

**PLACE NAME** The Newtown & Chilwell Free Kindergarten  
**ADDRESS** 25 Bond Street **LEVEL: B**  
**AREA** - **DATE/PERSON** 14.4/R.P. **NEG:**



**HISTORY**

The Newtown & Chilwell Free Kindergarten was designed by W. Hardy Wilson (ed. by Gordon, M. Gordon) and is one of the best examples of the Californian Bungalow style in the east. It was built in 1925 and is a fine example of the style. The building is a single-story structure with a covered veranda supported by columns. There is a lawn in front with some outdoor furniture and a large tree on the right side of the building.

**DATES** Construction: c1925  
**USE** Present Use: Public  
 Original Use: Kindergarten  
 Alterations?:

**FORM** Detached Single storey **STYLE** Californian Bungalow

**DESCRIPTION** (I = Intact A = Altered \* = significant)

**ROOF** Corr. Iron **WALLS** Terracotta Wall Tiles **I ROOF FORM** Roof Vents

**VERANDAH** \* Form **FENESTRATION** Doors Windows **FINISHES** Unpainted Brick

**INTERIOR** **GARDEN & SETTING** **OTHER COMMENTS**

**CONDITION & INTEGRITY** Condition: Excellent Integrity: Intact **THREATS**

## DESCRIPTION

A multiple hip-roofed symmetrical community building of red brick. The panels between the piers are faced with terracotta tiles. Most of the five bays have French doors (with six panes and highlights over) between piers. There is a fine flat roofed arcade all around supported by proper Tuscan column pairs in the 20th Century Colonial manner popularised by W. Hardy Wilson (eg. Eryldene at Gordon, NSW, 1913). The rafters are exposed and there are the usual up-cast shaft vents of the Kemp and Sheehan pattern.

## HISTORY

The Newtown & Chilwell Free Kindergarten in Bond Street, Newtown, designed by the architect I. G. Anderson, a member of the Free Kindergarten Committee, and opened on 27 November 1925, is typical of the many Kindergarten centres established throughout the state in the early decades of the present century. Architecturally, and because of the facilities provided, it was regarded at the time as "one of the best in Victoria".<sup>26</sup> It has been used as a kindergarten for more than 64 years.

The Free Kindergarten Union of Victoria grew in strength in the early 1900s as the kindergarten movement gained community support and centres were established throughout the state. Most major country towns aspired to at least one such centre. Some funding was provided in the form of grants from local government and the Free Kindergarten Union of Victoria, but community groups also helped with social events to raise funds and "Working Bees" to minimise the cost of labour for repairs and maintenance of buildings and grounds. Such activity was seen as socially beneficial as a means of fostering a community spirit.

Guidelines were set by the Victorian Union so that for a small fee children had an opportunity to interact with other children of a similar age, which was seen as an important factor in their intellectual and moral development. The siting and design of the centre was of paramount importance. In an era which lauded the benefits of sunshine and fresh air, kindergartens were designed to provide spacious, well-ventilated buildings with open air space where children could play. This was regarded as particularly important in areas of dense population. It was believed that children attending these centres would grow up to be healthy men and women, an obvious social benefit.<sup>27</sup>

In 1924 Geelong had two such centres run by a committee. The main kindergarten was in Geelong West and the other, a semi-permanent centre, was in the rented hall of the Noble Street Methodist Church. A new building was needed in Newtown and Chilwell, so the process of fundraising and rallying support began.

At the opening in November 1925, it was pointed out that there were 26 Free Kindergartens in Victoria of which fourteen had their buildings completed. Mrs A'Beckett, the President of the Free Kindergarten Union of Victoria, declared that the Newtown centre was "one of the best in Victoria". During the ceremony, at which she explained the aims and objectives of the Free Kindergarten movement, the honorary architect, I. G. Anderson, presented her

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26. John Selleck, "The Newtown & Chilwell Free Kindergarten, Bond Street, Newtown", Unpublished Historical Building Research Project, Deakin University, June 1990, unpaginated.
  27. Geelong Advertiser, 27 November, 1925.

with a silver key with a gold top to open the main door to the building.<sup>28</sup> In an article in the Geelong Advertiser the new building was described in these words:

The building, which cost 2000 pounds, is of brick and terracotta brick, lined with concrete, and is of a most attractive design. A feature is the splendid ventilation and light, which are indispensable in buildings of the kindergarten type. The big assembly hall is capable of seating 200 children, and there is a "babies" room, which will hold 50, a staff room, a store room, a cloakroom, and kitchen and scullery.<sup>29</sup> There is ample space in the grounds for recreation.

#### ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS

Although the firm Buchan and Laird, architects, were approached to design alterations to the building in 1946-47, this work does not seem to have been carried out.<sup>30</sup> Renovations in 1970 by the building contractor Daws, for the sum of \$16,920 however, have had some impact. Selleck describes these renovations as unsympathetic but concludes, that the 1970 extensions do not relate well to the original building as they have flat roofs and different quality bricks and brickwork, but they also do not intrude with any great significance on the building itself. The only section that has been affected by the alterations is the central entry point which now has been bricked in and a window put in its place so as to enclose the new toilet area. The plumbing for sewerage pipes rudely extract waste out through the front wall of the building where once the front entrance would have been.<sup>31</sup> In addition, a garden storeroom was added to the site in 1971.

#### COMPARISONS

Compare columns to those at "Waitaki", 251 Pakington Street (1905).

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The Newtown and Chilwell Free Kindergarten has regional historical significance as a good example of municipal enterprise and as one of the many free kindergarten centres established throughout the state in the early decades of the present century, offering facilities regarded at the time as among the best in Victoria. It was used for its original purposes for more than 64 years, demonstrating Newtown's role as part of the metropolis, and from 1925 providing specialised functions in the Geelong area. Its honorary architect was I. G. Anderson. When opened it was regarded by the President of the Free Kindergarten Union as "one of the best" of the fourteen free kindergarten buildings then in Victoria.

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#### RECOMMENDATIONS

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28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid. The designer was probably Ivan Warnock, home designer, 220 Moorabool Street, Geelong. See 1969 plans.
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Existing listings NONE

Recommend'ns LPS

... were approximately 1900-1910. This work does not seem to have been done until the late 1930s however, the building was renovated as an apartment building in 1930. The renovation does not relate well to the original building and different design elements do not coincide with the original design. The only section that has been affected by the renovation is the central entry point which has been replaced by a new window but in its place so as to maintain the original design for sewerage pipes which are on the east side of the building where the front entrance was. In addition, a store room was added to the building.

Compare columns to those of 111-113 Kingston Street (1910)

The Newtow and Chilton buildings are regional historical significance as a good example of the early 20th century of the many use buildings. The early 20th century, offering facilities regarded as the best in Victoria. It was used for its original purpose for more than 40 years. The building is a fine example of the metropolitan, and first 1925 providing specialized services. The building was designed by the prominent architect of the time, and is considered as one of the best of the early 20th century in Victoria.

28. Ibid. home designer, Ivan Watnack, see 1989 plans.  
29. Ibid. home designer, Ivan Watnack, see 1989 plans.  
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31. Ibid. The designer, Ivan Watnack, see 1989 plans.

ALTERATION CONDITIONS

Although the building has been renovated, the design and construction of the building seem to have been done in the late 1930s. The renovation does not relate well to the original building and different design elements do not coincide with the original design. The only section that has been affected by the renovation is the central entry point which has been replaced by a new window but in its place so as to maintain the original design for sewerage pipes which are on the east side of the building where the front entrance was. In addition, a store room was added to the building.

COMPARISON

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RECOMMENDATIONS

- 28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.