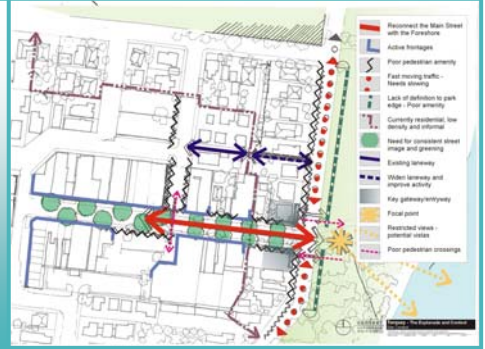


# Torquay Town Centre Foreshore Zone Design Guidance



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Reviewed by Planning by Design



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# 1 Design Guidelines Context

## 1.1 Introduction

The following guidelines have been prepared by Context Conybear Morrison and Surf Coast Shire to guide development in the eastern end of the Torquay Town Centre, abutting the foreshore (referred to as the 'Foreshore Zone').

These guidelines will facilitate the change of character of the existing residential areas, to commercial and compatible tourist related activities.

## 1.2 Aims

The aims of this document are:

to establish guidelines for individual sites that encourage the coastal character of the built form in the study area; and

to recognise and reinforce the aspirations for a change in character of The Esplanade and immediately beyond from residential to mixed commercial/residential/tourist.

This document is not intended to identify or establish the specific detail design of the precinct through this transition, rather to outline the preferred development objectives and identify techniques that will achieve the desired future character.

This document will be used in the assessment of proposals for new development within the study area.

## 1.3 Study Area

The study area is a strategically important precinct within Torquay with the potential to reinforce a strong link between the foreshore and the commercial core.

The study area comprises land fronting The Esplanade, Zeally Bay Road, Cliff Street and Gilbert Street. The key frontage and the focus of this study is the Esplanade where the change in character will be most marked. See attached site plan for details (Figure 1).



