

## For the children

Designing homes for children requires more than just aesthetics, it demands a thoughtful understanding of their needs, interests and unique perspectives.

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By LIEW JIA YI (YANIKA)  
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**W**HETHER to raise its value or make use of an unwanted piece of land, refurbishment is a welcome alternative to leaving under-utilised properties the way they are. While refurbishment is not an uncommon solution for these buildings, transforming them into community-focused projects remains an issue.

Unlike the economic motive inherent in the construction of residential, commercial and industrial units, focusing on non-profit projects allows the opportunity for greater social cohesion, inclusion and resilience necessary to advance social sustainability in Malaysia.

According to the World Bank, these are components critical to the goal of social sustainability, facilitating the ability of societies to adapt and flourish.

A portion of the National Budget 2023 is dedicated to corporate social responsibility, with RM250mil pledged to corporate social contribution for the hardcore poor, as well as a part of RM30mil to increase the habitability of public housing in Kuala Lumpur.

While progress remains slow, several developers have already begun to take steps to alleviate the needs of the community. MyTOWN Shopping Centre's recently commissioned international educational centre, targeted to open in 2024, used to be its old project office.

The centre is to be operated by Ideas Academy, which works closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR) to make learning more accessible to less privileged and refugee children in Malaysia, alongside general pupils.

To achieve its goal, Boustead Ikano Sdn Bhd (BISB) and Ikano Centres have pledged to invest approximately RM5mil to refurbish the building into a holistic learning environment with all necessary modern equipment.

"We felt that MyTOWN's former office is the ideal grounds for a learning destination with surrounding land creating ample space for skate ramps, multipurpose courts, and green spaces to create an environment for students to learn, grow and thrive," Ikano Centres commercial director Arnoud Bakker said.

According to Bakker, the initiative is part of their sustainability strategy, which championed initiatives that help support the goal of becoming more circular and climate positive. With community-centred refurbishment, projects are not just part of the social sustainability effort, but environmental sustainability as well.

"Demolishing the existing building creates additional construction waste that ends up being disposed of at landfills. Refurbishing the former building minimises waste of existing components and decreases energy consumption to reduce the overall impact on the environment," Bakker said.

"Our teams are also extensively looking at how we can re-use existing construction materials to ensure we minimise these ending up in landfills," he added.

There were several considerations regarding the processes and regulations of converting an interim structure into a permanent one. The team performed extensive evaluations of existing MEP infrastructure and worked closely with the authorities to ensure they met all the necessary safety requirements.

"In everything that we do, our focus

# Utilising unwanted properties for community benefit

Social sustainability through refurbished property



The WAO Shelter Home, a corporate social responsibility project to rebuild a dilapidated 1960s house.



"Feedback from the community provides valuable insights into the effectiveness and success of the refurbishment," Choong said.



Refurbishing the former building minimises waste of existing components and decreases energy consumption, Bakker said.



"In everything that we do our focus is to create a positive impact in the communities that we are a part of," van Aken said.

is to create a positive impact in the communities that we are a part of," Ideas Academy head of operations Stephanie van Aken said.

"We will be working closely with IKEA to provide furnishing for Ideas Academy. Ideas Academy has also received a great response from the business community including Clarion Newlife Capital Pte Ltd (CNC)," she added.

A lack of capital can be a challenge when it comes to community-centred spaces, but it is not insurmountable. The benefits of these spaces are often worth the effort.

"Balancing a limited budget while creating a thoughtful and sustainable design requires careful planning, strategic decision-making, and maximising the value of available resources," Veritas Design Group associate Choong Wei Li noted.

In the case of the WAO Shelter Home, a Corporate Social Responsibility project to rebuild a dilapidated 1960s house, the design team employed several cost-effective strategies, such as reusing materials and incorporating donated or sponsored items.

"The use of repurposed tiles, burnt roof tile screen wall, and other recycled elements helped minimise costs while adding aesthetic value. Additionally, incorporating passive design strategies like natural lighting and ventilation reduced the reliance on energy-consuming systems. By leveraging partnerships, fundraising, and pro bono contributions, the project was able to achieve a sustainable design within the budgetary constraints," Choong said.

He noted that projects serving the community often undergo refurbishment

when there is a need to address changing requirements, upgrade facilities, or improve functionality. Factors such as wear and tear, safety concerns, technological advancements, and evolving community needs can drive the decision to refurbish.

"Community-serving projects typically require ongoing maintenance and periodic refurbishment to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the users and maintain a safe and comfortable environment," he added.

Several criteria are necessary for refurbishing projects serving the community. First, a thorough assessment of the existing infrastructure and facilities is essential to identify areas requiring refurbishment.

Choong emphasised that understanding the specific needs of the community and ensuring compliance with building codes, safety regulations, and accessibility standards is crucial. The refurbishment should align with the objectives and mission of the organisation or institution and prioritise sustainability, inclusivity, and user comfort.

"Additionally, consideration should be given to budgetary constraints, resource availability, and potential community disruptions during the refurbishment process," Choong said.

To ensure the effectiveness of the project, Choong highlighted the need to engage with the community during the refurbishment process. Gathering feedback and input from the community helps ensure that the refurbishment meets their needs and aspirations.

"Feedback from the community provides valuable insights into the effectiveness and success of the

refurbishment. While specific feedback for the WAO Shelter Home is not provided, community involvement is crucial in fostering a sense of ownership, building trust, and creating a facility that truly serves their needs," he added.

## Repairing individual homes

The refurbishment of individual homes differs from creating community spaces, however many within the B40 community are not able to afford to refurbish their old, run-down properties.

An example of an initiative which targets such issues is Tenaga Nasional Bhd's (TNB) People Friendly Project (PMR) and the Baiti Jannani Project (PB). These are ongoing programs to help the B40 group, Asnaf and the poor to either repair, buy or build homes.

TNB noted in a statement that these programs are in line with TNB's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) philosophy to improve lives and contribute towards the benefit of society. Up until 2022, the organisation had allocated more than RM31.11mil to repair, buy or build 1,287 homes.

While these are critical steps to alleviate the burden of Malaysia's lower-income population, home refurbishment programs are absent on a federal level. Refurbishment requires the input and support of all stakeholders

It is only through sustainable, resilient communities that Malaysia will gain the much-coveted title of a developed nation.

Revitalising urban communities:  
<https://www.starproperty.my/news/what-s-the-attraction-/123319>

By LIEW JIA YI (YANIKA)  
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**W**HEN it comes to children with disabilities, universal design in playgrounds and communal spaces can go a long way in facilitating social cohesion and a sense of belonging. However, the practice is still relatively new to Malaysia.

"Universal design refers to the accessibility in totality to accommodate to people of all physical and mental abilities, without exception of their ages and backgrounds, with its overall objective to ensure spatial environment designed and created by the designers are all-inclusive safe for daily use, and practical for evacuations during emergencies," Veritas director and principal Syah Kamaruddin said.

As UNICEF corporate alliance officer Tiffany Mervin explained, these designs allowed for inclusive participation for all regardless of age, gender, and disability. Disability-inclusive playgrounds are one such example, and it has a key role in ensuring all children can enjoy their right to play.

"By creating inclusive spaces that accommodate the diverse needs and preferences of every person, there is no separation in participation. At the inclusive playground, children with and without disabilities play together," she said.

The results, as she pointed out, were mutual support, a sense of social cohesion, belonging, security, and pride in their local community.

"In order to build an inclusive playground, you have to involve the end users, children, parents, grandparents, caregivers and disability practitioners that would visit the playground. As the experts, they should be involved from start to finish, from the concept to the final design," she added.

### What makes inclusive design

In the case of disability-inclusive design, the UNICEF Best Practice Toolkit outlines the seven principles of universal design which should underpin the design approach.

"It's about creating safe public spaces that accommodate every child's individual differences. This means not having bright flashing lights so that children with autism are not overwhelmed," Mervin said.

An example would be a sensory play area, including musical display and instruments, and include indoor and outdoor plants for children with sensory impairments. The space could offer a calming and stimulating environment for children with sensory processing disorders.

"An area of play area close to the ground plane, and proximity to public areas for increased public surveillance, improved access for wheelchairs, walkers by independent children or with helpers allow for uninterrupted playtime," Kamaruddin said.

