



*The Star*  
**EXCLUSIVE**

# Upping liveability

Many older public housing schemes in Kuala Lumpur are no longer suitable due to their cramped conditions and ageing infrastructure. A proposed new Act will allow for redevelopment of these strata properties if 75% of owners agree to it. >2&3

# Communal living taking its toll at KL public housing

Many flats residents struggle with cramped living spaces and deteriorating levels of cleanliness

By **BAVANI M**  
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THE 600sq ft (61.5sq metres) one-bedroom flat is bursting at the seams, filled with an assortment of furniture and knick-knacks.

The living room serves as a pantry and living space.

To the right, there is a refrigerator, kitchen cabinets and dining table, while a wardrobe and makeshift bed are squeezed into the left corner.

The kitchen can only accommodate one person at a time and the balcony is crammed with items.

This unit at Sri Sarawak Public Housing (PA) on Jalan Kenanga, Pudu, is home to Theresa Watford, a 62-year-old taxi driver and her 33-year-old autistic son, Raphhael Watford Janssen.

They moved in seven years ago but Watford now wants to leave.

The cramped living conditions and deteriorating levels of cleanliness at the flats have begun to take a toll on her mental and physical well-being.

"When I first applied for a public housing unit with Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL), it wasn't easy due to the long waiting list.

"Nevertheless, I managed to secure a unit on humanitarian grounds," said Watford, a cancer survivor.

"But the living conditions

here started taking a toll on my mental health. I constantly feel depressed and sad.

"I submitted multiple applications to DBKL, requesting to move to a different unit within the city.

"Unfortunately, they were all rejected," she added.

Watford originally resided in the Damansara Bistari flat in Petaling Jaya, with a similar built-up area to Sri Sarawak.

However, she was paying RM1,000 a month to rent the unit, which exceeded her budget.

When the opportunity arose to rent a unit in the capital for only RM94 a month, she jumped on it.

However, she found the living conditions and environment far from ideal.

"The unit was in such a bad condition that repairs were required before I could move in.

"Due to my health, I had to request DBKL to instal a sitting toilet instead of a squatting one.

"It took them a while, but they finally did it," Watford recounted.

She feels there is a lack in sense of belonging and responsibility among the residents to take care of their shared spaces.

Janssen, who works as a food delivery rider, has also found it difficult to adjust to the environment.

"It is very stuffy as there is no proper ventilation.



Watford preparing food in her kitchen, with room only for one.

"When you go out, there is cat poo, uncollected rubbish and a bad smell," he lamented.

### Meant for temporary stay

PA and People's Housing Project (PPR) are low-cost government housing schemes designed to provide temporary shelter to underprivileged

city residents.

Occupants mainly comprise individuals and families living and working in Kuala Lumpur who are unable to afford private housing.

Fatimah Harun, 63, and her husband Osman Karim, 76, moved into the Sri Perak PPR in Bandar Baru Sentul 38 years ago.

This couple, formerly squatters, felt grateful for the opportunity to rent a unit in a PPR located in the heart of Kuala Lumpur.

The kitchen window of their cramped quarters even offers a breathtaking view of PETRONAS Twin Towers.

This tiny two-bedroom unit was once home to some of their 14 children with their spouses and their children.

"Initially, upon moving in years ago, it was only my husband and I but as the children arrived, our space became rather cramped," Fatimah recounted.

"We had to devise a system for sharing the toilet and kitchen," she said.

As the children grew up and had their own kids, the couple wanted to purchase a bigger unit but the prices were prohibitive.

Osman said buying a proper-



The decades-old Jalan Loke Yew flats are showing their age, say residents.



The Merdeka 118 tower looks like it is sandwiched between Jalan Loke Yew PA (left) and Sri Sarawak PA in Pudu. — Photos: YAP CHEE HONG/The Star

# Consent of 75% flats owners needed for redevelopment under proposed new Act



THE Kuala Lumpur skyline is poised for a dramatic transformation over the next decade, particularly older townships.

Old five-storey walk-up flats are slated to be replaced by high-rises.

To ensure this mission succeeds, the government is drafting a new Act geared towards redevelopment and urban renewal.

