

Handbook on Guidelines for Naming of Buildings and Estates



STREET AND BUILDING NAMES BOARD

**Handbook on
Guidelines for Naming
of Buildings and Estates**



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IMPORTANT NOTE

You are advised not to print any page from this handbook as it may be updated from time to time.





Introduction

Guidelines on the Naming of Buildings & Estates

INTRODUCTION

Established in 2003 under the Property Tax Act, the Street and Building Names Board (SBNB) considers and approves the naming and renaming of buildings, estates and streets proposed by building owners and developers. IRAS will then assign addresses such as house number or block number based on the approved street names.

Purpose of handbook

This handbook on the naming guidelines is a public resource that guides developers and building owners in proposing building or estate names to the SBNB for approval.

The importance of naming streets and buildings

Integral in any city, the appropriate naming of streets and buildings as well as the assignment of property addresses ensure that properties can be located quickly and efficiently by emergency and delivery services, the general public, and taxi drivers. Street and building names should provide clear location or direction cues to the public, and not cause confusion with other developments that are located elsewhere in Singapore.

As Singapore is a diverse society with people of different races and religion, the cultural context and heritage of a place should also be considered when it comes to naming our streets and buildings.

At the same time, we should safeguard public interest by avoiding names that contain controversial, offensive or derogatory meaning. Similarly, we should avoid misleading the public with names that do not accurately represent the development

The interest of the community should be preserved. Building names that monopolise the locality or street names will not be permitted. Similarly for industry or business sectors, no party will be given exclusive rights to use generic names for a building or an estate.

To prevent the duplication of existing street and building names, building owners and developers will have to submit naming applications to the Board. This will ensure clarity in the identification of the building or estate.

The SBNB will generally allow a change in building name for valid reasons, such as a change of owners or tenants of the building. Prevailing guidelines will apply to such applications to rename the building.

General Principles



GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Names should accurately reflect the development and the surrounding environment

Location and environment

A building / estate name for the development should suit the location and the environment where it is located. This helps to provide location or direction cues for the public as well as emergency and delivery services to reach the subject site quickly.

For example, the SBNB will not approve naming a development in Jurong as Marina Bay Residences. Using such a name for a Jurong development does not accurately represent the location and environment of the subject site and will confuse the public.

Size and type

A building / estate name should reflect the size and type of the development. The name should not mislead the public into thinking that the building is used for a purpose that it is not.

For example, naming a three-storey landed housing estate "Skypeak Vista" will not be appropriate as it misrepresents the building height and building form of the estate. The words "sky" and "peak" implies it is a high-rise development, and "vista" refers to a view from a high point, all of which do not accurately represent a three-storey landed housing estate.

Similarly, using names that contain "Business", "Commerce" or "Trade" and their variations like "Com" or "Biz" for industrial developments misrepresents the use of the development. They also mislead the public into thinking that the industrial development can be used solely for commercial purposes like retail businesses or office instead of manufacturing operations and industrial production. For more terms used in building names, please refer to the section *Use of specific terms for buildings*.

Retain heritage

Building or estate owners are encouraged to retain the history of the building or the area by including historical links in the proposed new name.

This helps to promote and reinforce a greater sense of identity in the community. Over time, the community becomes more familiar with the name of their locality and the associated historical context that comes with the name. The building, estate and street names in the Queenstown area are good examples.

Another two examples are “Hwi Yoh Ville” and “Hwi Yoh Court”, two HDB estates at Serangoon North Ave 1. “Hwi Yoh” means pottery kiln in dialect and using this as estate names commemorates the area’s pottery-making heritage.

Names should be unique and different parts of the development can also be given different names

Proposed names should not be too similar to or duplicate existing names

It is important for each building / estate name to be unique so that they can be clearly identified. Names that are too similar should be avoided. This prevents public confusion with another development within the same locality or elsewhere.

