

Concerned over elevated tracks

School wants MRT alignment to be located away from its entrance

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TEACHERS, former students and parents of pupils of SJK(C) Naam Kheung are seeing red over an apparent change of plans for the Klang Valley My Rapid Transit (MRT) project with regard to the location for elevated tracks between the Maluri and Taman Bukit Ria stations.

The school's board of governors, Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) and Old Students Association held a press conference recently to express their concern.

PTA chairman Lim Joo Kiat said: "We had raised an objection about the MRT alignment and met with some of the project's representatives in a dialogue in April last year.

"We were told the tracks will only be above ground across the road from the school which is located at Batu 3½, Jalan Cheras," said.

However, in mid-August the school was informed that the tracks will be built above ground just before the school.

"This means, the tracks will be placed over the area where parents wait to pick up or drop off their children. There have been cases of objects falling off the monorail and LRT lines and injuring people, so we are rightly worried about the safety of everyone who use this space," said Lim.

He added that the noise pollution resulting from construction and later the MRT opera-

tions would not be a conducive environment for the students.

"We want the alignment to follow Jalan Cheras and not make a bend which brings it close to the school.

"If this is not possible, we prefer the track to continue underground until it passes the school entrance," he said.

In reply, project owner MRT Corp, said in a statement that the location where the MRT rail alignment surfaced above ground was the same as what was displayed to the public between March and May last year.

"The alignment was approved by the Government in June 2011 without any modifications," it added.

"For the alignment to move from below surface level to above ground, a fair amount of space is required to build an exit portal, and to allow for a safe and gradual increment of height of the alignment.

"Thus, the alignment cannot follow the straight route along Jalan Cheras as the gradient upwards would be very steep. It is not safe for train operations as going downhill will be riskier while the steep incline would require more power to climb.

"The additional loop, which takes the alignment in front of the school, allows for a gradual ascent and descent due to the additional 400m of track," the statement added.

"Another reason for the alignment location is that going in a straight line from the two



Too close for comfort: The proposed location for the MRT track pillar is at the school's main entrance.

stations would require passing through a densely built-up area along Jalan Cheras.

"Building a portal along Jalan Cheras will result in many shoplots needing to be acquired and demolished. Jalan Cheras itself will also have to be realigned to meet this need," the statement said, adding that the current alignment requires no acquisition and allows the school to continue operating, thus causing the least social impact.

As for concerns on safety, the MRT project

worksite will be hoarded up to prevent unauthorised entry while proper traffic management will ensure smooth traffic flow.

"On concerns over noise when the MRT is operational, the low-noise trains and sound barriers will reduce noise pollution."

MRT Corp had also met with the school's board of governors, PTA and Old Student Association on several occasions to propose a modification to the pier design in front of the school, but was rejected.