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**Editor's Choice Awards 2023**



**KUALA LUMPUR  
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**MENARA CITIBANK**  
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**THE BINJAI  
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MALAYSIA'S OUTSTANDING  
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**THE ERA WETLANDS**  
MALAYSIA'S EXEMPLARY  
LANDSCAPE DESIGN

*The Edge Malaysia-ILAM*  
**Sustainable Landscape Awards 2023**



**SETIA BAYUEMAS  
LAKE PARK**  
LANDSCAPE PLANNING



**KOTASAS  
(PRECINCT 1 - PRECINCT 7)**  
LANDSCAPE PLANNING



**SUMMIT PARK @  
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LANDSCAPE DESIGN

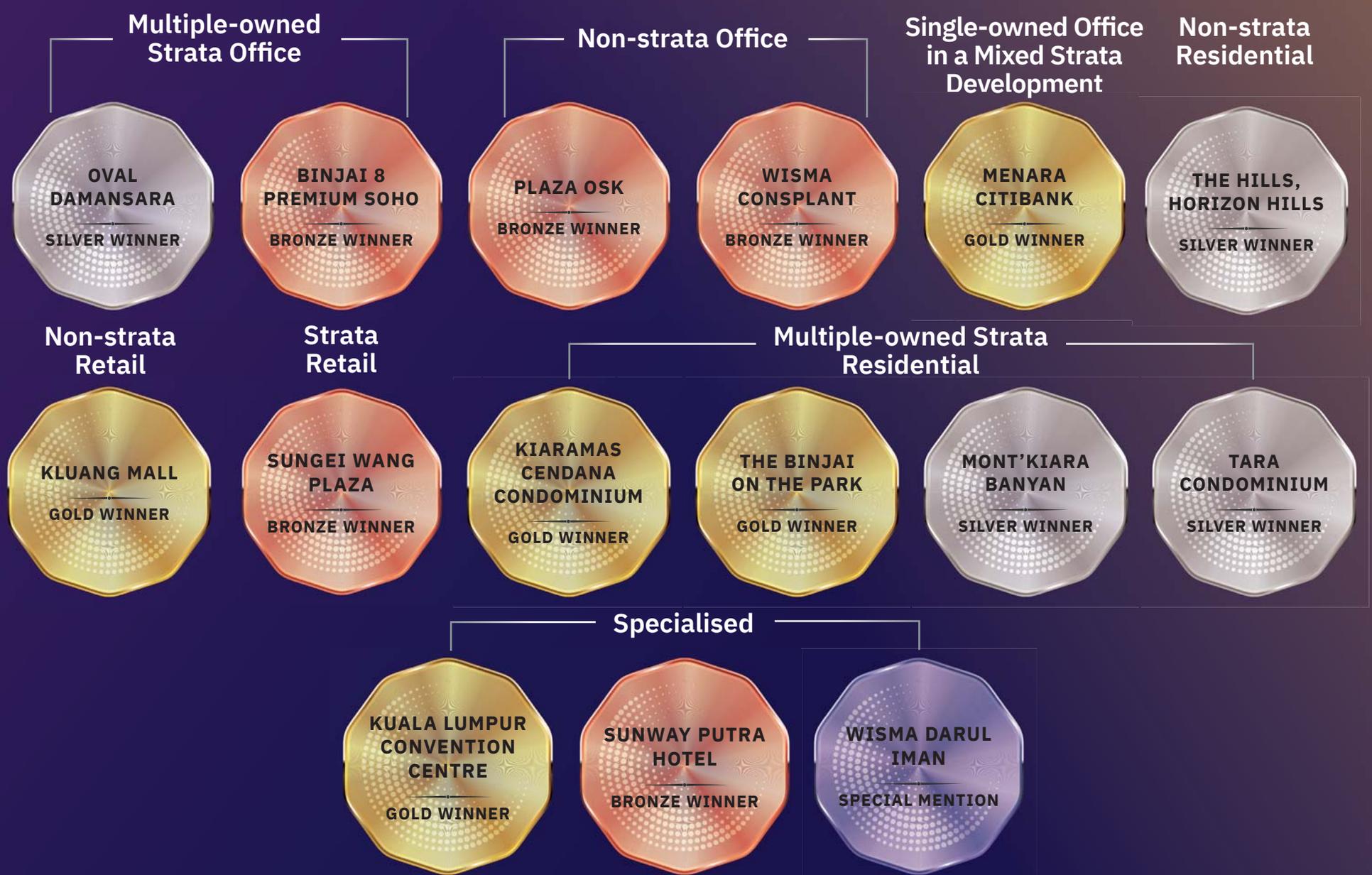


**THE ERA WETLANDS**  
LANDSCAPE DESIGN

## Below 10 Years



## 10 Years and Above



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# Note from the awards' chief judge



PATRICK GOH/THE EDGE

# Property built and managed sustainably is the future

BY AU FOONG YEE  
afyee@bizedge.com

Many in the real estate fraternity were puzzled when *The Edge Malaysia* rolled out Malaysia's Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards in 2017. This is the only award that celebrates the state of a real estate's heart and soul rather than its bells and whistles. Few fathomed the need for a national benchmark of sustainably built and maintained property.

Fast forward to the present, discerning real estate investors are favouring projects with future-proofed design and construction and which can be maintained sustainably.

This year's awards have achieved a new milestone. We received entries from government-owned buildings — Menara Majlis Bandaraya Johor Bahru and Wisma Darul Iman in Terengganu. Kudos to the authorities concerned. The act of submitting their property management practices for audit is testament to their strong commitment to excellence and sustainability. Both buildings bagged Special Mention in the Specialised category of the awards. We look forward to seeing more government-owned buildings participating in the awards.

Being involved in *The Edge Malaysia* Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards since its conception has given me a front-row seat to the Malaysian real estate landscape in a holistic manner. The verdict is clear — excellent property management, the pertinent last mile in the real estate ecosystem, is sorely missing in most buildings.

The property management culture in Malaysia is poor. Somehow, property managers have been relegated to discharging unglamorous chores everyone else takes for granted. It is worrying how poorly managed affordable housing and even high-end strata homes, offices and retail units are.

How well a building is managed is erroneously being measured strictly by the aesthetics of its façade. The hallmark of an excellently managed property, seriously, must be a lot more to its looking like a prized trophy!

Quality property management practice has in place a strong safety and security system, financial sustainability and preemptive maintenance — a reactive response to issues is not good. The team must be equipped to respond immediately and appropriately to all kinds of emergencies. At the same time, the team members must possess soft skills to deal effectively and harmoniously with people-oriented issues expected in community living.

Living conditions are changing. Considering the current erratic climatic conditions, when properties sit on elevated ground, inspections must be made regularly for soil movement and slope stability. Covid-19 has driven home the importance of quality indoor air while global warming demands a rethink of energy use. In conclusion, just ticking the standard operating procedures (SOPs) of property management is pathetic and unacceptable. Good property managers are those who move with the times.

To be fair, how simple or complex (read expensive) it is to manage a building rests significantly on its design, construction and amenities provided.

Responsible developers would care about the long-term interests of their buyers. They would not peddle frivolous



“Quality property management practice has in place a strong safety and security system, financial sustainability and preemptive maintenance — a reactive response to issues is not good.” — Au

and over-the-top designs just to achieve quick sales. They would not hand over a building that would cost an arm and a leg to manage. So, the next time you are out shopping for a property, stop and picture what the project might look like 10 years down the road before jumping in.

## Legislation compliance alone isn't enough

Compliance with legislation is pertinent but it is still not good enough. All building-sector stakeholders need to understand the spirit of the law. It is only with such insights that spaces designed and built would ultimately be relevant to users.

One of the key findings in this year's judging is the market's general lack of understanding of and unpreparedness in the upkeep of integrated strata developments.

Integrated or mixed strata developments are fast gaining popularity, thanks to the convenience offered. Depending on size, these projects typically offer a diverse range of properties such as residential, retail and, sometimes, office units in a cluster.

Whether these components sit on a single land title or multiple titles is central to the building's design from a successful property management standpoint. For example, maximising net lettable floor area at the expense of providing adequately equipped back-of-house services is not wise.

Back-of-house services are typically housed in tucked-away areas. These are out of bounds to unauthorised visitors. These are definitely on judges' to-visit list during site inspections.

We have seen fire control and service rooms not wired for

quick response or have faulty connections. Some water-cooling pump rooms inspected needed upgrading.

One potential dispute among owners of integrated strata development would be the demarcation of common and limited common areas. Property management issues get more challenging if affordable housing is a component of the mixed-use development.

All said, the role of property managers must be recognised at the start of a project. As a key industry stakeholder, their input from the onset of the project is crucial to its success.

## Time is of the essence

Property development and construction is a major contributor to the country's economy. Globally, the sector is fast evolving, pushed by changing lifestyles post-Covid-19 and green challenges. We must stay ahead of the curve to remain competitive. Playing catch-up equals opportunities lost.

The legal and regulatory framework must be shaped not for the current times but in anticipation of challenges to come.

A review of the Malaysian Strata Management Act (SMA) 2013, which came into force in 2015, is long overdue. If you recall, the initiative to amend SMA was mooted in 2019 followed by the government's engagement with industry stakeholders. The amendments were targeted for rollout in 2020 but Covid-19 disruptions got in the way. It is not clear when those amendments will materialise. Seeing how rapidly the strata property market is evolving, the amendments are needed urgently. Time is of the essence.

At the same time, the government's engagement with industry stakeholders must continue. Invaluable lessons can be gleaned from other parts of the world and adapted for local relevance.

## About the awards

*The Edge Malaysia* Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards has been described as a very laborious exercise for both submitting parties and the panel of judges.

Besides meeting to deliberate on several occasions, judges visit all shortlisted entries for a briefing, a question-and-answer session followed by an inspection of the site, in particular, the back-of-house areas.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 13

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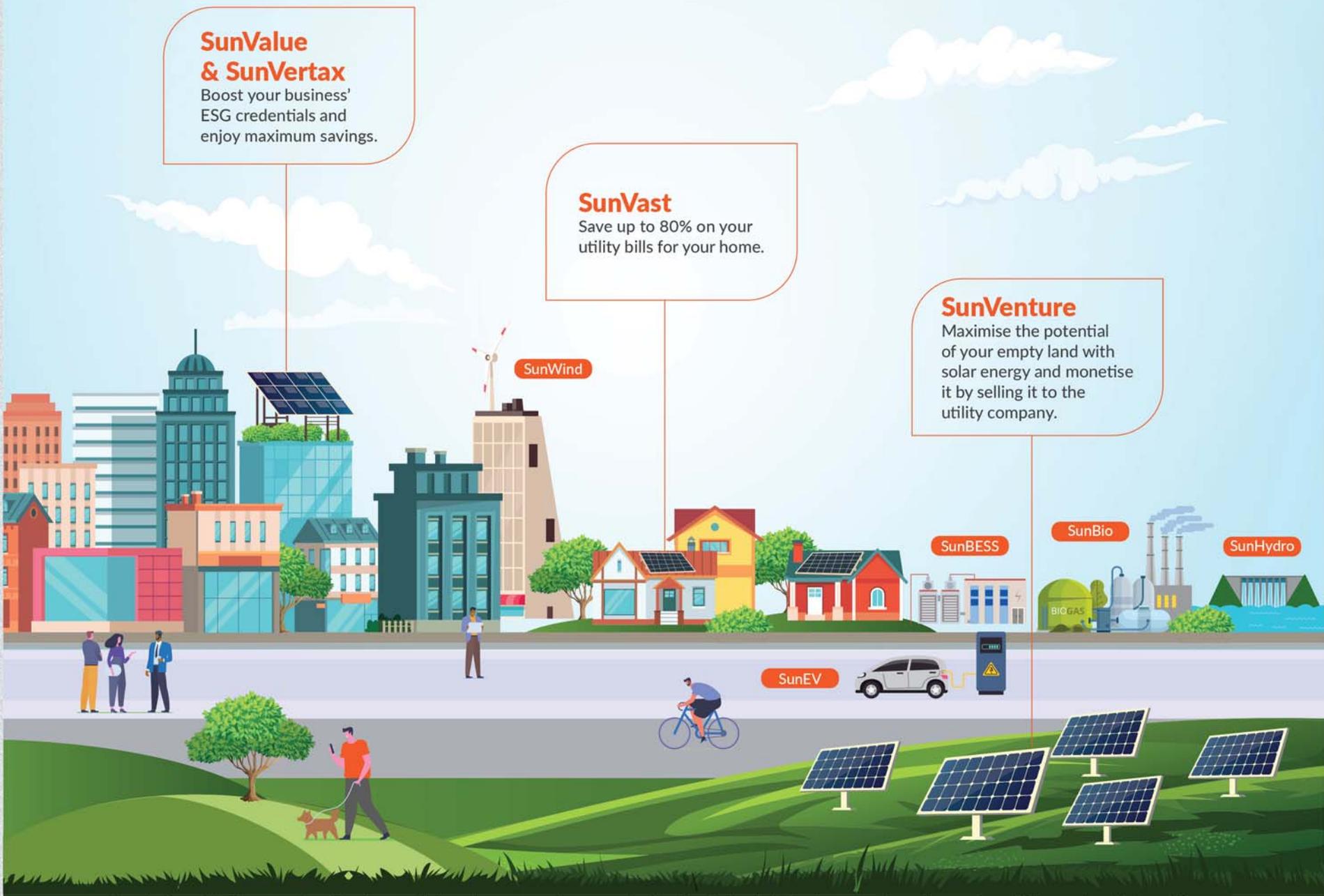
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# Overview



# The epitome of excellence

in Malaysia's best managed and sustainable properties

Nga: Since the debut of the BMSPA in 2017, the awards have successfully raised the bar on Malaysian property management practices, benchmarking against the best in class globally



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BY **ROWENA JOSEPH**  
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The Edge Malaysia Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards (BMSPA), which was first organised by EdgeProp Malaysia in 2017, marks its seventh edition this year. By comparing the properties to the best in class globally, it is hoped that the awards will raise the bar on property management and environmentally friendly real estate development in the country.

The gala dinner for the awards this year was held at Hilton Kuala Lumpur on July 4. In his welcome speech, The Edge Media Group publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat said the awards aimed to recognise top-class real estate management practices with maintenance that is effective and liveable.

“We believe that by recognising top-class real estate management practices, we will be able to raise the bar for the benefit of all stakeholders. By making sure that properties are well maintained and managed, property managers can prolong and enhance the

value of the properties and their overall liveability,” he added.

Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, who was the guest of honour, acknowledged in his keynote address that: “Since the debut of BMSPA in 2017, the awards have successfully raised the bar on Malaysian property management practices, benchmarking against the best in class globally. The awards have kick-started the urgently needed conversation among all property stakeholders for Malaysian real estate to be designed, built and maintained with sustainability.”

There were 10 categories of awards this year, covering residential, office, mixed development, shopping mall and specialised properties. Each category was divided into two segments to reflect the age of the properties — Below 10 Years and 10 Years and Above.

