

No-go for budget hotel

City Hall says developer failed to meet criteria

By PAULINE ALMEIDA
and PEARL LEE
mmnews@mmail.com.my

CITY Hall has rejected plans for the construction of a budget hotel along Jalan Hang Kasturi, opposite the Central Market, as the developers had failed to meet certain criteria.

Mayor Datuk Ahmad Fuad Ismail said the project by Geometel Sdn Bhd was first approved by City Hall last year.

"I've met with the developers and have since rejected their application as they cannot meet certain criteria," he said.

"They were supposed to build about 60 parking lots but what they have proposed is fewer than that."

He added that the developers had yet to resubmit any further plans.

Ahmad Fuad said since City Hall had rejected the plan, the owners had no right to cordon off the area.

City folk had complained that the construction of the hotel would worsen traffic congestion in the area. But owners of the property feel this will not happen.

It is the other businesses around the area that actually contribute to the traffic jams there," said an official of Geometel yesterday.

Geometel claim that the development order was given to



STILL AT IT: Workers busy at the parking lot along Jalan Hang Kasturi yesterday

begin work on the RM25 million, 11-storey budget hotel project.

"It is a viable venture as we will be also be mostly selling gifts and souvenirs on the ground floor," said the official.

The project came to light when *Malay Mail* reader C.W. Liew found heaps of sand in one corner of the area that was once a car park. The area had been cordoned off since last Wednesday.

Liew who had made proposals two months ago on how to improve traffic flow in the city, was of the opinion that the authorities should revoke any approval given to the owners of the property.

He maintained that the space should be used for public transport infrastructure, a multi-storey carpark or a combination of the two.

Geometel director P.H. Leong said the hotel would only have 35 parking bays, as they were targeting foreign clientele, who made on-line bookings for the rooms.

The hotel that would have 190 double and single rooms was scheduled to be ready in two years.

Geometel acquired the property, that was initially a petrol station, two years ago.