



HERITAGE & BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES



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Sawtell

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Coffs Harbour City Council

By

Hansen Partnership Pty Ltd and City Plan Heritage



CITY PLAN HERITAGE

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SCANNED

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HERITAGE AND BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 General

Sawtell is a small township located approximately 6 kilometres south of Coffs Harbour City (See Figure 1). The village centre is located adjacent to the coast between the Boambee and Bonville Creeks and is orientated generally in a north south direction. Its character and charm is unique in this local area, largely contributed to by the established planting within the median strip. Development along First Avenue is mixed but reflects a predominant 1950s theme and era. This development includes items worthy of preservation through retention and maintenance or restoration as 'heritage' items.

Whilst it is the purpose of this study to identify heritage and building design guidelines for specific buildings, it is also important to consider the broader precinct as not all properties will be worthy of retention but will require careful planning and consideration to ensure that the characteristics of the township are retained.

Figure 1 Locality Map of Sawtell, NSW



Figure 2 **Photograph of First Avenue, Sawtell**



1.2 ***Jamison Study, Sawtell Precinct Study, 1992***

The study undertaken and prepared by local architects, Jamison Architects Pty Ltd and town planning and development consultants, Christopher M Murray and Associates Pty Ltd, in August 1992 (Jamison Report), is acknowledged and provides very useful background information and research enabling a basis upon which to build our findings and recommendations.

This study has built on the well established historical overview and themes discussed and raised in that report.

1.3 ***History of Sawtell***

1.3.1 **Introduction**

Sawtell was created in the 1920s when Osie Sawtell, a Dorrigo man, saw an opportunity to purchase land and start a seaside holiday and residential town adjacent to an already popular and beautiful holiday camping area, Bonville Reserve.

Coffs Harbour was well established by this time as a sea port town, exporting local hardwood to Sydney.

This summary history includes the historical themes related to the Sawtell Township Master Plan.

1.3.2 Early Seaside Holiday Town (1925-1930)

First Avenue was located well behind the sand dunes, probably due to the difficulty of building a bridge across Middle Creek closer to the beach. This enabled Osie Sawtell to retain land between the beach and the new town on which he had his house. Mr David Kidd's bakery was one of the first buildings erected on First Avenue in 1924 and Osie Sawtell was the builder.

In about 1925 the Reeds, farmers from Uralla, built a large two-storey weatherboard guest house on the corner of Second and First Avenues. Later it was renovated and reduced in size and became known as the "Sea View Guest House". It stood on the site until it burnt down in 1962. The single storey general store to the north of Sea View was built in c.1925.

In 1927 Charlie Finch built a pair of weatherboard buildings with verandahs over the footpath just up from the Bakery. He lived in one and opened a Chemist shop in the other.

Charlie Finch was a prominent Coffs Harbour businessman. He was, in 1920 President of the Coffs Harbour Chamber of Commerce, in 1923 Trustee of the Park Beach Trust and in 1926 on the committee of the Coffs Harbour Hospital.

Although a Chamber of Commerce was established in Sawtell in 1929 and a Surf Club in 1930, growth in the town was slow. Improvement to local roads encouraged people to travel to Coffs Harbour to shop.

In 1929-30 the depression hit, growth halted and sites were sold for half price. A number of shacks were located in Sawtell at this time.

1.3.3 Manly of the North Coast (1930-1942)

Although the worst of the depression was not over until 1936, in this period at least three new buildings appeared in First Avenue.

In 1932, Frank Tyson finished building a two-storey brick Hotel on the prominent corner of First and Second Avenues. His hotel at Fernmount had burnt down and he transferred the licence to Sawtell. The bricks were railed from Grafton. The Hotel had a two-storey timber verandah on three sides.

Osie Sawtell built two buildings during this time, on the east side of First Avenue. Whilst the early buildings on the west side of First Avenue were built on the street boundary, the first buildings on the east side were located sufficiently far away to allow them to be serviced by a subsidiary road.

In the 1920s, Sawtell's First Avenue extended up the hill to the corner shop and the Road Bridge was built across the railway line at Boambee. This provided the opportunity for First Avenue to continue to meet with the Pacific Highway. After 1936 there was more building activity in Sawtell. Some single storey buildings with shops appear to have been built at this time, between the Cinema and Cockbain's Guest House.