In addition to the anchor awards, *The Edge Malaysia-ILAM Sustainable Landscape Awards 2023* as well as the Editor's Choice Awards 2023 were presented.

#### Celebrating the best of the best

BMSPA 2023 received 52 submissions from all over the country. Of these, 39 were short-

listed for the awards. Ultimately, 30 projects received recognition for the quality of their property management practices.

The Binjai On The Park and Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre retained their Gold status in the 10 Years and Above — Multiple-owned Strata Residential category and 10 Years and Above — Specialised category respectively. The Binjai On The Park, managed by Henry Butcher Malaysia (Mont Kiara) Sdn Bhd (HBMK), and Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, managed by Convex Malaysia Sdn Bhd, also won those awards in 2017 and 2019 respectively.

Properties that previously won Gold at the BMSPA can only resubmit their property for consideration after a period of three years.

In addition to their wins in the respective categories, both properties also received the Editor's Choice Awards — The Binjai On The Park for Malaysia's Outstanding Residential Strata Development and Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre for Malaysia's Outstanding Specialised Development.

Other properties that received the Editor's Choice Awards this year were Menara Citibank (managed by Knight Frank Property Management Sdn Bhd or KPFM)

for Malaysia's Outstanding Sustainable Office Development and The Era Wetlands (managed by JKG Central Park) for Malaysia's Exemplary Landscape Design.

Menara Citibank and The Era Wetlands were Gold winners in the 10 Years and Above — Single-owned Office in a Mixed Strata Development category and in *The Edge Malaysia-ILAM Sustainable Landscape Awards 2023 Landscape Design* category respectively.

Other developments that won Gold in the main categories of the BMSPA 2023 included IOI City Mall, managed by IOI Properties Group Bhd, in the Below 10 Years — Non-strata Retail; Sunway Emerald Residence, managed by Sunway Property and Facility Management Sdn Bhd (SPFM), in the Below 10 Years — Multiple-owned Strata Residential; The Estate, managed by HBMK, in the Below 10 Years — Multiple-owned Strata Residential; Kluang Mall, managed by Tenaga Nusantara Sdn Bhd, in the 10 Years and Above — Non-strata Retail; and Kiaramas Cendana Condominium, managed by HBMK, in the 10 Years and Above — Multiple-owned Strata Residential.

Meanwhile, winning Silver in the main

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## Editor's Choice Awards



From left: *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards' chief judge Au Foong Yee, Inverfin Sdn Bhd director Tang Wan Chee, Inverfin Sdn Bhd management committee member Allan Teh, JKG Land Bhd managing director Datuk Teh Kean Ming, JKG Land Bhd director Datuk Seri Eddie Tan, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre general manager John Burke, The Binjai On The Park Management Corporation chairman Tan Kim Seng, *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan and *The Edge Media Group* publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat following the presentation of the Editor's Choice Awards

categories were Selangorku PR1MA Lakefront Homes @ Cyberjaya, managed by MCT Property Management Sdn Bhd, in the Below 10 Years — Sustainable Affordable Housing; Dedaun Condominium and Pearl Suria Residence, both managed by HBMK, in the Below 10 Years — Multiple-owned Strata Residential; Menara 1 Sentrum, managed by KFPM, in the Below 10 Years — Single-owned Office in a Mixed Strata Development; Oval Damansara, managed by HBMK, in the 10 Years and Above — Multiple-owned Strata Office; The Hills, Horizon Hills, managed by Horizon Hills Property Services Sdn Bhd, in the 10 Years and Above — Non-strata Residential; Mont'Kiara Banyan, managed by SCM International Property Management Sdn Bhd, in the 10 Years and Above — Multiple-owned Strata Residential; and Tara Condominium, managed by Hartamas Asset Management, in the 10 Years and Above — Multiple-owned Strata Residential.

The Bronze winners in the main categories were Sunway Velocity, managed by SPFM, in the Below 10 Years — Mixed Development (Entire); Teega @ Puteri Harbour, managed by SCM International Property Management Sdn Bhd, in the Below 10 Years — Mixed

Development (Entire); Binjai 8 Premium SoHo, managed by HBMK, in the 10 Years and Above — Multiple-owned Strata Office; Plaza OSK, managed by OSK Realty Sdn Bhd, in the 10 Years and Above — Non-strata Office; Wisma Consplant, managed by KFPM, in the 10 Years and Above — Non-strata Office; Sungei Wang Plaza, managed by KFPM, in the 10 Years and Above — Strata Retail; and Sunway Putra Hotel, managed by Sunway Putra Hotel Sdn Bhd, in the 10 Years and Above — Specialised.

For *The Edge Malaysia*-ILAM Sustainable Landscape Awards 2023, Setia Bayuemas Lake Park and KotaSAS (Precinct 1 to Precinct 7) were awarded Gold in the Landscape Planning category, while Summit Park @ Southville City was the Silver winner in the Landscape Design category.

Three developments received special mention on the night, namely Iskandar Malaysia Studios, by Iskandar Malaysia Studios Sdn Bhd, and Menara Majlis Bandaraya Johor Bahru, by Majlis Bandaraya Johor Bahru, both in the Below 10 Years — Specialised, as well as Wisma Darul Iman, by UDA Dayaurus Sdn Bhd, in the 10 Years and Above — Specialised.

In his welcome speech, Ho explained the judging process. "Our judges, who represent experts in the real estate industry from both Malaysia and Singapore, short-listed 39 developments for consideration. They conducted thorough site inspections of each of the 39 developments, travelling to different states around the country to do so. This process was time-consuming but it had to be done, seeing that only through these visits were they able to conduct meticulous judging with a rigorous set of criteria that included property management practices, cost optimisation, sustainability and overall excellence."

Nga congratulated the recipients of the awards, saying that it was a proud moment. "To all winners, you have every reason to be proud, looking at the high benchmark that has been set by *The Edge*. This is an endorsement of your outstanding achievement and a mark of your success in the property industry."

The judges for this year's awards were *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards' chief judge Au Foong Yee, *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan, Real Estate and Housing Developers' Association (Rehda)

Malaysia president Datuk N K Tong, Association of Property and Facility Managers (APFM) president Lim Lan Yuan, Architect Centre Sdn Bhd accredited architect Anthony Lee Tee, Chur Associates founder and managing director Chris Tan, Malaysian REIT Managers Association (MRMA) vice-chairman Leong Kit May, Malaysian Institute of Property and Facility Managers (MIPFM) deputy president Ishak Ismail, Building Management Association of Malaysia (BMAM) committee member Richard Chan and Institute of Landscape Architects Malaysia (ILAM) president Nor Atiah Ismail.

This year's sponsors were Nippon Paint Malaysia as the main partner, and Panasonic Malaysia and Sunview Group Bhd as supporting partners.

Nippon has been a sponsor since 2017, while it is Panasonic's fifth year and the first for Sunview.

BMSPA 2023 was endorsed by the Ministry of Local Government Development and supported by EdgeProp Malaysia, Rehda, APFM, Architect Centre, MRMA and MIPFM, BMAM and ILAM. The results were audited by Deloitte Malaysia. **E**

# Judges' comments



## The Edge Malaysia Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023



### Au Foong Yee

Au Foong Yee is editor emeritus at *The Edge Malaysia* and chief judge for *The Edge Malaysia Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023*

It is heartening to see the awards gain traction outside the Klang Valley. Equally encouraging is the range of properties submitted this year, and they include government-owned and purpose-built properties, big and small. It is a fallacy that excellent property management practices are possible only at glamorous real estate. Or that the upkeep in newly completed buildings wins hands down over that of older real estate.

As the results of the awards would testify, old can be gold. Less can be more. It is encouraging to see how older strata buildings successfully mitigated inherent property maintenance issues caused primarily by building designs that are unfriendly to the quality of property upkeep.

What it took was passion and commitment from the management committee (MC), whose members, especially the chairman, know that the value of their investment is at stake. They also saw the need to work hand in hand with property managers to "turn around" the condition of the buildings.

An MC or JMC (joint management committee) that has members with self-interest or who choose to go on ego trips is a sure recipe for a badly managed property.

Another observation in this year's judging process is how rising costs and the government-driven higher minimum wage have affected financial planning and sustainability, a core attribute of quality property management.

Some building managers resorted to cost optimisation. However, excellent property management is never about cost-cutting. Maintaining and enhancing the property throughout its life cycle is paramount. Cost-cutting could result in disastrous consequences.

A shout-out to buildings that emphasise facilitating quality personal health, hygiene and wellness. Unlike yesteryears, liveability cannot be compromised. Only buildings that are maintained with excellence and sustainability can offer that.

Kudos to all the winners! To all building owners and property managers who have participated in the awards, give yourself a pat on the back. If your property manager was reluctant to submit the property for scrutiny, it would be useful to know why.



### Lim Lan Yuan

Lim Lan Yuan is president of the Association of Property and Facility Managers as well as a few other allied professional organisations. He currently chairs a technical committee that introduces standards and technical references for building maintenance and management. He is also a tribunal member of the Strata Titles Board in Singapore. He is author of the book, *A Guide to Management Corporations*, and several publications on property and facility management.

Since its launch in 2017, *The Edge Malaysia Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards* have gained traction as the benchmark for standards in property management in Malaysia. The submissions this year attracted both private and public sector properties. In addition to the traditionally popular categories such as residential and office buildings, other special properties also participated. This is a welcome sign. Developers and owners have become increasingly aware of the importance of effective management to maintain and enhance the asset value of their properties and developments.

Congratulations to all winners of the awards! They have shown strong management and community teamwork and adopted appropriate best practices. Those submissions that were unsuccessful can take a leaf from the efforts of these winners. Every property has the opportunity to be recognised by ensuring that they are managed in line with good management practices and standards.

### Richard Chan

With more than 42 years' experience, Richard Chan was a founder member and is the adviser of the Malaysia Shopping Malls Association, set up in 1984. He was a founding member of the Building Management Association of Malaysia and has been a corporate member of its national committee since 2010. He is also a member of Fiabci Malaysia. In 2018, he was appointed a registered property manager and has been called to serve as board member (2019 to 2021 and 2021 to 2023) with the Board of Valuers, Appraisers, Estate Agents and Property Managers Malaysia.

Another year has passed. There is more effort and more commitment and there are many new winners. Congratulations! As we are all getting back to our



### Datuk N K Tong

Datuk N K Tong is group managing director of Bukit Kiara Properties Sdn Bhd, a niche developer that offers innovative lifestyles. He is the president of the Real Estate and Housing Developers' Association (Rehda) Malaysia, an independent non-executive director at Standard Chartered Bank Malaysia and the Construction Industry Development Board, and a member of the KL City Advisory Board. He has an undergraduate degree in architecture from the University of Manchester and an MBA in real estate finance from the Wharton School of Business.

The submissions for this year's *The Edge Malaysia Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards* continue to raise the benchmark for excellence in sustainable property management in Malaysia. As judges, we had a tough but enjoyable task of distinguishing the best of the best. In showcasing this year's winners, my hope is that others will continue to be inspired to raise their standards and participate next year.

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# Judges' comments



## The Edge Malaysia Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023



### Chris Tan Chur Pim

Chris Tan Chur Pim has been a practising lawyer since 2000 and founded law firm Chur Associates in 2003. Tan is a regular guest speaker for corporate, academic and public events in Malaysia and overseas, a guest commentator on Chinese and English radio and TV stations, as well as a frequent contributor of articles to local and overseas media publications — both online and print — in English, Chinese and Malay, especially on the topic of real estate. He has been a regular speaker at the annual *The Edge Malaysia* RealTalk forum.

**A**s we recover from the pandemic and move into the endemic phase, we have learnt to appreciate more of what we have and make the best of things that we have long taken for granted, starting with the property that we live and work in. The increased awareness of the need to improve our immediate living space, develop a harmonious neighbourhood and foster a stronger community is obvious in the diversity of submissions for the latest edition of these unique awards.

The increased number of winners from outside the Klang Valley further highlights the efforts being carried out throughout the country. This first world mentality in maintenance is a tell-tale sign that Malaysia is now ever closer to being a developed country than most would give us credit for. Any journey of sustainability starts with acknowledging the need for timely management and routine maintenance, and not constantly chasing the new to replace the (g)old that we are sitting on.



### Leong Kit May

Leong Kit May began her career at Ernst & Young, where she gained a strong foundation in auditing and accounting. In 2001, she joined the UOA Group of Companies, taking on various roles across the group's property operations, including development, construction and investments, and was actively involved in the successful listing of UOA REIT in 2005.

In 2006, Leong joined Axis REIT Managers Bhd (ARMB) and was promoted to chief financial officer in 2008. That year, she spearheaded the conversion of Axis REIT into the first Islamic office/industrial real estate investment trust in Malaysia. She continued to assume greater management responsibilities

and was appointed to the board as an executive director in November 2011. As part of the board's succession plans, she was groomed to be CEO of ARMB. In preparation for this role, she took on the position of chief operating officer in 2015 before assuming the role of CEO on Jan 1, 2016.

Leong continues to lead Axis REIT to new heights as the fund extends its leadership as an owner, manager and developer of industrial properties in Malaysia. She has successfully steered Axis REIT through the pandemic, with the fund recording continued growth and operational resilience. She has also been instrumental in driving the fund's portfolio expansion, particularly in property development, actively overseeing the sourcing, implementation and handover of three "built-to-lease" projects so far, with two more development projects underway. She is currently the Malaysian REIT Managers Association vice-chairman.

**I**would like to congratulate not only the winners but all the participants for being able to fulfil the stringent criteria set out for these awards. This year's edition of *The Edge Malaysia* Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards did not disappoint, given the list of properties managed by esteemed real estate companies. I must also congratulate *The Edge Malaysia* for its effort in holding these awards year after year to give recognition to well managed and sustainable properties.

During the judging process, it was good to see that management companies had been proactively capitalising on the latest available technologies to enhance the properties, in particular, the security measures. Property management is no easy task, given the dynamic landscape of the industry and also requirements of tenants and owners.

I hope these prestigious awards will further instil awareness of the importance of sustainability in the day-to-day property management landscape. And, finally, a big, sincere thank you to *The Edge Malaysia* for inviting me as one of the judges. I am truly humbled.



### Anthony Lee Tee

A registered and practising architect since 1995, Anthony Lee Tee is managing director, accredited architect, independent forensic building inspector and trainer at Architect Centre Sdn Bhd. With more than 30 years' experience in the construction industry in the region, he is now Malaysian Institute of Architects (PAM) honorary secretary for 2023/24 and chairs the professional practice committee and disciplinary committee. He is also group chief operating officer and transformation officer at Bina Puri Holdings Bhd, overseeing the operations of the Bina Puri Group of Companies, particularly its property and construction businesses. He has been appointed an expert in numerous dispute resolution matters in and outside Malaysia, including at international arbitrations.

**T**his year's awards have seen an impressive number of serious submissions, reflecting a growing awareness of the true value and objectives of these awards. Winners were recognised for their careful planning and

execution, focusing on good management practices, long-term maintainability, financial sustainability and value creation. Property developers that prioritised these factors over short-term sales with skin-deep aesthetics and frivolous facilities are clear winners, too.

