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'Act' now on abandoned projects



The proposed Urban Redevelopment Act could improve the visual appeal of urban areas in Malaysia by revitalising urban landscapes and fully utilising idle urban land for the public good. — NSTP FILE PIC

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THE proposed Urban Redevelopment Act could improve the visual appeal of urban areas in Malaysia.

We should support its aim of demolishing or rehabilitating old, unoccupied, defective and abandoned buildings, including abandoned housing projects.

This can revitalise urban landscapes and fully utilise idle urban land for the public good.

The proposed act could prevent an increase in unwanted buildings and enhance the beauty of urban areas as well as maximising land use.

The proposed act also allows for the rehabilitation of abandoned housing projects and protects the rights of aggrieved purchasers.

Nonetheless, the demolition and rehabilitation of abandoned housing projects should consider several aspects to ensure public benefit.

Problems may arise if landowners or property purchasers do not give their consent because the proposed compensation may not be satisfactory.

Additionally, there may be challenges to communicate and locate these individuals. In cases where owners have died, there could be difficulties in appointing their representatives.

If the titles of the abandoned housing units have not been registered in the purchasers' names, then the units still belong to developers or landowners.

It is possible that the purchasers have made substantial payments or have fully paid for the units, but the developers are facing insolvency and cannot fulfil their responsibilities to purchasers.

Then there's the matter of security and collateral charges impacting and hindering the development of the land.

For land to be redeveloped, the government may need to repurchase, redeem, or reclaim the land, or go through a land acquisition process, which would involve public funds.

Another option would be for the government to invite private investors to redevelop the land through compulsory land acquisition.

If an abandoned housing project is suitable for rehabilitation, other issues may arise, including whether the developer can complete the project, and what legal protection will be available to purchasers if it doesn't.

If the rehabilitation requires amendments to previous sales and purchase agreements, such as requiring additional payments or scaling down the specifications of the buildings, how can the process be fair to purchasers?

If an abandoned housing project cannot be rehabilitated, will the aggrieved purchasers get legal and equitable remedies through the proposed act?

In case of abandonment, would the proposed act address the damage, losses, grievances and suffering of purchasers?

We should also ask what just and appropriate actions should the government take against defaulting developers to protect the rights and interests of aggrieved purchasers in abandoned housing projects?

Will the proposed act also apply to rural areas with dilapidated, old and abandoned housing projects?

Equally important is how can regulatory bodies ensure full enforcement and implementation of this act? How will it protect the rights and interests of stakeholders?

These issues should be taken into consideration to improve the proposed act.

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The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect those of the New Straits Times

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