An aerial photograph dating from 1942 indicates that on Osie Sawtell's original subdivision most of the houses were located along First Avenue, from Second to Eighth Avenue. The town centre was largely developed on the west side of First Avenue with only sparse development on the east side at this time.

1.3.4 1950s Growth

Sawtell shared in the prosperity of the country in the 1950s as it became an established beachside holiday town.

Between the end of the war in 1945 and 1954 there was rapid growth in the town, particularly on the east side of First Avenue including the first Surf Clubhouse which was built in 1952. After the first Cinema building had its roof blown off in a cyclone the present building was constructed in 1956.

In 1957, the Sawtell RSL Club relocated, from the site of the present Guide Hall in Elizabeth Street, to a prominent corner site in the First Avenue.

By the end of the 1950s, Sawtell had not fulfilled the dreams of its first entrepreneurs to be the 'Manly of the North Coast'. When the oysters and fish in Bonville Creek had reduced in numbers, the influence and popularity of the Reserve no longer attracted the district's holiday-makers as it had done in the 1930s.

1.3.5 New Directions

The town continued to grow in the 1960s. Holiday apartments were built on the corner of First and Second Avenues opposite the RSL Club. However, increasingly, the town became a dormitory area for Coffs Harbour. The town's second major subdivision took place west of the Railway Station, in the mid-1970s.

At this time, a second shopping centre at Toormina was built and substantially increased in size in the 1980s. A link road was built in the 1980s between Coffs Harbour and Toormina.

This major development at Toormina resulted in a slow down of the growth of the Sawtell Township in the 1990s. It has allowed the retention of buildings and an

atmosphere that may well have been lost with stronger commercial demands for change.

There is currently strong pressure for growth and redevelopment in Sawtell. In 2001 a number of applications for residential flats were made to the Coffs Harbour City Council signalling a new phase in multi-unit housing for First Avenue and surrounding streets.

1.4 *First Avenue, Sawtell – West Side*

The west side of the study precinct generally comprises a range of single storey retail and commercial premises with frontage to First Avenue. A limited number of premises have pedestrian connections through to the rear lane with some minor commercial activity with direct access from the lane. The west side also includes a number of restaurants and food premises, including the "Blue Fig", as well as the well-known Sawtell Hotel and the cinema, both local landmarks.

1.5 *First Avenue, Sawtell – East Side*

The east side of First Avenue also comprises a range of two storey commercial and retail premises. The prevalence of cafes and restaurants as established land uses on this side is also acknowledged. Pedestrian access to and from the rear lane has been created through the Commonwealth bank allowing patrons the option for parking. On this side of First Avenue, there is a greater number of residential premises which are occupied at the rear of or at the 'shop top' level. The northern end of First Avenue is dominated by the RSL Club.

2.0 DEVELOPMENT FEATURES

2.1 Existing Conditions

A number of verandahs have been constructed over the pavement in front of properties along a significant proportion of the length of the street. Whilst the practicality of these is acknowledged given the harsh elements during the warmer months of the year, it is important to provide some guidance for the erection of future structures when proposed. Although many are not original, these post-supported awnings have contributed to the existing character of the township. The recently constructed verandahs provide some confusion in identifying the period of construction as many have false Federation details.

Signage along this shopping strip and retail strip is adhoc and inconsistent, not having a thematic approach.

Several properties are vacant and/or ripe for redevelopment or renovation, and this includes some of the largest sites in the precinct.

A landscaped central median runs through the town centre. The presence of several large fig trees contributes to the character of the streetscape and provides necessary relief in the form of shade for visitors to the village centre. The road reserve through the town is wide and traffic runs either side of the median strip, which encourages active use through the provision of seating and tables.

2.2 A vision for Sawtell

Sawtell is notable for its compact size and village atmosphere. To maintain this character the commercial activity in Sawtell should be restricted to the existing boundaries. These define the earlier growth of the commercial precinct and enable controls that reinforce the shopping core around the planted central avenue.

