

Losing their school to fire sparked a dream to recreate a 'spooky real' 3D version of the original Kelso High

ABC Central West

By Xanthe Gregory

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Former Kelso student John Rouse and teacher Hans Strove watched the school burn to the ground in 2005. (ABC Central West: Xanthe Gregory)

If you could, would you return to roam your old high school's halls?

Key points:

- Former staff and students of Kelso High School commissioned a 3D walkthrough of the burnt-down school
- Graduate John Rouse had a recurring dream of walking through the old campus
- An electrical fault started the fire in 2005, leaving behind only old magazines and floor plans to recreate the original

Two men in New South Wales' Central West have stopped at nothing to recreate a beloved school [that was razed in an electrical fire fifteen years ago](#).

John Rouse graduated Kelso High School in 1987 but he never forgot the night the school became a pile of ashes.

"Once it hit it was all over. Everyone was devastated," Mr Rouse said.

He has been a driving force in bringing to life a vivid, computer-generated walkthrough of the school that precisely recreates the main building's features.

The 3D video was built using old school magazines, photographs, and 280 pages of school plans.

"It's absolutely dead accurate, it's spooky real," he said.

VIMEO [The Kelso High School 3D animation 3dwalkabout.com.au/kelso](https://www.vimeo.com/123456789)

Recurring dream spurs project

Since the night it was destroyed, Mr Rouse has had an itch to salvage what was left of Kelso High, established in the 1970s.

"I'd have this recurring dream of me wandering through the corridors," he said.

"There were no students, no teachers, just me wandering through the school."

With most of the school's records in ashes, all he had was memories.

"I [personally] had no photographs, no videos, no nothing, because this was well before the days of the mobile phones," he said.



The remains of Kelso High School after an electrical fire which burnt for four hours.(ABC TV)

Salvaging the past

Mr Rouse buddied-up with Kelso High School teacher Hans Strove to crowdfund the 3D walkthrough.

But it did not come cheap.

The project, executed by a 3D agency, cost over \$20,000, most of which was contributed by former students.

Mr Strove said he did not want the history of the one-of-a-kind building to be lost.

"I remember seeing what I thought were the toughest kids in school in tears on the front oval," Mr Strove said.

Hans Strove said the recreation of the old school brought memories flooding back.

He said it would help the community reflect on their school days, something most people took for granted.