Savvy investors are on the lookout for properties with these attributes. The recognition of the winner in the affordable housing category indicates that well-managed properties can be achieved across the spectrum of properties, benefiting all stakeholders. It is noteworthy that good property management is not limited to upmarket properties but applies to all property players. This year, I detected a significant shift in the industry's mindset towards good management and maintenance; sorely lacking here was the comment, "Five-star buildings with Third World maintenance," which sounds painfully familiar!

There is a growing awareness of the importance and impact of having healthy collections, adequate sinking funds to maintain and replace M&E equipment and facilities while keeping their property and occupants safe. I am truly encouraged by this positive trajectory. Congratulations to all winners!



### Ishak Ismail

Ishak Ismail is founder and managing director of IM Global Property Consultants Sdn Bhd, a property consulting firm registered with the Board of Valuers, Appraisers and Estate Agents and Property Manager (Bovaea). He has been in real estate practice since 1991 and was licensed by Bovaea to practise as a registered valuer, estate agent and property manager in 1998.

He is a member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and registered as a chartered surveyor since 2008. In 2015, he was accredited as an international certified valuation specialist, or business valuer, by the International Association of Consultants, Valuators and Analysts. He has also been actively involved in the auction industry since 1992 after obtaining a licence to conduct auctions for Kuala Lumpur, Selangor and Penang. In recent years, he was appointed REIT property manager for Damansara REIT Managers Sdn Bhd (AI-Aqar KPJ REIT), Pelaburan Hartanah Nasional Bhd and Pelaburan Hartanah Bumiputera.

**T**he *Edge Malaysia* Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards is organised to acknowledge the best property management practice in the country. It is also an industrial recognition as well as benchmark for properties that are managed with excellent sustainability. Therefore, I am very proud and honoured to congratulate all the winners. They have demonstrated their commitment to meeting the needs of the present and future without compromising on the maintenance of the buildings.

I hope these prestigious awards will motivate other companies to be more innovative, not to create only ecological features but also sustainable living environments that enrich people's lives.

## The Edge Malaysia-ILAM Sustainable Landscape Awards 2023



### Au Foong Yee

Au Foong Yee is editor emeritus at *The Edge Malaysia* and chief judge of *The Edge Malaysia-ILAM Sustainable Landscape Awards 2023*

An aesthetically pleasing landscaped garden is a feast for the eyes. An equally pretty and sustainable landscape space does more than that — it purposefully connects us to the natural world as well as the built environment. Besides being environmentally friendly, sustainable landscapes also foster community building, which is key to one's well being and quality of life.

Outstanding sustainable landscapes can take shape in varying forms and sizes. It is about working in sync with the existing landforms to create a natural habitat that welcomes the birds, bees and more.

The winners of the awards this year have successfully shown how creativity and innovation can transform even the most trying of land conditions into enthralling, sustainable landscapes.

Bodies of water are a strong component of any landscaping. Besides providing a healthy, aesthetic and soothing backdrop, they can take the lead role in architecture and design — as one of our Gold winners, The Era Wetlands, has shown.

The use of native plants is a common trait in all of the winning entries. Exotic species, naturally expensive and difficult to maintain, would not pass a sustainability audit. Plants selected for sustainable landscaping are long-lasting and do not demand attention, such as the use of fertilisers and pesticides.

The winners of these awards promote plant diversity to create stability within the environment besides enhancing aesthetics.

Congratulations to all the winners!

### Nor Atiah Ismail

Nor Atiah Ismail is an associate professor at the Department of Landscape Architecture, the Faculty of Design and Architecture, Universiti Putra Malaysia. She graduated with a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture and Master of Science in Architecture from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia and obtained her PhD in Landscape Architecture from Lincoln University in Canterbury, New Zealand. Her areas of research specialisation are rural and urban cultural heritage landscapes.

Nor Atiah is president of the Institute of Landscape Architects Malaysia (ILAM) (2022–2024). She is a Fellow member of ILAM and the Malaysian delegate of ILAM



to the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA), IFLA Asia-Pacific and the World Congress and ICOMOS-IFLA. She is also honorary secretary of the Malaysian Professional Centre. She is one of the expert panellists for the architecture and landscape heritage committee at the National Heritage Department of Malaysia and Perbadanan Adat Melayu dan Warisan Negeri Selangor. She is actively involved in conserving and preserving cultural heritage monuments and sites.

This year's *The Edge Malaysia Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards* has witnessed a growing emphasis on innovative and sustainable landscape projects that harmonise with the natural environment while meeting the evolving needs of urban spaces. The best landscape projects of the year have showcased several prominent trends that have shaped the industry and captured public attention.

First, there has been a notable shift towards eco-friendly and sustainable designs. Landscape architects and designers have integrated green technologies, such as rainwater harvesting systems, vertical gardens and renewable energy sources, into their projects. These initiatives not only enhance the aesthetic appeal but also contribute to environmental conservation and promote sustainable living.

The concept of biophilic design has gained prominence. This trend involves incorporating natural elements, such as plants, water features and natural materials, to create a connection between people and nature. Biophilic designs have been widely adopted in urban spaces, fostering a sense of well-being and improving the quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

Another trend is the integration of smart technologies into landscape projects. From intelligent lighting systems and automated irrigation to interactive displays and smart park amenities, technology has become an integral part of creating immersive and interactive experiences in outdoor spaces.

In addition, there has been an increased focus on cultural and historical preservation. Landscape projects have embraced Malaysia's diverse heritage by incorporating traditional elements, indigenous plant species and design motifs that reflect the country's cultural richness. This trend not only preserves cultural identity but also promotes tourism and educates visitors on Malaysia's unique heritage.

In conclusion, the best landscape projects of this year's awards have showcased trends such as sustainability, biophilic design, integration of smart technologies, cultural preservation and community engagement. These trends have not only transformed the physical landscape but also contributed to creating more liveable, resilient and environmentally conscious urban environments throughout Malaysia.

## Raising the bar

FROM PAGE 6

We also recognise the significance of landscapes that are planned, designed and executed for sustainability. These outstanding green spaces must be purposeful and inclusive. Besides aesthetics, the selection of trees, flowering plants, shrubs, foliage and water features, for example, must take into consideration their biodiversity values and, most importantly, sustainable upkeep.

This year, we have two past winners taking home another Gold. Well done to The Binjai On The Park and Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre! (All Gold winners are eligible to resubmit their entries for consideration after three years. However, all others can send in their submissions for a re-audit any time. All entries are free of charge).

The Binjai On The Park (Gold in the 10 Years and Above — Multiple-owned Strata Residential in 2017) and Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (Gold in the 10 Years and Above — Specialised in 2019) are managed by Henry Butcher Malaysia (Mont Kiara) Sdn Bhd and Convex Malaysia Sdn Bhd respectively.

The fact that these past Gold winners have volunteered themselves for another scrutiny of their property management practices and standards is highly commendable. It speaks volumes of the passion and commitment of the owners and property managers.

The Binjai On The Park and Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre also bagged this year's Editor's Choice Awards for Malaysia's Outstanding Residential Strata Development and Malaysia's Outstanding Specialised Development respectively.

We also have a surprise and outstanding winner in the town centre of Kluang, Johor. The Kluang Mall debunks any notion that only mega shopping centres located in high-profile locations are worthy of recognition. The mall was awarded Gold in the 10 Years and Above — Non-strata Retail category.

It is through the awards that we hope to raise the bar on Malaysia's property management culture and practices.

### Malaysian Developers' Hall of Fame

*The Edge Malaysia* Responsible Developer — Building Sustainable Development Award honours developers who are visionary and committed to sustainability.

Winners are chosen by *The Edge Malaysia* based on their track record of building in a sustainable manner. This recognition seeks to both inspire and encourage developers to act in a responsible manner towards not only Mother Nature but also to their customers.

All winners are automatically inducted into the Malaysian Developers' Hall of Fame. Like last year, there is no winner this year. Current members of the Malaysian Developers' Hall of Fame are S P Setia Bhd, AME Development Bhd, Paramount Property Development Sdn Bhd (2018); ParkCity Group, Sunway Bhd Property Division (2019); Gamuda Land, Tanah Sutera Development Sdn Bhd (2020); Sime Darby Property Bhd, Matrix Concepts Holdings Bhd and EcoWorld Development Group Bhd (2021). After three years, all past winners are eligible for another bid for the award.

### Valued support

The awards would not be possible without the support of leaders and key industry stakeholders in Malaysia and Singapore. All the experts are represented in the panel of judges led by *The Edge Malaysia*. They comprise the Real Estate and Housing Developers' Association (Rehda), Malaysian REIT Managers Association (MRMA), Association of Property and Facility Managers Singapore (APFM), Malaysian Institute of Property and Facility Managers (MIPFM), Building Management Association of Malaysia (BMAM), Architect Centre and Chur Associates.

We are also privileged to have the support of the Institute of Landscape Architects Malaysia (ILAM) for *The Edge Malaysia-ILAM Sustainable Landscape Awards*.

All judges have signed non-disclosure agreements. Those with interest in any of the award submissions have abstained from casting their votes accordingly. The awards is audited by Deloitte Malaysia. **E**

**Au Foong Yee (afyee@bizedge.com) is an editor emeritus of *The Edge Malaysia*. She conceptualised and is the chief judge of *The Edge Malaysia Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards*.**

# Judging criteria



## The Edge Malaysia Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023

The awards, which are in the sixth year, recognise buildings that show excellence in property management. The call for entries began on Jan 16 and closed on Feb 24.

Submissions were open to:

- Any strata and non-strata buildings in Malaysia, managed either in-house or by any property manager
- Properties of any size and type in Malaysia
- Properties that were fully completed and have received the Certificate of Completion and Compliance or Certificate of Fitness for Occupation
- Properties that fully complied with statutory requirements (that is, renewed licences, permits, approvals and so on)

Properties that previously won Gold are not entitled to enter for a period of three years from the year of winning.

The anchor awards offered various categories in two divisions based on the age of the property — Below 10 Years and 10 Years and Above.

The categories were:

- Multiple-owned Strata Residential
- Multiple-owned Strata Office
- Non-strata Office
- Single-owned Office in a Mixed Strata
- Mixed Development (Entire)
- Strata Retail and Non-Strata Retail
- Specialised (for industrial, heritage buildings, parks, schools and so on)
- Repurposed Buildings (recycled or adaptive reused buildings)

The judging panel comprised representatives from *The Edge Malaysia* and industry experts, who made site visits to shortlisted projects before the final decisions were made.

Those with interest in any of the submissions abstained from casting their votes accordingly.

The results were audited by Deloitte Malaysia and the winning projects were announced and honoured at an awards ceremony on July 4.

### THE MAIN JUDGING CRITERIA:

#### Maintenance

- Quality of M&E/building services
- Cleanliness and upkeep of facilities
- Special/key features of the building

#### Administration

- Standard operating procedures
- Transparency of accounts (financial governance, procurement process and so on)
- Crisis management & preparedness (disease outbreak, fires and national disasters)

#### Collections

- Debtor ageing/billing/collection ratio
- Proportion of debtors
- Collection procedures — notifications, reminders, warnings and so on

#### Financial sustainability

- Adherence to budget (budget vs actual expenditure)
- Cost optimisation initiatives and innovations such as energy-saving measures, rainwater harvesting, design features or beautification projects and efficient supervision of maintenance work

#### Security

- Use of technology
- Proactive measures to enhance security

#### Community and communication

- Community-building initiatives
- Procedures for tenant or occupant liaison such as booking for facilities and dispute resolution

#### Development value/yield

- Comparative growth in value over time
- Comparative rental yield

## The Edge Malaysia Editor's Choice Awards 2023

Selected by the editors of *The Edge Malaysia*, the Editor's Choice Awards recognises excellence in a project, building or company that is committed to top-quality property management practices. The award is also accorded to any individual who has demonstrated an outstanding contribution to the promotion of sustainable development in the Malaysian real estate sector.

## The Edge Malaysia Responsible Developer: Building Sustainable Development Award 2023

This award recognises property developers who are committed to building developments that are designed and built for best-in-class property management. The winning developer must show commitment to building sustainable\* projects moving forward.

### JUDGING CRITERIA

- Project(s) must be completed with Certificate of Completion and Compliance or Certificate of Fitness for Occupation
- Details of the sustainable project(s) — architecture, design, construction

methods, maintenance cost and effectiveness, crisis management and preparedness

- Vision, commitment and efforts made towards the building of sustainable development(s)
- Promotion of the following attributes demanded of a sustainable development:
  - Community living
  - Communications
  - Innovations
  - Respect for nature and environment

The award was based on submissions and the winners were decided by the editors of *The Edge Malaysia*.

## The Edge Malaysia-ILAM Sustainable Landscape Awards 2023

These awards benchmark projects or spaces that are designed, built and maintained for sustainability. The winning project or projects can be indoors or outdoors, and be of any size.

Submissions were open to:

- Entrants who were certified landscape architects under ILAM (corporate, graduate or foreign member)
- Any property developers
- Projects that were fully completed for no less than 12 continuous months and are located in Malaysia

### JUDGING CRITERIA

- Ecological and environmental values
- Designed and built for cost-effective maintenance
- Community-oriented planning and design
- Functionality
- Aesthetics and creativity
- Placemaking

For 2023, submissions were divided into two categories.

### LANDSCAPE PLANNING

- Participating projects tended to be:
- Open to both public and private use
  - Of a substantial size/multiple land-use/mixed-use development
  - Entailed a long implementation period
  - Involved numerous stakeholders

### LANDSCAPE DESIGN

- Participating projects tended to be:
- For the exclusive use of a certain community
  - Situated within the confines of a development project
  - Single land-use development

The judging panel comprised representatives of *The Edge Malaysia* and the Institute of Landscape Architects Malaysia (ILAM) who, after shortlisting the entries, made physical site visits, following which the final decisions were made. The results were audited by Deloitte Malaysia.

