

DURLACHER PRECINCT – (former PTA site)

March 2009



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1. INTRODUCTION

The City of Geraldton-Greenough (the City) is experiencing a resurgence of interest in development opportunities for mixed use development and tourism facilities as it is recognised as the Coral Capital of Australia's Coral Coast (the area between Leeman and Shark Bay/Ningaloo).

In this context the Public Transport Authority (PTA) has reviewed its land holdings and has identified land on the foreshore, overlooking Champion Bay and bounded by Marine Terrace, Foreshore Drive, Forrest Street and Durlacher Street, which is surplus to its requirements.

The land was previously part of the PTA Railway Marshalling Yards and is referred to as the "Durlacher Precinct". The railway and marshalling yards are no longer active and the line was removed in 2006. The site, which is approximately 8,500m² in area, is in a very prominent location in the heart of the CBD near the Geraldton Foreshore and presents a significant opportunity to create a world class mixed use development.

1.1 Background

Draft design guidelines for the site were prepared during 2004/05 to and were originally part of Amendment No. 32 to Town Planning Scheme No. 3 (Geraldton) which went through the statutory public consultation process.

The Amendment rezoned the site to "Marina" (with restricted uses) and during the finalisation of the Amendment the preferred approach was that the design guidelines would be subject to a further approval process independent of the Scheme Amendment.

Since this time the City of Geraldton-Greenough has commenced implementation of the Geraldton Foreshore Redevelopment Project,

which will provide greater public access to the Foreshore which fronts the Durlacher Precinct site.

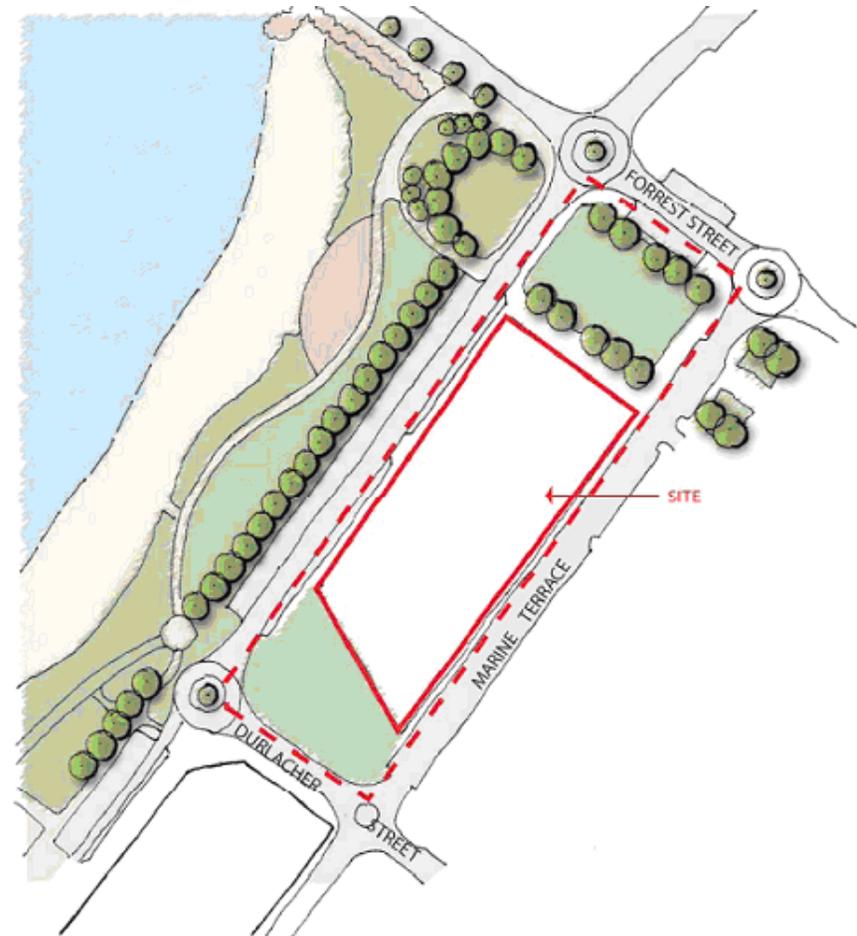


Figure 1 – Site Plan

1.2 Objectives

It is intended that development of the site will incorporate fundamental aspects of good city centre design that will contribute to a truly sustainable city.

