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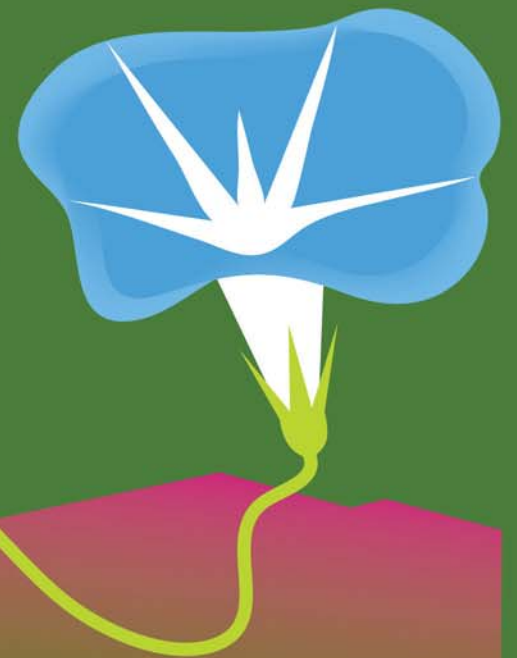


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HOPE for HIGHLAND TOWERS

The government wants to redevelop the site of the condominium, which collapsed in 1993, killing 48 people. The site has been left abandoned since the tragedy. What can hinder its redevelopment? See Pages 4 and 5.





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KPKT appoints more presidents to tackle rising tribunal cases

The Ministry of Housing and Local Government (KPKT) has appointed 16 new presidents to the Tribunal for Homebuyer Claims and Strata Management Tribunal to tackle the rising number of tribunal cases in the country.

Following their appointments, the number of the housing tribunal presidents has increased from nine to 15 while the Strata Management Tribunal now has 10 more presidents, bringing the total to 29.

"The appointment of these 16 new presidents is necessary as the cases need to be heard quickly. Hence, more presidents are required in this aspect," KPKT Minister Zuraida Kamaruddin told the media earlier this week.

Since the inception of the Tribunal for Homebuyer Claims in January 2003, the tribunal has recorded a total of 44,581 cases as at end-June 2018, of which 44,308 have been solved. Meanwhile, since its inception in July 2015 until 1H2018, the Strata Management Tribunal has registered a total of 9,787 cases, of which 7,645 have been solved.

Sentoria buys 150 acres of Morib land for RM20.25m

Sentoria Group Bhd has acquired 150 acres of land in Morib, Kuala

All RTO units in Ramah Pavilion snapped up

All 50 units of Ramah Pavilion condominium in Teluk Kumbar, Penang island, under the developer's rent-to-own (RTO) scheme have been taken up within two months after the scheme was introduced in mid-April.

Developed by M Summit Group, Ramah Pavilion comprises two blocks of 39- and 36-storey towers with 759 units, with built-ups ranging between 800 sq ft and 1,350 sq ft.

The developer has started handing over the units in phases to buyers from July 2. M Summit Group founder and managing director Datuk Albert Moh said the project was launched in 2014 and currently only less than 5% of the total units remains to be sold. Ramah Pavilion also has 15 retail units at the ground floor as part of the project's amenities.



Langat in Selangor for RM20.25 million, to be used for development purposes.

In a Bursa Malaysia filing, Sentoria's wholly-owned subsidiary Sentoria Morib Bay Sdn Bhd had on July 10 inked the sale and purchase agreement with Serimas Development Sdn Bhd, a wholly-owned unit of PNB Development Sdn Bhd.

The purchase price comprises RM2.97 million for water theme park land (22 acres), resort and convention centre land for RM5.13 million (38 acres), Safari Park land for RM10.53 million (78 acres) and a boutique hotel land for RM1.62 million (12 acres).

New rules for non-strata gated-and-guarded schemes in Shah Alam

The Shah Alam City Council has amended guidelines for gated-and-guarded schemes. Under the new rules, there must be 100% approval from residents for implementation of automated gates and access cards and 75% approval for manual boom gate.

As for barricades, they must be removable, are only permitted between midnight and 6am and a guard has to be available by the barricade at other times in case of an emergency.

Security guards are not allowed to take away the motorists' MyKad or other documents and fencing is not allowed unless the area is located near a highway, road, river or monsoon drain.

"If there is a need to fence up the area, residents will have to apply to change the land status to strata but this means all maintenance work (including road maintenance and rubbish collection) will be their responsibility instead of the council's," Shah Alam city councillor Foong Saik Hoong told a local English daily.