Expansion of the village's activities should be restricted to development at the rear of properties with access from the rear lanes. The overall principle is to maintain shopfronts at street level in the commercial precinct. Sawtell was developed with a different character on the east and west of First Avenue. The eastern side has undergone greater rate of change. The 1950s development was typified by two storey masonry buildings, with residences or offices on the first floor. The western side has retained its predominantly single storey character, including some of the earliest buildings in Sawtell. This side of the street maintains the single storey form with parapets and retains the significant "country town" character.

3.0 PRINCIPLES FOR HERITAGE AND BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

3.1 General guidelines

Proposals for development should have regard to the following general guidelines:

- Develop the seaside theme of Sawtell through the use of pastel colour schemes for external surfaces, especially on the post 1950s buildings (these colour schemes are not applicable to pre-1950s buildings);
- Ensure residential uses above shops on the east side of First Avenue to reinforce the strength of the local community;
- Locate additional commercial uses on the west side of First Avenue with frontage to the rear lane;
- Ensure the use of landscaping buffers along the rear lanes as part of car parking schemes achieved with redevelopment.

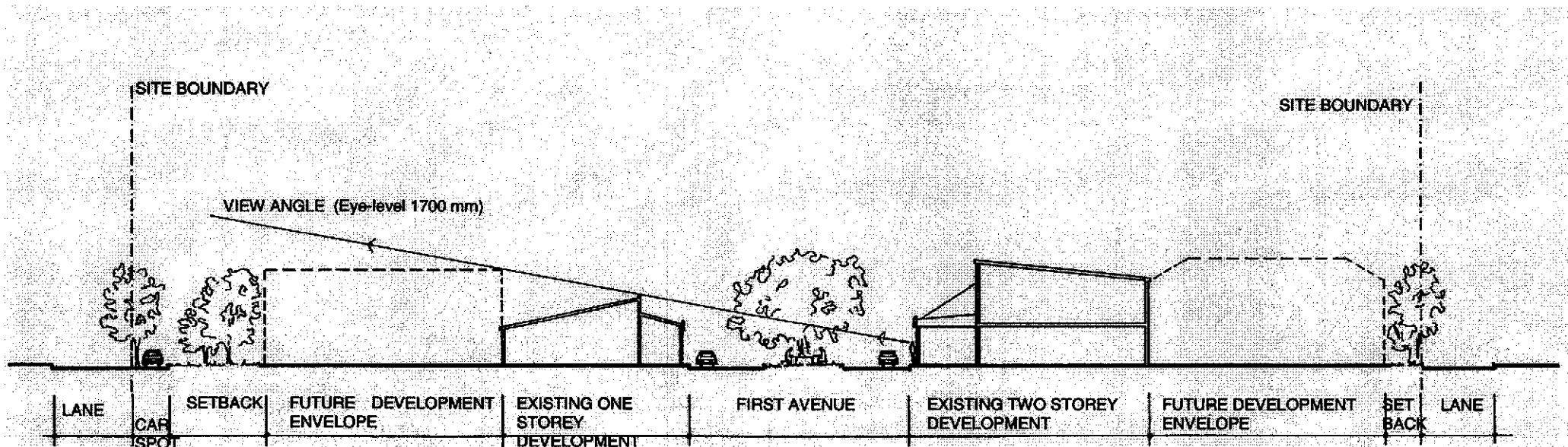
3.2 Development

Proposals for future development should have regard to the following specific development guidelines with reference to Figure 3 (p.9). These guidelines support the vision for Sawtell that reinforces the existing character of the town.

3.2.1 Building Envelopes, including building height and mass/bulk

- Ensure two storey development on the east side of First Avenue with appropriate rear setbacks that respect the scale of the residential development nearby;
- Ensure a maximum of single storey development on the west side of First Avenue, or two storey development which has regard to the sight lines from the east side of First Avenue. It is important that two storey development should not be visible over the existing or proposed parapet height from the eastern side of First Avenue (see Sections 1.4 and 1.5);

Figure 3- Building Envelopes for New Development in Sawtell Township



**CROSS-SECTION OF FIRST AVENUE (WEST TO EAST)
INDICATING FUTURE DEVELOPMENT BUILDING ENVELOPE**

prepared for
Coffs Harbour City Council
by
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Proposals for future development should have regard to the following development guidelines:

