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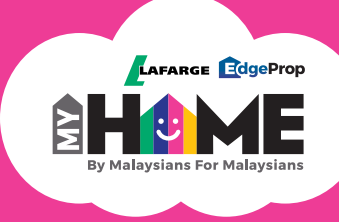
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THE B-WORD IN REAL ESTATE

Investors shudder whenever there is talk of a bubble, but what does it really mean? What are the signs? Is one developing in the Malaysian property sector?
See Pages 4 and 5.

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**KSL buys more
land in Johor**

KSL Holdings Bhd announced on Tuesday the acquisition of nine parcels of freehold land measuring 74.72ha in Johor Bahru for RM176.94 million. This comes just eight days after the property group proposed the purchase of two leasehold tracts measuring 47.74ha in the district for RM133.59 million.

In a filing with Bursa Malaysia, the Johor-based group said its wholly-owned subsidiaries Gantang Jaya Sdn Bhd and Bintang-Bintang Development Sdn Bhd have signed agreements with Pulai Springs Resort Bhd for the acquisition of the nine parcels. Gantang Jaya is buying three plots for RM4.45 million while Bintang-Bintang is acquiring the other six tracts for RM172.48 million.

KSL plans to use the land for landed property development.

**Medini City's
200,000 sq ft
co-working place**

Co-working space operator CO3 Social Office Sdn Bhd (CO3) is collaborating with Medini Iskandar Malaysia Sdn Bhd (MIM) to build CO3 Campus @ Medini 9, a 200,000 sq ft co-working space in Medini City at Iskandar Puteri, Johor, which can accommodate up to 4,000 members.

CO3 and MIM had signed the term

UEM Sunrise launches its first RUMAWIP

UEM Sunrise Bhd has launched its first Rumah Wilayah Persekutuan (RUMAWIP) project *Kondominium Kiara Kasih*.

The project, which has a GDV of about RM217.5 million, is coming up on a 2.14-acre freehold plot in Segambut, Kuala Lumpur and offers 719 units in a single 40-storey tower.

Each 3-bedroom unit is priced at RM300,000, has a built-up of 850 sq ft and comes with a car parking bay. The project is slated for completion in October 2022.

"Kondominium Kiara Kasih offers well-planned residential and facilities that cater to various fami-



ly-oriented needs. Residents of this modern high-rise living can be part of a connected and well-organised community living in Segambut,

neighbouring Mont'Kiara," said UEM Sunrise managing director and CEO Anwar Syahrin Abdul Ajib at the launch event.

sheet in relation to the joint venture and shareholders agreement last Saturday, marking the first stage of collaboration between the two parties, whereby a feasibility study will be carried out, with the definitive agreement expected to be signed in June.

"We believe our tie-up with CO3 will generate a lot of interest. In the near future, we will be offering office space that caters to all types of businesses, from start-ups right up to large-size organisations," said MIM CEO and managing director James Tee.

CO3 co-founder and CEO Yong Chen Hui said Medini City is a great starting point for CO3 Campus, as its role as the central business district of Iskandar Puteri and its strategic location will be able to attract a unique mix of local and international start-ups, small and medium enterprises, and multinational corporations.

**EWI completes
stage 1 of UK
land deal**

Eco World International Bhd (EWI) has completed stage 1 acquisitions of its joint venture with Be Living Holdings Ltd, which adds six sites to its pipeline.

"The completion of the stage 1 acquisitions marks the start of a new era for EWI in the UK. Going forward, we are well positioned to grow our UK business strongly," said EWI president and CEO Datuk Teow Leong Seng.

The six sites — which have an estimated GDV of £1.1 billion (RM6

billion) — are Woking; Kensal Rise and Maida Hill in Brent and Westminster; Millbrook Park in Barnet; Barking Abbey Retail Park and Barking Tesco in Barking and Dagenham; and Nantly House, Lampton, in Hounslow.

EWI noted that five out of the six sites have secured planning consent, enabling the projects to be launched in the next one or two years.

The conclusion of the first deal with Be Living — a sister company of UK contractor and developer Willmott Dixon Holdings Ltd — paves the way for the next stage of the deal, which entails the signing of definitive agreements for stage 2 acquisitions to potentially add a further six sites with an estimated GDV of £1.5 billion.

The proposed sites under stage 2 acquisitions are Kew Bridge and Osterley in Hounslow, Aberfeldy Village in Tower Hamlets, Bromley North and Bromley Sherman Road in Bromley, Tulse Hill in Lambeth, and Ealing in Ealing.

**LAUNCHES + EVENTS**

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**Earth Hour celebration
@ Publika**

Date: March 24 (Sat)

Time: 6pm to 10pm

Venue: Level G2, The Square,
Publika, Jalan Dutamas
1, Kuala Lumpur

Contact: (03) 2718 7788

UEM Sunrise Bhd is kick-starting its Eco-Month x MAPFest 2018 with its annual Earth Hour celebration. The event will feature an evening of cultural, music and dance performances.

**Unveiling of Impiria
Residensi sales gallery**

Date: March 24 and
25 (Sat and Sun)

Time: 10am to 6pm

Venue: Impiria Residensi
Sales Gallery, Lorong Batu
Nilam 21C, Bandar Bukit
Tinggi 2, Klang, Selangor

Contact: (016) 950 7192

WCT Land Sdn Bhd invites all to its new Impiria Residensi sales gallery featuring refurbished



show units. New buyers can take advantage of the complimentary renovation packages on offer. Terms and conditions apply.