Foong says the new requirements are to prevent conflict among residents.

trending
now

LAUNCHES + EVENTS



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If you have any real estate-related events, email us at editor@edgeprop.my.
Events listed here will also appear on www.EdgeProp.my.



Build your imaginary city

Date: July 14 (Sat)
Time: 11am to 5pm
Venue: Trio by Setia sales gallery, Lot No. 82623, Jalan Langat/KS06, Bandar Bukit Tinggi 1, Klang, Selangor
Contact: (03) 3162 3322
Build an imaginary bricks city at Trio by Setia sales gallery and participate in exciting games to win attractive prizes. Kids could also participate in a soap-making workshop.

Rediscover Evergreen Raya at The Glades

Date: July 14 (Sat)
Time: 10am to 5pm
Venue: The Glades Plaza, Off Persiaran Putra Perdana, Section 3, Subang Jaya, Selangor
Contact: (03) 5198 0888
Celebrate the Raya season with Sime Darby Property. There will be a *lemang* and *dodol* cooking demonstration and special performances by Salamiah Hassan and her daughter Atilia. You can also enjoy

childhood games and tasting traditional kampung snacks.

Eco Grandeur Hari Raya Open House

Date: July 14 (Sat)
Time: 6pm to 10pm
Venue: Lot 6232 Persiaran Mokhtar Dahari, Eco Grandeur, Bandar Puncak Alam, Selangor
Contact: (03) 3270 2525
All are invited to the Hari Raya Open House at Eco Grandeur where you and your family will enjoy a concert, food stalls and a Le.Pak Bazaar. There will also be fireworks, traditional dance and an Acapella performance.

Exclusive exhibition of 8 Casson Square

Date: July 14 and 15 (Sat and Sun)
Time: 11am to 6pm
Venue: Shangri-la Hotel, No. 11, Jalan Sultan Ismail, Kuala Lumpur
Contact: (012) 908 6318
Located in London, 8 Casson Square at Southbank Place is scheduled to open its doors to residents in the second half of 2019.



Jom Beraya at Serene Heights

Date: July 15 (Sun)
Time: 12pm to 5pm
Venue: Serene Heights Sales Gallery, Persiaran Serene, Serene Heights, Semenyih, Selangor
Contact: (1800) 888 008
Celebrate Hari Raya with UEM Sunrise Bhd at Serene Heights where you can enjoy meet and greet actress Amyra Rosli as well as special performance by Caliph Buskers. Other activities include a virtual reality simulator, electric scooter rides and a stand-up comedy act by Helmi Gimmick.

Syok Raya at Bayu Indera

Date: July 15 (Sun)
Time: 10am to 4pm
Venue: Bayu Indera sales gallery, PT-12079, Taman Bayu Indera Lukut, Mukim Port Dickson, Port Dickson, Negeri Sembilan
Contact: (1700) 815 925
Seri Pajam Development Sdn Bhd invites the public to celebrate Raya at Bayu Indera with fun activities. There will be water zorball, giant slide, inflatable kids' world, photo booth, game stalls and a free flow of popcorn.

Tamansari Raya Open House

Date: July 15 (Sun)
Time: 11am to 5pm
Venue: Tamansari Sales Gallery,



Jalan Batu Arang, Sungai Bakau, Rawang, Selangor
Contact: (03) 2727 7550
BRDB Developments Sdn Bhd will be hosting a Raya event at its Tamansari project sales gallery. Taste Raya cuisine and enjoy Gamelan and Ghazal performances. There will also be a special guided tour to its Amaryllis homes. Special Raya discounts will be available on that day.

FIFA World Cup Final LIVE at Southbay

Date: July 15 (Sun)
Time: 6pm to 2am
Venue: Southbay City sales gallery, No. 1, Southbay City, Jalan Permatang Damar Laut,, Bayan Lepas, Penang
Contact: (04) 628 8188
Mah Sing Group Bhd invites the public to the live screening of the World Cup final at its Southbay City sales gallery. Cheer for your favourite team while enjoying the table top games, iPong challenge, live band performance and face and body tattoo painting.



Representatives from EdgeProp.my, VPEX 2018 partners, supporting sponsors and participating developers at the handshake ceremony.

Let's go virtual

BY SHAWN NG

The ongoing EdgeProp.my Malaysia's Virtual Property Expo 2018 (VPEX 2018) features not just the latest properties by prominent developers in Malaysia but also offered visitors the chance to experience virtual reality (VR) technology.

Running online at VPEX.EdgeProp.my from July 6 to 29, the expo is organised by EdgeProp.my with digital partner 16TWO Communication Labs Sdn Bhd and media partner The Edge Malaysia.