In addition to the aims and objectives of the City Centre Planning Policy, the specific design objectives for the site are to:

- ♦ Maximise visual and pedestrian connections to the foreshore;
- ♦ Promote permanent residential, tourism accommodation and mixed use development;
- ♦ Increase the vitality and diversity of the beachfront promenade;
- ♦ Promote innovative and attractive development solutions that maximise the potential of the site; and
- ♦ Maximise the potential of the site's relationship to Champion Bay.

1.3 Durlacher Precinct Area

The subject precinct overlooks the beach and is bounded by Foreshore Drive, Forrest Street, Marine Terrace and Durlacher Street. The long rectangular site is orientated North West / South East. The land is level and presently cleared of structures. The City will be implementing civic spaces and public realm at either end. Foreshore Drive and the foreshore parklands represent the primary elements of the city centre enhancements. The street running in front of the development area (an extension of Foreshore Drive) will be a low speed environment encouraging pedestrian links from the site over to the foreshore parklands. The road carriageway will have traffic calming details at key locations. Expansive lawns for informal recreation will be bordered by paths and dual use paths linking areas of interest along the foreshore. Marine Terrace forms an extension of the primary retail and commercial centre situated to the east of the subject land.

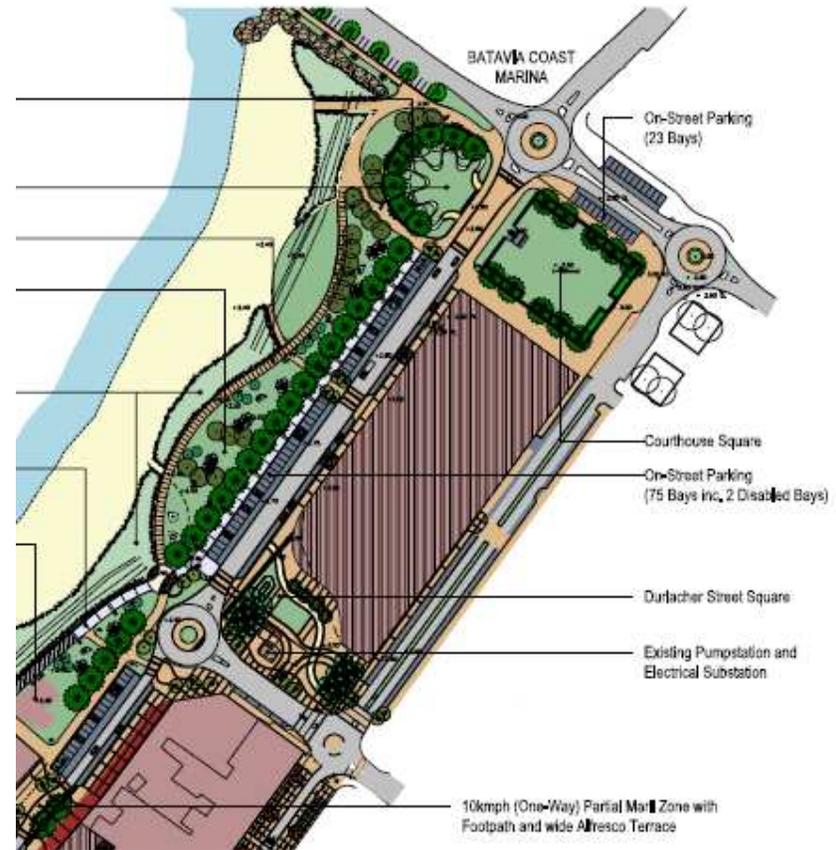


Figure 2 – Geraldton Foreshore Redevelopment Project (extract)

2. LAND USE

It is envisaged that the foreshore will be 'heart' of the city centre. A place where people live, rest and recreate and relax. At night its activity

could continue with restaurants, cafés and bars and other tourist attractions.

