was the headquarters for the Eastern Districts with a large shunting complex and 24 hour staff. In 1966 with the introduction of the new standard gauge railway, the old route was dismantled and a new station as built at East Northam.

Prospect House - West Northam Shops – Fitzgerald St West opposite Shire offices

Built in 1936 this row of commercial buildings is prominent in relation to the surrounding buildings. The central building with its simple parapet wall and symmetrical composition has feature of the Federation Free Style which include the quoin edgings located on either end as well as the balcony with classical balustrade over the rusticated entry architrave. These buildings are a reminder of earlier times when West Northam was a thriving centre, focusing on the main railway station and workshops, the Grand Hotel and supporting commercial businesses. The buildings are ornate and reflect aspects of the Federation Free Style.

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26. Avon Bridge Hotel/ Riverside Hotel 310 Fitzgerald St (HCWA Ref. No. 1863)

The two storey hotel was built by Tom Wilding, an influential character in Northam's history. The hotel, built near the new bridge over the Avon constructed in 1858 – 9 became a focus for Northam people. Wilding was active in organising sporting events which usually culminated at his hotel.

Community Development Building cnr Gairdner and Fitzgerald St (HCWA Ref. No 1875)

This building has been occupied by a number of government departments over time. At one time the police sergeant had his office in the building, and it is thought that the Public Works Dept and the Dept of Agriculture have been two of the tenants over time. It would appear to have been built at a similar time to the nearby police station and court House in the late 1890s

27. Men's Shed/ Toy Library - Old Fire Station 87 Duke St (HCWA Ref. No 1852)

Northam Fire Station No. 2 & Quarters (fmr) is an example of a two-storey brick fire station in the Inter-War Free Classical style, consistent in style with other fire stations throughout the state in the 1920s. The Fire Station has landmark quality in the streetscape of Duke Street and contributes to the heritage ambience of the Townscape of Northam.

This was the second of the three fire stations in Northam. The first was located behind the town hall and was built by the local council in 1910. The fire tender at the time of construction of this second station was a Model T Ford truck and the station was attended by an officer who lived in the flat within the station. This station was last used in 1991 when a new fire station was opened in Wellington St.

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28. Link Theatre 89 Duke St

The first Presbyterian Church services in Northam were held in 1897 in the original Mechanics Institute building. In July 1898 a small weatherboard building became the first Presbyterian Church. During the boom years associated with gold, the congregation increased rapidly, and work began on a new church building in 1908. St Paul's was used until the Presbyterians and Methodists in Australia joined to form the Uniting Church in the 1970s from which time services were held in the Methodist Church, so the Presbyterian Church was no longer used. The Northam Theatre Group purchased the old church, and community volunteers converted it into a theatre complex, the Link Theatre.

29) Stone Court – Masonic Hall cnr Duke St and Gordon St (HCWA Ref. No 10890)

Built c 1900. Single storey masonry (blue stone) construction. The main facade has an irregular coursed stone parapet wall with two light coloured stone string courses. There are white square pilasters and quoin edging to complement the cornice mouldings which cap the parapet wall. A part of the wall which extends towards the street is embellished with an entablature and small spherical finials. This building is an example of Federation Fr classical style. It has an unusual combination of face-cut stone, classical motifs and moulding with an unusual character.

30. Uniting Church 103 Duke St (HCWA Ref. No. 1856)

Built 1892. The first of two churches built on this site was a stone building with Gothic windows completed in 1892. Due to the rapid growth in population, Northam was soon too small. After ten years the foundations for a new early Gothic style church were laid and the new church was built directly in front of the old church. The old church was used as the church hall and Sunday school. During the depression the building served as a soup kitchen from which relief aid was provided.

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31. Byfield House- 30 Gordon St (HCWA Ref.No.1878)

Byfield House (1904), is an imposing two-storey, red brick mansion with a prominent Italianate tower. This Federation Queen Anne style home, built for James and Elizabeth Byfield, defines the corners of Gordon, Duke and Chidlow streets in Northam and is 'clear evidence of the benefits brought by the multitudes of gold-seekers who passed through the Avon Valley. a porch/portico with a rounded arch opening at ground level and balustraded balcony above.

James Byfield moved to Northam in 1898. He designed his home as well as other significant buildings in Northam. He was a leading building contractor and he also established a coach building business. He successfully operated the flour mill between 1883 and 1902. James Byfield was a leading member of the Temperance Movement, which became very influential in the district. He served on the Council for 35 years from 1879 to 1914. He was also the owner of the first car in Northam, a 1904 Oldsmobile. Byfield was killed tragically in an accident in 1914 when a horse harnessed to a wagon moved, causing the wagon to crush him. Since that time Byfield House has had a number of owners. At one stage it operated as a restaurant.

32. Uralia House 59 Gordon St (HCWA Ref. No. 1859)

Built in 1902, Uralia is a rare example of the residential architecture of H. J. Prockter's expressive interpretation of the Federation Free style. Uralia is a reminder of the growth in wealth that occurred in Northam in the 1890s and early twentieth century, as the town developed into a major railway and agricultural centre as a result of the gold boom. Uralia has historic value for its close association with the Throssell family, members of whom were prominent in political, commercial and social spheres, at both State and local level. After the collapse of the Throssell business empire in 1911, the bank assumed the property, allowing Lionel Throssell to stay on until Uralia was sold in 1923. The property was subdivided and sold and the house became Rosalyn a private maternity hospital, operating as such until 1948 when it became St John of God Hospital. For a period after 1973 it was used by the Marist Brothers and then as a classroom by St Joseph's school. It reverted to a private residence in 1985.

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Cody House

77 Gordon St (HCWA Ref. No 1879)

This significant residence was built by James Byfield who lived in Byfield House. In 1902 the house was bought by Michael Cody, another influential business man who built the Grand Hotel in 1896 and the commercial Hotel in 1902-3. Cody was one of the leading figures in the Northam Brewery at the turn of the century.

33. Fermoy House; St Joseph's Marist Brothers School

Uralia Terrace

Built in 1897, this was originally the home of George Throssell, Northam's first mayor. George later became Premier of WA. He was a prominent businessman, who became influential in the Temperance movement in the 1870s. Fermoy House was often the venue for large receptions, balls and garden parties. Charity functions and a variety of community celebrations were conducted at the stately house. Throssell died in 1910 after sustaining injuries when he fell down a staircase at the house. In 1912 the land around Fermoy was subdivided and a new housing estate was opened up on the hill. Fermoy then became a private hospital for many years. Part of the hospital was taken over by the military during the 1940s. The Marist brothers took over Fermoy in 1948 for use as a school, which became known as the Marist Brothers College, St Pauls with over 40 students enrolled in 1949. After WWII the migrant intake into the district from Eastern Europe led to increased numbers at the school. In 1971 St Pauls amalgamated the St Joseph's Girls School.

34. Mitchell House

cnr Duke and Hawes St (HCWA Ref. No. 1882)

Built in 1905, by James Mitchell, the house is significant, both for its design and architectural merits and for its association with James Mitchell. He came to Northam in 1891 as the manager of the West Australian Bank. In 1903 Mrs Clara Mitchell purchased three blocks of land on the hill considered to be Northam's 'nob hill', the most prestigious area in the town. Mitchell won a seat in

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the WA parliament in 1905, a seat he held for 28 years. Mitchell house was used as a family home and a venue for garden parties. Mitchell went on to become Premier of WA from 1919 - 24 and from 1930 - 33. While he was Premier he resided in Perth, travelling to and from Northam by train or chauffeur driven car. He also had local business and farming interests. Mitchell was influential in securing post-primary education for Northam, and in 1921 the first secondary school outside of Perth was built in Northam. Mitchell went on to become Lieutenant Governor of WA.

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