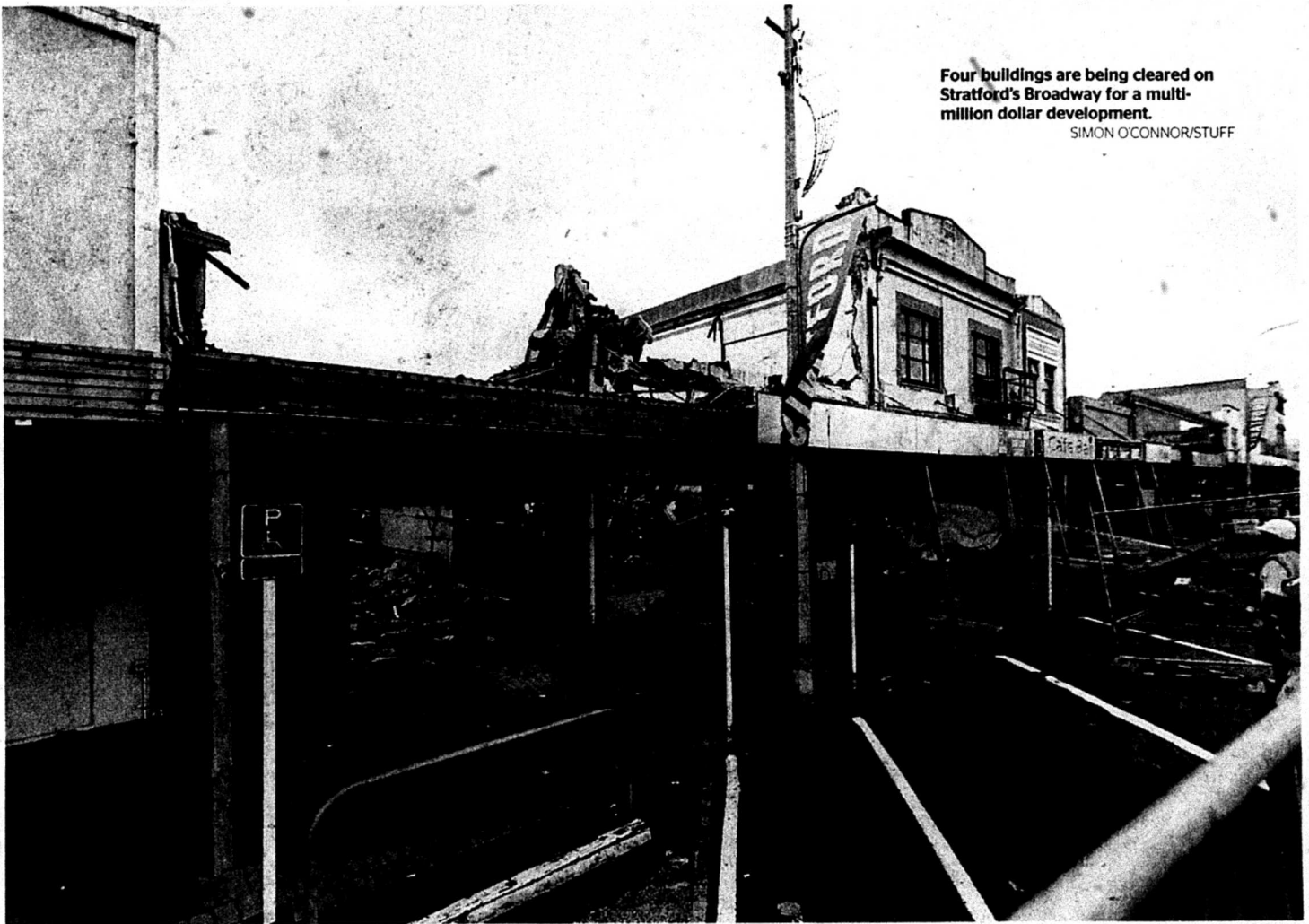


Four buildings are being cleared on Stratford's Broadway for a multi-million dollar development.

SIMON O'CONNOR/STUFF



Buildings make way for new development

Stratford Jane Matthews

The demolition of a block of buildings in the middle of a central Taranaki town is under way ahead of a major development.

Two of four buildings on the western side of Stratford's main street are partially gone, with the remaining two expected to be mostly demolished over the next two weeks.

The site was bought by father and son developers David and Jason Kowalewski in 2016. At the time they said they planned a cafe-retail development.

This week Jason Kowalewski said in an emailed statement the demolition, which began on April 8, should be completed by the end of May.

He would not share a timeline for the redevelopment.

"There have been a few surprises with the demolition so at this stage I cannot confirm a start date; however, we're hoping to begin this year," Kowalewski wrote.

He said 259, 257 and 249 Broadway would be completely demolished and the north-most building, 247 Broadway, would only be partly demolished "at this stage".

In 2016 the Kowalewskis announced their plans to clear the

buildings, including 249 Broadway, better known as the Hunter & Lyons building erected in 1898, to make room for a large development that would include eight retail spaces.

However, when asked for updated plans Kowalewski said he could not make any comment.

The Stratford District Council (SDC) will demolish the former ANZ Bank building, which sits next to the Kowalewskis' properties, once the bank's lease is finished in mid-October.

This would open up the town centre and allow the Kowalewskis to build a veranda and have pedestrian access to any south-facing buildings in the new development.

SDC chief executive Sven Hanne said, overall, the demolition and development was good for the town.

"There's always a bit about cultural heritage but overall as a council we are excited," Hanne said. "This is really positive."

The Broadway work is one of three new developments - including the Fenton Street Art Collective gallery, which opened last year, and a new cafe, The Baking Company, on Regan St - which Hanne said was promising for the town of 5500 people.

"People have put significant money of their own in - this clearly shows faith in the town."