It kicked off with a two-day roadshow VPEX ON-THE-GO on July 6 and 7.

Held in a custom-fitted truck, the roadshow's first stop was The Starling Mall in Petaling Jaya followed by MyTOWN Shopping Centre in Kuala Lumpur the following day.

The roadshow attracted overwhelming interest as visitors queued up to have a VR experience of selected property projects and play VR games, such as Fruit Ninja, Beat Saber and Bullet Train.

It was an unforgettable experience for many families as everyone had fun, with excited parents "slicing fruits" in VR with their children. All were rewarded with loads of freebies including goodie bags, balloons, ice-cream and popcorn.

Introduced in 2017, VPEX aims to serve as a one-stop centre for those who are interested in buying

property by digitalising the footprints of customers to traditional property fairs and showrooms.

VPEX 2018 also serves to raise the competitive edge of both local and foreign developers by keeping them "ahead of the game" while amplifying their brand awareness and interactions with buyers and prospective buyers, said EdgeProp.my editor-in-chief and managing director Au Foong Yee in her welcome address at a handshake ceremony with partners, supporters and participating developers on July 6.

This year's VPEX features projects by more than 10 prominent developers in the country, namely Asiana Agresif Sdn Bhd (a joint venture between CapitaLand and Jura Asia Corp Sdn Bhd), BRDB Developments Sdn Bhd, Eastern & Oriental Bhd (E&O), I & P Group Sdn Bhd (a member of Setia), LBS Bina Group Bhd, Matrix Concepts Holdings Bhd, Paramount Property Development Sdn Bhd, Perdana ParkCity Sdn Bhd, Putrajaya Holdings Sdn Bhd, UEM Sunrise Bhd and Yong Tai Bhd.

Among the projects featured at the virtual property fair are genKL by Asiana Agresif; BRDB's Emerald Bay, Senja Residences, Taman Sari and Verdana; E&O's 18 East at Andaman; I & P's homes in Althea at Alam Impian, Kinrara Anggun, Kota Bayuemas Klang, TEN Kinrara and homes in Cemara Damai Residence; LBS Bina's Alam Perdana and Residensi Bintang Bukit Jalil; Chambers Kuala Lumpur by Matrix Concepts; Paramount's Atwater, Greenwoods and Utopolis Batu Kawan; Perdana ParkCity's South Brooks @ Desa ParkCity; Putrajaya Holdings' Augusta, Duta Villa, Flora Rosa and Aura Residence; UEM Sunrise's Estuari Gardens, Residensi Ledang, Serene Heights, Solaris Parq, Teega and Verdi Eco-dominiums; and Yong Tai's Impression U-Ithant and The Dawn.

Visitors to the VPEX.EdgeProp.my portal will have the chance to win daily prizes including free stays at Resorts World Kijal, Resorts World Langkawi and Awana Genting, courtesy of Resorts World Genting, and mattresses by Slumberland (Hilding Anders Malaysia Sdn Bhd).

Resorts World Genting and Hilding Anders are supporting sponsors of VPEX 2018.

Malaysia Virtual Property Expo 2018  

While you may have missed out on VPEX-ON-THE-GO, VPEX is still ongoing until July 29 at VPEX.EdgeProp.my.



VPEX ON-THE-GO received good response from the public who were eager to experience virtual tours of the properties.



Ice-cream and popcorn were available for free to VPEX ON-THE-GO visitors.



Visitors to the roadshow could also take "we-fies" with VPEX 2018's human billboards.



The roadshow was held in a customised truck that went from Starling Mall in Petaling Jaya on July 6 to MyTOWN Shopping Centre in Kuala Lumpur on July 7.



A family having fun at VPEX ON-THE-GO in MyTOWN Shopping Centre.



Kids had fun at the VR game console while the adults had a VR tour of selected property projects.

ALL PICTURES BY LOW YEN YEING | EdgeProp.my

COVER STORY



BY TAN AI LENG

With a name synonymous with tragedy, the Highland Towers site located in Ulu Kelang, Selangor has long been abandoned since a block of the condominium collapsed in December 1993, killing 48 people. It has since become a den for drug addicts and vagabonds.

Calls by residents in the surrounding areas to pull down the two remaining 12-storey blocks to eradicate the unhealthy activities going on there have met with inaction, until the newly appointed Housing and Local Government Minister took it up.

Within a month after taking office, Zuraida Kamaruddin has expressed her intention to rope in the support of stakeholders to redevelop the site. She deemed the 15-acre site in the Gombak district to be too valuable to be left to decay and become an eyesore.

