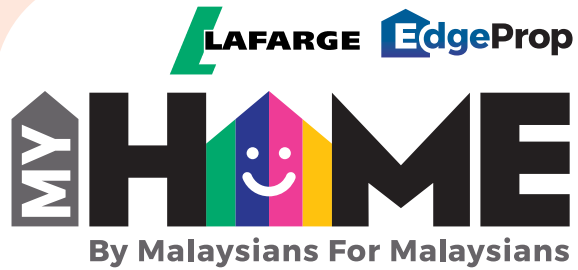


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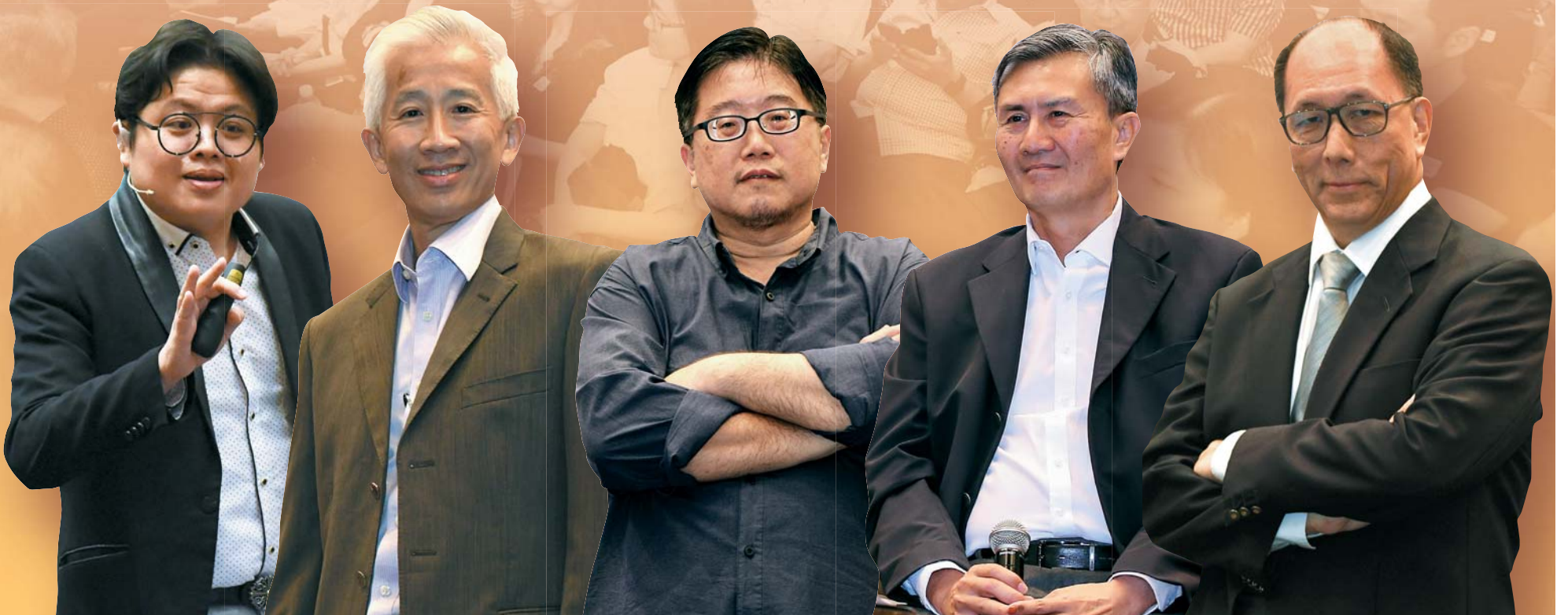
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MISTAKES YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO MAKE!

More than 600 people turned up for the EdgeProp.my Symposium on Excellent Property Management 2018 on May 12 to get some insight from the five speakers. Find out what they shared on **Pages 4 to 18.**



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An open letter to the government

Housing is undeniably a subject that is very close to the heart of Malaysians.

In fact, as a prime mover of Malaysia's economy, the property development and construction sector feeds hundreds of thousands of workers dependent on the about-140-related industries.

To take the industry forward, Malaysia needs a holistic approach in rewriting how things have been done repeatedly in the past.

A change in mindset is therefore necessary, as with the buy-in of a clear objective in order to compete on the global stage.

For a start, please consider the following:

1. Consultation and engagement

Introduce any new policy or guideline only after prior consultation with industry stakeholders. This will prevent unnecessary confusion that paralyses — albeit temporarily, but which we can ill afford — the market.

2. Affordable housing

- Provide a clear definition. With land cost being a variable, there is no one-size-fits-all pricing; ambiguity spawns abuse.
- It is great news that there would be a National Affordable Housing Council to streamline planning and implementation across all the agencies involved.
- Build based strictly on location-specific demand or risk a further supply-demand mismatch.

3. Curbing price hike

- Provide transparency in the approval processes.
- Remove discretionary powers.
- Ensure KPI-pegged efficiency.
- Practise a review of cross subsidies.
- Review and reduce compliance cost.
- Incentivise developers to adopt Industrialised Building System.

4. Design and layout

Lifestyle and needs have changed; so must the mindset of the approving authorities.

5. Oversupply

- There is an urgent need for timely market data.
- Ironically, the key data — incoming supply and its construction progress, recent sales, property types and pricing — are available at various departments. Just join the dots!

6. No flip-flopping, please!

Inconsistent rules and regulations stifle the market. Moving goalposts mid-way in a game is a strict no-no — we have seen this too often.

7. Need for property maintenance

- Government must take the lead.
- Incentivise and encourage the private sector to embrace top-in-class global property management practices.
- Note that poorly-maintained vertical strata homes, especially the lower-cost types, could potentially end up looking like slums in urban areas.

8. Elections in local councils

The sooner the better — for obvious reasons.

9. Liveability

- Leave gazetted parks and green lungs alone. These are the heartbeats of a robust and liveable nation.
- Encourage recycling and sustainability.

Yours sincerely,

EdgeProp.my

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LAUNCHES + EVENTS**PRIMA open day in Melaka****Date:** May 18 to 20 (Fri to Sun)**Time:** 9am to 4pm**Venue:** UTC Melaka, Jalan Hang Tuah, Melaka**Contact:** (03) 7962 4374

PRIMA's open house in Melaka will be showcasing four projects namely PR1MA @ Taman Sri Gading, PR1MA @ Durian Tunggal, PR1MA @ Taman Sri Serindit and PR1MA @ Klebang 1. Interested buyers are encouraged to bring along their personal and bank documents for application and pre-verification.

Celebrate Parents' Day at Trio by Setia**Date:** May 19 (Sat)**Time:** 11am to 5pm**Venue:** Trio by Setia, Lot 82623, Jalan Langat / KS06, Bandar Bukit Tinggi 1, Klang, Selangor**Contact:** (03) 3162 3322

S P Setia Bhd celebrates Parents' Day at Trio by Setia at Klang

with fun activities including a cupcake-decoration workshop, head-and-shoulder massages, canvas-bag-making workshop, a money-grabbing machine, flower bouquet giveaways and family portrait photo-taking session.

Ardence Labs 'Jio' Bazaar**Date:** May 19 (Sat)**Time:** 12pm to 9pm**Venue:** Ardence Labs at Eco Ardence, Persiaran Setia Alam, Setia Alam, Shah Alam, Selangor

Contact: (03) 7499 2552 Eco World Development Group Bhd is organising the "Jio" Bazaar at Ardence Labs' Secret Garden. All are invited to shop, relax and have some fun at the photo booths, pet playland and music performances.



Hillcrest Gardens reduces condo price with immediate effect

BY RACHEL CHEW

PETALING JAYA: Hillcrest Gardens Sdn Bhd has cut the selling prices of its latest development, Hillcrest Heights @ Taman Puchong Utama, Selangor, by 3% with immediate effect to reflect the savings from the zero-rated goods and services tax (GST) announced on Wednesday by the new government.

"We have calculated that the cost of GST is 3% of our selling price. Therefore we are reducing our prices at Hillcrest Heights by the same amount, that is 3%," said Hillcrest Gardens executive director Frank Goon.

Hillcrest Gardens is a member of the Kuok Group of Companies. The new GST rate only takes effect starting June this year.

"In the spirit of the new government's intention to ease the burden of rising prices, Hillcrest is proud to announce that we are passing on our savings to our buyers.

"We applaud the move to zero-rate GST and although residential property sales do not attract this tax, it will still bring us some sav-

ings on the cost of building materials and professional services," he noted.

Goon also assured earlier buyers of Hillcrest Heights that they will also benefit from the same discount.

"We must be fair. Early birds have not been forgotten," he said.

Hillcrest Heights is a freehold condominium development comprising 510 units in two towers of 37 stories each. It sits on a huge elevated site of 7.58 acres in Taman Puchong Utama.

The development offers a wide array of facilities and each unit has two car park bays. The Green Building Index Gold-rated development was priced at RM588 psf prior to the 3% price reduction.

This story first appeared on www.EdgeProp.my. Visit the portal for more related stories.

Goon: In the spirit of the new government's intention to ease the burden of rising prices, Hillcrest is proud to announce that we are passing on our savings to our buyers.





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 And they will want to be a part of it.



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MISTAKES YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO MAKE!**EdgeProp.my****SYMPOSIUM ON
EXCELLENT PROPERTY
MANAGEMENT 2018**

(From left) EdgeProp.my product and business development director Alvin Ong, editor Lam Jian Wyn, Low, Khaw, Lee, Gamuda Land senior manager of township management Chang Peu Lee, Red Ideas director David Foo, Nippon Paint Malaysia head of project marketing Datin Wong Meng Lee, Panasonic Malaysia B2B development manager Adrian Heong, Red Ideas director Ignatius Ho, Zurich General Insurance Malaysia head of general agency development and assistant vice-president Danny Ee, Ng, Tan, EdgeProp.my executive editor Sharon Kam and Au at EdgeProp.my Symposium on Excellent Property Management 2018.

'Is your home designed and built for excellent property management?'

BY **RACHEL CHEW**

For many Malaysians, owning their own homes is often one of their life goals, but these days, homeowners are not satisfied with merely owning a home — they, especially strata property owners, want one that is properly managed and is able to sustain its value in the long run.

Therefore, the all-important question any property buyer must ask now is whether or not the property has been designed and built for excellent property management, which encompasses the management and maintenance of not just the buildings but also the community or the people living in them, said EdgeProp.my managing director and editor-in-chief Au Foong Yee in her welcome speech at EdgeProp.my Symposium on Excellent Property Management 2018 on May 12 in Kuala Lumpur.

Almost 600 people attended the event that was held following EdgeProp Malaysia's Best Managed Property Awards 2018 on May 7.

Themed "Mistakes you CAN'T afford to make!", the half-day symposium was organised by EdgeProp.my with partners Nippon Paint Malaysia and Panasonic Malaysia. Supporting sponsors were Gamuda Land, Red Ideas Sdn Bhd (Graaab JaGaApp) and Zurich General Insurance Malaysia Bhd. The event was also supported by *The Edge Malaysia*.

Au said that excellent property management is not confined to the aesthetics of a real estate. "Security and safety are key considerations, as with keeping the cost affordable while ensuring comfort and liveability at the same time.

"Unlike the traditional self-managed real estate, strata property centres on communal living, which offers its share of bouquets and challenges.

"The key to strata living is how well the property is managed. The condition of the building — and this extends beyond its design and aesthetics — to its sustained function, safety and liveability will determine significantly the value of your investment," said Au.

The symposium started off with Architect Centre Sdn Bhd accredited building inspector and trainer Anthony Lee Tee sharing tips and myths about home safety in his talk entitled "Stop! Is your home a safety hazard?". He highlighted that many properties and lives were lost due to fires caused by faulty fire-fighting equipment and warning systems in their buildings.

"Many thought that installing fire-fighting equipment in the house or building will keep them safe, but their negligence in maintaining the equipment and facilities will be the fatal error," said Lee.

The following speaker was Sri Penaga Condominium management corporation (MC) chairman Khaw Chay Tee. Sri Penaga Condominium was a Gold winner in the above 10 years multi-own strata residential category at the recent EdgeProp Malaysia's Best Managed Property Awards 2018.

Having more than 15 years of experience as the chairman of the condominium, Khaw offered some real-life property management challenges and how the MC tackled them. His session was entitled "Without fear or favour — tested sustainable community living".

"The MC will set the standard in the place you are living in. Most people who move into the condominium feel that it is too much trouble to get involved in the management. They think they can just hire a professional property management company, but no matter how good the company is in managing the development, it will still require directions and constant oversight by the MC," said Khaw.

Up next was landscape design firm Praxcis Design Sdn Bhd director Low Chee Leong who, in his session entitled "Landscape: When less is definitely more", urged property buyers not to be taken in by fancy landscaping in a project, as it may be difficult and costly to maintain without the right expertise.

"[Before buying a property with nice landscaping] you have to consider the long-term maintenance because you will be living in the project for many years — you will be bearing the cost of upkeep and maintenance," noted Low.

Meanwhile, in the session entitled "Developers' role in excellent property management", Rehda Institute chairman Datuk

Jeffrey Ng pointed out that property developers usually shy away from the topic of property management, but this attitude is beginning to change. In fact, developers play a crucial role in the future management and maintenance of the properties they develop.

"Good design-and-build inputs in the early stage of the development process are essential in achieving excellent property management," stressed Ng.

Chur Associates founder and managing partner Chris Tan then took the floor and gave a spirited presentation on the various avenues that homeowners can use to solve problems they encounter in strata living.

In his session entitled "What if? Why? How? — Legal problems and solutions", he also called on homeowners to empower themselves with knowledge of their rights in communal living and to know the options available to them in resolving issues.

Lee, Ng and Tan then took part in a panel discussion moderated by Au based on questions from the floor. In conclusion, the panel members agreed that property owners and residents need to constantly stay alert and keep themselves updated regarding the laws, guidelines and procedures related to property management and maintenance.

Lucky participants

The event culminated in a lucky draw, which saw Kenya Tan receiving the grand prize of a car worth RM35,000, thanks to Graaab JaGaApp.

