



# Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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## Press Statement

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### CAP Baffled over Runnymede Demolition

The Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) is baffled over the demolition of ancillary buildings in the Runnymede property in Penang. We are confused because according to the information in the One Stop Centre website the application for planning approval by the developer Warisan Pinang Sdn. Bhd., it is stated that the application (MBPP/OSC/PM2798/15) has been "batal" or cancelled/rejected and this decision was made on 24 November 2015.

We are not sure whether the developer had resubmitted application and this was later approved by the Penang Island City Council as there is no update in the website. Anyhow another matter to be considered is that the project application included construction of one 61-storey apartment block, one 31-storey hotel block, one 12-storey commercial and office block, and conservation of the Runnymede building.

Does this mean that the developers are now allowed to proceed with all these development? What has happened to the guidelines which restricts height of building in the heritage areas? What about carrying capacity of the area, what is the justification for more commercial buildings and what about traffic management in an already congested area?

The George Town World Heritage Site (WHS) Special Area Plan specifies that "increase in height of all heritage buildings in the WHS (Category II) and the allowable height for Infill and Replacement sites may be built to a maximum of 18 metres from ground level to the roof eave". It is further stated that "the control of height is a necessary measure to ensure the importance of protecting vista, townscape and historic streetscape are in no way compromised".

The State and local authority should clarify the demolition and approval that has been given. What action will be taken against the developer? Mere fines will not do as in the case of the Bukit Botak (Relau) saga.

Besides conserving our physical heritage, the State government should ensure that Penang's natural heritage are also protected and not to bow down to developers. It looks like nothing is left sacred in Penang, from our hills to our seas and now our heritage buildings. There seems to be no limits to planning and approvals, and the developers benefit the most from this uncontrolled pursuit for development.

**S. M. Mohamed Idris**

**President**

**Consumers' Association of Penang**