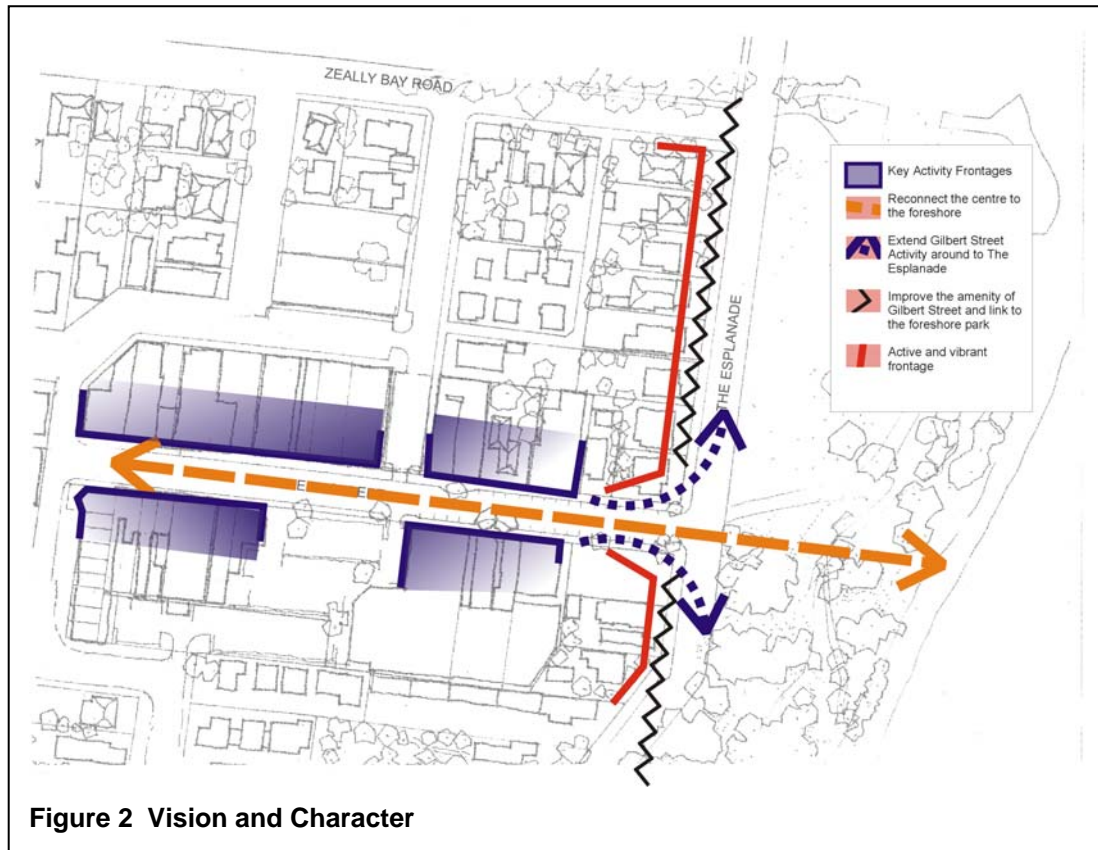
Figure 1 Study Area



## 2 Urban Design Analysis

### 2.1 Vision and Character of Torquay Town Centre

Council's vision for Torquay Town Centre seeks to consolidate the town centre and strengthen the connection of the business core to the foreshore. The evolution of The Esplanade, adjacent to the Torquay Town Centre to accommodate a range of ancillary commercial and tourist related uses that will complement the commercial activities in the Gilbert Street core of the Torquay Town Centre will facilitate this and, improve the amenity of the foreshore. The guidelines seek to reinforce this vision of Torquay's future development and ensure that new buildings within this area contribute positively towards the coastal town centre's unique, form, scale and character. (Refer Figure 2).



The overall vision for the development for the Torquay Town Centre is addressed in the Surf Coast Planning Scheme (21.10-5), which states:

The Torquay Town Centre will be strengthened, expanded and promoted as the commercial focus and civic hub of Torquay-Jan Juc. A wide range of retail and tourist related activities as well as complementary apartments and tourist accommodation will be encouraged to give life and vitality to the Centre during and outside business hours.

Over time, a number of distinct nodes will evolve throughout the Centre, each serving a particular market. This will include a change in emphasis that will focus core retail and business activities at the western end, and encourage a progressive build up of tourist activities at the eastern end, creating viewsheds and greater functional links to the foreshore.

The Town Centre will develop in a manner which enhances the beach, surfing and coastal character of the town. People visiting the Centre should feel a sense of place which is recognisably Torquay and reflects its image as one of Australia's greatest surf beach environs.

Surf Coast Style will be part of realising this image and is an evolving theme that will be integral to the realisation of development proposals.”

## 2.2 Precincts

The Council’s vision for the town centre as referenced in the MSS currently highlights the development of distinct precincts. The study area largely comprises Precinct 3 and Area D, the visions for which are described below:

‘Precinct 3 – tourist related uses (and possibly some apartments and resort type accommodation) at the eastern end of Gilbert Street and along The Esplanade, particularly cafes eating establishments and uses which support recreational activities.’

Area D is in the north west corner of the study area and proposes a slightly different treatment to that of precinct 3. This area is currently identified in the MSS as being:

‘..earmarked for possible office development, as well as medium rise residential apartments or tourist accommodation, to create a people environment and give greater life to the Town Centre outside business hours. Consideration will be given to residential or tourist accommodation up to four storeys (or 13.5m) in height to allow upper level apartments to take advantage of sea views. Any views above second floor level will be protected by limiting the height of buildings on The Esplanade to two storeys (7.5m).’

Since the adoption of these visions in the MSS in 2000 a review of the Torquay and Jan Juc Retail Strategy was undertaken in 2005 as part of the preparation of the Torquay Jan Juc Structure Plan. This strategy continues to promote the overall vision for the Torquay Town Centre as earlier described. Significantly however the review suggests a move away from nominating designated office precincts. The review notes that the maintenance of the Zeally Bay Road precinct is inconsequential to the development of a higher order office market in Torquay, and allowing a broader range of commercial activity in this precinct would provide greater flexibility and adaptability of this precinct which would benefit the strength and vitality of the town centre.