\* A sustainable development is one that meets the needs of the present and future without compromising on maintenance of the building

**THE EDGE**  
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& SUSTAINABLE  
PROPERTY  
AWARDS **2023**

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Sustainable Landscape Award 2023  
Landscape Design Category

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# Siteseeing



1. Admiring the view of the Petronas Twin Towers from The Binjai On The Park
2. Touring Menara MBBJ in Johor
3. Inspecting the pipes at Plaza OSK
4. An informal chat after inspecting Menara Citibank
5. Two judges having some fun
6. Checking out IOI City Mall
7. The judges deliberate
8. Taking a breather at Setia Bayuemas Lake Park
9. The landscape architects showing the lake at KotaSAS





10

10. Excitement about a new concert hall in Sungei Wang Plaza  
11. It's a full house at Kiaramas Cendana Condominium  
12. Watching the fishes at The Era Wetlands  
13. Enjoying the stunning view at Teega @ Puteri Harbour

14. A little movie magic at Iskandar Malaysia Studios  
15. Strolling in Sunway Emerald Residence  
16. A tour of Kluang Mall  
17. A day out in Summit Park @ Southville City

18. A visit to the kitchen in Sunway Putra Hotel  
19. Up on the roof at Wisma Consplant  
20. The Estate team making a point



11



12



13



16



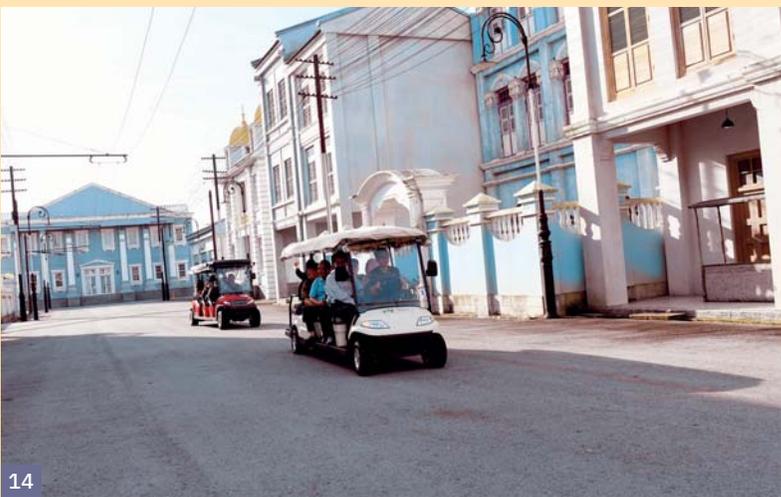
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15

**EDITOR'S CHOICE**

MALAYSIA'S OUTSTANDING SPECIALISED DEVELOPMENT

**10 YEARS AND ABOVE**  
Specialised**GOLD****KUALA LUMPUR CONVENTION CENTRE**

# Adhering to international standards

BY **RACHEAL LEE**  
city.country@bizedge.com

It is hard to tell that Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre is already 18 years old, given its pristine interior and exterior. The ability to keep the convention centre in such excellent shape is the result of the hard work and determination of the management, even during the Movement Control Order (MCO) period, when no events were hosted there.

KL Convention Centre won the Editor's Choice Award for Exemplary Convention Centre and the Gold award in the 10 Years and Above — Specialised category in 2019.

This year, it has repeated the feat by winning the Editor's Choice award — Malaysia's Outstanding Specialised Development and the Gold award for the 10 Years and Above — Specialised category of *The Edge Malaysia* Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023.

KL Convention Centre, which is owned by Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre Sdn Bhd, is managed by Convex Malaysia Sdn Bhd — a joint venture between KLCC (Holdings) Sdn Bhd and AEG Ogden. Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre Sdn Bhd is a subsidiary of Petroliaam Nasional Bhd.

According to Convex Malaysia general manager John Burke, the building still went through its regular maintenance and cleaning regime during the MCO, as the team believed it was important to “restart properly” after it was shut down for a prolonged period. Thanks to their efforts, the convention centre has been functioning well since its reopening in March 2022.

“Throughout the MCO period, we continued with the maintenance and cleaning regime even though no one was using the building, so everything would still function well when we came out of the pandemic in March 2022,” says Burke.

“People [are more concerned about] airborne viruses, so we upgraded the filtration system. We also increased the servicing [frequency] for the system to make sure the air quality is good. We did an air-quality audit and had a consultancy firm check [and confirm] that what we have was good and appropriate.”

He notes that post-pandemic, the meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibition (MICE) industry rebounded much faster than everyone had expected. KL Convention Centre hosted 1,200 events from March to December 2022. Considering that 1,600 events were held each year in pre-pandemic times, it looks like the industry is back on track.

“We were cautiously optimistic while managing the cost, as business might not be like what it used to be. Some events last year were slightly smaller but [we can see that] people have turned their backs on virtual events. Humans need to meet and see people face to face, and to engage with them. You cannot build relationships online,” he says.

## More upgrades

With the return of the MICE sector, Convex Malaysia is looking to upgrade the convention centre, which has never had a major refurbishment. Burke is proud that the building still looks new despite its age, and he explains that it would not have been possible without the consistent maintenance and cleaning schedule.

He reckons that as a world-class convention centre, the building needs to be improved, with equal focus on the back and front of house. The improvements for the back of house include the engineering system, building management system and kitchen, while the front of house has prioritised



Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre already has bookings until 2031



areas with high footfall such as the food court on the concourse level and meeting rooms with all-day dining on Level 3.

“The food court may not be the highest revenue area but we have three million people walking through the space every month as it is a short window to everywhere, such as the bridge towards Pavilion Kuala Lumpur, Aquaria and Suria KLCC that eventually connects to an LRT station. This makes the food court the representative of quality for many people, even though they are not coming for any events here. If the food court is badly maintained, they will think the same for the rest of the buildings,” Burke explains.

The food court has been refurbished with new furniture and, in an ongoing exercise, Convex Malaysia has changed some tenants to offer a better tenant mix.

“The other area is the meeting rooms, where there can be a high footfall, with 400 to 500 people using

**Burke (third from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards' chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, *The Edge Media Group* publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat and *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan**

that area daily. We provide all-day dining according to the clients' request. We have been upgrading the furniture, and even the menu.”

Another area it is looking to refurbish is the auditorium, which involves a higher cost. Other major areas, such as plant and lift systems, he reckons, also need to be replaced or overhauled. He stresses the importance of fixing defects as soon as possible so that clients are not affected.

“[Defects] affect production ... and when one event goes wrong, people won't be happy and the event fails. Many of our events are on an annual or bi-annual basis. So, if you miss one cycle, you cannot get them back,” he says.

## Challenges

Burke notes that as KL Convention Centre hosts events almost daily, maintenance can be a challenge — so is sourcing materials for the maintenance of an 18-year-old building.

“Even regular maintenance is very difficult — let alone upgrade and replacement — as there are events every single day, but we try to upgrade whenever possible. [We fix minor] defects in between events so that the clients are not affected. Also, as the building ages, we do more minor maintenance such as wall finishes. We have spare stock from when the building was completed, but it is slowly running out. Those materials, or even suppliers or supply chain systems, may not be there anymore.”

Also, the MICE sector is highly competitive. With more hotels, event spaces and convention centres coming up locally, regionally and internationally, it is important for Burke to make KL Convention Centre an attractive venue for events.

“We have local, regional and international clients. International events bring in investments with money transfer and knowledge transfer. But now, in Kuala Lumpur, there are new hotels with a ballroom and that affects my business with 500-per-

PICTURES BY SHAHRILL BASRI/ THE EDGE



At the back of the house are the linen area (left) and one of the kitchens

**Quick facts**

<b>NAME</b>	Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre
<b>DEVELOPER</b>	KLCC Property Holdings Bhd
<b>DEVELOPMENT TYPE</b>	Conference and exhibition centre
<b>SIZE</b>	8.9 acres
<b>STOREYS</b>	4 storeys and 2 basement floors
<b>UNITS</b>	8 exhibition halls, 3 conference halls, 2 ballrooms, 2 auditoriums, 1 banquet hall and 30 meetings rooms
<b>COMMENCEMENT OF OPERATION</b>	2005
<b>NET LETTABLE AREA</b>	243,900 sq ft
<b>GROSS FLOOR AREA</b>	1,540,003 sq ft
<b>CAR PARK BAYS</b>	729

**AMENITIES**  
Shopping malls/supermarkets, shops and F&B, banks

**FACILITIES**  
Business centre, registration counters, VIP suites, hospitality lounges, organiser office suites, medical room, in-house F&B outlets and food court, concierge, parenting rooms, prayer rooms, VIP and public car park, artist suites, air-conditioned walkways, e-hailing pick-up and drop-off area, public toilets, ATM machines, convenience shops

**ENERGY-SAVING FEATURES**  
Variable Speed Drives for air-handling units (AHUs), lifts, escalators, motors and pumps; a building automation system for the scheduling of AHUs, fan coil units, lighting during low-demand periods; LED lighting throughout the venue; on-demand escalators (motionless until being used); temperature-regulated air conditioners; building control system, AHUs and pumps are fitted with inverters; glass façade tinted with UV-absorptive film; zero-energy rainwater harvesting system; indoor air-quality features; Minimum Efficiency Reporting Values rating for 14 filters of AHU; and annual indoor air-quality assessment and cleaning.



CONVEX MALAYSIA



CONVEX MALAYSIA

**Above (left and right):** Post-pandemic, 20% of the events held at the convention centre are association events, 15% to 20% are exhibitions, and the rest are corporate meetings

**Convex Malaysia is promoting the 3,000-capacity plenary hall as a venue for concerts**

**The new, 11,000 sq m extension of the convention centre was opened in 2019**

**Future undertakings**

In the first half of this year, KL Convention Centre hosted 700 events. It opened a new extension of about 11,000 sq m in 2019.

Burke is positive about the future of KL Convention Centre, adding that 60% of its occupancy and financial targets for 2024 have been met. The convention centre already has bookings until 2031. “The international clients haven’t fully returned this year, but we expect many more to come back next year. Before the pandemic, [we had an even ratio between local, regional and international clients] — one-third comprising corporate meetings and local exhibitions, another one-third is association events and the remaining is conferences,” he says.

“Post-pandemic, we now see 20% are association events, 15% to 20% are exhibitions and the rest are corporate meetings. We see a dip in regional and international events, but the gap is taken up by local events such as corporate town hall meetings and trade events.”

Nevertheless, he explains that the convention centre is purpose-built to attract international businesses, which in turn will bring trade and investment into the country. Therefore, it hopes to bring in more international events.



**Burke:** Throughout the MCO period, we continued with the maintenance and cleaning regime

To keep up with the times, Burke is looking to reconfigure some of the meeting spaces because he believes that the days of sitting in large plenary halls being lectured to or in a hall with PowerPoint presentations are slowly disappearing.

He says events are now more two-way or experiential and encourage engagements between participants. As such, there is a need for breakout rooms and informal spaces for more collaborations, discussions and activities outside the main seminar room.

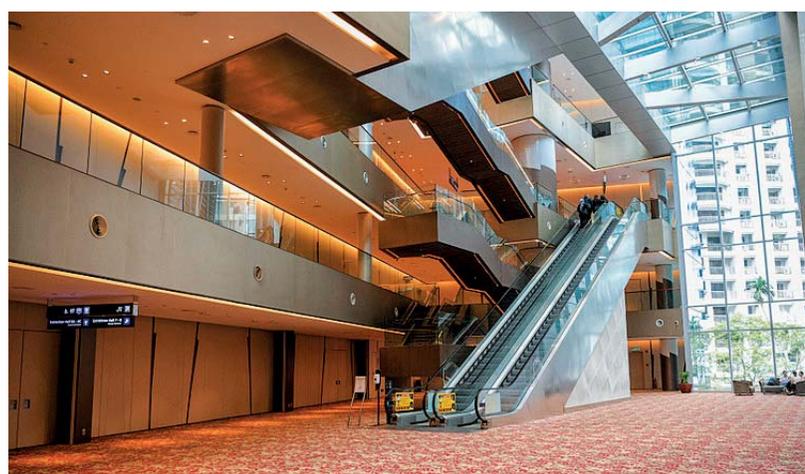
“We do have smaller breakout rooms but we are looking at how we can repurpose some of the bigger spaces and the less utilised areas. For example, we don’t get to use the registration counters all the time, so we can repurpose it into something else until there is a need for a registration counter. It is about how to repurpose other rooms into meeting rooms until there is a need for its original purpose,” he explains.

“Similarly, it is about how to reuse a plenary hall for 3,000 people. So, we are pushing it for entertainment concerts, as it is a nice size between an arena and a small theatre and we are getting more events for that. It is about how we think differently for the usage of the room, how we make use of the space and cater for different types of events and expose the building to different types of audiences.”

son events. Then, there are purpose-built buildings affecting my 200-person events,” he says.

“Also, the neighbouring countries are getting more competitive and they get support from the local government. So, they can take many events. That’s why we try to promote Malaysia first, then Kuala Lumpur, and then the venue. The location in KLCC and next to a park is a great combination and we try to maximise that.”

He adds that the unique selling points of the convention centre are location, the centre’s configuration and the team’s attention to detail in managing and maintaining the building to create a pleasant and safe environment.



**EDITOR'S  
CHOICE**MALAYSIA'S OUTSTANDING  
SUSTAINABLE OFFICE  
DEVELOPMENT**10 YEARS AND ABOVE**

Single-owned Office in a Mixed Strata Development

**GOLD****Menara Citibank**

# Leading by example

BY **CHAI YEE HOONG**  
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Walking into Menara Citibank in Jalan Ampang, it was hard to tell that the building had stood there for 25 years and there were ongoing upgrading works. Standing tall at 50 storeys in Kuala Lumpur's Golden Triangle, the purpose-built Grade A commercial office building adjoins the InterContinental Kuala Lumpur hotel in a mixed strata development.

Completed in 1998, Menara Citibank is owned by Inverfin Sdn Bhd — equally owned by Menara Citi Holding Co Sdn Bhd and Hap Seng Realty (KL City) Sdn Bhd. Inverfin, formerly owned by Lion Group, was set up in 1984 to develop the mixed strata development, of which the hotel component was sold to a third party.

Menara Citibank comprises large floor plates of column-free office spaces, with a total net floor area of about 733,237 sq ft. Despite its age, it is Green Building Index (GBI)-certified. The tower is divided into three zones — Low (Levels 1 to 18), Mid (Levels 19 to 34) and High (Levels 35 to 50) — with office space ranging from 16,000 to 18,000 sq ft; five basement car park levels with roughly 1,500 bays that are shared with the hotel; and a rooftop helipad.

In addition to the surrounding amenities, Menara Citibank's occupants and visitors can enjoy a good range of conveniences within the building itself, including retail stores such as San Francisco Coffee, Family Mart and Boost Juice, as well as a retail banking hall, florist, clinic, surau and a food court on Level 5 with 18 food operators. There is also a community floor and café on Level 35 and a gymnasium on Level 37 that is operated by the anchor tenant Citibank Group for its staff.

In terms of connectivity and accessibility, the office tower has two exits, on Jalan Ampang and Jalan Binjai, is a five-minute walk to the Ampang Park LRT station and enjoys direct access to the taxi and bus stops in front of the building.

Knight Frank Property Management Sdn Bhd (KFPM) has been the appointed property manager for Menara Citibank since 2014. Its managing director Kuruvilla Abraham starts by commending Inverfin for its initiative to continuously upgrade Menara Citibank.

"One of the things I must compliment Inverfin on is that it has a lot of initiative to upgrade the building, which is 25 years old and counting. [Otherwise,] with the technological needs we have today, it will not be able to compete in this market. Taking the initiative to upgrade the property and make it relevant, in addition to the added complexity of having two corporations [Citi and Hap Seng] come together, and with us, to do all these — that in itself is a major compliment," he says.

In addition to property management, Knight Frank is the exclusive listing agent for Menara Citibank. "We've been managing the building for nine years now. This reflects the level of trust and good working relationship [between ourselves and the owners]," Kuruvilla remarks.

"You see, as property managers, we can only make recommendations. So to have owners who can understand and take our suggestions, and subsequently implement them, shows the fantastic relationship we have.

