7.0 MAJOR TOWNS - KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Typically, major towns were established along a river or on the coast as ports. Often they were sited within a striking landscape visible from many different points throughout the town. These urban settlements are usually more dense than smaller towns and villages and the natural environment is not as prominent within the urban structure. Typically farming or a major industry has supported the growth of the settlement.

Major towns often service a number of smaller, disconnected urban areas and so have developed a significant commercial core. This town centre is supplemented by other smaller commercial points which service outlying residential areas.

A greater number and variety of public buildings including public administration buildings such as council chambers or law courts characterise the urban centre. Regional community services such as sport and recreation facilities are evident and there is a greater choice of accommodation types including flats, semi-detached houses and terraces.

Typically, residential accommodation is characterised by detached dwellings with some higher density accommodation towards the town centre.
7.1 **MAJOR TOWN ONE - AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH**

This major town lies in a broad agricultural valley within a caldera landscape. Sited on the banks of a coastal river the town also features an isolated hill close to its centre. Farming is an important local industry that sustains the settlements.
7.2 MAJOR TOWN ONE - LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

This major town is established along a coastal river and is surrounded by low lying farmland and a caldera landscape beyond. The town centre is established on flat land while some residential areas are influenced by the hilly topography. There are many generous green spaces providing recreational facilities for local residents and those from surrounding smaller settlements.

Key landscape elements of this major town include:

— The caldera rim and its dense native vegetation is visible from many points within the township
— A small hill, naturally vegetated, sits dramatically within the town centre forming a striking landscape setting for development
— The settlement has developed on flat and low lying land with strong connections to the river and has then grown into surrounding foothills
— Dense established gardens and foliage are evident throughout the town
— There are numerous open spaces and recreation facilities within the town, including large multi-purpose facilities and formal parks
— A bridge connects disconnected urban areas to the east of the river

Distant views of the caldera rim and low lying farmland are accessible from higher vantage points in the township.
07 MAJOR TOWNS

A small naturally vegetated hill within the settlement imparts a strong landscape character.

The dwellings of the settlement site within dense tropical vegetation against a backdrop of sugar cane fields and the dramatic caldera rim.

Fertile flood plains of surrounding farmland.
7.3 **MAJOR TOWN ONE - STREETSCAPE**

The underlying topography and the course of the river have influenced the street layout of this major town and there is a clear street hierarchy. The street grids in commercial and industrial centres are a formal north south orientation, revealing the flat topography in these areas. The residential streets are less formal as they are influenced by the hilly landscape evident further from the river.

Stretches of awnings extend to the kerb throughout most of the town centre providing opportunities for outdoor dining and cafes. On-street car parking is available with both parallel and angle parking in the town centre.

The original residential streets continue in a formal grid pattern close to the centre and become less formal in the outlying areas. The residential streets typically have two way carriageways with formed kerb and gutters and a well maintained, landscaped verge. The highway and the natural landscape has informed the settlement patterns in this town. These streets sit in a loose intersecting grid pattern.

Key elements of the streets in this major town include:

- There is a clear hierarchy of streets defining commercial, industrial and residential areas
- Some streets provide visual connections to the surrounding farm lands and hinterland; visual access to the river is hindered by the levy banks
- Residential streets are typically formal two way carriageways with formed kerb and gutter and grassed verge
- The streets to the centre are typically two way carriageways with parallel or angle parking to either side; the streets are not typically symmetrical
- Some buildings in the town centre are setback from the street providing a formal courtyard space within the street
- Residential streets near the town centre are formal and become informal with grass swales in the outskirts of the town

![Commercial centre street with formal carriageway and angle parking with parallel parking to opposite side, some street planting and intermittently covered footpaths](image)
Major Towns

Wide residential streets, with the surrounding landscape visible, have a distinctly North Coast character.

Residential street with formed kerb and gutter and grass verge; consistent building setbacks with low height fencing or mature planting define boundaries.

A series of mature tropical trees give a rich streetscape character to a river-edge street.
7.4 MAJOR TOWN ONE - BUILDINGS

The character of buildings within the town centre is a reflection of the role of the town as a major service centre for the surrounding rural communities and smaller settlements.

The town centre reflects a range of architectural styles responding to the civic and commercial services provided. Buildings are predominantly masonry revealing the importance of the major town and the investment in high quality built form. Retail buildings of low scale are also evident within the residential areas.

Traditional residences in this major town are predominantly of lightweight construction. Many of the houses are elevated, particularly in close proximity to the river and on steeper topography. There is a uniform style of housing throughout the town of detached single dwellings with some more dense forms of housing close to the town centre.

Key building elements of this major town include:

- A well-defined town centre with buildings of two to three storeys in height and varying materials and styles, which reflect their diverse civic and commercial functions
- Traditional dwellings, commonly built of lightweight materials and elevated above the ground in response to the hot subtropical climate
- The detached elevated houses have approximately six metre setbacks with carports commonly located under the house
- Medium density residential buildings are emerging as infill development within the established areas of the town

Traditional elevated dwelling of lightweight materials and simple roof form; the verandah is an important extension of internal living space
07 MAJOR TOWNS

A series of dwellings of consistent form, materials, scale and alignment typical of this major town.

