

Miller Street, North Sydney



The Greenwood Plaza shopping complex located near North Sydney Station has as its centrepiece the former Greenwood School. This large development site fronting the Pacific Highway, Blue and Miller Streets comprises an area of 1.08 hectares and features a multi-storey commercial office building, a retail arcade, open recreation space and the retention of the Greenwood building which was once St. Leonards Public School and later the North Sydney Technical High School.

This Gothic revival building was constructed in 1877 by architect, George Allan Mansfield. A leading architect of his day, he was responsible for many of the school buildings erected in the 1870s and 1880s throughout Sydney.

The school first opened its doors to 320 children in 1878 and expanded

rapidly by the 1880s and 1890s by which time it was necessary to build additions to house the growing number of pupils enrolling each year. The stone building is commonly and affectionately known as the 'Greenwood' building and is named for Mr. Nimrod Greenwood, the most famous headmaster of this school. Greenwood lived in the school grounds in a pleasant 2-storey residence which fronted Blue Street. This building was demolished in 1960 to make way for car parking.

Nimrod Greenwood was described by one of his pupils, A.R.Chisholm, as a

"fairly big man, heavy but not corpulent, with a fringe of grey hair round a pink scalp and a neatly clipped beard. His hands, like his face, were rather florid and had thin, brittle-looking nails. His eyes were of a bluish or greyish green, and unforgettably ironical".

Chisholm goes on to describe the school and its grounds including its various name changes - St. Leonards Public School, North Sydney Public School, North Sydney Superior School, North Sydney-Chatswood Junior High School,

and finally in 1943 North Sydney Technical High School. Chisholm tells us that 'the boys always called it Greeny's. The North Sydney Technical High School existed on this site from 1943 until its closure in 1969. The Education Department then used the buildings as a curriculum development unit.

Greenwood's building was saved by the efforts of the "Old Lions", past pupils of the Technical High School, the North Shore Historical Society and North Sydney Council.

This historic building, classified by the National Trust, is an integral feature of the commercial and retail development known as Greenwood Plaza. It provides a combination of a place of commercial activity and an open space for people to gather and relive a part of North Sydney's history.

For further details about the school and the redevelopment of this site check the Library's OPAC under Greenwood and North Sydney Technical High School.