The redevelopment proposal has largely been welcomed by the surrounding residents, but will redevelopment counter the stigma of the ill-fated towers that collapsed due to a landslide?

Knight Frank Malaysia executive director for capital markets Allan Sim says the plan to redevelop the area will benefit the local community in terms of stamping out criminal activities that have been found within the abandoned buildings.

"It could also help to provide some sort of closure to the families of the affected, which could not have been properly reached over the past 25 years with the ruins of the development still towering over the Taman Hillview area," he says.

A resident who only wants to be known as Marshall, has stayed at Taman Hillview for thirty years and witnessed the rise and fall of this area. He believed that with the government taking the lead in the redevelopment plan, the market's confidence towards Ulu Kelang properties will be restored.

"The abandoned buildings have been an eyesore for local residents. The [Sri Ukay Hillview] Residents' Association has engaged with local MPs a few years ago and proposed the idea of redevelopment, but nothing concrete has happened. We really hope the minister could realise the plan," he tells EdgeProp.my.

For any development or redevelopment to move ahead, one would need to get rid of the stigma attached to the area as a result of the tragic events due to a landslide.

It would be a challenge to rid the thought of similar landslides occurring in the area from people's minds, says The One Property International Sdn Bhd co-founder and executive director Stephen Yew.

The public perception of unsafe soil structure was further aggravated by another landslide incident in 2008 in the eastern side of Bukit Antarabangsa, around 2km away from Highland Towers.

"Sentiments have been negative about new developments around this hilly area. Buyers are not so receptive towards the idea of owning a property in an area which is prone to landslide," he stresses.

The Highland Towers' site has remained an eyesore for the local community and served as a public reminder of its past tragedy.



Highland Towers site — IS REVIVAL POSSIBLE?

House prices resilient

According to Marshall, despite the tragedy shedding a negative light on Ulu Kelang's Taman Hillview or Bukit Antarabangsa areas, house price growth in these places have remained resilient although it lags behind the rest of the market.

"Prices have continued to climb, especially for houses in guarded communities. The beautiful green living environment and the proximity to KL city centre are the reasons that support the price growth," says Marshall.

Yew of The One Property International notes that the property market in and around Ulu Kelang has proven resilient in view of its strategic position close to Kuala Lumpur

city centre and the Ampang area.

Sim from Knight Frank concurs that housing prices in the Ulu Kelang area have generally increased over the years albeit slowly.

"We believe it is because the Taman Hillview area is home to middle- to high-income earners, coupled with its freehold central location being only 7km to 8km away from KL city centre. In addition, its access to expressways such as the MRR2 is definitely a plus point," he says.

EdgeProp.my data showed that the average transaction price for detached homes in Taman Hillview, which are located nearest to the Highland Towers' site, have increased to RM261 psf last year based on land size or RM1.31 million per unit based on aver-

age absolute price from RM243 psf in 2016 or RM796,667 per unit. No transaction was recorded in 1Q2018.

Overall, a total of 31 detached homes were transacted in the entire Ulu Kelang area last year at an average price of RM374 psf or RM1.82 million per unit.

As for terraced houses, a total of 57 units were transacted at an average price of RM423 psf or RM790,139 per unit or RM920,000 per unit; one unit was sold at RM271 psf in 1Q2018.

As for condominiums in Ulu Kelang, average prices were lower than neighbouring housing areas such as Wangsa Maju and Taman Setiawangsa. A total of 72 condominium units in Ulu Kelang were sold in 2017 at an average price of RM265 psf, compared with RM453 psf in Wangsa Maju and RM396 psf in Taman Setiawangsa.

Sim notes that not many development parcels were transacted within the immediate area except for two pieces of land in Ampang Ukay acquired by EcoFirst Consolidated Bhd, back in 2013 and 2015.

The company purchased a 62-acre plot from Zurich Insurance (M) Bhd and a 25-acre plot from Harta Villa Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of IGB Corp Bhd, for RM145 million (about RM54 psf) and RM61.86 million or an average of RM57.45 psf, respectively. The combined 87 acres are currently the project site for EcoFirst's Liberty Arc mixed development.

KNIGHT FRANK MALAYSIA



Sim: The redevelopment plan will benefit the local community in terms of crime eradication.

PATRICK GOH | THE EDGE



Tian: Property demand in the Ulu Kelang area is stable as most of the houses are bought for own stay and not for speculation.

