



Capel Inn & Stables
96 Capel Drive, Capel

Proposed Development
Heritage Impact Assessment

Prepared for Doepel Marsh

October 2025

Griffiths Architects





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Cover: Capel Inn. Shire of Capel Collection, cwa-org-54-IMG1024

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Introduction

This Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) relates to the proposed development of the Capel Inn & Stables site located at 96 Capel Drive in Capel, Western Australia as prepared by Doepel Marsh.

The Capel Inn building was constructed in 1880 for Charles Properjohn. The building was to provide accommodation for six people, with a six stall stables, and stores to the large rear yard. The place is included on the Shire of Cape Municipal Heritage Inventory as a Category B place. The place is not included on the State Register of Heritage Places, but it is listed on the DPLH inherit database as Place No. 03027.

This HIA was prepared to meet the requirements of the Shire of Capel and the Heritage Council of Western Australia. The HIA analyses the significance of the existing building and what impacts the proposed development may have on the significance of the place.

The development proposes the general clearing of the site from the rear of the original inn building to construct short stay and over 55's residential accommodation with associated support buildings and amenity facilities. There are no works proposed to the Capel Inn building.

The proposed works will be assessed against the heritage values identified in the Statement of Significance for the Capel Inn & Stables and consider the impact that these works will have on the stated values.



Summary

The heritage values identified in the Statement of Significance for the Capel Inn and Stables are unimpaired by the proposed works. The proposed works will also have no detrimental impacts on the State Registered *St John's Anglican Church* located across Forrest Road to the west.

The proposed removal of selected outbuildings/sheds from varying time periods is an acceptable outcome and will not have negative impacts on identified heritage values. These outbuildings are representative of the site's development over time but individually carry little to no intrinsic heritage significance.

Most of the proposed works occur to areas to the rear of the Capel Inn / Tavern building that are not readily visible from the street. As there are no works proposed to the Tavern building, the existing Capel Drive and Forrest Road streetscapes remain largely unchanged, apart from the redesign of the existing car park.

The proposed make safe and remediation works to the stables allow the original section of the building to be retained in-situ and interpreted, a positive heritage outcome. The retrofitting of the newer section has little to no impact given this fabric is a later addition.

The proposed short-stay and over 55's accommodation incorporates setbacks that act as a buffer zone between heritage fabric and new construction. The setbacks mitigate the impacts on the significant fabric of the tavern building and stables, and retains important visual connections between the tavern and stables, and maintain the historic use association between them.

The proposals allow the tavern and stables to retain visual prominence and legibility in their immediate context, aiding interpretation, which is a positive heritage outcome.

The proposed development of the site provides new facilities to contemporary standards, improving the amenity and fostering the ongoing viability of the Inn through increased usage.

The proposed development has little to no impact on the place nor its contribution to the streetscape in the immediate context. The development is largely sympathetic to retained significant heritage fabric and provides a level of amenity which is both beneficial to the subject site curtilage and surrounding town. A positive outcome.



Location

The *Capel Inn & Stables* are prominently located on Capel Drive due south of the Capel River Road Bridge. The site is bound to its north across Capel Drive by Bottom Shops, a group of shops included on the Shire of Capel Municipal Heritage Inventory. Immediately west of the site are a mix of commercial and residential structures with no intrinsic heritage value. The *St John's Anglican Chapel*, a State Registered Place, and the Shire of Capel Administration Building and Library are located further west across Forrest Road. The Capel River runs along the eastern boundary of the site, and there are residential buildings along the southern boundary of the site. The site is located within a railway corridor (currently inactive), with the rail running along the south-east site boundary.



Figure 01: Location Plan, Capel Inn & Stables. Indicative site curtilage shown red. Approximate built curtilage of Inn & Stables buildings shown blue. Courtesy Landgate, accessed September 2025.



Heritage Listings

The Capel Inn & Stables site is included on the following Heritage Lists:

- Shire of Capel – Municipal Heritage Inventory – Category B – Adopted 01 August 1999.
- National Trust – Classified 14 June 2004.
- Statewide Hotel Survey – Completed 01 November 1997.

The place is not included in the State Register of Heritage Places, it is listed on the DPLH inherit database as Place No. 03027.

Listings typically relate to the inn building, its streetscape contributions, and historical associations. The stables building is identified as having social value due to its representation of a time where horse-drawn transport was the primary means of transportation.

