

SITE NAME	Warehouse
STREET ADDRESS	27-29 Little Lonsdale Street Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	110722



SURVEY DATE: October 2018		SURVEY BY: Context	
HERITAGE INVENTORY	N/A	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Not known	FORMER GRADE	C
		BUILDER:	William Roger
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Interwar Period (c1919-c1940)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1924

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here.
HISTORIC THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
5 Building a Commercial City	5.5 Building a manufacturing capacity

LAND USE

HISTORIC LAND USE	
Archaeological block no: 16	Inventory no: Inventory not provided.
THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Factories and Workshops
1920s	Factories and Workshops
1960s	Factories and Workshops

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map

SUMMARY

27-29 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, is a two-storey brick warehouse built in 1924 for engineering firm A Lugton & Sons as an investment. The building was let out by A Lugton & Sons, and occupied by various manufacturers for almost 50 years between c1924 and the early 1970s. The Gloria Knitting Mills occupied the site for around 30 years, until the early 1970s.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Building a Commercial City

Building a manufacturing capacity

From the 1850s, the Yarra River and the docks west of Swanston Street were in essence the 'lifeline' of the city. Port facilities and large warehouses were built in this area to serve shipping interests (Context 2012:39-40).

By the 1880s, the areas of Flinders Street, King Street, Little Bourke Street and Spencer Street comprised multiple mercantile offices, produce stores and large-scale bonded stores, including Zander's Bonded Stores and Coles Bonded Stores. As Melbourne developed through the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, so did her manufacturing industry, much of which was established in close proximity to existing warehouses and stores.

Although affected by World War One in the period 1914-1918, by 1921, 38 per cent of Melbourne's workers were employed in industry with almost all new factory jobs in Australia between 1921 and 1947 created in Sydney and Melbourne. The growth of manufacturing, assisted by a new federal tariff in 1921, stimulated urban growth and by the end of the 1920s, Melbourne's population had reached one million people. The expansion of new sectors in the manufacturing industry was maintained by buoyant levels of domestic demand (Marsden 2000:29; Dingle 2008).

In the first decades of the twentieth century, the demand for residential development declined in central Melbourne as many residents moved out of the city to the suburbs, and the booming retail and manufacturing sectors rapidly took up available city properties (Marsden 2000:29-30). Multi-storey factory, workshop and warehouse buildings, some designed by architects, increasingly took over the city.

Development in the city slowed with the Great Depression that commenced in October 1929 and continued through the early 1930s. Because of a lack of finance over this period, instead of new construction, some city buildings were substantially re-modelled to create new office, commercial and industrial spaces, and also for use by government.

From the 1930s, like the rest of Australia, an increasing proportion of the city's workforce took up jobs in manufacturing, an industry that led Australia's recovery from the economic depression and a time when, the *Encyclopedia of Melbourne* notes, a

steep rise in tariffs, devaluation of the Australian pound, falling wages and electricity costs all made local producers far more competitive internationally. Textiles benefited first, then the metals industries and engineering took over as pacemakers (Dingle 2008).

After being the centre of manufacturing in Australia in the 1920s, Melbourne's importance in this regard began to decline. During the 1940s some city factories and warehouses were left empty or converted for other uses (Context 2012:35).

From the end of World War Two to the beginning of the 1970s, Melbourne underwent the most sustained growth in its history, mostly based on the manufacturing industry. At the peak of industrialisation in 1966, 37 per cent of total employment in Melbourne was dedicated to manufacturing, compared to the national average of 27 per cent (Maher cited in Tsutsumi and O'Connor 2006:8.3). Australia's manufacturing output increased 6 per cent per year between 1949

and 1967, and between 1947 and 1966, 155,221 new manufacturing jobs were created in Melbourne alone, roughly one-third of which went to women (Dingle 2008).

