

## **Auspicious Harmony Vihara – onsite operation**

This summary is provided to assist Council to prepare for the request from the LPP to outline the onsite operations.

May we refer you to the Operational Plan of Management which sets out the operation and activities of the Vihara. Also other reports that were submitted with the application.

### **Key aspects of our operation are as following:**

#### **Number of People & traffic**

Based on our application, the proposal is to allow a maximum of 20 people on site at any point in time. Although we have applied for 20 people, which is based on our understanding of what's legally allowed. If there are genuine concerns or we've misunderstood the rule, we can reduce the number of people on site.

The reference to the total number of people includes the Venerable we may invite to reside in the Vihara.

We invite the Venerable from China to reside in Vihara, normally for a maximum of 3 months, so devotees and people who want to learn more about Buddhism can be invited to come and talk to the Venerable. Each time the Venerable come, they normally stay for a max of 3 months. Previous visits:

- Dec 2018 – 10 days
- Mar – June 2019 – 3 months
- Dec 2019 to Mar 2020 – 3 months

There is no money paid by the Venerable when they stay and the occupation of the building is no different to a house that is leased by a group of people, but are not related as family members. We reject the categorisation in the previous LPP report that the use operates in any way that is akin to a boarding house.

In table 1 (page 3) of the Operational Plan of Management, we set out the proposed capacity in each section of the Vihara. However, there is still the max. cap of 20 people in total on site. We believe our neighbours may have misinterpreted our application and hold the misbelieve that we will have 20+ people by adding up the capacity assessment in the table. That is not the correct way to read the information.

As verbally submitted during the LPP meeting, since the operation of our Vihara, which has been since the start of 2018, there was only 1 occasion that we had 20 people on site. Which was for a special occasion and it was by invitation. We were in full control of the number of people on site as we keep a visitor register.

The number of visitors are controlled by invitation and we are able to coordinate the number of vehicles coming to the vihara to minimise the impact to the neighbourhood. Again, we confirm that the general public is not able arrive unannounced and the use does not and will not operate in a similar manner to a temple, for example.

It is important to note that much of the traffic complaints from the local residents are based on the traffic and noise generated from construction site at No. 1-5 Rickard Rd. The local residents then implied we will be the same without having regard to the real situation. The Venerable do not own or drive a private vehicle to the premises and as such, they do not create any additional traffic or parking demand.

#### **Operation hours**

We do not operate 24/7 as miscomprehended by our neighbours.

We have set operating hours as outlined in the Operational Plan of Management, being:

- Mon – Sun – 8am to 6pm
- Monthly Vihara committee meeting – once per month, usually between 6pm to 9pm. Currently, we have 5 people in our committee.

As clearly stated in our Operational Plan of Management, we operate by “invitation only”. This is intentionally designed to ensure we can deliver and achieve the objective of the Vihara. The provision of a tranquil and peaceful environment is key to our operation.

When the Venerable are here, they are practising the Buddhism religion and have strict routine to follow. We are respecting the routine of the Venerable and the number of visitors on Monday to Friday is kept to the minimal so the Venerable can practise their religious routine peacefully and without interruption.

If we invite visitors, mostly the visitors would come either on Saturday or Sunday. The visitors would typically spend a few hours (2-3 hours) when they are here. When visitors are here, they can do:

- Meditation
- Sutra script writing/reading
- Talk to the Venerable (if they want some guidance or to learn Buddhism from the Venerable)
- Do prayers in the worship hall
- Sit and relax in the Resting area/Sunroom, immerse themselves in the peaceful environment of the Vihara for inner peace.

Important note: Since we started using the Vihara 3.5 years ago, we have not had one incident of neighbour complaints. Furthermore, we can confirm that that intent of the operation is to have a peaceful place of quiet contemplation where the stresses of everyday life can be set aside.

### **Routines & Activities**

When the Venerable are residing in the Vihara, they do observe the religious routine. They have a short chanting session in the morning (roughly 30 mins) and a short chanting session in the afternoon (roughly 30 mins). The instruments used are the 4 small piece items as shown during the site visit.