Fun N' Fit Family Day

Date: March 24 (Sat)

Time: 8am to 4pm

Venue: Greenwoods Sales Gallery,
32A, 36, Jalan Belian 1, Taman
Salak Perdana, Bandar Baru
Salak Tinggi, Sepang, Selangor

Contact: (012) 422 9003

Join Paramount Property for some fitness-themed fun at its Greenwoods Salak Perdana sales gallery. There will be health talks, aerobic sessions, rock-climbing and other health activities.

**Dutch Festival with OSK
Property**

Date: March 24 and
25 (Sat and Sun)

Time: 10am to 6pm

Venue: Windmill Upon Hills
Sales Gallery, Jalan Permai,
Genting Permai Avenue, Genting
Highlands Bentong, Pahang

Contact: (03) 6100 2339

OSK Property Holdings Bhd is bringing the Netherlands to you! Join the developer at its Dutch Festival in Genting Highlands and enjoy its zero-entry offer for fully-furnished homes that ends on March 30, 2018.

**Zumba classes
@ Eco Majestic**

Date: March 25 (Sun)

Time: 9.30am to 11am

Venue: EcoWorld Gallery @
Eco Majestic, 1, Lingkaran
Eco Majestic, Eco Majestic,
Semenyih, Selangor

Contact: (03) 8723 2255

Join Eco World Development

Group Bhd for a heart-pumping Zumba session at Eco Majestic this Sunday morning. The complimentary Zumba class will require RSVP — don't forget to bring your towel, sports shoes and attire.

Orkid Nilai Impian launch

Date: March 24 (Sat)

Time: 10am to 6pm

Venue: Nilai Impian Sales Gallery,
1, Persiaran Nilai Impian 3, Nilai
Impian, Nilai, Negeri Sembilan

Contact: (06) 794 8383

Sime Darby Property Bhd will be launching its Orkid double-storey linked homes at the Nilai Impian township. The 4-bedroom 3-bathroom units start from RM488,888.



Demand for homes expected to rise after GE14, says Savills Malaysia

BY SHAWN NG

KUALA LUMPUR: Demand for residential property is expected to rise after Malaysia's 14th general elections, thus pushing up real estate transaction volume this year, said Savills Malaysia executive chairman Datuk Christopher Boyd.

"What we have seen is a lack of confidence in the market as well as affordability in the residential market, but I think it has been overplayed. And I feel very sure that once the general elections are over, whatever the outcome, there will be an increase in demand for residential property and the market will begin to pick up," he told reporters after Savills Malaysia Breakfast Forum in Kuala Lumpur on Tuesday.

Boyd was one of the panellists at a panel discussion of the forum, which was also joined by The Economist Corporate Network global editorial director Andrew Staples, head of Savills World Research Yolande Barnes and Savills South East Asia CEO Christopher Marriot.

Speculation over the timing of the elections has intensified recently, with many political pundits expecting Parliament to be dissolved in a matter of weeks, paving the way for the polls.

Parliament will be automatically dissolved on June 24, and the general elections must be held within 60 days after that.



(From left) Deputy executive chairman Savills Malaysia Sdn Bhd Allan Soo, Marriot, Boyd, Barnes and Staples at the Savills Malaysia Breakfast Forum.

Although the turnover for real estate deals is expected to increase this year, Boyd believes that prices "are not going to go through the roof".

"It is not going to cause a price explosion because it will be tempered by quite a considerable backlog that some developers still need to clear as well as the increasing supply," he explained.

On the office sector front, he expects the vacancy rate in the Klang Valley to increase slightly while rental will face a little bit of downward pressure before the market stabilises.

"The current vacancy rate for office buildings in the Klang Valley is between 20% and 25%, which is not the worst that I have seen in my lifetime. I think it will hover around 25%

or so until the surplus space is absorbed, which is expected to happen in 2021 or 2022.

"Meanwhile, rental rates have been surprisingly stable and resilient but they are under pressure now, so tenants who are moving now to take advantage of better-specified buildings are getting a great deal," he said.

According to Savills Malaysia, the existing stock of office space in the Klang Valley stood at some 120 million sq ft, which is higher than Singapore and Bangkok.

"It is going through a growth phase. We will have about five million sq ft per annum completing over the next three years. We have an annual absorption of about three million in a good year and one to two million in a quiet year. So clearly there is more space being built than is required in the short term and this is putting pressure on rents.

"But buildings go in cycles and phases. Come 2022, there may be very little new space coming on stream for the next few years. Developers build these buildings for the long term — for 50 or 100 years, so a little bit of temporary vacancy is not life-threatening.

"The new generation of office buildings is very, very much better than the old generation as they have bigger floor plates, are better specified and have more amenities for tenants. So you have to look at it as an evolutionary process, which will sort out in the medium term," Boyd concluded.

Country Garden Malaysia hits 70% take-up rate for launches in 2017

BY SHAWN NG

JOHOR BAHRU: Despite the challenging real estate market, Country Garden Malaysia has managed to achieve a decent take-up rate of more than 70% for its new property launches in Malaysia last year.

