



House enlargement

Procedures for renovations

Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL), Petaling Jaya Municipal Council (MBPJ) and several other councils within Malaysia permit home owners to optimise available space within their property boundaries for renovation and expansion. However, this freedom does not imply unrestricted liberty for property revamping. Each council maintains a set of building guidelines, as explained by a DBKL insider.

"There are constraints. For instance, renovations must stay within the confines of the property," she said, and this rule appears to apply across the board for other councils in Malaysia, even Sabah and Sarawak.

All applications for house renovation or reconstruction must be submitted by a qualified engineer, architect or registered draughtsman, as agreed upon by the councils. DBKL, MBPJ and Subang Jaya Municipal Council advise home owners to follow the proper procedures and consider hiring professionals to design and oversee renovations in accordance with council guidelines.

Approval of renovation works is not guaranteed, with DBKL and MBPJ acknowledging instances of owners circumventing legal procedures. Some do so to cut costs while others may simply be unaware of the regulations. Additionally, there are cases where errant contractors falsely claim to be knowledgeable about council guidelines.

"An approved renovation can save owners both time and money and may increase property value. If an illegal structure must be removed, owners incur losses. Hence, we encourage homeowners to consult us if they have doubts," emphasised the source.

DBKL's Building Control Department specifies that houses can be fully extended to the back and owners can add an extra storey beyond the original design, allowing single-storey homes to become double-storey and double-storey ones to become triple-storey, provided the width is 5.5m or less.

Each council has its own specifications and limitations, prompting homeowners to verify with their respective councils before initiating any renovation work. However, those undertaking renovations should be mindful that not all neighbours will welcome such changes.

Complaints regarding noise, dust during construction, loss of view, airflow and sunlight are common, according to the DBKL source.

Finally, expect the assessment rate of the renovated property to rise as additional square footage has been added and naturally, this increases the property value, hence, subjected to higher council rates.