3.2.2 New Buildings

- Should encourage parapets as a simple form and avoid stepped profiles;
- The design of new buildings should maintain a contemporary appearance and not copy a 'period style';
- Should make reference to traditional massing and form and have vertical fenestration to the First Avenue elevations;
- Should have regard to the Building Design Guidelines and the general form and massing of adjacent buildings;
- Should respect the proportions of adjoining Heritage Buildings

3.2.3 Alterations and Additions

- Aluminium windows should be replaced with timber windows;
- Post-supported awnings should not replace cantilevered awnings on buildings where cantilevered awnings are original;
- Post-supported awnings should avoid 'fake Federation' details and include simple profiles;
- Appropriately dimensioned fascias to awnings should be encouraged and could serve as a location for future signage.

3.3 Local Heritage items

All identified Local Heritage Items

- Should not be demolished;
- Should be retained for refurbishment or renovation;
- Where unpainted brickwork exists, it should remain as unpainted brickwork and must not be rendered or painted;
- Care should be taken to conserve the identified significant aspects of the building as identified on the individual Inventory Form

Refer to the ***Sawtell: Heritage and Building Design Guidelines, Inventory, Vol 2*** and the ***Sawtell: Heritage and Building Design Guidelines, Design***

Recommendations, Vol 3, which outline the specifications for each listed site. Refer to Appendix 1 for the Schedule of Local Heritage Items.

3.4 Specific Sites

Due to the prominence of some specific or individual sites, in terms of their location and size within the Sawtell Township precinct, an overall Master Plan for these sites is to be prepared before further alterations and additions can be considered and approved by Council, for the following sites:

- Sawtell Hotel;
- RSL;
- No. 57 First Avenue (north west corner of First and Second Avenue) and refer to Appendix 2 showing a suggestion for a Building Design Envelope; and
- Nos. 9-11 First Avenue (north west corner First Avenue and Boronia Street) and refer to Appendix 2 showing a suggestion for a Building Design Envelope;

3.5 Non Listed Heritage Buildings

Refer to the **Sawtell Heritage and Building Design Guidelines, Inventory, Vol 2**, which outlines the specifications for each site by street address.

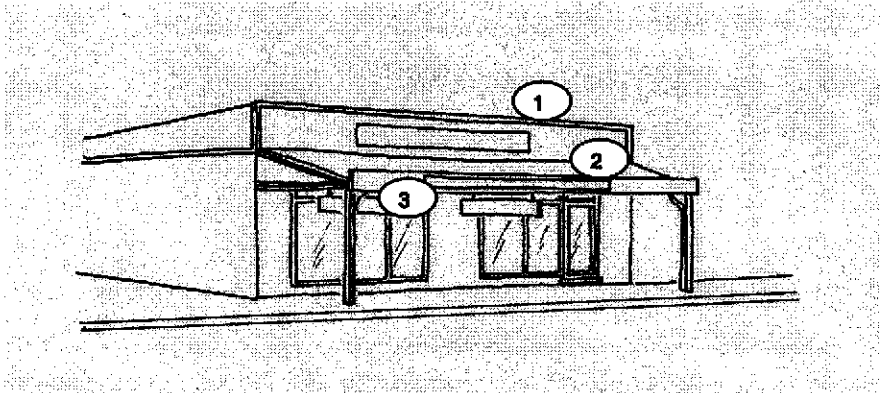
3.6 Signage

Proposals for signage should seek to

- Encourage signage that is located below awning;
- Encourage simple and interesting signage preferably incorporating a local and coastal theme;
- Avoid the use of above awning signs, unless in exceptional circumstances;
- Take on appropriate proportions for the façade or fascia upon which the sign is to be erected.