Country Garden Malaysia regional president Jason Fu said the developer's market-oriented strategy of launching new properties according to market demand has allowed the group to overcome current market challenges such as the over-supply of high-end non-landed residential properties in Johor and China's curbs on capital outflow.

"We also paid a lot of attention to the product itself to ensure that the design and services offered by us are up to standard so our products can stand out in the market. This is a very competitive industry and we have to be very focused on the product details.

"Overall, we are gradually being recognised in the market. Our sales and the progress of our developments have been pretty good over the past few years. In 2017, we achieved an average take-up rate of over 70% for our new properties in Malaysia. Buyers are mostly locals," Fu told EdgeProp.my.

Country Garden Malaysia projects in Malaysia include Country Garden Diamond City in Semenyih, Selangor; Country Garden Central Park in Tampoi and Country Garden Danga Bay, both in Johor Bahru.

In 2017, Country Garden Malaysia had



Country Garden Danga Bay is Country Garden Malaysia's first development in Malaysia.

launched a total of 1,178 new properties in Country Garden Central Park and Country Garden Diamond City.

Country Garden Central Park saw 1,138 freehold serviced apartment units unveiled last year. With built-ups from 403 sq ft to 1,631 sq ft, the serviced apartments are priced at around RM480 psf to RM640 psf.

Meanwhile, Country Garden Diamond City had launched 40 units of landed homes

Fu: Our sales and the progress of our developments have been pretty good over the past few years.

last year. They consist of 2-storey terraced, semi-detached and bungalow homes with built-ups from 1,862 sq ft to 3,657 sq ft. Prices start at RM350 psf.

Looking ahead, Country Garden Malaysia is optimistic about the long-term prospect for the Malaysian property sector and expects the market to contribute higher sales to the group this year.

"Malaysia is a market where we pay a lot of attention to, due to its stable political situation, economic growth, the good relations between China and Malaysia, and the country's strong support for China's Belt and Road Initiative," said Fu.

Although the sales contribution from Malaysia at present is not considered significant, he believes that sales will rise as the group continues to grow its business and projects in the country while striving to meet consumer expectations.

Listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, the Country Garden Group is one of the largest China developers by contracted sales. For the financial year ended Dec 31, 2017, the group recorded some RMB550.8 billion (RM340.92 billion) of contracted sales. It made its debut in Malaysia in 2013 with its Danga Bay project in Johor, which consists of a shopping mall, commercial streets and some 8,500 condo units. The group is also in a joint venture with Esplanade Danga 88 Sdn Bhd, an associate company of Kumpulan Prasarana Rakyat Johor to develop mega development Forest City in Johor.

COVER STORY



BY LUM KA KAY

PATRICK GOH/THE EDGE



Foo: Should a crisis hit, property prices will fall but whether or not the price drop is substantial and drastic enough for a bubble to pop remains subjective.

Bubble, bubble, toil and trouble? Bubble can be a scary word for property investors because it means that real estate prices are inflating rapidly over a short period without the support of underlying fundamentals or demand.

Investors often want to know whether a bubble is forming because when it “bursts,” it will probably lead to sharp drops in asset prices. When aggravated by debt, falling asset prices will trigger an economic downturn or a recession.

For CBRE|WTW Malaysia managing director Foo Gee Jen, asset bubbles are often sentiment-driven, hence they do not provide any standard characteristics for early detection. A bubble will also form when there is excessive liquidity, leading to “too much money chasing too few assets,” especially when the investment market narrows with limited buying options.

“People should be wary when the value of an asset bloats to a level where the expectation on the economic returns is unjustifiable or has an unfounded basis,” he tells EdgeProp.my.

Foo has repeatedly pointed out that a housing bubble is not taking place in the Malaysian property market currently, citing the country’s strong fundamentals and the cooling measures introduced by Bank Negara Malaysia, which have moderated the impact from price growth in the last market boom.

He explains that a few conditions will be present in a property bubble situation: price heating, supply exceeding demand, panic selling and irresponsible lending.

“While housing prices in Malaysia have been on the rise, they have not reached an unjustifiable level where the price unreasonably exceeds its economic returns, especially for the last three years. Rental yields of 2.5% to 3.5% for residential properties are still in line with current fixed deposit and savings interest rates. For the commercial and industrial properties, the market can still offer reasonable returns of between 5% and 7%.

“As far as residential properties are concerned, we estimate that in 2016 there are 97,500 new households formed every year compared to annual completions of 78,200 units. Therefore, an oversupply across the board leading to a dearth of house buyers is unlikely.

“The oversupply situation in Malaysia is locational and product-specific,” Foo elaborates, adding that the Malaysian property market is still strongly backed by local homebuyers.

He says the property market should see better days as early as 2H18, although challenges such as affordability will remain the primary structural issue in the residential sector.

“Nevertheless, developers are seen to be more innovative and willing to adjust their selling prices. Concerns of oversupply in the office and retail sectors persist but developers and investors have slowed down their projects,” he says.

Foo does not deny that the general consensus is that the economic climate is expected to be challenging going forward.

“The political landscapes in and out of the country are not stable. Political conflicts may lead to economic retaliation. Activities in major financial markets such as the US would affect the currencies of emerging markets like Malaysia as well.

“While an asset bubble is usually a result of a crisis, not every economic or financial crisis will

lead to an asset bubble. Therefore, it is impossible to ascertain if and when a bubble will happen.