However, by the mid-1960s,

[the] postwar expansion of manufacturing could no longer be contained within the old ring of inner industrial suburbs. They had become crowded and congested. New methods of production required more space and single-storey buildings to accommodate assembly-line techniques. The fork-lift truck led to new kinds of factory buildings. An increasing use of electricity for power and road transport rather than rail to move goods, opened up new locational possibilities...During the 1960s manufacturing expanded most rapidly in Moorabbin and the Oakleigh-Clayton area. When the available sites were taken up the area of fastest growth then transferred to Broadmeadows and Waverley (Dingle 2008).

City centres retained some manufacturing until the late 1970s, mostly in the areas of clothing, printing and food processing, sectors that increasingly employed women workers. By the 1990s manufacturing had declined to 16 per cent of total employment in Melbourne, and 77 per cent of the workforce were working in the tertiary sector (Marsden 2000:99-100).

SITE HISTORY

The land at 27-29 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne was part of the Crown Allotment 6, Block 25, purchased by James Westwood (CoMMaps). The land was vacant until 1856, and by 1859, an 'engineer and smith' Alexander J Lugton established a factory on the subject site (S&Mc 1860; Bibbs 1856). The 1859 factory was the first building ever erected for the firm A Lugton & Sons, which over an approximate 100 year period came to own and operate multiple engineering premises between Little Lonsdale and Lonsdale streets near Gorman Lane and Casselden Place, up until the 1950s. By March 1889, the subject land previously known as 144 Little Lonsdale Street East was re-addressed as 27-33 Little Lonsdale Street (see Figure 1) (*Warragul Guardian and Buln Buln and Narracan Shire Advocate* 1 March 1889:3).

In 1924, the current two-storey brick building at 27-29 Little Lonsdale Street was constructed for A Lugton & Sons by builder William Roger of Hawksburn to replace the former workshop premises (PROV VPRS11201/1, item 81). Drawings for the new building were prepared by 1923 (see Figure 2) with the building completed by c1925 (S&Mc 1927-1974).



Figure 1. Advertisements for A Lugton & Sons: LHS in 1888 at 142-144 Little Lonsdale Street; RHS in 1889 at 27-33 Little Lonsdale Street. (Source: *Leader* 22 December 1888:14; *Warragul Guardian and Buln Buln and Narracan Shire Advocate* 31 December 1889:4)

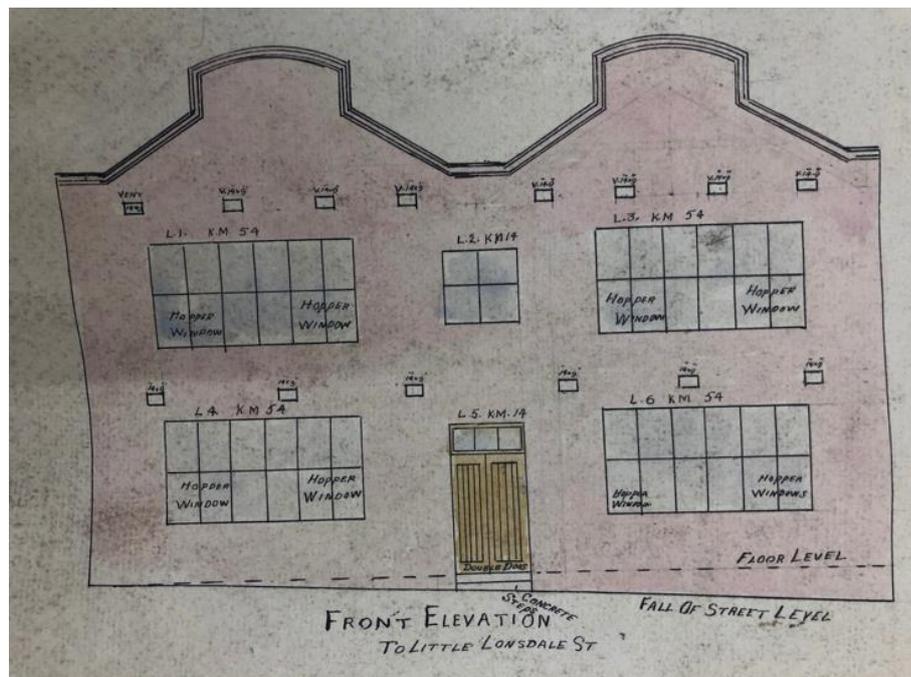


Figure 2. Original elevation drawings of the subject building in 1923 (Source: PROV VPRS 11200/1, item 754).