"I must also say we have an excellent team here, which has been a major point of the relationship ... not only in terms of working closely together but understanding what the owners are looking for, and the owners understand why we are coming up with such recommendations. The site team is also supported by the big team we have at Knight Frank. All this

**Quick facts**

<b>NAME</b>	Menara Citibank
<b>OWNER</b>	Inverfin Sdn Bhd
<b>DEVELOPMENT TYPE</b>	Office
<b>TENURE</b>	Freehold
<b>STOREYS</b>	50
<b>COMPLETION</b>	1998
<b>AVERAGE OCCUPANCY RATE</b>	80%
<b>AVERAGE RENTAL RATE</b>	Approximately RM6.20 to RM7.70
<b>NET LETTABLE AREA</b>	733,237 sq ft
<b>GROSS FLOOR AREA</b>	1,077,628 sq ft
<b>CAR PARK BAYS</b>	1,398 bays

**AMENITIES**

- Easy access to highways, embassies, corporate buildings, shopping complexes and a golf course
- Public transport (bus including GoKL free city bus service, taxi, LRT and MRT)

**FACILITIES**

Food court, community floor/cafe and gym room operated by anchor tenant – Citibank Group, five levels of basement car park, retail banking hall, Family Mart, Boost Juice, San Francisco Café, florist, clinic, surau, disabled/OKU-friendly male and female washrooms, fully fiberised 5G network coverage by Maxis and TM

**ENERGY-SAVING FEATURES**

- Building management system (BMS) to monitor energy performance and cybersecurity
- A centralised air-conditioning system with variable airflow volume (VAV) for energy efficiency
- All air handling units (AHUs), chilled water pumps, condenser water pumps and cooling towers operate with variable speed drive (VSD) to optimise cost and energy efficiency
- T5 LED light tubes in most common areas to bring significant energy and cost savings
- Electricity sub-meters/digital power meters in the riser rooms to monitor the energy consumption of the operational systems in the building (whose monthly kWh consumption is within the Energy Performance Contract benchmark)
- The modernised lifts are equipped with gearless traction permanent magnet (PM) motors and variable-voltage, variable-frequency (VVVF) controls, which conserve a significant amount of energy and reduce CO2 emissions.

**INDOOR AIR QUALITY FEATURES**

- CO2 sensors have been installed at all return ducts linked to BMS and fresh air damper to control the volume of fresh air intake
- AHU filters replaced every year and washed every month via normal jet wash cleaning and sanitised with eco-friendly disinfectant (AHU filters were upgraded to MERV 13 for better air filtration)
- Monthly air flushing/air circulation exercise

shows the level of commitment from Knight Frank."

Menara Citibank has won Gold at *The Edge Malaysia* Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023 for the 10 Years and Above — Single-owned Office in a Mixed Strata Development category. It also won the Editor's Choice Award for Malaysia's Outstanding Sustainable Office Development.

**Managing expectations**

One of the main challenges about maintaining Menara Citibank is its age. "Most of the building systems require upgrading and repair works to better accommodate the high level of expectations from our anchor tenants, which are predominantly or about 80% from the financial and oil and gas sectors. Hence, rectification works need to be carried out in stages

**The main entrance and lobby of Menara Citibank**

to ensure the building's functionality is compatible with the latest technology and is sustainable," says KFPM centre manager Tai Sue Ching.

"In addition, the building's needs may change over time. For example, occupancy rates and new regulations are some of the things that could cause upkeep challenges. So, our team will have to be always vigilant, think ahead and take preventive measures to mitigate issues and high cost. Every year, we conduct a building condition assessment to identify the critical areas for improvement and submit the rectification or improvement proposals to the owners for consideration," she adds.

"I think this is expected of a building that is 25 years old," Kuruvilla chimes in. "Most of the equipment would have reached [the end of] their life cycle

PICTURES BY SUHAIMI YUSUF/THE EDGE

Despite being a 25-year-old building, Menara Citibank is GBI-certified



The office tower's Level 5 food court is open to the public



(From left) Tai, Chew, Lim and Kuruvilla



Kuruvilla and Inverfin Sdn Bhd management committee member Allan Teh (third and fourth from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards' chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, *The Edge Media Group* publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat and *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan

because we've stretched them to the maximum and therefore an upgrade is needed. The owners have been very supportive, so that has made our life a lot easier as well."

For Knight Frank, upgrading is not just about putting back what was there before. "Rather, it's about embracing technology and green and sustainable features in the upgrade as well. It's all about making the building competitive in the market," he says.

The most recent and still ongoing upgrade at Menara Citibank is the lift modernisation works that started in 2020 and is targeted to be completed by year end. "The project to carry out lift modernisation for the 25 lifts in the building was [approved by the owners] in 2019," says Kuruvilla.

"In a way, the Covid-19 pandemic made it easier because people couldn't come to work. Upgrading a lift system in an occupied building is challenging because of the inconvenience to the occupants. There will be inconveniences but that depends on how we manage it. So far, the tenants have been understanding and are actually happy that the building is being upgraded."

KFPFM executive director Winnie Lim notes that the lift modernisation works are going to be completed on schedule despite the delays during the pandemic. "We kick-started the project in 2020 but work was delayed because of the MCO (Movement Control Order) [and some supply chain issues, as some of the parts come from overseas]. But we have caught up and are well within the planned time frame of 3½ years to complete the project."

Another major upgrade was to the piping system in Menara Citibank. "We replaced all the aged ABS (acrylonitrile butadiene styrene) pipes in the building in 2019 and 2020 with PPR (polypropylene random copolymer) pipes. The PPR pipes carry more benefits than the ABS pipes as they are made of a non-toxic green material that is corrosion-free, have low water flow resistance and require less maintenance," Kuruvilla explains.

"We actually use Menara Citibank as a case study for some of the older buildings that we manage. So [when owners need a reference], we'll say go to Menara Citibank and tell us how you find it. Some of them actually came to look and were [impressed]. This is the beauty about doing something so others can come to see and know what to expect."

### All things sustainable

When it comes to sustainability, Tai notes that the building has to be aligned with Citi's sustainability goals. "Our owner, and especially our main tenant Citibank Group, is committed to reaching net zero by 2050 and to reduce the environmental footprint of its operations," she says, adding that Citibank has obtained the WELL certification, which is quite rare in the market, for the majority of their floors in the building. The WELL Building Standard is a system that measures the built environment for the health and well-being of its occupants.

Meanwhile, the ongoing lift modernisation work has contributed quite significantly to Menara Citibank's energy efficiency.

"The lifts use gearless traction PM (permanent magnet) motors and VVVF (variable-voltage, variable-frequency) control, which conserve a significant amount of energy and reduce carbon dioxide emissions. At the same time, we are now updating our building management system (BMS) and the updated version will provide integration of green technology and more features for energy monitoring," says Tai.

To further ensure healthy indoor air quality, all the AHU (air handling unit) filters in the building have been upgraded to MERV 13 since early last year, says Kuruvilla. "We've upgraded the filters from MERV 6 to MERV 13. In addition to giving better air filtration, they also help contain the spread of the Covid-19 virus. This is important to assure tenants that it's safe to come back to the office."

Menara Citibank's average occupancy rate is 80%. "During Covid, we were running slightly lower at 79%, but we've brought in new tenants along the way. The most recent tenant took up about 3.4% of the net lettable area with a long-term tenancy of 15 years," says KFPFM senior finance manager Sally Chew.

The key to successful management and maintenance of Menara Citibank is down to data, says Kuruvilla. "Good property management is having data, and we have a lot of data. We have to look at where the data is captured and how we are using the data to inform our decision-making."

"For us, we use a property management software, iKFPFM. We didn't just buy the software off the shelf. We bought part of it and customised most of it, and we've rolled the system out to all the buildings we manage. One of the first things we do when we take over a building is to get all the inventory into the software. Everything that is in a manual or on hard copies is transferred to our system. From there, we can start working out the planned preventive maintenance, issue work orders and get maintenance history of things done, because it's all in there. This has made communication and maintaining the building a lot more effective."

Having this data, he adds, will ensure the longevity of Menara Citibank. "We may not be here forever, and neither will the owners, but we have all this data. So, when the new owners come in, they don't have to worry about the building's history. It's all there and we can just transfer it to an Excel spreadsheet and they can take it from there. And that's important. We're not just a caretaker, but we have to make sure the building remains occupiable, is able to meet technological needs and is environmentally friendly in the years to come."

### Constant improvement

The task of maintaining a building is never easy and a never-ending one. "You can never finish upgrading a building because there are always things that are coming to the end of their lifespan. So, we'll continue looking at how we can improve," says Kuruvilla.

"We're also constantly looking at the ESG (environmental, social and governance) agenda and how we can take it further. We want to look at the health and wellness part, and when things are more settled, maybe have wellness programmes for our tenants."

To adapt to the changing work culture, the property manager conducts tenant surveys. "The whole working culture has changed and is changing. Today's needs are different from even two to three years ago. So, we always have to be adaptable and flexible to those changes. Based on their needs, we will assess whether it is viable for the building to provide such a facility. Of course, we will be limited by the building structure, but whatever we can do, we will," he says.

He adds that technology will continue to play a major role in the maintenance of the building. "We're also looking at getting a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification. To get a green certification for an existing building is a major achievement and bonus for the building. We should encourage all existing buildings to do the same. Well, Menara Citibank has done it." **E**

**EDITOR'S CHOICE**

MALAYSIA'S OUTSTANDING SUSTAINABLE RESIDENTIAL STRATA DEVELOPMENT

**10 YEARS AND ABOVE**  
Multiple-owned Strata Residential**GOLD****The Binjai On The Park**

LOW YEN YEING/THE EDGE



The KLCC park can be seen from the swimming pool area

# Maintaining standards

BY **RACHEAL LEE**  
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A view of the Petronas Twin Towers above tall trees and lush greenery is what you get when you are in the lobby of The Binjai On The Park. As one of the earliest residential developments in the vicinity, it is probably the most expensive high-rise condominium development in the country. It has offered residents 24/7 concierge and buggy services to and from the twin towers since its handover in 2010.

“We started with a high standard and we need to keep it up,” says Tan Kim Seng, chairman of The Binjai On The Park’s Management Corporation (MC), referring to the management and maintenance of the development. Owners of such an exclusive project would demand the highest standards of management and maintenance.

The effective management and maintenance of The Binjai On The Park is the result of the professionalism of and working relationship between the owners and the property manager, Henry Butcher Malaysia (Mont Kiara) Sdn Bhd (HBMK). The partnership led to the development being a Gold winner in the Strata Residential category at *EdgeProp Malaysia’s* Best Managed Property Awards 2017.

This year, not only did it retain the Gold award in the 10 Years And Above — Multiple-owned Strata Residential category of *The Edge Malaysia* Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023, it also went home with the Editor’s Choice Award for Malaysia’s Outstanding Sustainable Residential Strata Development.

HBMK managing director Low Hon Keong says stability and consistency are very important for The Binjai On The Park.

“In managing a high-end residential development like this, we treat everyone like a VVIP. Safety and security are of utmost importance. The



**Low and Tan (third and fourth from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards’ chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, *The Edge Media Group* publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat and *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan**

Binjai area is home to many [of the] who’s who [of Malaysia]. To them, it is not about how much they spend, it is about the priority items to spend on, and for the MC and management to continue maintaining and improving them.”

He adds that the MC’s strict adherence to the by-laws contribute to the effective maintenance and management of the building.

The commitment of and swift response from the MC is also important. Tan notes that the bi-monthly MC meeting with the property manager is always fully attended, which allows the MC to analyse the building’s issues and make decisions quickly. “We are able to carry out the maintenance before the worst happens and we are always ahead of the curve.”

MC secretary Chong Chow Mei notes that there is always maintenance and she reiterates the importance of fixing defects before they get worse.

“With HBMK, they report what needs to be done and all ... it is a thorough job, so they will alert you before anything major happens. We try to

settle the defects before they become big. We take their advice and that’s how we handle the ageing [of the building]. [For other changes,] we change according to what we need,” she says.

To further enhance the efficiency of the overall maintenance and upkeep of the development, The Binjai On The Park relies on the Building Automation System (BAS), a software that allows holistic monitoring of all M&E components in the development. Via BAS, the maintenance crew is able to set, check and monitor the status of M&E components in each of the blocks accordingly.

## Good relationship

Low reckons that good management and maintenance of a building go beyond just the hardware. He explains that a good relationship with the MC and owners is important in property management.

Communication is the key as the smooth operation of the development depends largely on constant updated communication with all key stakeholders via WhatsApp. In total, there are 17 active WhatsApp groups to cover communication with regard to maintenance updates.

“Hardware is one thing because we have the necessary hardware, but a soft touch is even more important. We work closely with the committee members and we have a good understanding of what they want,” says Low.

The 24/7 concierge and buggy services continue to be offered after 14 years. The on-demand buggy service is just a phone call away and the waiting time is not more than five minutes. These buggies are replaced every four to five years. Meanwhile, the concierge service aims to assist the owners at any time.

Tan says the development has two buggies in operation: one in the daytime and the other at night. “No development in Malaysia has this service and it is the status of this condominium. Also,

PICTURES BY SAM FONG/THE EDGE

**Quick facts**

<b>NAME</b>	The Binjai On The Park
<b>DEVELOPER</b>	Layar Intan Sdn Bhd
<b>DEVELOPMENT TYPE</b>	Residential
<b>LAND AREA</b>	1.74 acres
<b>TENURE</b>	Freehold
<b>COMPLETION</b>	2009
<b>UNITS</b>	171
<b>STOREYS</b>	Binjai Barat — 46 Binjai Timur — 45
<b>BUILT-UP</b>	2,250 to 8,977 sq ft
<b>GROSS FLOOR AREA</b>	690,824 sq ft
<b>MAINTENANCE FEE</b>	RM7.58 per share unit/ RM0.67 psf (Sinking fund: RM0.758 per share unit/RM0.067 psf)
<b>AVERAGE OCCUPANCY RATE</b>	56%
<b>CAR PARK BAYS</b>	420

**AMENITIES**  
Shopping malls/supermarkets, shops and F&B, banks

**FACILITIES**  
Concierge, gymnasium, aerobics room, swimming pool, casual lounge, multipurpose hall, sauna, Jacuzzi, changing room, squash court, tennis court, car wash area, driver's room, EV charger and buggy service

**ENERGY-SAVING FEATURES**  
Replaced bulbs with LED, shortened A/C operation in lift lobbies

**INDOOR AIR QUALITY FEATURES**  
Ventilation fan in common area and M&E rooms; Dyson air purifier in office meeting room, multipurpose hall, gym and aerobics room; Medkline Air+Surface Steriliser in all private lifts



From left: HBMK senior building manager Chong Yin Choon, HBMK associate director Paris Tian, Tan, Chong, Low and Lim



there is no development anywhere in the world with a park right at your doorstep.”

Due to its location, The Binjai On The Park attracts a number of foreign residents. Low explains that before they move in, management gives them a briefing on the by-laws, house rules and local culture to make their move to a new country easier.

The Binjai On The Park organises festive parties every year as a community event for owners to get in touch with each other. These events also serve to introduce local culture to the foreign residents there.

