

Prospects for airbase land excite developers

Area and its vicinity will benefit from lifting of building height restrictions

By MELISSA TAN

PROPERTY players are already excited at the prospect of redeveloping a vast area in the nation's heart – even though it will happen only after 2030.

Consultants and developers have been quick to size up the options for making use of 800ha of land to be freed up after the relocation of Paya Lebar Airbase.

The land and the removal of aircraft traffic that constrained building heights around the area "will provide more opportunities for new forms of development to cater to the future growth of Singapore", said Mr Jeffrey Ho, managing director of urban planning at building consultancy Surbana International Consultants.

"It will have a positive impact on long-term land use planning, given the scarcity of land here."

The plan to move the airbase to Changi East was announced by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong in his National Day Rally speech.

The facility is the largest of four airbases run by the Republic of Singapore Air Force.

The land area, bigger than Ang Mo Kio, is bounded in the north by forest and the Tampines Wafer Fab Park, and in the south and west by the Kaki Bukit and Defu industrial estates. To its east are Tampines Reservoir and Tampines Quarry.

SLP International research head Nicholas Mak said it could accommodate 60,000 to 80,000 public and private homes.

Consultants yesterday said the area and its vicinity will benefit from the lifting of building height restrictions, which vary depending on distance from the airbase,

based on aircraft flight routes.

The Straits Times understands from consultants that the height restrictions for private residential blocks due to flight paths range from eight storeys in Geylang to 24 storeys in Marine Parade.

"Even though the private homes (in Geylang) have a plot ratio of 2.8 with an allowable building height of 30 storeys, the buildings are built up to only eight storeys because of the height restriction," OrangeTee managing director Steven Tan noted.

"Some of these developments should command higher prices given their en bloc potential once the height restrictions are removed."

A Ministry of Defence spokesman yesterday declined to provide details on the exact height restrictions, citing the sensitivity of operations. But he said: "The relocation of Paya Lebar Airbase is a long-term and complex undertaking, and will take place only after the capabilities and facilities of (the airbase) have been adequately replaced in other sites."

DTZ research head Lee Lay Keng said the new homes, offices and factories that can be built in the area would supplement the Government's plans to develop Paya Lebar Central as a commercial node in the eastern region of the island.

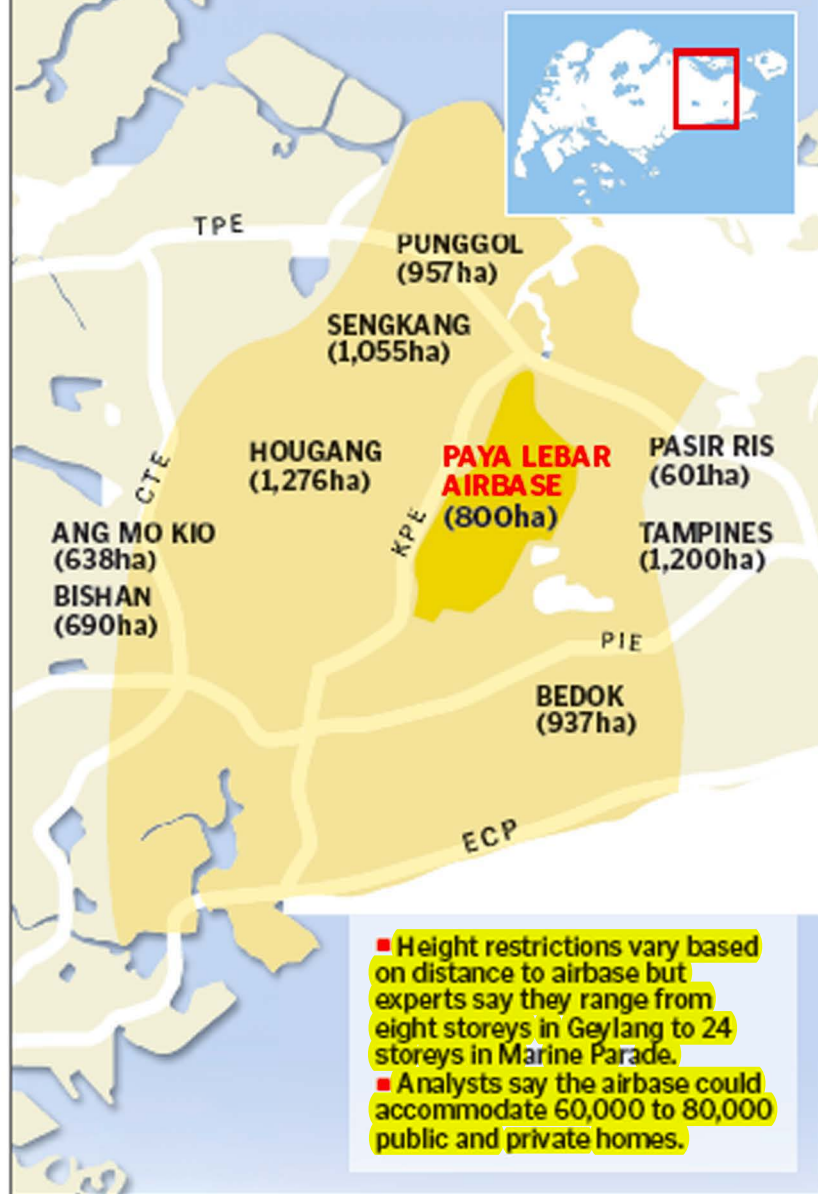
Chestern Singapore research head Elaine Chow said: "Developers and property consultancies will be studying the land use and plot ratio of available lots in the vicinity of the airbase for redevelopment potential."

Developers also said they were keen to explore the area's redevelopment potential.

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CLEARING LAND IN THE HEART OF SINGAPORE

When Paya Lebar Airbase is relocated to Changi Airport, a large tract of land will be available for redevelopment, and height restrictions on surrounding housing can be eased.



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