Another five attendees received a home-safety inspection worth RM4,000, each courtesy of Architect Centre, while 30 participants received a copy of Rehda Institute's Strata Management Handbook.

"I got to know about this symposium from my husband. We are staying in Semenyih and plan to buy a condo that is closer to the city, so we thought this symposium was a good platform for us to gain some knowledge and information before making the purchase decision," said Kenya, who is pregnant with her second child.

"We knew there was a lucky draw and the grand prize is a car sponsored by Graaab. I could feel my baby moving throughout the whole event. Maybe it was a sign! I think I'll most likely sell the car off to fund our property purchase," said Kenya, adding that she was three days to her pregnancy due date.

Besides the lucky draw, every attendee also received the Strata OMG (Owner's Manual & Guidebook) authored by Tan of Chur Associates and had the opportunity to visit booths set up by Gamuda Land, Nippon Paint, Zurich General Insurance, Graaab JaGaApp and Rehda Institute.

The condition of the building — and this extends beyond its design and aesthetics — to its sustained function, safety and liveability will determine significantly the value of your investment." — Au



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SYMPOSIUM ON EXCELLENT PROPERTY MANAGEMENT 2018

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PHOTOS BY LOW YEN YEING | EdgeProp.my



1. The grand prize winner, Kenya Tan (centre), with (from left) Au, Foo, Ho and Kam.
2. (From the back row, seventh from left) Kam, Ng and Au with the 30 winners of Rehda Institute's Strata Management Handbook.
3. The five attendees who won home-safety inspections from Architect Centre with (from fourth from left) Kam, Malaysian Institute of Architects president Ezumi Harzani Ismail and Au.
4. The crowd waiting to enter the hall before the start of the symposium.
5. Graaab JaGaApp's booth received a number of enquiries from symposium participants.
6. It was standing room only at the symposium.
7. Gamuda Land showcased one of its latest projects at the symposium.
8. Nippon Paint Malaysia representatives introducing its products to the attendees.
9. A participant reading the EdgeProp.my pullout.
10. Zurich General Insurances received a number of visitors to its booth.

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SYMPOSIUM ON
EXCELLENT PROPERTY
MANAGEMENT 2018

Maintenance – the key to keeping you and your home safe

BY TAN AI LENG

Fire incidents in homes and buildings are among the most fatal, causing the loss of lives and properties. About 15,000 to 20,000 fire incidents kill around 50 to 80 people every year in Malaysia.

However, according to Architect Centre Sdn Bhd accredited building inspector and trainer Anthony Lee Tee, most Malaysians remain apathetic or unaware of the risk of fires that are present in our buildings, including our homes, workplaces, schools, hospitals — just about everywhere.

Fire safety in a building is not just about installing fire-fighting equipment such as fire extinguishers, sprinklers and smoke detectors. It is also crucial that the equipment that has been installed is maintained in good working order, as many lives have been lost during fires due to faulty fire-fighting equipment.

“Negligence in maintaining these facilities will be the fatal error,” said Lee.

“It’s understandable that it’s not easy for residents to examine or check the equipment by themselves as that would require technical knowledge. But every stakeholder must be aware of the importance of these pieces of equipment in case of emergency and make the effort to ensure that they are functional,” he said during his presentation titled “Stop! Is your home a safety hazard?” at EdgeProp.my Symposium on Excellent Property Management 2018 on May 12.

Themed “Mistakes you CAN’T afford to make!”, the half-day symposium was organised by EdgeProp.my with partners Nippon Paint Malaysia and Panasonic Malaysia. Supporting sponsors were Gamuda Land, Red Ideas Sdn Bhd (Graaab JaGaApp) and Zurich General Insurance Malaysia Bhd. The event was also supported by *The Edge Malaysia*.

Based on his experience as a building inspector, Lee said it is common, for instance, to find that regular checks are not done and fire extinguishers in a building are not replaced — and this could delay the fire-fighting process.

“The first five minutes of a fire are crucial in saving your life. If you fail to extinguish the fire within five minutes, it will extinguish you. The smoke itself could kill you in two minutes,” he warned.

In a strata residential building, it takes the collective effort of every resident to ensure everyone’s safety in the building. All residents have to share the responsibility of keeping themselves and their property safe from fires. For instance, each resident has to make sure that the fire-fighting facilities in the building are functional and there are clear evacuation routes during fire incidents.

“Dysfunctional fire detection and control systems, no sprinklers installed in the building, damaged water sources such as fire hydrants and hose reels, as well as cluttered fire escape staircase are among what we have observed during inspections,” said Lee, who was a judge of EdgeProp Malaysia’s Best Managed Property Awards 2018.

He also cited a case where the sophisticated digital alarm communicator in the building, which enables the system to directly alert the Fire and Rescue Department (Bomba) when a fire breaks out, failed to work because it was faulty and no one had noticed due to lack of maintenance.

Elaborating on evacuation measures,



The first five minutes of a fire are crucial in saving your life. If you fail to extinguish the fire within five minutes, it will extinguish you.” – Lee

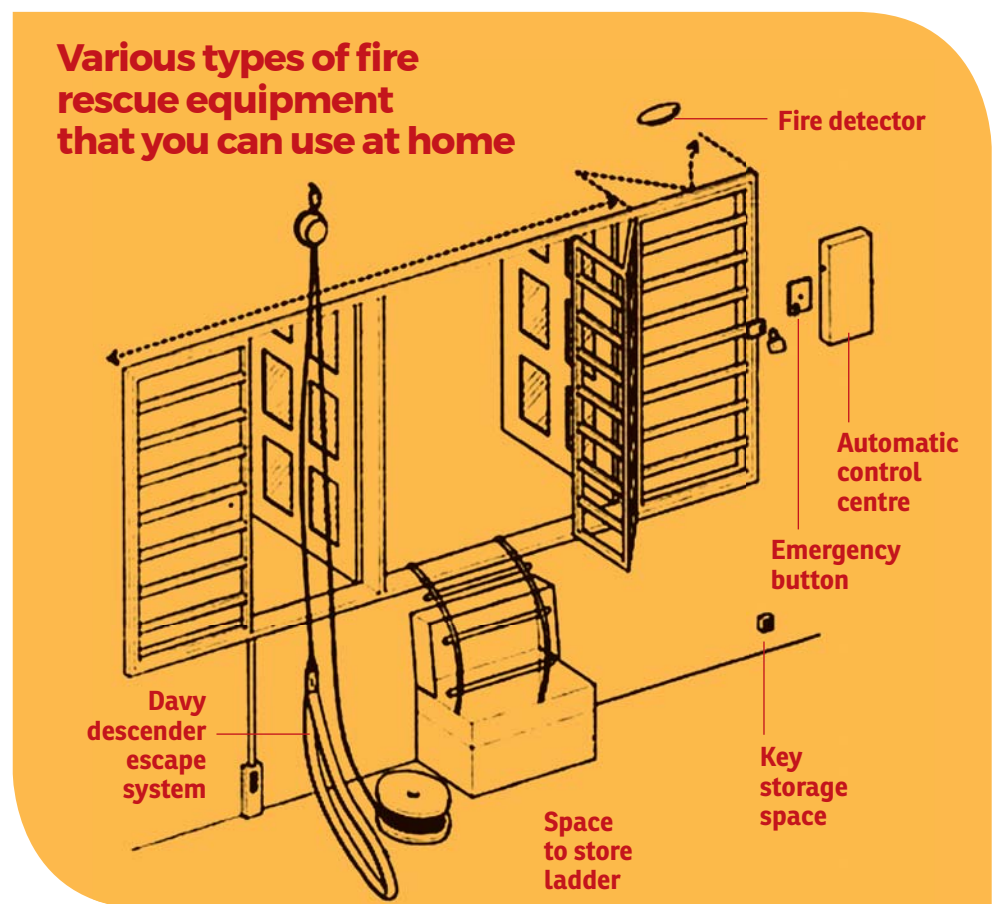
Lee warned of the dangers posed by fixed window grilles, as there were many cases where victims of fire were trapped and failed to escape due to bolted-down grilles on the windows.

“Many install grilles to prevent thefts but don’t realise that they have closed an escape way for themselves. We must ensure that functional doors or window grilles with keys are installed in case fire breaks out,” he said.

Lee noted that, way back in 2004, Bomba had published the guidelines for installing grilles at home. “Property owners should follow the guidelines and consider changing their grilles at home if their existing grilles do not meet safety requirements.

“We think such unfortunate incidents will not happen to us, but everyone must understand that safety is never an option or a slogan. Everyone who stays and works in the building have to start the inconvenient conversation and take necessary action to ensure their safety,” he emphasised.

Many also assume that the buildings where



SOURCE: BOMBA

they reside, work or spend their leisure time in — such as the mall — have obtained a Fire Certificate (FC). But this assumption could be a grave mistake, as the FC is not issued based on checks by Bomba but based on a declaration by the building owners or managers.

Fire hazards at home

Among the common fire hazards at home are electrical appliances, especially those that are not SIRIM-certified.

“Many of us make online purchases for all kinds of electrical appliances, from toys to gadgets. These appliances arrive at our doorsteps directly from overseas without SIRIM approvals. These electrical items can

overheat due to lack of ventilation and catch fire,” noted Lee, adding that DIY wiring at home is also a fire hazard.

He also advised property owners to replace the metal hose on instant water heaters to rubber hose and engage a qualified electrician to check the specification of circuit breakers serving the home to meet the regulations specified by the Energy Commission or Suruhanjaya Tenaga.

Another fire hazard, especially in high-rise residential developments, is the centralised gas supply; hence, homeowners are advised to install gas leak detectors in the living room or dining room so they will be alerted of any gas leaks.

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The power of the management committee

BY NATALIE KHOO

Being a member of the management committee of a management corporation (MC) is no walk in the park. Based on his experience, Sri Penaga Condominium MC chairman Khaw Chay Tee believes that to be an effective MC, it would entail continuous effort and hard work from its committee members.

"It is not just to turn up during a meeting, give instructions to the property management company and go home," he said in his talk entitled "Without fear of favour — tested sustainable community living" at the EdgeProp.my Symposium on Excellent Property Management 2018 held at Hilton Kuala Lumpur Hotel on Saturday.

Themed "Mistakes you CAN'T afford to make!", the symposium was organised by EdgeProp.my with partners Nippon Paint Malaysia and Panasonic Malaysia. Supporting sponsors were Gamuda Land, Red Ideas Sdn Bhd (Graaab JaGaApp) and Zurich General Insurance Malaysia Bhd. It was also supported by *The Edge Malaysia*.

"The MC will set the standards where you live in. Most people who move into the condominium feel that it is too much trouble to get involved in [the management of the condominium]," he said, adding that many would also hire a property management company and expect everything to be done without inconveniencing them.

"However, no matter how good a property management company is in managing the development, it will still require direction and constant oversight [from the MC]," Khaw explained.

He added that the MC has to oversee the property management company closely because "it is important to get it right the first time round instead of rectifying mistakes later."

Sri Penaga Condominium in Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur was developed by Bandar Raya Developments Bhd (now BRDB Developments Sdn Bhd) in June 1995. It comprises 304 units across two 22-storey blocks and one 7-storey block. The condominium was one of the Gold winners in the recently concluded EdgeProp.my Malaysia's Best Managed Property Awards 2018.

Khaw said that most condominium residents are reluctant to sit on the MC board as it involves too much time and work. However, Khaw noted, "if residents want to influence what happens in their development, they need to take responsibility for their condominium and serve in the committee because a successfully [managed] condominium always has a good management committee.

"If you really want to serve, turn up at the annual general meeting, put in your nomination form and get elected."

Unfortunately, he noted that there are no clear guidelines for committee members in current laws. This has prompted the Sri Penaga Condominium MC to formulate its own Code of Conduct for its committee members.

One of the requirements in the Code of Conduct is that a committee member must serve conscientiously, honestly and impartially. "It is important to serve impartially because it is crucial to create trust. We also note that committee members need to make decisions based on the best interests of Sri Penaga Condominium MC as well as of all



Khaw: If residents want to influence what happens in their development, they need to take responsibility for their condominium and serve in the committee because a successfully [managed] condominium always has a good management committee.

Extracts of Sri Penaga Condominium's Code of Conduct for MC members:

- Committee members shall serve conscientiously, honestly and impartially.
- Committee members shall make decisions based upon the best interest of the MC, owners and residents of Sri Penaga Condominium.
- Committee members shall avoid conflicts of interest and never seek to use improper influence to affect the decisions of the MC.
- Committee members are prohibited from seeking or accepting any fee, remuneration, reward or any other favour done or not done as a committee member.
- Committee members shall treat their colleagues, the owners and residents of Sri Penaga Condominium and the service personnel there with courtesy and respect.

the owners and residents of the condominium. There will be some [members] who come on board with an agenda — it is inevitable. But the agenda must fit in with the rest of the community," said Khaw.

On top of that, committee members are also prohibited from seeking or accepting any fee, remuneration, reward or any other favour for any act done or not done as a committee member.



"I understand that there are some MCs that during their AGMs have voted for remuneration for committee members. That's fine but they must know what they are doing," he added.

The 6Cs of community living

Khaw also shared Sri Penaga Condominium's 6Cs of community living — commitment, competence, compliance, consist-

ency, continuity and courtesy.

Front liners who are managing the development must be competent and committed in carrying out their tasks while enforcing by-laws and house rules in the community, thus ensuring compliance.

"You need to ensure that the by-laws and house rules are followed (compliance) and not just there for the sake of being there. If you are not living in a community, then maybe you can do whatever you want, but not when you are living in a community," he stressed, citing for instance when a homeowner wants to carry out renovations.

"The concrete shear walls and floors form the condominium's load-bearing walls. As such, indiscriminate hacking of the shear walls or floors may cause the building to suffer structural damage or failure," he explained.

Hence, Sri Penaga Condominium has very strict by-laws and regulations governing renovation work, which needs to be clearly and patiently explained to owners who want to carry out major renovations.

Sri Penaga Condominium's MC team also adopts a strict maintenance culture that ensures the continuity of the development.