**Round-the-clock concierge (above) and buggy services to and from the twin towers have been offered to residents since the handover in 2010**

**Upgrades**

The Binjai On The Park has undergone some upgrades, especially after the pandemic. One major change is the licence plate recognition at the ingress and egress points of the development, says Tan.

The project was proposed by HBMK in view of the need to increase security in the development. It commenced in October 2020 and was completed the following month at a total cost of RM150,000.

“Then last year, we did a major upgrade for the gymnasium and aerobic room. Previously, they were in one space ... it was small and congested.

So, what we did was we took out the gymnasium equipment to put them in what was previously a yoga room that was underutilised,” he says.

“This idea came from the feedback of the residents. Now, we have two rooms — one for the gymnasium and the other for aerobics, with state-of-the-art equipment. We immediately saw an increase in usage.”

The Binjai On The Park has just embarked on a repainting exercise, which MC treasurer Lim Yee Li says was delayed due to the Movement Control Order. It will refresh the façade.

It is a risk for The Binjai On The Park to make another submission for judging this year, having won the Gold award in 2017. Nevertheless, it has maintained its standard over the years, making sure its maintenance status is on par with the best of luxury residences in the region. **E**

LOW YEN YEING/THE EDGE



Above: The gymnasium was upgraded last year

Left: The Binjai On The Park will soon have a fresh look as it has just embarked on a repainting exercise

**EDITOR'S  
CHOICE**MALAYSIA'S EXEMPLARY  
LANDSCAPE DESIGNTHE EDGE MALAYSIA-ILAM SUSTAINABLE  
LANDSCAPE AWARDS 2023 – Landscape Design**GOLD****The Era Wetlands**

PICTURES BY PATRICK GOH/THE EDGE

# Green oasis in a concrete jungle

BY **RACHEAL LEE**  
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**W**hen I set foot in The Era Wetlands, I could not believe that there was such a serene landscape sanctuary — birds chirping, lower temperatures and fresh, crisp air — on Jalan Segambut, which is known for being an old industrial area.

The 1.26-acre The Era Wetlands is part of The Era Duta North, which is developed by JKG Land Bhd. When I interviewed managing director Datuk Teh Kean Ming in 2016 for the launch of The Era Phase 1, he said he intended to include a wetland in the project as a facility for the residents. It was a rather new idea back then.

Today, it has proven to be a good idea as The Era Wetlands has emerged as the Gold winner in the Landscape Design category of *The Edge Malaysia-ILAM Sustainable Landscape Awards 2023*, as well as winner of the Editor's Choice Award — Malaysia's Exemplary Landscape Design 2023.

Teh explains that the inspiration for the wetland came from fond memories of playing in a stream behind his childhood home in Bukit Mertajam, Penang, after school with his brother.

"When I was growing up in a kampung in Bukit Mertajam, there was a rubber plantation and a small stream behind my house. After school, we loved to go to the water to play and to catch fish. That was something very good for children," he says.

"This development is in Segambut, with [many] old factories that cause air pollution. It can be noisy and messy. Of course, we can do a more straightforward way, which is to cut the land, and put in the building and the required 10% of green space. We could have just put in an open space with a jogging track, but we want to come up with something different on this land."

The site of the wetland is "the remnant of the development", he says. It is too close to the boundary of the development site, making it difficult to place a building there. Then, there came the idea of a wetland, which JKG Land believed would be able to differentiate The Era Duta North from other developments.

Teh continues: "A wetland is a sanctuary where you can have different plants; therefore, there is a diversity of greens compared to a regular green area. There is also water, which is a very soothing element. We hope our buyers can go home, after the hustle and bustle of daily life, to a place where children can play safely and adults can relax."

The company engaged landscape architect Praxcis Design Sdn Bhd to design the wetland. The planning of the wetland up to completion took about a year. Teh says The Era Wetlands is a balanced ecological system and he believes it will add value to the property.

"I want to share with the young people the joy [our generation] had. That was a good memory. Also, if you are convinced you can make a difference,



Everything in the wetland, from the type of stone to the shrubs and trees, has its purpose



Yap and Teh (third and fourth from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards' chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, The Edge Media Group publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat and *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan

you should do something meaningful [in your developments]. Set a standard so that, hopefully, it becomes the catalyst for other developers. In a small way, we want to set a certain standard and benchmark in the industry."

Praxcis Design director Yap Nga Tuan says there is a reason for everything that has been placed in the wetland. Everything — from the type of stone to shrubs and trees — has its purpose. Together, all elements help form an ecosystem in the wetland, purifying the air and river water naturally, while lowering the temperature.

## Kidney of Segambut

The 217m-long wetland, which allows for the formation of a river from one end to another, has four sections: Wetland Cells; Forest Brooks; Water Play and Picnic Area; as well as Main Wetland.

The Wetland Cells are gravel stones and sand beds to support the growth of wetland plants. In these cells, effluents are filtered in the sand or gravel and biologically treated by bacteria living in the cell and exposed to plant roots, removing substances such as nitrogen and phosphorus, which is responsible for biologically cleansing the water.

The water continues along Forest Brooks, where a narrow section arranged with wetland plants, small stone boulders and driftwood is densely covered and bordered by trees, which improves the purification process and increases the oxygenate capacity, and builds a self-purifying cycle.

The Water Play and Picnic Area is the main recreational area, where picnic areas — overlooking the main wetlands pond — are set out for occasional gatherings. There is a hammock play spot for families, and children can also play in the shallow, clean water areas.

Finally, the central pond — which is located in the Main Wetland — serves as a wildlife sanctuary, protected by a lush aquatic marsh teeming with shoaling. It also provides a source of water for the birds, helps recharge aquifers and filters polluted water.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 26

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# Trees and shrubs a natural filtration system for the habitat

**FROM PAGE 24**

There is a total of 34 species of aquatic plants as well as 300 trees and shrubs in the wetland. They act as a natural filtration system for the habitat, which is home to aquatic animals, birds, fish, insects and mammals.

“We create the natural flow of the river, which is the wetland environment. We call it the ‘Kidney of Segambut’ because it performs an important ecological role to ensure harmony and balance in the ecosystem and raise the awareness and benefits of having ecological health. By using this wetland as a biological supermarket, climate conditions have been moderated, recreational opportunities have been recreated and wildlife sanctuaries have been re-established,” Yap says.

“We put in plants that attract the birds, which act as pest control. Some aquatic plants are the source of food and shelter to the wildlife. Then, birds and fish will come and make their habitat there because everything is sheltered and protected.”

**Wind-harvesting turbines**

JKG Land also uses wind-harvesting turbines, located behind the residential towers and near the wetland, to generate self-reliant electricity for the water feature pumping system in the wetland. The winds come from the basement car park via the car park’s mechanical ventilation system and the natural wind from the surrounding areas.

Teh notes that having a clear vision and criteria was very important in developing the wetland, so that the landscape architect could capture the vision and produce the desired result.

He says: “We are very particular about certain things, such as having crystal clear water. The water in the Main Wetland section is blueish because of the volcanic rock and limestones placed there. The things we want in the wetland have been fully captured [by Praxcis Design]. We also have a very experienced contractor to build the wetland.” He adds that it cost RM1.8 million to build the wetland.

The maintenance of the wetland costs RM9,000 per month and includes regular checks on the filtration system, clearing of weeds and blockages, pruning and debris removal.

As for The Era Duta North, Teh says Phase 1 has been fully sold and more than 50% of Phase 2, which was launched about a year ago, has been sold.

“The value of Phase 2 is about 10% higher than Phase 1. The second phase will be completed in 2025,” he says.

Located on a 14.86-acre freehold tract, The Era Duta North will have six serviced apartment blocks on top of a 3-storey retail podium and an 8-storey car park podium.

The apartment blocks, which will be launched over three phases, will have 53 to 63 floors each and offer a total of 2,913 units. Meanwhile, facilities will include a gymnasium, water pavilion, swimming pool, multipurpose hall and roof garden.

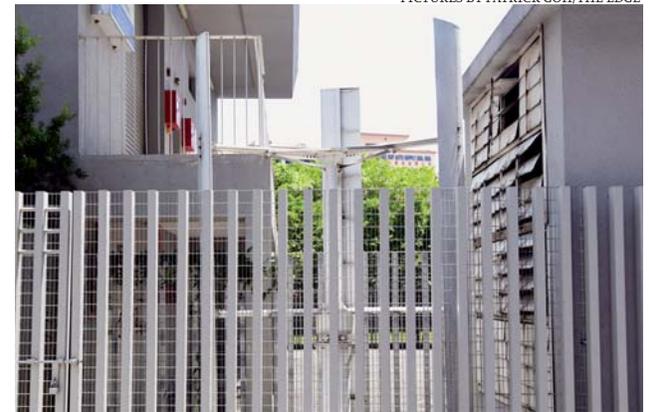
The 277,000 sq ft retail podium is retained by the developer to control the tenant mix. It is open to the public, with a dedicated entrance to the non-residents’ car park. **E**



The 1.26-acre The Era Wetlands is part of JKG Land’s The Era Duta North



(From left) JKG Land executive director Foh Meng Wha, Teh and Yap



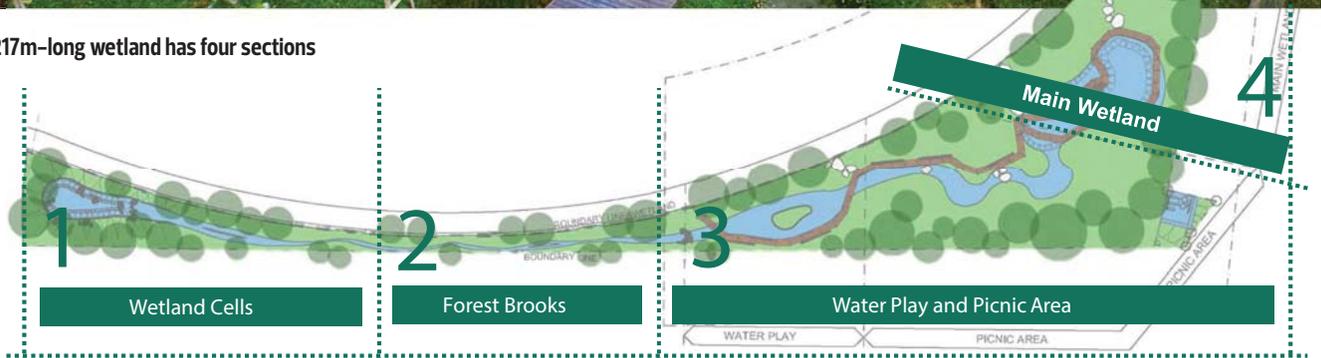
PICTURES BY PATRICK GOH/THE EDGE

Wind-harvesting turbines are used to generate electricity for the water-feature pumping system in the wetland



An aerial view of the Main Wetland

The 217m-long wetland has four sections





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AWARDS 2023**

*(Below 10 Years: Retail Category)*

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**TASTES | TRENDS | ADVENTURES** IOI City Mall Sdn Bhd [200801016058 (817348-V)]

**ioicity**  
MALL

**BELOW 10 YEARS**

Multiple-owned Strata Residential

**GOLD**

## Sunway Emerald Residence

PICTURES BY SPFM



# Passion to serve

The 20-acre Emerald Lake fronts Sunway Emerald Residence

BY **CHELSEA J LIM**  
city.country@bizedge.com

**T**he strong partnership between the property manager and the Joint Management Body (JMB) is key to the management and maintenance of Sunway Emerald Residence in Iskandar Puteri.

Sunway Property & Facility Management Sdn Bhd (SPFM) assistant general manager of property management and customer services Chong Hoc Mun and JMB chairman Ramond Yeoh came across as a passionate and fiery duo.

“The JMB and property manager are actually like a corporation. We check and balance each other and we also challenge each other on whether it is the right decision,” says Chong.

“Definitely, we have mutual respect for each other. We are very clear with our roles as property manager hired by the committee to carry out our duty. So, due diligence is needed to make sure our recommendation or the decision the JMB takes is in accordance with the Strata Management Act. Sometimes, the JMB challenges us and questions whether the recommendation is the best outcome for the development.

“We have a WhatsApp group that buzzes every day and a monthly meeting. There are constantly things to discuss. That’s how we work together very closely and achieve this very strong partnership.”

The strong partnership between the two parties is the recipe for Emerald Residence’s success. It is the Gold winner in the Below 10 Years — Multiple-owned Strata Residential category at *The Edge Malaysia* Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023.

The 20-acre Emerald Lake fronts the 22.06-acre Emerald Residence. Residents enjoy unobstructed views of the lake as it is a hilltop development that offers exclusivity and low density, with only 222 units of two-storey link houses, two-storey link courtyard homes and three-storey semi-detached houses, as well as a private clubhouse at the heart of the development.

Located in the Sunway City Iskandar Puteri township in Johor, Emerald Residence was developed by Sunway Iskandar Sdn Bhd and completed in 2018. It is located in the Lakeview precinct.

The first JMB was formed in 2019. Yeoh was elected chairman in 2021 and is currently serving his second term.

### Great details in problem-solving

Yeoh shares that in his first term as chairman, keeping track of the finances was a challenge given the pandemic.

Emerald Residence has a mix of nationalities among its residents, from Malaysians to foreigners from Singapore, China, South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan, among others. Inevitably, it became a challenge for SPFM to collect maintenance fees when foreign buyers were not able to enter the country during the MCO.

“Our finances were not in the best situation at the time. It was harder to collect the maintenance fee from the residents as they were going through hardships. But that also meant we had less funds to maintain some of the common areas and the community itself,” says Yeoh.

To ensure financial sustainability, SPFM and the JMB came up with an action plan to resolve this issue. Chong says the team created a list with the residents’ profiles, with clear details on where they were from and whether they were living in Malaysia or in another country.

“From the list, we could analyse just how much we could actually collect from those living in Malaysia and those living overseas but were able to remit money to Malaysia. We had a separate list for those who were not contactable,” he adds.

SPFM also helped the residents find tenants for the rental of their units by arranging meetings with property agents. “When they were able to get tenants [to rent their units], they were also willing to pay [the charges],” says Chong.