In a similar vein, the Structure Plan proposes the retraction of Precinct 3 (Special Use Zone) from properties along Gilbert Street, such that the tourist retail emphasis is concentrated solely on properties with frontage to The Esplanade. Again, the rezoning of this end of Gilbert Street to Business 1 will allow market forces to determine the mix of retail occupancies of these premises, while Council can continue to encourage a tourist element through the appropriate street treatment.

Finally, the preparation of these design guidelines and the approval process for the re-development of the former primary school site (Torquay Central), has questioned the appropriateness of promoting four storey development (13.5m) in any one section of the town centre whilst limiting development in an adjacent section to two storey development (7.5m). It is noted that the Torquay Central development gained approval for a small section of three storey development to a height of 12.3 metres (comprising a 4.5m approx first floor retail level with two residential levels above).

A large variation of development height in various precincts appears to have little supporting merit. Conversely, there is a case that development up to three levels in height along The Esplanade will help to raise the profile of this section of The Esplanade, reinforcing its mixed use role as a tourist / accommodation node on the edge of the main retail trade centre. In this vein, a more uniform set of design guidelines is recommended to be applied to the study area. This includes a redistribution of preferred heights that will allow consideration of buildings up to three storeys (10.5m) throughout the ‘Foreshore Zone’, supported by detailed design considerations that are sympathetic to the local character of the streetscapes and surrounding development / land use.

### 2.3 Existing Character

The existing built character of the study area is comprised of residential areas along The Esplanade, the east side of Cliff Street and south side of Zeally Bay Road, and a mixture of residential and commercial uses along Gilbert Street.

The existing residential character is low-density, one to two storey houses, with generous setbacks from the property boundaries. Buildings generally cover around half of the relatively wide plots and are setback on all sides usually with garage access from the front.

The character of The Esplanade and Zeally Bay Road is open and green with large front setbacks and views to parkland and the sea behind. The foreshore park abutting The Esplanade is the green buffer between the beach and the town, and is a key visual focus as the endpoint and anchor to the Gilbert Street commercial area.

Typically, the building style and materials are diverse, but predominantly reflect the coastal character with lightweight structure, light colours and front verandas/balconies, which maximise the aspect to the beach.

### 2.4 Taylor Park Landscape Master Plan

The Taylor Park Landscape Master Plan was prepared for the Great Ocean Road Coastal Committee in 2000, the key features of which include:

- Informal, unsealed parking along the Zeally Bay Road reservation, providing overflow spaces for the Torquay Town Centre and the foreshore.
- Planted end path entries at Walker and Cliff Streets to encourage access to and use of Taylor Park by shoppers.
- Picnic barbecue areas adjacent to Cliff and Walker Streets to provide convenient resting points for shoppers walking through Taylor Park to the Town Centre and to encourage use of the park by shoppers and workers.
- This plan provides the context for how adjacent development might address Taylor Park.

### 2.5 Jump Starting the Heart

The Torquay Town Centre Revitalisation Project report, 2001 prepared by Fisher Stewart provides further context to the development of urban design guidelines for the study area. The streetscape design concept contained within this report is intended to reinforce the coastal village character of Torquay and strengthen the role of the town centre as the hub of commercial and retail activity and as a popular tourist destination, and proposes:

“The goal is to create a vibrant, distinctive and active precinct. The focus will be on pedestrian activity and developing an interactive and exciting commercial zone which offers a quality shopping experience, features attractive and striking artworks and street furniture, and encourages people to spend time in the area.

Integration of the precinct with the foreshore and Taylor Park will be achieved through the use of design features and the opening up of view corridors to these areas.

The ocean, surf and beach character of the area will be reinforced through the use of a whimsical, contemporary sea creatures theme. Paving, street furniture and artworks will be based around this theme, drawing on the form and movement of the creatures of the sea rather than presenting literal reproductions.”

The Streetscape Master Plan incorporated in the Revitalisation Project report is an important reference and guide to integrating urban design in the ‘Foreshore Zone’ with the balance of the town centre.

