

Proposed development of the old Police Station and Courthouse site

To:	City of Greater Geraldton	From:	Joshua Carmody
Attention:	Councillors	Job No:	9191
Copy to:	Chief Executive Officer	Date:	13 February 2025
Subject:	Special Council Meeting – 14 February 2025 Proposed mixed development of old Police Station and Courthouse site		

Planning Solutions acts on behalf of DG Corp in relation to the application to develop the old Police Station and Courthouse site.

At the upcoming special meeting of Council on Friday, 14 February, we will request that Council support the Shire's recommendation by approving the proposed development.

Town planning considerations

From a purely town planning perspective—this development ticks every box: the land uses are capable of approval; the development is essentially compliant with the local planning scheme; the individual dwellings meet the provisions of the Residential Design Codes; and all other considerations are capable of being addressed via standard conditions of approval.

The only noteworthy variation involves the ground floor residential dwellings fronting Robinson Street.

These residential dwellings do **not** undermine the Shire's aspirations for commercial activity to extend along Robinson Street to the waterfront—in fact, they enable it by allowing for an innovative, interim solution: the units have been designed in such a way that they can be adapted for use as commercial tenancies at a future time when it would be viable to do so.

To demonstrate this, we have attached—

- A concept plan which demonstrates some of the ways in which these units could be modified for commercial activities;
- Photomontages illustrating how the adapted units would present to the street if used for commercial purposes

Instead of waiting decades for market demand, construction costs and financing to align in such a way as to make the delivery of 3,000m² of commercial floorspace viable—this development allows for incremental evolution and adaptation, consistent with more traditional patterns of regional development.

This is not to suggest that there would be no immediate commercial activity—the plans clearly show that the most prominent location (the corner of Olivia Terrace and Robinson Street) would be developed with a commercial building containing a café or restaurant.



Figure 1 – Photomontage of the proposed development looking north-east along Robinson Street

Benefits of the proposed development

Council previously approved a mixed-use development on this same site in 2023 that included a four-storey hotel with ground floor commercial tenancies.

With respect, whilst recognising the community aspirations for this site and the inevitable comparison between the current and former proposal—Council is required to assess the application in front of them on its own merits. It is our view that the proposed development retains the best qualities of the previous development whilst improving on the internal amenity, urban design and architectural outcomes, as follows—

- The development will continue to deliver a combination of residential accommodation that addresses a critical need for short and long-term accommodation within the Shire whilst meeting the preferences of future residents for lower-density accommodation.
- The development retains a **viable** café/restaurant on the prominent corner location providing a gateway to the town centre whilst drawing pedestrian traffic along Robinson Street in both directions.
- The two-storey scale of the development is wholly consistent with the existing scale of the town centre creating a seamless streetscape (refer photomontage below) with the building better suited to the high-wind conditions experienced on this site.
- The overall quality of the architectural treatment has been improved, in terms of cladding, materiality and landscaping which significantly improves this portion of the street.
- Adaptability has been worked into the design allowing the ground-level interface to Robinson Street to evolve and adapt over time to a much wider range of future commercial tenants than the large tenancies previously proposed did.

The seamless integration of the proposed development into the existing streetscape and the overall benefit that it will bring to the Town are best illustrated by the photomontage below and the additional montages attached.



Figure 2 – Photomontage of the development looking west from Robinson Street