

FORECAST

6.0. FORECAST

6.1 Why Forecast?

Forecasting is essential if plans are to be developed which can accommodate the changing needs of the community. The development of a forecast should assist in determining the optimum future and how planning intervention might ensure that this potential future is realised.

In the case of Cabramatta, which has grown quickly in response to an unusual set of conditions, it is tempting to assume that this growth will continue, based on extrapolation of past trends rather than an understanding of what has caused these trends and the factors that are likely to influence them in the future.

The central questions to be considered in developing forecasts are, accordingly:

- * what might change the present trends and structure?
- * what is the likelihood that present trends and structures will change?

A forecast developed from such an understanding provides a basis from which to develop strategies to guide future development. Forecasting provides an understanding of what is likely to happen and what should happen. Strategies can then be developed to bridge the gap between the likely and the desired futures. (Isserman 1984 & Vlachos 1981)

6.2 Current Trends

The future of Cabramatta will be closely linked to the Indo-Chinese. Changes in their: population; settlement pattern; and lifestyle preferences will all influence the future of Cabramatta. These are, of course, extremely complex factors which could be influenced by any number of unknowns but the current trends indicate:

- * continued growth in the Indo-Chinese population in Fairfield.
- * continued growth of Indo-Chinese floorspace in Cabramatta.

Indo-Chinese population and floorspace have, as was illustrated in Figure 4:6, both experienced exponential growth over the past ten years.

6.2.1 Factors that will influence current trends.

There are many factors that will influence the future of Cabramatta, some will be related to changes in the community, others to changes in government policy and others to changes in other centres in the region. The following are some of the known factors that will influence the centre.

Migration policy - will give less priority to Indo-Chinese refugees, viewing them as just one of a number of groups eligible for consideration for settlement on humanitarian grounds rather than as a special case.

Initial settlement policy - will move towards smaller units of accommodation spread throughout the metropolitan area.

Development of Indo-Chinese community centres - for a number of the larger sub-groups will continue as funds are consolidated. These centres will usually be located where land is cheaper (ie. further west than Cabramatta) and will seek to provide more than religious facilities.

Indo-Chinese movement away from Cabramatta - to detached housing will accelerate as the resources available to the community increase.

Dispersal of Indo-Chinese business - as establishment in a good location in Cabramatta becomes more difficult and more expensive Indo-Chinese businessmen will seek to establish in one of the secondary centres of Indo-Chinese settlement, such as Bankstown or Marrickville, or in one of the shopping centres around Cabramatta. Bankstown already has a strong Indo-Chinese business community and Indo-Chinese restaurants and food shops are beginning to move into neighbouring centres such as Fairfield where three Indo-Chinese hot bread shops established in the first few months of 1985. (Refer Appendix 5)

Bonnyrigg Group Neighbourhood Centre - will introduce a large, new shopping complex to the residential area into which many Indo-Chinese are currently moving. Many Indo-Chinese businessmen will see this as an opportunity to establish a business close to their target population in an area where there is not already an oversupply of businesses directed towards the Indo-Chinese.

6.3 Trends

These factors combine, with a distillation of other information contained in this report, to allow definition of a number of trends. The implications of these trends for the future of Cabramatta are sometimes conflicting.

6.3.1 Reduced importance of Fairfield as a place of first settlement.

Fairfield LGA has, as was discussed in Section 3, provided a place of initial settlement for large numbers of migrants since World War 2. It developed this role in large part because of the proximity of the area to three of the four migrant hostels in Sydney.

A further change in resettlement policy in favour of smaller hostels and disposal of the remaining large hostels could mean that the Indo-Chinese will be the last significant wave of non-English speaking migrants to settle in Fairfield.

The settlement pattern of any future migrant wave would be likely to be much more dispersed. The importance of migrant hostel location in influencing settlement patterns, which in turn provided the concentrated target population necessary for the establishment of ethnic business cannot be over-estimated. In Melbourne, for example, where migrant hostels are dispersed throughout the metropolitan area there is a much more dispersed pattern of settlement amongst the Indo-Chinese and there is a much lesser level of Indo-Chinese business activity. (Viviani 1984:162 & Hearn 1982:19)

Changes in migration policy (refer Appendix 4) which reduce the number of refugees in favour of family reunion and business migration are likely to further reinforce this trend as refugee communities are more likely than others to need to develop their own centres. There is little likelihood that a significant number of refugees will be accepted from any country which does not already have an established community in Australia. Although, as a result of the Indo-Chinese influx, a mechanism now exists to allow a response to be made to other international crises acceptance of such large numbers of refugees from a single region is unlikely to occur again. The DIEA regards the Indo-Chinese as a special case because: "unlike other refugee situations the problem is in Australia's own region." (DIEA 1984:35)

Consequently although larger numbers of people from Central and South America are now being accepted their numbers, as indicated in Table 3:1, are not comparable with the numbers of Indo-Chinese being accepted and they are unlikely to increase significantly.

