

# Original Kelso High School to be 'rebuilt' online for virtual tours

Sam Bolt



MEMORIES: Former Kelso High teacher Hans Stroeve with the original school's theatrette sign spared by the 2005 fire. Photo: CHRIS SEABROOK

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Almost 15 years on from the devastating fire, the original Kelso High School building is set to receive a rebirth online via a 3D virtual reconstruction.

The project will use original building plans and existing photographs of the former Kelso High, which was destroyed by fire in August 2005, to create a detailed virtual model of the old building.

Former Kelso High student Dr John Rouse, who graduated in 1987, has funded the \$11,000 project himself, and was inspired by last year's launch of the Kelso High archive.

"I was absolutely blown away from all the memories compiled by Hans [Stroeve, former teacher] and various ex-staff and students, and immediately felt a virtual reconstruction could enhance the archive," Dr Rouse said.

"So I came across this Perth-based company, 3D Walkabout, who has the capacity to create virtual walk-throughs of buildings, and they immediately jumped at the idea, as a reconstruction of an extinct building is something they've never attempted before."

Dr Rouse, who is now a partner in a national radiography firm, has received assistance from fellow Kelso High alumnus Nick Drengenberg, who tracked down the original school's plans through NSW Public Works.

"We've purchased nearly 70 plans of the original school to assist developers with the recreation," he said.

"The end product will be a short, interactive video fly-through of the old building, with a closer look at each area of the school akin to what you'd see on Google Maps."

"It's still in the early days yet, but I feel this is an important legacy project to help keep the memory of the original Kelso High School alive."

The project has been met with significant enthusiasm among Kelso High alumni, with more than 140 promises to reimburse Dr Rouse for the cause and Mr Stroeve, who taught full-time at Kelso High for nearly 40 years, has set up an account on the 'Kelso High School friends' Facebook page.

He said the project will hopefully allow future generations to virtually revisit Kelso High as it once was.

"The developers have labelled it 'forensic architecture,' and it's pleasing to hear they're just as excited as we are to see this project come about," he said.

"So many people in Bathurst remember the old Kelso High, but have only vague memories of the experience, so we hope this reconstruction will help alumni reignite some of their treasures school experiences."

To contribute to the 3D Kelso High Virtual Tour project, visit the Kelso High School friends Facebook page or send a donation to account name H Stroeve, account number 68521 and BSB 882000.