Category B places within the Shire of Capel are places of considerable significance that are very important to the locality.

The Capel River Bridge located adjacent to Inn site is included in the Shire of Capel Municipal Heritage Inventory as a Category B place. The bridge itself will not be altered by the proposed works, though visual impacts to views and vistas will need to be considered.



Background

The following historic background is drawn from the inHerit entry page for the place, and is a general summary.

Charles Properjohn was the son of a John Properjohn who arrived in the Colony on c.1840 as a butcher-shoemaker with the WA Land Company. After giving up at Australind, he established a butcher shop in Bunbury. In 1870, after working at Capel Farm, Charles Properjohn left and purchased 18 acres being suburban lots 28 and 30 in the Coolingup Reserve. He built a bark hut on the bank of the river on his property. In 1880, the government negotiated a mail contract with Coob & Co. to have a regular mail service between Bunbury and Busselton on the inland route., with a place to spell the horses and passengers by the new bridge at the Capel River in the Coolingup Reserve. Properjohn won the contract to supply the horses and forage for the coaches and also acted as a relief driver.

In February 1880, he borrowed money to build an inn and stables on the south side of the river. He also successfully applied for a liquor licence. The comfortable and popular staging post did not prove viable enough, and in March 1882, it was advertised for sale. Unsuccessful in selling at the time, the financier later foreclosed, and Thomas and May (nee McCourt) Larkin purchased the place. Mary had formerly taught a Ludlow School. They renamed the Inn the Roadside Inn. After three years they had no success, and sold the inn. Between 1882 and when the Tren Creek Post Office closed in 1887 when the Coolingup Post Office opened, the post office was conducted from the back verandah of the inn. Stables are at the rear.

John Hutton and his brother Tom previously had a lease in Balingup, where they had forage for horses and a mail coach as well as the local post office and farming activities. When the Capel Inn was for sale, it was a good opportunity for John Hutton to go on his own. He took it over in 1885. It was difficult at first with only 36 people in the Coolingup settlement. He ploughed and seeded forage for horses, and soon ran the Inn from his own produce. Ann's widowed sister also assisted. JJ Hutton used to kill cattle in the stock yards and drag the carcasses to hang in a tree where the Anglican Church belfry is now located. (Capel Shire Local Studies Collection ref No. 325; Conversation with R Maidment 17th August 1994). The construction of a church in 1904 stopped that activity, and about that time, he sold the Inn to Gerald Stapleton. In 1904, a frog jumping competition was a popular event at the Inn.

In 1909, Aubrey Moore took over the lease and arranged for the stock sales yard to be built at the side of the hotel. The stockyards were used for pigs and cattle through until the 1930's.

In 1946, Fred Davies married the incumbent innkeeper, Margaret McCausland, who then quit the hotel. Les Davies started an SP bookie at the Inn until the Magistrate prosecuted him. In 1962, Percy Payne, long time owner sold to Maurice (Pope) Blechynden who was followed by his son Terry and his wife Kerry. The place was subsequently converted to a tavern with no accommodation.

RSL meetings were held at the Inn between 1919 and 1956, when the RSL Hall was built, and the first CWA meeting was at the Inn in 1934.



Physical Description

The following physical description is drawn from the inHerit entry page for the place and is a general summary.

The 1880 brick building provided accommodation for six people, with a verandah at the rear, a two room store, six stall stables, barn, stockyard and pasture for horses. In 1946 a brick ablution block was constructed off the rear verandah. The original building is still visible. The original separate kitchen now connects the building by additions in between over the years.

Proposals

Demolition/Removal

- Removal of sheds and outbuildings.
- Removal of selected trees generally in poor condition.
- General clearing of site to facilitate works.
- Removal of later walls within the stables area

Proposed Works

- Redesign of car park area to provide public and private parking spaces.
- Construction of pedestrian paths and internal vehicular ring road to provide access throughout the site.
- New short stay accommodation with a mixture of 2 and 3-storey.
- New amenities to support the short stay accommodation inclusive of bin storage areas and car parking.
- Retrofitting the newer sections of the stables building to accommodate short-stay activity area, storage and maintenance areas.
- Make safe works and conservation to original sections of stables building.
- New visually permeable fencing around retained original sections of stables.
- New landscape buffers and seating areas external to stables building.
- New over 55's accommodation in a mixture of 1, 2 and 3-storey builds.
- New over 55's clubhouse.
- New over 55's amenities inclusive of bin storage areas and car parking.
- New pétanque area and view deck toward south-east site boundary adjacent to the Capel River.