6.3.2 Growth of the Indo-Chinese population

The growth of the Indo-Chinese population will be important to the future of Cabramatta particularly as it is unlikely that they will be replaced by a new group of migrants.

The growth of the Indo-Chinese population will be influenced by changes in government policy. A policy which supports continued acceptance of Indo-Chinese as refugees and through family reunion will support the continued growth of the population in Cabramatta.

Government attitudes towards Indo-Chinese migration appear to have been influenced by the Blainey debate resulting in a change of policy for the 1985-6 migrant intake. As indicated in Appendix 4 it will concentrate on family migration, skilled migration and business migration. It is aimed towards a reduction in Indo-Chinese migration in favour of the "traditional" European source countries.

The greater the number of people accepted as refugees the greater the number of people who will qualify to migrate under the Family Reunion Program. The continued acceptance of refugees will, therefore, influence the continued growth of the community.

The rate of family formation will influence the size of the Indo-Chinese population and their needs. As was discussed in Section 4 many people have postponed having a family until they were settled in their new country. This, combined with the high proportion of people in the child rearing age group indicates that the population will increase through a high birth rate.

An increase in the number of children will not increase the spending power of the population, initially, but it will increase the need for services and promote a strengthening of the psychological attachment to Cabramatta as home, which is already apparent by the number of Indo-Chinese who refer to Cabramatta or Fairfield as "my home town".

Relaxation of the guidelines for migration under the Family Reunion Scheme to allow other members of a family such as nieces and nephews to qualify would increase the potential for growth in the Indo-Chinese community. This could also have beneficial effects on the success of individual resettlement as the extended family is culturally very important to the Indo-Chinese.

6.3.3 Indo-Chinese settlement in Fairfield

The strength of Indo-Chinese population concentration in Fairfield is likely to continue as the strength of the existing community acts as a magnet attracting people who may have settled elsewhere initially. This is likely to be particularly true of people who are looking to buy a dwelling and establish a permanent base.

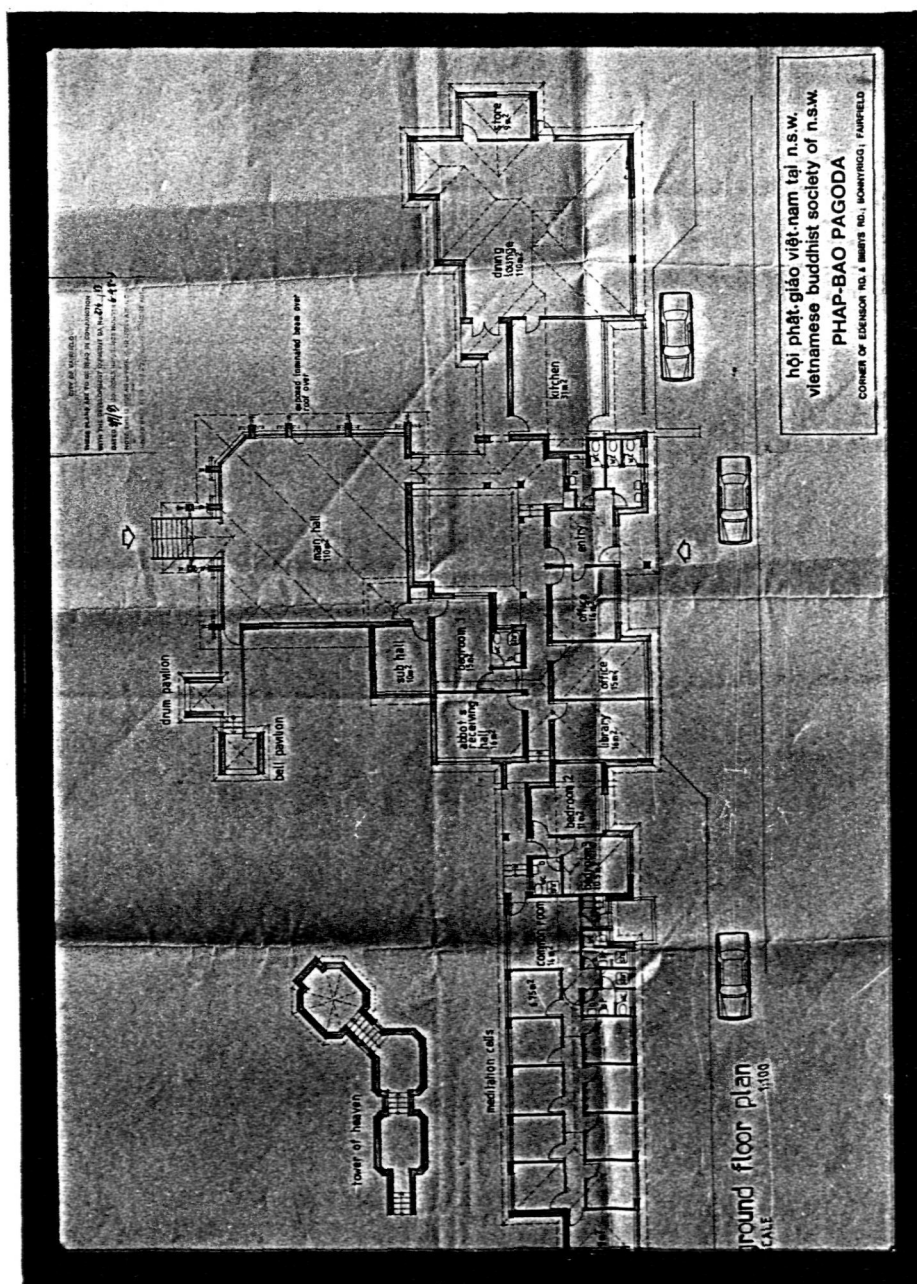
The Indo-Chinese, like many other Australians, prefer to live in a detached house with a backyard that they either own or are purchasing. New suburbs such as Bönnyrigg, St Johns Park, and Greenfield Park provide relatively inexpensive housing in a location which is still in the vicinity of Cabramatta. Each national group has distinct areas in which they have settled forming identifiable sub-concentrations.