For example, if there is a “Residences @ Katong”, the name “Katong Residences” will not be approved for another building as the two names are too alike.

Prior to submitting their naming applications, applicants are advised to conduct their own online search to verify if their proposed name is similar to existing names.

Individual names can be given to different internal areas within the overall development

Names of internal areas in one development do not have to be approved by the SBNB. For example, names of different blocks within a condominium development, given by Management Corporations/Owners are solely for internal identification purposes and will not need the SBNB's approval.

Different names may be given to different parts of mixed use developments with distinct commercial podium(s) and residential tower(s). Different names for each component provide the public with a clearer identification of the distinct uses as well as directional cues, especially where these two components have separate access points such as lift lobbies and car parks.

A large-scale development site containing plots for individual developments may be given an overall name. The respective developer(s) can then apply to name the individual developments within that estate. Two examples are Sentosa Cove and Biopolis where there are names for the individual developments within.

Names should be kept reasonably short and easy to pronounce, spell and remember

Building or estate owners are encouraged to propose building / estate names that are reasonably short and easy to read. If names are too long, the SBNB will advise the applicant to shorten the name.

The SBNB also evaluates if the proposed names appear or sound too similar. Jurong Ville and Jurong View are examples of two names that look and sound too similar.

Names should not contain the following:

Names of persons, living or dead, unless there is significant cause to

The SBNB and the Government will consider naming new streets or places after outstanding persons who have made significant contributions to Singapore, whether it is in the area of economics, the arts, sports, education or politics.

For example, the Devan Nair Institute for Employment and Employability, located at 80 Jurong East Street 21, is named after the late president of Singapore and labour chief. The name reflects the close partnership between the Government and the Labour Movement in the running of the institute for different groups of workers.

An example where the names of persons should not be used in the proposed building / estate name would be the names of the British royalty. Using names of the British royalty in a building name such as "Prince Charles Residences" for marketing purposes or otherwise is not appropriate.

Also, even if the existing street name is already named after British royalty such as Prince Charles Crescent, SBNB will not approve naming buildings after such street names.

Names of national institutions / symbols, public office and international organisations

Only agencies can use their own names for building / estate names. Other than that, names of national institutions / symbols, public office and international organisations such as "Singapore", "National", "Raffles", "Merlion", "Asean", "APEC", "Temasek" should be avoided. This is because the public could be misled into thinking that the building and its operations are state owned, or representative offices of national or international agencies.

Any meaning that is deemed controversial, derogatory or offensive

We safeguard public interest by ensuring that names do not contain any meaning that is deemed controversial, derogatory or offensive.

Generic descriptions of industry types or building uses, street names or locality names

Names like “My Katong” or “The Scotts” which permit a single development to monopolise the street or locality names will not be allowed. This is to preserve the interest of the community in that area. Use of possessive forms such as “My” and the definite article “The” in the building / estate names with the street or locality name alludes to sole possession of the street or locality. For more terms that would imply monopolisation of the street or locality names, please refer to the section *Use of prefixes or possessive forms before the street name or locality*.

This also applies to various industry or business sectors where no party is to be given exclusive rights to use any generic name for a building or an estate that others may also want to use, for example, ABC Print Media Centre or XYZ Print Media Centre.

Infringements on trade names or trademarks of other parties

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the proposed name does not infringe upon any registered trademark or trade name.

The SBNB shall not be held responsible for any legal issues that may arise as a result of such infringements.

Specific claims

Developments with names making specific claims may eventually be surpassed by future developments. For example, a building may currently be the ‘greenest’, ‘tallest’, ‘largest’, or “newest” and therefore, lay claim to the superlative used. However, the development could be surpassed by future developments, and the latter may then challenge the claim of the former.

Non-English names should also conform to the naming principles and guidelines

Applicants are required to provide the meaning and pronunciation of non-English names.

The meaning of the proposed names will be evaluated against the above-mentioned principles and guidelines to ensure that the name is not controversial, derogatory or offensive, and is appropriate for the development .