"Our swimming pool pump is still functioning after 22 years. Even the original tiles are still being used in the common areas. We also had a slope-strengthening exercise at Jalan Maarof in 2012," said Khaw.

Last but not least, he stressed that there must be consistency in providing equal treatment to all owners and residents and for courtesy to be prevalent in the community.

"There should be no expectation that just because you are sitting on the board, you deserve special treatment. Everyone is treated the same. The committee members must also treat their colleagues, the owners and residents of Sri Penaga Condominium and all the service personnel there with courtesy and respect," he concluded.

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Enhance your property's value with a well-maintained landscape

BY RACHEL CHEW

With rising demand for lifestyle living, property developers today are placing more focus on landscaping in their projects.

Consumers, however, should be aware that while fancy landscaping elements in a project may impress potential buyers, they sometimes come with a price. Not only will the landscaping cost be accounted for in the property's selling price, there is also the cost of its future maintenance and upkeep, warned landscape design firm Praxcis Design Sdn Bhd director Low Chee Leong. Hence, it is best to go for projects that offer simple and fuss-free yet attractive landscaping.

"Less is more" is a famous quote by the architect and furniture designer Ludwig Mies van der Rohe — one of the founders of modern architecture and a proponent of simplicity of style. The quote means you don't have to do extra to achieve a certain effect. You can gain the same effect by keeping things simple, explained Low in his presentation at EdgeProp.my Symposium on Excellent Property Management 2018 held on May 12 in Kuala Lumpur.

The symposium was organised by EdgeProp.my with partners Nippon Paint Malaysia and Panasonic Malaysia. The supporting sponsors of the half-day event were Gamuda Land, Red Ideas Sdn Bhd (Graab JaGaApp) and Zurich General Insurance Malaysia Bhd. The event was also supported by *The Edge Malaysia*.

Low was one of the five speakers at the symposium. His presentation was titled "Landscape: When less is definitely more".

Elaborating on the concept of "less is more", he cited a fashion news in 2015 in China that went viral. It was about a 79-year-old model Wang Deshun who showed off his toned physique on the runway during China Fashion Week in Beijing. It created a stark contrast with designs from the same series by designer Hu Sheguang, as the rest of the designs were complicated with lots of detailing.

"Wang's photo went viral and he was named China's hottest grandpa since then. The designer had successfully achieved the effect he wanted with the simplest design. It is an example of not just less is more, but that less is even more, and less is definitely more," said Low.

Coming back to landscape, he said that simple and clean design is one of the three main landscape design concepts — namely classical, minimalist or modern, and tropical or natural.

According to Low, the main feature for classical landscape design is equality. "[In classical landscape design] the left always mirrors the right while the top mirrors the bottom. Plants are cut and pruned or shaped to achieve the overall elegant landscape design style," he noted.

Meanwhile, the minimalist and modern landscape design creates clean lines that do not outshine the building's architectural design. This is more commonly adopted in today's developments.

"Lastly, the tropical or natural landscape design is mostly free form. It is okay if you don't prune the shrubs for a few months, as it will still look fine since the style emphasises on a natural look," he explained.



Low: A healthy ecosystem is more important than a beautiful landscape.



(Above) An example of classical landscape design.

(Far right) A project with modern landscape design.

(Right) The landscape in The Mansions Desa ParkCity has a tropical or natural style.



The three main elements

Low said the chosen design can be considered a reflection of one's fashion style — be it a preference for formal, smart or casual look.

"Regardless of what style you prefer, you need to consider its maintenance. It is just like some people need to visit a barber shop weekly, some monthly and some could be quarterly," he noted.

There are three main elements that require the most care in an overall landscape — softscape, hardscape and water elements. For the softscape — meaning the plants — aside from watering and fertilising, the main maintenance work is irrigation.

"It is not a difficult job, although some plants may require more than one watering per day. It is not expensive but it is time-consuming and require manpower," he shared. One suggestion is to invest in

rainwater harvesting and automatic irrigation systems. Though the initial investment may be high, they will help cut labour cost and enhance the effectiveness of watering in the long run.

Low also highlighted pest control as a crucial aspect of softscape maintenance.

"A healthy ecosystem is more important than a beautiful landscape. Some insects contribute to the healthy growth of plants while others could be the source of food for birds, thus creating a healthy ecosystem," he told the audience.

As for the hardscape elements such as floor finishes and outdoor furniture, keeping them clean and well-maintained is important as it will directly impact the overall appearance of the property and thus help retain its value.

"Imagine if people walk into your condo-

minium and see dirty benches and uneven floors. Hardscape elements require constant washing, cleaning and resealing to refresh the surfaces," said Low.

Similarly, the lack of maintenance of water elements can also affect the value of the property. "For instance, we want to avoid muddy stagnant water that emits bad odour.

"If you are going to live there for the long term, you would need to take into consideration these issues on landscape maintenance," he added.

Low also believes that gardeners tend to be under-appreciated. "They are not doing an easy job because they are looking after living things. A little encouragement to show they are appreciated goes a long way. The property owner will be the winner because a nice living environment can enhance the property's value," he concluded.

LOW YEN YEING | EdgeProp.my

PICTURES BY PRAXCIS DESIGN SDN BHD

Good design-and-build inputs = good communal living

BY LUM KA KAY

Be it in a family or a country, harmonious living is always desired. Similarly, well-managed strata or communal living will give property owners peace of mind.

Believe it or not, excellent property management begins with the property developer.

Speaking from the perspective of property developers, Rehda Institute chairman Datuk Jeffrey Ng noted that good design-and-build inputs in the early stages of the development process are crucial in achieving good and sustainable property management.

Ng was speaking at EdgeProp.my Symposium on Excellent Property Management 2018 entitled "Mistakes you CAN'T afford to make!" held in Kuala Lumpur on May 12. The symposium was organised by EdgeProp.my in partnership with Nippon Paint Malaysia and Panasonic Malaysia. Supporting sponsors were Gamuda Land, Red Ideas Sdn Bhd (Graaab JaGaApp) and Zurich Insurance Malaysia Bhd. It was also supported by *The Edge Malaysia*.

In his presentation entitled "Developers' role in excellent property management", Ng said developers play three key roles in the property development process:

1. Planning and design inputs
2. Construction management
3. Operations and property management

"A well-planned and well-designed project will bring long-term benefits in the project's sustainability, property management and eventually value appreciation.

"It is essential to balance the emphasis between aesthetics, functionality and maintenance practicality, as all these have long-term implications on property maintenance and risk management.

"We may have expensive and great-looking building designs... but what about the cost for its future maintenance?" he asked, citing a project where an 8-storey-tall glass panel was one of the features of the building.

A project's design can also pose safety risks, said Ng. For instance, some projects may have used fire-hazardous external building claddings for their facades, or a building's design is such that it has dark hidden corridors, thus raising its security risk.

"These are some of the design considerations that property developers have to take into account," he added.

Ng said that developers tend to shy away from the topic of property management, as they are reluctant to face the issues raised by homeowners, but he noted that this is changing.

"When it comes to property management, developers are usually in the first line of firing by owners. And the defence line is always the property management consultants who will become the mediators.

"But as we move forward, developers are becoming and have to become more responsible and willing to take the ups and downs and deal with problems accordingly," he said.

The rise of mixed-use developments

With ever-increasing land cost, developers will be developing more high-density, mixed-use developments going forward. This is where planning and design become even more critical because so many varied



Ng: For strata owners, everything depends on the planning right from the start. If you [the developer] plan it wrongly, problems will come.

Design considerations for property developers

- Harvest natural lighting and optimum use of daylight at common areas to minimise energy use with right building orientation and openings
- Stagger lightings with motion and optical sensors to save energy cost
- Green features with right choice of plants that are easy and less costly to maintain
- Fresh air circulation/ventilation at common areas to minimise air-conditioning usage
- Use of solar energy, where feasible, in common areas
- Rainwater harvesting for use of garden irrigation and common area cleaning works
- Careful access design to minimise security guards' deployment waste composting and handling of waste

Technology adoptions for property management

- Community management applications to handle security management, facilities booking, complaints management and community engagement
- Use of renewable energy such as solar energy
- The Internet of Things with use of sensor technology to facilitate maintenance monitoring, environment monitoring and energy savings
- Security management systems using facial recognition and abnormal event management capabilities, which will allow reduction in costly manual security surveillance
- Waste management technology in recycling, food waste composting and handling of waste



occupants are involved in a single development, said Ng.

"You will then start to see regulations regarding MCs (management corporations) and sub-MCs. So, it is very important for you, as one of the stratified owners, to know the rules, or else you will be very disappointed when dealing with the sub-MCs.

"For strata owners, everything depends on the planning right from the start. If you [the developer] plan it wrongly, problems will come.

"When it comes to mixed developments, my recommendation is that consumers invest in projects where the developer has a presence or stake as a co-proprietor. This

enhances the developer's interest and long-term commitment towards good property maintenance of the project," he added.

Technological adoption and quality benchmark

Much of property management can be made more efficient, while the decision for the adoption of relevant technology that could benefit the management and maintenance of the building should be made at the building design stage, said Ng.

"Developers can defray future maintenance cost by investing in technology. The areas of technology adoption include the use of renewable energy, Internet of Things, security management systems and waste management technology.

"More importantly, we must be aware that maintenance cost will only rise over time. Hence, it is essential to incorporate good design input and efficient technology adoption to help defray cost escalations in the medium and long term.

"Things like security cost takes up about 20% to 30% of your annual budget, but if you know how to use technology, it could help save your budget significantly," he said.

Meanwhile, property developers should adopt quality project management practices and construction quality standards such as Qlassic and Conquas (Construction Quality Assessment System) to benchmark workmanship standards. Hence, Ng advised property purchasers to go for projects that have achieved such quality benchmarks.

Last but not least is the operations segment, which includes staff training, having standard operating procedures, preparing a homeowner's manual, maintaining clear and independent accounts, conducting proper and timely financial control and reporting, as well as initiating community events — these are among the important measures that need to be carried out by property management teams to promote cordial community living.



(Above) An artist's impression of Gamuda Gardens' commercial boulevard, which will feature retail, business and co-working spaces.

THE TELLTALE SIGNS OF A VERY HOT SPOT

Securing a property with strong capital growth does not simply come by luck, but on training our sights on the signs of a soon-to-ripen harvest.

As an example, those who had banked on a property in Puchong when the area was still a backwater would have earned substantial margins when it exploded into a residential, commercial and industrial hot spot. The transformation did not occur overnight, nor were the signs hidden. The marks of development began in the mid-1980s — and the earlier the entry point, the bigger the profits.

Such opportunities still abound today as the nation gallops towards becoming a world-class metropolis.

Among the suburbs earmarked to benefit from the progress is Sungai Buloh, a town in the north of Selangor's Petaling district. Better known as the go-to destination for garden lovers, the once-idyllic neck of the woods is now a ripening field for economic boom.

The following telltale signs all point towards the potential brewing in Sungai Buloh.

SHRINKING LAND PUSHING BOUNDARIES OUTWARDS

Real estate rates in the centre of the Klang Valley are becoming more unattainable due to the shrinking supply of land. To counter the predicament, new frontiers have opened up at the south and north of Kuala Lumpur.

Lying at the north-west of the commercial heart of the country, Sungai Buloh is an ideal spot for this expansion.

RAIL-LY EASY TO REACH

Known as the Sungai Buloh-Kajang MRT Line, the first mass rapid transit (MRT) line has changed Sungai Buloh from too far to easily accessible. Integrated to the region's existing public transportation systems, Sungai Buloh is practically within a train-ride from the capital city and almost every part of the Klang Valley.

Various property consultants have said rail connectivity will boost up commercial activities and the real estate market.

In fact, property consultancy CBRE|WTW managing director Foo Gee Jen had pointed out that the next rental hot spots could be the end terminals of the MRT system, such as Sungai Buloh.

The next phase of the integrated transit system will connect Sungai Buloh to Putrajaya via Serdang, further enhancing its attractiveness.

A COMPREHENSIVE ARTERY OF CAR ROUTES

The completion of the Guthrie Corridor Expressway (GCE) since 2005 has elevated Sungai Buloh to a prime thoroughfare. Through its links with the KL-Kuala Selangor Expressway (LATAR), Federal Road FT54, North-South Expressway Central Link (ELITE) and New Klang Valley Expressway (NKVE), Sungai Buloh has become conveniently connected to both the northern states and the southern capital city. Integrated to the North-South Expressway (PLUS), it is seamlessly joined to the northern Petaling Jaya and Damansara areas.

KL city centre is within proximity via the

The new Sungai Buloh MRT Station is interconnected with the KTM and connects the township to the city centre.



(Below) Sungai Buloh General Hospital and HELP University Subang 2 are some of the amenities in Sungai Buloh.





Gamuda Gardens is well-connected to thriving areas such as Kota Damansara, Bandar Utama and Kuala Lumpur via the Sungai Buloh-Kajang MRT Line, North-South Expressway, Guthrie Corridor Expressway and LATAR Highway.

Middle Ring Road 2 and Duta-Ulu Kelang Expressway. Similarly, Mont'Kiara and Petaling Jaya can be conveniently accessed. Retail hubs in Mutiara Damansara are only 15 minutes away through NKVE or the Penchala exit on the Damansara-Puchong Highway. KLIA is less than an hour's drive away.

Greater connectivity is anticipated in the future with the upcoming Damansara-Shah Alam Highway and West Coast Expressway.

A FOCUS OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Taking the cue, rapid developments within and without Sungai Buloh such as Kwasa Damansara are catalysing Sungai Buloh into a thriving hot spot in the near future.

Even at present, with the availability of vast and nature-rich plots, Sungai Buloh has earned a reputation as an upscale neighbourhood housing various luxury residential developments such as Valencia.

A COMPLETE HOST OF AMENITIES

Some of the current landmarks in and around Sungai Buloh are the Skypark Subang Airport, HELP University Subang 2, Sungai Buloh General Hospital and The Star Avenue Lifestyle Mall. These, along with a host of existing and upcoming amenities, are turning Sungai Buloh into a buzzing hive.