“My view is that, thus far, the property market in Malaysia does not seem to be moving towards a bubble situation. Should a crisis hit, property prices will fall but whether or not the price drop is substantial and drastic enough for a bubble to pop remains subjective,” he adds.

Worse yet to come

Meanwhile, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman’s Faculty of Business and Finance, Department of Economics assistant professor Dr Yip Chee Yin — who specialises in the housing market — opines that the property market, which is currently experiencing a slowdown, has yet to see the worst of it.

“The peak period [of the cycle] was in 2013, and thereafter prices have been sliding down. The question is whether this is due to fundamental changes or the bubble phenomenon.

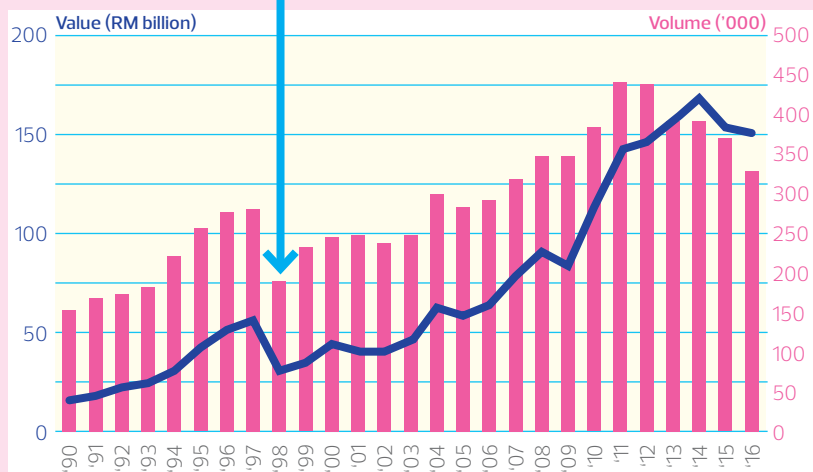
“Housing prices are already coming down [indirectly] at a steady rate because developers are offering rebates, free furnishing and more. All

GOT BUBBLE OR NOT?

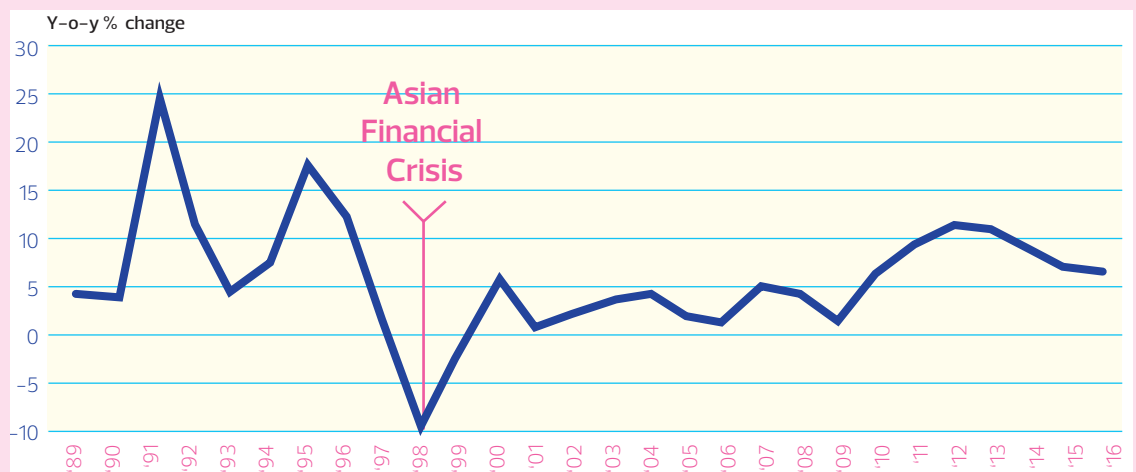


When was the last housing bubble in Malaysia?

Foo: There was a drastic drop in transaction value and volume during the 1997/98 Asian financial crisis — that was a bubble burst. The current slowdown saw some declines but at a gradual rate, not considered a bubble burst.



House price index changes (percentage year-on-year)



Tip: The last housing bubble burst in Malaysia happened around 1997, which we all know was the Asian financial crisis. It lasted about two years. So a housing bubble is usually preceded by a financial crisis.

From 1995 to 1997, the rise in house prices was about 25%. The rise was rather sharp because it was slightly more than 10% per year for two consecutive years. Then from 1997 to 1999, the

drop was about 20%, which is equivalent to almost 10% per year. This is considered a bubble because the rise and fall were rather sharp by international standards — amounting to more than a 10% change per year. Moreover, after the collapse of the Malaysian housing market, the economy suffered tremendously, resulting in a devastating depreciation of the ringgit and a drastic drop of the GDP.

COVER STORY



NEWS

YIP CHEE YIN



these amount to a price decrease. So far, the rate of such incentive offers is still manageable.

"The sad news is that overhang and unsold properties are at an all-time high in a decade. This may cause developers to default bridging loan payments, thereby resulting in a domino effect on loan defaults and this could cause a financial crisis, signalling the housing market is about to burst.