The continued strength of the attachment to Cabramatta is, however, likely to reduce as new commercial centres are formed in the release areas to the west and as new centres of community activity are developed reducing the number of reasons for making a trip to Cabramatta in preference to other areas. This will also highlight the diversity inherent in the Indo-Chinese community with different sub-groups tending to settle around the new focal points created by the development of community centres. The concept of an "Indo-Chinese" community will thus become less valid over time, particularly in the Fairfield LGA, where numbers of sub-groups are large enough to form identifiable communities.

The continued involvement in business is also likely to decrease as the need for an identifiable ethnic centre will decrease over time. It is linked, like the forces that promote residential concentration, to the degree of assimilation of the community.

Nancy Viviani estimates that areas of high migrant concentration last about 1 1/2 generations. (Viviani 1985:245)

FIGURE 6:1
 FLOOR PLAN PHAP-BAO
 PAGODA. THE TEMPLE
 IS ONLY THE FIRST
 STAGE IN A LONG
 TERM PLAN WHICH
 MAKES PROVISION
 FOR A RESIDENTIAL
 COMPLEX FOR PRIESTS.
 THERE ARE, AS WELL,
 PLANS TO LOCATE A
 MUSEUM ON THIS
 SITE TO ACT AS A
 REMINDER/TESTAMENT
 TO THE STRUGGLES
 OF THE INDO CHINESE



6.3.4 Continued involvement by migrant groups in small business

The involvement of the Indo-Chinese community in small business in the Cabramatta area will continue to increase, at least in the short term, as the needs and material resources of the Indo-Chinese community increase as part of the process of becoming established.

Many of those people who have established themselves in a small business will continue to operate the business while it remains viable even if more lucrative employment becomes available because of: inertia; the sense of control that owning a small business can give; the desire for stability; and the apparent preference of many members of the Indo-Chinese community towards small business as a form of employment.

The desire to establish a business will lead to an increase in the dispersal of Indo-Chinese business into other suburbs which is already becoming evident. (Refer Appendix 5)

There is, however, also some evidence to suggest that while small business is often popular amongst new migrant groups the rate of participation declines over time. Table 6:1 indicates that while the proportion of self employed men declined between 1947 & 1971 the proportion of overseas born males declined at a greater rate. Particularly among the Greek and Italian communities which had been significant non-English speaking migrant groups after WW2.

TABLE 6:1 % OF SELF EMPLOYED MALES IN AUSTRALIA BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN 1947 & 1971

ORIGIN	% SELF-EMPLOYED	
	1947	1971
Australia	22	15.4
Overseas	26.2	12
Italy	57.9	19.2
Greece	51.8	16.8
UK & Eire	23.5	8.9

SOURCE: Johns 1983:30

This reduction in the participation rate in small business by these migrant groups over time could be related to an increase in the assimilation of their migrant communities and a subsequent reduction in the number of specialised goods and services required by that community. It is possible that the Indo-Chinese will also find small business a less attractive form of employment over time.