Public access to the Geraldton foreshore is provided by the open space with pedestrian linkages across Courthouse Square and Durlacher Square and other street improvements. This will include the incorporation of new traffic management techniques and streetscape enhancement encouraging pedestrian traffic between Marine Terrace and the foreshore. Foreshore Drive is to be realigned, extended and designed to become more pedestrian friendly. The provision of “mixed use” development and in particular a residential component will result in passive surveillance of this section of Marine Terrace as well as of Foreshore Drive and the Geraldton foreshore in general. It is envisaged that the inclusion of higher density residential accommodation will help enliven this part of the CBD making it a safer and more attractive place.

The subject land is in a prime location for a mixture of uses relevant to the urban centre. The area can accommodate hotel / mixed uses / residential / office / retail land uses and public realm spaces. Land uses should provide the maximum level of activity at street level, appropriate to this location in Geraldton.

The precinct will relate to the busy city centre and foreshore on the Durlacher Street side and to the quieter civic and heritage precinct of the Courthouse on the Forrest Street side. A tourism development option could maximize the use of the site for a hotel, serviced tourist apartments, café, restaurant, festival retail outlets and other related facilities. Residential elements should maximize the opportunities of the Foreshore Drive location.

A limited “thin skin” of retail, commercial and entertainment uses may be acceptable at street level along the development interface with Durlacher Square and possibly Courthouse Square. The retail uses proposed should be typical of the seaside location and offer facilities for tourists as well as those suitable for permanent residents, including kiosks, convenience shopping, and alfresco dining.

An opportunity may exist for “civic style” offices on the boundary of Courthouse Square.

As a permanent residential component is a desirable outcome for the site, is not considered appropriate that a night club use be permitted as conflict issues may arise. Additionally, for such an iconic site, a fast food outlet would not be in keeping with the landmark status of the precinct.

3. HEIGHT

The City considers that there is an opportunity to create a world class mixed use development and recognises that the site has the potential to contribute towards a nationally significant regional waterfront precinct.

Given the size, significance and location of the site along with the acknowledgement of what the site has contributed to the Geraldton Foreshore Redevelopment Project (Courthouse & Durlacher Squares and the accommodation of the extension of Foreshore Drive), the site is considered a “Landmark” site.

It is likely that the site will be required to establish a minimum floor level to allow for storm surge. It is likely that this will be in the range of 3.1m to 3.3m AHD (this is subject to verification from a qualified engineer).

The lowest occupied floor level on Foreshore Drive should be no more than 1.2m above the average natural ground level (ANGL) which allows a step up from the street level therefore accommodating potential undercroft carparking without the floor/door being separated from street level activity.

The lowest occupied floor level on Marine Terrace should no more than 100mm above ANGL to enable this floor level to connect directly with Marine terrace.

4. SETBACKS

Any façade of any floor level over the podium height shall be set back a minimum of 3m from the property boundary on all streets.

The increased podium height for street corners is also applicable to 4 corners of the site that front a street and the public Squares.

Awnings, verandahs and balconies which provide protection and shelter over pavements and outdoor activities, are strongly encouraged.

Development is encouraged which along Marine Terrace, Durlacher Street and Forrest Street frontages which retains a human scale minimising the impact on the historical buildings and the public Squares. Therefore the additional setback of 10m from the property boundary for the façade of any floor level in excess of 20m does not apply to the property boundary abutting Foreshore Drive.