## 2.6 Foreshore Coast Action Plan – Central Torquay

The Great Ocean Road Coastal Committee has recently adopted a coast action plan for improvement works along the foreshore opposite the study area. Features of this plan that should be considered in the development of design guidelines include the parking and intersection treatments along The Esplanade and the landscape features / improvements of the Yellow Bluff foreshore reserve area. The pedestrian linkages proposed in particular will greatly influence the relationship and role of the Study Area with the foreshore. (Refer to Figure 3).

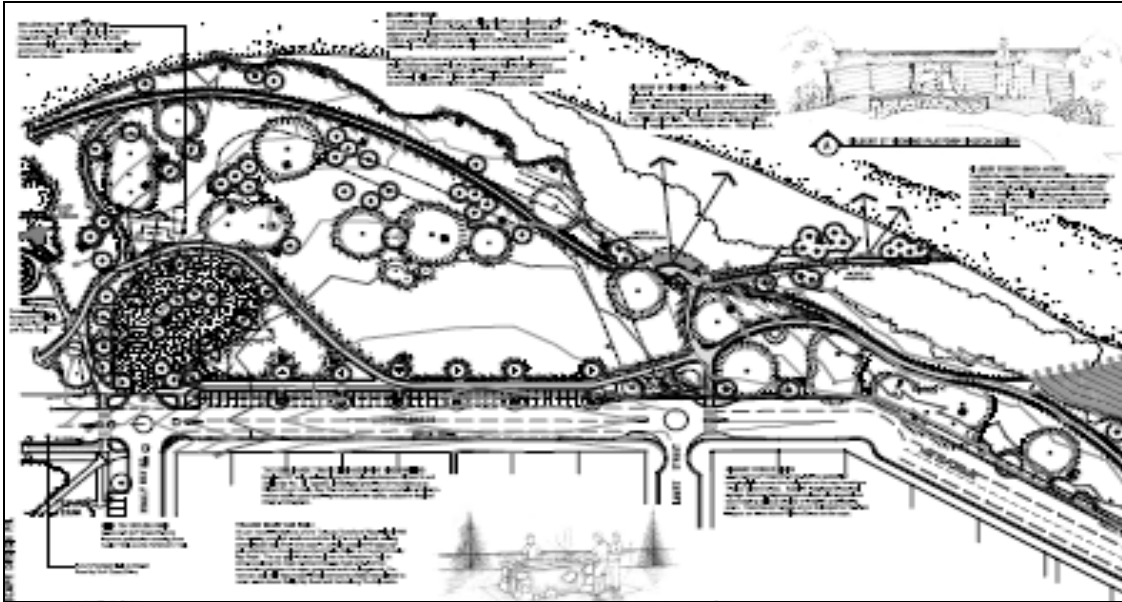


Figure 3: Extract Coast Action Plan, Torquay

## 2.7 Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

The Torquay Town Centre Car Parking Strategy 2020 was adopted by Council in March 2006. This strategy addresses the provision for car parking in the town centre taking into account the projected growth of the centre. In so far as the strategy affects the land subject of this Design Guidance, it makes the following recommendations:

- Car parking rates for commercial (non residential or tourist accommodation) should be applied at the ratio of 4.5 spaces/100sqm of net leasable ground level floor area, and 3.5/100sqm of net leasable above ground floor area. Clause 52-06 Planning Scheme rates will apply to taverns and hotels that have a floor area in excess of 100sqm.
- Street parking along The Esplanade is to be provided as parallel parking on the western side and 60 degree angle parking on the foreshore (eastern) side. This arrangement should retain the existing kerbline on the western side.
- Development of sites fronting The Esplanade are to provide for rear parking accessed from the laneway off Zeally Bay Road. This laneway is to be widened to about 11.5 metres with 90 degree parking on both sides of the re-aligned laneway. Individual driveways from The Esplanade will be discouraged. Rear parking will provide for public and staff parking. Parking associated with residential accommodation should be integrated with the development on site.

