

Buddhists' temple win

ADAM VIDLER

A MULTI-million-dollar Buddhist temple and cultural centre will be built in Bankstown after approval from the council.

The \$2.19 million complex will be built at 55-61 Northam Ave, on land owned by the Congregation of Vietnamese Buddhists in Western Australia, Inc.

The application was lodged in November 2009 and resubmitted in February this year following the council's original assessment.

The centre will include a public place of worship, a basement

PLACE OF WORSHIP

■ **WHAT:** A \$2.19 million Buddhist temple and cultural centre at Northam St, Bankstown

■ **WHEN:** Construction will be completed in the next three years

carpark and 18 rooms for short-term residential accommodation for congregation members on spiritual respite.

Bankstown Mayor Tania Mihailuk offered her congratulations to the applicant.

"They have done everything

possible to comply with the regulations and work with the council," she said.

The library and counselling services of the temple will be open from 8am to 5pm on weekdays and 3pm to 7pm over the weekend.

Religious services will be limited to 6.30pm to 9pm on Saturday, and 11am to 2pm Sunday.

Approval has been granted for three festivals to be held in the first 12 months of operation.

Applicant Tien Dung Vo, of TVL Domestic Architecture Designs, said the construction of the centre would take place during the next

three years. "I think it will be a great contribution not just to the Vietnamese community but also to the wider community," he said.

"When we were designing it we were thinking of how it would also benefit the wider multicultural community."

Mr Tien said the response from the Vietnamese community so far had been very strong. "We're very excited to start building," he said.



TEMPLE PLAN: Do you think the Buddhist temple will be an asset in Bankstown? Email editor@theexpress.com.au

Uni consultation

MILPERRA: THE community will be consulted over further development at the Milperra campus of the University of Western Sydney following a council resolution. UWS proposed to demolish an existing childcare centre and construct a 394-bed student accommodation facility, comprising 80 units across six blocks, as well as a replacement childcare centre. Following concerns about traffic and parking from residents, Bankstown Council determined the community would be better represented in the consultation process.

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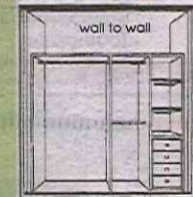
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Nguyet Tran, Henri Le, Master Thich Phuoc Nhon, Tien Vo, Nun Thich Nu Bao Truong, Cr Kahl Asfour and Hong Le are looking forward to a multi-million dollar Buddhist temple development for Bankstown.

Buddhists get \$2.5m temple

By MICK ROBERTS

BANKSTOWN'S Buddhists will receive a new place of worship after councillors approved a development application for a multi-million dollar temple on the corner of Northham and Cambridge avenues last week.

The Pho Minh Temple - meaning to bring enlightenment - will include 18 bed-sit type accommodation units for monks and nuns, a 12.6m high pagoda, and a main hall with altar and library.

To be built by the Congregation of the Vietnamese Buddhists in WA, spokesman and Bankstown real estate agent Henri Le is enthusiastic about the project.

"This will be a significant building for Bankstown," Mr Le said.

"With eight per cent of Bankstown's population Vietnamese, and another 10 per cent Chinese, and taking into consideration that 85 per cent of that population is Buddhist, this temple is very much needed," he said.

Mr Le said there were at least six small Buddhist temples in Bankstown, some operating in residential homes without council approval, and the green light for the \$2.5 million temple would provide a convenient place of worship.

"The Master Thich Phuoc Nhon has chosen this site because it's convenient, near the railway station and near the Vietnamese business centre in Bankstown," he said.

Mr Le said the temple would become a tourist attraction and build on sister city relationships already exist-

ing between Bankstown and Korea.

The temple will become a focal point during three important Buddhist festivals - Buddha's Birthday, Lunar New Year and Ullambana Day.

Mr Le said the temple was the second to be built by Master Thich Phuoc Nhon, with another - Pho Quang - already operating in Perth, WA.

Cr Ian Stromborg has welcomed the new development

"Vietnamese people have established themselves as excellent citizens of Bankstown and their food culture is enjoyed by all," he said.

"The new Buddhist temple is an exciting new development for our area and will add much character to that part of Bankstown."

Mr Le said he expected the temple to be completed in about two years.

Pilot hero a local boy

By MICK ROBERTS

THE remains of former Bankstown pilot Michael Nerandzic have been recovered from wreckage of an incinerated airship in Germany as investigations into the accident continue.

Mr Nerandzic, who grew-up in Bungalow Crescent, Bankstown, is being hailed a hero for ordering his three passengers to jump to safety before flames engulfed the aircraft's gondola on June 12. His instructions to his passengers caused the airship to shoot into the sky, trapping and incinerating the veteran pilot. He would have turned 53 last Wednesday.

Mr Nerandzic arrived in Bankstown with his parents and brother from England as a 10-year-old boy in the 1960s. The two Nerandzic boys attended Bankstown Central Public School before going on to study at Bankstown Boys High School - now Bankstown Senior College.

Brother Zoran said despite moving away after completing his aircraft training at Bankstown Airport, Michael always had a close connection to the area.

He lived at Balgownie, near Wollongong, with his wife Lyndy.

"His job took him around the world, but he was always popping back to Bankstown," Zoran said. "We were Billy Bankstowners through and through. I think it would be good to let Bankstown people know about Michael's achievements."

Mr Nerandzic was a talented pilot with a deep passion for flying, he said. He piloted charter flights from Bankstown Airport, from where he later navigated the Swan Airships, for Alan Bond in the 1980s.

He clocked up more than 12,300 hours in the air and worked in 24 countries, including flying over five Olympic Games. Arrangement for his funeral have not been finalised.

Get ready for tax time now

TAX Commissioner Michael D'Ascenzo says now is a good time to start thinking about preparing your 2011 tax return.

"Getting your tax records in order early will help ensure you are ready to lodge from July 1 and avoid the October rush," Mr D'Ascenzo said.

"The ATO website has lots of information to make sure you have all the records you need to lodge, including how to claim all the deductions you are entitled to and what you need to report if you have bought or sold shares, earned bank interest or sold an investment. Visit ato.gov.au.