

Attachment D

**Engagement Report – Chinatown Ceremonial
Gates**

Engagement report – Chinatown Ceremonial Gates



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Overview

Background

City of Sydney is proposing to heritage list the Chinatown Ceremonial Gates (“the gates”) at either end of Dixon Street, Haymarket. These two gates were conceived by the Dixon Street Chinese Committee as part of a broader Dixon Street beautification project in the late 1970s. They were designed by architect Henry Tsang using traditional Chinese materials and ornamentation. Completed in 1980, the gates were officially handed over to the City of Sydney by the Dixon Street Chinese Committee.

In March 2020, Council noted businesses in Chinatown had expressed their desire for formal acknowledgement of the heritage significance of the gates and that a heritage study would consider heritage listing for the gates. A heritage report (June 2023) concluded that the Chinatown Ceremonial Gates have local significance for their historic, associative, aesthetic, social, rarity and representative attributes.

Consequently, City of Sydney is proposing to amend the Sydney Local Environmental Plan to list the Chinatown Ceremonial Gates as a heritage item, in schedule 5 of the plan. The proposal recommends a curtilage to protect the setting of the gates. The curtilage extends to the north and south of each gate along Dixon Street south and is wholly within the public domain. It does not apply to properties either side of Dixon Street.

The City of Sydney’s proposed restoration and heritage listing of the gates is part of a wider plan to revitalise the Haymarket and Chinatown area.

Engagement summary

Between 25 October and 22 November 2023, we consulted with the community about our proposal to heritage list the Chinatown Ceremonial Gates.

This report focuses on the community engagement activities that took place to gather feedback about the proposal for the heritage listing of the gates and summarises the key findings from this consultation.

A parallel consultation for the proposed Dixon Street public domain upgrades ran 18 October to 15 November 2023 and activities associated with this consultation are referenced on occasion in this report.

Purpose of engagement

Engagement activities were designed to:

1. Inform the Chinatown and Haymarket community about Council’s intentions to amend the Sydney Local Environmental Plan, to list the Chinatown Ceremonial Gates as a heritage item, in schedule 5 of the plan.
2. Gather community feedback about the heritage listing proposal.

Outcomes of engagement

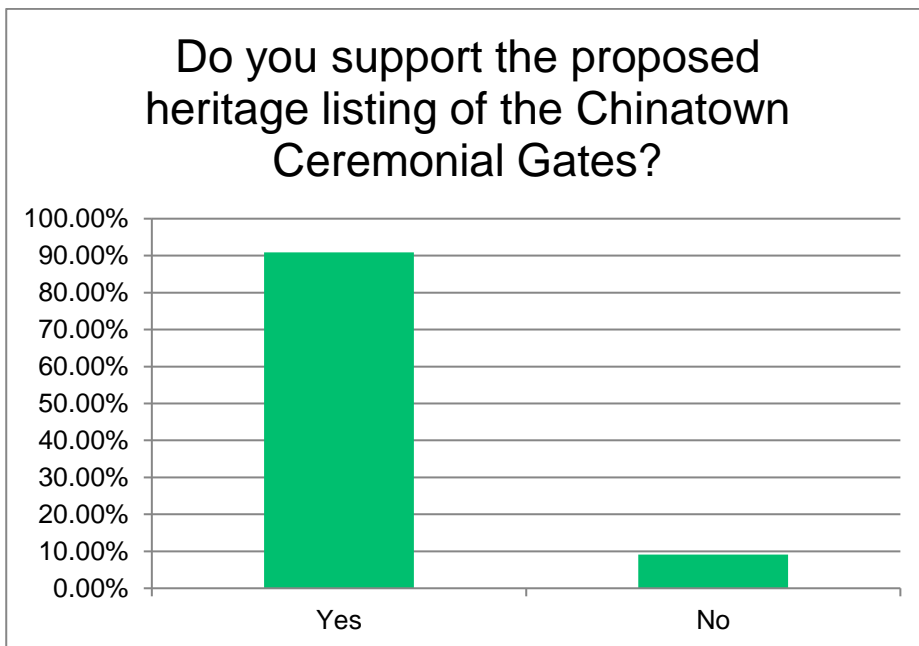
The following is a snapshot of the outcomes from the engagement.

Submissions received

We received a total of 14 submissions via online survey (11) and email (3) during the public consultation period.

13 submissions were largely in favour (93%) of heritage listing the gates.

