



Press Release

For Immediate Release

INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS TAKES A STAND AGAINST RAMPANT FELLING OF STREET TREES

[Kuala Lumpur, 7 July 2023] – We write in response and in support of our member Ar Yong Sow Wai’s letter “Indiscriminate felling of trees must stop” dated 20 June 2023.

The Malaysian Institute of Architects (PAM) is deeply concerned about the alarming increase in the unnecessary felling of street trees by local governments in the Greater Kuala Lumpur region. Our Institute has been consistently committed to promoting sustainable and livable urban environments, and we firmly believe that preserving and enhancing urban greenery is crucial for the well-being of our communities.

PAM through its various committees, chapters and subsidiaries, engages at a policy level with the federal, state, and local governments across the country and recognises the importance of protecting street trees and public open areas such as playgrounds, recreational fields, public parks, and urban farms. From an advocacy perspective, PAM through its programmes and representatives, has been at the forefront in promoting the adoption of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and New Urban Agenda.

Goal 11 of the SDGs specifically targets the development of sustainable cities and communities. Preserving street trees aligns with this goal, as urban green spaces positively impact the environment, public health, and social well-being. Whereas, the New Urban Agenda, adopted at the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development in 2016, highlights the importance of sustainable urban development. It emphasises the integration of nature into urban areas and recognizes the benefits of street trees in creating resilient, inclusive, and attractive cities.

PAM urges local governments to adopt a sustainable approach towards urban development and prioritise the preservation and planting of new street trees. We recommend the following measures:

- **Conduct comprehensive tree assessments:** Local governments should have professional arborists employed to maintain a register of public trees. The health, condition, and value of existing street trees should be assessed before making any decisions regarding their removal, with removed trees to be replaced in an appropriate location nearby.
- **Develop tree management policies:** Establish clear guidelines and regulations to guide the management, maintenance, and protection of street trees, ensuring their long-term viability.
- **Foster community engagement:** Involve residents, community groups, and environmental organisations in decision-making processes related to street tree management in the spirit of Local Agenda 21.
- **Promote tree planting initiatives:** Encourage the planting of suitable tree species in urban areas, considering factors such as adaptability, biodiversity, and urban resilience.

At the same time, PAM advocates for its architect members and the general public to be active citizens. Members of the public who witness trees that have been felled without need or justification should be active citizens and make their views known to their local government complaints portal, municipality/city councillors, member of the state legislative assembly, or member of Parliament. PAM is committed to collaborating with stakeholders and supporting initiatives that promote a greener, healthier, and more livable urban environment. We urge local governments to take heed and take action to improve the management of urban street tree assets.

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About Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia (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), Johor Bahru (Southern chapter) and the East Coast (East Coast chapter).

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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