### 3 Proposed Character

The proposed character for the study area is a more urban, active and intensively built environment than currently exists. The proposed change in character will encourage a greater diversity of land use and draw the vibrancy and activity of Gilbert Street towards the foreshore.

The proposed character of the 'Foreshore Zone', and The Esplanade in particular, is that of a consolidated coastal strip of medium scale buildings that contribute an active edge to the park and the foreshore. Built form in this area should have a distinctive built frontage that ensures quality public space and active use of The Esplanade frontage, with a generous promenade incorporating features such as lightweight canopies / awnings, balconies and retractable 'fold back' doors. Building design should reflect the coastal environment through the innovative use of materials, lighting and surface materials and should take advantage of the coastal aspect. Building design should also incorporate and reflect environmentally sustainable design (ESD) principles

In summary, the desired future character of the precinct is to comprise:

- Medium scale development with varied heights up to three storey;
- Active edges;
- Building design that reflects the coastal environment through the use of appropriate surface materials, colours, lighting etc;
- Building design that reflects the principles of environmental sustainability;
- Innovative façade treatments and building forms with roof forms and materials that complement the building design and contribute to interest and variety of the streetscape;
- Colours of materials that complement the existing natural and built environment;
- Light weight canopies and balconies, and
- Selective and clever use of planting to soften and highlight without dominating.

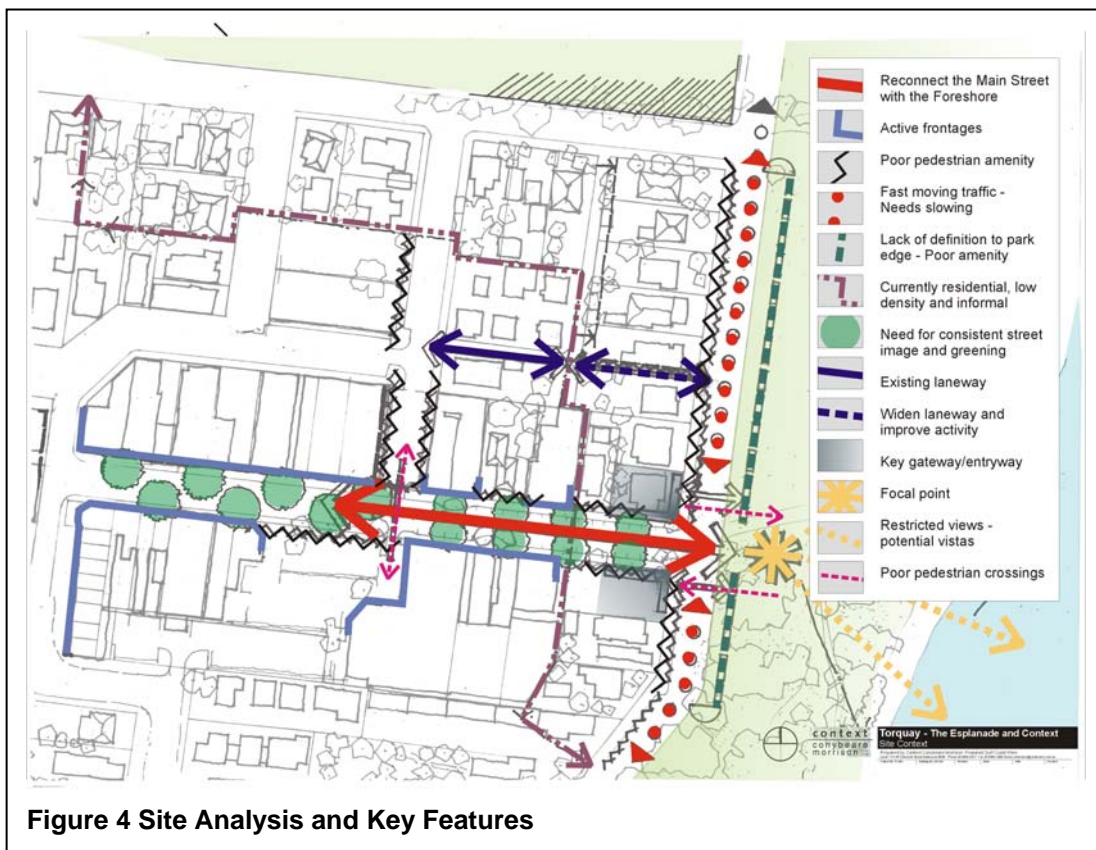


Figure 4 Site Analysis and Key Features



## 4 Urban Design Guidelines

In addition to the overall design principles for the 'Foreshore Zone', the following more specific guidelines are provided to guide development of new buildings, and the re-development of existing building.

