

Your Ref: P20043/A16328

24 July 2020

Chief Executive Officer  
Shire of Northam  
PO BOX 613  
NORTHAM WA 6401

Dear Sir

**APPLICATION FOR PLANNING APPROVAL – LOT 201 EUCALYPT BEND, WUNDOWIE -  
PROPOSED COMMUNITY CENTRE**

I have been engaged by *Vizawadya Theinn Australia Perth* to assist with the progress of the abovementioned planning application currently before the Shire and is in response to the email received from your Planning Manager on 8 June 2020. In considering the application, the landowner has respectfully requested the Shire consider the following.

*Vizawadya Theinn Australia Perth* is an Australian Burmese not for profit Association, established to provide meditation and other services for the Burmese community.

Lot 201 is a 11,940m<sup>2</sup> lot located at the intersection of Eucalypt Bend and Werribee Road. The Lot is zoned Rural Living 5 in the Shire of Northam Local Planning Scheme No 5 (LPS 6).

**Building Use**

The primary purpose for the building on Lot 201 is to accommodate the traditional meeting and meditation requirements of the Western Australian Burmese community. Attending meditation is an important and regularly cultural practice in Burma, which provides significant health and well-being benefits to its communities. Between five and six times every year, the Western Australian Burmese community propose to invite an internationally renowned mediation expert, generally from Burma, to run meditation sessions on Lot 201. These sessions run for approximately seven to ten days, with participants attending sessions that run for approximately one hour at the time. A number of sessions may be run on each day during that week, with approximately 20 – 30 participants at each session.

All mediation sessions are open to the public.

The meditation expert and his assistances will also live on-site during the week. This will enable the expert to run sessions efficiently and provide for comfortable accommodation during the stay.

It is important to note that the building will not be used for religious ceremonies. There will be no figures, paintings or statues of deities and the like and the building will not be consecrated for any religion.

Outside of the time used for meditation sessions, the building, including the main hall and the kitchen, will be available for hire for community use. The on-site caretaker will be able to take bookings and arrange for the hire of the hall on a day to day basis.

In light of the activities that are anticipated for the proposed building, the use building should be determined as being “community purposes” under the (LPS 6).

*“community purpose” means the use of premises designed or adapted primarily for the provision of educational, social or recreational facilities or services by organizations involved in activities for community benefit;*

As a not for profit entity, *Vizawadya Theinn Australia Perth* meets the definition of an organisation involved in activities for community benefit. In addition, the building will be available for hire for the majority of the time by wider community for recreational and social uses.

Community Purpose is listed as an ‘A’ use in the Rural Living zone in Table 1 Zoning Table of LPS 6, which means that:

*“that the use is not permitted unless the local government has exercised its discretion by granting development approval after giving special notice in accordance with clause 64 of the deemed provisions;”*

Clause 64 of the deemed provisions require applications for this use in the Rural Living Zone to be advertised for public inspection and comment.

### **Building Design**

The building has been designed as a simple rectangular masonry structure 15m wide and 35m long with single pitch metal roof. The building will be located entirely within the designated building envelop.

The main body of the building includes a large hall 18m x 15m and five smaller meeting rooms on either ends. These smaller rooms can be used for meeting rooms, storage and will also be used as bedrooms for the meditation expert during his stay.

A small caretakers dwelling (15m x 10m) has been included on the western wing of the proposed building.

While the roof structure is a simple gable, a monitor roof raised 100mm above the main roof line creates a visual interest and softens the large roof line. In addition, a small three roof tower is proposed on the south western corner of the building. This tower reflects the cultural aspirations of the Burmese community and adds interest to the simple building.

The building is proposed to be cut into the landscape, as this would avoid the need for extensive earthworks on the site. With a five metre fall from the front to the rear of the building envelop, extensive earthworks beyond the building envelopment would have been required to provide a level surface and a workable surrounds. The resulting layout of the building on one level that seeks to minimise the cut and fill requirements. An undercroft parking area has been provided as an effective alternative to a traditional the cut and fill approach.

### **Number of People**

It is anticipated that a maximum of 100 people will be on-site at any one time. While only 20 – 30 people are likely to attending meditation at any one time, it could be possible that a larger number may attend the site, particularly as it is available for public hire.

### **Car parking**

A total of forty four (44) car parking including 6 minibus parking bays are proposed for the site.

As the building has been designed primarily for the provision of social/recreational services, at a rate of one car parking per four persons, the 44 bays could accommodate up to 166 people on the site. Given that a maximum occupancy of 100 people is being sought by this application, the amount of car parking would exceed the Shire's minimum requirements.

Three universal access bays have been provided in a location that will provide the most convenient access to the building.

### **Accommodation**

The design includes provision for a live-in caretaker, who will be the only permanent resident on the site. The design of caretaker's accommodation is of sufficient size to accommodate a modest family, should the Association wish to permit the family of the caretaker to also reside on the site.

During the week in which the international mediation expert is in attendance, he/she will reside on-site, together with any assistants that have accompanied the expert. Meals for the expert and the assistance will be provided by the community and/or the caretaker. No other persons will reside on the site. Upon the expert completing the mediation sessions, the building will become available for community hire.

The rooms to be used as temporary bedrooms for the expert and his/her assistants will be available as break out rooms or smaller meeting rooms as part of the main hall hire.

### **Building Colours and Materials**

The building is proposed as a masonry building rendered in an off-white colour.

The roof will be a metal roof finished in Colorbond Manor Red.

## **Bushfire**

A bushfire attack level report has been prepared for the site, which confirms a BAL rating of 12.5.

## **Conclusion**

This application seeks the Shire's approval for a community purpose building for the use of the *Vizawadya Theinn Australia Perth* Association for the purposes as a public meditation. The association will use the building some five to six weeks per year. Outside of these times, the building will be available for hire as a public hall.

The mediation undertaken on the site is a non-religious activity and there are no deities or other features associated with any religion placed in or around the building and it will not be consecrated for any religion. The building will remain as a hall, available for public use for the vast majority of the time.

The proposed building will be simple brick wall and metal roof building, with a monitor styled roof. A small feature element is proposed to satisfy the cultural aspirations of the association.

The hall can accommodate up to 100 people, which will be sufficient to meet the needs of the association. The building can be described as a small modest hall, which will have the capacity to provide a useful facility for local residents for the majority of the time.

Some 44 car parking bays are proposed, which will comfortably accommodate 100 people. The small number of vehicles and the low frequency of events within the hall will ensure that there is no additional traffic safety issues associated with the development.

The Association looks forward to the matter proceeding to the public comment period, prior to its favourable determination by the Council.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries regarding this matter.

Yours sincerely



**Eugene Ferraro**  
Director