FIGURE 6:2
 TRAVEL AGENT --
 CABRAMATTA PLAZA
 HUGHES ST. TRAVEL
 IS JUST ONE OF A
 RANGE OF
 BUSINESSES THAT
 WILL EXPAND AS THE
 INDO-CHINESE
 BECOME MORE
 SETTLED AND HAVE
 HIGHER DISPOSABLE INCOMES



6.3.5 Changes in Indo-Chinese business

Indo-Chinese business will change in response to the changing needs of the Indo-Chinese population. As the Indo-Chinese become more settled their needs will change from basic needs to less practical ones. This is in accordance with Maslow's concept of a hierarchy of human needs which conceptually places the need for food and shelter before other needs which are satisfied only after basic needs are no longer a problem. (Avery & Baker 1984:330-1)

Accordingly once the Indo-Chinese are settled it could be expected that businesses which provide services and more expensive consumer goods will become more important. The introduction of travel agents aimed at the Indo-Chinese is a good example of the adaption of business that can be expected as the Indo-Chinese become more settled.

6.4 Likely Future

This forecast is based on the implications of the factors and trends discussed earlier.

The forecast based on these trends and developments is one of stabilisation followed by slow decline.

Cabramatta will not be able to meet the changing needs of the Indo-Chinese as the community assimilates and disperses. Its role as a centre of initial settlement for the Indo-Chinese will diminish, with the decline in the number of new residents. The number of Indo-Chinese households in the trade area will decline as the rate of home ownership increases. The movement of people into detached dwellings in the new release areas would promote development of Bonnyrigg as a second Indo-Chinese centre and this will replace Cabramatta as the principal shopping centre for the Indo-Chinese living in the new residential areas surrounding the Bonnyrigg centre.

The importance of the centre as a focus of community activity will diminish as community support functions diminish in importance and the restaurants and cafes become less important as places of information exchange. The new community centres developed by and for particular ethnic groups will create new focal points. The Indo-Chinese community will develop a series of foci and will begin to lose its identity as a homogenous community.

Cabramatta will, then, begin to lose its identity as an ethnic enclave or buffer for the Indo-Chinese as those people who developed it find they have less need for it.

The non Indo-Chinese residents of the catchment area will have meanwhile established shopping habits which by-pass Cabramatta.

The amount of floorspace able to be supported will decline as the number of people in the primary trade area using the Centre decreases. The secondary catchment will continue to be important but the Centre will fail to attract the non-Asian population due to lack of promotion and the poor quality environment of the Centre.