The survey asked –



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The Sydney Your Say page was viewed 209 times and the planning proposal downloaded 47 times.

Two submissions were made on behalf of local community groups/organisations:

- Save Chinatown Sydney
- St Peter Julian's Catholic Church (Haymarket)

Two submissions were received from individuals associated with key associations, including one respondent associated with both the Chinese Community Council of Australia and the Museum of Chinese in Australia; and the other associated with the Institute for Australian and Chinese Arts and Culture.

Engagement activity

Quantity	Description of activity
14	Total submissions received
11	Survey submissions
3	Emailed submissions received from community groups / residents
209	Sydney Your Say webpage visits
47	Document downloads
5257	Letters distributed

Key findings

Overview of key findings from October/November consultation

There is majority support (93%) for heritage listing the Chinatown Ceremonial Gates in Dixon Street. Respondents highlighted their historical and cultural significance, as well as their role in signifying an entrance into Sydney's Chinatown.

The Heritage Assessment Report (2023) undertaken by GML Heritage was made publicly available as part of this consultation. Although respondents were not asked to comment on this directly, one stated "I agree with the conclusions of the heritage assessment report that the gates are worthy of heritage listing."

Of the 14 submissions received, only one opposed heritage listing the gates. The responder suggested that listing the gates was tokenistic and Council should –

"pursue more fundamental matters... one way streets, music and tables in the street, good food as a result of demand."

Historical and cultural significance

The most prominent theme across the submissions was the historical and cultural significance of the gates. One respondent wrote –

"They are an important part of Chinatown."

Others expressed –

"Seeing such well-built Chinatown Gates always reminds me of home [China]."

"It always makes me reflect on the journey Chinese immigrants make to arrive and settle in Australia."

This feedback aligns with themes identified in the Heritage Assessment Report and those informing the design principles behind the proposed Dixon Street public domain upgrades.

Identifiable entrance

Another recurrent idea was that the gates clearly signalled an entrance into Chinatown.

"These gates let you know that you have truly arrived in Chinatown. They deserve to be preserved for future generations."

"The Gates and Stone Lions are the most identifiable representatives of Chinese Culture at Sydney Chinatown."

The traditional Chinese architectural style is widely recognisable and seen in many Chinatowns across the globe. The use of traditional Chinese materials and ornamentation is distinct, and respondents agree are worthy of preserving and restoring through heritage listing.

Submissions table

Submissions	Comments	Response
11 individuals	<p>Support</p> <p>The proposed heritage listing will support the preservation of history.</p> <p>The proposed heritage listing is an excellent idea.</p> <p>The relevant heritage study's conclusions are valid.</p> <p>The Gates let you know that you have arrived in Chinatown.</p> <p>The Gates are an important part of Chinatown.</p> <p>The Gates look great.</p> <p>The Gates are reminiscent of “home” to Chinese Australians and other Chinese people.</p> <p>The Gates help people reflect on the journeys of Chinese immigrants to Australia.</p>	<p>Support for the Gates’ heritage listing is noted.</p>
2 individuals	<p>Visual impact of nearby structures</p> <p>The Gates and Stone Lions are identifiable markers of Chinese culture in Chinatown.</p> <p>The City should consider if nearby buildings, trees and street furniture adversely obstruct views of the Gates.</p>	<p>The existing condition is considered acceptable. Changes to the surrounding built form are outside of the scope of this planning proposal.</p> <p>The City is currently working on public domain upgrades for Dixon Street. Concept designs are being developed in consultation with the local community (link). Views of the Gates are a key consideration of the project.</p>
1 individual	<p>The City should focus on other priorities</p> <p>Instead of heritage listing, the City should pursue more fundamental matters such as one way streets, music and tables in the street, and improving the food offer.</p>	<p>Noted. The City is also progressing with other priorities in Haymarket, including public domain improvements, supporting local businesses and supporting events and activations. The full range of projects can be seen in the Haymarket and Chinatown Revitalisation Strategy (link).</p>
1 academic, with expertise in China-	<p>The City should undertake a comprehensive archiving of Chinatown’s oral history</p>	<p>Noted. The City does archive oral history, and has some interviews about Chinatown and with Chinese</p>