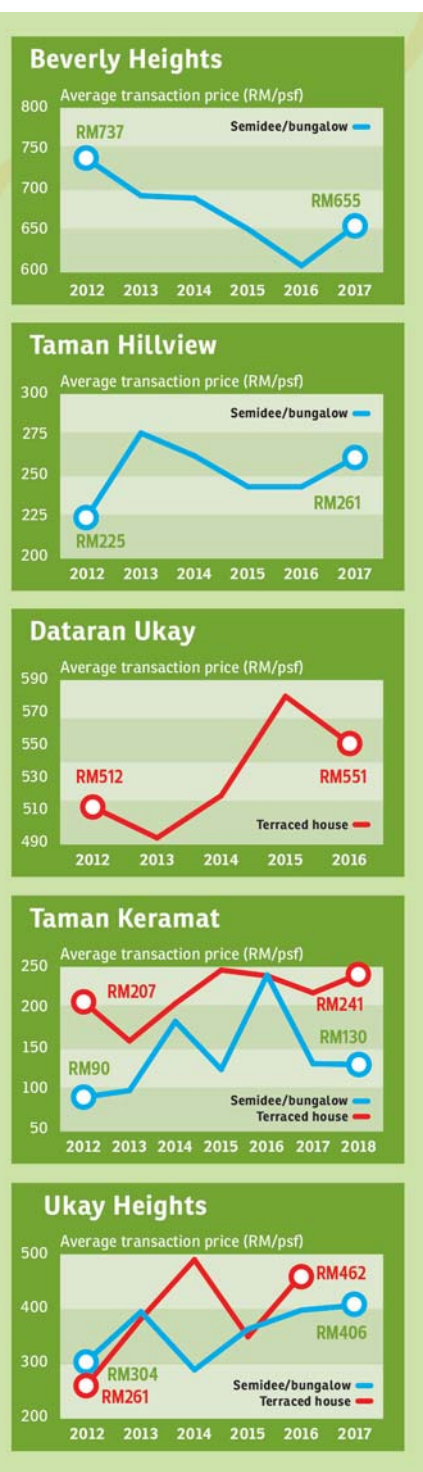
KENNY YAP | THE EDGE



Yew: Redevelopment will be easier if the initiative comes from the government.

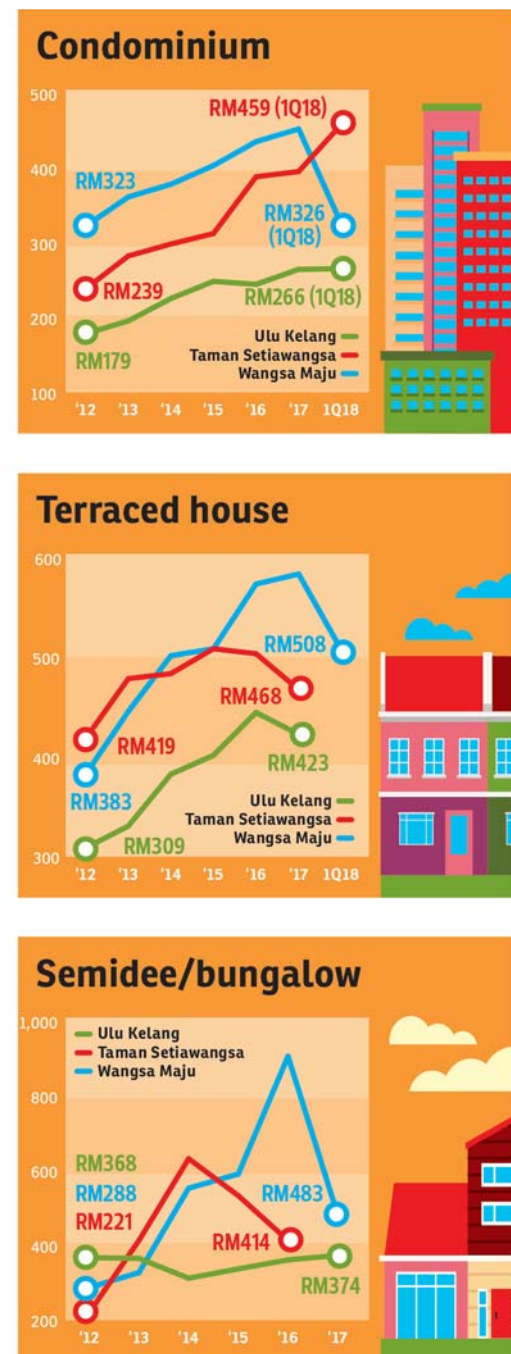


Ulu Kelang housing price trends



Property price comparisons

— between Ulu Kelang, Taman Setiawangsa, and Wangsa Maju



Ampong Jaya area specialist Matt Tian, who is also the head of international market of PropNex Realty (Malaysia), opines that demand in the Ulu Kelang area is pretty stable as most of the houses there attract owner occupiers and not speculators.