The three-storey semi-detached houses

PICTURE BY MOHD IZWAN MOHD NAZAM/THE EDGE



Yeoh and Sunway Iskandar Sdn Bhd CEO Gerard Soosay (third and fourth from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards’ chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, *The Edge* Media Group publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat and *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan



Outdoor gymnasium at the clubhouse



From left: The gateless feature of Sunway Emerald Residence is aimed at fostering a close-knit community; the private clubhouse for residents includes facilities such as a swimming pool and gym

Quick facts	
NAME	Sunway Emerald Residence
DEVELOPER	Sunway Iskandar Sdn Bhd
DEVELOPMENT TYPE	Residential
PROJECT SIZE	89,274 sq m
TENURE	Leasehold
STOREYS	Two and three
BUILT-UP	1,919 to 4,192 sq ft
COMPLETION DATE	2018
MAINTENANCE FEE	RM2.80 per share unit
AVERAGE OCCUPANCY RATE	60%
GROSS FLOOR AREA	51,418 sq m
<b>AMENITIES</b>	Sunway International School, Emerald Lake, SJK (C) Cheah Fah, Sunway Boulevard 88 (retail shops), Starbucks, Caltex, X-park, Golf Driving Range, Sunway Citrine Retail Hub, Sunway Big Bix Retail Park, Causeway Link Services
<b>FACILITIES</b>	Community hall, swimming pool, wading pool, indoor and outdoor gymnasium, playground, barbecue area, viewing deck, meeting room
<b>ENERGY-SAVING FEATURES</b>	Solar panels, LED lights
<b>INDOOR AIR QUALITY FEATURES</b>	Scheduled air-conditioned servicing



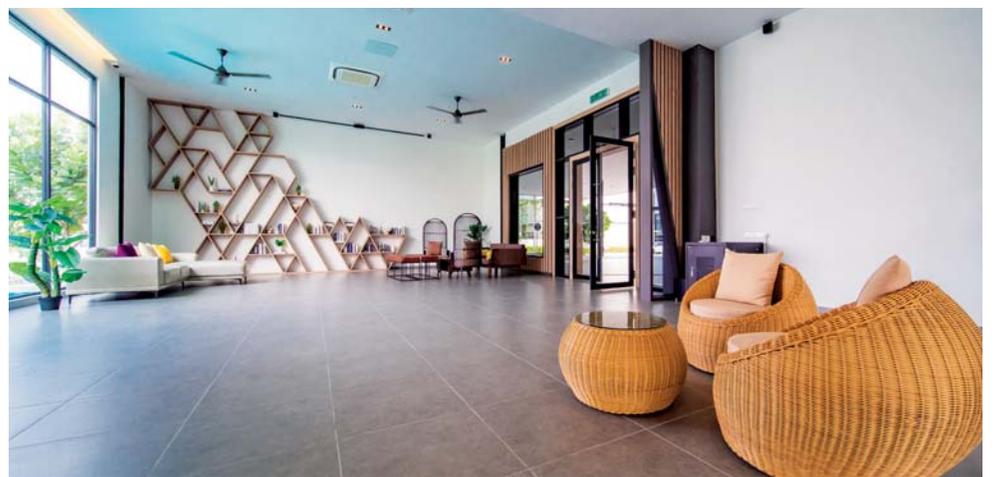
Yeoh: For the last two years, the collection has been pretty outstanding



Chong: The JMB and property manager like to challenge each other to ensure we are making the right decision



The indoor gymnasium at the clubhouse (above) and the lounge in the private clubhouse (below)



“At the time, our collection rate was around 70% and now, we are close to 90%. So, there has been a progression from where we were to where we are right now. For the last two years, the results have been pretty outstanding,” says Yeoh.

The occupancy rate currently stands at 60%, with 30% to 40% foreigners.

Another challenge was the water ponding issue at the clubhouse. Emerald Residence has a private clubhouse for residents, with facilities such as a swimming pool and gymnasium.

During the Defects Liability Period, there was a water ponding issue around the clubhouse, especially near the swimming pool, which they initially suspected was leaking, says Chong.

“We worked closely with the developer and contractor to identify the root cause of the issue. We had to close the pool. During that time, we needed to diagnose the problem and rectify it. The JMB members were also there to witness the root cause analysis.”

Eventually, they found out that it was because the groundwater was unable to be discharged to the drainage.

“We also needed to prove with a chemical test that the water was not coming from the swimming pool. This process took many months, which required us to have a lot of communication with

our residents. Even during the annual general meeting, we had to explain the issue and action plan to them,” says Chong.

“When we had the result, we published the findings and let everyone know the root cause and how we managed to identify it. So, we really go all out in terms of investigating major issues.”

### Cost-saving initiatives

With a collection rate of about 90%, there have been discussions on enhancing the surrounding neighbourhood.

In October 2022, solar panels were installed at Emerald Residence. These are estimated to save RM20,000 in electricity bills annually, says Chong.

He adds that the team is currently in discussions to finalise the installation of the solar panel for street lights in the gated-and-guarded community.

“We wanted to install the solar panel for street lights as we realised there are certain spots in the development that are a bit too dim for people to walk around. We wanted to light up a certain junction for safety purposes. But rather than use conventional street lighting, we decided to install solar street lights instead for maintenance and cost purposes.”

The team is also planning to add electric vehicle (EV) chargers. “It is something that we are

currently studying to see whether we have sufficient demand for it,” says Chong.

He explains that the reason behind this is to facilitate the future demands of residents, especially now that EVs are becoming popular.

“Especially with Singapore going for EV chargers and EVs, and we have a lot of residents from Singapore or those working in Singapore. Eventually, a fast-charging EV charger could be a requirement by our residents.”

### That kampung feeling

Emerald Residence is a gateless development and SPFM takes advantage of this feature to promote a strong community spirit.

“We have a lot of discussions on house rules. The house rules are designed to help people learn the dos and don’ts,” says Chong.

“We also communicate and educate to raise awareness. Our communication is not only with the owners but also the tenants. They need to know our rules, our standard operating procedures and what is happening in the residence.”

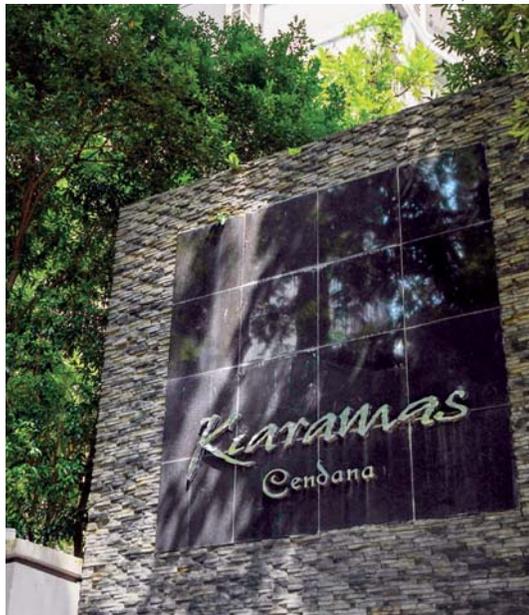
At the end of the day, the goal is to create a close-knit community like the ones you find in the kampung and emulate that spirit in the residence. **E**

10 YEARS AND ABOVE  
Multiple-owned Strata Residential

**GOLD**

## Kiaramas Cendana Condominium

PICTURES BY LOW YEN YEING/THE EDGE



MOHD IZWAN MOHD NAZAM/THE EDGE



HBMK senior area manager Kathrine Yong and Lim (third and fourth from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards' chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, *The Edge Media Group* publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat and *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan



The landscaping and grounds are well maintained



The water features create a serene atmosphere

# Strong processes keep condo in good shape

BY **WONG KING WAI**  
city.country@bizedge.com

**M**aintaining an older building is certainly a big challenge. Kiaramas Cendana Condominium's Management Corporation (MC) committee and its managing agent Henry Butcher Malaysia (Mont Kiara) Sdn Bhd (HBMK) took this challenge head on and, today, they are reaping the rewards.

For its efforts, the judges of *The Edge Malaysia* Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023 have awarded it Gold in the 10 Years and Above — Multiple-owned Strata Residential category.

MC chairman Sean Lim and treasurer Jacz Yee are happy to have won this award, as it means they now know where they stand among the other condo MCs in Mont'Kiara.

"We did not know our standard in Mont'Kiara because there are a lot of good condos around; we were not sure where we stood ... It is nice to be recognised and to know we are on the right track in managing the condo," says Lim.

Yee concurs: "In the future, it will be easier for others to continue to do a good job."

Kiaramas Cendana Condominium is located in Mont'Kiara but closer to Jalan Kiara 5, which is a short distance away from the more "happening" area of Jalan Kiara. The condo occupies 3.4 acres and was completed in 2006.

There are two adjoining 28-storey towers — City Wing and Garden Wing — with an average of eight units per floor. There are a total of 190 units: 120 are owner-occupied, 44 are tenanted and the remaining 26 are vacant. The occupancy rate is 86%.

In 2015, HBMK took over the management of the condo, with guidance and input from the MC.

HBMK executive director Ho Kim Heong says: "We work closely and have monthly meetings with the MC to understand the direction and its expectations. Most importantly for the MC and Henry Butcher is to understand who the actual users of the facilities are. So, we know what to do and the MC knows what to expect from us."

Facilities at the condo include a swimming pool, multipurpose hall/badminton court, children's playground, changing room, squash court, tennis court, meeting room, table tennis, barbecue pit, jogging

CONTINUES ON PAGE 32

Kiaramas Cendana  
Condominium comprises  
two adjoining towers and  
was completed in 2006



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PICTURES BY LOW YEN YEING/THE EDGE



KIARAMAS CENDANA CONDOMINIUM



## Managing the use of energy

### FROM PAGE 30

track, gymnasium, sauna, reading room and Jacuzzi.

At the time of the interview for this article, the swimming pool was undergoing a major renovation. Queried about this, Lim, Yee and Ho explain that it is part of the upgrading and maintenance of the condo facilities.

Says Ho, "Leaks were repaired over the years but the condition has worsened over time. So, to prevent further damage, the MC decided to rectify the whole pool. Basically, it will be a new pool with new tiles and new waterproofing."

Lim adds: "We managed to convince everyone that the pool refurbishment was the way forward. There is no point in keeping the money in the account when the property is not well maintained."

There are also water features around the swimming pool area and a pond with large fish swimming lazily in the clear waters. These elements provide a sense of serenity and are not usually found in newer condos.

The pond area was originally a water feature with chlorinated water before it was converted into what it is today. Ho adds that the MC helped with research into the latest water feature technology.

To ensure all facilities and landscape matters are well maintained, HBMK has implemented the Planned Preventive Maintenance (PPM) method, which includes daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly and yearly checks and servicing to ensure everything is in tip-top condition.

### Ensuring a good collection rate

In 2022, the collection rate for the condo was 92.26% on average. HBMK accounts manager Nurul Shaziera Rosemi says, "This is a mature neighbourhood; so, we normally send a friendly reminder before the collection date ... Communicating well with the residents and engaging with them has helped in the collection rate being as high as it is."

The outstanding collection figures are from overseas owners, who Nurul says will eventually make their payments.

In terms of staying in touch with the residents,

KIARAMAS CENDANA CONDOMINIUM



The swimming pool is undergoing a major renovation as part of the upgrading and maintenance of the condo facilities



HBMK building manager Karen Leong speaks with residents in the course of her daily walkabout.

Besides face-to-face meetings, communication with residents is usually done via email and WhatsApp. Owing to the small number of units, Ho says, most of the residents prefer a simple phone call.

Lim and Yee are part of a younger generation of MC members that *City & Country* met over the course of the judging period of the awards. The members are usually older in age, but both gentlemen believe it is important for those in their age group to participate in the MC to ensure the condo is maintained at a standard they are happy with.

Says Lim, "I own two big units here, and my two children and I use most of the facilities. I play tennis and table tennis as well as swim every week. So, I have to make sure the condo is running well. It is better for all of us to come together to contribute rather than expect other people to handle it."

(From left): Yee, Lim, Ho, Leong and Nurul work closely together to ensure the condo is well maintained

The former water feature filled with chlorinated water is now a vibrant fish pond



### Quick facts

NAME	Kiaramas Cendana Condominium
DEVELOPER	Kiaramas Development Sdn Bhd
DEVELOPMENT TYPE	Residential
SIZE	3.4 acres
TENURE	Freehold
STOREYS	28
UNITS	190
BUILT-UP	1,700 to 4,600 sq ft
COMPLETION	2006
MAINTENANCE FEE	RM3.01 per share unit
AVERAGE OCCUPANCY RATE	86%
CAR PARK BAYS	486

### AMENITIES

Shopping malls/supermarkets, international schools, hospital, shops and F&B, banks

### FACILITIES

Swimming pool, wading pool, Jacuzzi, tennis court, squash court, sauna, badminton, multipurpose hall, BBQ, playground and reflexology

### ENERGY-SAVING FEATURES

Photocell sensors, LED and timers for pumps and lightings

### INDOOR AIR QUALITY FEATURES

Air-conditioning and exhaust fans

Yee concurs: "I use the facilities a lot, so I have to ensure the facilities are safe. Few people understand the facilities in a condo — if you don't get the right people in charge, you will have a lot of misconceptions about them, especially in terms of safety and maintenance."

"A committee member who doesn't use the facilities will not understand how the tennis court or the swimming pool are supposed to be maintained. Someone like Sean, who uses the facilities almost every day, will have a better understanding of the facilities. Then, it will be easier to communicate with the contractor, or Henry Butcher will assist us — at least they know what we want."

Disputes that affect the condo community are usually put to a vote, says Lim. Discussions among residents, who are mainly professionals and retirees, can be held to come up with a win-win situation for all.

With regard to cost savings, Ho says all efforts are made to ensure that the condo is running efficiently without having to incur high costs.

He explains: "Basically, we focus on the electricity bill for the water pump, tennis court lights and corridor lighting. We had to change to a better [light] product; it's better than LED, with lower voltage but similar lamination as before. Even the water pump has been changed to one that has an inverter."

Ho adds that the new lights were recommended by a resident who is an energy consultant.

Leong says timers have been installed in areas that need light only at certain times of the day and also for the water pumps to operate only when needed.

As for what is in store for the condo, Lim says: "We plan to build another lobby, as having only one can cause congestion. There was a request from the residents for another lobby."

"I will suggest to the committee that a side gate be opened so that residents can park their cars outside the compound for 20 to 30 minutes instead of having to park in the condo to get something from their unit."



Editor's  
Choice Award

ABOVE 10 YEARS  
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BELOW 10 YEARS  
 Non-strata Retail

**GOLD**
**IOI City Mall**

# Reinventing shopping mall based on regional standards

 BY RACHEL CHEW  
 city.country@bizedge.com

IOI City Mall has become a landmark in the southern corridor of the Klang Valley. Not only is it the new commercial, entertainment and lifestyle heartbeat of the area, the 2.5 million sq ft shopping mall is also the biggest retail mall in Malaysia so far.

However, being the biggest is not the objective of the builder, operator and facility manager, IOI Properties Group Bhd. The vision for IOI City Mall has always been to redefine it by benchmarking it against regional mall standards in terms of operational efficiency, sustainability and integration.

“The first phase of IOI City Mall opened in September 2014, followed by the second phase seven years later, bringing the total net lettable area to 2.5 million sq ft and making it the biggest shopping mall in Malaysia. Construction on Phase 3 will start by the end of next year and is slated for completion by 2029. Upon its completion, we could possibly be one of the biggest in Southeast Asia,” IOI Properties chief operating officer of property investment (Malaysia) Chris Chong tells *City & Country*.

IOI City Mall is the Gold winner in the Below 10 Years — Non-strata Retail category in *The Edge Malaysia Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023*.

The GBI-certified mall is located within IOI Resort City in Putrajaya, Selangor, and is easily accessible via major highways and public transport. It is a 30-minute drive from Kuala Lumpur International Airport, making it an attractive retail and entertainment hub. The mall is currently occupied by more than 700 tenants, including trendy fashion brands, two major supermarkets, cineplexes, and food and beverage outlets offering local and international dining experiences.