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Submissions	Comments	Response
<p>Australia heritage, arts and culture;</p>	<p>The documents supporting the Gates’ listing are based on written records. A lot of knowledge only kept as oral history is rapidly being lost.</p> <p>A request for the City to partner with MOCA to create a “history room” at 84 Dixon Street.</p> <p>A suggestion for the City to interview former residents and workers with experience in Chinatown.</p> <p>The submission noted that the City should purposively sample people with experience in Chinatown dating back to 1950 for interviews, and avoid sampling “self-appointed community leaders”.</p> <p>It was further noted that the City should undertake these interviews, rather than support an external archivist via grants.</p> <p>The submission stated that the City’s oral history archive is of low relevance to Dixon Street.</p>	<p>Australians (link). The City also notes similar work is done by the National Library of Australia (link).</p> <p>An action in the Haymarket and Chinatown Revitalisation Strategy is to record five additional oral history interviews with people about their lived experience of Chinatown. This is proposed to take place in 2024/25. The suggestions for interviewees are noted and any further suggestions are welcome.</p> <p>Beyond the five proposed, the City’s grants program is suggested as a possible pathway to funding further archiving of oral history.</p>
<p>1 individual</p>	<p>Supports the Gates’ listing despite not being very old</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>1 individual</p>	<p>Notes impact of gates on nearby businesses may negatively affect Chi/Qi</p>	<p>Noted. Changes to the surrounding built form are outside of the scope of this planning proposal.</p>

Engagement activities

Overview of engagement undertaken

Sydney Your Say webpage

A Sydney Your Say webpage (<https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/policy-planning-changes/proposed-heritage-listing-chinatown-ceremonial-gates>) was created to facilitate this consultation. The page included an electronic copy of the planning proposal, the heritage assessment report, online feedback form and other key information.

This webpage sat separately to the broader Sydney Your Say Dixon Street Improvements webpage, although, the proposed restoration of the Ceremonial Gates was referenced in Dixon Street Improvement's main body of text.

Online feedback form via Survey Monkey

Community and stakeholders were able to give feedback using an online feedback form. A link to the feedback form was provided on the Sydney Your Say website.

Sydney Your Say e-newsletter

The consultation was included in the Sydney Your Say e-newsletter ("edm"), issued 2 November 2023 to 6760 subscribers. The edm generated 2738 unique opens. 65 clicks were directly attributed to the proposed heritage listing of the Chinatown Ceremonial Gates.

Consultation letter

A letter signed by City of Sydney's Executive Manager Strategic Planning & Urban Design and dated 25 October 2023 was posted to both owners and occupiers, inviting them to give feedback on the proposal. A total of 5257 letters were distributed (2405 owners/businesses, 2870 residents).

A separate letter signed by the Lord Mayor Clover Moore AO was sent to 8266 recipients (4416 owners/businesses, 3850 residents) inviting feedback on the broader Dixon Street public domain improvements. Although issued just prior to this consultation starting, it referenced the proposal to heritage list the Chinatown Ceremonial Gates.

Stakeholder e-letter

On 1 November 2023, an e-letter was sent to 28 key stakeholders, identified by their interest and/or participation in the Chinatown thematic history study (2023). Stakeholders were invited to give feedback on this proposal to heritage list the Chinatown Ceremonial Gates.

Appendices

Appendix A - Sydney Your Say webpage

[Policy & planning changes](#)

Proposed heritage listing of Chinatown Ceremonial Gates

Why we're doing this

Our proposed restoration and heritage listing of the Chinatown Ceremonial Gates is part of our wider plan to revitalise the [Haymarket and Chinatown area](#).

We're also inviting feedback on our [proposed concepts to improve Dixon Street public domain](#).

In March 2020, Council noted businesses in Chinatown had expressed their desire for a formal acknowledgement of the heritage significance of the Chinatown Ceremonial Gates and that a heritage study would consider heritage listing for the gates.

A heritage assessment carried out in 2023 provides detailed information on the gates. The report concluded that the Chinatown Ceremonial Gates have local significance for their historic, associative, aesthetic, social, rarity and representative attributes.

What we're doing

We are proposing to amend the Sydney Local Environmental Plan to list the Chinatown Ceremonial Gates as a heritage item, in schedule 5 of the plan.

The planning proposal recommends a curtilage to protect the setting of the gates. The curtilage extends to the north and south of each gate along Dixon Street south and is wholly within the public domain. It does not apply to properties either side of Dixon Street.