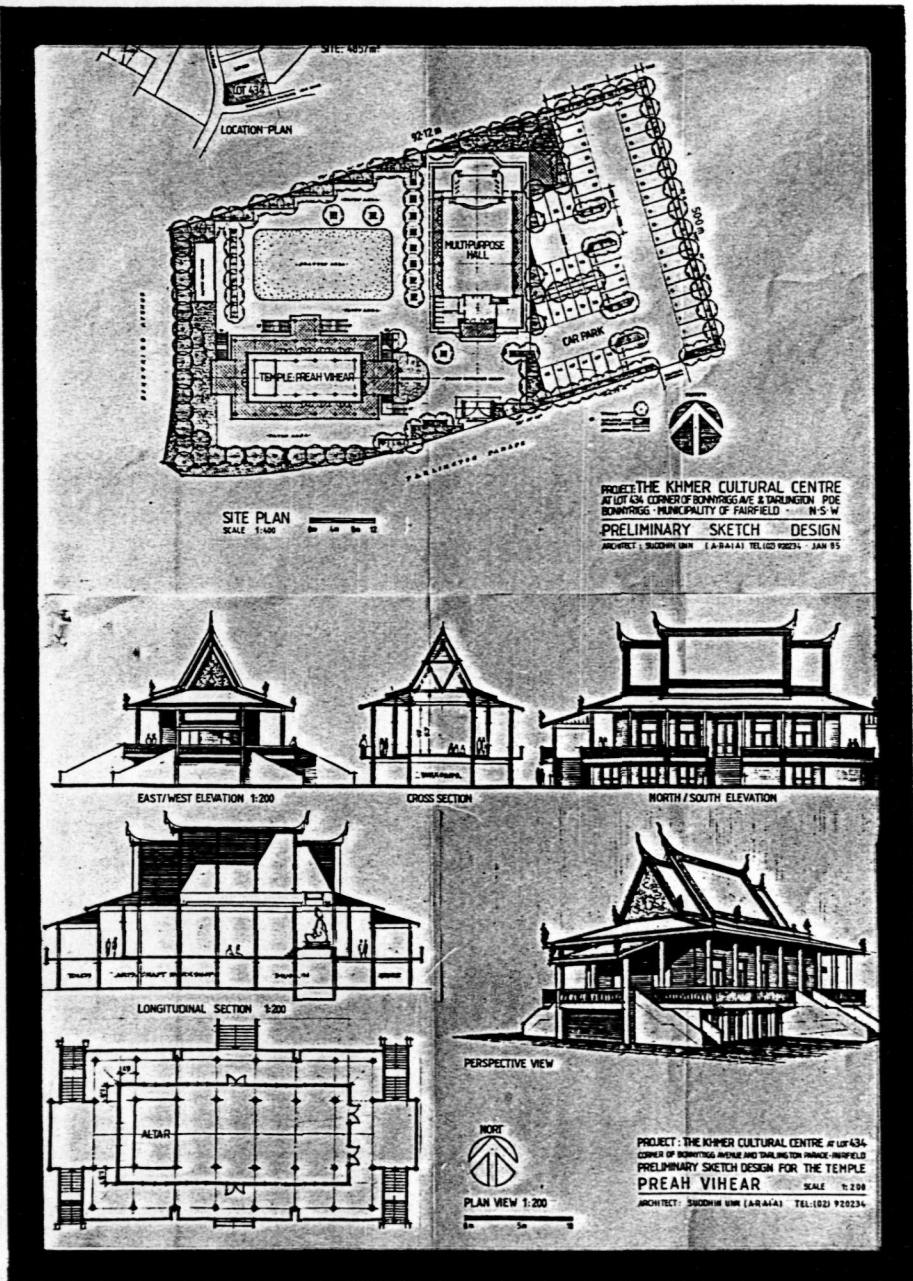


FIGURE 6:3
KHMER CULTURAL CENTRE
PROPOSAL FOR A SITE IN
BONNYRIGG — INCLUDES A LARGE
MULTI-PURPOSE HALL IN AN
INDIGENOUS ARCHITECTURAL STYLE.
THIS COMPLEX IS DESTINED TO
BECOME A LOCAL LANDMARK

CONCLUSION

7.0 CONCLUSION

The western suburbs, and particularly the Fairfield area, have an ethnically diverse population.

This diversity of culture and background provides a valuable resource which should be used to the benefit of the entire community.

The development of Cabramatta as an Asian centre is one example of how overseas born residents can diversify the urban environment for everyone while providing an opportunity to maintain links with their heritage.

The experience in Cabramatta is probably unique and unlikely to be repeated in western Sydney. Many of the Indo-Chinese have a particular aptitude for business which has encouraged a greater and more rapid development of small business than might normally be expected. Changes in migration and settlement policy are likely to discourage future concentrations of new residents which encourage the development of an ethnic centre.

7.1 Policies

The policies which will guide Cabramatta towards a future which will maintain its role as a vital commercial centre are ones which:

- * allow Cabramatta to maintain its role as a neighbourhood centre for a community which includes a variety of ethnic groups.

- * promote Cabramatta as a specialised centre which acts as a focus for the Indo-Chinese community.

- * recognise the role of the centre as a specialised centre of regional significance.

- * emphasise its unique characteristics rather than the ones it shares with other centre in the region.

- * do not alter its position in the hierarchy of centres in the Western Sydney region.

that is, they should:

- * seek to retain its character as a centre of small shops that are family-owned and operated, rather than a centre dominated by large retail outlets to which the smaller shops cling, as is the trend in retailing.

- * increase the diversity of specialised functions that can be found in the centre.

- * improve the environment extending the ability of the centre to attract people and to increase the number of activities that can be carried out in the centre.

7.1.1 Settlement policy

Settlement policy should be designed to take advantage of the resources that exist within the migrant group to assist in settlement and should:

- * encourage new residents to spend sufficient time in hostel accommodation to develop the skills necessary for successful resettlement

- * develop hostel facilities which are better able to adapt to the varying needs of different migrant groups, such as smaller hostels with individual facilities.

- * recognise the importance of the informal assistance rendered by members of the relevant migrant community. If people are discouraged from settling together the extent of such assistance is greatly diminished.

Immigration policy is a factor which will vary according to changes in world events and public opinion. However, the implications of immigration policy on local areas should be taken into consideration when formulating this policy.

