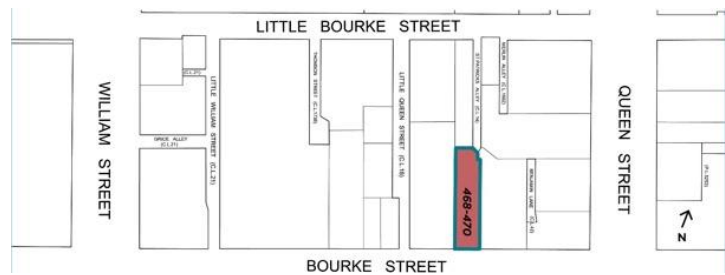


STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former London Assurance House



PS ref no: HO1006



What is significant?

The former London Assurance House at Part 468-470 Bourke Street, Melbourne; now the Law Institute of Victoria, completed in 1960 and designed by architect, developer, former Melbourne City Councillor and Mayor, Bernard Evans.

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

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations are not significant.

How it is significant?

The former London Assurance House at 468-470 Bourke Street is of historical, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

468-470 Bourke Street is historically significant as the original location of St Patrick's Hall of 1849, which was built on land purchased by the St Patrick's Society in 1846. In 1851 the hall was the first meeting place of the Victorian Parliament.

The former London Assurance House, now the Law Institute of Victoria, is historically significant for its association with the rapid growth of the insurance and assurance industry in the 1950s-1960s. These

companies used new city office buildings as a form of promotion and fund investment, contributing to Melbourne's pre-eminent role as the preferred Australian location for large financial institutions.

The former London Assurance House is historically significant for its association with Bernard Evans; architect, Melbourne City Councillor (1949-73) and former Lord Mayor (1959-60). It is one of many city buildings designed by Evans in his long career as a city developer, architect and principal of the architectural practice Bernard Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking Pty Ltd. (Criterion A)

The former London Assurance House is significant as a highly intact, curtain-walled office building from the postwar period demonstrating the style embraced by local architects by the late 1950s. In particular it employs a curtain-wall façade that creates bold contrasts between the clear glazing and solid spandrels. (Criterion D)

The former London Assurance House is aesthetically significant for its ground floor entry glazing designed as a replica of the 'picture frame' in stone facing that surrounds the whole building. The curtain wall is unusual in its design with the horizontal rectangular windows placed across the façade. Whilst some glazing panels have been replaced, the overall pattern of the façade has been retained. It is aesthetically significant for its lightness of structure, elegant transparency and curtain wall glazing of unusual pattern. The building has been identified by at least two key architectural publications including *Architecture and Arts* and in Melbourne's best architecture guide of 1965. (Criterion E)

Primary source

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