

Relevant Information for Council

FILE: X086317 **DATE:** 9 December 2022

TO: Lord Mayor and Councillors

FROM: Kate Deacon, Director Strategic Development and Engagement

THROUGH: Monica Barone, Chief Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Information Relevant To Item 6.5 – Post Exhibition - Naming Proposal - Two Lanes at 180 George Street, Sydney

For Noting

This memo is for the information of the Lord Mayor and Councillors.

Purpose

This memo provides additional information on the requirements of road naming and the reasons for proposing Sai Ying rather than Mak Sai Ying or Mak Shying to name the lane.

Background

At the meeting of the Corporate, Finance, Properties and Tenders Committee on 5 December 2023, further information was sought on the proposed name, Sai Ying Lane. Ah Toy and Sai Ying are proposed for two new lanes recognising the early Chinese community in Sydney.

Road naming policy and principles

The City is the authority responsible for naming roads in our area. However, we must comply with the Geographical Names Board NSW Addressing Policy and User Manual. The Geographical Names Board (GNB) also coordinates engagement with relevant agencies such as Australia Post and emergency services on our behalf.

The first principle of road naming relates to ensuring public safety and delivery services.

From 6.7.1 of the NSW Addressing Policy -

“Road names shall not risk public and operational safety for emergency response, or cause confusion for transport, communication and mail services.”

“With the centralisation of emergency service operational dispatch centres in NSW, uniqueness is the most essential quality when proposing a new road name. Duplication of similar and like sounding road names should be avoided as these names can cause confusion for dispatch and delay emergency response times.”

New names should be checked in the GNB’s online system to identify if there are duplications or similar sounding names before seeking feedback from the community.

Regulatory requirements for consultation and registration

Under Road Regulation 2018 and NSW Addressing Policy, the City is required to put new names on public exhibition and to register these names for use with the GNB. The following names have been exhibited and registered and are ready for use once adopted by Council.

- Ah Toy Lane
- Sai Ying Lane
- Cabinetmaker Place (original suggestion for what is currently proposed as Sai Ying Lane)

Any other options would need to go through another public consultation process prior to adoption by Council.

Commemorative names

Commemorative naming is an approved category under the NSW Addressing Policy. Naming roads after people is also a common historical practice. Most of these road names are based on the surname. Some historical names use both given and surnames. However, this is no longer allowed under the NSW Addressing Policy. Under the NSW Addressing Policy, either the given name or surname can be used by not both.

Names

Mak Sai Ying Lane

The full name is of the first Chinese migrant to arrive in Sydney is Mak Sai Ying. Unfortunately, it is not possible to use the complete name Mak Sai Ying (or Mak Shying) due to the fact that this name has multiple conflicts with the NSW Addressing Policy. These include:

- Similar sounding to other existing names including Mackey Street, Surry Hills \
- Only one name shall be used for commemorative naming e.g. a given name or surname

Although Mak Sai Ying may be considered to be the most accurate and culturally meaningful name for the lane, it cannot be adopted as it does not meet the requirements of the GNB and other relevant parties such as emergency services. When checked in the GNB's online portal, the name returned 14 issues across the two key requirements of multiple duplicate or similar sounding names within a 10km radius and too many words. It also does not meet the rule of not allowing given and surnames.

Sai Ying Lane

Sai Ying is a given name of Mak Sai Ying, the first Chinese migrant to arrive in Sydney. This version of his name received the greatest amount of supportive feedback in the first round of consultation. In some submissions the spelling was Shi Ying. Sai Ying was subsequently put on public exhibition to meet the public consultation requirements.

In English speaking communities, it was very common for Chinese given names to become the person's new surname. It was also common for similar sounding English names to be used instead of either the surname or given name.

Sai Ying conforms with the NSW Addressing Policy. It retains a connection to the name he arrived with in 1818.

Shying Lane

John Shying is the Anglicised name that Mak Sai Ying adopted after arriving in Sydney and moving to Parramatta. His descendants took Shying as their family name. He also went by several other names.

Shying is not an obviously Chinese name. Shying is also an English word meaning 'to avoid doing something due to nervousness.' There was significant feedback in the first consultation indicating preference for a Chinese name rather than an English word. It is considered that Shying Lane would not achieve the desired outcome expressed by the community through the consultation process.

Information about the names

Both Ah Toy Lane and Sai Ying Lane will require additional information to ensure the names are meaningful and fully understood by the community. We will provide this in the laneway, on the City's website and in City news articles. We will also use Mak Sai Ying's full name and characters – 麥世英 – in online information and historical interpretation in the laneway.

Community feedback

Feedback to Sai Ying and Ah Toy was overwhelmingly positive. Only one individual raised the issue of Sai Ying not being his family name or full name. Key submissions are listed below. All submissions were attached to the council report.

Joanne Armstrong – descendant of Mak Sai Ying

I support the naming of these two lanes with the names of early Chinese settlers in Sydney. I am proud that my Great, Great, Great Grandfather Mak Sai (Xai) Ying will be recognised as he was the first Chinese free settler in Australia in 1818.

Darryl Low Choy – President, Chinese Australian History Society

Please accept this email as a formal response of support from the Chinese Australian Historical Society (CAHS) for the City of Sydney's new proposed names, 'Ah Toy Lane' and 'Sai Ying Lane' for the two lanes at 180 George Street Sydney.

Ann Toy – Vice President, Chinese Australian History Society

I support the use of these two names for the two lanes, as they recognise two specific and well documented Chinese migrants who were important members of the local 19th century Chinese community in Sydney. Also kudos to the City of Sydney for their willingness to respond to community feedback on this project.

Dr Juanita Kwok

As a historian specialising in the history of early Chinese Australians, I am writing to express my approval and pleasure that the names Ah Toy Lane and Sai Ying Lane have been chosen for the names of two new lanes in Lower George St.

Dr Kate Bagnall – University of Tasmania

His descendants used Shying as their surname, not Sai Ying. I suggest that it would be more appropriate, therefore, to either name the lane Mak Sai Ying Lane or Shying Lane, both of which are names that Mak Sai Ying used himself.

Dr Michael Williams – Western Sydney University

I thoroughly support the proposed names for the two lanes and congratulate the City of Sydney for listening to the community on this issue.

Critical timing to adopt the names

It is anticipated that the business with addresses on the lanes will be looking to open in early 2023. The road names are required for the subdivision to be approved and registered and for occupation to occur.

Memo from Kate Deacon Director Strategic Development and Engagement

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Approved



MONICA BARONE

Chief Executive Officer