

Little Bourke/Hardware Street Laneway Precinct

Statement of Significance

The many narrow lanes off Little Bourke Street were created between the 1860s and 1880s, when subdivisions in the central city reached a peak. The southern half of Hardware Lane (formerly Street) was created in 1925 by subdividing the large Kirk's Horse Bazaar, which had been established in 1840. Kirk's attracted other horse bazaars, saddlers and the like, creating a horse-business precinct, which later translated into a concentration of hardware businesses, giving the lane its name. The building stock varies in age, style and height, but the majority are 1880s to the 1930s, with mainly pre-WWII industrial buildings, often red brick, in the side lanes. In Hardware Lane there are more later or altered buildings. The streetscape of Little Bourke Street includes the most individually notable buildings, with good examples of most periods pre-WWII. The precinct also includes older buildings facing Lonsdale and Elizabeth that contribute to the precinct through their rear or side walls, but are also pre-WWII. There are bluestone kerbs and guttering throughout, except for Hardware Lane, which was paved in red brick on the 1980s, and Niagara Lane is paved with bluestone pitchers.

The Hardware Lane Precinct encompasses the greatest concentration of lanes in the central city area, as well as one of the most well known, complete with many notable industrial and commercial buildings. The mostly long narrow side lanes are generally lined with two to four storey red brick buildings, creating a series of characteristic 'Melbourne' lanes. These are complemented by Hardware Lane, one of the relatively few wider 'lanes' that functioned more like a main street, housing hardware-related retail outlets and hardware house itself. The quality and variety of the buildings is notable, including elaborate tall narrow Victorian warehouses on many of the side lanes, simply designed 1920s commercial buildings on the main streets, interspersed with other Victorian, Edwardian, Art Deco and early modern styles.





Pink indicated buildings with individual HO, blue those that will gain one with the C186 Amendment, and green buildings with a grading, or worthy of grading