Another area could be a quiet space to allow for break time for the children at specific times as required. He noted that the area should include communication aids that incorporate visual and verbal, as well as physical communication tools to support children with communication disabilities.

"A multi-sensory garden area with an array of plant types, textures, scents



Children with and without disabilities play in the inclusive playground in City of Elmina, Shah Alam- Grace Tan.

# Making spaces accessible for children with disabilities

## Universal design in child-friendly spaces

and colours could offer sensory and therapeutic relief for children with sensory disabilities. [Or an] adaptive play area and sports facilities with accessible and safe playing surfaces and equipment to allow children with physical disabilities," he expressed.

"Disability-inclusive spaces enable children and people with and without disabilities to live together, empathise, innovate and adapt, resulting in healthier and happier ways of living. Everyone has the right to live a full and productive life and live with dignity," Mervin said.

### Business case for inclusive design

She pointed out that inclusive design was not only important for social cohesion, but the concept also made good business sense. Inclusive designs meant access to markets that were previously untapped.

"The challenges that exist for children with disabilities become opportunities for the design of innovative spaces that are accessible to children with disabilities who are often regarded as extreme users," Mervin said.

"Inclusive and greater accessibility of spaces often improve the experience for all children, not just children with disabilities. Children with disabilities

and their families who enjoy a better experience in the space will spread the word, creating free marketing, increasing awareness, and potentially bringing in new customers," she added.

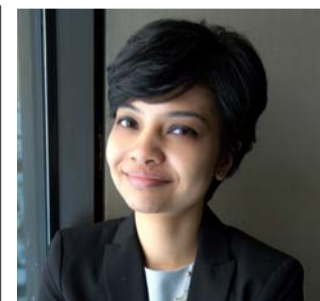
Those connected to children with disabilities tend to value and patronise businesses that they recognise as disability inclusive.

She indicated that in the age of sustainability, designing for the future could save businesses the high costs of retrofitting spaces to fit accessibility requirements. It would also mitigate other risks related to issues that children with disabilities might experience in a space.

"Demonstrating commitment to respecting children's needs and in this case, designing disability-inclusive spaces would appeal to consumers and young people who are increasingly shifting loyalties to businesses that have demonstrated a commitment to social responsibility," Mervin said.

The costs of building an inclusive playground could be as cheap as ensuring sidewalks were wheel friendly for strollers and wheelchairs. They could also be as expensive as a swing set that a wheelchair user could load themselves onto.

"The point is that building and



"At the inclusive playground, children with and without disabilities play together," Mervin said.



The area should include communication aids that incorporate visual and verbal, as well as physical communication tools, Kamaruddin said.

**"Everyone has the right to live a full and productive life and live with dignity."**

– Tiffany Mervin



designing for inclusion is an investment. It is an investment in our collective future, and in building a kinder, more inclusive world for children,"

"The decisions that developers and builders make today will determine the world children grow up in. Let's build a world where children can enjoy their rights to play and to participate in the world," Mervin said. 🌟

# Great value awaits home buyers at PR1MA developments

Developed for the M40 Malaysians, the quality homes range include landed and high-rise

**M**ALAYSIA'S housing development is a thriving landscape with a plethora of developers offering many types of homes. However, only one stands out with a single-minded mission of building quality homes within reasonable prices for middle-income (M40) Malaysian. Since established in 2012, PR1MA Corporation Malaysia has enabled 41,884 families to realize their dream of home ownership. Currently offering 76 projects nationwide, they are built at locations conducive for nurturing families and are benchmarked for quality. Some of them are ready-to-move in and offer great value to potential home buyers.

## Quality high rise developments

In East Malaysia, Residensi Borneo Cove in Sabah offers an apartment with up to three bedrooms plus one utility and up to two bathrooms at a starting price of just RM104,625. Its built up size is from 668 sq ft to 1,088 sq ft and features gated and guarded security and CCTV surveillance, and facilities including kindergarten, multipurpose hall, nursery, playground, surau and futsal court.

It is also located near amenities including the Harbour Mall, Gentingmas Mall, SMK Sandakan, St Michael Secondary School, Hospital Duchess of Kent, and Klinik Desa Berhala Darat. Residents are also connected to other regions in Sabah via Jalan Lintas Utara and Jalan Buli Sim Sim which are linked to major highways.

Interested home buyers can get up close to the development at the two-day PR1MARia @ Borneo Cove event, happening on 19 and 20 August, at 10am to 5pm. The venue can be located by searching Residensi Borneo Cove on Waze or PR1MA Borneo Cove on Google Maps.

In Selangor, Residensi Kajang Utama, Selangor is strategically located within access from highways such as LEKAS, SILK and the North-south Expressway. It is also near the nexus of public transportation in Kajang consisting Kajang Bus Terminal, the KTM Kajang and MRT Kajang station. Shopping for necessities is made easy as it is near the Kajang city centre as well as within a short driving distance to Bangi Sentral.

Priced from RM322,710, it offers up to three bedrooms and up to two bathrooms, with built-up sizes from 904 sq ft to 1,119 sq ft. The apartment also comes with community hall, kindergarten, nursery, playground, surau, recreational area and basketball / badminton court.

In Perak, Residensi Kepayang offers a low-density development that has won the StarProperty Award 2023 Real Estate Developer (Excellence) in the



Best National Homeownership Initiative category. Located in the Ipoh city centre near the Perak Stadium, it is a short drive from several Ipoh's key landmark such as the Lost World of Tambun, Gunung Lang Recreational Park, Sultan Azlan Shah Airport, and the Mydin Mall.

With a starting price of RM226,575, the units have up to three bedrooms and up to two bathrooms, with built-up sizes from 850 sq ft to 950 sq ft. Its facilities include kindergarten, multipurpose hall, nursery, surau and playground.

Another high rise development in Perak is Residensi Meru, located near the main road of Bandar Meru Raya that connects to the Ipoh city centre. It offers up to three bedrooms and up to two bathrooms in built up sizes from 959 sq ft and 1,137 sq ft. Priced from just RM182,280, the development comes with a swimming pool for residence to enjoy a healthy lifestyle. Residents can also conveniently access amenities such as Mydin Mall, Hospital Pantai, Amanjaya Terminal and the local government offices.

In Melaka, Residensi Klebang 2 offers an upcoming apartment that is near the famous Pantai Klebang, as well as nearby many Melaka city attraction such as Melaka Sentral, Mahkota Parade, Dataran Pahlawan Melaka Megamall, Jonker Walk and A'famosa.

At a starting price of RM196,830, the units have up to three bedrooms plus

one utility and up to two bathrooms, while built-up sizes are from 1,000 sq ft to 1,200 sq ft. It features facilities such as kindergarten, multipurpose hall, nursery, playground and surau.

## Attractive Landed Development

Also in Sabah, PR1MA has developed the Residensi Rangu comprising single-storey and double-storey terrace homes with up to three bedrooms plus one utility and up to three bathrooms. The unit sizing is from 1,200 sq ft and 1,761 sq ft and the development is secured by a gated and guarded security arrangement.

Apart from facilities offered such as the kindergarten, multipurpose hall, nursery and surau, residents will also enjoy the river view of Sungai Riparian which flows in the middle of the development area.

With an attractive starting price of RM149,488, it is located near the Eastern Plaza, Pasar Sri Indah, SMK Visi, the Tawau Airport and the Tawau Port. Connectivity to highways is assured via Jalan Rangu, Jalan Bara Daya and Jalan Utara Baru.

To learn more about the development, an upcoming event PR1MARia @ Residensi Rangu, Sabah will be held on 26 and 27 August 2023, from 10am to 5pm for interested home buyers. The event venue can be found

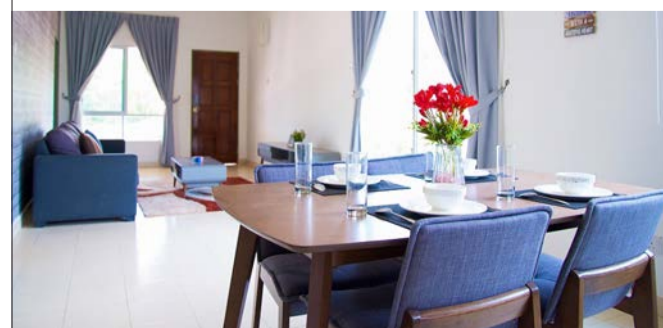
(ABOVE) Residensi Meru is located near essential amenities such as hospital and hypermarket and has attractive facilities.

on Waze using search words Residensi Rangu or on Google Maps using PR1MA @ Rangu.