The following description of works has been condensed to focus on heritage impacts in relation to nearby heritage places, the Capel Inn, the stables building, and other ancillary structures or items impacting on identified heritage value.

The site for the proposed works is adjacent the State Heritage registered place *St John's Anglican Church* which is located across the Forrest Rd to the west. The proposed works do not have any impact



on the identified heritage values nor have any not impact on the landmark qualities of the Church. The general context between the Church and Capel Inn remains unchanged by the proposal.

Generally, the removal of the outbuildings does not impact on the heritage values of the place. The outbuildings were built at various time periods, some more recent than others, and are generally of a lesser quality construction than the main inn building. They are representative of the site's development over time but individually carry little heritage significance.

The proposed 3-storey short-stay apartment buildings to the south of the Capel Inn / Tavern building have been setback from the significant heritage fabric to provide a buffer zone between heritage fabric and new construction. The setbacks reduce impacts on the tavern building and retain the important visual connections between the tavern and stables, retaining their historic associations. The setbacks allow the tavern building to retain its visual prominence and legibility in the immediate context. The design and material selections of the proposed accommodation are sympathetic to the identified heritage fabric and values and are acceptable for implementation on site.

The scale of the 3-storey accommodation does not visually dominate the site or overwhelm the existing building, and its location at the rear of the tavern reduces its visibility from the street. The new constructions adjacent to the tavern building also have little to no impact on the identified heritage values of the place.

The site survey and photographs of the existing stables show that the structure is in a moderate state of disrepair with timber deterioration, detached fixings and racking structural members visible. The proposed works to the stables building have been divided into two parts; the remediation of the original section and the retrofitting of the newer section.

The original sections of the stables building will be made safe and remedial work undertaken to address the deterioration and stabilise the structure. Once remediated a visually permeable fence is proposed to be installed around the exterior of the original sections to restrict access, and to allow this section of the stables to be retained in-situ and interpreted in a managed state of disrepair, a positive heritage outcome.

The newer sections of the stables building will be retrofitted to provide an activity room which includes spaces for table tennis, a lounge and a TV area. Two smaller spaces on the northern side of the stables building will be adapted to accommodate e-bike storage and a maintenance area respectively.

Like the tavern building, proposed new construction adjacent to heritage fabric has been set back to provide a buffer zone containing a mixture of soft and hard landscaping, allowing the significant building to retain prominence and legibility in its immediate context.

Generally, the works will have no detrimental impacts on the *St John's Anglican Church* located across Forrest Road to the west. The heritage values identified in the Statement of Significance for the place will remain unimpaired by the proposed works. The proposed development of the site considers the



existing significant fabric through appropriate setbacks, form and scale, and sympathetic design and material palettes.

Statement of Significance

In this assessment, the proposed works are measured against the heritage values drawn from the Statement of Significance for the Capel Inn & Stables from the inHerit entry page for the place:

The place is of considerable significance in the history and development of the town of Capel. It has operated continuously in the hotel function since 1880, and is a landmark at the Capel Bridge. The hotel makes a significant contribution to the streetscape and townscape character of Capel Town.

Conservation Policy

There is no conservation management plan for the place, so good conservation practice is to accord with Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter principles guides practice.

Impacts and Mitigation

In this section, the proposed works are assessed against the heritage values identified in the Statements of Significance to consider the impact that these works may have on the existing sites and their heritage values. Where applicable, a mitigation strategy is recommended to reduce negative impacts on identified heritage values.

Capel Inn & Stables

Heritage Values	Impact Analysis	Mitigation
The place is of considerable significance in the history and development of the town of Capel. It has operated continuously in the hotel function since 1880, and is a landmark at the Capel Bridge. The hotel makes a significant contribution to the streetscape and townscape character of Capel Town.	There is no work that would detract from its landmark status. The proposed works occur to areas of the site that are set back from the street. The contribution of the Inn building to the streetscape and townscape remains unchanged.	No mitigation required.



Conclusion

The heritage values identified in the Statement of Significance for the Capel Inn and Stables are unimpaired by the proposed works. The proposed works will also have no detrimental impacts on the State Registered *St John's Anglican Church* located across Forrest Road to the west.