Alexander Joseph Lugton established an engineering business in Melbourne in 1859, at the subject site, then known as 144 or 146 Little Lonsdale Street East. By 1862, he was working with his sons as A Lugton & Sons, engineers, blacksmiths and boiler makers.

Centring around the servicing laneway Gorman Alley that adjoins the subject site, A Lugton & Sons had established an engineering and manufacturing complex stretching north-south between Little Lonsdale and Lonsdale streets (see Figure 3) (MMBW Detail Plan no 1019, 1895; Mahlstedt Map Section 2, no 8A, 1910 & 1923). A building permit was issued for a brick factory in Casselden Place on 22 June 1910 for owner Alexander J Lugton. This factory was designed by architect R Schriber

and constructed by J Wilson of Carlton (MCC registration no 2013 as cited in AAI, record no 72642). A Lugton & Sons also constructed three two-storey brick factories in Lonsdale Street c1912 (Figure 3), at 32-36 Lonsdale Street (MCC registration no 3504 as cited in AAI, record no 76394). By 1924, the firm had moved from 27-33 Little Lonsdale Street to premises in Lonsdale Street (*Argus* 29 November 1924:1). Historian J A Leckey, in his thesis on the Little Lonsdale area, provides the following information about the firm of A Lugton & Sons:

The company...won a 'first order of merit' prize for their chaff-making machine at the 1880 Melbourne International Exhibition. The business, which stretched through to Lonsdale Street, advertised itself as 'Makers of engines and boilers, axles and bearings, every class of machinery made and repaired'. Following compulsory acquisition, they sold out to a rival firm in 1952 and closed the site (Leckey 2003: 53).

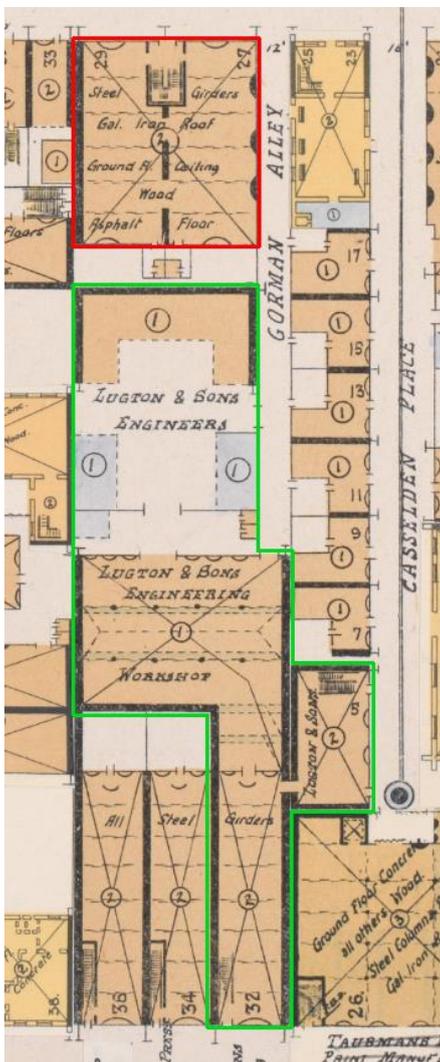


Figure 3. Image showing the subject site at 27-29 Little Lonsdale Street outlined in red, and Lugton & Sons operating in several buildings between Little Lonsdale and Lonsdale streets, addressed as 32 Lonsdale Street and 5 Casselden Place (outlined in green). (Source: Mahlstedt Map Section 2, no 8A, 1923).

The subject building was let out by A Lugton & Sons and occupied by various manufacturers for almost fifty years between c1924 and the early 1970s.