Last but not least in Kelantan, Residensi Lubok Jong comprises single-storey and double storey terrace homes and semi-detached homes, at a starting price of just RM155,310. Offering up to four bedrooms and up to three bathrooms, the built-up sizes range from 980 sq ft to 1,450 sq ft. The guarded development is near amenities including Terminal Bus Pasir Mas, Rantau Panjang Tax-free Zone, SK Kiambang, SMK Tiang Chandi, and Hospital Pasir Mas.

For more information, visit [www.pr1ma.my](http://www.pr1ma.my).

**Home buyers are invited to PR1MARia @ Borneo Cove and PR1MARia @ Residensi Rangu events in August to learn more about the developments.**





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PRIMAHOMES

# A need to go beyond energy efficiency

A concerted effort has to be made by every one, not just some

By YIP WAI FONG  
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**N**ET zero carbon by 2050. The local construction industry is not spared from the global rally to rein in the emission of greenhouse gases (GHG) and has long embarked on roadmaps to mitigate their impact on the environment. Starting with the lowest hanging fruit — constructing energy-efficient structures — rating tools such as the Green Building Index (GBI) and GreenRE have been developed from within the industry to benchmark the standards of a green building. Today, hundreds of buildings in the country have been certified as green buildings that emit lower GHG volumes.

However, a growing awareness to go beyond energy efficiency is spreading in the industry. While the score points of energy efficiency remain the cornerstone of both GBI and GreenRE, about 30% of the scores are also allocated for sustainable construction and environmental protection of the construction site.

MyCREST rating tool, developed by the Malaysia Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB), an agency of the Works Ministry, aims to regulate the life cycle impacts of the built environment and its components. It has a comprehensive scorecard covering sustainable site planning and environmental management,

construction waste management, as well as the building's energy performance.

According to CIDB sustainability unit manager Fuhairah Ahmad Fuad, it is possible to deploy sustainable construction practices along most of the construction cycle, from the design stage to the construction phase, and to the operation and maintenance of buildings.

"At the design stage, both sustainable passive and active design can be used. Passive design refers to the strategic use of natural resources, such as sunlight, ventilation and shading, in building design to minimise energy consumption and environmental impact without relying on active systems like air conditioning or artificial lighting. Active design refers to the incorporation of energy-efficient technologies and systems, such as solar panels, efficient HVAC systems, and smart controls, in building design to reduce energy consumption and environmental impact while actively harnessing renewable energy sources," she explained.

## Eco construction materials

"During the construction phase, sustainable practices involve practising construction waste management to reduce, reuse and recycle waste, providing proper worker amenities, optimising energy and water use, promoting recycling, choosing eco-

friendly materials, and adopting efficient construction methods to reduce environmental impact and enhance long-term sustainability, including adopting Industrialised Building System (IBS) and Building Information Modeling (BIM) to improve efficiency," she said.

When it comes to construction materials, a CIDB report has pointed out the embodied carbon level of various materials, the highest of which is the Ordinary Portland Cement, a widely used product in the local construction industry. Fuhairah suggested an alternative to Portland cement.

"There are alternative and more sustainable options to traditional concrete available in the market. Green concrete incorporates recycled materials, such as fly ash (a byproduct of coal combustion) or slag (a byproduct of iron production), as partial replacements for cement. By reducing the amount of cement required, green concrete significantly reduces carbon dioxide emissions associated with cement production, which is a major contributor to GHG emissions.

"Some green concrete mixes use alternative binders which have lower carbon footprints compared to traditional Portland cement. These alternative concrete types offer comparable or even improved performance in terms of strength, durability, and workability while reducing the environmental impact associated with conventional concrete



"Building design should embrace elements of social responsibility as well," said Fuhairah.

production," she said.

"(Another alternative material) is recycled steel. It can be obtained from salvaged structures and industrial waste. It retains the same strength and durability as virgin steel and reduces the need for new steel production," she added.

## Site Management

Also during the construction stage, Fuhairah said there should be a proper stormwater management plan and implementation to limit the destruction of natural stormwater capacities at the construction site.

"Proper stormwater management is as per the Urban Stormwater Management Manual published by the Irrigation and Drainage Department. The main focus of the Manual is to manage stormwater according to a more environmental approach known as the control at source approach instead of draining it away as fast as possible," she said.

"This approach utilises detention/retention, infiltration and purification processes. The quality and quantity of the run-off from the developed area can be maintained to be the same as the pre-development condition," she said, adding that maintaining wetlands, ponds or vegetative strips is also synonymous with this approach. In lieu of natural wetlands, a man-made alternative is also feasible.

"Constructed wetland is a man-made system that involves altering the existing terrain to simulate wetland conditions. It is an attempt to replicate how a natural wetland treats polluted water that enters it. It was observed that wetland purifies water by removing organic compounds and oxidising ammonia, reducing nitrates, and removing phosphorus," she explained.

## The social and cultural aspects of buildings

Other than taking care of the environment, Fuhairah said sustainability also extends to taking care of the users of buildings.

"Building design should embrace elements of social responsibility as well. It can have disabled-friendly amenities, have features or details that promote well-being, comfort or productivity, and maintain some cultural or heritage value of the site," she said.

While the above is not an exhaustive list of sustainable construction practices, the methods seem clear. However, what is still required for wider adoption of sustainable practices will be greater awareness across industry players, users and customers and greater accessibility to eco-friendly materials and tools such as IBS and BIM across the industry. 🏡





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Artist's impression

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# Safeguarding indoor air quality

Indoor air quality should not be neglected especially that children are spending longer time indoors

By YIP WAI FONG  
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**T**HE modern age and the built environment are inextricably linked to the formation and growth of cities and townships. One cannot begin to discuss the subject of modernity without invoking the image of cities and urbanisation. As buildings and paved roads proliferate, human retreats from nature and conduct more and more of their daily life indoors.

More so for the children born and bred in urban environments. They spend a disproportionate amount of time indoors than adults since there are fewer and fewer outdoor spaces left for them where they can be left unsupervised without being exposed to the hazard of traffic, be it humans or objects.

As such, indoor environmental quality deserves important attention, and when children are its frequent users, an added emphasis should be placed to ensure that their health and safety are safeguarded.

In the past decade, the agendas of Green Building, part of the global movement towards net-zero carbon emissions, has included optimising

indoor air quality. Within the overall framework of environmental protection, this benchmark actually leans heavier on the side of protecting human health. The World Green Building Council, the world's largest action network on sustainable buildings, has identified several major causes of indoor air pollution.

The first one is household air pollution from solid fuel combustion, primarily due to the use of solid fuels and kerosene for cooking and heating which creates toxic particulate matter (PM) through combustion. Exposure to PM can cause cardiovascular and respiratory disease and strokes.

While the first cause happens mainly in developing countries, developed countries also face a major issue of indoor air pollution from gas stoves, often considered the clean and safe upgrade from solid fuel combustion. However, research shows that pollutants released from gas appliances can lead to heightened nitrogen dioxide levels, which can worsen respiratory conditions such as asthma.

Third, pollutants released within the indoor environment include volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from building or fit-out materials including paints and varnishes, adhesives and furnishings, and household items such as electronics and cleaning materials. Exposure to these

pollutants can trigger health issues such as nausea, headaches, respiratory irritation, and allergies. Organically derived gases, such as radon, can also generate a form of indoor pollution that presents major health risks.

A substandard building can also lead to biological contaminants concentrated in indoor air. Infiltration of air through cracks in the building façade (exterior) can cause dampness, leading to mould and fungi growth within walls, releasing airborne microbial pollution within indoor air. This occurs in both hot, humid climates and cold, temperate climates. Homes with mould increase the risk of asthma.

building rating tools such as GBI and the GreenRE both have stipulations for the usage of low VOC paints and finishes as a score point. While it is estimated that buildings that received certification by the two standards total hundreds, it is by no means clear to the general public how these buildings have scored, and how many of them scored on the usage of low VOC paints and finishes. Also, not all buildings that use low VOC materials necessarily participate in the ratings.

