



Shire of Northam

Wundowie Community Hub Feasibility Study: Findings & Options

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1 Background

The Shire of Northam has, in consultation with the community, identified a need for a community hub within the Wundowie townsite. To allow the Shire of Northam to understand the requirements and considerations of such a facility, Anna Dixon Consulting, in partnership with Slavin Architects, was engaged to prepare a feasibility study and initial concept designs for a community hub. In addition to a community hub, the scope includes consideration of the incorporation of a café as well as a short-stay caravan park facility into the precinct.

This document provides extracts of the Overview of Findings and Overview of Options from the full feasibility study and should be considered in conjunction with the full study along with the concept designs referred to within this document.

2 Overview of Findings

As part of the development of the Wundowie Community Plan, the Wundowie community has identified a need for a multi-purpose community and recreation hub within the townsite, driven by a desire to see more social and recreation activities occurring locally.

There is currently no purpose-built facility of this nature in the townsite. There are a number of buildings that cater to some elements of this type of facility:

- town hall with activity areas, storage, kitchen and bathrooms (Shire owned and managed);
- library with various meeting areas (Shire owned and managed);
- football clubhouse and change rooms (club managed on land leased from the Shire – note that the buildings are in poor condition);
- Wundowie Workers Club (privately owned building owned and managed by the Wundowie Workers Club Association.)

There are also a number of sporting and recreation facilities, including two sports fields, tennis courts, skate park, playground and swimming pool.

Currently there are no organised sports offered in the Wundowie townsite, although informal recreation including swimming, tennis, walking and children's play-based activity takes place. The community consultation process indicated strong community interest in re-activating recreation and social activities within the community.

In determining the feasibility of a hub for Wundowie, it was an unusual situation to have a comparatively large community (for the Wheatbelt region) being in a position of having very few sporting and community groups. In most other communities, the study would look at how best to collocate a range of groups and activities into one facility, whereas the Wundowie community is in a position of needing to project what they perceive they would

like to have happening locally. As a result, this feasibility study has endeavoured to capture these aspirations and provide guidance on how these could be met (and how the eventual facility could be funded and operated). It is suggested that the next stage of this process be the investment of funds (potentially via grant funding) in supporting the initiation of community and recreation activities that utilise existing facilities. This would have several benefits, including but not limited to:

- building community cohesion and local leadership;
- identifying ‘what works’ in this space, and where the challenges are;
- provide evidence to grant funders of actual, rather than anticipated, need.

With regards to the caravan park, the development of a small-scale facility seems feasible although is unlikely to generate significant income for the community as there are currently very few opportunities for visitors to spend money locally (although increased visitor numbers would be likely to benefit existing local retailers). The development of a park may catalyse the development of micro-tourism operations.

3 Overview of Options

3.1 Facility Requirements

3.1.1 Community and Recreation Hub

Based on the Shire of Northam’s Long Term Financial Plan, which allocates of a budget of \$1.6m, and in light of feedback from the community about their anticipated needs, the concept design have allowed for the considerations below:

- A building less than 500sqm
 - 500sqm is the maximum permissible fire envelope for a building as prescribed by the National Construction Codes
 - A building exceeding 500sqm requires sprinkler systems, fire detection systems and fire rated walls and doors which will escalate costs beyond what is achievable for the Shire’s budget
 - The budget cannot realistically support a building larger than 450sqm
- 2 changerooms, player’s amenities, first aid and umpires’ room in accordance with the preferred facility guidelines for Local Level AFL clubs. The size and amenity provision requirements for AFL are the most onerous of all the codes – by providing fit for purpose AFL changerooms, the facility automatically caters to all other sports
- The changeroom requirements account for 176sqm of building which leaves 274sqm for the ‘Hub’
- The Hub:
 - 195sqm, which provides a maximum occupancy of 195 persons

- Toilet provisions are provided to cater for a maximum occupancy of 195 persons in accordance with the National Construction Codes
- Has a chair store so loose furniture can be conveniently stored for user groups requiring an empty floor
- Has a small office
- Has a kitchen/bar with dual-server windows to the Hub internally and covered external space
- Large operable facades to provide a 'soft edge' between the Hub and external covered areas
- Provides universal access throughout