Chinese cabinetmaker, Foo Lung, was the first tenant of the subject building listed in the postal directory in 1927. A large concentration of Chinese traders, especially cabinetmakers, were located in the vicinity in the same year (S&Mc 1927). Foo Lung & Co and Watson Stabilators Pty Ltd were listed as tenants between 1928 and 1930 (S&Mc 1928-1930).

During the 1930s, the site was occupied by Marble Company Ltd, a synthetic marble sheeting producer, before being taken over by the Gloria Knitting Mills c1940 (Figure 4) (S&Mc 1933, 1938, 1940). The Gloria Knitting Mills head office and main factory were located at 279 Spring Street. The knitting mills occupied the site for around 30 years, until the early 1970s. By 1974, the building was listed in a post office directory as a storage warehouse (S&Mc 1970, 1974). The building in c1980s is shown in Figure 5.

In 1988, 27-29 Lonsdale Street was used as the site office for the Victorian Archaeological Survey, which took place at two dig sites on each side of Casselden Place (Age 9 January 1988:1).

The former factory building at 27-29 Little Lonsdale Street was refurbished and restored in 1993. It is now part of a complex of buildings, including a 34-storey office tower built in 2006, addressed as 32-54 Lonsdale Street. The subject building currently operates as a conference centre (CoMMaps).



Figure 4. Image showing subject site as Gloria Knitting Mills c1950. (Source: Australian Department of Housing and Construction c1950, SLV)



Figure 5. Image showing the subject site on the right-hand side c1980s. (Source: Australian Department of Works c1980s, SLV copyright)

SITE DESCRIPTION

Located on the southern side of Little Lonsdale Street, between Spring Street and Exhibition Street, and abutting Gorman Alley to the east, 27-29 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne is a simple 1920s two-storey factory/warehouse building, roughly square in plan, and constructed in loadbearing face brick.

The Little Lonsdale Street façade is a two-bay building form, with a double gabled parapet surmounted with a simple rendered moulding. The gables are an unusual derivative of the Dutch Gable characteristic of some earlier turn of the century buildings. The building is constructed of red face brick laid in colonial bond, with concrete lintels over the window and door openings, typical of earlier inner-city factory buildings.

The brick wall along the Gorman Alley (east) elevation has suffered damage at approximately 1-1.5 metre height, which is probably the outcome of goods vehicles regularly scraping the brickwork. The same vehicle marks are observed in the western elevation of the neighbouring building at 23-25 Little Lonsdale Street, which was erected in 1883-84 (see Figure 6).

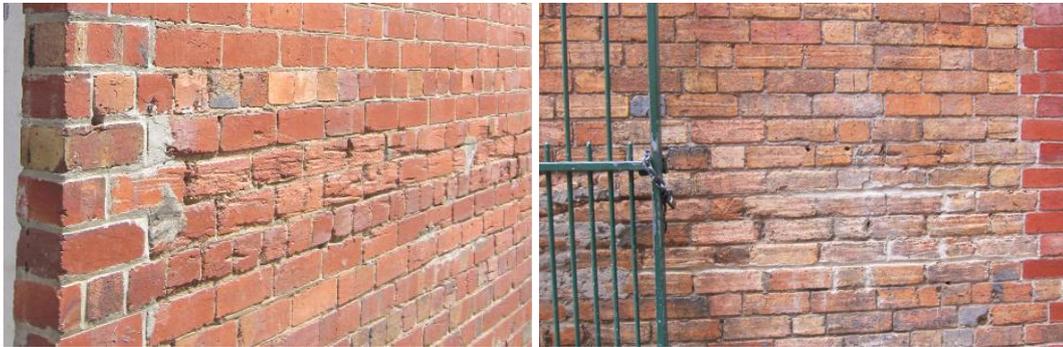


Figure 6. Vehicle marks on 27-29 Little Lonsdale (left) and a neighbouring building at 23-25 Little Lonsdale Street. (Source: Context 2018)

The ground floor has two concrete steps leading up to a central timber door and overhead transom window that appears to be original. The brickwork reveals to the door opening have curved corners which terminate with a quirk, a number of courses below the lintel. Directly above the entrance door, on the first storey, is a square steel-framed window, divided into four square panes. Two symmetrical bays of multipane steel frame windows punctuate the ground and first floors, each of these comprising twelve vertical panes, two vertically and six horizontally. The ground floor windows are protected by a later steel palisade barrier.