The spike of concern over indoor air quality was most pronounced during the Covid-19 pandemic, due to the fact that the virus was airborne. Apart from the pandemic popularising the use of

**In the past decade, the agendas of Green Building, part of the global movement towards net-zero carbon emissions, has included optimising indoor air quality.**

## Malaysia's indoor air quality

In Malaysia, researchers have found radon concentration in building materials such as concrete bricks and brown clay bricks. The researchers used

a set of samples consisting of concrete bricks, concrete bricks with cemented coatings, concrete bricks with cemented coatings and paint, brown clay bricks, brown clay bricks with cemented coatings and brown clay bricks with cemented coatings and paint. Publishing the findings in the *Journal of Nuclear and Related Technologies* (2010), they noted that concrete bricks contain double as much radon as brown clay bricks. Consequently, the researchers recommended that concrete walls be painted and concrete floors be paved with ceramic tiles to prevent radon emanation, as ceramic tiles were found to have zero radon concentration. Popular green

Young Asian boy wear a mask to young girl to protect virus and pollution.





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# Designing homes for children

Creating spaces that spark creativity and imagination

By JOSEPH WONG

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CHILDREN are inherently curious and imaginative beings and the spaces they inhabit play a crucial role in shaping their development and experiences. So designing homes for children requires more than just aesthetics, it demands a thoughtful understanding of their needs, interests and unique perspectives.

Can architecture, interiors and outdoor spaces inspire creativity, encourage learning and foster a sense of wonder among children? Research certainly confirms this but it is important to note that a child-centric design has to be intrinsic to children's behaviour.

Childhood is a time of growth and exploration, where every experience contributes to a child's cognitive, emotional and social development. Child-centric design focuses on creating environments that cater to the specific needs and capabilities of children. From early childhood education centres to play areas, incorporating child-friendly design principles can have a profound impact on their overall well-being and learning outcomes.

In Malaysia, the housing industry concentrates on building homes for home buyers and child-friendly designs seldom come into the picture. At most, property developers create family-friendly homes to cater to growing or bigger families. The child-centric design usually comes as an afterthought and the task usually lies in the hands of interior designers.

## Play areas

However, most developments do look into spaces for children like play areas and playgrounds. In fact, children's play areas have become a popular addition to a range of family-friendly homes in recent years. These indoor play areas offer a valuable service for families looking to keep their children entertained and engaged. They provide a safe and stimulating environment where children can play, learn and socialise, while parents can relax, catch up on work or simply enjoy some downtime. By offering a fun and safe space for families to enjoy, indoor play centres can enhance the overall experience of family bonding.

Naturally, safety is paramount when designing spaces for children. Child-proofing interiors, selecting age-appropriate furniture and ensuring proper ventilation and lighting are essential considerations. Additionally, creating spaces that are accessible to children of all abilities promotes inclusivity and fosters a sense of belonging.

## Outdoor spaces

However, outdoor play spaces are usually perceived as less safe as children may inadvertently hurt themselves while playing with other children. One parent pointed out that you can make a place as possible but you can't stop squabbles between children so bruises are a part and parcel of growing up. Nevertheless, play is an integral part of childhood development and well-designed play spaces can ignite a child's imagination and creativity. From indoor playrooms to outdoor playgrounds, incorporating elements that encourage exploration, problem-solving, and physical activity can enhance a child's cognitive and motor skills.

But taking it a step further, inclusive design also needs to be given greater focus in urban planning for children with disabilities, making facilities like children's playgrounds accessible



to all and creating places every child can use, according to Klang Municipal Council president Noraini Roslan.

Inclusive design enables everyone to participate equally, confidently and independently in everyday activities, and this includes children. "We need to create more joyful spaces for children and disabled persons," she said.

As for educational spaces, such as reading rooms and libraries, they play a crucial role in shaping a child's learning journey. Designing such areas with flexible layouts, interactive technology and age-appropriate learning materials can create dynamic environments that spark curiosity and enthusiasm for learning.

While it is observed that the affluent and the middle class have better access to such facilities in condominiums, serviced apartments and up-market gated-and-guarded enclaves, the lower income earners,

the B40 in particular, lack such facilities. When living in cramped housing conditions, affected by noisy neighbours and loud arguments in neighbouring units, youths can be deprived of this privilege.

## Children's feedback

Earlier this year at the Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ) Children's Participation and Protection Policy brainstorming session, it was discovered that students living in low-cost flats and People's Housing Projects (PPR) are in need of a safe living environment to do their homework and study.

A total of 42 children, aged eight to 18, along with 12 child facilitators, participated in the event, fostering an inclusive platform for their voices to be heard. The visionary move by MBPJ culminated in the successful passing of the Children's Participation and Protection Policy during a recent full board meeting, making MBPJ the first local authority in the

country to adopt such a policy.

The city's deputy mayor, Sharipah Marhaini Syed Ali, emphasised the significance of considering children's input when shaping the city's development. This policy not only underscores MBPJ's commitment to giving children a voice but also aligns with the principles of the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Dr Amelia Alias, a consultant for Child-Friendly Cities Initiatives, highlighted the inclusion of child councillors to contribute to policy formulation and child-friendly city initiatives. She noted the lack of a comprehensive policy guiding MBPJ in executing effective child-related initiatives, emphasising the importance of evidence-based findings in creating robust policies.

With the valuable qualitative data gathered from stakeholders themselves, especially the children, MBPJ can gain deeper insights into the community's needs and craft informed policies.

**Take the great outdoors where adults may enjoy the scenic views of a lake or the serenity of a wooded park, children tend to be more activity based where they can run and play, basically enjoying nature.**

MBPJ's forward-looking approach to incorporating children's perspectives in policy-making and city planning exemplifies a crucial step towards building a more inclusive, child-friendly community. By nurturing children's voices and experiences, MBPJ endeavours to create a city that caters to the needs and aspirations of all its inhabitants, ensuring that children play an active role in shaping their own future.

Similarly, when it comes to designing homes, taking into account children's points of view would be essential in crafting homes that are more suitable and conducive to them. In most instances, adults presume to know what is best for them without getting their input. It is true that children might not know legal matters or safety issues but taking the time to listen to a younger voice can open more possibilities.

Take the great outdoors where adults may enjoy the scenic views of a lake or the serenity of a wooded park, children tend to be more activity based where they can run and play, basically enjoying nature.

Mind you, nature has a profound impact on a child's well-being and cognitive development. Integrating natural elements into the design, such as indoor plants, nature-inspired colour palettes and access to outdoor spaces, provides children with opportunities to connect with the environment and enhances their sense of wonder and appreciation for the world around them.

Children's emotions play a significant role in their overall development. Designing spaces that promote emotional well-being involves creating calming areas for relaxation, quiet corners for reflection and communal spaces



for social interactions. Providing children with spaces where they can express themselves freely and feel emotionally secure fosters healthy emotional growth.

And this doesn't mean planting a playground will automatically be used by children. Sustainability is a crucial consideration when designing for children. Creating eco-friendly spaces that minimise environmental impact and promote sustainable practices sets a positive example for future generations. From using renewable materials to incorporating energy-efficient features, sustainable design instils in children a sense of

responsibility towards the environment.

## Incorporating technology

Finally, in today's rapidly advancing world, the digital era has become an integral part of children's lives. From an early age, children are exposed to various digital technologies, including smartphones, tablets, computers, and the Internet. While the digital age offers numerous opportunities for learning, entertainment, and communication, it also presents a host of challenges that demand thoughtful consideration and proactive measures.

Integrating digital technology thoughtfully into the design can enhance learning experiences and interactive play. As such, modern homes now require good connectivity to the Internet of Things and this means the technological infrastructure has to be in place to ensure this connectivity.

The digital era offers a world of possibilities for children, but it also comes with potential pitfalls. Nurturing responsible digital citizenship and providing a supportive environment that encourages digital literacy, safety, and a balanced lifestyle are essential steps to ensure that children thrive in the digital age. By fostering a healthy relationship with technology and digital media, children can make the most of the opportunities while navigating the challenges of the digital era with confidence and resilience.