In the case of Cabramatta, for example, it was predictable that the Indo-Chinese in Sydney once directed into migrant hostels in western Sydney would follow settlement patterns similar to previous groups of non-English speaking migrants and settle in the Fairfield LGA. There was, however, little attempt made to provide the appropriate services for the Indo-Chinese following their departure from the migrant hostels.

It was fortunate for the Indo-Chinese that the circumstances existed for them to create a centre which acted as a focus for their own community support. These factors included:

- * a small declining commercial area in which it was relatively easy to establish a small business.

- * a large supply of cheap, rental housing which encouraged concentration of the community around Cabramatta.

Close settlement allowed people to learn from the experiences of others, and new residents took less time to adjust because those who had migrated earlier were close at hand to point out the pitfalls. As Nancy Viviani notes residential concentration has a crucial benefit "it provides a physical and emotional support system for people whose traumatic life experiences and whose settlement problems in a largely indifferent and unsympathetic society would overwhelm them." (Viviani 1985:245)

7.1.2 Multicultural policy

The development of centres, such as Cabramatta, is an important element in the development of a multi-cultural society. Such centres should be supported and promoted as one of its important advantages.

It is no longer expected that migrant groups must assimilate as quickly as possible or that the most desirable migrant is one who is most nearly Australian. (Viviani 1984:157)

There is an increasing recognition that a genuinely multi-cultural society has many benefits for all Australians. Not only in increasing the diversity of lifestyle preferences which can be experienced but also in exposure to different attitudes making ours a much less insular and more heterogeneous society.

The development of Cabramatta as a centre associated with the Indo-Chinese allows them to retain and foster their own culture and languages. They do not need to feel that they have had to give up everything to migrate.

Cabramatta also presents an opportunity to improve the relationship between the Indo-Chinese and already established communities. Although the concentration of the population has promoted the attitude that there are too many Indo-Chinese it can be used as a tool to introduce more people to the Indo-Chinese their food, culture and the people on their own territory.

Acceptance of the Indo-Chinese as part of a multi-cultural Australia is important but it is harder to achieve than for previous groups because of their heightened visibility. To quote Alderman Joe Morizzi of FCC, who was himself an Italian migrant in the 1950's: "When I walk past the pub the drinkers sitting outside no longer call me a wog but they call the man next to me a slanty-eyed bastard. In ten years if nothing is done he could still be a slanty-eyed bastard to many Australians." (Appendix 6)

Cabramatta should be used as a resource which can ensure the acceptance of the Indo-Chinese by making it a place that everyone enjoys visiting and not just a place for the Indo-Chinese.

7.1.3 Tourist / Multi-cultural centre

Cabramatta should be promoted in Sydney and particularly in Western Sydney as a special place worthy of a special outing, encouraging its use as a focus of multi-cultural activity and Indo-Chinese activity in particular.

Cabramatta has the potential to become a centre which attracts people from all over Sydney for a special trip. While this may not be enough to enable classification of the centre as a "tourist" destination it does mean that to develop this role policies are required to promote the centre and its special features.

This aspect of the centre's operation has yet to be formally recognised. A discussion paper on Tourist Activity prepared for WESROC in 1984 did not identify Cabramatta as a Tourist Promotion Area. (Study by Peat, Marwick & Mitchell reported in Hirst et al 1984:98-9).

This study identified Parramatta and Windsor as the two areas worthy of promotion in the Western Region, these are both centres which include structures of architectural or heritage significance. Cabramatta is not a potential destination for visitors because of the significance of its physical form but it does have its own character and atmosphere which could be enhanced through visual improvements and which, with a wider view of what constitutes a tourist resource could be considered as a potential tourist resource in the western region.

Although the Indo-Chinese have had the strongest influence on Cabramatta in recent years improvements made to Cabramatta should recognise the context of the centre in a multi-cultural community. It should be a centre which can accommodate any changes in the ethnic structure of the area. These aims should not be contradictory, improvements should be capable of being adapted to the needs of a wide range of user groups and not unalterably associated with any particular group.

Arthur Street car park

The development of Arthur Street carpark for a multi-cultural arts centre is a good example of an action that could be taken to meet all these requirements.