"In my opinion, we have not gone past the worst. The fact is that, year in year out, we are facing an accumulated housing glut that can degenerate the cycle into a housing bubble. In view of this fact, we are still in a 'slow-down', the severity of which is yet to be seen," he shares.

Yip is also head of a research group funded by the Higher Education Ministry's Fundamental Research Grant Scheme which has published a research work titled "The development of housing bubble model: A study of Malaysian property market".

Yip: We have not gone past the worst. The fact is that, year in year out, we are facing an accumulated housing glut that can degenerate the cycle into a housing bubble.

How to maintain economic fundamentals?

What anchors the property market in Malaysia? CBRE|WTW's Foo notes that strong domestic demand and external performance have been the strength of Malaysia's general economy, resulting in a 6.2% GDP growth in 3Q17 — a new high since 2Q14.

Meanwhile, Yip states political stability as a crucial base for general economic strength. However, political stability is not easy to achieve, especially in a multi-ethnic Malaysian society.

"Other than political stability, we have to maintain a clean government free from corruption. The final factor is that we need to be allies with large countries to benefit the people. We are a small country. We need to be allies with big and strong countries in most aspects so that relationships with them can make our country prosper. If we can achieve all the above, foreign investments will come in a big way," he opines.

Characteristics of a housing bubble

1.

Price heating

This refers to the extreme price escalation of properties to an unjustifiable level, leading to disproportionate valuation of property. Everyone wants to ride on this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, further pushing prices up.



2.

Supply exceeding demand

When there is an oversupply, it will trigger the "dumping" of properties, which would drastically pull down property prices, contributing to an asset bubble burst. The subprime mortgage crisis of 2006 in the US is a startling example — where housing demand was driven up as people bought homes as investments, leading to price heating.

As homebuilders continue to build, the unsold property inventory stacks up and house prices start to fall, leading to an asset bubble burst, thus creating the subprime mortgage crisis, subsequently a banking crisis and the global financial crisis.



3.

Panic selling

Panic selling creates a surge of supply which then pulls down property prices. This would happen when a crisis hits. The property market in Malaysia is still very much backed by local buyers. Foreign investors only make up 7% of the market. Furthermore, foreign ownership is restricted to residential properties priced RM1 million and above, so the majority of the buyers are locals.

Foreign investors presumably have a higher tendency and willingness to dispose of their assets to minimise their losses, compared to local buyers who mainly acquire properties for self-occupation. As such, when a crisis hits, panic selling would be less exaggerated in a local-backed market compared with an investor-backed market.



4.

Irresponsible lending

Ease of access to credit presents a moral hazard where loosely-collateralised loans create fundamental flaws and systemic risks to the financial system.

Bank Negara Malaysia has been very proactive in monitoring and regulating the country's financial system. Measures have been implemented to ensure prudent lending behaviour by banks. This, by and large, is one of the main stabilisers to prevent bubbles.

Latest tactic to sell a condominium: They'll pay your taxes

BLOOMBERG



Thousands of condominium buyers in Brooklyn have benefitted from state-funded abatement programmes such as 421-a, which rewarded developers with tax breaks for up to 25 years.

BY OSHRAT CARMIEL

As sales began at a boutique Williamsburg condominium project in Brooklyn, New York City, would-be buyers touring the apartments, each with a terrace or balcony, kept asking the same question: Do I get a tax break?

Unlike some larger developments in the waterfront neighbourhood that benefit from government-sponsored abatements, the 13-unit project at 62-66 North Third Street didn't have that perk. So the builders are sponsoring an abatement of their own.

They're offering to pay up to 2.5 years of buyers' property taxes on any unit that goes into contract by the end of the month. The payments, which will be offered as a credit at closing, range from US\$23,000 (RM90,000) on a 1-bedroom apartment to US\$80,000 for each of the two penthouses, according to documents filed with the state attorney general's office.

"It's a checklist item," said David Dweck, principal at Duke Equities, a developer of the project along with Flatiron Real Estate Advisors and MJM Contracting. "People say 'I won't go into anything without a concession' because they're really thinking long term" about their monthly costs.

By many measures, the market in Williamsburg is doing well — buyers seeking hipness and affordability relative to Manhattan are snapping up homes faster than they can be listed for sale, pushing prices ever higher. But as values rise, so do concerns about costs associated with homeownership — something that's come into sharper focus now, with mortgage rates at a four-year high and new federal rules limiting deductions for loan and tax expenses.

"People plan some degree of flexibility around what they can pay, and the recent rise in mortgage rates has eaten into a lot of that," said Grant Long, senior economist at listings website StreetEasy. "That makes having a property-tax abatement much more valuable."

At the North Third Street project, two blocks from the East River waterfront, units currently listed for sale are priced at an average of US\$1,520 psf, according to StreetEasy. That's the higher end of the market in Williamsburg, where the median for homes that changed hands last year was US\$1,204 psf.

Apartments there include a 731-sq-ft 1-bedroom listed for US\$1.16 million, and a 3-bedroom with 1,996 sq ft for US\$3.07 million, according to StreetEasy. Sales at the project started in December and two of the 13 homes are under contract.

Thousands of condominium buyers in Brooklyn have benefitted from state-funded abatement programmes such as 421-a, which rewarded developers with tax breaks for up to 25 years — passed on to buyers — in exchange for building or financing affordable housing. That programme was replaced last year with a more restrictive one that essentially makes the next wave of high-end condos ineligible for such incentives.