Despite the stigma of being landslide-prone, Tian emphasises that slope enhancement works have been done over the years and the local community who knows this place well, have treated past incidents as water under the bridge.

“This has been reflected in the high rental demand from expats who prefer landed homes with lush green environment. For certain well-maintained and furnished bungalows, expats are willing to pay above RM10,000 rent a month,” he says.

However, Tian notes that the rental market has slowed due to cost cutting exercises by the oil and gas industry and multinational companies. Average rent for bungalows has dropped from above RM10,000 a month to slightly below RM10,000.

Meanwhile, terraced house rentals have remained within the RM3,500 to RM4,000 range a month, depending on size and condition.

Land matters

Besides the stigma of it being a landslide-prone area, there are many other challenges in redeveloping the Highland Towers’ site, says The One International’s Yew.

Among the many issues, land matters pertaining to the ownership of the property and the vested interest of various stakeholders, including banks, will be the first things that have to be sorted out.

“With government intervention, there will be a need for a special committee to conduct a feasibility study, take charge of the land and rebuild the entire area with new housing schemes,” he adds.

The minister has also raised concerns

“Prices have continued to climb, especially for houses in guarded communities. The beautiful green living environment and the proximity to KL city centre are the reasons that support the price growth.”

over land matters as her ministry had encountered some difficulties in identifying the land and unit owners.

The Highland Towers land was owned by AmBank (M) Bhd. However, when contacted by EdgeProp.my through email, the company said the land was sold “some years ago”. AmBank also declined to disclose more details on the deal including the transaction price and details of the new owner.

As of early July, the ministry (which has set up a special taskforce on the Highland

Towers redevelopment) has identified the landowner of Highland Towers — Regal Field Development Sdn Bhd. It has also managed to contact 111 out of a total of 138 owners of the condominium units. The 111 owners have agreed to the redevelopment as they have received full compensation for the collapse.

At the same time, ministry secretary-general Datuk Mohammad Mentek, who has been appointed to chair the redevelopment

committee, has had a meeting with Jabatan Insolvency Malaysia. The latter has been given till July 16 to find out the names and contacts of the remaining 27 unit owners.

Safety

Knight Frank’s Sim also believes the fundamental issue is safety. “Safety is still the main factor whether the redevelopment project could regain people’s confidence.”

He adds that before any development there can be explored, comprehensive stud-

ies need to be carried out on the site and its surrounding areas to ensure the engineering, soil condition, drainage, infrastructure capacity and other aspects are properly assessed to ensure its safety.

“In addition, the process will also need to take into account the necessary compliance with the Selangor hillslope development guidelines,” he says.

Will the market bite should there be any redevelopment in the future? Yew opines that a mixed development comprising high and medium-end residential landed stratified schemes such as villas, bungalows, semi-dees, and super-linked houses with gated-and-guarded schemes will be preferred by buyers.

“Ulu Kelang is within the enclave of the KL urban city belt surrounded by elites, affluent residents and expat residents. The spill over effect from the rapid developments in KL, Ampang and Ulu Kelang areas has long been felt in this area.

“But the Highland Towers collapse and several landslide incidents within the vicinity have resulted in a slowdown in developments and have pushed away developers from embarking on new developments here,” he opines.

He notes that high-rise residential projects could be considered, if the development strictly complies with recommendations from experts with regards to building in the area.

SOLUTIONS TO BEST MANAGED PROPERTY



How to counter common challenges in strata living

There are bound to be problems and issues when you live within a strata community. Some of these challenges are more commonly encountered than others. What are they and how do you deal with them?



BY SHAWN NG

Being part of a strata residential community can be a boon or a bane, depending on the kind of fellow-residents you get, or you are. Granted, most of us try our best to love our neighbours as ourselves; yet, certain quandaries seem to beset strata dwellers rather commonly.

"You must know and be aware of the kind of problems you could face in community living, whom you will be up against, and how you can go about resolving the issues," Chur Associates founder and managing partner Chris Tan tells EdgeProp.my.

"Hence, homeowners must equip themselves first with knowledge about their rights as property owners, so that they are able to take the right action when conflicts arise with developers or among fellow property owners," adds Tan, who was a judge of EdgeProp Malaysia's Best Managed Property Awards 2018 and a speaker at the EdgeProp.my Symposium on Excellent Property Management 2018.

Here are the five most common issues in strata living that owners should take note of, according to Tan.