The SBNB will also look into similar sounding Chinese names for buildings and estates using hanyu pinyin.

The SBNB will evaluate each case individually for proposed names that are not covered under the guidelines.



Naming Conventions

NAMING CONVENTIONS

This section covers the guidelines on naming conventions and the rationale for the guidelines. These naming conventions include the spelling of names, the use of symbols, numbers and so on.

Using addresses in building / estates names

The sole purpose of naming a building is to be able to identify it by name, instead of just by its address. Therefore, as far as possible, the development name should not be exactly the same as its address.

A building name containing the street name can only be allowed if the building is located on that street. For the use of house numbers in the building name, please refer to the section on the *Use of numerals*.

For building name applications where the proposed building name contains the house number and/or the road name, such as 1 Adam Road, the application must be accompanied by the Certificate of Housing Numbering issued by the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS).

Use of prefixes or possessive forms before the street name or locality

We should avoid building / estate names that monopolise the street or locality name as no party should be given the exclusive right to do so. This means some prefixes such as ‘The’ or possessive form in names such as ‘My’ followed by the street name or locality should be avoided. Some examples are:

“The”

Using the definite article “The” as a prefix in building names before the street name will be deemed as monopolising the area or the street name. An example is ‘The Scotts’.

“D”

A capital D with an apostrophe is pronounced in the same way as “The” when it is used as a definite article. Using D’ as a prefix in building names before the street name will similarly seem like the building is monopolising the area or the street name. One example is D’Orchard.

“Le” or “La”

“Le” or “La” is the French equivalents of the definite article “The” when they are used as a prefix before the street name or locality.

Using “Le” or “La” as a prefix in building names before the street name will similarly seem like the building is monopolising the area or the street name.

“My”

Similarly, the possessive form “My” before the street or locality name will seem like the building is monopolising the area or the street name.

However, building names that use an apostrophe with an “s” found in existing street names, or to indicate the ownership of the building may be considered.

For example, a development sited at King’s Road can be named as “King’s Garden”. A building can also be named after its owner’s initials such as HT’s Residences.

Use of “i” as prefix for names in general

“i” can mean either the capital letter “I”, the numeral 1, or a lower case for the letter “L”.

To avoid confusion, the lower case “i” is recommended for clarity. Some examples are “iSPACE” or “i Development Building”.

Use of double-barrelled names

Proposing double-barrelled names that repeat the street name should be avoided as they may be confused with other developments on the same street.

For example, “Meyer at Meyer”, “Meyer Meyer” or “Meyer Meyer Residences” will not be allowed. The applicant will be asked to consider using a single “Meyer” with other words.

Use of owner’s or company’s name

A building can be named after the building owner or main tenant’s company name but only without words that denote the type of the company, such as “Pte Ltd” and “Ltd”. This is so that there is a distinction between the company name and the building name.

Similarly, for organisations’ names that end with “Group” or “Enterprise”, a suitable building descriptor should be added as a suffix in the name of the building. For example, it should be “ABC Enterprise Building” or “XYZ Group Centre”, instead of simply calling the building “ABC Enterprise” or “XYZ Group”.

This guideline also extends to applicants proposing to name the building after the name of its parent company that may not be occupying the particular development.

Use of numerals

The form of the number (word, numeral or Roman numeral) may be interchangeable in an approved building / estate name without referring to the SBNB again. For example, “five” can be interchanged with the number “5” or the Roman numeral “V”.

Numbers should always be placed at the end of the name. For example, possible names can be ‘Treetop One’ or ‘Red Dot Three’ but not ‘One Treetop’. When it contains a street name, there should be no conflict with other addresses. For example, a building at 1 Fullerton Road cannot be named “Fullerton Ten” if there is already a building at 10 Fullerton Road.