Besides five public schools, there are six international schools and two other tertiary learning institutions within the vicinity.

Shopping needs are catered to at Tesco, The Store, Giant and AEON Jusco Rawang. Private hospitals nearby are Putra Medical Centre and Tropicana Medical Centre.

A GROWING POPULATION OF A BALANCED COMMUNITY

According to the Department of Statistics, the Greater KL North population is estimated to reach 10 million by the year 2020 and Sungai Buloh will see rapid growth to absorb this increase.

Similarly, statistics showed the total population of Sungai Buloh increased 72% to 466,163 in 2010 from 2000.

The Malays made up 45% of the total population, followed by the Chinese at 37% and the Indians at almost 10%.

The age groups used to be almost equal among the 0-to-4 to 35-to-39, numbering between 21,000 plus and 29,000 plus for each bracket. In 2010, however, the 25-to-29 and 20-to-24 age groups stood out at 62,174 and 51,133, respectively, lending a touch of youthful dynamism to this once-deemed rural enclave.

The working population from ages 25 to 59 has seen a slight increase from 49% to 52% within the 10 years. In tandem, children aged 0 to 19 make up 30% of the population in 2010, a testament to the conduciveness of Sungai Buloh as a family enclave.

In summary, the Sungai Buloh community comprises a balanced component of family units and young people, as well as a balanced ethnic proportion.

PROPERTY VALUES ON THE UPTREND

Unsurprisingly, property prices in Sungai Buloh have seen an uptrend over the past five years.

It should be noted, though, that cooling measures in the past few years have resulted in fewer transactions across the country. While there were 656 and 82 transactions in landed and non-landed categories respectively in 2013, there were only 256 and 16 similar respective transactions in 2017, according to data from EdgeProp.my.

Based on an average transacted price of RM582,873 or RM300 psf in 2017, a compound annual growth rate of 4.18% over the past five years was observed for landed properties. For non-landed properties, an average transacted price of RM236,625 or RM231 psf was recorded in 2017, giving a marked increase of 10.11%.



One of Gamuda Gardens' most outstanding facilities is a 50-acre central park with cascading lakes, a waterfall, mixed-terrain jogging and cycling trails, wetlands, a lookout point, and fully-equipped camping grounds.

A MASTERFULLY-PLANNED TOWNSHIP — WHERE CONNECTION IS A PIECE OF CAKE

As one of the prime movers in Sungai Buloh, Gamuda Gardens presents a highly viable option for those looking to reap the potential benefits of the upcoming hot spot.

Developed by the well-reputed Gamuda Land, Gamuda Gardens is an 810-acre township featuring 6,000 residential leasehold plots comprising link houses, linked villas, semidees, bungalows and serviced apartments. With a GDV of RM10.1 billion, the township is to be developed over 15 years.

Underpinned by the developer's strong masterplanning, beautifully crafted environment, environmental restitution and excellent connectivity and accessibility, "Gamuda Gardens is perfect if you are looking for a reasonably priced landed home in a nice township setting," says Gamuda Land CEO Ngan Chee Meng.

Preserving its natural top soil, Gamuda Gardens offers a paradise-like environment with undulating topography, greenery, a wetland of living species, five cascading lakes and a waterfall. The efforts have earned Gamuda Gardens the Green Building Index Silver rating.

Residents can enjoy this invigorating spread through its 50-acre park, a 4km mixed terrain jogging and cycling trail, a lookout point and a fully-equipped camping ground. An adventure playland and a football field further make Gamuda Gardens a great place for play and community bonding.

At the centre of all the elements is the Waterfront Retail Village Square, a lakeside town square for hanging out, shopping, services and leisure.

The self-sustainable township also features a prominent 100-acre commercial hub. Visible along the PLUS Highway, it houses offices, malls, shops and an array of retail offerings. An international school is also in the pipeline.

In short, Gamuda Gardens "is our way of connecting you with the community, with nature and with yourself," says Ngan.

NEARBY EVERYTHING

A free shuttle service is provided to the Kuang KTM Station, which is just one station away from the Sungai Buloh interchange.

For road users, Gamuda Gardens is strategically positioned at the intersection of three major highways. Residents can simply exit Gamuda Gardens at Exit 115 to go straight into the PLUS Highway 1km away, or to the LATAR and GCE highways 1.5km away. Additionally, the developer will be investing substantially to upgrade the infrastructure and widen the access roads.

Besides three golf courses, other recreational attractions nearby are Tasik Biru Kundang, 37 fishing ponds and the 3Q Equestrian.

THE DOOR OF OPPORTUNITY NOW OPEN

Evidently, such favourable conditions have not escaped the attention of home seekers. The first phase of its 2-storey link homes launched in February 2017 has been 100% sold out.

Those who have missed out the first opportunity can now look to phase 2. Launched in September 2017, the 2-storey link homes named Lavena and Nara enjoy the closest proximity to the central park, besides a linear garden of its own.

Priced from RM750,000, the 260 units come in 2,114 sq ft to 2,800 sq ft built-ups with land sizes measuring 20ft x 75ft and 22ft x 80ft. Layouts come in four bedrooms + 3 bathrooms as well as four bedrooms + four bathrooms. Built on 52 acres, the project has a GDV of RM233 million.

For those who prefer hassle-free lifestyles, the first high-rise has started previewing in February 2018. Named Gaia Residences, the serviced apartment is complemented by a retail podium. Housed in two blocks of 17 and 18 storeys, it offers occupants a soothing view of the luxuriant surroundings.

Gaia offers 500 units of four built-ups of 640 sq ft, 660 sq ft, 750 sq ft and 900 sq ft with a choice of two bedrooms + one bathroom, two bedrooms + one study room + two bathrooms, or three bedrooms + two bathrooms. The 5.6-acre project has a GDV of RM260 million.

Indicatively priced from RM360,000 plus, the scheme is suitable for young couples or young families buying their first homes. Those who aim to step on the first rung of the property investment ladder will also find this to be an attractive option.

Both the projects are gated and guarded, along with CCTV surveillance.

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SYMPOSIUM ON EXCELLENT PROPERTY MANAGEMENT 2018

A three-step problem-solving method to common issues in strata living

BY SHAWN NG

Unrectified defects, stubborn owners who refuse to comply with house rules, late issuance of strata titles, inter-floor leaks — these are some of the issues that may bring grief to strata residential owners.

But how can they resolve these problems? In order to bring certainty to strata property owners, Chur Associates founder and managing partner Chris Tan offered a simple three-step problem-solving method for common issues that crop up in strata living:

1. Identify the people you will be dealing with
2. Be clear and find out all you can about the issue
3. Know what the options are to solve the problem

“As a strata property owner, you must know and be aware of the kind of problems you could face in community living, who you will be up against, and how you can go about resolving the issue,” Tan told the audience at the EdgeProp.my Symposium on Excellent Property Management 2018 on May 12. Themed “Mistakes you CAN’T afford to make!”, the symposium was organised by EdgeProp.my with partners Nippon Paint Malaysia and Panasonic Malaysia. Supporting sponsors were Gamuda Land, Red Ideas Sdn Bhd (Graaab JaGaApp) and Zurich General Insurance Malaysia Bhd. The event was also supported by *The Edge Malaysia*.

Tan was speaking on the topic “What if? Why? How? — Legal problems and solutions.”

For a start, homeowners are advised to identify the players in communal living so they can get the right body or person to address the issue. Some problems can be solved merely by communicating with the right person.

“How do you win the game if you do not know who the players are? So we must know all the players in communal living. They would be the homeowners, property management such as the JMB (joint management body) or MC (management corporation), the property manager and the developer.

“For instance, you would probably have an issue that you need to communicate with the property management. Do you know who the chairman of the MC is? Do you know who to call, should a problem arise?” he asked.

Secondly, he urged homeowners to be proactive in empowering themselves with knowledge on strata living and management. More importantly, they should find out the options that they have in resolving an issue.

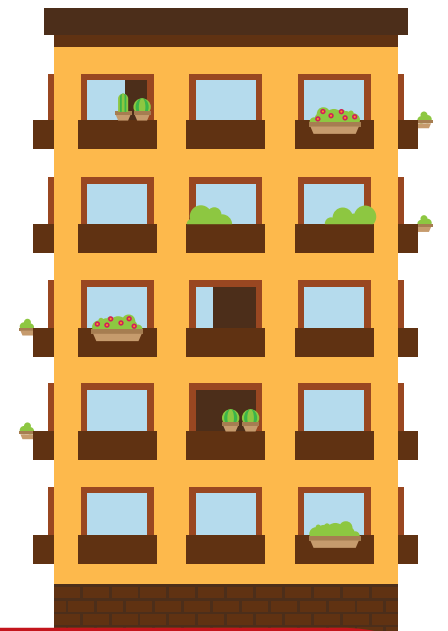
Quoting former international trade and industry minister Tan Sri Rafidah Aziz, Tan said Malaysia is like a big house that needs good managers or a house that needs to be built by a good contractor. “Residents need to review the performance of their contractor and they can change the contractor if they are not satisfied with the performance.

“What we have learnt from the last few days is the word ‘option’. We realise that we have a choice, don’t we? Participation is the key and the power is in your hands,” he told the audience at the symposium, referring to the outcome of the country’s recently concluded 14th General Election.



LOW YEN YEING | EdgeProp.my

Chris: Residents need to review the performance of their contractor and they can change the contractor if they are not satisfied with the contractor’s performance.



Who will you be dealing with?

1. Neighbours
2. Joint management body or management corporation
3. Property manager
4. Developer

What are the common issues in communal living?

- SERVICE CHARGE AND SINKING FUND:**
 - Payment
 - Interests chargeable on default payment
 - Usage of the collected fund
 - The rate of service charge
- COMMUNITY MEETINGS (AGM/EGM)**
 - Notice of meeting
 - Participation
 - Processes
- DEFECTS**
 - Common property
 - Main parcel and accessory parcel
 - Defects liability period
- SERVICE QUALITY OF CONTRACTOR**
 - Service level
 - Contractor’s performance
- STRATA TITLES**
 - Late issuance of strata titles
 - Boundary encroachment
- OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT BY COMMITTEE (JMB, MC OR DEVELOPER)**
 - Running of meetings
 - Exercise of power
 - Appointment of committee members
- NUISANCE:**
 - Inter-floor leakage
 - Interference of enjoyment, such as home-sharing business
 - Usage of common property
- HOUSE RULES/ DEED OF MUTUAL COVENANT/BY-LAWS:**
 - Non-compliance
 - Introduction of new rules or by-laws
 - Enforcement

An action chart for strata homeowners

COMMON ISSUES HOMEOWNERS FACE	CLARIFICATION	NEGOTIATION	COMMISSIONER OF BUILDINGS	STRATA MANAGEMENT TRIBUNAL	HOUSE BUYERS TRIBUNAL	AUTHORITY	CIVIL COURTS	POLICE	MP/ ADUN	MEDIA
Nuisance	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
House rules, deed of mutual covenant and building by-laws	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	
Service charge and sinking fund	✓	✓		✓			✓			
Community meetings	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Operation and management by committee	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Defects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Strata titles	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			

Tan offered that there are plenty of options for homeowners to resolve their issues, depending on the nature of the issue and the people they are dealing with.

Among the options are to seek help from the authorities, bring it up to the respective

tribunal or to the courts and even to the media.

“The first thing we should always do is to ask for clarification because half of the problems will probably be solved after things are clarified. And then, the next thing to do is negotiate. If you can solve it at this level, you

wouldn’t need to escalate to the next stage.

“It is important for us to know the process and the stakeholders in communal living because once you know all of these, the answer will become clearer and make sense to you,” he concluded.



(From left) Au, Ng, Lee and Tan during the panel discussion.

Be aware of common mistakes and avoid them!

BY TAN AI LENG

We all make mistakes, but purchasing the “wrong” property is a mistake we cannot afford. Buying a property that is not properly managed can lower the value of the property in the long run and, worse, could even cost the lives of the people living in it.

At a panel discussion themed “Mistakes you CAN’T afford to make!” at EdgeProp.my Symposium on Excellent Property Management 2018 on May 12, three experts in their respective fields took questions from the floor and shared their views on issues related to property management and maintenance, including building safety and communal living disputes.

The panellists were Architect Centre Sdn Bhd accredited building inspector and trainer Anthony Lee Tee, the Real Estate and Housing Developers’ Association Malaysia (Rehda) Institute chairman Datuk Jeffrey Ng and Chur Associates founder and managing partner Chris Tan. The session was moderated by EdgeProp.my managing director and editor-in-chief Au Foong Yee.

The symposium was organised by EdgeProp.my with partners Nippon Paint Malaysia and Panasonic Malaysia. Supporting sponsors were Gamuda Land, Red Ideas Sdn Bhd (Graaab JaGaApp) and Zurich General Insurance Malaysia Bhd. The event was also supported by *The Edge Malaysia*.

Mistake #1: Impulsive buying without due diligence

“In the current buyer’s market, purchasers will find themselves overwhelmed by all kinds of rebates and freebies as well as posh designs with various lifestyle facilities, but they may not be aware that the upkeep of the building in future is another issue,” said Ng.

He admitted that many architects and property developers care too much about the aesthetics of their building design, hoping to gain lasting impressions, when they should instead be coming up with sustainable designs that make buildings long-lasting and easy to manage.

When buying a property off the plan, it would be impossible for a buyer to know the quality of a building or development before it was built. Hence, Ng advised purchasers to buy from reputable and responsible developers that have good track records.

“Responsible and reputable developers would want to be in business for the long term, so they are willing to put their effort into fixing the defects as well as in constructing a high-quality building, as they would not want to risk their reputation even with one project,” he said, adding that responsible developers will give due consideration to the future management and maintenance of a completed project from the moment they begin planning and designing a project.

This is because whether the development will be sustainable or easy to manage in the future very much depends on its design and construction. Buyers can also keep themselves abreast with building assessment

guidelines or green building initiatives so they can make the right choice when buying a property, said Ng.