Hence, designing for children is a journey of creativity, empathy and understanding. By embracing child-centric design principles, architects, designers and educators can create spaces that inspire young minds, nurture their imagination, and support their growth and development. Whether it is a school, a playground, or a home, every space presents an opportunity to shape the experiences of children and leave a lasting impact on their lives. As we design for children, let us remember that we are not just creating spaces; we are building a foundation for a future filled with creativity, joy and endless possibilities. 🏡



# Embracing low-density vertical living

Vista Harmoni Residences rides on its accessibility to amenities

**I**n the bustling urban landscape of Kuala Lumpur, where space is a luxury and convenience is paramount, the emergence of Vista Harmoni Residences presents an exciting prospect for homebuyers seeking a perfect blend of low-density living and urban accessibility.

This modern condominium development, located within the matured neighbourhood of Sentul, offers a harmonious balance between serene living spaces and proximity to essential amenities.

With an estimated gross development value of RM137mil, Vista Harmoni Residences is more than just a residential project as it embodies a lifestyle that redefines the essence of urban living. With a freehold tenure spanning 2.27 acres of prime land, the condominium comprises a mere 205 units. This thoughtful approach ensures residents experience the luxury of space, privacy and a tranquil environment amidst the vibrant city.

## Spacious and versatile

At Vista Harmoni Residences, residents can luxuriate in generously sized units, offering 1,200 sq ft of living space. The spaciousness extends beyond the typical expectations of city living, making it an ideal choice for families and professionals seeking comfort and room to grow. Moreover, these well-designed units hold the potential for conversion into dual-key units, offering flexibility for multi-generational living arrangements or investment opportunities for rental yields.

One of the standout features of Vista Harmoni Residences is that it offers residents the convenience of being within a short distance of an array of daily essentials, including marts, grocery stores, restaurants, fast food chains, cafes and clinics. This accessibility not only simplifies day-to-day living but also enhances the overall quality of life for its residents.

In terms of commercial, retail and other amenities, there are a huge number of choices. For example, Ong Tai Kim Supermarket is the closest at 1.8km while the bigger Giant Hypermarket, The Palette and PV128 are less than 5km away.

Just over a kilometre further are Setapak Central Mall, Sunway Putra Mall and Quill City Mall. Other commercial and retail options include Lotus's Selayang, Publika Shopping Gallery, Suria KLCC, Pavilion Bukit Bintang and KL East Mall which are less than 9km from Vista Harmoni.

The nearest healthcare services are Sentul Medical Centre (4.2km), KPJ Tawakkal Specialist Hospital (5.3km), Hospital Pusrawi (5.8km), Hospital Kuala Lumpur (6.4km) and Institut Jantung Negara (6.7km). A short drive away reside recreation areas like Metropolitan

Batu Park, Istana Budaya, Balai Seni Negara, Batu Caves, Sentul Park, KLPAC and Taman Tasik Titiwangsa.

Families with children will be pleased with the number of nearby schools, colleges and universities. Primary schools include SK Sentul 1 and 2, SK Batu Muda, SK Convent Sentul, St Joseph Tamil Primary School, SK Kampung Batu and SK Sri Selima. Vernacular schools nearby are SJK (C) Sentul Pasar, SJK (C) Sentul KL, SJK (C) Chi Man, SRJK (C) Chong Hwa, SJK (C) Lai Chee, SJK (C) Mun Chong and SJK (C) Khai Chee.

Secondary schools in the vicinity are SK Batu Muda, SMJK Chong Hwa, Convent Sentul, SMK Bandar Baru Sentul, SMK La Salle Sentul, SMK Dato' Ibrahim Yaacob, SMK (P) Jalan Ipoh and Chong Hwa Independent High School.

The three nearest international schools are Wesley Methodist School KL, Sri Utama School and Fairview International School. Higher education is available at International Islamic College, Tunku Abdul Rahman University College, Setapak Vocational College and Universiti Kuala Lumpur.

## Potential value appreciation

For astute buyers, Vista Harmoni Residences holds immense promise. Its freehold status ensures ownership security, providing peace of mind for buyers and potential appreciation in value over time. With the Kuala Lumpur property market steadily growing, investing in a low-density condominium like Vista Harmoni Residences can be a prudent decision to capitalise on future market trends.

Priced from RM649,000 to RM750,000, Vista Harmoni Residences encapsulates the essence of living in Kuala Lumpur's vibrant Sentul neighbourhood and its allure only grows stronger, inviting prospective homeowners and investors alike to embrace a lifestyle that harmonises convenience in the heart of the city. More information is obtainable at <https://www.vistaharmoni.com/>

**For astute buyers, Vista Harmoni Residences holds immense promise. Its freehold status ensures ownership security, providing peace of mind for buyers and potential appreciation in value over time. With the Kuala Lumpur property market steadily growing.**



ABOVE An artist impression of Vista Harmoni Residences.

**RIGHT**  
A rendering of the gym which is one of the many facilities in Vista Harmoni Residences.



BELOW Children will be able to play safely within the guarded premises of the condominium.





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To solve the problem of heat gain due to sun-facing, Big Dutchman uses bricks as a shield as well as a signature of the company's European origin.

# A showcase of passive design

An industrial building cools itself by harnessing natural elements despite sun-facing

By YIP WAI FONG  
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In recent years, the use of passive design in buildings has gained traction as the drive to reduce carbon emissions in the local construction industry spread. Broadly defined, passive design is a method of aligning building design, including orientation and choice of materials, with the natural elements such as the weather and sunlight to protect building users from discomfort and to minimise energy consumption that would release greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere.

While it is now common for buildings to optimise window positioning and sizes to take advantage of natural daylight and promote cross ventilation, modern architectures with an all-round implementation of passive designs are still far in between in Malaysia and are known only to industry insiders such as architects and engineers. One such example is the headquarters of BD Agriculture (M) Sdn Bhd (known globally as Big Dutchman), located in Bukit Raja, Klang.

Designed by NKWA Architects, the office cum warehouse encompasses close to 275,000 sq ft on a 20-acre site. It is also the winner of the PAM Gold Award in 2018 and is GBI certified. NKWA principal architect Ng Wai Keong explained that the architecture was anchored on using passive design to solve the issue of heat gain in the building, as the building's long sides would be directly facing the east and the west, and optimise the advantage of being in the way of the north-east and south-west wind to further cool the building and save on energy consumption.

"We started to take a great interest in how you can actually develop the environments that we want by using natural energies. Not by doing anything clever but just orienting in the right direction," he said.

Using a second skin to shield the building from heat, Ng incorporated bricks, a material commonly known to capture heat, to form the building envelope for the office. As heat is captured on the outside by the bricks, the heat is kept away by the insulation of the inner walls. For ventilation, the office is lifted from the ground, similar to a traditional kampung house, where the underneath is made as a parking area.

Ingeniously, the warehouse which takes up the most floor area has a wind funnel in the form of a suspended brick wall. It is erected spanning the entire length of the warehouse not only to capture heat but also to catch the north-east and south-west wind, which is then allowed into the warehouse through openings at the top and bottom of the wall. The air in the warehouse is thus circulated by natural cross-ventilation.

At the east side of the building, where the office is exposed to the morning sun and heat, perforated louvres were installed to moderate the glare while still allowing views of the outside. These are not ordinary louvres but are equipped with sensors and motors to track the sun and open or close accordingly.

Contrary to many modern building facades with tall and wide windows, the Big Dutchman headquarters facade is lined by narrow and long strips of windows to minimise heat gain. Nevertheless, the interior is kept bright by way of natural light coming through the central void as well as artificial light. In addition, trees are replanted to help with cooling the temperature as well as to recreate a green landscape.

Ng said that his approach to passive design is simply responding to the environment and using common sense. While acknowledging that most building material results in heat gain, Ng pointed out that there is another way to soften the effect.



The building's long sides, where the warehouse and entrance are, face the morning and afternoon sun.



Ng said passive design goes beyond construction and is about a radical rethinking of day-to-day lifestyle.

"Concrete (does) gain a lot of heat. So, just get something to shield it, right? And something, hopefully, which is less heat absorbent, so that it dissipates the heat. As a consequence, your buildings are cooler, so it requires less air-con.

"And hopefully, if you allow enough ventilation, maybe no air-conditioning (will be needed). So instead of fighting against an external environment, you're actually using the external environment for your buildings," he said, adding that passive design goes beyond construction and is a radical rethinking of day-to-day lifestyle.