However, when it contains a street name and corresponds to the building's assigned address, the number can be placed at the beginning of the name as well. For example, when the address of the building is assigned as 1 Fullerton Road, the name of the building can be 'One Fullerton' or 'Fullerton One'.

If the number in a proposed name is the same as the house number of the development, then the number can either be at the beginning or end of the name. For example, "10 Oxley" or "Oxley 10" for a building with its address assigned as 10 Oxley Road.

If the number does not correspond to the address, the number must be written in words instead of in numerals.

Estates that are near each other can have paired names using numerals or alphanumeric form. For example, Eden Spring I & Eden Spring II, or Infinity One and Infinity Two or Tampines Lodge 1A and Tampines Lodge 1B.

A mixture of words and / or the numerals to represent a number instead of the full spelling of the number can be considered. For example, One Ten for 110, Two One for 21 or Two8One for 281 or One Eighties for 180 to 189.

Use of symbols and punctuation marks

The symbol '&' and 'And' may be interchangeable in an approved building / estate name without another submission of application to the SBNB since the symbol is a representation of the word.

The symbol '@' and 'At' may be interchangeable in an approved building / estate name without another submission of application to the SBNB since the symbol is a representation of the word.

As a guide, the '@' symbol should not be placed at the beginning of the name so that the building / estate name does not resemble a Twitter handle. The word following "@" should be a location descriptor, locality name or unit number.

Punctuation marks such as full-stops, commas, and symbols such as “~” and “-”, should be avoided in building / estate names. These punctuation marks and symbols are often not fully pronounced or read together with the wording in the names and have no meaning.

Use of prepositions

The use of prepositions such as “on”, “by” and “at” together with a term that describes the general location such as the street name, locality name, name of the water body or other location identifiers like parks and cardinal points (north, south, east, west) can be considered if appropriate.

Some examples are “on Maxwell” (street name), “by the water”, “by the lake” or “at the lake”, “by the bay” or “on the bay”, “by the cove”, “by the park”.

For these names, the Board will assess if the development is close to the term that describes the general location.

Language of names

Use of American or British English

Using American or British spelling for building / estate names is acceptable. For example, the building can be named “Center” or “Centre”. This will provide more flexibility in accommodating names of American companies in building names.

Use of simplified Chinese characters, punctuation marks and symbols in Chinese names

Chinese building names should use the simplified form of writing Chinese characters as there is no difference in the meaning of the name.

Punctuation marks and symbols are often not pronounced or read together with the Chinese characters and do not have any meaning. Therefore, punctuation marks and symbols should be avoided in Chinese building / estate names.

Use of abbreviations for approved building names

To facilitate the accurate retrieval of approved names and for consistency, the Board currently does not use abbreviations for official names.

While it may be common to use the abbreviation “St” for “Saint” like “St George’s Residences” in marketing collaterals or artwork design of the signage, the official name will still be spelled in full in the Board’s records as “Saint George’s Residences”.

Use of alphanumeric names, creative names and coined words

Alphanumeric names, creative names or coined words can be considered as building / estate names as long as they are in line with key naming principles.

Use of upper or lower case of alphabet letters in the building / estate name signage

Building owners are to display the approved name in a conspicuous place or position on the subject property.

The SBNB database will reflect the approved names in capital letters. However, in the display of the approved name signage, a combination of upper or lower case alphabet letters can be used. There are also no requirements on the artwork / design for the building name signage.



Use of Specific Terms for Buildings

USE OF SPECIFIC TERMS FOR BUILDINGS

Building descriptors are terms that describe building types. An appropriate building descriptor ensures that the building name relates to the building use, the building form, the scale of the development, and its geographical context. It also helps to make the building name complete and distinct from names of the company, institutions or streets and localities.

Common building descriptors are generic words like “building”, “centre” and those that describe the building use such as Residences, Apartments, Hostel, Industrial Building, Factory, Warehouse, Mall and Plaza. Words that describe the building form and height include “Tower”, “Heights”, “Complex”, “Condominium” and “Villas”.