The proposed removal of selected outbuildings/sheds from varying time periods is an acceptable outcome and will not have negative impacts on identified heritage values. These outbuildings are representative of the site's development over time but individually carry little to no intrinsic heritage significance.

The proposed works occur mostly to the rear of the Capel Inn / Tavern building and are not readily visible from the street. As there are no works proposed to the Tavern building, the existing Capel Drive and Forrest Road streetscapes remain largely unchanged, apart from the redesign of the existing car park.

The proposed make safe and remediation works to the stables allow the original section of the building to be retained in-situ and interpreted, a positive heritage outcome. The retrofitting of the newer section has little to no impact given this fabric is a later addition.

The proposed short-stay and over 55's accommodation incorporates setbacks that act as a buffer zone between heritage fabric and new construction. The setbacks mitigate the impacts on the significant fabric of the tavern building and stables, and retains important visual connections between the tavern and stables, and maintain the historic use association between them.

The proposals allow the tavern and stables to retain visual prominence and legibility in their immediate context, aiding interpretation, which is a positive heritage outcome.

The proposed development of the site provides new facilities to contemporary standards, improving the amenity and fostering the ongoing viability of the Inn through increased usage.

The proposed development has little to no impact on the place nor its contribution to the streetscape in the immediate context. The development is largely sympathetic to retained significant heritage fabric and provides a level of amenity which is both beneficial to the subject site curtilage and surrounding town. A positive outcome.



References

Architectural Drawings 'Mixed Use Development – Capel, Development Approval Submission' Revision A, Doepel Marsh Architects, dated 31 October 2025.

Heritage Council of Western Australia. 2021. inHerit Registry Page – Capel Inn & Stables (fmr). Accessed September 2025.

Shire of Capel. 2017. Local Government Heritage Survey – Capel Tavern Place Entry.



Photographs



Photograph 01: Looking east showing existing carpark to be altered as part of the proposed works. Sheds visible to background are later additions and are to be removed.
Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.



Photograph 02: Looking south showing adjacent commercial premises located along Forrest Road.
Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.



Photograph 03: Looking south-east within carpark area showing existing site context.
Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.



Photograph 04: Looking south-west towards rear of adjacent commercial premises.
Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.



Photograph 05: General context photo of the site extents. Selected landscape elements in poor condition to be removed to make the site safe. Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.



Photograph 06: General context photo of the site extents. Selected landscape elements in poor condition to be removed to make the site safe. Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.



Photograph 07: General context photo of the site extents. Selected elements in poor condition to be removed to make the site safe. Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.



Photograph 08: General context photo of the site extents. Rear boundaries of Roe Street residences visible. Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.



Photograph 09: Looking towards rear boundaries of residences along Roe Street.
Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.



Photograph 10: Looking towards rear boundaries of residences along Roe Street.
Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.



Photograph 11: General context photo of the site extents on approach to south-east site boundary.
Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.



Photograph 12: Looking east towards Capel River Railway Bridge, outside the south-east site boundary.
Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.



Photograph 13: Looking north-east towards existing stables building. Newer section visible in the foreground.
Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.



Photograph 14: Looking north-east towards original section of stables building.
Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.



Photograph 15: Tree causing damage to south-east corner of stables building.



Photograph 16: Damage and other organic growth visible to stable roof structure.
Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.



Photograph 17: Looking south west showing poor condition and deterioration of existing stables building. Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.



Photograph 18: Looking south-west showing east elevation of stables building. Damage being caused by vegetation and other deterioration visible. Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.



Photograph 19: Internal view of stables showing current use as a store room.
Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.



Photograph 20: Internal view of stables building showing poor condition of timber members.
Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.



Photograph 21: Internal view of stables building showing poor condition of timber members.
Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.



Photograph 22: Internal view showing newer section of stables building.
Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.



Photograph 23: Internal view of original stables. Structure to be made safe as part of the proposed works.
Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.



Photograph 24: Section of original stables to be made safe as part of the proposed works.
Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.



Photograph 25: Section of stables to be made safe as part of the proposed works.
Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.



Photograph 26: Surrounding context of stables. Fencing and vegetation to be removed as part of the proposed works. Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.



Photograph 27: View of later shed additions/ extensions to be removed as part of the proposed works.
Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.



Photograph 28: View of later shed additions/ extensions to be removed as part of the proposed works.
Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.



Photograph 29: Later shed additions/ extensions to be removed as part of the proposed works.
Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.



Photograph 30: Later shed additions/ extensions to be removed as part of the proposed works.
Courtesy Doepel Marsh, August 2025.