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**City of Sydney
Heritage Office**

**Re: Planning proposal submission- heritage listing
82- 84 Dixon Street, Haymarket- reference X023484.002**

The Chinese Australian Historical Society wishes to strongly support the current proposals concerning the buildings on 82-84 Dixon Street, Haymarket, Sydney. (aka, Kwong Wah Chong or KWC buildings.) These buildings are of undoubtedly great historical and heritage value as has been amply demonstrated and acknowledged by the excellent heritage consultants report submitted to the City of Sydney.

The Chinese Australian Historical Society also wishes to emphasise that in addition to the obvious high local and State heritage value of these buildings they also have National heritage value and we intend to recommend such listing and would request the City of Sydney to support this recommendation for National heritage listing. For details how 82-84 Dixon Street meet the criteria for National heritage listing please see appendix below.

We also note that while the value of 84 Dixon Street has been strongly acknowledged that of 82 Dixon Street somewhat less so due to its perceived internal changes with various usages overtime. However this is to underestimate the significance of that usage and in particular the importance of the restaurant trade to Chinese Australian history in general and of the Hingara restaurant in particular to the Sydney Chinese community and its history. This heritage of 82 Dixon Street includes, for example, the Hingara as the site of the first fashion show of the internationally famous Jenny Kee.¹

One of the most important recommendations of the report was that 82-84 Dixon Street be used as a museum. This is an extremely important recommendation and one that the Chinese Australian Historical Society supports wholeheartedly. Sydney has historically been the most significant place of immigration, settlement and business for Chinese Australians for more than 200 years. Yet this contribution is not represented significantly in any part of the city's history or heritage.

In addition the City of Sydney is increasingly host to numerous tourists, students and immigrants of Chinese origin. Most of these people arrive ignorant of the Chinese heritage of Sydney and Australia. Yet consistently when this heritage is

¹ *Jenny Kee and Linda Jackson: Step Into Paradise*, Powerhouse Museum
<https://maas.museum/event/step-into-paradise>

made known to them it is enthusiastically take up. The need and value of a museum related to Chinese Australian history is of great importance and would undoubtedly be of great benefit to the City of Sydney.

While the consultants report was excellent its historical background lacked Chinese language sources, which are numerous and greatly help to explain the history and significance of the buildings, the businesses and the family most closely linked with both.² It is recommended that research and translation of some of this material – which includes many images of interest and value – be undertaken into the Chinese language newspapers. The Chinese Australian Historical Society is willing to assist the City of Sydney in this.

In addition the Chinese Australian community is itself rich in oral history resources and this would be particularly valuable in understanding the value of 82 Dixon Street in general and also the use of 84 Dixon Street after it ceased to be owned by the family of Philip Lee Chun. The CAHS is currently in co-operation with the State Library of NSW in conducting oral history research and would be prepared to assist the City of Sydney in this regard.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit and once again we wish to strongly recommend that the heritage listing of 82-84 Dixon Street proceed in full.

Yours sincerely,



for,
Daphne Lowe-Kelley
President CAHS
7 Nov 2019

² Newspapers such as the *Tung Wah News* and the *Chinese Australian Herald* are accessible on Trove but require expert translation. Again the CAHS is will to assist in this regard. It is our understanding that the submission of Dr Michael Williams contains specific references to some of this material.

Appendix

National Heritage listing

The buildings meet the standard for national heritage listing on a number of criteria. Mostly significantly:

- a. *the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history*
 - The Chinese Australian community has for 200 years been the largest non-British/Irish immigrant community in Australia. For much of this period the community relied upon businesses that supported individuals on a dialect/locality basis with their ongoing connections with village and family in south China. The KWC played this significant role for the majority dialect/locality group (Zhongshan) of Sydney/NSW/Queensland.
- b. *the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Australia's natural or cultural history*
 - The KWC building is the last remaining such example of a dialect/locality based remittance business in Australia. As such it represents an extremely rare and endangered aspect of Australia's cultural history.
- c. *the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Australia's natural or cultural history*
 - The knowledge and understanding of Chinese Australian history is extremely limited and based largely on very narrow stereotypes. The potential for this site to yield major information that will broaden our understanding of this aspect of Australia's cultural history is therefore very high.
- d. *the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of:*
 - i. *a class of Australia's natural or cultural places; or*
 - ii. *a class of Australia's natural or cultural environments;*
 - The KWC building is a major example of a remittance/general store that supported the Zhongshan Chinese community for several generations. This was a major and now little understood aspect of the history of the Chinese in Australia. The potential for this site to demonstrate the principle characteristics of the history of the Chinese in Australia is of an outstanding nature with no comparable site elsewhere in Australia remaining.

- e. *the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group*
 - N/A
- f. *the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period*
 - N/A
- g. *the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons*
 - The KWC building has a special association with the Chinese Australian community.
- h. *the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Australia's natural or cultural history*
 - The KWC was a family business founded by a leading member of the Chinese Australia community of Sydney. Philip Lee Chun was a prominent member of the Chinese Australian community at the time of the establishment of the White Australia policy. He was nevertheless able to bring his wife to Sydney and raise a large Australian born family many of whose members went on to lead lives of importance to Australia's cultural history. Williams Lee for example became the first Chinese Australian barrister in NSW and the second in Australia.
- i. *the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance as part of Indigenous tradition.*
 - N/A