When sales at 62-66 North Third Street began, "we heard from buyers who came in saying, 'I love the property, I have no problem with the pricing,' but basically their hesitation was the taxes," said Andrew Barrocas, CEO of brokerage MNS, which is marketing the project.

That feedback inspired the developers' rebate, according to Barrocas: "We said, 'let's stay ahead of the curve.'" — Bloomberg



How home designs in Malaysia have evolved



BY NATALIE KHOO

A home design that was relevant and favourable 10 years ago may not be the “in” design today. As time passes, consumers’ needs and tastes change and this shapes the design of homes over the years.

For instance, 30 years back, vertical living was an uncommon concept in Malaysia — unlike today when land is scarce and supply of such homes is abundant in city centres. Decades ago, all we wanted was a roof over our heads, but today there are greater demands for lifestyle elements.

Malaysian Institute of Architects president Ezumi Harzani shares with EdgeProp.my that housing design has evolved over time.

In recent times, issues of housing affordability have been raised due to the rising cost of living and stringent lending policies, among others. “There is a mismatch between the income of the urban middle class and the cost of housing, making it almost impossible for a majority of the Below 40 (B40) income group to afford homes in urban areas,” he says, adding that this has influenced the design of houses as well.

Ezumi notes there are noticeable differences in houses built over different time periods.

“The modern houses built in the 70s have a minimalist design with basic geometrical forms shaping the buildings. Internally, there were clear boundaries between kitchen, dining and living rooms. The trend continued until the mid 80s. Towards the late 80s, homeowners and designers in Malaysia placed more consideration to tropical climate design, with more openings and airy spaces, as well as pitch roofs with large overhang. Internally, there was also a blurring of the boundaries between kitchen and dining spaces, sometimes with a combination of dining and living areas,” he says.

The tropical design trend became more popular from the early 90s, he adds, which later led to an adoption of Balinese-style architecture.

The design evolution also reflects the wealth of the general public and their ability to buy bigger and better homes.

“Today, owning a big house has become the ‘dream’ of many, while the reality is that the houses in urban areas are getting smaller. Are

we then going back to the 70s minimalist design for these smaller units?” Ezumi notes, adding that developers are coming up with smaller homes to keep prices affordable in the current environment. Smaller residential units are now compensated with lifestyle and support facilities such as club houses, gymnasium, retail outlets and public transportation.

“It is important to note that space and design standards are still average — it is hard to find a balance between providing adequate space and creating economic value for housing. When budget is the main consideration, value for money is very important.

“Developers must always take into account the functionality, comfort and habitability of the homes. Most importantly, affordable housing must be created by using the right building materials and methods without compromising on quality,” he stresses.

Timeless interior design

Similarly, interior design trends have also evolved as society progresses.

“Preferences and tastes change. For instance, we see a demand from the younger generation for spaces more attuned with their fast-paced internet-driven life. Spaces have evolved from mere fulfilment of utilitarian basics to styles demanded by this young generation on the go,” Chris Yap, president of the Malaysian Institute of Interior Designers, shares.

However, some design concepts are timeless, he says, citing period trends such as Victorian, Bohemian, Art Deco and, to a certain extent, Renaissance. They do, however, get adapted and styled to be more contemporary.

“Another timeless interior design approach would be minimalist simplicity, much to the fancy of the younger generations who buy ready-made furniture pieces to fit

SUHAIMI YUSUF/THE EDGE



Ezumi: Owning a big house has become the ‘dream’ of many, while the reality is that the houses in urban areas are getting smaller.

MALAYSIAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS



Yap: Spaces have evolved from mere fulfilment of utilitarian basics to styles demanded by a young generation on the go.

into their habitat for convenience and practicality,” says Yap.

He emphasises that in this day and age, however, the interior design of homes very much depends on individual’s taste, influence and lifestyle.

“The uncluttered look still holds its ground, with collector pieces dotting the spaces, for those who can afford them. Simple highlights with feature walls are also prominent, with contemporary furniture and fixtures completing the interior assembly of spaces. The use of innovative products available today also helps to expound the fact that people are focusing more on their living spaces and they want to individualise these spaces as best they can,” Yap shares.

Smart and green

According to Ezumi, today’s generation of Malaysian homebuyers, particularly the millennials, are keen on smart homes as they are attracted to technological innovations such as mobile security systems.

“They also want ‘green homes’ to counter the effects of the rising

cost of living. It will not only promote better use of resources and a greener environment but also help reduce electricity bills. Homes with energy-efficient features also help promote healthier living,” he shares.

How homebuyers can benefit

Both Ezumi and Yap agree that a well-designed home benefits the homeowner in the long run.

“A well-designed home, in my opinion, equates to a happy and contented end-user. It gives its inhabitants confidence, a sense of belonging and a secure refuge to retreat to after challenging workdays or situations in life,” says Yap.

A well-designed home is also an investment that pays for itself over a building’s lifetime, offers Ezumi. “For the developer, it would be easier to sell a well-designed property and at a good price, thus providing better return on investment,” he adds.

Similarly, on a more macroeconomic scale, a well-designed neighbourhood will improve the community’s quality of living.