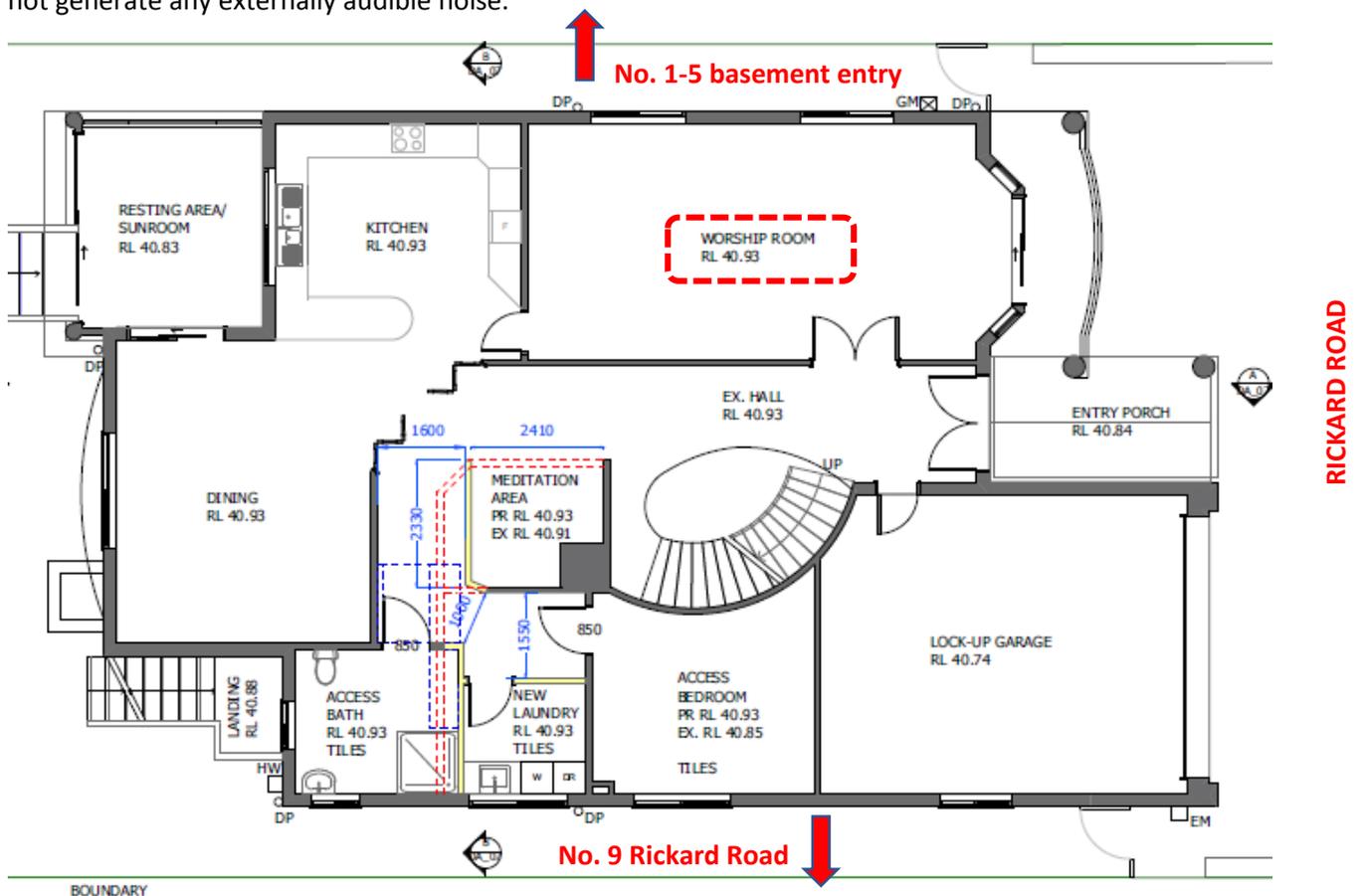


We are always mindful of the possibility of transmission of sound. Although there are 4 instruments used as part of the meditation process, they are small and the worship room is adjacent to the basement driveway entrance of No.1-5 Rickard Road (not the neighbour at No. 9 Rickard Road). The instruments are used as a meditation aid to assist with maintaining a present state of mind – it would be counterproductive and counterintuitive for the instruments to be loud to create distraction. On this basis, the chances of our immediate western neighbour be affected by the chanting and instrument sounds is very minimal. Please refer to the Acoustic Logic Acoustic Report and the recommendations for acoustic attenuation.

Specifically, we will be adopting the recommended controls set out in Section 5.1.3 of the Acoustic Report, including the recommended building works to further reduce the transmission of sounds. See also Section 4 Noise Minimisation in the Operational Plan of Management.

There are 6 key religious dates we observe in our stream of Buddhism. On the key religious dates, we may have more visitors wanting to visit the Vihara, all of which are still by Invitation only, so we can effectively carry out and be consistent with our submitted Operational Plan of Management.

We submit that the allegation from the residents at No. 9 Rickard Rd that the sounds travel to their house due to the closeness of the buildings is ill-based. Between the worship hall and No. 9 house, there is a hall way, a double garage, a laundry and bathroom, a bedroom, plus our building is constructed of double brick. Upstairs, the spaces facing No. 9 are the meditation room and the sutra script room, both are quiet and does not generate any externally audible noise.



If further information is required, please don't hesitate to contact us.

**Applicant: Auspicious Harmony Vihara (Australia) Inc**

**16 June 2021**