



**MAJLIS PERBANDARAN AMPANG JAYA**  
**BAHAGIAN PERHUBUNGAN AWAM DAN SEKRETARIAT**  
MENARA MPAJ, JALAN PANDAN UTAMA,  
PANDAN INDAH, SELANGOR,  
55100 KUALA LUMPUR

**KERATAN AKHBAR**  
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**The Star**

- Uncovering truth of land deal

3



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Akhbar	The Star
Tajuk Berita	Uncovering truth of land deal
Muka Surat	3

# Uncovering truth of land deal

Residents, MP want to get to the bottom of fate of green space

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A KUALA Lumpur lawmaker wants government agencies involved in a land deal made 20 years ago to come clean on how a public space meant for the residents was sold to a third party.

At the same time, the Bangsar Baru Residents Association (BBRA) has vowed to leave no stones unturned in order to get to the bottom of the sale which they say has robbed them of a precious green space in their township.

The development project now taking place in front of Bangsar Village II shopping centre, off Jalan Maarof, was approved by DBKL in 2017.

Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) has stated that a commercial development in Bangsar situated on a former open space meant for the community was approved according to procedure.

But DBKL was unable to explain how the land ended up in the hands of a third party more than a decade ago.

According to DBKL, the development was approved because it was a low-density project and the developer had fulfilled all the technical requirements that were requested by the local authority.

A DBKL spokesman told *StarMetro* that the developer had applied for planning permission to develop the 0.2ha land on June 16, 2016, and the development was approved on April 19, 2017 with major amendments made to the original plan.

"The land's status now is commercial. The current owner initially applied for a multi-storey building but we scaled it down to only four storeys and with plot ratio reduced from 2.20 to 2.18," the spokesman said.

*StarMetro* had in 2016 reported on residents unhappiness over DBKL's approval for development on a piece of land that was originally reserved as open space.

The land originally belonged to Bangsar Baru developer Eng Lian Enterprise Sdn Bhd but it was surrendered to Federal Territories Land and Mines Office (PPTGWP) in 1977 as part of the requirement for open space in their development site.

However, the land was never used for its designated purpose. Instead, for almost 20 years, it was used for a luxury car showroom until recently when the cur-



Fahmi visiting the project site in September where he found the contractors working on a Sunday. — Filepic

rent landowner applied to develop it and was met with objections from surrounding stakeholders.

According to DBKL, an objection hearing under Rule 5 was conducted on Nov 16, 2016 after stakeholders were invited to put in their objections.

Rule 5 of the Planning Development Amendment Rules 1994 — a bylaw under the Federal Territory Planning Act 1982 — is a provision of law that requires the mayor to refer to the registered owners of the adjacent land, through advertisements in newspapers and exhibition to invite objections to the application for a development that involves the conversion of land use, zoning or increase in residential density.

"We received two objections from registered owners of the adjacent lands; Bangsar Baru Residents Association (BBRA) and the management of Sa'dina Abu Bakar As Siddiq Mosque.

"The mayor had weighed in on the objections and approved the project based on three justifications.

According to the spokesman, the first reason is that the proposed project is a commercial development as per the land status.

The second reason is that it is a

low-density project with a plot ratio below 2.2 and building height of only four storeys.

And the final reason is that the developer has fulfilled all the technical requirements pertaining to land setback, public facilities as well as allocation of parking bays for both cars and motorcycles.

"Based on all the technical requirements, there was no need for the developer to prepare a TIA (traffic impact assessment) report as the project would not create potential burden on roads in the surrounding area.

"The project is not using Jalan Maarof as the main entry and exit point. It is using Jalan Telawi 1 and Jalan Telawi 4 instead."

According to DBKL, the four-storey building is to be used as an office.

The land issue made headlines in 2004 when word got out that the new owner received a 99-year lease after leaving paid a premium of RM2mil to acquire the land.

Following a public outcry, the Land Offices and former Federal Territories minister Datuk Seri Raja Nong Chik Raja Zainal Abidin tried in 2009 to persuade the company to relocate the car showroom by offering alternative sites but they were rejected by the company.

When contacted, BBRA president Kim Chee said the residents had strongly objected to the change of land ownership and change of land status from the very beginning and would continue to vehemently object to any type of commercial development on said piece of land.

"This is why BBRA is compiling a set of documents that will be the basis of a complaint to be lodged with Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) for an investigation," said Chee.

"We are confident that with the new leadership at MACC, justice will prevail because BBRA insists that the piece of land belongs to the rakyat," she added.

Former BBRA president Datuk George Joseph questioned the legality of the land transfer.

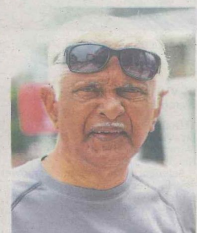
"How can public land be transferred to a company or an individual?" he asked.

Resident Panjamoorthy Sivanesan, from Lorong Maarof, said that in view of the unanswered question regarding the deal, DBKL should not have approved the project in the first place.

Bangsar Baru Business Council president Ronnie Quay expressed concern over future congestion once the building was completed.



Quay is worried about possible congestion once the new building is completed.



Joseph questions the legality of the land transfer.

"At the time of approving the project, did DBKL forget about the night market here?"

"The inner roads of Jalan Telawi 1 and Jalan Telawi 4 are not wide enough to take on extra vehicular traffic," he said, adding that it was bad planning.

## Seeking closure

Meanwhile Lembah Pantai MP Fahmi Fadzil said the matter was not over as there were still a lot of unanswered questions to this long-standing issue.

"We are in the process of getting details from PPTGWP regarding what happened between 1991 and 2003 when the land was sold to a third party," he said.

"We discovered that during a land exco meeting back then, DBKL in their summary objected to the land being sold in 2002.

"But in 2003, PPTGWP went ahead and sold the land anyway despite DBKL's objection," said the MP.

Fahmi said the residents of Bangsar, Eng Lian Enterprise and even the present landowner, for that matter, were entitled to the truth of why a public open space was sold to a private entity.

"These are issues of ethics and justice and we need to have the full facts to be fair to all parties concerned," he said.

He gave assurance that he would continue to monitor the project site where construction had started several months ago.

"There have been some infringements pertaining to noise and dust pollution and issues of flashflood in the area," he noted.

"When I went down for a spot check recently it was a Sunday and the contractors were working.

"They were compounded by DBKL for breaking the rules," said Fahmi.

"In a recent flashflood situation there, Alam Flora reported that the drains at the construction site were choked with debris and it came from the project.

"I hope DBKL will do their part but I will continue to monitor the site," he added.



Construction work ongoing at the pocket of open land in Bangsar that was handed over by Bangsar's original developer to the government, then sold to a third party in 2003. — Photos: ART CHEN/The Star



Bangsar residents say the township's inner roads will be congested when the project is completed, especially when there is a night market on the same street.