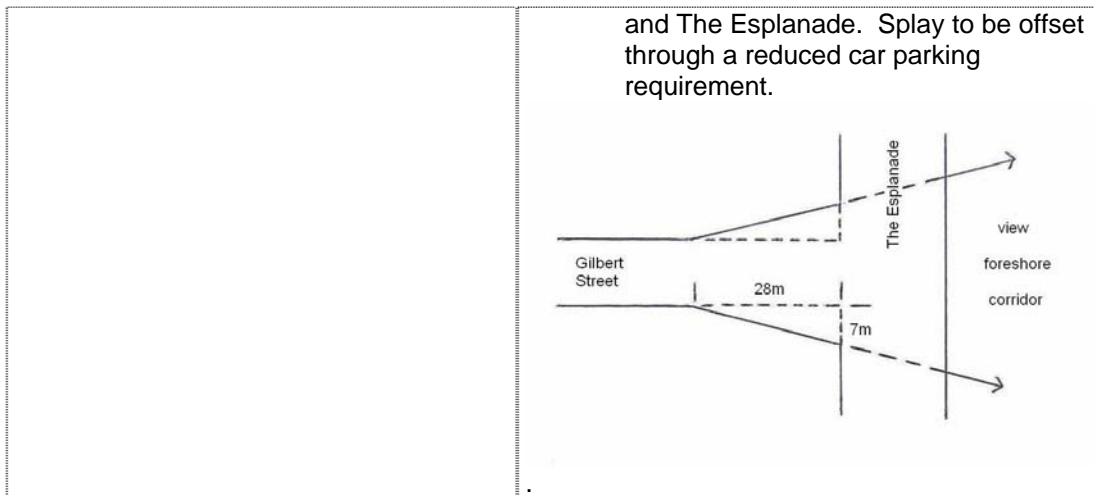
The purpose of these guidelines is to assist property owners and prospective developers to achieve appropriate forms of development within the 'Foreshore Zone'. The guidelines are designed to reinforce the proposed character of The Esplanade and immediate area inland, and to reflect the vision for the Torquay Town Centre.

The guidelines outline objectives and techniques for achieving appropriate form for the following:

- Setbacks
- Height
- Architectural Detail
- Landscaping
- Access
- Signage

The guidelines establish, in Column 1, the desired design objective and, in Column 2, suggest some techniques / requirements and preferred approaches that should be considered in order to achieve the relevant objective.

<b>4.1 Building Setbacks – Ground Level</b>	
<b>4.1.1 Street Frontages</b>	
<i>Objective</i>	<i>Technique</i>
O1 To encourage greater activity and intensity of built form and good connectivity within and external of the town centre.	T1 Building setback to achieve a minimum 6m wide promenade along The Esplanade to encourage outdoor dining areas and retail activity and accommodate street planting. Some variation in frontage setback is preferred.
O2 To promote consistency in the streetscape, and complement the character of the street and land use opposite.	T2 Building setback as may be required to achieve a minimum 3m wide footpath along Zeally Bay Road and provision for street trees to complement Taylors Park.
O3 To maximise the visual connection of Gilbert Street with the foreshore.	T3 Building setback to achieve a minimum 3m wide footpath along Cliff Street frontage after allowing for 90degree parking on the eastern side of the road, (refer Torquay Town Centre Car Parking Plan).
	T4 'Zero' lot line along the Gilbert Street Road frontages provided a minimum 3m wide unobstructed footpath is maintained.
	T5 'Zero' setback splaying out to 7m along the Gilbert St frontage for the properties at the corner of Gilbert St



<b>4.1.2 Side Boundary Setbacks</b>	
<i>Objective</i>	<i>Technique</i>
O4 To limit overlooking and present a predominantly built frontage to the street.	T6 'Zero' setback on side boundaries at ground level to best utilise available space given frontage and rear setback requirements.
O5 To maximise potential commercial frontage and safe pedestrian movement along the footpath.	T7 Front driveways with side access to be avoided.