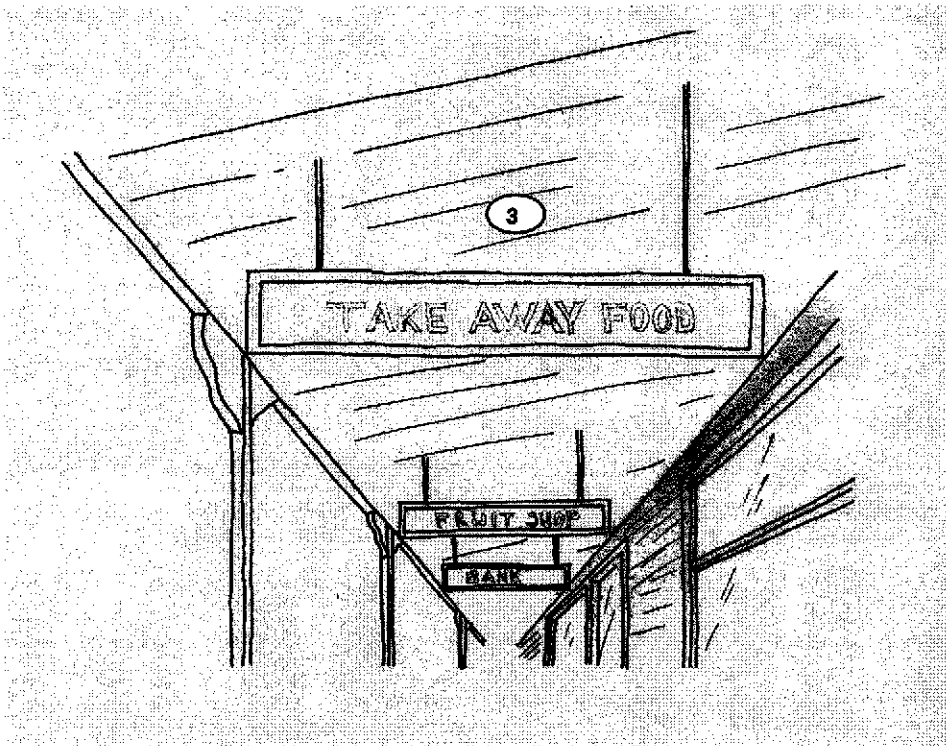
Refer to Figure 4, below.

Figure 4 – Suggested locations for Advertising Signage in Sawtell Township



- 1 Signs on parapets should relate both in size and design to the architecture of the building and should not cover the whole structure, and must wholly fit within the parapet.
- 2 Horizontal signs on the awning fascia should be consistent with others on the building in style.
- 3 Below awning signs should be encouraged and consistent in size.

IN GENERAL: The design and shape of signage should be simple and respect the period of the building and/or the holiday nature of Sawtell (eg. Signs should not be internally illuminated).



4.0 GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

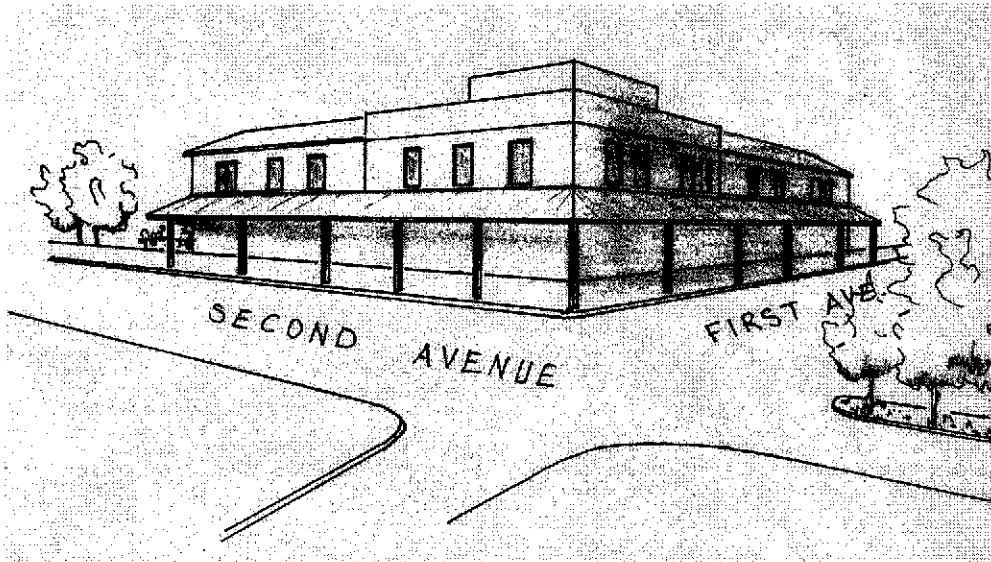
The following recommendations are made in relation to future development in the Sawtell Township to complement and support these guidelines.