This will ensure older and dilapidated flats can be made liveable again.

"The government, through the Housing and Local Government Ministry, is expected to table this Act during Parliament's second session.

"It may stipulate 75% residents' approval for redevelopment projects," said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's political secretary Datuk Azman Abidin (pic).

He said the current threshold, which requires unanimous approval, made it hard to carry out redevelopment projects.

This is one of the reasons why hundreds of old flats and apartments in the city are becoming more like urban slums.

"Older buildings, especially over 30 years old, have many issues including leaking and roofs being blown off," he told *StarMetro*.

Redeveloping some old flats has become a necessity, including for safety reasons.

"We need land to build more affordable homes, and we need developers to build them.

"But we are facing land scarcity. No developer is going to do it without incentives, hence a compromise is needed."

He said under the Madani project, houses will be made available for sale and rent to B40 and M40 income groups.

Households under M40 earning RM7,000 a month or less can purchase an 800sq ft unit for RM200,000.

B40 households with an income of RM5,000 a month or less can buy a 750sq ft residential unit for RM180,000.

Singles and young newlyweds with a maximum income of RM4,000 a month or less can buy a 700sq ft unit for between RM150,000 and RM200,000.

These new units will have three bedrooms and two bathrooms and come with parking space.

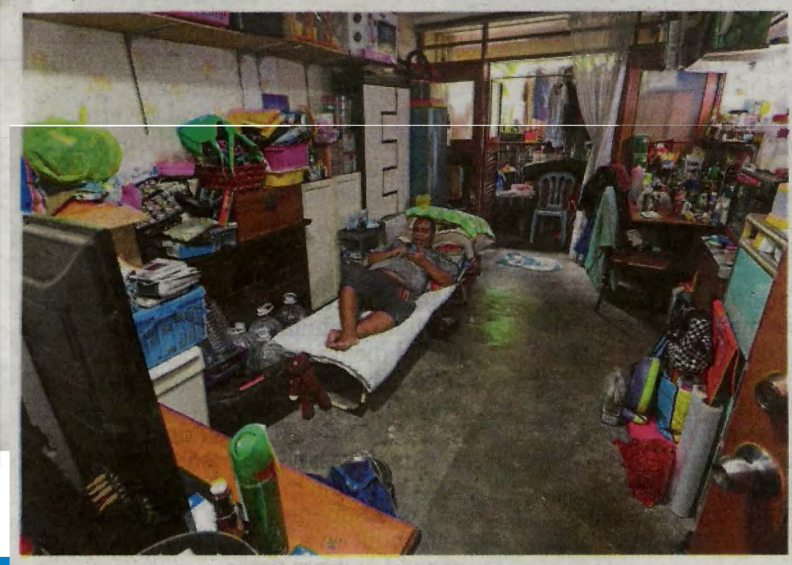
"The challenge now is to get developers to take on these projects.