<b>4.1.3 Rear Street Setbacks</b>	
<i>Objective</i>	<i>Technique</i>
O6 To provide for vehicle access and service access at the rear of properties.	T8 Buildings on properties with frontage to The Esplanade set back from the rear boundary to provide space for dual 90 degree angle parking, pedestrian access, and service delivery.

<b>4.2 Building Setback – Above Ground Level</b>	
<b>4.2.1 Street Frontages</b>	
<i>Objective</i>	<i>Technique</i>
O7 Buildings above ground level should be designed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ preserve sunlight access to the street;</li> <li>▪ minimise overshadowing of active public areas and private open space and living areas; and</li> <li>▪ promote activity and surveillance of the street.</li> </ul>	T9 Second and third storey building components (including balconies, balustrades, sunshades, pergolas etc) setback from The Esplanade frontage so as not to cause additional overshadowing of the front setback area/footpath at the 2pm equinox.
O8 Buildings above ground level on the periphery of the centre should respect the surrounding land use and building form.	T10 Second and third storey levels stepped back from Zeally Bay Road and Cliff Street frontages in average 3m increments to achieve visual interest and opportunity for privacy separation. Variation in setback to create interest in building form is encouraged.

		T11	Any third storey building component (including balconies, balustrades, sunshades, pergolas etc) setback from Gilbert Street frontage (north side) so as not to cause additional overshadowing of the footpath between the 11am and 2pm equinox.
<b>4.2.2 Side setbacks</b>			
	<b>Objective</b>		<b>Technique</b>
O9	Side setbacks at upper levels should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>maintain the distinction between private and public space,</li> <li>minimise overshadowing of active public areas and private open space and living areas, and</li> <li>not diminish the amenity of private space through overlooking.</li> </ul>	T12	Setbacks at the northern side of dwellings to maximise solar gain.
		T13	Third storey levels setback from the southern property boundary so as not to cause overshadowing of the adjoining property at that level between 9am and 3pm at the equinox.
		T14	Minimal windows and balconies on southern side of development that adjoins another property.

<b>4.3 Building Height</b>			
	<b>Objective</b>		<b>Technique</b>
O10	To encourage modest building heights that provide opportunity for increasing density and achieving a mixed land use compatible with the coastal character and scale of the town centre.	T15	Buildings (including service installations and other appurtenances of a building) not exceeding 3 storeys and 10.5 metres in height. Higher elements must be supported with detailed design considerations that go the extra distance in achieving the objectives of these guidelines.

<b>4.4 Architectural Detail</b>			
<b>4.4.1 Facades and Style</b>			
	<b>Objective</b>		<b>Technique</b>
O11	To promote architectural style that is in keeping with the coastal character of Torquay. Overall style should be lightweight and have a contemporary feel that reflects the current era. Bulky heavy looking buildings should be avoided.	T16	Ground floor facades that activate the street and have a high proportion of glazing to promote visibility into and out of buildings.
		T17	Retractable (fold back) doors used to integrate outdoor dining areas with indoor areas.
O12	To encourage the identification of the corners of Gilbert Street and Zeally Bay Road with The	T18	Innovative use of materials that reflect the coastal character of Torquay.
		T19	Building articulation and detail that

Esplanade as gateways through strong / innovative architectural treatment.	T20	adds visual interest to the street. Incorporation of a faceted or curved edge to the built form on the corner site of Zeally Bay and The Esplanade to improve pedestrian flow.
	T21	Balustrades that are at least 75% transparent.