- *A Landscape Plan should be adopted as part of the Sawtell Township Master Plan currently being undertaken by Council. This plan should include consideration of landscaping requirements for the township and village precinct as well as the future requirements and themes for street furniture and infrastructure such as lighting.*
- *A Master Plan for prominent sites within the precinct should be prepared by the owner of the site, and approved by Council to avoid on going adhoc development of these large or critical sites at the 'gateway' to the village or township. Subsequent Development Applications (DAs) should be assessed against the Sawtell Master Plan approved by Council which incorporates these guidelines.*
- *Development on land identified as a Heritage Item should be the subject of a Heritage Impact Statement that addresses the recommendations and guidelines included in Volumes 1, 2, & 3 of the **Sawtell: Heritage and Building Design Guidelines**.*

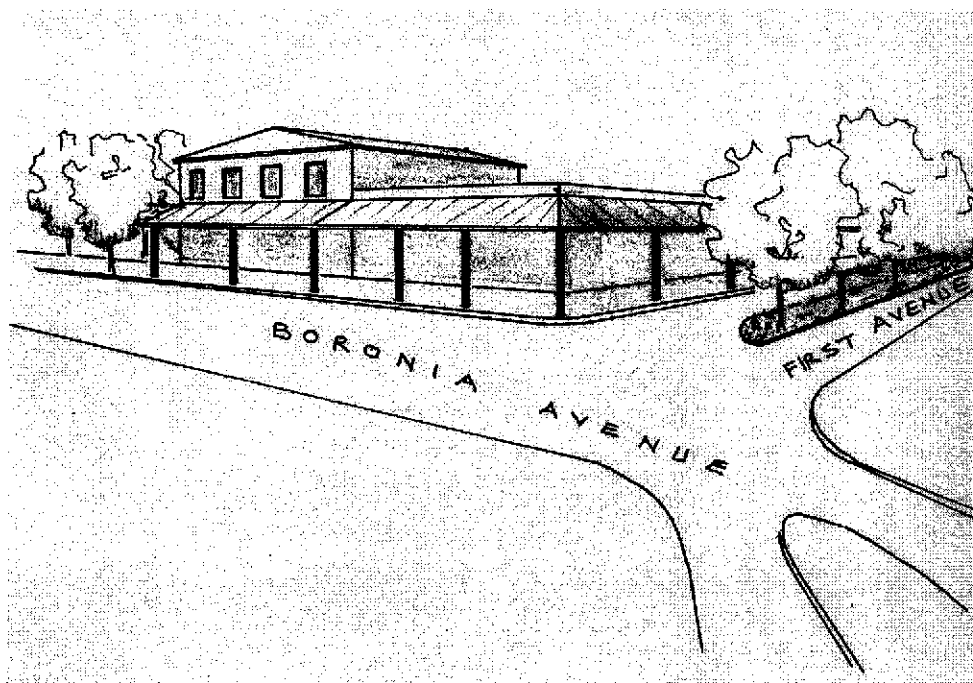
Appendix 1 Schedule of Local Heritage Items

Inventory No	Address	Item Type
1	8-12 First Avenue	Shop & Dwelling
2	12-16 First Avenue	Office
3	18 First Avenue	Shop
4	20 First Avenue	Bank
7	26-30 First Avenue (Single Storey)	Shop
8	26-30 First Avenue (Two Storey)	Shop
10	34-36 First Avenue	Office & Dentist
13	66-68 First Avenue	Flats
15	Noreen Anderson Memorial Gardens (Central Landscaped Area)	Public Reserve
17	67 First Avenue	Shop & Residence
18	63-65 First Avenue	Shop
20	Sawtell Hotel	Hotel
21	45-49 First Avenue	Shop
25	31-33 First Avenue	Shop
27	25 First Avenue	Cinema
28	21-23 First Avenue	Restaurant
29	15-19 First Avenue	Post Office & Vacant Shops

Appendix 2 Suggested Building Design Envelope for corner of First and Second Avenues, and corner of First and Boronia Avenues



57 First Avenue Building Envelope



9-11 First Avenue Building Envelope