Mistake #2: Procrastination in fixing defects

Certainly, there is no perfect building or house that comes without defects. Every property will have some defects even if they are built by the same contractor. However, it is critical that defects are fixed quickly.

Hence, the panellists stressed that property owners should be actively involved in checking their properties and getting their developers to fix the defects before the defects liability period is over.

“Defects are normal as [a big part of] the construction process relies on human labour. No matter how strict the process is, there will still be defects. However, most defects can be fixed,” said Architect Centre’s Lee.

In cases where the property owners’ request to fix the defects is ignored by the developer, property owners can bring the case to the respective tribunals or seek help from the local authorities or even people’s representatives, said Tan of Chur Associates.

Tan said homeowners must equip themselves first with knowledge about their rights as property owners, so that they are able to take the right action when conflict arises with developers or between property owners.

Rehda’s Ng added that a responsible developer would not try to delay fixing the problem. He also suggested that property owners who failed to get any help from the developers should keep a record of all the relevant docu-

ments and lodge a complaint to professional bodies and industry bodies such as Rehda and the Malaysian Institute of Architects.

Mistake #3: Negligence in maintaining fire-fighting equipment

It takes the collective effort of all stakeholders to ensure that a building is safe for its occupants. One way is to make sure that the building is equipped with functional equipment such as fire-fighting equipment.

Lee advised the management corporations of strata properties to engage with professionals as well as the Fire and Rescue Department to carry out inspections from time to time on the functionality of the fire-fighting equipment in their projects.

“Most of the time, people feel safe just because they have [fire and house owner] insurance, but then they neglect another important thing that can put them at risk in claiming compensation — and that is, the building may not be fire-safety compliant,” he stressed, adding that apathy is another reason for the lack of fire prevention measures at home.

One of the easiest and most effective fire-safety equipment to have at home is a fire extinguisher. “There are two different sizes of fire extinguishers — 2kg and 9kg. However, 9kg would be too heavy for most people; hence, the 2kg fire extinguisher will be sufficient for a home with a built-up of around 1,000 sq ft. If you are staying in a double-storey house, it is better to have one upstairs and one downstairs,” said Lee. He suggested that owners install fire detectors and alarm systems as well.

MISTAKES YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO MAKE!

EdgeProp.my

SYMPOSIUM ON
EXCELLENT PROPERTY
MANAGEMENT 2018

Q & A with the speakers



Questions from the audience were forwarded to the respective speakers at EdgeProp.my Symposium on Excellent Property Management 2018 following the event on May 12 and the speakers have answered the best they could. The replies reflect the speakers' personal views and do not constitute legal advice. Questions have been edited for clarity.



Anthony Lee Tee

Architect Centre Sdn Bhd
accredited building inspector
and trainer

You mentioned about asbestos sheet, which could cause lung disease. Can you elaborate on this?

The usage of corrugated asbestos roof sheeting has been banned for decades in most countries due to health hazard reasons. However, it is still being manufactured, sold and used widely in Malaysia.

Medical research reports showed that asbestos fibres contain harmful elements that could cause cancer and asbestosis, a type of lung disease caused by inhalation of asbestos fibres.

Where asbestos has been used, the removal is carried out only by specialists

using proper hazmat suits, etc, with controlled disposals. It is very irresponsible to allow for asbestos roof sheeting to be manufactured and sold. However, the awareness of asbestosis is obviously very low.

It is advisable for property owners who are currently using asbestos roof sheeting to consider changing it to asbestos-free roof sheeting, which is widely available in Malaysia.

If I have purchased some electrical appliances from overseas, how can I make sure it's safe to use at home?

There are 34 categories of controlled electrical appliances that require the Energy Commission (ST) or SIRIM approvals.

These electrical appliances range from plug sockets, lamp fittings, circuit breakers, kettles, refrigerators, water heaters, air-conditioners to audio and video players. The public could access the relevant information through the ST website or contact ST directly.

How would I know if my water heater is safe to use? When is it time to change my water heater?

The replacement life cycle will depend on the manufacturer's recommendation, up-keep, and wear and tear.

For the installation of a water heater, please engage with a qualified electrician or plumber for safety reasons. Besides this, do follow the manufacturer's specifications when using the water heater to ensure your safety.

For more information, please refer to ST's guidelines on the design, installation, inspection, testing, operation and maintenance of water heater systems. The guidelines are available on ST's website.

I'm using centralised gas system in my condo. Where can I get a gas leak detector, and will it be very costly to install one?

There are stand-alone domestic LPG or natural gas detectors sold online for under RM100. However, for safety reasons, please check with ST for the details.

Is an induction cooker safer than a gas cooker? Should I change my gas cooker to an electric induction cooker?

Electricity or gas can be equally beneficial

or dangerous if used carelessly, without supervision or installed by unqualified people. Common sense prevails.

How would I know if the design of my condo is faulty in terms of fire safety?

Engage independent professionals to assess the fire safety of your property. If it is a strata high-rise residence, a yearly safety inspection is recommended.

For landed houses, do you think there is a need to engage experts to inspect the house from time to time?

Landed properties may have been altered or renovated from time to time. We recommend safety inspections once every two to three years, or after renovations or refurbishments have been carried out. Do ask for immediate inspection if the property experiences frequent electricity power trips.



Low Chee Leong

Praxis Design Sdn Bhd director

If we have limited budget and can only focus on either the softscape or hardscape, which should we choose and why?

Focus on the softscape. Apart from natural beauty, plants will remove carbon dioxide

and return oxygen into the environment. This provides immediate benefits for you and your family.

You can buy online simple DIY automatic irrigation controller and drip lines, and connect to your rainwater harvesting tank. It will take away the time needed for you to irrigate the plants.

What is the main consideration in planning a functional landscape in an established or existing project? Do we need to get permission or consent from any authorities in case we need to cut down trees or things like that?

Investigate whether the soil depth you have is on reinforced concrete desk because that will determine everything from shrubs, trees to turf.

Keep the landscape simple, adopt a natural look or a modern minimalist approach, as it will need less care.

All trees and plants outside your property belong to the local council, so you need permission to cut them down, but before you consider taking any trees down, consider the possibility of keeping them. Explore all options before you make that decision.

How to find a qualified landscape architect? Any list or association to refer to? What is the cost?

The Institute of Landscape Architects Malaysia has a list of qualified landscape architects. If it is a small house garden, just make it a family project. Do research on plants and design, and get the kids off their mobile phones and encourage them to reconnect with nature together.

Do you have any example on the value appreciation difference between a property with landscape and one without?

This will make an interesting dissertation or thesis topic, and a great research area for property valuers as well.

Please suggest a few easy-to-maintain shady trees to be planted in an existing landed housing area.

Dalbergia Latifolia, Osmasia Pinnata, Alstonia Augustifolia and Samanea Saman.



Chris Tan

Chur Associates managing partner

Pertaining to the issue of “encroachment” in stratified properties, what can we do when we face scenarios as follows:

A) SCENARIO 1

There is an owner of two condo units on the top floor of a 3-storey walk-up block with a common area/landing leading to the front entrance doors of the units. Since no one else uses the common area/landing, he decides to claim the space by renovating and constructing a door where the staircase meets the top landing. If the strata title has been issued, can the proprietor apply to the management corporation (MC) to grant him special privileges with regard to the common property under By-Laws clause 4 of the 3rd Schedule, Strata Management Act 2013: Strata Management (Maintenance and Management) Regulations 2015?

The strata title issued will clearly indicate the exact area owned by the owner. There is no such thing as claiming the space. If it is common property, it must be enjoyed by all owners of the strata development. The MC at best can give a licence for exclusive use of the common area, subject to the terms and conditions set by the MC, but not giving away ownership of the common property.

B) SCENARIO 2

The owner of a unit on the first floor of a 3-storey walk-up block with a common area/landing leading to the front and side (kitchen) doors of the unit intends to use the space on a temporary basis after working hours, and wishes to put up a sliding-folding screen to provide privacy when he has visitors/guests. He undertakes not to obstruct the access during the day or working hours if technicians need to work on the riser compartment within this space. If the strata title has not been issued, can the proprietor apply to the joint management body (JMB) to grant him exclusive use and enjoyment of part of the common property, subject to conditions, under By-Laws clause 4 of the 3rd Schedule, Strata Management Act 2013: Strata Management (Maintenance and Management) Regulations 2015?

Yes, just like the basis of the previous answer. Due consideration must be given to the fact that the riser is within the area of common property intended for exclusive usage. Safety is a concern, where it requires unobstructed and timely access.

C) SCENARIO 3

If a strata unit adjoins a common property — in this case, a small portion of reinforced concrete flat roof that is not accessible to the JMB's or joint management committee's (JMC) property management team for maintenance purpose except through the said unit — can the proprietor apply for permission to have exclusive use and enjoyment of that part of the common property (such as the flat roof area), on condition that he undertakes to maintain it for the JMB/JMC, pursuant to By-Laws clause 4 of the 3rd Schedule, Strata Management Act 2013: Strata Management (Maintenance and Management) Regulations 2015?

Yes, but subject to the terms and conditions set by the management at the material time (either the developer or JMB or MC).

We are a self-managed MC. I discovered that the manager's contract has expired since May 17, 2017. When I questioned the previous MC as to why the manager is still here when the contract had not been renewed, none could answer me and no one wants to be responsible for this. I would like to consider the option of hiring a professional property management company, but I do not know how to terminate this manager without creating trouble for the MC. May I kindly ask for advice on this?

Firstly, look at the terms and conditions of how this manager was appointed in the first place. Look for clauses in relation to termination and renewal. If the contract has indeed expired and has not been renewed (it could just be a month-to-month contract now), parties are free to negotiate on how to proceed further or to end it amicably. Please seek the help of a lawyer to better advise you upon looking into the details.

I have purchased a landed strata management property. Upon completion, it was found that the fencing provided by the developer was a normal type and not with the anti-climb feature. The developer claimed it had followed and complied with the SPA clause and therefore no appeal can be made. Is there any way the purchaser can take this case to the tribunal?

Look at the agreement with the developer again and see if there is any specific representation to provide the anti-climb fencing so that you can start your negotiation with basis. In any event, you can always refer to the Tribunal for Homebuyers if the claim is below RM50,000, and not the Strata Management Tribunal. This is not a strata management issue.

The legal knowledge and understanding of the concept of communal living is often lacking. In your opinion, what can be done to raise awareness among homeowners and JMB/MC committee members to ensure harmonious communal living?

EdgeProp.my is doing a good job in raising the awareness with this yearly symposium as well as EdgeProp Malaysia's Best Managed Property Awards. Personally, I have always been an advocate for a basic training to be carried out for JMB and MC members before they take office. It is important for the community as well as the members themselves, as they can be potential personal liabilities.

What is your advice to stakeholders in communal living — developers, property

managers, owners and others — on what can be done to raise the standards of communal living?

Parties must act in collaboration instead of being adversaries and this mindset must be practised all the time. Developers should conduct pre-vacant possession education to all owners to equip them with the basic knowledge and ensure a better handover. Owners tend to be more defensive if they do not know any better. Generating options is the key to any solution.

Strangers are coming into our stratified condominium because some owners are leasing out their car park spaces to people working in nearby offices. This has raised security concerns among other owners because these renters are holding access cards that allow them access to the car park spaces. They have also been registered with the management office to allow them access. We've tried to convince the owners who are renting out their car park spaces to stop doing so, as we do not want to compromise on security, but most of them claim that they have the right to do so. Is that true? What is your advice on this?

Legally, the owner of any property is entitled to full enjoyment of the same subject to any express condition. If your stratified condominium is designated for residential usage under the master title, it should be rightfully enjoyed by the owners and their permitted residents. Owners can pass a by-law at the annual general meeting and enforce the restriction. In the event it is challenged, refer the matter to the Strata Management Tribunal for eventual determination.



Datuk Jeffrey Ng

Rehda Institute chairman

In a mixed development where there is only a master title but the development comprises a shopping mall, hospital and residential apartment block, on what basis will the service charge be calculated? Will it be based on the whole development or separately based on each entity (shopping mall, hospital, apartment block)?

The service charge in a subdivided development is computed based on the approved share value predetermined by the developer in the Certificate of Share Unit Formula (commonly referred to as SiFUS) and the Schedule of Parcels submitted to the Commissioner under the Strata Management

Act 2013. Such share value computation should be carried out in accordance with the formula set out in the first Schedule of the Act.

While the first Schedule seeks to provide clarity and an equitable basis for the computation of share value and subsequently service charge, there remains many questions and arguments on sharing of maintenance and management expenses, especially in a mixed development that comprises various uses such as residential, retail, commercial and hospital components.

In a mixed development with one master title, all components will at their onset collectively form a single management corporation. All components of the development will share all rights and obligations, including payment of service charge and sinking fund in the development in accordance to the share value established, based on the procedures outlined above.

However, the Strata Management Act 2013 provides an option for the management corporation of a mixed development to streamline the maintenance and management of each different component within the development. Section 63 of the Act allows for the formation of a subsidiary management corporation and demarcation of limited common area for each different component in the mixed development, where maintenance charges can be managed separately for each separate subsidiary management corporation.

In this example, there will be separate subsidiary management corporations for residential, retail and hospital. Each subsidiary management corporation will manage its own maintenance expenses for its own limited common area while sharing only the maintenance expenses with all other subsidiary management corporations on the management and maintenance of the common areas such as common access roads, facilities and services.

What are some of the challenges in coming up with the planning and design of a mixed use development?

The challenges are:

- Defining common areas and limited common areas in advance may be difficult and requires very good coordination within the development team to ensure clear separation of services and facilities in accordance to the demarcation of the limited common areas.
- Electrical circuits, standby generators, plumbing pipelines, air-conditioning plant, chilled water pipelines and others may not be designed and laid according to the subdivision of limited common area and boundaries of the subsidiary management corporation. Hence, it makes metering and separation of utility charges and maintenance charges difficult.
- There should be equitable contribution of maintenance charges for each different component of the development. Different components will have different frequency of usage and enjoyment of the common facilities. Some may not use certain facilities at all.

What is good property management to you? Is it the ability to evolve with the times? Or the ability to streamline operations budget?