On this elevation there are some rectangular prism elements which are probably concealing the ends of some tensile rods inserted through the building to prevent the front wall from bulging or rotating.

All of the windows are steel framed and appear to be original (with some reglazing of louvered panes, refer figure 4 and figure 5). Consistent with other twentieth-century industrial buildings in inner city Melbourne, the windows feature a ventilation system where one row of sashes is angled back, and the gap above covered in mesh to provide a measure of permanent ventilation.

A door opening on the eastern elevation, fronting Gorman Alley, has a contemporary aluminium door and window set within an original opening, and a ramp and handrail to provide at grade access. The

other windows on this elevation are similar to those on the Little Lonsdale Street façade but are only three panes in width.

At the rear of the building is a recent cantilevered lightweight glass box addition. The extension is single storey but elevated above ground level so that it creates an undercroft beneath. From the rear the addition is quite prominent but is not readily visible from the street.

INTEGRITY

27-29 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne is highly intact with very few changes visible to original or early fabric. The building retains its original scale, walls and parapets of loadbearing face brick, painted render lintels, original fenestration, pattern of openings, steel frame windows and an early or original entrance door.

Alterations include the replacement of some windows and a door on the eastern elevation and the new extension at the rear which is barely visible from the street. Overall, the building is of high integrity.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The construction of warehouses and industrial buildings was an important phase of development in central Melbourne, especially during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The buildings were usually low scale and located in minor streets and laneways with rear lane access to facilitate the movement of material in and out of the building. Today most of these early factory or warehouse buildings are no longer operating and have often been adapted to accommodate professional offices or other commercial functions, in this case a conference centre.

The brick warehouses constructed around the early twentieth century and early interwar period are generally of a simple utilitarian character, utilising loadbearing face brick external walls with either a steel post and beam or reinforced concrete internal structure. Windows were generally large to maximise access to natural light at a time when artificial lighting was not adequate for the manufacturing process.

The following examples are comparable with 27-29 Little Lonsdale Street, being of a similar style, scale, construction date and use. The images and descriptions are provided by CoM Maps unless stated otherwise, with images dated c2000 or later.

562-566 Little Bourke Street, c1920s (HO701)

The former Sun Electric Building. A four-storey brick former warehouse with a basement. Built in the early 1920's. Refurbished into an office in 1987. Converted and subdivided into residential units with ground level retail in 2000.



Figure 7. 562-566 Little Bourke Street, built in the 1920s.

337-339 La Trobe Street, 1923-24 (HO1208)

A mid-block, three-storey face brick warehouse building with classical derived detailing including bricked pilasters and a dentil cornice. Contrasting lintels topped with squared corbels make features of these wide factory windows.



Figure 8. 337-339 La Trobe Street, built in 1923-24.

34-36 Little La Trobe Street, 1929 (Recommended as significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review)

The two-storey interwar brick warehouse at 34-36 Little La Trobe Street was built in 1929 to a design by architect Robert Bell Hamilton (1892-1948). The building was occupied by Nason & Pollard, engineers (later Central Motor Engineers), from 1930 to 1965.



Figure 9 34-36 Little Latrobe Street, built in 1929.

27-29 Little Lonsdale Street is an excellent example of an intact interwar warehouse/factory building, utilitarian and functional and refined in its design, of which there are several surviving examples within central Melbourne (albeit often adapted to house new uses such as professional offices). It forms part of a group of now-rare historic buildings associated with smaller-scale manufacturing businesses that once prospered in the northern part of the Hoddle Grid.

It is comparable with a number of other HO listed examples of the type, including 337-339 La Trobe Street (HO1208) and 562-566 Little Bourke Street (HO701), being of a similar character, scale and degree of intactness. It is also comparable with 34-36 Little Lonsdale Street which is proposed for listing on the HO as part of the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	<p>CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION B Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p>CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
	<p>CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p>CRITERION G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

Argus, as cited.