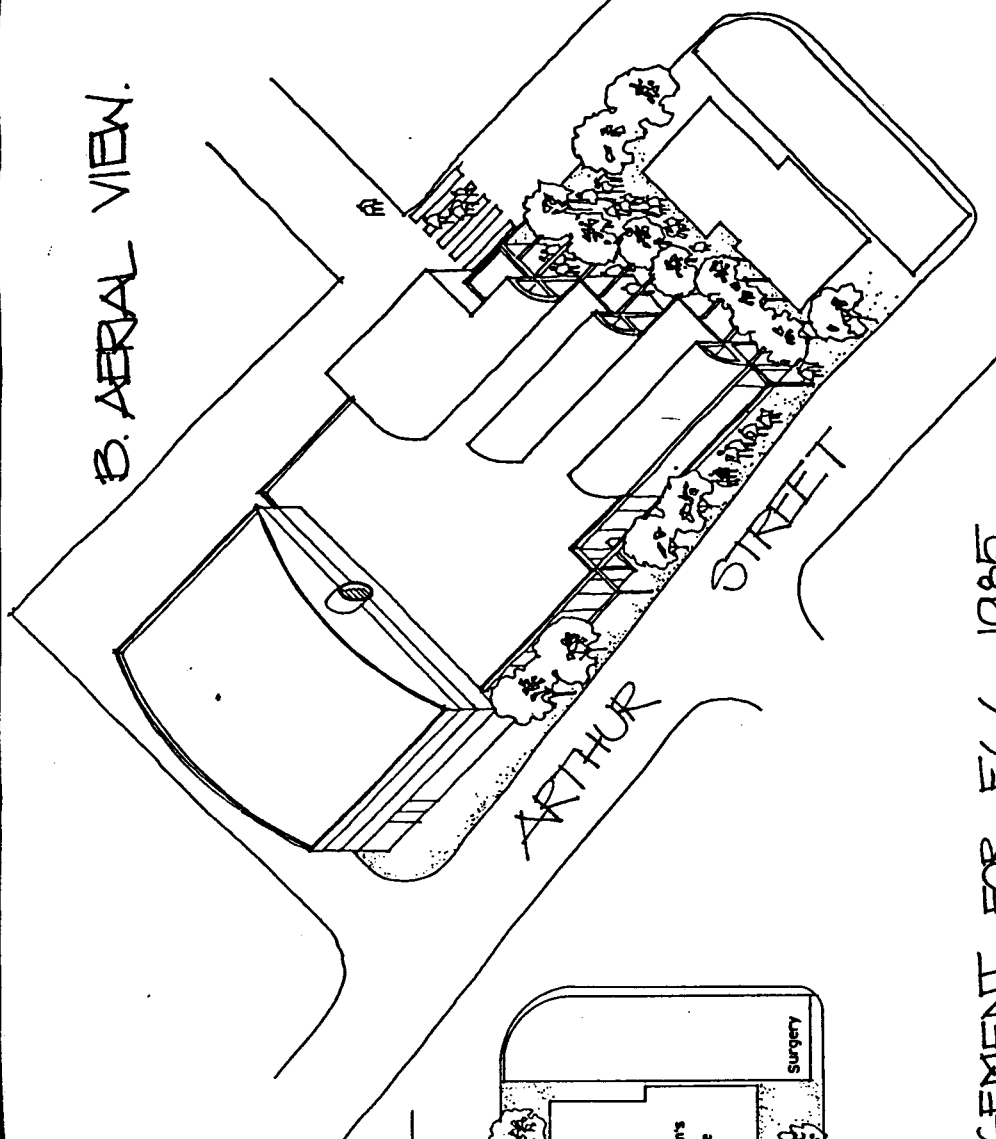
Arthur St. carpark is a small carpark containing only 36 spaces which was designed to serve the John St. area but the centre has expanded so that it is now inappropriately located in the centre of the shopping area.

The study of the centre by FCC, in 1984, recognised the suitability of the area for commercial/community/civic purposes and the improvements to the structure of the centre that would result from redevelopment of the site.

