

Mystery project in the works

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KUALA LUMPUR: Speculation is rife over a development project said to be coming up at the site of the former Unilever Malaysia headquarters in Bangsar.

It is learnt that the piece of prime land, which has become overgrown with lalang and bushes since Unilever Malaysia moved out in 2003, will be handed over to a new owner in three weeks.

The land currently belongs to the Railway Asset Corporation (RAC).

Efforts to find out more about the project have been unsuccessful. There were rumours sometime back that a transport hub might be built on the site.

However, it is now believed that a mixed development project comprising residential and commercial lots, may be in the pipeline.

A spokesperson for RAC would only confirm that the corporation had been in talks with a potential client to develop the land.

"All we can say is that we will be finalising all matters in the next three weeks," he said.

RAC would also not be cleaning up the site despite complaints from residents in the area about the undergrowth.

"For the time being, we are not going to touch the property," he said.

Unilever Malaysia, formerly known as Lever Brothers, occupied the premises for 56 years before moving out in 2003. Since then, the land has remained vacant.

Bangsar Baru Residents' Association secretary Prem Kumar Nair said if the area was going to be de-

veloped, the new owner should take full responsibility and ensure that the development would not affect the area's residents.

"It doesn't matter if it is going to be a residential or commercial development, the land owner must abide by all regulations set by the local authority," he said.

Prem said Bangsar was already densely populated and new projects would increase the density.

"It is crucial that the developer ensures that there are sufficient exit and entry points. Jalan Maarof is already congested with traffic coming from Mid Valley, Petaling Jaya and the city. To prevent the traffic from getting worse, a traffic assessment study must be done," he said.

Prem said residents should be informed of proposed developments.

"It is important to get residents' feedback on the development."

Bangsar residents had expressed concern that the vacant land would be a breeding ground for Aedes mosquitoes.

A check by *Streets* found that the land was overgrown with undergrowth. There was also some rubbish. The gates were chained and padlocked and "No Trespassing" signs were hanging on all three gates.

Prem said it was the responsibility of land owners to ensure that their

properties were not breeding grounds for Aedes mosquitoes and other pests.

"Proper maintenance should be conducted regularly to ensure that the area does not pose a danger to nearby residents," he said.

Streets had highlighted a similar complaint last year and the land was cleaned up soon after the report was published. However, the land has not been maintained since then.



A new development is expected to take place on the neglected land in front of the New Straits Times Press in Jalan Riong. — File picture

COMING SOON

The former Unilever site in Bangsar may get a new lease of life after being left vacant for the past seven years