"It is how a building is designed for its users. It can be designed to support recycling, and we've seen a building in Bali that facilitates the recycling of 95% of its waste. That's a great way to optimise our lifestyle." he said. ↗



The suspended brick wall serves as both a wind funnel and heat trap for the warehouse, and has narrow and thin windows to reduce heat penetration.



Ample natural lighting fills the interior through the central void although windows are generally sized narrowly to minimize heat gain.

Contributed by **SULAIMAN SAHEH**

**T**HE market has seen notable shifts in consumer and behavioural trends; both new and old with some going from being a niche to a now mainstream option. More so, these shifts were accelerated and amplified by the two-year pandemic which had caused many to re-evaluate their priorities.

For the employment sector, strategic readjustment was necessary to accommodate the new needs and demands of post-pandemic employees. This was primarily seen with the embracement of co-working spaces that allows anyone to work remotely and not be locked into one specific office cubicle. As cloud usage and virtual communications became the norm, remote working became more doable and acceptable as a way of working.

This not only solved the dilemma of space downsizing faced by organisations without having to resort to retrenchments but also gave employees more flexibility to structure their own work style efficiently – be it from a commute cost, convenience or comfort perspective.

But happening simultaneously on the other end of the co-sharing spectrum is co-living which is simply defined as a dwelling unit occupied by several individuals utilising the same facilities and amenities provided within the development. Of course, this type of living arrangement is no new concept as it is commonly practised in student accommodations and rental homes. Instead, the co-living of today is seen as the upgraded and well-facilitated version of conventional renting with such spaces provided and managed by professional co-living service providers. Rather than just having rented a room to yourself within a conventional home and having access to the common areas such as a living room, kitchen and bathrooms, co-living centres have gone several steps ahead to encourage and create a sense of community within the shared dwelling. This is done with the provision of common lounges, entertainment rooms, and work spaces for the digital nomads.

As to whom this type of living arrangement is catered to, it is commonly seen targeted to the single, working demographic looking to have a flexible and community lifestyle. Due to the sharing nature of co-living, tenants are encouraged and often put in a social setting when going about their daily routines as most of the facilities and amenities used are located in common areas; the bedroom being the only private space to have. To those who are also living the co-working life, this will be a complementary add-on to the whole sharing lifestyle as some co-living spaces include co-working areas as well.

### Eye on senior living

But in response to the growing ageing population and the accommodation services that are slowly making their way into the market to meet the demands of the elderly crowd, co-living is seen to have also extended its target market to the senior tenants. One such is Komune Living and Wellness in Cheras by UOA Hospitality which offers options for senior care facilities to elderly tenants based on their physical needs. Extending further to families with children, while Malaysia has yet to see any co-living



# Is co-living the future of renting?

Many are re-evaluating their priorities as more options enter the market



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services marketed for family tenants, the embracement of the sharing concept with young ones involved is gaining ground in other regions of the world.

With four residences in France currently in development and set to open end of 2023, Commune is a co-living service dedicated to single-parent families by offering housing solutions designed to simplify parental organisation and meet the needs of children. Founded by two individuals who came up with the idea in 2021, the founders shared a passion to create and recreate social ties for isolated and disrupted families and fill in the gap where social public policies failed to do so. With each residence built to cater to between 14 and 28 families at a time, both indoor and outdoor common areas are provided and designed to accommodate and entertain the young tenants on top of the usual living, laundry and kitchen rooms. On-demand services such as babysitting, school transportation and organised activities

are also on offer to help single parents needing extra support.

### Positive aspects

With all that has been said and done, is co-living the best next option for future renting? On the pro side, tenants are looking for a more flexible and less tied-down financial commitment as most co-living providers offer monthly leases without having to commit for a year when signing the agreement. For convenience, tenants are looking at a close-to-fully facilitated living experience as the co-living package includes access and usage of more than just the basic amenities: others include a gym, entertainment rooms and working spaces. With a community right outside your bedroom door readily available for you to be a part of, networking and socialising comes naturally to a co-living environment.

### Negative points

On the con side, you are likely to face a higher rental fee (on a per sq ft basis) for a co-living space as opposed to a conventional rental home unit. For example, a super single room at CoLiv Damai Residence goes for RM1,650 per month for tenants committing to a three to five months period. In comparison, a 500 sqft unit in M Suites located just a few hundred metres away is listed for RM1,600 per month; just RM3.20 psf versus RM12.60 psf at CoLiv Damai Residence. In terms of privacy and exclusive access, having a whole dwelling unit to yourself brings the privilege of having all spaces to yourself – including

the kitchen, bathroom and living areas. While some don't mind having to share facilities with strangers, others may prioritise exclusive access out of safety and comfort reasons. From a spatial perspective, the sharing of facilities and spaces will result in a much smaller unit to yourself, which is basically your bedroom-cum-wardrobe that is typically sized at 100 sqft and below.

The ultimate judgement remains subjective to the tenant's needs and preferences. For the co-living spaces currently available in Malaysia, most are designed for single individuals and couples with no children. With privacy only limited to your bedroom, this factor should be heavily deliberated on as Asian households lean typically more toward private settings as opposed to the more commonly practised open living arrangements by Western households. Work styles also have their influence on which is better as a nomadic worker will require a flexible and network-friendly living environment to complement their job.

Though co-living presents its benefits in the all-inclusive package they offer, conventional renting holds itself up with the access and temporary ownership of bigger spaces and more privacy within your own dwelling. Rather than expecting one to overtake the other, the market may likely see a mixture of the two and reap the benefits of both. Just as with co-working now being a complementary service embraced by the corporate and brand companies, co-living has its potential to add value and flexibility to the conventional renting market. 🏠

**With privacy only limited to your bedroom, this factor should be heavily deliberated on as Asian households lean typically more toward private settings as opposed to the more commonly practised open living arrangements by Western households.**

As demand for affordable housing in Malaysia continues to rise, developers have made consistent progress towards meeting the needs of new homebuyers entering the market. In an urban environment, the standard markers of a home are its connectivity, convenience and liveability.

Your home should provide comfort and be a sanctuary that you look forward to coming back to every day. This can be achieved through thoughtful interior design and the amenities and facilities in your surroundings. With seamless convenience and connectivity to the city centre, Vista Adesa Residensi Desa Timur offers just that.

Spanning 9.8 acres, the new residential project is a Residensi Wilayah development by Radium Development Bhd. Emphasising a holistic lifestyle for urban dwellers, the development offers easy access to a network of facilities and amenities that will please any Kuala Lumpur local.

Located in the heart of Sungai Besi, Vista Adesa comprises two towers, Block D and Block E, both of which have 32 storeys. With a gross development value (GDV) of approximately RM366mil, the development has 24 units per floor and a total of 1,218 units, each with a build-up of 800 sq ft.

Priced between RM300,000 and RM318,000, each unit has three bedrooms and two bathrooms, ideal for first-time homebuyers and young couples. Within the units, residents will be welcomed by the soothing visage of Vista Adesa's minimalist aesthetic. Masterfully designed to emphasise its clean lines, each unit features a sophisticated appearance to create uncluttered spaces for the comfort of its residents.

Imagine sitting comfortably on a sofa in the living hall enjoying a scenic panoramic view of Kuala Lumpur city centre. With these contemporary touches, residents will feel well at home in a minimalist utopia. Maximising the potential of its limited space, Vista Adesa provides homeowners with a wide-open space within the crowded everyday routine.

## Health and wellness

In addition, Vista Adesa facilitates an active and healthy lifestyle with a wide range of amenities. Residents will be able to take a swim in the 25m swimming pool, while watching out for their children in the shallow wading pool, alongside an outdoor shower and a pool deck.

Even in the bustling city, there is always time to maintain wellness through fitness; Vista Adesa offers a clubhouse complete with a gym, an open lawn and a children's playground. Let your children roam the development safely, as the development is also equipped with a security system to ensure the safety and protection of its residents.

With Vista Adesa in close proximity to commercial areas, the

# A minimalist haven in Sungai Besi

Radium offers affordability and aesthetic beauty with the new Residensi Wilayah home, Vista Adesa



Vista Adesa facilitates an active and healthy lifestyle with its wide range of amenities.