Australian Architectural Index (AAI), as cited. Copyright Miles Lewis.

Australian Department of Housing and Construction 1950, 'Little Lonsdale Street - south side, no. 27-29 showing Gloria Knitting and Underwear Mills', State Library of Victoria (SLV) photographic collection, accessed online 12 December 2018.

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Public Records Office Victoria (PROV), City of Melbourne building plans and permits (1916-1960), VPRS 11201/P1.

Sands & McDougall, *Melbourne and Suburban Directories* (S&Mc), as cited.

Tsutsumi, Jun and O'Connor, Kevin 2006, 'Time series analysis of the skyline and employment changes in the CBD of Melbourne', *Applied GIS* Vol 2 No 2:8.1–8.12. DOI:10.2104/ag060008.

Warragul Guardian and Buln Buln and Narracan Shire Advocate, as cited.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** D

**Central City Heritage
Study 1993** C

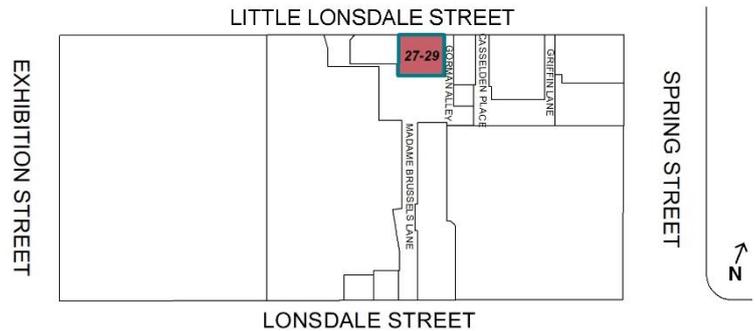
**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Warehouse

PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

27-29 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, a two-storey face brick warehouse built in 1924.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The original building form and scale;
- The original face brick walls and pattern of fenestration including parapets, painted render lintels and pattern of window openings; and
- The original steel frame windows.

Later alterations made to the building, including new windows on the Little Lonsdale façade and a rear extension, are not significant.

How it is significant?

27-29 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne is of local historic and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The building at 27-29 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, constructed in 1924 for engineers, blacksmiths and boilermakers, A Lugton & Sons, is historically significant for its association with the long-term industry and warehouse concentration in this part of the city which demonstrates the historical grouping and evolution of similar uses that have been assessed as significant elements of the city's development. The factory/warehouse building at 27-29 Little Lonsdale Street demonstrates the rise of industry in the city in the 1920s, which, like elsewhere in Australia, led the recovery from the economic depression of the late 1920s-early 1930s. From the end of the World War Two to the beginning of the 1970s, Melbourne underwent the most sustained growth in its history, mostly based on the manufacturing industry. The factory building at 27-29 Little Lonsdale Street demonstrates this growth, established in the 1920s for the manufacturing industry, and continuing to be used for manufacturing by Gloria Knitting Mills from the c1940s until the early 1970s. (Criterion A)

27-29 Little Lonsdale Street is significant as a highly intact example of an early interwar warehouse/factory building constructed in 1924 as a component of the industrial expansion in central

Melbourne during this period. The building is a fine example of the many low scale warehouse/factory buildings of a simple utilitarian character, that utilised loadbearing face brick external wall with either a steel post and beam or reinforced concrete internal structure. These buildings were located in minor streets and laneways with rear lane access to facilitate the movement of goods and materials in and out of the building. Like other such buildings that survive from the period, which are generally low scale using simple construction of loadbearing face brick walls with either a steel post and beam or reinforced concrete internal structure, the building demonstrates a refined yet highly functional aesthetic with a symmetrical facade. 27-29 Little Lonsdale Street is distinguished by an unusual, Dutch Gable inspired yet simple double parapet, and regular pattern of large efficient steel framed windows with painted render lintels. The lack of superfluous decoration reinforces this simple and disciplined industrial aesthetic. (Criterion D)

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)