MP Fong vows to save ashram

KUALA LUMPUR: Bukit Bintang member of parliament Fong Kui Lun has vowed to ensure that Vivekananda Ashrama in Brickfields here is preserved as a national heritage site.

He said he was aware of concerns surrounding a potential redevelopment of the land the 120-year-old building stood on.

"We will find a solution to make sure the building and land are preserved according to the High Court's decision in 2016," he told the *New Straits Times*.

He was asked to respond to the move to earmark the plot of land on which the building sits as a major commercial zone in the proposed Kuala Lumpur Local Plan (KLLP 2040), instead of a national heritage site, as it was gazetted under the National Heritage Act 2005.

He said the building held historical value and was symbolic of the existence of the Indian community

"We have referred the discrepancy to City Hall and the mayor, and will raise the issue at the next parliamentary sitting in June."

Fong added that the site had been ordered to be preserved as a historic landmark by the court, thus the confusion in the KLLP 2040 should never have taken place.

Fong Kui Lun

It was reported that in 2016, the High Court had ordered that the ashram to be gazetted as a national heritage site.

The order for the site's preservation came on June 16, after the gazette was published in the Attorney-General's Chambers website.

The Vivekananda Ashrama, with its bronze statue of Swami Vivekananda, is one of Brickfields' iconic structures.

Efforts to contact Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Federal Territories) Dr Zaliha Mustafa for comment on the matter are ongoing.