The building descriptors listed below are not exhaustive and guidelines relating to the use of specific words will be added as and when it is appropriate.

Boutique

“Boutique” is used to describe a business serving a sophisticated or specialised clientele, such as boutique hotels. Therefore, the use of the word “boutique” is inappropriate for a residential development.

Business, Commerce and Trade

Terms such as “Business” (or Biz), “Commerce” (or Commerze) and “Trade” refer to commercial activities. The use of such words for building names of industrial developments is inappropriate as these names may confuse and mislead the public to believe that industrial buildings can be used for commercial purposes.

The same consideration will similarly apply to coined words such as “Bizhub”, “Bizconnect” or “Tradelink”. For Business Park developments e.g. where a ‘White’ component is provisioned in the development where commercial activities may be permitted, the use of such terms in the building name will be considered where appropriate. The quantum and nature of activities in the development will be taken into consideration.

City and Metropolis

“City” is an inhabited place of greater size, population, or importance than a town or village. “Metropolis” means the capital or chief city of a country or region. Therefore, the use of “City” and “Metropolis” should be restricted to large-scale commercial or mixed-use developments. Examples include Suntec City, Vivo City and Ngee Ann City.

The use of the words “City” and “Metropolis” is not applicable for pure residential developments or pure industrial developments.

The use of the word “City” in any variation of spelling such as “Cite” in French or “Citi” or in a coined word such as “Citysphere” will be assessed individually in relation to the intended meaning of the word mentioned above.

Condominium or Condo

“Condominium” or its acronym “Condo” is applicable for names of residential developments that are approved based on condominium standards such as a minimum land area of 4,000 sq m with the provision of communal facilities.

Foundation

“Foundation” is an institution or organisation financed by a donation or legacy to aid research, education, or the arts and so on. Using “foundation” in a building name is thus inappropriate and should be avoided.

Gallery

“Gallery” usually refers to a place or building used to show or exhibit art works. Using “Gallery” in the name of a building that is not approved for this use is inappropriate and will mislead the public on the approved use of the building.

Gateway

“Gateway” should define both the location of the development, such as the Clementi Gateway located at the entrance of Clementi town, as well as the iconic architectural form of the development, such as The Gateway at Beach Road and Orchard Gateway.

Hills and Ridges

“Hills” is applicable only for names of developments located on hilly terrain.

“Ridge” is defined as a chain of mountains or hills. It also refers to the ridge of the roof, the line or edge formed when two sloping sides of a roof meet at the top.

“Ridges” can be used in the names of developments located on hilly or undulating terrain or in names that describe roof design or skyline of buildings that resembles a mountain range.

Hospitals and healthcare establishments

Applicants must obtain prior clearance from the Ministry of Health for building names that contain terms such as “hospital”, “medical clinic”, “dental clinic”, “medical centre”, “dental centre”, “medical surgery”, “dental surgery”, “clinical laboratory”, “medical laboratory”, “healthcare establishment” or any other term that implies similarity to the practices and premises of a private hospital, medical clinic, clinical laboratory or healthcare establishment.

HQ and its derivatives

Using “HQ” or “Headquarters” in a building name connotes that it is a sizeable office development. This may give the wrong impression that non-commercial buildings such as industrial buildings are used predominantly as headquarters for administrative offices.

The use of the term “HQ” or “Headquarters” (or other derivative names such as Regional HQ, Corporate HQ, Group HQ, International HQ and so on) in building names can be considered, subject to the following criteria:

- The applicant must be a large-scale enterprise with significant annual sales turnover as well as a well-established regional or international presence or operations.
- The subject building must be a non-strata subdivided and single-user development.
- Strata-titled developments with a HQ function are not allowed to use “HQ” or “Headquarters” (and other derivative names) in the building name.
- Endorsement for the use of “HQ” or “Headquarters” (and other derivative names) from relevant supporting agencies such as JTC Corporation, the Economic Development Board, Spring Singapore and so on should be submitted together with the naming application.