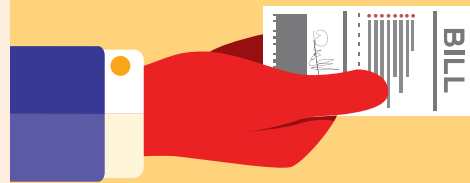
Service charge and sinking fund payments

First on the list has to do with money. It may not be the most cordial subject to broach, but it is inevitable as service charge collection is one of the most common issues in strata living. You have probably heard of homeowners who refuse to pay their maintenance fees.

So, how do you tackle this problem?

Tan says the property management should always keep owners informed on payment updates and do timely follow-up with them. It is also important to give the defaulters notice promptly and suspend their usage of common property immediately [upon default].

On top of that, make it convenient to pay such as online facilities or standing instructions to help and encourage owners to keep up with their maintenance fees, he adds.



How to resolve a payment dispute in strata living

Owners can...

- STEP 1** – Seek clarification from the management to understand the payment dispute verbally or in writing.
- STEP 2** – Start a negotiation process with the management to address the dispute for a win-win solution.
- STEP 3** – Refer to the Strata Management Tribunal.
- STEP 4** – Refer to civil court.

Property management can...

- STEP 1** – Seek clarification from the owner.
- STEP 2** – Exercise the power granted by law to enter into an instalment payment programme.
- STEP 3** – Refer to the Strata Management Tribunal.
- STEP 4** – Refer to the Commissioner of Building.
- STEP 5** – Refer to civil court.



Participation in general meetings

In communal living, the key to good property management is participation. Owners should participate in the general meetings to keep tabs on the performance of their property management.

However, many strata property owners do not realise that good property management requires strong participation from the owners.

"To encourage participation in general meetings, the property management should serve an early notice on the requirement to participate as well as the fee payment status before the official notice of the meetings.

"It is also advisable to publish an infographic to accompany meeting notices to educate the owners on the dos and don'ts as participants," Tan suggests.

How to ensure meetings are smoothly conducted

- STEP 1** – Ensure that the meeting notices and service of the meeting notices are in order.
- STEP 2** – Clarify with the management on the requirements and participation process.
- STEP 3** – Negotiate for a solution to ensure participation.
- STEP 4** – Refer to the Strata Management Tribunal if there is a dispute.
- STEP 5** – Refer to the Commissioner of Buildings for execution.

Leakage from adjoining unit

Leakage from ceilings and walls can be very distressing. Left unattended, it can even pose a danger. Besides giving space for mould growth, it can cause damage to the property and lead to more severe mechanical and electrical problems.

"The issue should be addressed as soon as possible and not until it escalates. Timely maintenance of common property is also required to prevent leaks," counsels Tan.

The source of the leakage can arise from another owner's property or the common property, but the claiming process is similar.



Inter-floor leakage claiming process

The party affected can...

- STEP 1** – Clarify with the resident/management to understand the cause of the leakage.
- STEP 2** – Negotiate a solution with the party responsible for the leakage.
- STEP 3** – If direct solution fails, lodge a complaint with the management body.
- STEP 4** – The management body is to conduct an inspection to ascertain the cause of leakage.
- STEP 5** – Once the responsible party is identified, the management shall instruct him/her to fix the leakage.
- STEP 6** – If the responsible party refuses to do so, the owner/management can proceed with the repair and start a claim with the Strata Management Tribunal.
- STEP 7** – Refer to the Commissioner of Building for execution.

Handover of management from developer to JMB/MC

According to the Strata Management Act 2013, developers shall hand over the management of a strata residential property to the owners before the developer's management period expires (within 12 months from vacant possession).

The items that developers are required to hand over include the balance in the maintenance and sinking fund account and all records relating to and necessary for the maintenance and management of the building and common area.

In order to ensure a smooth and transparent transition, Tan urges developers to conduct a pre-handover education with the owners and provide a checklist for the convenience of the incoming management body.

"Meanwhile, the owners should maintain a good communication with the developer after the handover to ensure proper knowledge transfer," he says.

How to resolve a dispute in the handover process

Joint management body (JMB) or management corporation (MC) can...

- STEP 1** – Clarify with the developer any concerns in the dispute.
- STEP 2** – Start a negotiation process to address the dispute for a win-win solution.
- STEP 3** – Refer to the Strata Management Tribunal.
- STEP 4** – Refer to the Commissioner of Building.
- STEP 5** – Refer to the relevant ministry.



Late issuance of strata title

A strata title is the document that prove one's ownership of a strata property, but some owners face the problem of late issuance of strata titles. Tan says developers should keep the owners informed of the application process and progress of the issuance of the title while the owners should keep tabs on the matter so they would understand if there is any potential delay.