Good property management is the ability to provide prompt action in responding to customer and regulatory requirements. It is

CONTINUES NEXT PAGE

MISTAKES YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO MAKE!

Q & A (continued)

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

also important to achieve a balance of good service delivery and equitable maintenance charge contribution. While the ability to streamline operational budget is important, one must also be able to evolve with the times with regard to the adoption of new technology and processes.

How can we ensure a smooth handover from the JMB to the MC? Things mostly look good until the handover to the MC because the developer of the project has always supported the maintenance cost as they are still part of the JMB. Any advice on how to keep things up after the handover?

To help ensure good maintenance after the handover to the MC, it is important for the developer to compute the service charge on a sustainable basis covering all necessary expenses. Some developers may deliberately keep the service charge low as a marketing gimmick, but this will result in maintenance budget deficits.

The developer should carry out the duties, during the preliminary management period, as prescribed by the Strata Management Act 2013 and conduct a proper handing over to the JMB or MC, including all monies in the maintenance and sinking fund accounts, building drawings, manuals, certificates and licences.

It is also important that the MC appoints a registered and experienced property manager at a reasonable fee. Self-management, if possible, should be avoided.

I live in an old (15 years old) and low-density (about 40 units) non-landed development. The low density has its pros and cons — whereby I'm charged about RM800 every month for my maintenance fee. It is crazy. I know this may be due to bad planning by the developer, but is there anything the MC could do to reduce the budget?

Share value was introduced by the Strata Management Act 2013, which took effect in 2015. Prior to the implementation of this new Act, service charge was computed based on the number of units in the development and the size of the units.

The owners of this development have to accept that the development is a low-density development. It does not have the economies of scale, which thus results in a higher service charge compared to other higher density developments. Nevertheless, it is more important to look at the service charge comparatively on a psf basis, as opposed to a total quantum of RM800 per month. A service charge of RM0.30 to RM0.40 psf would be considered reasonable in the market while some exclusive low-density developments would require about RM0.70 to RM0.80 psf to maintain the common areas.

To reduce the maintenance budget, the MC could review the scope of maintenance works, appointment of service providers, adoption of technology to reduce expensive manpower such as security guards, and reduce electricity consumption in common areas by installing motion or optical sensors as well as the adoption of renewable energy and the Internet of Things.

I have purchased a landed strata property. Upon completion, it was found that the fencing provided by the developer was a normal type and not really with the anti-climb feature. The developer

claimed it had followed and complied with the SPA clause and therefore no appeal can be made. Is there any way the purchasers can take this case to the tribunal?

It is not normal for the sale and purchase agreement (SPA) with the developer to state what would be the details and specifications of the common areas such as the quality and specification of fencing. As such, it will be difficult to win in the tribunal as this is often not specified in the SPA. However, one can approach the developer and advise that if the developer cares for his reputation and future sales, the developer should take an effort to improve the fencing, hopefully on an equal sharing basis. This approach may lead to an amicable solution benefiting all parties concerned.



Khaw Chay Tee

Sri Penaga Condominium management corporation chairman

As the Sri Penaga Condominium MC chairman, can you please share the strategies used to achieve monthly maintenance fee collection rate of 95% to 100%?

There is the soft approach and there is the hard approach. The soft approach is for the front line property management staff in the management office and the building manager to build a rapport with all owners so that a few phone calls or email reminders are sufficient for payment to be received. Owners are also made aware that late payment will incur interest at 10% per annum and no request for waiver of interest will be entertained.

Allowing and enabling owners to pay their maintenance fees by credit card, direct debit or standing bank instructions have also helped Sri Penaga Condominium to maintain its high collection levels. [Please note that banks will charge a fee of about 1.8% for facilitating payment of maintenance fees by credit card.]

The hard approach is to issue notices and take actions provided for under paragraph 6 of the Strata Management (Maintenance and Management) Regulations 2015, which includes:

1. Displaying each defaulter's name and details on the notice boards
2. Deactivating the defaulter's access card, tag or transponder and requiring him or her to sign in a defaulter's book each time he or she requires assistance to enter or exit the condominium

3. Stopping or suspending the defaulter from using the common facilities

Sri Penaga Condominium has not yet had to resort to the hard approach to obtain payment of its maintenance fees.

How did the Sri Penaga Condominium MC build a transparent, friendly and professional management office staff?

There is no short cut to achieving this. The management committee and its committee members have to take the lead, set the standards and establish the culture for the on-site property management staff. The role of the building manager in maintaining the required standards and reinforcing the culture on a day-to-day basis is also very crucial. As such, management committees should choose their building managers carefully, as well as monitor and guide them.

How do we achieve transparency in the "complaint management"? Currently, even as the MC chairperson, I have no idea how many complaints actually come into the office and how many have actually been solved. Recently, two cases surfaced on our Facebook group that their complaints have not been addressed. It seems like, if any owner is in the committee, the manager would solve their problems while others are ignored. I want to change this favouritism practice.

At Sri Penaga Condominium, we have a website where any owner or resident can log in and lodge a complaint. Each complaint is assigned a ticket number, which will then have to be dealt with by the property management team. All complaints received and the action taken by the property management team have to be reported to the management committee at every management committee meeting.

If your condominium does not have a website, then you can perhaps start with a complaints record book that is kept in the management office where residents can fill in the date, their details and their complaints on one side and the management can fill in the action taken, who attended to it and the date on the other side. This complaints record book should be reviewed by the management committee at least at every management committee meeting, if not more frequently.

We are a self-managed MC. I discovered that the manager's contract has expired since May 17, 2017. When I questioned the previous MC as to why the manager is still here when the contract had not been renewed, none could answer me and no one wants to be responsible for this. I would like to consider the option of hiring a professional property management company, but I do not know how to terminate this manager without creating trouble for the MC. May I kindly ask for advice on this?

You cannot deal with this issue alone. You will need the support of the majority of your management committee in order to deal with it. I suggest that you ask the following questions and take the following steps:

1. Ask the management committee members if they are satisfied with the performance of the building manager. If the majority of them say yes, then it is unlikely that you will be able to take the issue of terminating the building manager's contract any further. If the majority say no, then you take the next step.
2. Get the approval of the management

committee to look into the contract of the building manager and to get legal advice as to how it can be lawfully terminated and what compensation (if any) needs to be paid. Present the findings to the management committee for discussion and decision. If the decision is to proceed, then take the next step.

3. To ensure there is no disruption to the day-to-day management and maintenance of your condominium, get the approval of the management committee to contact a few property management companies interested in managing your condominium and select one and employ them before terminating the building manager.

There is another approach to the problem that I can suggest. Get the approval of the management committee to contact a few property management companies interested in managing your condominium. Inform the property management companies that you will require them to take over the employment of the building manager and the other directly employed staff of your condominium. If they agree, this approach will be the least disruptive for your condominium.

What happens when there is dispute between the property management company and the MC? The property management company is hired by the MC, so the MC has the right to make the final decision. What happens if the decision made [by the MC] is not actually beneficial for the residents? How then can the property management company resolve this and how should this situation be handled?

The duty and responsibility of a property management company is to advise and guide the MC that has employed them. If the MC makes decisions that the property management company does not agree with, then the property management company can take a number of steps, including:

1. Discuss the disagreement with the management committee and see if a resolution can be arrived at.
2. Put the reasons for such disagreement on record in the minutes of the management committee meeting.
3. Put such disagreement on record by writing a letter to the chairman of the MC with copies to all the committee members.
4. Give the MC notice of termination of their appointment as property managers, stating the reasons why.

From my experience, it is difficult to get people to serve on the management committee. How do you go about convincing the residents of Sri Penaga Condominium to be a management committee member, more so when there is strict Code of Conduct?

The minimum number of members required to form a management committee under the law is not fewer than three (3) owners, so you only need to persuade two (2) other owners who are prepared to serve on the management committee to stand for election together with you! Sri Penaga Condominium only introduced its Code of Conduct for Committee Members a few years after the MC was formed. You can always start off without a Code of Conduct or with only a few simple rules and then introduce more rules when the management committee has served for some time and stabilised.

EdgeProp.my

SYMPOSIUM ON EXCELLENT PROPERTY MANAGEMENT 2018



THANK YOU!

DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS

ANTHONY LEE TEE
Accredited
building inspector
and trainer,
Architect Centre

KHAW CHAY TEE
Chairman,
Sri Penaga
Management
Corporation

LOW CHEE LEONG
Director,
Praxcis Design
Sdn Bhd

DATO' JEFFREY NG
Chairman,
Rehda Institute

CHRIS TAN
Founder &
Managing Partner,
Chur Associates

... and readers of EdgeProp.my
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MYHOME SURVEY FINDINGS



Drawing up a picture of the IDEAL MALAYSIAN HOME



BY LUM KA KAY

Owning a home is a common goal shared by many Malaysians. But what constitutes an ideal home? Although it is a concept that is subjective to the individual, Lafarge Malaysia and EdgeProp.my have initiated the Lafarge-EdgeProp MYHOME survey to find out what the majority of Malaysians want in a home.

This nationwide project does not stop just at the survey and results analysis. The input will be the basis for the home designs that would be built by Malaysia's award-winning developer S P Setia Bhd. This project follows TheEdgeProperty.com-Lafarge Happiness in the City Index 2017 that measured the happiness level of urban dwellers in major Malaysian cities.

This year, the Lafarge-EdgeProp MYHOME survey that ran for six weeks from February 28 to April 15, managed to garner almost 14,000 respondents. Here are the findings.

So, what do Malaysians really want?

According to the survey, most Malaysians aspire to live in a moderate terraced home or townhouse with a nice living room and a garden, which they can own with a budget of between RM400,000 and RM600,000. The landed property should be located in a gated residential area with amenities such as jogging trails, children's playground and swimming pool.

For most Malaysians, an ideal home should be in the size of 1,000 sq ft to 1,999 sq ft with at least three bedrooms and three bathrooms. The ambience of the home would be "earthy or natural" complemented with wood or marble floorings, partially furnished with good quality appliances. It should offer good ventilation, security and spaciousness — the top three attributes that most Malaysians pay attention to when it comes to choosing a home.

Malaysians also hope their ideal home could be located in a convenient location with good security and surrounded by natural green spaces.

So, now that we know what most Malaysians want in their ideal home, the question is, are we asking for too much? Are we being realistic?

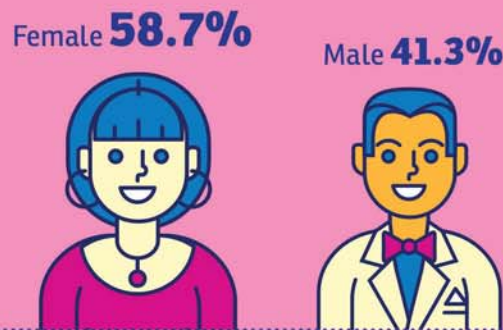
Who are the respondents?

More than half of the respondents are **below the age of 35**, 19% of them are aged between 36 and 45 years old, 7.1% are between 46 and 55, while the remaining 6% are evenly split between those aged 55 years and above and those less than 18 years old.

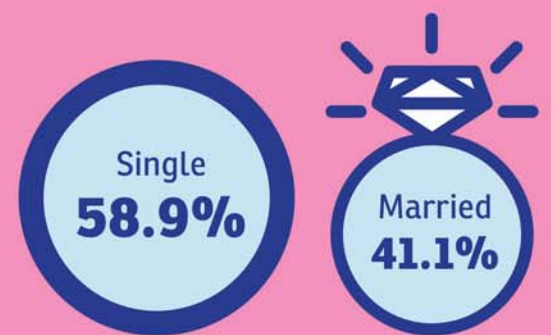
Most respondents reside in the **Klang Valley** — with the majority from Selangor (42%), followed by Kuala Lumpur (17.5%), Johor (about 7.1%) and Perak (6.8%).



GENDER



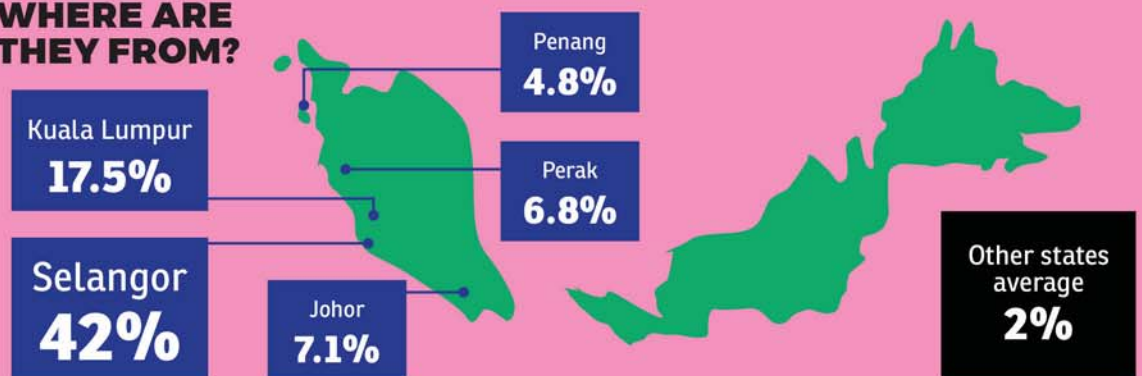
MARITAL STATUS



AGE



WHERE ARE THEY FROM?

