

# MEMORANDUM

Reference: DA20/0423  
To: Penrith Local Planning Panel  
From: James Heathcote – Development Assessment Planner  
Date: 22 September 2020

The following information is provided in response to the queries/requests raised by the Penrith Local Planning Panel in relation to Development Application DA20/0423, 682 Castlereagh Road AGNES BANKS NSW 2753

## 1. What is the list of things leading to the assumption it is a place of worship?

- Inconsistencies and discrepancies between the previous development application (withdrawn) and the submitted application. There are also discrepancies within documentation forming the current development application which indicates there may be activities on the site which involve religious worship and the congregation of a religious group, which would categorise, at least some aspects, of the development as a place of public worship.
- The Vaishnav Sangh of Sydney, owners of the subject site, are a group of Vaishnava devotees who practise the Pushti Marg faith, a sub tradition of Vaishnavism which is a Hindu denomination and the name given to the faith and practices of Hindus who hold Vishnu and other gods and goddesses, such as Krishna, as supreme deities.
- The list of annual scheduled events are, in part, Indian religious festivals. For example, Holi festival of Colour and Diwali Festival of Lights are both celebrated religious Hindu events.
- The application has not provided a detailed description of the nature of the regular activities to be held for Council to be satisfied that they are not based on the Hindu faith or other Indian religious denomination.

The activities listed in the Statement of Environmental Effects only detail activities relating to the preparation of events. There does not appear to be any other cultural activities proposed outside of event preparation.

- The scale of the proposed outdoor area appears disproportionate to the activities listed as being undertaken on a weekly basis. The scale

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of the outdoor area indicates that this space may be used frequently by a large congregation.

- The previous application included a room to hold up to 84 statues, the use of statues in Indian culture is generally associated with the religious worshipping activities of Hinduism.

The current application has removed the statue notation and indicates this room to be used as a 'donative display area'. The description of the development and activities listed does not detail what a donatives area is or what activities are to be undertaken within this area of the development.

Furthermore, there are three other rooms which have no known use. The provision of these spaces suggest that the facility is designed to be used for regular worship.

## **2. If it was a community facility, would staff have recommended refusal due to other impacts apart from this?**

Yes.

The site is not suitable for the proposed development, as the site cannot accommodate the scale of the development without impacts to adjoining properties and the surrounding area.

The proposed development is not of a scale that is compatible with the surrounding area. This is attributed to the visual, acoustic and traffic related impacts associated with the proposed development.

The development has not been designed nor incorporated features to protect the existing amenity of the area.

James Heathcote  
**Development Assessment Planner**