High quality public buildings, often of masonry, are evident in the town centre.

Traditional dwellings of lightweight materials, elevated with internal verandahs and parking; the buildings are aligned consistently along the street.
7.5 MAJOR TOWN ONE - SUMMARY

Approx. 24m Road reserve
Zero setback

45 degree on-street parking
Continuous awning/verandah provides pedestrian shelter in town centre
Town centre characterised by consistent built form, alignment and scale

Higher density buildings distinguish the commercial centre from residential areas
Intermittent planting provides the opportunity for the centre to connect to the surrounding natural environment
Streetscapes have been designed to accommodate formalised outdoor dining
High quality buildings of two and three storeys contribute to the character of the settlement

Continuous awning/verandah provides pedestrian shelter in town centre
On-street parallel parking
Cycle lane
Pedestrian crossing
Planting on one side of street

Two to three story retail/commercial buildings with residential on top
Two to three story retail/commercial buildings with canopy + landscaping
Four way car park + herb/gate
Bulge to create outdoor eating area with canopy + landscaping
Two storey retail/commercial buildings with verandah on first floor

Footpath
Two way carriageway + kerb + gutter
45 degree on-street parking
Planting on one side of street

Settlement Main Street
This major town lies at the intersection of a major highway and a coastal river. Originally settled as a river port the commercial core of the town is immediately adjacent to the riverbank. Over time the settlement has expanded crossing the river and its creeks in several directions.
7.7 MAJOR TOWN TWO - LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

This major town is located inland, on the banks of a coastal river and set within a broad valley used extensively for agriculture. Naturally vegetated mountains form the landscape setting. The settlement of this major town has been influenced by the river and is framed by the surrounding farmland. Visual connections to the river and surrounding hinterland are evident from within the urban settlement.

Key landscape elements of the major town include:

— The close relationship of the settlement to the river, particularly the traditional main street
— The influence exerted by the river and the topography on the form of the major town and structure of its streets
— Views to distant vegetated mountains from many vantage points within the settlement

The river with its distinctive vegetation provides a natural focus for the settlement and is important to the landscape character of this major town.
07 MAJOR TOWNS

Areas within the settlements have a distinctly lower density with almost rural character including small farm lots set in a river valley landscape.

As the settlement climbs into the low valley foothills the township’s relationship to its landscape setting becomes clear.

The bridge is set in a striking river landscape where the naturally vegetated coastal ranges are visible in the distance.
7.8 MAJOR TOWN TWO - STREETSCAPE

The street pattern in this major town responds to the alluvial plain topography and river edge. The town centre is characterised by a formal north south grid, and bound by the river and its creeks. The more informal grid to the residential areas is influenced by the hilly topography and major highways through the settlement.

Key elements of the streets in this major town include:
- A defined street hierarchy within the commercial and residential areas
- The streets in the town centre have formal carriageways with formed kerb and gutter treatments and are characterised by formal tree planting and on-street car parking
- The streets to the elevated residential areas offer views to the surrounding farmlands
- The settlement pattern includes streets that address the river edge, separating development from the waterfront
Where residential streets follow the alignment of the river they tend to allow public access to the water’s edge.

Similarly, where commercial streets address the river a positive relationship and good public access to the river edge is achieved.

Residential street with generous width and a focus on public open space at its end; formed kerbs and gutters with grassed verges create a modest, informal character.
7.9 MAJOR TOWNS - BUILDINGS

There are many well-maintained traditional buildings within the town centre, which include masonry buildings with detailed façades. The town centre is scattered with more commercial developments of various styles but with consistent alignment and form.

Two storey buildings dominate the main street in the town centre, with scale decreasing at either end of the street. The commercial/retail frontages are typically narrow with awnings to the kerb edge or verandahs addressing the street. More recent developments often have wider frontages.

The residential buildings are commonly a mix of both masonry and lightweight construction. The roofs are tiled or metal with garages often to the rear. Housing sites in the lower lying areas are typically elevated and of lightweight construction with the garage often located under the house.

Key building elements in the major town include:

- A prominent town centre with commercial and public buildings of high quality
- Commercial buildings ranging in character from narrow fronted parapet buildings with awning to kerb to grand civic buildings with a verandah addressing the street; typically buildings are one to two storeys high
- Residential buildings range in form depending on their position in the landscape; many buildings are of lightweight construction and elevated on lower lying sites
- Residential buildings are typically freestanding, detached dwellings, although semi-detached housing, small scale blocks of flats and shop-top housing is also evident closer to the town centre
The local police station utilises a traditional masonry dwelling, well landscaped, set back from the street and bounded by a low front fence.

Traditional residential dwelling, elevated and of mixed masonry and lightweight construction with an external verandah.

Commercial buildings in town centre typically have a narrow shop front, with awning to the kerb, and utilise parapet forms of consistent alignment.
7.10 MAJOR TOWN TWO - SUMMARY

Higher density buildings distinguish the commercial centre from residential areas.

A continuous covered way provides pedestrian protection in the town centre.

A clear buffer is defined between the built edge and the natural environment.

Variation in scale of built form provides diversity of character.

Settlement Main Street - Park Edge