

R Annable, *A Setting for Justice: Building for the Supreme Court of New South Wales*, Sydney, UNSW Press, 2007

Foreword

**By the Honourable J J Spigelman AC
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The location, plan and construction of the original Supreme Court building resulted more from chance than design. On 7 October 1819 Macquarie laid the foundation stone for the court, but St James' Church was built over it. On 20 March 1829 Macquarie laid the foundation stone for the Georgian public school, which was built on the other side of Elizabeth Street.

Macquarie left in December 1821. Greenway was dismissed from government service in November 1822. The experience of Joern Utzon and the Sydney Opera House was not unprecedented. As this volume records, the construction of the courthouse was finished under contract. The result was said to be only fit for an old barn and not at all in character with the building.

No part of it was ready until August 1827. In the meantime, on 17 May 1824, the Supreme Court of New South Wales came into being and had been formally launched by Chief Justice Forbes in the Georgian School House.

On this side of the street the contract work caused constant trouble. By 1832 the Chief Justice was complaining of serious cracks in the court's partition walls and expressed the fear they would collapse. There was the constant threat of ceilings and plaster falling down. By 1838 the state of the building was perilous due to some neglect of architect or builders or both and to the weakness of the lime mortar which, having been made from sea shells in the early days, was frail and too sparingly used.

It is rare for a building of heritage significance to be recycled for its original use. This was the objective of this significant project of restoration of the original Supreme Court complex. Restoration of our heritage is food for the soul.

This has been a magnificent restoration project. The process and some of the trials and tribulations involved are here recorded. I wish to acknowledge some of the principal contributors to that process. The Honourable Simon Sheller and the other members of the Building Committee of the Court have participated in the restoration of the complex with dedication and enthusiasm over many years. The Attorney General's Department has, by various officers, supported the project throughout.

This volume contains some of the original research upon which the restoration was based and reflects the result of that research in physical form. It is a definitive and much welcome history of one aspect, but a vital aspect, of the history of the Supreme Court of New South Wales.