#### 4.4.2 Canopies and Verandahs

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Technique</b>
O13 Canopies should reinforce the coastal character of the street and balance the provision of protection from sun and rain with maintaining solar access to the footpath.	T22 Canopies or awnings that are light weight, retractable or semi permeable, that do not cause additional (permanent) overshadowing of The Esplanade footpath at the 2pm equinox.
	T23 Canopies consistent with building style, and in Gilbert Street reflect the prevailing form of canopies in that street.

#### 4.4.3 Balconies

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Technique</b>
O14 Balconies should add activity and surveillance of the street from an upper level.	T24 Balconies located at the front &/or rear of buildings.
O15 Balconies should not unduly impact on the amenity of adjacent properties.	T25 Balconies discouraged at the sides of buildings where they may cause direct overlooking of adjacent properties.

#### 4.4.4 Roof pitches and the design of parapets

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Technique</b>
O16 Variations in roof form should reinforce a distinctive streetscape silhouette.	T26 Innovative roof forms that reflect the coastal style, typically pitched, hipped, gabled, barrelled or flat roofs
	T27 Roof pitches less than 30 degrees.

#### 4.5 Landscaping

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Technique</b>
O17 The landscape character of the area should enhance and define a distinctive character of the streetscape and buildings and should protect any significant existing vegetation on site and in the adjacent road reserve.	T28 Specimen trees, street furniture and art work incorporated into the footpath design along The Esplanade and Zeally Bay Road to Council's satisfaction.
	T29 Any additional 'in-ground' planting integral to the design of the adjacent development.



	T30	Balconies softened with landscaping contained in planters.
	T31	In ground landscaping and planters to have automatic irrigation systems.
	T32	Use of hardy plants appropriate to coastal conditions and therefore likely to maintain a healthy appearance.
	T33	On street planters used to highlight and define the character of individual commercial properties and outdoor eating areas.
	T34	Sturdy planters that reflect the coastal character/geology by using local materials and coastal textures and designed to comply with Local Policy 22.05 Surf Coast Design and Colours.
	T35	Planters and 'in ground' planting that does not severely disrupt the movement of pedestrians.

<b>4.6 Access</b>		
	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Technique</b>
O18	Potential for vehicle and pedestrian conflicts should be minimised, while maximising pedestrian connectivity within and external of the town centre.	T36 Properties with rear lanes accessed by vehicles from the rear only.
		T37 No vehicle access directly off The Esplanade except for properties where no rear access is possible.
O19	Laneways should be maintained and where possible, extended.	T38 Easy, safe and attractive pedestrian links between car parking areas and the public street network maintained and improved.

<b>4.7 Signage</b>		
<b>4.7.1 The Esplanade and Zeally Bay Road</b>		
	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Technique</b>
O20	Signage fronting the foreshore reserve and Taylor Park shall be understated and designed as part of the building architecture.	T39 Signage not displayed above ground floor level.
		T40 Signage that is discrete and not dominating the frontage.
		T41 Signage for identification purposes only and not for product advertising.

<b>Precinct 3</b>	<b>Planning scheme controls</b>	<b>Decision guidelines</b>
Above-verandah sign Pole sign Reflective sign	<u>Permit required.</u>	Avoid.
Animated sign Bunting sign High wall sign Major promotion sign Panel sign Reflective sign Sky sign	<u>Prohibited</u>	Not applicable.
Bed and breakfast sign Home occupation sign	<u>No permit required</u> if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only one sign to each premises</li> <li>• The advertisement area does not exceed 0.2sqm.</li> </ul>	If condition not met, avoid.
Business identification sign	<u>Permit required.</u>	Refer to general decision guidelines above.
Direction sign	<u>No permit required.</u>	Not applicable.
Floodlit sign	<u>Permit required</u>	Illumination levels should not cause detriment to the amenity of nearby dwellings. Refer to general decision guidelines above.
Internally-illuminated sign	<u>Permit required</u>	Illumination levels should not cause detriment to the amenity of nearby dwellings. Refer to general decision guidelines above.
Promotion sign.	<u>Permit required</u> <u>Prohibited</u> if advertising area exceeds 2 sqm.	Avoid.