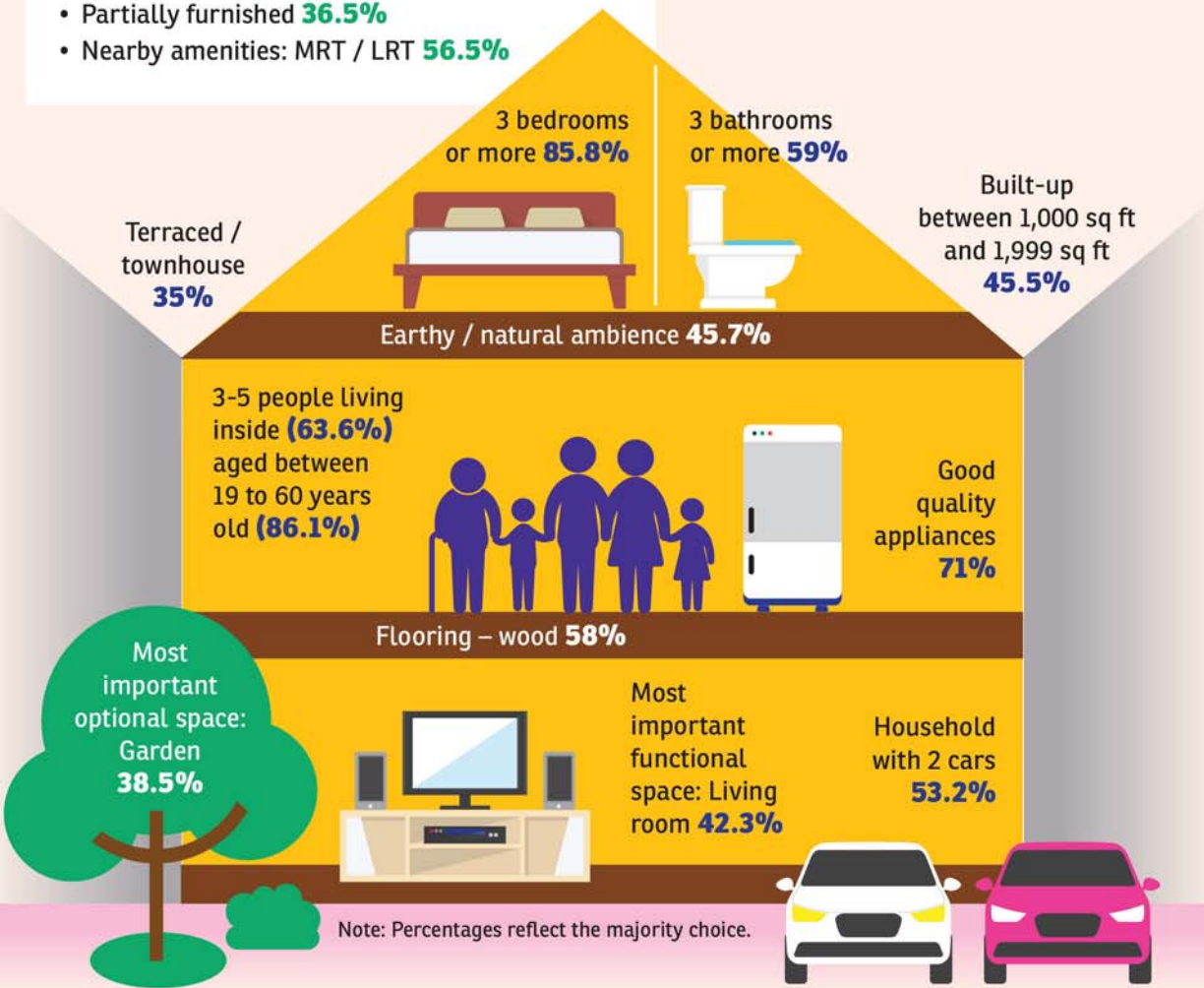


MYHOME SURVEY FINDINGS

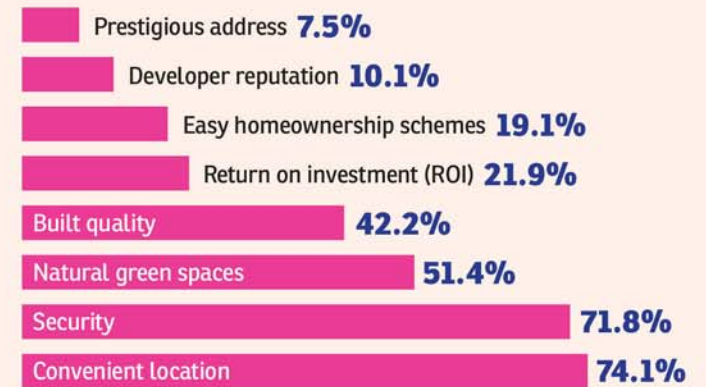
MALAYSIANS ALSO WANT:

- Homes priced RM400,000 to RM600,000 **40.1%**
- Residential only **60.2%**
- Gated with amenities **59.8%**
- Convenient location **74.1%**
- Jogging trail **52.7%**
- Good ventilation **65.6%**
- Partially furnished **36.5%**
- Nearby amenities: MRT / LRT **56.5%**

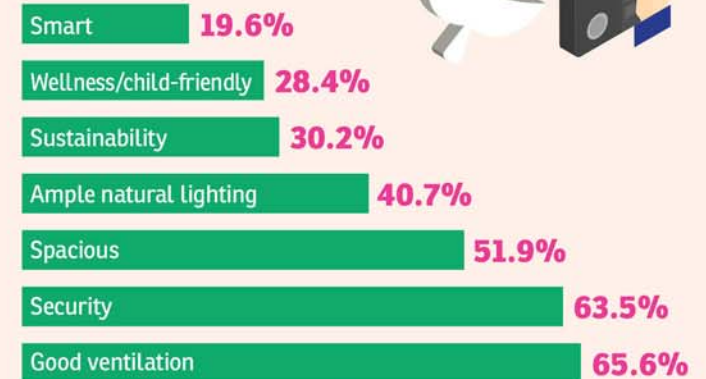
SUMMARY OF THE IDEAL HOME



TOP PRIORITIES WHEN CHOOSING AN IDEAL HOME *



IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF A HOME *



* Percentages do not add up to 100% because respondents were allowed to choose more than one answer.

A home is not just a roof over our heads

BY NATALIE KHOO

Now that Malaysians have given their input on their ideal home through the Lafarge-EdgeProp MYHOME survey, the organisers of this initiative are eager to see the creation of the Malaysian ideal home.

"What we envision as our dream home can be vastly different from the actual living abode that best suits our lifestyle. It is a question of balancing expectation and reality. It is important to know what Malaysians look for in an ideal home and then to balance it with reality, carefully evaluating available options and resources," says Lafarge Malaysia president and CEO Mario Gross.

Hence, the survey results serve as a good reference for the industry as it seeks to provide Malaysians the homes that they want to live in. "It is more important now than ever before for building solutions companies like Lafarge, to work

closely with architects, designers and developers to build homes that meet the needs of Malaysians," says Gross.

He adds that the results show that Malaysians seem to favour smaller spaces that are well thought out, planned and designed. "With good design and optimisation of layout, it increases functional space while allowing for the home to be well ventilated," he says.

EdgeProp.my managing director and editor-in-chief Au Foong Yee notes that the findings amplify the fact that a home is not just a roof over one's head.

This has everything to do with changing lifestyles plus real estate ownership is getting harder owing to a mismatch in property prices and income levels, she added.

"While it is true that trends may influence aesthetics, fundamental needs such as location, affordability, security and convenience remain paramount for the home Malaysians want. The survey findings are synonymous with the clicks on our portal, www.edgeprop.my as well as the



Gross: It is more important now than ever before for building solutions companies like Lafarge, to work closely with architects, designers and developers to build homes that meet the needs of Malaysians.



Au: In a new world where social media thrive, EdgeProp.my is happy to be able to play a strategic role to facilitate homeownership in the new real estate landscape.

feedback from homebuyers at the numerous ground engagements we have organised," she notes.

"The MyHome campaign seeks to hear Malaysians out on what makes them tick. It is about being inclusive. While some developers have sought product input from the

market, this might or might not have been comprehensive or conclusive. In a new world where social media thrive, EdgeProp.my is happy to be able to play a strategic role to facilitate homeownership in the new real estate landscape," says Au.

According to Gross, build quality and what goes into the build are also crucial elements in a home.

"Do we actually know what goes into the walls and structural integrity of our homes? Many homeowners will only discover certain defects such as wall cracks or popping tiles a few months or even years after they have moved in. To mitigate this, it is important that quality products are used and the right materials are used in the right applications," Gross says.

The key word for Au is "sustainability", as she believes that Malaysians must realise that the design and construction of any real estate must take into consideration its long-term quality and upkeep.

"As for Malaysia's Ideal Home, we are happy that it will be designed and built by S P Setia, the country's top property developer. S P Setia is a winner of the inaugural EdgeProp Malaysia's Responsible Developer — Building Sustainable Development Award 2018," Au concludes.

MYHOME SURVEY FINDINGS

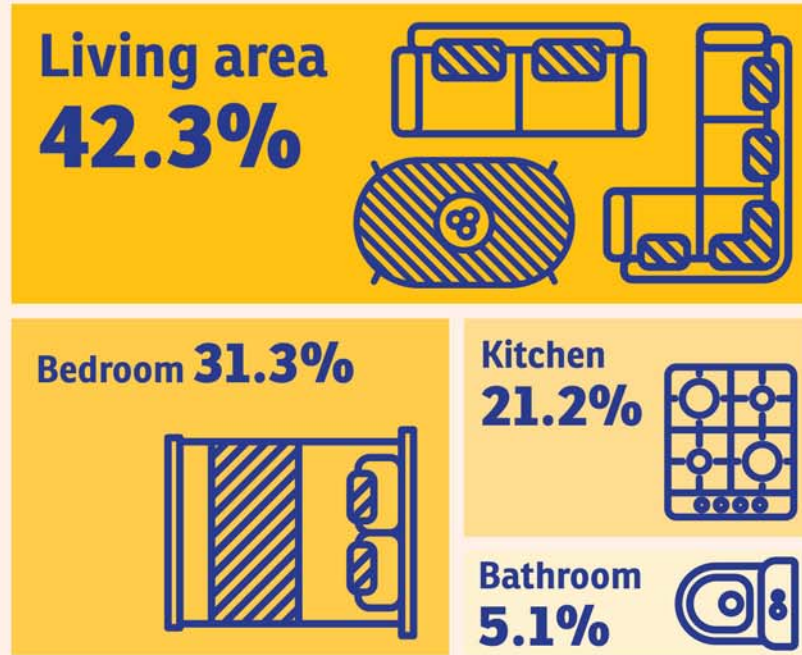


Living that ideal lifestyle

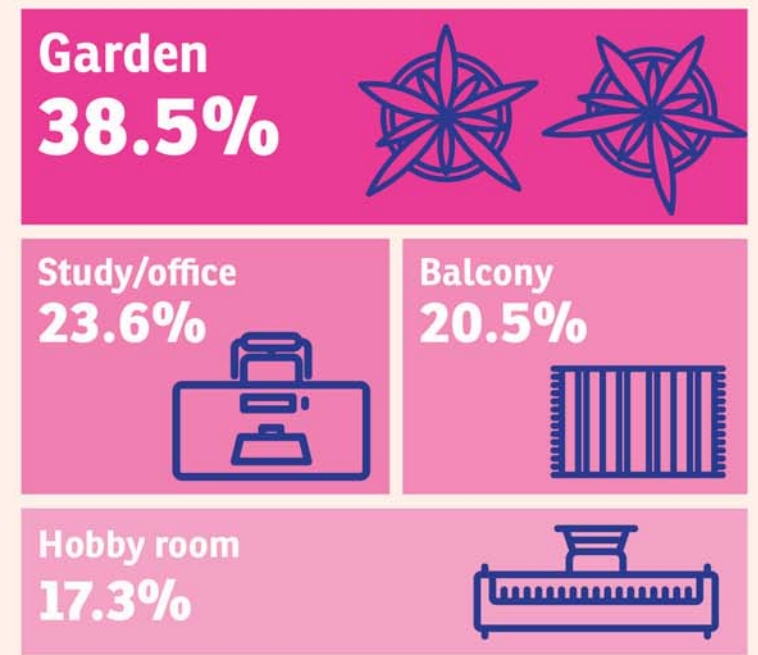
Favourite spaces

Living in an ideal home offers the possibility of an ideal lifestyle. According to the survey respondents, the living room (42.3%) is the most important space in a home, followed by the bedroom (31.3%), kitchen (21.2%) and bathroom (5.1%).

MOST IMPORTANT SPACES



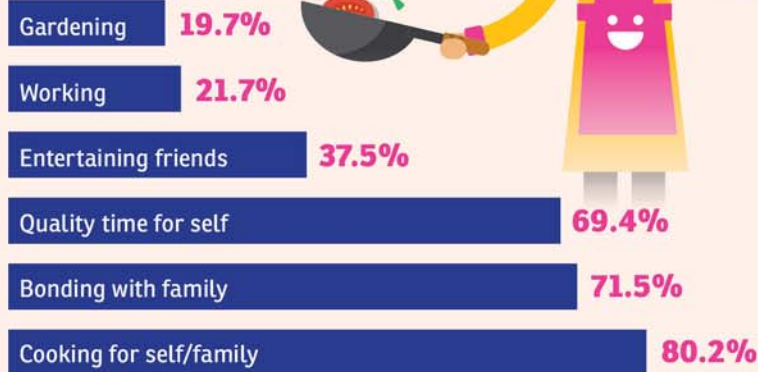
MOST IMPORTANT OPTIONAL SPACES



Things that matter

Malaysians are known for their love for food, and although the kitchen is not chosen as the most important space in a home, a whopping 80.2% of respondents view cooking for themselves or family members as the most important activity at home. Certainly, a home continues to be seen as a place where families can spend time together as 71.5% view the home as a good place for bonding with the family. It is also considered an individual's sanctuary and a place for a person to spend some quality time with oneself (69.4%).

