

**BN approved Batu Caves condo in 2007, says Selangor exco
Malaysian Insider
October 27, 2012
By Md Izwan**

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 27 — Selangor revealed today that the controversial Dolomite Park Avenue condominium project currently being built near Batu Caves, a gazetted heritage zone, was given planning approval in 2007 when the Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition governed the country's wealthiest state.

MIC and Gerakan have been leading protests against the 29-storey condominium development that they say was approved by the current Pakatan Rakyat (PR) government, a stone's throw from the limestone cave that houses the popular Sri Subramaniam Temple and the venue of Malaysia's largest gathering to celebrate Thaipusam, a Hindu festival.

"The explanation by Kohilan saying the 'Planning Approval' is not approval to implement is utterly ridiculous," said Ronnie Liu, the state executive councillor (exco), referring to political foe, senator A. Kohilan's remarks on the project yesterday.

Kohilan, at the time, was a councillor with the Selayang Municipal Council (MPS), which was in charge of development projects for the area.

"Where is there approval for implementation as said by Kohilan? The 'Planning Approval' is approval to the developer to build the project," said Liu, the chairman of the Local Government, Research and Development Committee.

He slammed Kohilan for feigning ignorance over the condominium project.

"How can he say he doesn't know? How can he say the developer only will build shop lots there? Today, I have the construction plan that covers the shop lots and the condominium approved by MPS," Liu added, pointing out that the condominium building is clearly marked out in the plans.

The Dolomite project, by developer Dolomite Properties Sdn Bhd, is a sensitive issue as Batu Caves is the religious focal point of Hindu Indians, who form the majority of the 1.7 million Indians who are a key voting group in many urban seats in Selangor.

Kohilan had claimed yesterday that the current PR government, which gained control of Selangor after it defeated BN in the 2008 general elections, were behind the approval of Dolomite's plans to develop the land.

Kohilan, who was also present at the "Save Batu Caves" rally, admitted he had been aware of the project since 2007 but denied that the former BN administration had given approval for the project.

"I knew of the project since 2007, but MPS had then only approved 'Planning Approval' for a commercial development proposal on Lot 622.

"But it is not about the approval for 'Development Planning' to build the 29-storey building," Kohilan said.

Today, Ronnie revealed the complete documents of the "Planning Approval" that was granted on November 30, 2007 after a One-Stop Centre (OSC) meeting.

He also showed reporters a construction plan, including the location of shop lots and the condominium, which was submitted by the developer to MPS.

"After OSC met on September 27, 2007, this "Planning Approval" was given to the developer.

"In the letter of permission, it is stated 'building plan has to be presented according to the procedure set by MPS Building Department'. This proves that MPS had then already known about this condo," Ronnie said.

When asked about the state government's steps to handling this issue, Ronnie said MPS would raise it with the state planning committee (SPC).

"A study will be carried out by SPC, it may take a month.

"If this study finds that there will be bad effects if the construction is continued, then this "Planning Approval" will be cancelled.

"The state government will also not be burdened with the need to pay compensation," the Pandamaran assemblyman said.

The construction of the condominium, planned since 2007, is now under public pressure, especially from the Hindu temple committee at Batu Caves, whose protest of the project also is supported by MIC leaders.

Yesterday, hundreds of Hindu and non-governmental activists joined the rally in the Batu Caves temple complex to protest against the condominium construction, saying the work was an environmental risk that would jeopardise the temple grounds but did not furnish proof to substantiate their allegations.

Former works minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu who attended the same rally on the invitation of the temple committee, gave a speech to the crowd of around 300 people yesterday.

Hakcipta © 2012 The Malaysian Insider

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/bn-approved-batu-caves-condo-in-2007-says-selangor-exco/>