"They will only be able to do

## Public and private flats slated for redevelopment in Kuala Lumpur

<b>PA Setapak Jaya 1</b> Mukim Setapak Parliament Setiawangsa	<b>PA Sri Pahang</b> Mukim Kuala Lumpur Parliament Lembah Pantai
<b>Flat Taman Segar</b> Mukim Kuala Lumpur Parliament Cheras	<b>Flat Taman Sri Lempah</b> Mukim Kuala Lumpur Parliament Seputeh
<b>PA Seri Perlis 1</b> Mukim Bandar Kuala Lumpur Parliament Titiwangsa	<b>PA Seri Kelantan</b> Mukim Setapak Parliament Batu
<b>Flat Taman Rajawali</b> Mukim Kuala Lumpur Parliament Cheras	<b>PA Sri Langkawi 1</b> Mukim Setapak Parliament Wangsa Maju
<b>PA Seri Perlis 2</b> Mukim Bandar Kuala Lumpur Parliament Titiwangsa	<b>PA Seri Terengganu</b> Mukim Bandar Kuala Lumpur Parliament Batu
<b>Flat Taman Desa Aman</b> Mukim Kuala Lumpur Parliament Cheras	<b>Flat Taman Melati</b> Mukim Setapak Parliament Wangsa Maju
<b>PA Seri Negeri Sembilan</b> Mukim Bandar Kuala Lumpur Parliament Batu	<b>PA Seri Perak</b> Mukim Bandar Kuala Lumpur Parliament Batu
<b>Flat Taman Sri Bahtera</b> Mukim Kuala Lumpur Parliament Cheras	<b>Flat Sg. Baru Kg. Bharu</b> Mukim Bandar Kuala Lumpur Parliament Titiwangsa
<b>PA Sri Sarawak</b> Mukim Bandar Kuala Lumpur Parliament Cheras	<b>PA Seri Labuan</b> Mukim Kuala Lumpur Parliament Bandar Tun Razak
<b>Flat Taman Pertama</b> Mukim Kuala Lumpur Parliament Cheras	<b>PA Bandar Baru Sentul (Fasa 3)</b> Mukim Bandar Kuala Lumpur Parliament Batu
<b>PA Seri Selangor</b> Mukim Bandar Kuala Lumpur Parliament Cheras	<b>PA Seri Tioman</b> Mukim Setapak Parliament Wangsa Maju
<b>Flat Taman Kobena</b> Mukim Kuala Lumpur Parliament Cheras	<b>Flat PKNS Jalan Tun Razak</b> Mukim Bandar Kuala Lumpur Parliament Titiwangsa
<b>Flat Taman Shamelin Perkasa</b> Mukim Kuala Lumpur Parliament Cheras	<b>PA Seri Kedah/Langkawi</b> Mukim Setapak Parliament Wangsa Maju
<b>PA Loke Yew</b> Mukim Bandar Kuala Lumpur Parliament Cheras	<b>Flat PKNS Jalan Kuching</b> Mukim Batu Parliament Batu
<b>PA Hang Tuah</b> Mukim Kuala Lumpur Parliament Bukit Bintang	<b>Flat Taman Maluri</b> Mukim Ampang Parliament Titiwangsa

Source: DBKL 



Janssen sleeping on a makeshift bed in the hall of his Sri Sarawak unit.

**"It is very stuffy as there is no proper ventilation. When you go out, there is cat poo, uncollected rubbish and a bad smell."**

Raphael Watford Janssen

ty in Sentul was unattainable, despite the combined efforts of his children.

"We considered relocating to outside the city but the commute for my children would have been too costly," he said, adding that at one time, they had 25 people in the flat.

Many Kuala Lumpur residents like Fatimah and Watford wish to own their units.

But they are unable to achieve this aspiration because even so-called affordable housing in high-rises cost a few hundred thousand ringgit.

Sara Abdullah Tan, a resident of Jalan Loke Yew PA next door,

is renting a unit as she is unable to buy one.

"At prices ranging between RM300,000 and RM350,000, we can never afford it.

"We won't even qualify for a loan," lamented Sara who works as a shop assistant in Sungei Wang Plaza.

What is affordable for her are units priced between RM150,000 and RM200,000, which are almost impossible to find.

Ooi Lin Ling, 75, purchased a unit in Jalan Loke Yew for only RM20,000 in the late 1970s.

Despite having her own property, Ooi yearns for better living conditions.

"It would be wonderful to live in a larger unit with three bedrooms instead of one, and to have access to facilities like a gym, along with a cleaner and greener living environment," she said.

Her neighbour, identified only as Lim, aged 65, shared Ooi's sentiments.

Lim hopes some of the old infrastructure in the building would be repaired, aside from having stronger water pressure.

For many of these residents, a rent-to-own scheme is the only way many of them will be able to own a home.



Several attempts to redevelop Sri Lempah Flats on Jalan Jugra, off Jalan Kelang Lama, have failed as it could not obtain unanimous consent from owners. — YAP CHEE HONG/The Star

so if they are given incentives like higher plot ratios and density."

Azman said that at least 20% to 30% of a private housing development must have a Madani component to it.

He said DBKL had identified

139 sites in the city with potential for redevelopment (see chart for some of them).

He added that priority would be given to those born in Kuala Lumpur or who have lived and worked in the city for more than 15 years. — By BAVANI M