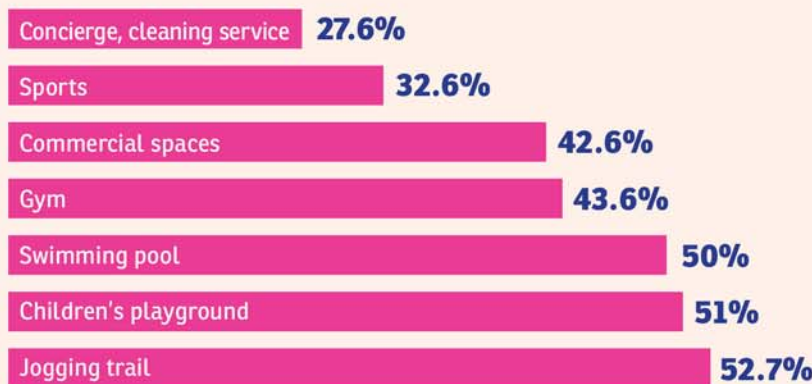
IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES AT HOME *



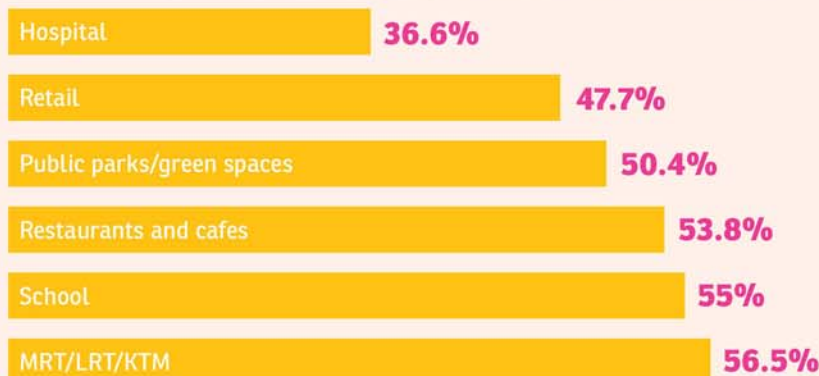
Community living

Although slightly more than half of the respondents prefer to have at least two cars in the house, 56.5% of them think that it is still important for their homes to be located near to public transportation such as mass rapid transit or light rail transit stations. They would also like to be near schools (55%) and near to eateries such as restaurants or cafes (53.8%). These amenities are followed closely by a liking for green spaces such as parks, as 50.4% of the respondents prefer to live near parks.

IMPORTANT AMENITIES WITHIN COMMUNITY *



IMPORTANT AMENITIES OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY *



* Percentages do not add up to 100% because respondents were allowed to choose more than one answer.

Can you afford a mortgage?

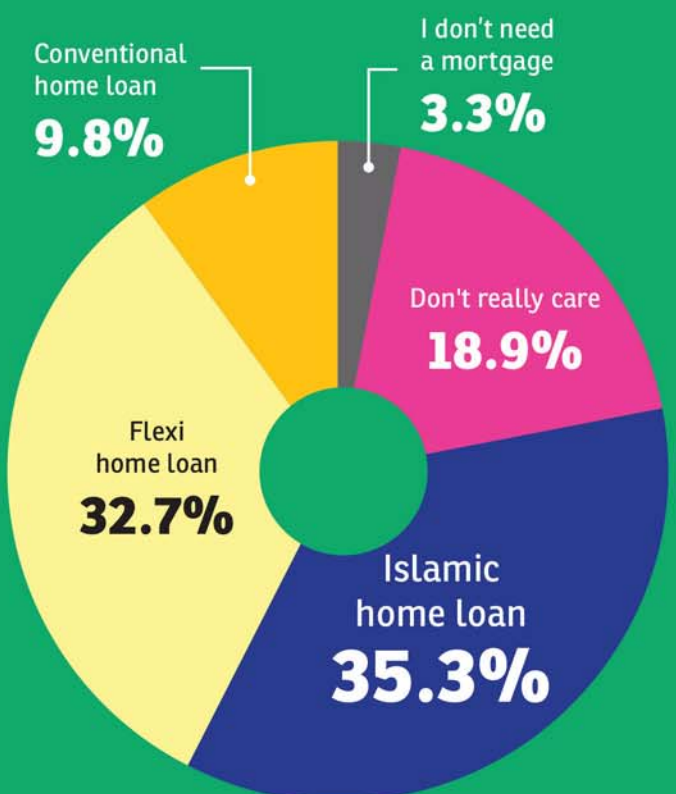
Buying a home is usually the biggest investment or purchase we will ever make in our lives and for most people, a loan is crucial to a home purchase. In the Malaysian home loan market, there are a slew of products that homebuyers could consider — conventional home loans, flexi home loans and Islamic home loans.

Notably, 35.3% of respondents prefer to take up an Islamic loan and 32.7% would go for a flexi home loan while 9.8% would choose conventional home loans.

Surprisingly, about 18.9% don't really care about the type of housing loan that they take on. Only 3.3% note that they don't need a mortgage.

With all being said, the fact is that not every loan application is approved or approved with the desired financing margin, leading to a gap between the upfront payment and the loan amount.

As part of their Plan B, 38.6% of respondents would choose to rent first before trying to apply for a home loan again, while 37.6% will get a differential sum loan to bridge the gap. Almost a quarter of them (23.9% of respondents) however, will forget about getting a home altogether.

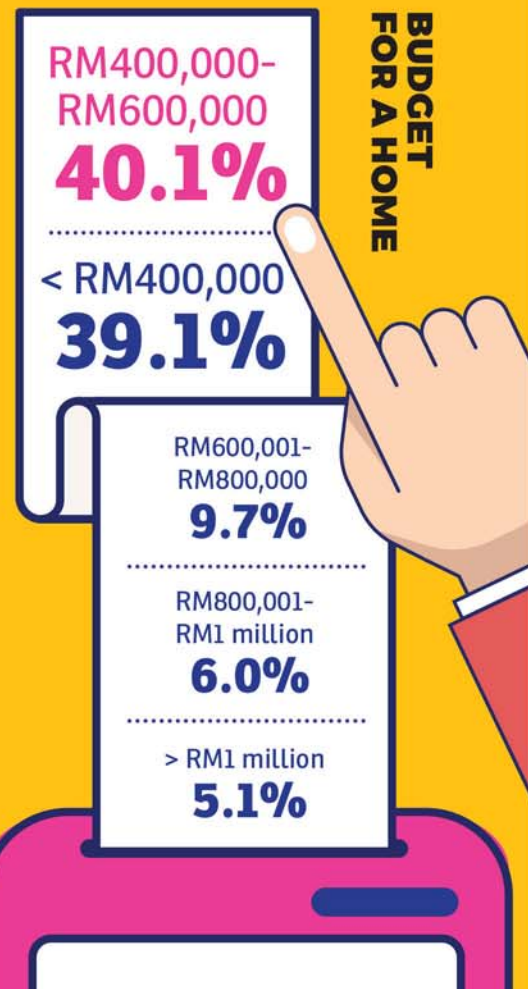
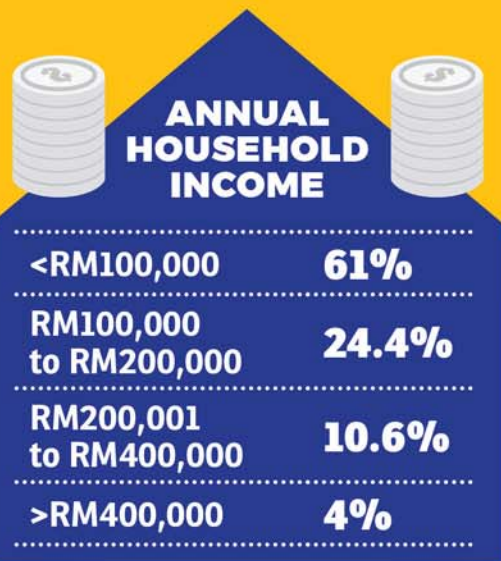


MYHOME SURVEY FINDINGS

Money matters

About 61% of respondents have an annual household income of **less than RM100,000** while almost a quarter (24.4%) earn between RM100,000 and RM200,000.

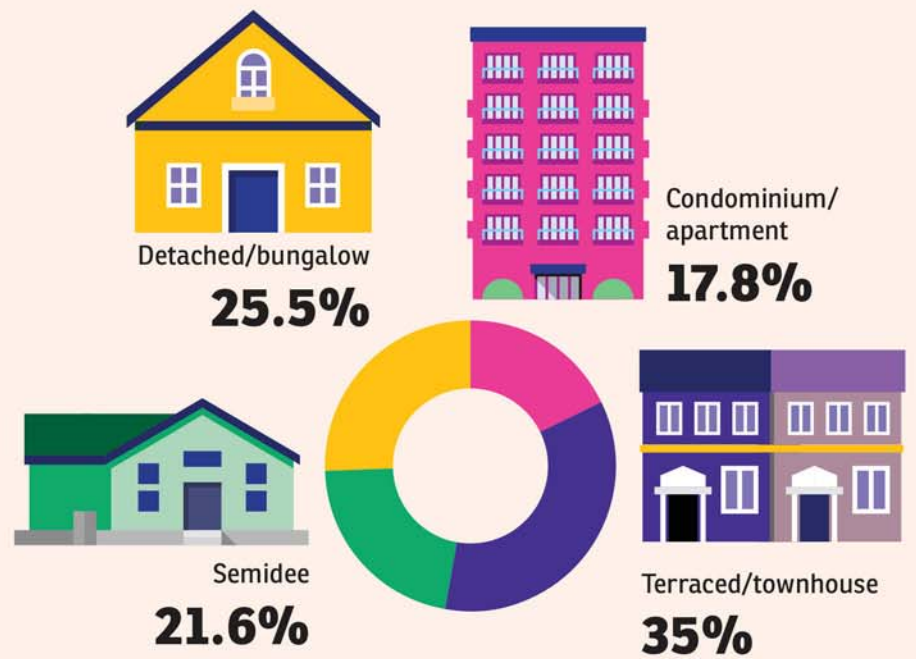
Overall, Malaysians seem to be able to afford homes of **below RM600,000** as about 40.1% of the respondents say they have an average budget of RM400,000 to RM600,000 followed closely with 39.1% with less than RM400,000, to purchase their ideal home. The rest are willing to fork out above RM600,000.



The specifics

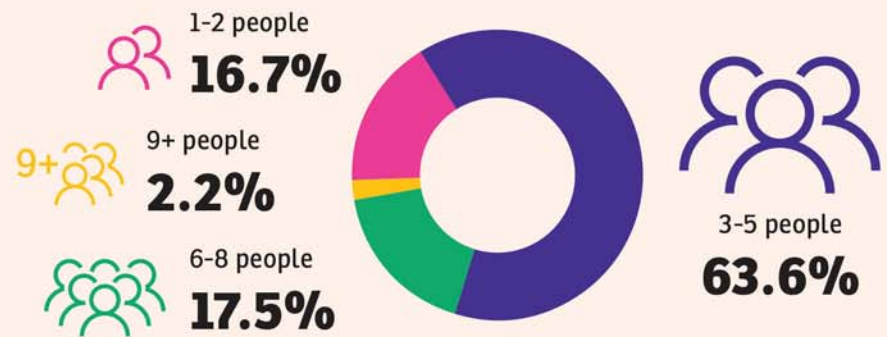
Landed trump high-rise homes

Although house prices are generally on the rise in the country, many respondents still hope to have a landed home, specifically **terraced home/townhouse** (35%), while the rest choose semi-detached (21.6%) and detached/bungalow (25.5%). Only about 17.8% choose a non-landed home namely condominium or apartment.



Under one roof

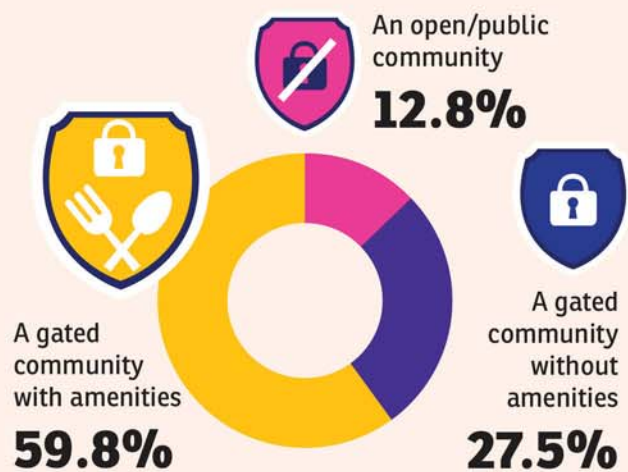
On the number of people they expect to be living under one roof in their ideal home, most respondents or 63.6% envision three to five people to make up the household. About 16.7% indicate one or two persons, while 19.7% expect to live with six or more people in their ideal home.



Attributes

Let's look at the attributes of a home that Malaysians want. Security is a major priority to many aspiring and existing homeowners as 59.8% respondents would like their ideal homes to be located in a gated community with amenities, while 27.5% prefer to live in a gated community without amenities. Only 12.8% choose to live in an open or public community.

Interestingly, in the era of convenience, more than half of the respondents (60.2%) prefer to live in a fully residential development while the rest would like to live in integrated or mixed developments that offer commercial/retail segments such as a mall.



Do we want smaller homes?

Based on the results, the ideal built-up size would be in the range of the 1,000 sq ft to 1,999 sq ft, as chosen by 45.5% of respondents, seemingly "not too big, not too small". About 24.1% of respondents prefer larger built-ups of between 2,000 sq ft and 3,000 sq ft while 9.1% opt for 3,000 sq ft. Only 8.7% choose small built-ups of less than 1,000 sq ft.

Interestingly, 12.6% of the respondents say they don't really care about the size of a home, as long as it fits their household and other needs.

On the number of rooms, it is clear that three bedrooms or more will only be sufficient for most Malaysians as indicated by 85.8% of respondents. As for bathrooms, 59% would like to have three bathrooms or more while 38.9% think that two bathrooms would be sufficient.

Slightly more than half (53.2%) say they will have two cars in the house while 22.2% will have three cars, and 8.9% will have four or more. About 14.4% will have only one car while a mere 1.4% say they will have no car.

IDEAL SIZE



NUMBER OF ROOMS



Residential only development
60.2%

Mixed development
39.8%





What is your IDEAL HOME?



WE HEAR YOU!

Thank you for participating in the
Lafarge-EdgeProp MYHOME survey

SURVEY RESULTS ARE OUT!

Find out @ www.EdgeProp.my

You took
the survey!

Your input
was **collated**
and has been
analysed

A home
showcasing
your input
will be built

Finally,
**Malaysia's IDEAL
HOME** will be **put
on the market!**

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