**ABOVE**  
An artist's impression of the 25m pool.

**BELOW**  
This minimalist haven allows residents a secured atmosphere of prestige within the neighbourhood.

guarded community allows residents an atmosphere of prestige within the neighbourhood, while being able to indulge in urban convenience and accessibility. Find joy over the weekend with trips to the nearby shopping malls, such as the CMC Centre, formerly known as Giant Taman Connaught, Sunway Velocity, IKEA Cheras, EKOCheras, Lotus's Cheras, Mid Valley Megamall as well as Kuala Lumpur City Centre.

In addition, take advantage of the many medical facilities within the area, such as Sunway Velocity Hospital, UKM Hospital, iHeal Hospital, Prince Court Hospital, General Hospital, Kuala Lumpur and Universiti Malaya Hospital.

For families with young children, look no further than the surrounding educational institutions, from primary to secondary level. These schools include national schools and international schools, such as SJCK Tai Thung, SJCK Sam Yoke, SK Salak Selatan, SMK Seri Sentosa, Sri Desa International Secondary School, Cempaka International School and more.

## Well-connected

Strategically located with prime accessibility to major highways within the area, home

dwellers will find driving to and from work a breeze. Enjoy easy access to major highways, just minutes away. Within 3km, residents will find the KL Smart Tunnel, KL-Seremban Express, and the East-West-Link Highway to Putrajaya. A little further, residents can take the MEX Highway to Putrajaya, the KL Sungai Besi Expressway, or the East-West-Link Highway to PJ and Cheras.

As Vista Adesa is categorised as a Residensi Wilayah project, home seekers who are interested can check their eligibility and submit an application through the Residensi Wilayah website, <https://residensiwilayah.jwp.gov.my/projek/87>. Buyers must be aged 21 years and above with Malaysian citizenship. They must be born, living or working in the Federal Territory, as well as have a monthly gross income below RM10,000, should they be single, and RM15,000, should they be married.

The project was launched in the second quarter of 2023. With its minimalist beauty and practical and functional layout, Vista Adesa incorporates the necessities of modern life into an affordable package for first-time homebuyers and small families.

Vista Adesa is expected to be completed in December 2027. For more information, visit [radiumdevelopment.com/development/vista-adesa-des-timur/](http://radiumdevelopment.com/development/vista-adesa-des-timur/). 📍



# VISTA ADESA

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## SEAMLESS CONNECTIVITY

Vista Adesa welcomes you to embrace an affordable city lifestyle in the vicinity of Kuala Lumpur. The innovative design brings forth a sense of distinguished sky living that is specifically personalised to the needs and wants of the urbanite with the added comfort of outdoor recreational facilities and amenities.

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Nama Pemaju: Fitrah Resources Sdn Bhd | Nama Projek: Residensi Desa Timur | **Jenis Kediamaan: Residensi Wilayah** | No. Lesen Pemaju: 30363/02-2028/0040(N) | Tempoh Sahlaku: 13/02/2023 - 12/02/2028 | No. Permit Iklan Dan Jualan: 30363-1/05-2026/0515(A)-(S) | Tempoh Sahlaku: 08/05/2023 - 07/05/2026 | Pelan Bangunan Diluluskan Oleh: Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur | No. Rujukan: BP S1 OSC 2022 2532 | Pegangan Tanah: Pajak (99 tahun berakhir 13 November 2118) | Bebanan Tanah: Gadaian (Maybank Islamic Berhad) | Tarikh Pemajuan Perumahan Dijangka Siap: Disember 2027 | Bilangan Unit: Fasa 1; Block D: 609 unit; Block E: 609 unit; Parkir 1/2 | Harga Jualan: RM300,000\* (min) - RM318,000 (maks)

**IKLAN INI TELAH DILULUSKAN OLEH JABATAN PERUMAHAN NEGARA**

(i) Tanah ini tidak boleh dipindahmilik, dipajak atau digadai tanpa kebenaran Jawatankuasa Kerja Tanah Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur. (ii) Sekatan pindahmilik dikenakan selama 10 tahun daripada tarikh perjanjian jual beli yang ditandatangani oleh pembeli pertama; (iii) Dalam tempoh 10 tahun daripada tarikh perjanjian jual beli diperenggan (ii) di atas, setiap permohonan kebenaran pindahmilik berikutnya hendaklah disertakan dengan surat persetujuan daripada Kerajaan Persekutuan. (iv) Bagi pindahmilik daripada Pesuruhjaya Tanah Persekutuan kepada penerima pindahmilik yang tidak tertakluk kepada perenggan (ii) di atas, permohonan kebenaran pindahmilik berikutnya hendaklah disertakan dengan surat pengesahan daripada Kerajaan Persekutuan.

Penafian: Maklumat yang terkandung adalah tertakluk kepada perubahan dan tidak boleh menjadi sebahagian daripada daripada kontrak tawaran, Semua gambaran yang dipamerkan adalah impresi artis sahaja. Semua ukuran adalah anggaran sahaja. Walaupun setiap usaha telah diambil kira dalam menyediakan bahan ini, pemaju/pemilik tidak bertanggungjawab atas sebarang ketidaktepatan. Semua item di atas adalah tertakluk kepada variasi, pengubahsuaian & penggantian yang mungkin diperlukan oleh Pihak berkuasa atau disyorkan oleh Arkitek atau Jurutera.



# The countdown begins

Who will be on the MDA 2023 Top-of-the-Charts list?

**T**HE Malaysia Developer Awards (MDA) 2023, one of the most prestigious property awards in the country, is currently undergoing the judging process but the question is who will be on the list of the Top-of-the-Charts for both the RM1bil and above tier and below RM1bil tier?

This year's Top-of-the-Charts criteria have undergone some tweaking to streamline and strengthen the assessment process. The quantitative attributes will now hold a weightage of 50% against last year's 70% while the qualitative attributes, which are also valued at 50%, have given more weight towards the environmental, social and governance (ESG) attribute with the addition of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and carbon-free footprint aspects.

This event is a celebration of excellence and innovation in the property industry, recognising outstanding achievements and contributions to the development of Malaysia's built environment.

Organised by Star Media Group and FIABCI-Malaysia, MDA 2023 comprises the Top-of-the-Charts and the Special Awards, which offer four categories, namely International Awards, Joint Development Awards, Rising Star Awards and Transformation Awards.

The Top-of-the-Charts Awards are by invitation only while the Special Awards are open to developers, large or small, who

have contributed to the property industry in Malaysia through their exceptional projects, designs and innovations may be eligible with their respective developments.

This year sees the introduction of the new Joint Development Awards. This category is for developers who have joined forces and expertise to leverage on each other's capabilities to develop at least one property. In the normal circumstance, the joint venture (JV) can be two or more Malaysian developers, however, the participating JV can also be between

a Malaysian developer and a foreign developer, provided that a consortium has been formed for the project.

Developers who have managed to penetrate markets beyond their country of origin, and garnered exceptional success through new ideas and concepts while inspiring their peers will be recognised in the International Awards category.

As for the Transformation Awards, this category acknowledges developers who have transformation projects from the rescuing of abandoned projects to the

rejuvenating of old and dilapidated buildings or converting of mining, quarry, disused or derelict land into a grand development.

The Rising Star Awards seeks to uncover and highlight new and budding developers who have just set foot into the industry but have set themselves apart from their peers by demonstrating their potential to develop into leading voices.

The entries are judged via a panel comprising industry leaders and professionals. To ensure transparency, the results are validated by Deloitte, one of the Big Four accounting firms. The results will be revealed during the Gala Dinner at M Resort & Hotel on August 24, 2023. [👉](#)

**This event is a celebration of excellence and innovation in the property industry, recognising outstanding achievements and contributions to the development of Malaysia's built environment.**



**S**tarProperty, one of Malaysia's trusted real estate omni-channel platforms, will be hosting its third StarProperty Fair for 2023 next week, giving home buyers the opportunity to view projects, and if they choose to buy, from a dozen property developers.

Held at Sunway Pyramid Mall (Blue and Orange Concourse) from August 11 to 13, the fair will run from 10am to 10pm. Among the property developers are Aaland, Chin Hin Group, Eco Ardence, Eco Sanctuary, Eupe PJ South Development, Gamuda Land, IJM Land, Land & General, Perbadanan Kemajuan Negeri Selangor, Platinum Victory, Sunway Property and Tropicana Corporation.