What to keep in mind when building a home



1. Building materials

- Select building materials for long-term durability
- Use materials from sustainable resources
- Use materials that comply with fire safety requirements
- Avoid harmful materials and finishes

2. Design

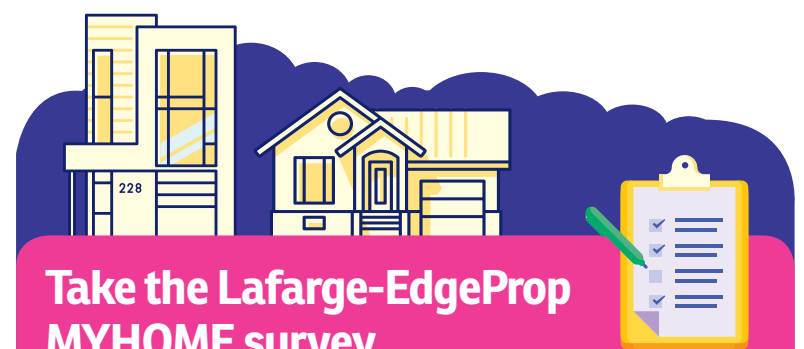
- Reduce building footprint by simplifying building shapes while maximising space
- Design that caters to the dynamic needs of the current generation
- Designed for expansion, physical flexibility or house deconstruction

- Functional flexibility to perform as home-office
- Lifestyle support services: clubhouse, swimming pool, recreational parks, public places and infrastructure

3. Social and economic factors

- Needs of the current generation
- Urban demographic changes
- Sustainable building for future generations
- Cost effective and practical to maintain
- Reduce environmental impact by minimising electricity and water usage

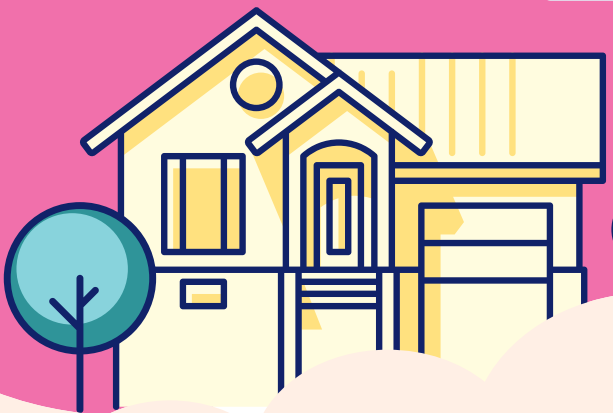
SOURCE: EZUMI HARZANI, PAM PRESIDENT



Take the Lafarge-EdgeProp MYHOME survey

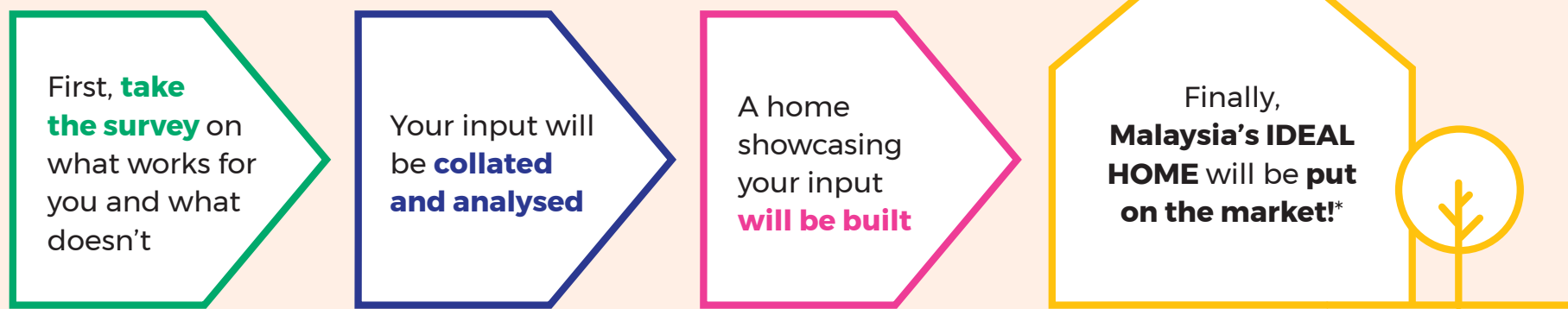
What would the design of your ideal home be like? Is it one with a big kitchen so you can whip up a good meal for friends and family, or one with a large bedroom where you can lounge around and watch movies?

Have your say now on what your ideal home would be like by taking part in the Lafarge-EdgeProp MYHOME survey at www.EdgeProp.my/MYHOME. The results will form the basis of the design of homes to be built by S P Setia Bhd. Hurry, because the survey ends on March 31!



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For sale

**RM599,000****Puncak Nusa Kelana, Ara Damansara, Selangor****Type:** Condominium **Tenure:** Leasehold/ bumi lot **Built-up:** 1,327 sq ft **Bedrooms:** 3+1 **Bathrooms:** 3

This unit includes one car parking bay and is located on a lower floor close to the pool. Other facilities are a gym and playground.

**Izzat Razali** (REN14066)
Oriental Realty
E(3)0050/12
+6016 331 2685**RM2,750,000****Indigo 2, USJ Heights, Selangor****Type:** Zero-lot bungalow **Tenure:** Freehold **Built-up:** 4,682 sq ft **Land size:** 3,825 sq ft **Bedrooms:** 6 **Bathrooms:** 6

This property is part of Indigo II, featuring only 35 units of zero-lot bungalows within six special garden-themed neighbourhoods.