Designed with integration in mind, IOI City Mall is more than just retail. Attractions include IOI City Farm, an 18,000 sq ft indoor edutainment exhibition space that provides family-friendly activities to learn about plants and animals; IOI Sports Centre, the only world-class sports facility of its kind in the vicinity of Putrajaya, with a total of 15 badminton courts and two covered futsal arenas; an Olympic-size ice-skating rink; a 52,000 sq ft adventure park; and a Proton Premium Outlet with an after-sales car service centre.

“Shopping malls are evolving. It is a very competitive industry; hence, we need to be innovative and, most importantly, outdo ourselves,” says Chong.

IOI Properties is also the operator of two successful retail malls, namely IOI Mall Puchong in Selangor, which started operating in 1996, and IOI Mall Kulai in Johor, which opened in 2001.

“We want [IOI City Mall] to move away from the traditional impression of a shopping mall that is only meant for shopping. We want it to be a happy destination for everyone, so there is something for everyone. For younger kids, we have the indoor farm; for children, we have a sports centre; for teenagers, we have Malaysia’s biggest ice rink and indoor adventure theme park; for fathers, we have Proton’s service centre,” he smiles. “So that the men can schedule their car service in the mall while their wives go shopping and kids go for entertainment.”

However, managing a wide range and diverse



PICTURE BY PATRICK GOH/THE EDGE



tenant mix under one roof is never an easy task, especially in fulfilling the special requirements of unusual mall tenants.

For example, as IOI City Farm is designed with an indoor farm concept to bring the outdoor experience indoors, it has special requirements on the environment space and temperature to ensure the comfort of the animals and plants. The edutainment exhibition consists of three zones for visitors to interact and observe more than 70 species of plants, farm and exotic animals as well as fish.

“We have the advantage as IOI Properties is also a developer and builder. We have expertise in design, architecture, engineering and so on to ensure our space meets the special requirements.

“In terms of day-to-day operations, maintenance and management, the responsibility does not fall so much on us but the tenants themselves. Our role is to provide external support to them, such

IOI City Mall Sdn Bhd assistant general manager Wilfred Wong and Chong (third and fourth from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards’ chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, *The Edge Media Group* publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat and *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan

as to ensure the safety of the mall, cleanliness in the common areas, brand building, efficient traffic control, building upkeep and upgrading works planning,” Chong shares.

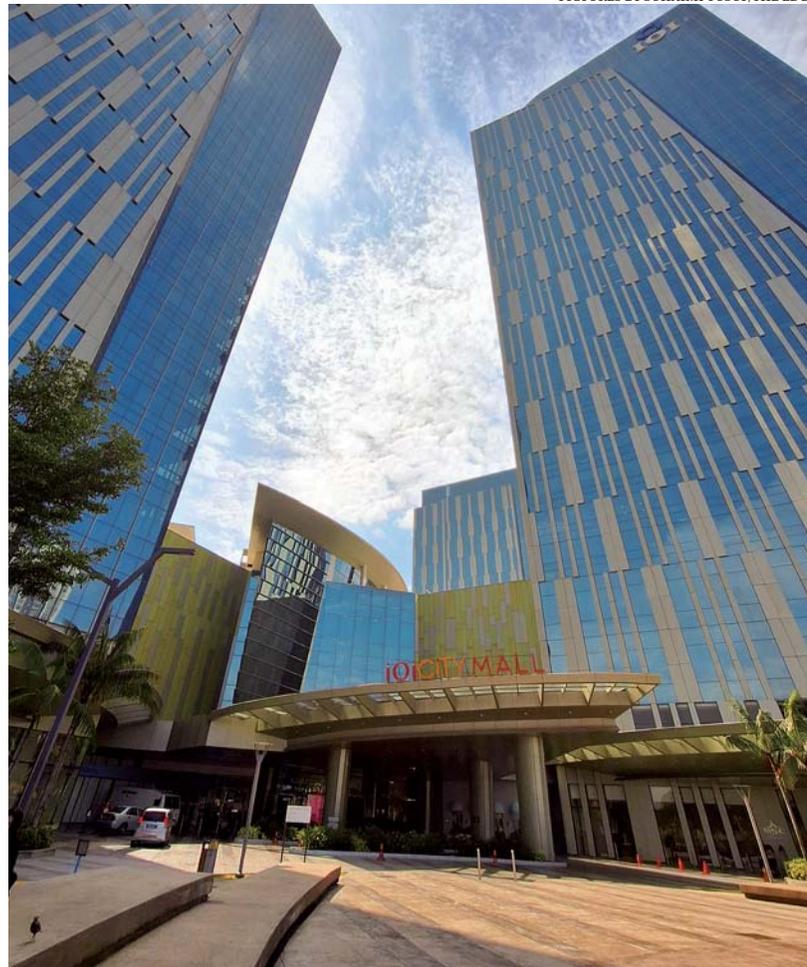
## Staying relevant

When the first phase of IOI City Mall was opened in 2014, LED light fittings were not common in the market. Fast forward to the opening of the second phase in 2021, sustainability and energy saving were the trend; hence, Phase 2 is 100% LED light fitted.

“Facility management is about long-term planning while [considering] many aspects, including budgeting. While we are committed to upgrading our light fittings [in Phase 1], we cannot throw away those old fittings that are still usable just to follow the trend because it is not environmentally friendly either; it defeats the purpose. What we did was upgrade [to LED light fittings] gradually starting two years ago, only when the lifespan of old light fittings ended. We are now 100% on LED light fittings,” Chong explains.

Meanwhile, in showing its commitment to sustainability, IOI Properties did not stop there. Some 8,910 pieces of photovoltaic solar panel modules have been installed on the rooftop of IOI City Mall in 2020/21. They produce a total of 3.5MW electricity power supply for the mall’s self-consumption, and an excess energy grid through the Net Energy Metering Scheme (NEM) under the NEM contract. Every month, the mall generates about 381MW for the whole mall, which covers 15% of the electricity consumption in the mall’s common area.

IOI City Mall is also built with two Thermal Energy Storage (TES) tanks, which have a total volume of 62,000 cu m, equivalent to 16.5 Olympic-size swimming pools, for more efficient use of energy by using chilled water while continuing



PICTURES BY SUHAIMI YUSUF/THE EDGE

(Left) IOI City Mall is the biggest mall in Malaysia

(Above) One of the main entrances of IOI City Mall

to provide a desirable atmosphere for its customers. The chilled water is charged during off-peak hours at night and stored in the TES tanks to avoid maximum demand charges during peak hours.

“We are constantly enhancing the mall, be it on the hardware or software [side], because staying relevant is crucial in operating a well-received and socially responsible mall,” Chong says.

For example, he explains that while IOI City Mall was one of the first shopping malls in the region to have a “find a car park” indication system installed upon its opening in 2014, the operator has recently further enhanced it to a more efficient and integrated system.

“As we have more than 14,000 parking bays and a few parking zones, traffic flow and indication of available bays and mall direction are important. We have a KPI to not let our shoppers spend more than 15 minutes in the parking area or to look for their car. We are pleased to share that the target has been well-achieved so far,” Chong notes.

He attributes the achievement to the recently upgraded automated License Plate Recognition system and car finder system. The car finder system helps shoppers locate their car simply by keying in the car plate number in a kiosk, which is connected to the security camera system in the car park.

“IOI City Mall is a mega mall and we understand the pain of looking for your car among the 14,000 parking bays. A kiosk allows customers to find their car by just keying in the car registration number [and] through image recognition technology via camera on-site,” Chong explains.

He adds that there is one camera for every three parking bays, serving more than just the purpose of finding a car. It also doubles as an additional security feature in the car park and to provide a hassle-free experience when visiting the mall.

**Chong: IOI City Mall will continue to thrive and shine only when our tenants are doing well and our shoppers are happy**



“On top of that, more than half of our total security personnel are stationed in the car park and 10 entrances of the mall. They are placed there for security reasons, and at the same time to ensure smooth traffic flow, directing cars to the zone with more available car park bays,” he says.

#### Enhanced communication

Moving forward, in the third quarter of 2023, IOI City Mall will launch the revamped CLUB IOI app with a more user-friendly interface to provide a wholesome offline to online shopping experience.

One of the many highlights of the app is the flexible food delivery feature, where users can order food from different merchants in IOI City Mall under one delivery order.

“The idea came from how we could enhance the communication with tenants and help them generate higher income and widen their customer catchment. Of course they could engage third-party food delivery platforms [to do that] but most of them are mindful of the high commission charge. As IOI Properties already has an app, we realised that we could actually play the role, and offer an even more flexible feature such as ordering from different merchants under the same delivery bill, as well as pay the online ordering bill with points collected from shopping offline in IOI City Mall,” Chong notes.

He says it is a strategy of killing two birds with one stone — for one, it will help to enhance cus-

#### Quick facts

NAME	IOI City Mall
DEVELOPER	IOI Properties Group Bhd
DEVELOPMENT TYPE	Commercial
SIZE	57 acres
COMPLETION	IOI City Mall Phase 1 (ICM P1) — 2014; IOI City Mall Phase 2 (ICM P2) — 2021
STOREYS	Five levels of retail, one Sports Centre level and three levels of basement car park
AVERAGE OCCUPANCY RATE	97.8% for ICM P1; 85.6% for ICM P2
AVERAGE RENTAL RATE	Average RM11.30 psf for ICM P1; RM7.70 psf for ICM P2
NET LETTABLE AREA	2.5 million sq ft
GROSS FLOOR AREA	8.4 million sq ft
CAR PARK BAYS	14,072 and 164 (OKU) bays

#### AMENITIES

Taxi stand, bus terminal, ATM machines, police station

#### FACILITIES

Storage lockers, baby rooms, surau, escalators, lifts, wheelchairs, baby strollers and electric scooters

#### ENERGY-SAVING FEATURES

- Energy-efficient lighting
- Natural lighting and skylights by incorporating ample windows and skylights to allow natural light to penetrate the mall, reducing the need for artificial lighting during daylight hours and saving energy
- Motion sensors and timers
- Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems
- Renewable energy sources such as solar panels to generate clean energy on site and offset some of the energy consumption
- Energy management systems
- Efficient equipment and appliances
- Water conservation by implementing water-efficient fixtures
- Waste management and recycling
- Awareness and education by raising awareness among tenants, employees and visitors about energy-saving practices and encouraging everyone to participate in conservation efforts

#### INDOOR AIR QUALITY FEATURES

- Ventilation systems
- Air filtration
- HVAC maintenance
- Enforcing strict no-smoking policies
- Strict hazardous materials management to prevent the release of harmful substances into the indoor air of the mall

tomers loyalty from the wholesome offline to online experience. Second, it will help the tenants' business widen their customer coverage. Third, it will also increase tenants' income in general as the commission cost is much lower compared with other third-party platforms.

“We are investing in [the food delivery feature in the app] not for commission-earning purposes, but to help our tenants secure more business and create better income. Hence, the charge is minimal compared with third-party platforms. We truly understand that IOI City Mall will continue to thrive and shine only when our tenants are doing well and our shoppers are happy,” Chong concludes. **E**

**BELOW 10 YEARS**

Multiple-owned Strata Residential

**GOLD****The Estate**

# All hands on deck

BY **PRIYA DEVAN**  
 city.country@bizedge.com

**A**lthough it is located in the lively area of Kerinchi, next to Bangsar South, The Estate exudes a sense of calmness and serenity. Perhaps it is the contemporary, elegant façade and dark exterior or the perfectly landscaped recreational areas of the condominium development that does the trick.

“From the front, The Estate looks like the keyboard of a piano. The façade is dark grey, which everyone was initially sceptical about, as a dark colour would make the building very hot. However, over time, that has changed because the unique colour makes The Estate stand out among the other high-rises in the area, and it’s not as hot as they expected because the project’s design allows plenty of natural ventilation,” BON Estates Sdn Bhd CEO Chan Jin-Wy tells *City & Country* in an interview.

Occupying a 3.68-acre freehold tract in Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur, The Estate comprises 328 condo units across two 46-storey towers. The built-ups of the units range from 2,346 to 5,258 sq ft. The facilities include a gymnasium, yoga room, sky lounge, function room, games room, meeting rooms, a multipurpose hall, children’s playground, Jacuzzi and swimming pools.

The Estate was completed in May 2021 and handed over to the owners in August 2021. BON Estates appointed Henry Butcher Malaysia (Mont Kiara) Sdn Bhd (HBMK) as its property manager in February 2021.

The Estate can now add another accolade to its collection of awards, having been selected the Gold winner in the Below 10 Years Multiple — owned Strata Residential category of *The Edge Malaysia* Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023.

## Planning ahead

Chan says the developer started looking for a property manager even before The Estate was completed.

“We started discussing things casually at the end of 2020 and we spoke to many vendors. HBMK provided many good ideas by engaging and planning early, which helped us a lot because we were venturing into our maiden project. That experience and learning helped us strengthen the handover process,” he recalls, adding that HBMK’s partnership with The Estate started about seven months before the project’s vacant possession (VP).

HBMK managing director Low Hon Keong says that due to the increased awareness of property management, some developers prefer to engage with management companies before the VP.

“Many years ago, property management was often overlooked. In the past five years or so, there seems to have been an increased awareness of property management, as it affects a project’s value creation in the long run. For The Estate, the developer made the effort to set up meetings with us even before the VP to discuss maintenance and management plans,” Low adds.

HBMK associate director Jessie Koh Ching Nee elaborates, “We have provided input since the drafting of the by-laws, [which are the house rules of The Estate]. In terms of practicality, we have brought in the experience we gained from doing other developments and applied it to The Estate.

“We also advised on the renovation hours; sourcing of service providers, including security guards, cleaners and gardeners; setting up the



Sporting a piano-like façade, The Estate comprises two 46-storey condominium towers



Koh and Chan (third and fourth from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards’ chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, The Edge Media Group publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat and *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan

management office such as the furniture and layout of the office; creating the accounting system; and submitting the [required] Form 25 to the Commissioner of Buildings (COB) as part of the strata management requirement for common area defects rectification. The Strata Management Act 2013 is quite new, which is why we worked with them on this.

“We worked together on the budget and the four-month advance billing, where we advised the developer to collect a deposit from owners for utilities such as electricity and water.”

For The Estate’s long-term maintenance and upkeep, Low says the management team uses the planned preventive maintenance (PPM) method, which is common practice in most condominiums.

“It essentially became the sole guide and reference in maintaining the building. As The Estate has many common facilities, the PPM should be integrated into the work scope of technicians on site.

“The preventive measures are to ensure the assets and facilities are maintained in the long

PATRICK GOH/THE EDGE

PICTURES BY PATRICK GOH/THE EDGE



Residents get to enjoy the well-maintained swimming pool and lounge area



From left: HBMK building manager Yvette Saman, Koh, Low, Chan, BON Estates business development and asset management director Bernard Ng and accounts manager Low Sook Ling

run. