



(From third right) Tamilwanan, Deva Kunjari Sambanthan and Raja Singham with other stakeholders after a public hearing at Menara DBKL. — AZLINA ABDULLAH/The Star

'Rezone heritage site to public community facilities'

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THE commercial zoning designated for Vivekananda Ashram in Brickfields under the draft Kuala Lumpur Local Plan (KLLP) 2040 is inconsistent with the presence of heritage sites in the area, say stakeholders.

"It being zoned as a major commercial area in the draft plan is deeply concerning as this allows various commercial premises to be built," said Happy Garden resident P. Tamilwanan.

"Although the ashram was classified as a 'Category 1 Heritage Building' in 2016 and any development or modifications to the building must be approved by National Heritage Department (JWN), we are still worried that changing it to a 'major commercial' zone would attract development.

"So we are suggesting rezoning the land to public community facilities (PCF)," he said.

Residents and business owners voiced their concerns on the major commercial zoning in the KLLP 2040 during a public hear-

Stakeholders want zoning to reflect Vivekananda Ashram's main purpose



Despite Vivekananda Ashram being gazetted as a heritage site, the land has been designated as a major commercial zone under draft KLLP 2040. — Filepic

ing at Menara DBKL 1 on Jalan Raja Laut yesterday.

In April, residents were shocked to find the Vivekananda Ashram land had been designated as a major commercial area with a high plot ratio in the

draft KLLP 2040.

Under the KLLP 2020, the 124-year-old building and surrounding site was listed as a heritage zone, even though it was designated for mixed development.

Tamilwanan said the PCF zoning was more in line with the objectives of Vivekananda Ashram.

"It promotes Hinduism and the study of arts, science and industries.

"Great personalities such as Malaysia's first prime minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj, had visited the building," he said.

Save Vivekananda Ashram Brickfields (SVAB) action group committee member S. Raja Singham said a major commercial zone was not consistent with the building's heritage status.

"As a site of spiritual, religious and cultural significance, Vivekananda Ashram does not fit in with a major commercial zone.

"The PCF zoning aligns with the ashram's primary objectives and the public has made it clear that Vivekananda Ashram should remain intact," he said.