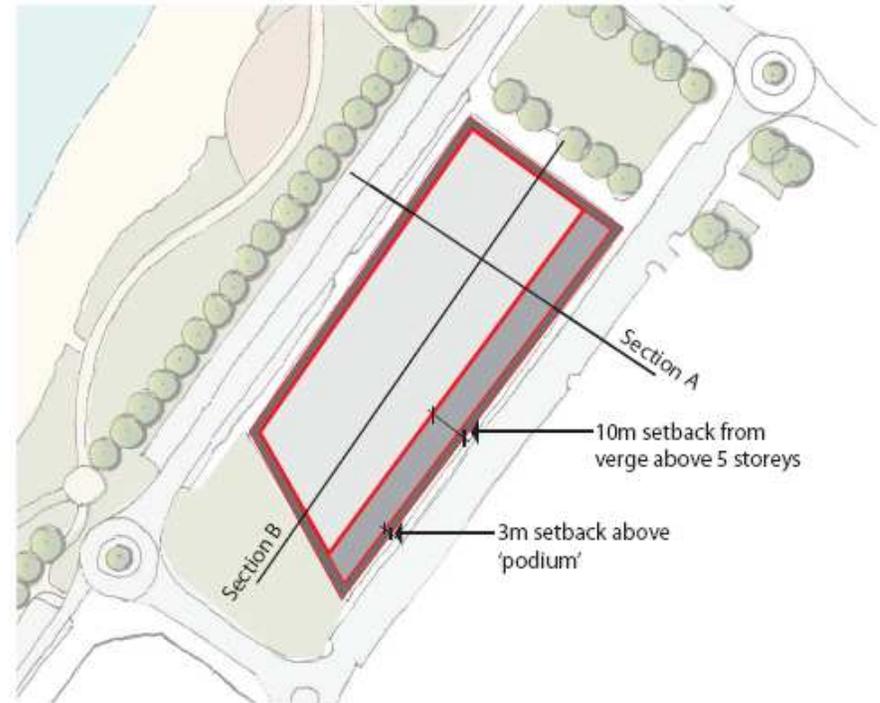


Figure 4 – Setbacks

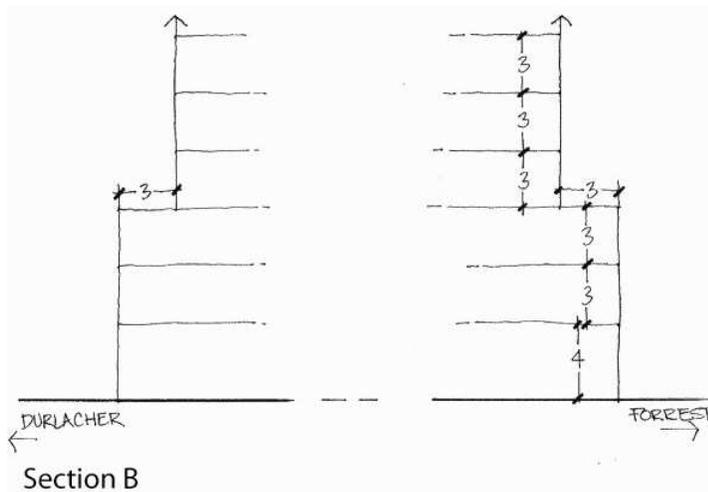
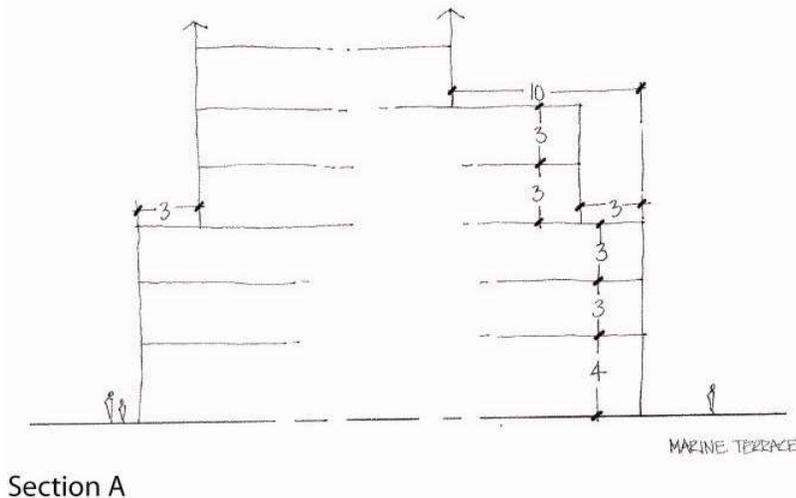