Hub

A building can be described as a “Hub” if there is a varied range of complementary or related services / products offered within the same development.

Such buildings should also be of a sizeable scale. As a benchmark, the development should have a land area of at least 20,000 sq m with a Gross Floor Area of at least 50,000 sq m.

Lodge

Typically, dormitories that house construction, marine and / or process workers will use terms like “Lodge” or “Dormitory” in the names of their buildings.

“Lodge” can also be used for hostel building names.

However, the word ‘Residences’ is inappropriate for such buildings as workers’ accommodation are not approved residential developments.

Padang

“Padang” refers to the area in front of City Hall. The word has significant heritage value and should not be used elsewhere.

Park or Parc

A name must not end with “Park” or “Parc” except for specialised industrial or Business Parks. However, “Park” or “Parc” can be used at the beginning of a building name.

Peak, Tower, Pinnacle, Apex, Summit

The words “Peak”, “Tower”, “Pinnacle”, “Apex” and “Summit” are only applicable for developments that are 30 storeys and above.

Plaza

“Plaza” can be used for the name of a public square, marketplace, or a similar open space that is in a built-up area or shopping complex. However, it is inappropriate to use “Plaza” in the name for non-commercial developments such as residential or hostel developments.

Resort

Using “Resort” in the name for a residential development is inappropriate. “Resort” connotes that it is a place for recreation attracting visitors on vacation. Thus, using “Resort” in the name of a residential development might misrepresent what the development is used for.

Square

“Square” should only be used for a sizeable commercial or mixed use development with a minimum Gross Floor Area of 10,000 sq m.

Generic terms for street names such as Link, Avenue, Boulevard, Terrace, Place

The words “Link”, “Avenue”, “Boulevard”, “Terrace”, “Place” and other generic terms for streets should be avoided. This is to prevent confusion between building names that are similar to existing road names.

Villas

“Villas” is only applicable for landed housing developments.

Sky and Vista

“Sky” and “Vista”, which mean a view from a high position, are not applicable for names of low-rise landed or strata landed developments.

Words relating to location of water body

For names containing words relating to the location of a water body, the Board will consider the distance of the subject development site from the water body, as well as the type of water body and whether they are rivers or seas and so on. A development's name can use words related to locations next to a water body, only if it is located near a water body. These words include :

Cove, defined as a small sheltered bay next to the sea.

Bay, defined as an area of the coast where the land curves inwards.

Marine, which relates to the sea

Marina, which refers to a specially designed harbour

Quay, which is similar to a pier, jetty landing, and so on.

River bank, which refers to the land along both sides of the river.

Coast / coastline, which refers to the outline of a coast, especially when seen from the sea or the land adjacent to the sea. This includes coined words such as coastfront, coastview etc

Words that contain "water" such as Waterfront and Waterway. Such names may also relate to water features as landscaping elements in the development such as waterfalls.

In assessing the naming applications for buildings and estates, the Street and Building Names Board ("SBNB") will apply the general guidelines and principles as set out in this handbook. However, the guidelines are not exhaustive. The SBNB will consider all circumstances of each individual application and reserves the right to assess them based on factors including but not limited to those covered in the handbook. While the SBNB endeavours to ensure the accuracy of all information provided, SBNB and URA disclaim all liability for any damage, loss and/or expenses which may result from any error and/or omission in the information in the handbook.

As the handbook will be updated from time to time, please visit <https://www.ura.gov.sg/uoi/guidelines/development-control/building-estate-naming.aspx> for the latest version of the handbook.

For more information on street and building names, please refer to the hyperlink above or contact SBNB Secretariat by email : ura_sbnb_ura.gov.sg or call us at 6321 6529 / 6321 6545.

STREET AND BUILDING NAMES BOARD

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