3.1.2 Un-manned Caravan Park

A basic, short-stay caravan park should incorporate the following facilities as a minimum:

- Bays with either grass or gravel sites (with concrete pad if achievement within budget), ideally serviced with power and water. Bays should be easy to reverse a 22ft caravan into, with drive through bays if space permits.
- Basic ablution block with accessible toilets and showers.
- Dump point.
- Sheltered communal area, with gas BBQ and basic kitchen (sink and bench space) if budget permits.
- Information bay (potentially incorporated into communal area).

3.2 Locations

Following the engagement process, it was clear that some groups and individuals had strong opinions about particular locations, but there was no strong consensus about the appropriate location for a hub. To better assist the community to visualise the various locations that were discussed, three concepts have been presented to assist them in gaining agreement on a way forward. In addition to the development of a caravan park area, the three options developed for a community and recreation hub are:

- Develop of a new facility to replace the existing football club buildings on the eastern sporting grounds site (between football and hockey fields).
- Development of a new facility on undeveloped area on the western sporting grounds site (between football oval and hard courts).
- Expansion of the existing Wundowie Community Hall.

3.3 Overview of Concept Designs

In terms of building style, the design is informed by community suggestions that the architecture should speak to the industrial/agricultural/farming history of the town.

Each building is designed as a series of large span boxes which references the rural shed vernacular and provides an envelope which is simple, functional and flexible.

By eliminating dependence on internal load bearing walls, the building offers myriad options for internal use and function while remaining fully adaptable and open to changes of use into the future.

Roof forms are purely pragmatic – simple forms designed to be low maintenance and derived from the building's solar orientation and the need to provide protection from harsh summer sun while maximising solar penetration in winter. Deep verandahs create 'outdoor' rooms, provide shelter from weather and offer viewing platforms for external activities.

Operable windows have been used extensively to maximise use of natural light, provide cross ventilation and offer both visual and physical connections with the surrounding town and recreational areas.

The palette of materials has been chosen to reference the town's association with the iron industry. Expressed steel structure and timber frames have been designed to support locally available skills and locally sourced materials. Cladding the structure with a combination of galvanised corrugated steel and expanses of glass offer a contemporary interpretation on the outback shed.

The presented designs allow for the considerations outlined in 3.1 Facility Requirements.

3.3.1 Community & Recreation Hub Option 1

Option 1, as shown in SK101 is located on the site mooted in the Wundowie Community Plan and would see the removal of the three existing buildings that form the Wundowie Football Club.

SK102 shows the floor plan for this option, the long axis of the building is orientated in parallel with the ovals to the east and west to provide viewing opportunities to both ovals and the play area to the north.

The two changerooms have outward opening doors and are separate units to the rest of the building, allowing the individual rooms to be utilised without opening up the rest of the building.

This location requires a western orientation of the building and as such, a wide western covered viewing deck has been designed to reduce the impact of the afternoon sun as well as providing an opportunity for observation of sporting matches from the hub.

Consideration has also been given to potentially creating a landscaped amphitheatre style space on the northern side that could be utilised for community presentations with seating on the covered area of the hub and in the area directly in front of it.

The building is elevated to allow for better sightlines of the field and to respond to suspected low level flooding in this area during significant rain events. Universal access has been allowed for with a ramp located at the south western end of the building adjacent to the existing bitumen area and universal toilets within the facility.

SK103, SK104 and SK105 provide elevations and perspectives to give a sense of the building's potential exterior.

3.3.2 Community & Recreation Hub Option 2

This option considers the site on the opposite side of the football field, adjacent to the tennis courts and directly across from the community hall. This location could be more strongly connected with the townsite, particularly with the creation of more traffic calming and pedestrianisation of Banksia Avenue. During events, it would be possible to close Banksia Avenue between each intersection with Boronia Avenue with minimal impact on vehicle movements and create a pedestrian dedicated piazza between the Hub and Community Hall. The piazza acts to link the 'town centre' with the recreational precinct and also reinforces the symmetry and 'heart' of the Garden City town planning design.

