

PRESS STATEMENT

Petaling Jaya, 12 June 2009

The Real Estate and Housing Developers' Association Malaysia (REHDA) urges the Penang Island Municipal Council (MPPP) to reconsider the restriction made to limit Penang's inner city hotel projects to 18m height or five - storey ruling.

REHDA President Datuk Ng Seing Liong, J.P said that the ruling would only impede property developments in Penang, a potential investment destination of choice in the country. "We respect the decision made by the Penang authorities to preserve George Town as a World Heritage Site (WHS), but the restriction is unfair to the industry," Datuk Ng said.

REHDA also concerned that despite approval given by the state planning department based on stringent guidelines allowing the development of high - rise buildings over 18m height, blanket restriction was now being applied. "It is premature for the State to pre-empt UNESCO's decision on the status of the four projects. This is because UNESCO has yet to decide on how the 18m height restriction would affect the four approved projects in the State's heritage and buffer zones," added Datuk Ng.

Datuk Ng stressed that the State should protect the concerned 4 projects, who are mere victims of circumstances, if it believes in the economic benefits to be generated by the projects. Approvals for these projects were obtained through proper process and therefore, there has to be respect for the sanctity of these approvals. The State should defend the approvals and pursue the matter so long as there is still avenue for appeal to UNESCO as its credibility is on the line.

"Furthermore in the heritage application, as required by UNESCO, was a study and opinions sought from stakeholders. It is important to know UNESCO's view on this shortcoming in the heritage listing application with regard to the 18m height restriction," said Datuk Ng.

The State authorities should seriously review and study the need for such restriction. "There shouldn't be any assumption that Penang will lose its World Heritage Status if the projects are carried out," Datuk Ng added.

"We urge the Penang authorities to reconsider such policy implementation as there will be social and economic impact on builders as well as investors," said Datuk Ng.

Issued by:

Datuk Ng Seing Liong, PJN, JP

拿督黃騰亮 太平局紳

President

Real Estate and Housing Developers' Association Malaysia