What to do if the issuance of strata title is delayed

Owners can...

- STEP 1** – Seek clarification with developer and the authorities.
- STEP 2** – Negotiate for a solution.
- STEP 3** – Check with the Tribunal for Homebuyer Claims.
- STEP 4** – Check with the Housing and Local Government Ministry.



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Creating a mini natural world

BY RACHEL CHEW

No one can dispute the benefits of plants. So, despite the time and money involved in keeping a green bed, many deem the effort worth it. However, such a privilege can only be enjoyed by those with space for some good old ground.

Fret not, however, because there is now another way to make up for the lack of land for landscaping – aquascaping.

L C Chan, the director of Aqua Design Amano Malaysia (ADA Malaysia), describes aquascaping as building a miniature natural world in an aquarium.

“It is about building an ecosystem by setting up an oxygen regulator system, lighting, soil, water, plant and animal in an aquarium. It is like a mini jungle you can have at home,” Chan tells EdgeProp.my.

According to Chan, aquascaping is not a new hobby to Malaysia, with its roots going back a few decades. However, it has never gained traction until recently, mainly because its life span used to be as brief as half a year.

“Imagine having invested a month to set up a beautiful aquarium scape, but your

plants and fishes cannot last more than half a year. You will be upset and disappointed because it is not cheap to start one. So it was not so popular in the past,” Chan explains. He says the key reason to the short life span of an aquascaping tank in the past was the quality of the base layer or the soil and sand.

“The base is everything. Last time people did not really pay much attention to the base. [They think] what is more important is the landscape. So when all the nutrients in the soil are depleted, the plants slowly die and eventually you will have to start everything all over again,” he shares.

Chan, who had quit his career as a mechanical engineer to be the first Malaysia distributor of Japan’s ADA range of aquascaping equipment products, says aquascaping has come a long way over the years and one could create a real miniature natural world as a complete ecosystem within the tank.

“It can actually last forever with some regular maintenance,” he says while showing off an eight-year-old tank.

To Chan, aquascaping is one of the best home decor one could possibly have because it is a live painting. “It looks a little different every day. It is never boring.”



Build a miniature natural world in an aquarium.

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Chan: It can actually last forever with some regular maintenance.



A mini jungle you can have at home.

Tips for beginners

1. Install the tank on a cabinet that is safe and specifically designed for aquariums.
2. Place a mat on the cabinet to absorb vibration and help to prevent the tank from sliding off the cabinet.
3. Use a level gauge at the bottom of the tank to ensure the installation is level.
4. Do not skimp on substrate additives for beneficial bacteria which is important for the health of aquatic plants.
5. Make sure the driftwood is perfectly supported by stones to avoid the substrate from floating out.
6. Treat feeding time as a therapeutic interactive activity.
7. Nutrient supplementation – potassium and trace elements are easily depleted so add basic nutrients to ensure aquatic plants are healthy.
8. Remove dead leaves from tank.

Things you will need to start

1. Tank
2. Soil and sand
3. Substrate additives for beneficial bacteria
4. Driftwood and stones
5. Light system
6. Water filter system
7. Oxygen regulator system
8. Fertiliser
9. Aqua plants and fishes
10. Maintenance tools such as scissors and razor



To set up a standard two-foot tank will cost about RM1,500 to RM2,000, depending on the equipment, plants and fish used. “It takes about a month to prepare the ecosystem in the tank. It begins with building the base. Get the soil ready for the plants and water. Then, choose the layout material and plan the composition before placing the plants in.

“After setting up the landscape, you need to set up the equipment including the CO2 system, water filter system, lights and so on before you can fill the tank with water. Observe and adjust the pH, temperature, water quality and see how the plants are doing,” says Chan, adding that the observation period will usually take one to two weeks before fish is introduced into the tank.

“Many people are unsure about how to set up a tank, so we offer a service to ‘babysit’ their tank and

only pass it to them when the ecosystem is ready and stable,” he says.

Daily maintenance, according to him, is “effortless”.

“Always remember it is a complete ecosystem. You can be away for a few days and the fishes and plants will be completely fine. Of course you can put fertiliser and fish food to help them grow stronger,” he shares.

Daily maintenance involves picking up dead leaves, flattening the sand and cleaning the tank with a razor. Other periodical maintenance includes changing 1/3 of the water in the tank every two weeks and cleaning the filter media, tools and equipment.

Unlike a garden, regular trimming is not necessary. “You don’t see a neat, garden-like jungle anywhere, right? So you don’t have to trim your aqua plants like bonsai, just let it grow naturally and trim it when it is too much for the tank.”

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