The site for Option 2 allows for a north facing facility which will provide deep penetration of sunlight into the Hub during winter months. The Hub has two fully glazed edges both protected by deep roof overhangs which provide connection to the town centre to the north and the football oval to the east.

Drawing SK201 shows the building in its standard configuration, with two changeroom facilities and a large open plan hub area. As with option 1, the two changerooms and umpire's room have outward opening doors and are separate units to the rest of the building, allowing the changerooms to operate independently from the rest of the Hub.

Drawing SK202 shows an option to create a larger Hub with externally accessible public toilets which can be easily converted in the future if the need to provide changerooms arises in the future.

Like option 1, an elevated style has been adopted to create better viewing opportunities. Universal access is achieved with ground level entry on the northern side of the building and universal toilet facilities within the building.

SK203, SK204 and SK205 provide elevations and perspectives to give a sense of the building's potential exterior.

3.3.3 Community & Recreation Hub Option 3

Option 3 has been presented as a way to utilise existing facilities, reinvigorate the town centre and more strongly adhere to the principles of the Garden City Plan of the town and

the associated heritage implications on planning decisions (refer to Feasibility Study **Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found.**).

The Wundowie Community Hall is deliberately located precisely on the central axis of the heritage town plan and provides a strong focal point for the community, with the potential to really strengthen the draw of the town centre, with a positive flow-on of great foot traffic in the area for local businesses.

This design presents a solution with two key elements – a refurbishment and extension of the Town Hall, and the development of a smaller scale hub directly across from it, connected by a thoughtfully landscaped space between the two facilities. Like Option 2, this has real potential to be used to great effect during events, particularly with the temporary road closures suggested in Option 2.

Option 3 would see a smaller Hub developed as a north facing facility adjacent to the tennis courts. As illustrated in SK301, when utilised as a Hub, it offers a large open plan area for activities and some smaller offices potentially for use by visiting service providers and community groups. SK302 demonstrates how partition walls could be used to create changerooms for sporting activities and instead of office space the area be developed instead with players' amenities. Both options provide the potential to access the toilets from outside the building which could be useful during events where the Hub itself is not required. This smaller scale building offers universal access via the ground level northern veranda and universal toilets being located in the Hall.

As part of this development, it is recommended that first consideration is given to utilising the existing Hall which is still in good condition and offers many of the features the community identified as desirable. In SK303, in addition to cosmetic improvements/modernisation to the interior, it is suggested that the existing parking aisle (which is far in excess of standard width) be reduced to allow for glass fronted openings and wide covered area on the southern side of the building, along with outdoor seating and landscaping. This would deliver an attractive meeting place with the potential to be able to be used for community events and activities, with a good-sized kitchen and toilet facilities already available. Consideration may even be given to changing parking arrangements in the town centre to increase the size of the landscaped area and provide more places with passive recreation.

SK304, SK305 provide elevations and perspectives to give a sense of the Hall's potential exterior.

3.3.4 Caravan Park

Based on the topography of the area, it is recommended that the most suitable area to locate a caravan park would be where the current lower hockey field is. As presented in SK101, the design has been created to avoid encroaching on the remaining hockey field but

in close enough proximity that it could be used for overflow caravan or tent sites if the park was at capacity during an event or a visit from a caravan club.

In designing the park, consideration has been given to creating a layout that allows for drive through bays (attractive to caravaners with larger vans or motor homes) that offer a good degree of privacy with natural plantings around each site.

A modest ablution block and drive-through dump point is situated at the hockey field end of the park to allow for easy access by visitors using the overflow area and with the potential for the toilets to be used by players and spectators at sporting events on the field.

The page features several decorative geometric elements. A long teal line runs diagonally from the top left towards the bottom right. On the left side, there is a dark purple line forming a chevron shape pointing right, and a vertical teal line segment. On the right side, there are three nested orange triangles pointing right. The text is centered in the middle of the page.

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