**Ms Di** (REN 11289)
Metroworld Realty Sdn Bhd
E(1)1026/13
+6019 316 1413**RM700,000****Taman Subang Indah, PJS 10, Bandar Sunway, Selangor****Type:** Terraced house **Tenure:** Freehold **Built-up:** 1,650 sq ft **Land size:** 1,400 sq ft **Bedrooms:** 4 **Bathrooms:** 3

This house offers an extended kitchen with approval from the local authority. Well-kept and in good condition.

**Sarah Nadia Che Rohim** (REN 08342)
Transasia Property Consultancy
Sdn Bhd VE(1)0187/2
+6012 358 2950**RM800,000****Kepong Baru, Kepong, Kuala Lumpur****Type:** Terraced house **Tenure:** Leasehold **Built-up:** 1,800 sq ft **Land size:** 1,430 sq ft **Bedrooms:** 3+1 **Bathrooms:** 3

This newly renovated home was previously a 1-storey house before the second floor was added. It also has kitchen cabinets.

**Eugene Yap** (REN12217)
Focus Estate Agency
E(1)1751
+6012 625 9888**RM990,000****Taman Kepong, Kepong, Kuala Lumpur****Type:** Terraced house **Tenure:** Freehold **Built-up:** 2,400 sq ft **Land size:** 1,500 sq ft **Bedrooms:** 5 **Bathrooms:** 3

This spacious 2-storey house has an extended kitchen, downstairs toilet and downstairs bedroom. The generously-sized bedrooms upstairs fit queen-sized beds with ease.

**Eugene Yap** (REN12217)
Focus Estate Agency
E(1)1751
+6012 625 9888**RM750,000****Taman Kepong, Kepong, Kuala Lumpur****Type:** Terraced house **Tenure:** Freehold **Built-up:** 1,430 sq ft **Land size:** 1,430 sq ft **Bedrooms:** 3 **Bathrooms:** 2

This 1-storey house is newly renovated.

**Eugene Yap** (REN12217)
Focus Estate Agency
E(1)1751
+6012 625 9888**RM2,990,000****Mayang Sutera, TTDI Jaya, Selangor****Type:** Bungalow **Tenure:** Freehold **Built-up:** 4,500 sq ft **Land size:** 6,480 sq ft **Bedrooms:** 8 **Bathrooms:** 7

Located in Shah Alam, this 3-storey bungalow is fully renovated in a modern Balinese style.

**Farikadona Afrianto** (REN 11237)
Azmi & Co Estate Agency
E(1)0553
+6017 494 9695**RM2,500,000****Sri Langit Condo, Seputeh, Kuala Lumpur****Type:** Condominium (penthouse) **Tenure:** Freehold **Built-up:** 2,940 sq ft **Bedrooms:** 5 **Bathrooms:** 4

This newly and elegantly fully-furnished penthouse is located in the tranquil and convenient neighbourhood of Seputeh, close to the bustling Mid Valley City.

**Chew Hui Wah** (REN 00223)
Meridin Properties Sdn Bhd
E(1)1525
+6012 376 8375**RM530,000****I Residence, Kota Damansara, Selangor****Type:** Condominium **Tenure:** Leasehold **Built-up:** 1,293 sq ft **Bedrooms:** 2 **Bathrooms:** 2

This unit comes with kitchen cabinets and island, and is in move-in condition. It includes two car parking lots and is within walking distance to an LRT station.

**Noruljannah Sabari** (REN 12779)
Rescom Realty
VE(3)0244
+6012 275 2164**RM2,500,000****Section 4, Shah Alam, Selangor****Type:** Zero-lot bungalow **Tenure:** Leasehold **Built-up:** 3,732 sq ft **Land size:** 4,241 sq ft **Bedrooms:** 6 **Bathrooms:** 5

This 3-storey corner unit is within walking distance to a surau. It boasts a modern interior design and is fully furnished, well-kept and in good condition.

**Nabil Md Yusof** (REN 21331)
Realty Appraisal (EA) Sdn Bhd
VE(1)0274
+6014 513 8863**RM2,100,000****Setia Eco Park, Setia Alam, Selangor****Type:** Semidee **Tenure:** Freehold **Built-up:** 3,918 sq ft **Land size:** 3,041 sq ft **Bedrooms:** 6 **Bathrooms:** 5

This Elizabeth Falls (Cheshire type) basic unit has a lower ground floor and a modern design. Facing a field, it is located within a peaceful environment.

**Nabil Md Yusof** (REN 21331)
Realty Appraisal (EA) Sdn Bhd
VE(1)0274
+6014 513 8863**RM3,200,000****Jalan Pekaka, Section 8, Kota Damansara, Selangor****Type:** Bungalow **Tenure:** Leasehold **Built-up:** 5,548 sq ft **Land size:** 8,148 sq ft **Bedrooms:** 7 **Bathrooms:** 7

This renovated bungalow boasts a huge land area and car parking space. The environment is clean and secure.

**Nabil Md Yusof** (REN 21331)
Realty Appraisal (EA) Sdn Bhd
VE(1)0274
+6014 513 8863