Figure 5 – Sections

5. BUILT FORM

The size and shape of the lot present a significant opportunity to create a holistic built form for this iconic precinct. Subdivision of the land into any more than 2 evenly sized vacant strata or freehold lots is not supported by the City as further subdivision may create a significant potential for the land to be developed in an ad-hoc manner, thereby compromising the full development opportunity of the site and its iconic, “landmark” status.

A strong architectural emphasis should be articulated on the corners fronting onto Courthouse Square and Durlacher Square.

Buildings fronting the street and public realm should face or address these public spaces, have large facades at street level and entries should be clearly visible.

New buildings on Foreshore Drive may be designed to incorporate qualities and detail which reflects the special ocean front setting.

A wide range of materials may be considered including clay bricks from red or earth colour palette, plantation timber, aluminium and steel. All materials should be selected and treated appropriately in accordance with prevailing weather conditions of the location. All materials should have a low level of reflectivity. Large expanses of unbroken and monolithic surfaces are not considered acceptable.

A wide range of roof forms may be considered. Most roofs in Geraldton are hidden behind parapet walls and the development may include similar treatment. Where visible, rooflines should be articulated to create a roofscape that is not dominated by one ridge line. Such roofs should be constructed to within the 25-32 degrees range. Gables are to be used rather than hips as they add interest to the street. Roofing materials should be non-reflective. Roofs and ridge lines should contribute to creating views/vistas down the valleys of the roof (generally run through, not across the block, north-west to south-east).

In very limited situations or as a temporary measure, an end wall may require articulation. Planting particularly climbing species is recommended at ground floor level and at upper level, recessed alcoves resembling fenestration is acceptable and possibly public art/murals.



Figure 6 – External Detailing

6. HERITAGE

New buildings should be designed to compliment the streetscape and not compete for attention with significant heritage buildings in the vicinity of the site such as the Courthouse and the Freemason’s Hotel.

Development of the site should maintain the significant vistas to the Courthouse and the Freemason’s Hotel.

Development is encouraged along Marine Terrace, Durlacher Street and Forrest Street which retains a human scale minimising the impact on the historical buildings (consistent with the principles of the City of Geraldton Development Guidelines prepared by Considine and Griffiths Architects, April 2003).

Development on the site will require a sensitive design approach and early consultation with the Regional Heritage Advisor and the Heritage Council of WA is considered essential.

7. PEDESTRIAN LINKS

This site will significantly enhanced the pedestrian experience through the creation of quality public urban spaces at its east and west extremities (Durlacher Street Square and Courthouse Square).

No other additional links are required for the site but at the design stage there may be the opportunity for internal arcade links.

8. TRANSIT PLANNING & CAR PARKING

All car parking shall be provided within the site and be wholly concealed and not visible from the street. The use of underground and under-croft car parking will enable the maximum use of the site.

The number of vehicle entrances should be minimised with the primary public access/egress from the site along Foreshore Drive. A maximum of 2 crossovers should be permitted onto Foreshore Drive with access onto Marine Terrace restricted a single point for service and emergency vehicles only.

All loading and turning movements by service vehicles should be made within the site.

9. SUSTAINABLE BUILDING & GREEN DESIGN

A minimal power supply will be available at the development site to satisfy development conditions however the developer of the site would be required to apply for a power upgrade possibly involving the incorporation of a substation site within the development.

10. ADDITIONAL CRITERIA FOR HEIGHT BONUSES

Given the iconic nature of this precinct, it is expected that the development will result in a world class mixed use development and accordingly will entail additional height.

The site is deemed 'Landmark' and it is considered that the site has met the following criteria for additional height as prescribed in the City Centre Planning Policy:

- ♦ Provided pedestrian and public access across the city via the public Squares (11a).
- ♦ Maximised the opportunity for views and view vistas via the setbacks and public Squares (11d).
- ♦ Full built form development of the site area is permitted (subject to setbacks) via the creation of the public Squares (11n, 11o, 11q & 11y vi).

- ♦ Provision of streetscape improvements and street parks via the extension of Foreshore Drive and the public Squares (11r).
- ♦ Included a community facility via the public Squares (11y i).

Modifications are proposed to the criteria for additional height as follows:

- ♦ Buildings may have their main axis running parallel to the foreshore as the provision of the public Squares and setbacks proposed have created significant view vistas (11m).

Other applicable criteria will need to be met by the design/development of the site itself in order to achieve a higher built form.

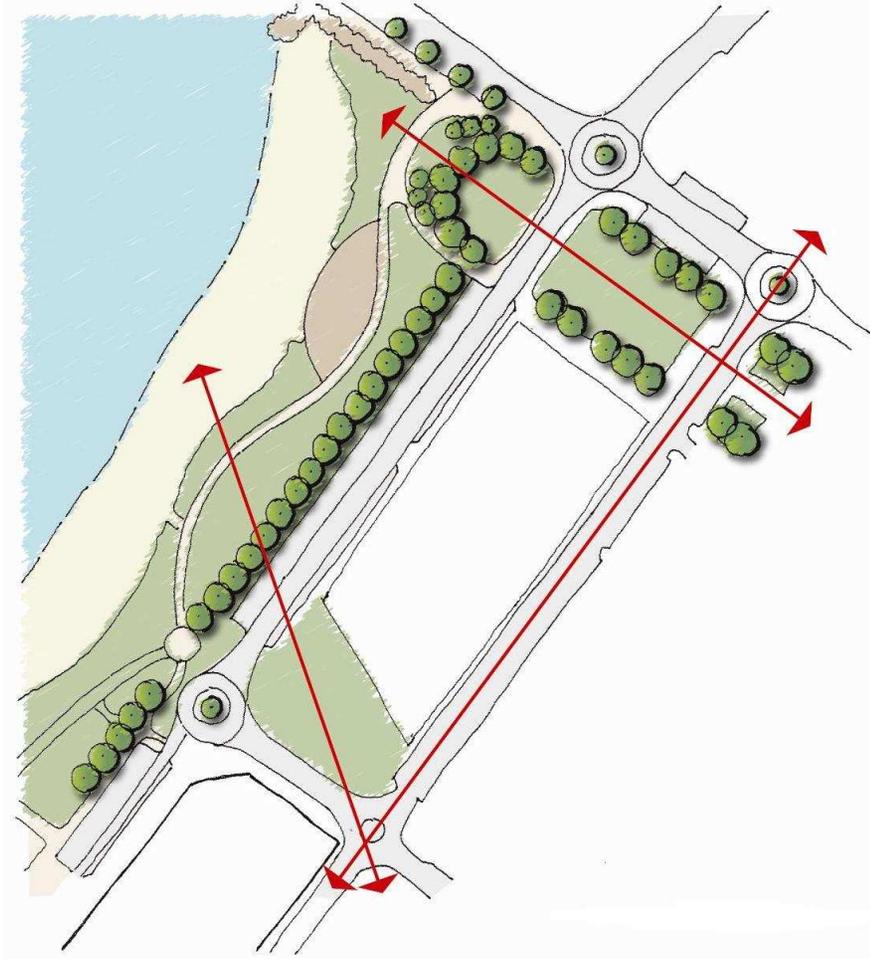


Figure 7 – View Vistas

11. APPLICATION INFORMATION

The size, significance and location of the site mandate that the City have enough detailed information at the planning application stage in order to fully understand, appreciate and assess the intent and impact of any proposed development and therefore the following should be submitted (in addition to the standard site plans, floor plans and elevations):

- ♦ An urban design statement;
- ♦ A full shadow and wind analysis for both summer and winter;
- ♦ 3D perspectives not only for the development itself but also in the context of the locality; and
- ♦ Full details of building materials and colours.