Travelling along Parry St in Newcastle West it is hard not to notice the award-winning Hamilton College of TAFE.

Latest stage in 110 years of history receives civic design awards

TOMORROW’S opening of the Hamilton College of TAFE represents the latest stage in 110 years of development of the Parry St site.

The old restored section of the college was built in 1874 as part of the Castlemaine Brewery complex.

It is believed to have been the work of Oswald Lewis, the son of colonial architect Mortimer Lewis.

The building was never intended to be a brewery hall, but it remained in use as a bond store until 1919.

The building was acquired as a prototype of a traditional maltings.

In 1920, in his 1921 report to parliament, the Minister of Public Instruction reported that the Newcastle College city was built upon the last inch and it was impossible to accommodate the additional classes to be formed in the existing buildings.

In 1926 it was purchased by the Commonweath Government to provide vocational training for World War I veterans.

Because the Hunter St West college, built in 1894, was becoming too cramped for expanding classes a move was made by the Technical Education Branch of the Department of Public Instruction to purchase the brewery building site in Parry St.

In 1877 the Technical Education Branch of the Department of Public Instruction bought the building from the Commonwealth Government.

In November 1992 a grant of $20,000 was approved by the Unemployment Relief Council at the first stage of a $70,000 development of the site.

Tenders were called in May 1993 and by the end of the year the foundation stone was laid by the Minister for Education, Mr D.H. Drummond.

In August 1934 physics and electrical classes occupied the building.

The same year saw the announcement of an additional $10,000 building to house chemistry and metallurgy classes.

By August 1934 technical education classes were installed over the Hunter St West building, a hall store in King St, several cottages in Stanlab and Hoban streets, and in the old brewery building and the recently completed science blocks.

This situation continued with student enrolments increasing to 2,534 in 1985.

In March 1973 teachers and students from Hunter and Parry St buildings were calling on the Minister for Education to take immediate steps to replace all buildings on the college.

Classified listing by Trust

The conditions were becoming intolerable and in 1974 it was announced that a new college was to be built at the Parry St site for $56.5m.

In July 1976 conservationists became active in an effort to save the old brewery building which was to be demolished to make way for the new college.

In the same month the National Trust of Australia gave it a classified listing in its Register which meant the building was essential to national heritage and the listing helped to ensure its preservation.

By August 1976 the cost had risen to $25m and in December the Hunter District Council for Technical and Further Education recommended staying the plan.

Meanwhile students at Hunter St West attended classes under leaking roofs, inadequate lavatory facilities and poor lighting. In addition the brewery building was not used because of the safety risk involved.

It was not until February 1989 that a tender of $236,000 was accepted for repair work to the brewery building.

In 1989 tenders were called for the construction of the new college in Parry St with Citra Constructions winning the job.

In October 1989 the deputy principal of Newcastle Technical College, Mr Neville Thomas, was appointed principal of the Hamilton college to operate TAFE activities at Parry St, Hunter St and Laman St.

In December 1989 the renovated brewery building (Block B) was handed over to TAFE by the contractors M/W Building Pty Ltd.

Early the following year Citra Constructions handed over the new Block A and butchery courses began.

In November 1985 the Newcastle City Council in association with the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, Master Builders Association and the Royal Australian Planning Institute awarded the college a civic design award.

The Block B brewery building won the Heritage Award for a development incorporating the conservation, preservation and rehabilitation of a building or place of cultural, historical or architectural significance.

Block A was awarded the Duncan Merit Award for a non-residential development of a civic nature designed by a professionally qualified designer.

Today students at the college come from trade and industrial areas for vocational training and from the wider community to extend their general education and leisure skills.

The principal of the Hamilton College of TAFE, Mr Neville Thomas, proudly holds the Newcastle City Council's 1985 Heritage Award plaque which the college won for the restoration of the former Castlemaine brewery building.

Although fully operational the college remains in its formative years and objectives remain flexible to allow for growth and re-creation.
College opening

THE Minister for Education, Mr Cavalier, will tomorrow officially open Hamilton College of Technical and Further Education at 2pm.

Situated in Parry St, Newcastle West, the college houses the Food and Home Science Schools which service the Newcastle region and offer vocational and leisure training in catering, butchery, food service and hospitality.

It also provides courses in community education through Basic Education, PEB Outreach and an Individual Learning Centre.

Other courses administered by the college at the Hunter Street West Annessa are in hairdressing, fashion and art and design. Some classes in fashion, adult literacy and secretarial studies are also held at Nelson Bay and Raymond Terrace.

The college buildings, constructed and renovated for over $12 million, have already received architectural recognition with the prestigious Heritage, Ward, and the Dangar Merit Award.

The college combines the latest equipment and technology with an atmosphere designed to facilitate learning. The blend of architectural styles also reflects the diversity of courses offered at the college.

Mr Cavalier is pleased to be opening the State's first complete Food School.

"The new Hamilton College will provide an excellent learning environment," he said.

Surroundings are very important for staff and student morale. With the new building and the refurbished brewery building have won design awards.

The brewery building will provide a good home for the Individual Learning Centre, regional PEB staff, regional Outreach staff and adult literacy and staff.

I am looking forward to personally inspecting this award-winning campus as well as meeting the students and staff.

The principal of the college, Mr Neville Thomas, is enthusiastic about the new centre of learning.

The college is extending its existing vocational, leisure and community education courses and will continue this service to Newcastle," he said.

In addition, the tourist and hospitality industries will benefit from the technical and educational skills provided by the staff in the new portion of the college.

This expertise will contribute to earning tourist dollars for the Hunter Region.

A section of the old brewery building now fully restored and serving a new purpose for the Hamilton College of TAFE.