



Elderly residents of 1Razak Mansion are grappling with high maintenance fees, which they are unaccustomed to after decades of paying low fees for modest walk-up flats.

By BAVANI M
bavanim@thestar.com.my

CELEBRATED as Kuala Lumpur's flagship redevelopment success, 1Razak Mansion now finds itself grappling with the steep financial demands of high-rise living.

Formerly known as Razak Mansion, the flats are located near Jalan Sungai Besi.

The transformative upgrade to 1Razak Mansion brought a 240% increase in maintenance fees, largely for the cost of maintaining modern facilities.

Residents like Jagit Singh, 68, remember the lush green spaces and modest RM35 maintenance fees of the original walk-up flats established in the 1960s.

After the redevelopment in 2017, the excitement of moving into larger, brand-new units softened the blow of higher maintenance fees, which rose to RM120.

Eight years after receiving their keys, residents are witnessing the reality of high-rise maintenance.

Among the costly repairs needed are waterproofing, water pump and lift maintenance.

The building needs a fresh coat of paint – an expense the management can't even afford.

Its building management now faces the daunting task of raising funds to keep up with maintenance, which could mean another increase in the fees and sinking fund.

Those most affected will be 60% of the property's residents, who are retirees already burdened by rising living costs.

High cost of maintenance

The looming financial strain for residents raises concerns for future redevelopment projects, prompting questions about whether residents are truly prepared for the higher costs and responsibilities that come with living in modern high-rise condominiums.

The government is advancing plans to redevelop ageing areas in Kuala Lumpur, with 139 sites earmarked for transformation under the Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan 2040.

This effort will be facilitated by the proposed Urban Redevelopment Act (URA), designed to revitalise deteriorating urban areas with ageing infrastructure and buildings.

The Housing and Local Government Ministry has proposed a consent threshold of 80% of residents for buildings under 30 years old and 75% for properties over 30 years old.

The URA bill is expected to be



Tan's original cramped one-bedroom flat has been upgraded to a modern three-bedroom unit.

High-rise living that comes with towering costs

KL residents' excitement over flagship urban renewal, transforming ageing flats into modern condos, fades under upkeep burdens

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tabled in Parliament next year.

With this government push, the Act aims to replace many older walk-up flats with modern high-rises, presenting significant challenges for residents accustomed to low maintenance fees.

These residents will face sharply higher costs for added facilities and amenities in new developments, necessitating careful management by joint-management bodies (JMB) and management corporations (MC) to ease this financial impact.

Not the expected model of urban renewal

1Razak Mansion's Management Corporation chairman Anthony Tan, 34, said the increased maintenance costs were "only the tip of the iceberg".

Tan said that cost, along with a RM1.4mil debt accumulated from electricity bills, had placed the MC's accounts in the red.

He added that before the redevelopment, the cost of maintaining common areas, including electricity, was absorbed by Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL).

"We are struggling to keep up with maintaining the facilities and this financial strain is raising concerns about the long-term sustainability of the redeveloped 1Razak Mansion."

Tan, a second-generation owner of a unit in 1Razak Mansion, is one of hundreds who consented to the redevelopment of the old walk-up flats in 2014.

Having been raised in the original cramped one-bedroom flats alongside his parents, the transition to a modern three-bedroom unit with a million-ringgit view – including the PETRONAS Twin Towers and Menara KL – was



Elderly residents of 1Razak Mansion want the provision of government facilities like hospitals, a community hall, park and public transit near the development. — Photos: SAMUEL ONG and CHAN TAK KONG/The Star

greatly welcomed.

"Back in 2017, when we received the keys and moved in, everyone was excited about their bigger units and the view," Tan recalled, saying how long-term maintenance had not even occurred to them then.

"We're now facing breakdowns of essential facilities like lifts and firefighting equipment."

"The initial excitement has given way to the reality of maintaining a high-rise with modern amenities and the costs are catching up with us," Tan said.

1Razak Mansion committee member and long-time resident Lee Eng Foo, 58, said to justify the high maintenance fees, there should be essential facilities nearby, such as a government hospital, community hall, park, and accessible LRT or MRT stations for seniors.

"There's only so much a good view can offer, good development must have all the essential facilities geared towards an age-

ing population," said Lee.

"You take away green space, you must return something equally valuable," said Jagit, reflecting on the importance of preserving quality amenities in urban redevelopment.

The original Razak Mansion consisted of seven blocks of four-storey walk-up flats in Salak South.

The first block was built in 1961, followed by six more blocks in 1963, with the final phase completed in 1967 and inaugurated by then deputy prime minister Tun Abdul Razak Hussein.

Over the decades, the flats deteriorated, plagued by leaking pipes, cracked walls and low water pressure.

The redevelopment replaced the ageing structures with modern, spacious units featuring enhanced amenities.

There was little resistance from the residents and on March 15, 2017, the 557 original owners received keys to their new

1Razak Mansion homes at no cost while 101 long-term tenants had the option to purchase units for RM42,000.

For many like Tan, transitioning from a cramped 504 sq ft unit to a 800 sq ft home was a huge relief.

When residents moved into the newly redeveloped 1Razak Mansion, the transition period for the developer to hand over the property to the MC was delayed.

Under the Strata Management Act 2013 (SMA), this handover should have occurred within one year to allow the MC time to learn the operations of managing flats or condominiums.

However, the actual transfer took place in 2019, instead of 2018 as required.

By then, the defect liability period during which the developer would have been responsible for addressing defects, had already ended.

This left the newly formed MC