

For immediate release

PAM's recommendations to improve the Urban Renewal Bill 2025

KUALA LUMPUR, 25 August 2025 – The Malaysian Institute of Architects (PAM) welcomes the Government's initiative to introduce a comprehensive Urban Renewal Bill in providing a structured and sustainable framework for rejuvenating our cities. In this context, PAM opines the Bill may be strengthened and refined with the inclusions of the following recommendations:

1. Role of the Approved Developer

Under Section 17, the Bill, as it is currently phrased, seems to place obtaining consent, securing engineering reports, and even determining whether a building is mismanaged or a nuisance in the hands of the "approved developer". As an interested party with a direct financial stake, this may create a perception of bias and conflict of interest. PAM recommends that these functions be entrusted to an impartial body to ensure objectivity, fairness, and protection against undue pressure on owners.

2. Function of 'Consent Thresholds' to be clarified

There is a public concern that achieving a consent threshold automatically leads to the disenfranchisement of those who disagree. It is essential for KPKT to clarify that the consent threshold serves as a trigger point to initiate a formal, structured process. It enables the state to facilitate negotiations through the Mediation Committee, with the primary goal of achieving a unanimous agreement.

Compulsory acquisition is intended as a last resort to resolve a deadlock, not an immediate consequence of meeting the threshold. PAM recommends that the bill should determine the minimum final percentage that must be achieved before the Land Acquisition Act is invoked; otherwise, redevelopment should not proceed.

3. Absence of a Formal Appeals Mechanism

The Bill does not provide a statutory avenue for affected owners to appeal key decisions.

PAM recommends introducing a clear appeals process at two stages:

- After the Declaration of an Urban Renewal Area: Owners should have the right to appeal the designation of their property within a renewal area to an independent body such as a tribunal.
- Before the Invocation of the Land Acquisition Act: Dissenting owners should have a channel to appeal on the grounds of legality and fairness, beyond what mediation covers, before compulsory acquisition is exercised.

4. Lack of a Structured Co-Design Process

Urban renewal projects affect not only property owners but also the wider community surrounding the development. We recommend the Bill should embed a collaborative, architect-led co-design process within the Mediation Committee's role to ensure that all interests are balanced and that outcomes are equitable, sustainable, and reflective of local context. An architect's involvement in the mediation process provides the opportunity for all stakeholders to visualise the outcomes that are negotiated and reach a consensus collaboratively.

5. Barriers to Community-Led Initiatives

The requirement for unanimous (100%) consent for owner-initiated projects creates a significant imbalance compared to the lower thresholds set for government- or developer-led initiatives. This disparity weakens community empowerment. PAM recommends harmonising the consent thresholds and providing clearer pathways for Management Corporations (MCs) and resident groups to take a proactive role in initiating renewal.

6. Absence of Mandated Architectural Expertise in Decision-Making Committees

Urban renewal involves complex considerations of planning, design, economics, health and safety, environmental and community impact. However, the Bill does not mandate the inclusion of professional architects in the Federal and State Executive Committees. PAM strongly recommends reserving at least one seat on both committees for an experienced architect nominated by the Board of Architects Malaysia to ensure decisions are technically sound, holistic, and aligned with the public good.

PAM reiterates its commitment to supporting the Government in achieving meaningful urban renewal. However, it is crucial that the law fully safeguards public interest, empowers communities, and upholds the highest standards of professional practice. By refining the Bill at the Committee Stage before its passage, Malaysia can establish an urban renewal framework that is fair, transparent, and capable of building better, more inclusive cities for all.

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About PAM

Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia (PAM) — Malaysian Institute of Architects — is the national professional institute representing architects in Malaysia. PAM's mission statement is "To promote the advancement of architecture and the architectural profession for the betterment of society".

Founded in 1923 as the Institute of Architects Malaya, its name was changed in 1948 to the Federation of Malaya Society of Architects (FMSA), then allied to the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). Another change to its current name to reflect national sovereignty came about on 20th January, 1967 when PAM was registered with the Registrar of Societies.

PAM currently has approximately 5,000 members consisting of professional architects, graduates and students. Apart from its registered address in the capital city, PAM membership is also represented across Malaysia with member chapters in Sabah, Sarawak, Penang (Northern chapter), Johore Baru (Southern chapter) and East Coast.

On 19 July 2017, PAM completed an important milestone with the official opening of its own headquarters building in Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur. The PAM Centre is a GBI Platinum-rated building, a result of an open architectural competition.

The institute organises the annual PAM Architecture Awards and maintains a regular extensive programme of publications and programmes on architectural matters relating to its members, the public and the environment.

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