

RELEVANT INFORMATION FOR COUNCIL

FILE: X005053 **DATE:** 24 June 2016
TO: Lord Mayor and Councillors
FROM: George Angelis, Acting Director City Operations
THROUGH: Monica Barone, Chief Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Information Relevant To Item 6.5 - Naming Proposal - Napoleon Plaza - At Council - 27 June 2016

That the Lord Mayor and Councillors note the information contained in this memo.

Purpose

To provide potential alternative names for the new public plaza located at the junction of Kent Street and Napoleon Street, Sydney. The new plaza will link Wynyard Station, via Wynyard Walk and a pedestrian bridge over Sussex Street, with Barangaroo.

Background

At the meeting of the Corporate, Finance, Properties and Tenders Committee on 20 June 2016, alternative naming options were requested for the new public plaza under construction at the junction of Kent Street and Napoleon Street.

Candidate names for consideration, derived from historical research of the local area, are:

Napoleon Plaza

This proposed name reflects the close proximity of the site with the adjacent Napoleon Street. Naming this new public open space "Napoleon Plaza" would facilitate ease of location by pedestrian visitors, particularly commuters and residents already familiar with the location of the long-established Napoleon Street.

Napoleon Street has historical associations dating back to the 1830s. Research indicates that Napoleon Street was probably named by Francis (Francois) Girard (1793 – 1859), a convict dance master, baker and flour miller. The road, an access road, connected Margaret Place to Girard's flour mill and wharf located on Darling Harbour, 1832-1841. Girard was an army officer during the Napoleonic Wars. The French connection is a reminder of the diversity of the early colonists. They were not all English. Sydney was a vibrant maritime port with a diverse population, in terms of class and nationality.

Girard Plaza

Named after Francis (Francois) Girard (1793-1859), an army officer during the Napoleonic Wars who migrated to England where he was convicted for theft, possibly unfairly, and transported to Sydney in 1820. Although a convict, upon arrival he was allowed to earn his keep, which Girard did as a dance master. He was granted a conditional pardon in 1825. Girard established a flour mill and wharf on Darling Harbour which operated between 1832 and 1841. Girard also had a flour mill up on Woolloomooloo Hill.

Francis Girard was a convict who reinvented himself in the colony as a sophisticated Frenchman and dance teacher, and later as a successful businessman. He was an entrepreneur who saw an opportunity in the market in the 1830s, supplying bread, rolls and other baked goods to the well-to-do in Sydney. Girard was one of the early business people located along Darling Harbour. Girard's flour mill and business laid the foundation for a later company established on the site, the Sydney Flour Company, founded by Thomas Breillat.

Archaeological evidence of land reclamation undertaken by Girard was uncovered during excavations of Barangaroo South. The Plaza is not located on the site of Girard's mill.

This name was originally proposed by the Barangaroo Development Authority, current owners of part of the site.

Kapok Plaza

Named after a warehousing business that operated on the plaza site, this proposed name references the international maritime trade that passed through the wharves of Cockle Bay and the warehousing district along Sussex and Kent Streets. G.G. Clarke Pty Ltd had bulk stores used for storage of Kapok Fibre and Coir Mats. Oral histories with wharfies recall the handling of this fibre on the wharves. The word "kapok" refers to both the tree and to the fibre it produces.

Phoenix Plaza

Named after Phoenix Wharf, c.1848-1903. The wharf was located between Margaret and Erskine Streets on the edge of Soldiers Point. The wharf was built by John Cunningham on cedar piles and named after the vessel Cunningham rebuilt using steam engines from an 1826 vessel. The wharf was leased for the South Coast trade, and then serviced Parramatta. In later years, it was the wharf of the Illawarra Steam Navigation Company. The higgledy-piggledy private wharves jutting into Darling Harbour in the 19th century were all known by name, and their ship destinations and maritime trade lent their names to many of the local pubs, such as the Sydney & Melbourne Hotel, the Morpeth & Hinton Hotel, the Clarence Hotel, and the Mariners Hotel. It was a bustling, commercial wharf precinct with ship chandlers, sailmakers, blacksmiths, timber mills, warehouses and shipping offices.

The name also suggests a transformation with the phoenix rising from the ashes, appropriate for a large urban renewal project.

Public Consultation

Following in-principle approval of Council, the proposed name will be exhibited for public comment for a minimum period of 28 days, in accordance with Part 2, Division 2 (Naming of Roads), Roads Regulation 2008.

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approved


Monica Barone, Chief Executive Officer