

PS  
CITIES IN FOCUS/GLOBAL  
**CUNNING  
PLANS**

The urban developers that are busy changing three metropolises for the better.

As cities grow bigger, faster, the tendency is for developers and municipalities to put up buildings quickly and colonise new districts beyond the city limits. But this is a recipe for poor-quality projects and unattractive urban sprawl. In this report we focus on three burgeoning cities – Warsaw, Oslo and Kuala Lumpur – where imaginative developers are looking to rethink existing sites. From infill architecture to adaptive reuse, they offer some considered tips on how to grow smartly. — (M)



1 2

**Regeneration game**  
Developing creative hubs  
*Kuala Lumpur*

As Malaysia plans the 60th anniversary of its independence, a generational shift is sweeping across Kuala Lumpur and enlivening the capital's property scene. In 2013, Ee Soon Wei started transforming his family's underused warehouses into Art Printing Works (APW), a mixed-use F&B, commercial and events space, home to co-working hub Upper Case and Pulp coffee shop.

APW sits at the heart of Bangsar and has given the creative neighbourhood a visible boost. Its success has also set a precedent for other budding developers to approach conventional owners who are less comfortable with community building. "The traditional retail property market is tanking so that's given us more of a voice," says Ee, who has spotted suited visitors buying coffee while (literally) taking the measure of the place.

But revitalising the cityscape isn't exclusively a young man's game. William Ng got involved in property in the early 2000s while still working for Rio Tinto, when he turned a terrace of 1940s shop-houses into a popular nightlife destination. He is now converting them again into a shopping-and-dining precinct called The Row. "I've done boom-and-bust in nightlife; I'm looking for sustainability," says the 52-year-old, who worked with Singapore's Pocket Projects to find the right tenants.

There are also green shoots of revival in downtown Kuala Lumpur, which has suffered a 20-year decline brought about by poor governance and corporate dominance. Among the rows of crumbling heritage houses one art deco beacon stands out: the 1930s OCBC building on Jalan Hang Kasturi, sold last year by the Singaporean bank for MYR21m (€4.4m). While its new owner decides on its future, the second floor has been leased to



3



4



5

(1) APW (left) and PAM Center (2) Outdoor area of APW (3) Ee Soon Wei (left) and business partner Bek Yee Lim (4) Interiors shop Peter Hoe (5) Breakfast Thieves at APW (6) The Row (7) William Ng and The Row co-owner Chan Chia Lin



6



7