The Chinatown Ceremonial Gates were conceived by the Dixon Street Chinese Committee as part of a broader Dixon Street beautification project in the late 1970s. Designed by architect Henry Tsang using traditional Chinese materials and ornamentation, they were completed in 1980 and officially handed over to the City of Sydney by the Dixon Street Chinese Committee.

In 2024, the City of Sydney is planning to restore the gates, including replacing broken tiles and panels and upgrading the lighting.

Bettina Johnston

SENIOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
COORDINATOR - CITY ENGAGEMENT

☎ [02 9265 9333](tel:0292659333)

✉ [sydneyyoursay@cityofsy...](mailto:sydneyyoursay@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au)

COPY EMAIL ADDRESS

Appendix B – Feedback form



Proposed Heritage Listing of Chinatown Ceremonial Gates

*** 1. Do you support the proposed heritage listing of the Chinatown Ceremonial Gates?**

Yes

No

2. Please provide your feedback on the proposed heritage listing of the Chinatown Ceremonial Gates

3. You can also upload your submission.

Choose File

No file chosen

*** 4. Please provide your contact information.**

Name *

Postcode

Email Address *

5. Organisation name

The contact information will be held by the City of Sydney and not shared with any third parties, in line with the City's [Privacy Management Plan](#).

*** 6. Feedback may be published in publicly available reports at the end of the consultation period. Do you give permission for your name or organisation's name to appear in these reports, with your feedback attributed? We will not publish your email address.**

Yes

No

Privacy and personal information protection notice

Purpose: Collect community feedback on the proposal to heritage list the Chinatown Ceremonial Gates on Dixon Street, between Hay and Factory streets, in Chinatown.

Appendix C - Sydney Your Say e-newsletter



Your say on proposed heritage listing of Chinatown Ceremonial Gates

We propose to amend the Sydney Local Environmental Plan to list the Chinatown Ceremonial Gates as a heritage item.

We also plan to restore the gates, including replacing broken tiles and panels, and upgrade the lighting in 2024.

Have your say by Wednesday 22 November.

[Read more](#)

Appendix D – Consultation letter



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cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

25 October 2023

Our Ref: 2023/610359

Proposed heritage listing of Chinatown Ceremonial Gates

The City of Sydney invites your feedback on a proposal to heritage list the Chinatown Ceremonial Gates on Dixon Street in Haymarket.

The planning proposal recommends a curtilage to protect the setting of the gates. The curtilage extends to the north and south of each gate along Dixon Street and is wholly within the public domain. It does not apply to properties either side of Dixon Street.

City of Sydney Council is the designated local plan-making authority.

Why we're doing this

In 2020, businesses in Chinatown expressed their desire for a formal acknowledgement of the heritage significance of the Chinatown Ceremonial Gates. In 2023, a heritage assessment prepared by GML Heritage recommended the gates be listed.

Our proposed restoration and heritage listing of the Chinatown Ceremonial Gates is part of our wider plan to revitalise Dixon Street and the Chinatown area. We're also currently inviting feedback on our proposed concepts to improve Dixon Street.

How to give feedback

You can view the planning proposal and give your feedback at sydneyoursay.com.au by 5pm on Wednesday 22 November.

If you have any questions, you can contact Laura Dodds-Hebron, Senior Specialist Planner at sydneyoursay@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au or on 02 9265 9333.

Yours sincerely

Benjamin Pechey
Executive Manager
Strategic Planning & Urban Design, City Planning Development & Transport



Appendix E – Stakeholder email



Proposed heritage listing of the Chinatown Ceremonial Gates

We invite your feedback on a proposal to heritage list the Chinatown Ceremonial Gates on Dixon Street in Haymarket.

The planning proposal recommends a curtilage to protect the setting of the gates. The curtilage extends to the north and south of each gate along Dixon Street and is wholly within the public domain. It does not apply to properties either side of Dixon Street.

In 2020, businesses in Chinatown expressed their desire for a formal acknowledgement of the heritage significance of the Chinatown Ceremonial Gates. In 2023, a heritage assessment prepared by GML Heritage recommended the gates be listed.

You [can view the planning proposal and give your feedback](#) by Wednesday 22 November.

Our proposed restoration and heritage listing of the Chinatown Ceremonial Gates is part of our wider plan to revitalise Dixon Street and the Chinatown area. We're also inviting feedback on [our proposed concepts to improve Dixon Street](#).

The City of Sydney acknowledges the Gadigal of the Eora nation as the Traditional Custodians of our local area.

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