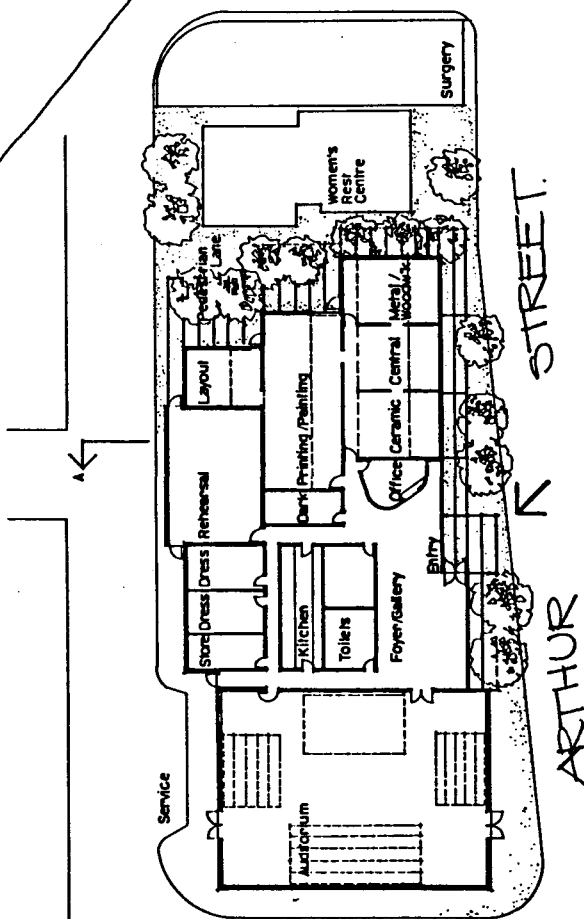
Since this report was prepared a proposal has been prepared to develop a multi-cultural arts centre in the Fairfield LGA. It was originally proposed to site this facility on a parcel of open space removed from public transport and the Cabramatta centre. The potential of the Arthur St car park as a site for the facility has been recognised and sketch plans for the site, illustrated in Figure 7:1, prepared.

The problem of removing carparking, however, even when it is to be replaced elsewhere (Council has plans to build multi-level parking on the Post Office carpark), are likely to prevent this idea from being implemented.

B. AERIAL VIEW.



A. FLOORPLAN



SOURCE: COMMUNITY PLANNING & MANAGEMENT FOR F.L.C. 1985

FIG 7:1 MULTICULTURAL ARTS CENTRE PROPOSAL FOR ARTHUR ST CAR PARK

7.1.4 Retail Hierarchy

Cabramatta's position as a neighbourhood centre in the regional retail hierarchy should be maintained.

Cabramatta is a neighbourhood centre in the hierarchy of centres in the western region. The development of Indo-Chinese business has created a second role for the centre as a regional centre for the Indo-Chinese but the main function of the centre has remained as a neighbourhood centre serving the immediate residential areas.

The growth of the centre as a specialised centre should be directed so that it does not undermine the adopted strategy for commercial centres in the western region: " Preservation of existing retail structure and promotion of existing and appropriately located new centres as population grows." (Hirst et al 1984:57)

Future developments should reinforce the characteristics of Cabramatta which make it different from other centres. The development of large amounts of floorspace for stores which supply mainly Anglo-saxon goods, such as K-mart, would not be suitable in Cabramatta.

Significant increases in the floorspace would not be welcomed by the existing traders who recognise that their potential catchment is, currently, limited and that the centre can only support a finite amount of floorspace. At the present the centre of activity is strictly defined giving the central area a feeling of congestion and activity. This is an attribute that should be preserved increasing the level of activity in the central area rather than encouraging the area of activity to spread out further. The Indo-Chinese businessmen themselves recognise the value of limiting the area " deliberately restricting the boom area to keep the system on the boil." (Warneminde 1985:54)

7.1.5 Environment Improvement

The environment of the centre must be improved if it is to increase its attractiveness to the wider community, realise its potential as a continuing focus for the Indo-Chinese community and become a place of which its users are proud.

Improvements made to the physical environment must acknowledge the elements that contribute to its existing character:

- * the tight spaces which heighten the feeling of congestion and activity
- * narrow shop fronts which add interest and diversity to the streetscape
- * narrow pedestrian areas leading into a series of larger spaces each of which can accommodate a different activity

Maintenance of these features should be combined with a program which will satisfy its deficiencies:

- * inadequate areas for informal and formal activities
spaces are required for: exhibitions; performance; market areas; informal meeting areas; as well as spaces which simply allow people to sit and watch.
- * lack of shade and shelter
- * lack of visual interest other than that provided by the shop signs.

7.2 Desired Future

The implementation of policies such as these should help to ensure that Cabramatta retains its role as an ethnic centre for the Indo-Chinese community while extending recognition and use of the centre as a specialised centre to the wider community.

The centre will maintain and increase the range and variety of specialised Indo-Chinese businesses continuing to attract the Indo-Chinese in the catchment area for most purchases. The non-Asian community will be increasingly attracted to the area for special trips as a place which is interesting, where there is always something happening providing an inexpensive excursion for the family. Those Indo-Chinese who have moved out of Cabramatta will return to meet friends, renew ties and buy goods that cannot be bought elsewhere. The range of specialised uses likely to attract the Indo-Chinese community will increase and diversify to include nightclubs, quality restaurants and outlets for cultural activities.

The number of non-Indo-Chinese businesses will remain steady and the centre will maintain its role as a neighbourhood shopping centre for the wider community.