

PRESERVING WENTWORTH STREET PORT KEMBLA

I noted recently that the NSW Town of Maitland was to have its entire Main Street nominated for National Estate listing because of its surprisingly intact streetscape of nineteenth century shops.

If ever a heritage precinct in Wollongong needed preserving in toto it is Wentworth Street, Port Kembla. I know of no more intact between the wars strip shopping centre anywhere in Australia. Even movie producers have started to recognize its value and at least one production has utilized both the street and the marvellous Port Kembla baths as the location for a feature film. Some time ago SBS used the street as the opening frames for a locally produced

soap opera.

Despite the unfortunate interior remodelling of the art-deco Commonwealth bank and the fire damaged Whiteway cinema, the street has massive potential now that it remains in the economic doldrums and real estate is extraordinarily cheap. The brains behind our much touted 'Industry World' should have the imagination to get the entire street declared as part of our National Estate before this precious between the wars streetscape is either demolished or unsympathetically 'renovated' out of existence.