A whole plethora of property developments ranging from landed properties to high-rise condominiums and serviced apartments. Offering a wide scope of choices to first-time home buyers as well as those seeking fresh investment opportunities. These homes offer a variety of designs to suit a multitude of lifestyle options.

Ranging from RM300,000 to high-end units, there is something for everyone. In addition, many of the participating developers will be offering their own promotion for their projects during the event.

In addition, home buyers and visitors stand to gain several extra prizes if they participate in the Visit & Win and Buy & Win promotions. For the Visit & Win, all that is required by the visitors is to scan a QR code and answer as few simple questions. This will qualify visitors to sweat treats of popcorn and cotton candy.

For voters participating in the August 12 State Elections, StarProperty will reward them with a mystery gift once they have shown proof of voting. This offer is only valid

on August 12, 2023.

For home buyers, the Buy & Win is offering prizes worth more than RM10,000. All they need to do is to place a booking for the unit of your choice at any exhibitor's booths, submit a copy of the Sales Order Form, proof of payment (receipt) and photocopy IC of the purchaser/s at the StarProperty booth.

In order to participate, purchasers must be present to submit all relevant documents along with a completed participation form and answer the qualifying question. Prizes include electrical items, gift cards and shopping vouchers. In addition, every home buyer will receive a one-year home warranty plan worth up to RM999 to cover the repair of appliances or home systems.

Moreover, children are not left out as they can enjoy themselves with the kids' fun activities as well as the carnival games to be staged at the exhibition site. [👉](#)

**Offering a wide scope of choices to first-time home buyers as well as those seeking fresh investment opportunities. These homes offer a variety of designs to suit a multitude of lifestyle options.**

## Excitement ramping up for 3rd StarProperty Fair 2023

**11-13 AUG 23  
10AM-10PM**  
**Sunway Pyramid Mall  
Blue & Orange Concourse**

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# Developers say housing loans more difficult to acquire

For property seekers, Koe points to the OPR increase and the tightening banks as signs of the road ahead



By **LIEW JIA YI (YANIKA)**  
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**W**HILE the issue of unaffordability in housing often centres around the price of the project itself, financing plays a significant role in being able to afford a home. Acquiring a property requires the help of bank loans and yet financing remains an issue for a majority of Malaysians.

From 2014 to 2020, Bank Negara Malaysia reported that income rose approximately 2.1% while house prices grew 4.1%, growing faster than income can catch up to. The trend continues in 2023, with house prices steadily growing out of reach of ordinary households.

For property seekers, the overnight policy rate (OPR) has increased and the banks are tightening up, FIABCI Malaysia immediate past president Datuk Sri Koe Peng Kang pointed out in the recent StarProperty Budget 2024 Roundtable.

According to National Property Information Centre (Napic), the Malaysian House Price Index (MHPI) stood at RM453,365 per unit in the first quarter of 2023. The maximum price of an affordable home is to be set at RM300,000. To afford a house priced at RM300,000, the monthly household income has to be RM8,333. Despite this, 76% of households in Malaysia earn less than RM8,333, while only 36% of units are priced at RM300,000 and below.

When it comes to a financial health screening by the banks, the documents they will require go beyond the required income documents. Koe noted that there was also the borrower's credit (CTOS) score, their CCRIS records, debt service ratio (DSR) score, and if applicable, their litigation and bankruptcy checks and trade reference listing.

The DSR is calculated through a borrower's existing loans and compared to their income. Before the pandemic, Bank Negara reported that 76% of

Malaysians have savings that can only cover less than three months of living expenses. This, combined with the fact that 65% of borrowers already have either car or personal loans, lowers a potential borrower's DSR score.

Koe estimated that the debt service ratio limit from bank to bank stands at 50-80%, with a lot of loan applications rejected because of their DSR profile.

"One thing peculiar to me is, sometimes the borrower has never borrowed money, [but] they are rejected because [the banks] don't know their background... If you build affordable housing, the B40 will be the biggest problem," he said.

He noted that loan applications were always rejected because borrowers could not feasibly prove their earnings. With the rise of the gig economy, and more and more graduates participating as they enter the workforce, the situation has only gotten worse. In the eyes of the bank, those working in the gig economy do not have stable incomes.

## A difference in assessment

"Even if that's what they're earning, [the banks] cannot give," Koe said.

"We're going to have a problem because, in the last 10 to 15 years, banking has changed. Banks now work on a risk basis, every banker is now 80% doing the job of a risk manager," Sime Darby Property Bhd managing director Azmir Merican said at the StarProperty Budget 2024 Roundtable.

He pointed out that banks run models looking at the probability of risk and defaults. The issue of housing was an urban problem rather than a problem for the whole country.

"If you're talking about housing, it is a problem of the urban society and urban society has got an income



"We hope that banks can consider relaxing their approval criteria, particularly for genuine first-time home buyers," Ho said.



"If you're talking about housing, it is a problem of the urban society, and urban society has got an income issue," Azmir said.



"Even if that's what they're earning, [the banks] cannot give," Koe said.

issue," he said.

"Say, for example, we got two guys, early in their careers, earning RM5,000.

That's a risk issue for me... I have a problem thinking oh, I cannot afford it. I may not be able to afford it now, but as I progress in my career, I can afford it, then we talk about step-ups," he added.

Step-up financing programs involve paying a lower monthly instalment for a selected number of years of the loan, with it increasing over time.

"In Mah Sing, our average conversion rate (loan approvals) stands at approximately 50%," Mah Sing Group Bhd chief executive officer Datuk Ho Hon Sang said.

"This is mainly thanks to the support of our end financiers, many of whom have been on our panel for a long time. The affordable price points of our projects and availability of Step-Up Financing packages from end financiers have also played a significant role in boosting our conversion rate," he added.

"As a property developer, Mah Sing has been working towards narrowing the affordability gap for our customers. One example is Mah Sing's Secure Campaign

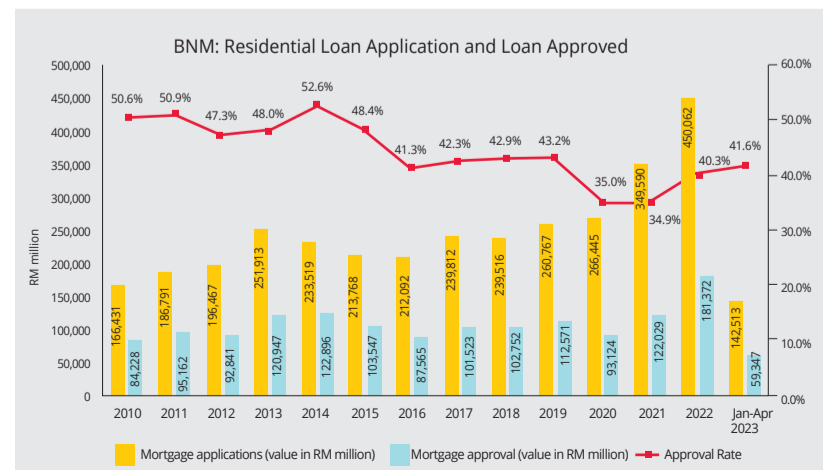
in 1H2023 with features such as a fixed interest rate, step-up payment scheme, appealing packages and incentives, and additional rewards. The response from home buyers towards this campaign has been positive, primarily because lower initial home loan instalments during the first few years have improved affordability and resulted in higher approval rates," Ho said.

A view shared by many developers, including Ho and participants of the roundtable event, was that the current challenges faced by homebuyers could be resolved by reinstating the Home Ownership Campaign (HOC). Currently, its successor, i-Miliki is running until the end of December 2023.

"We hope that banks can consider relaxing their approval criteria, particularly for genuine first-time home buyers. Besides that, banks can also consider giving lower, fixed-rate financing for properties priced up to RM500,000," Ho said.

"It is essential for financial institutions to strike a balance between risk management and supporting responsible borrowers," he added.

## BNM: Loans Applications and Approvals



Source: Bank Negara Malaysia Monthly Highlights & Statistics

**StarProperty**  
**FAIR 2023**



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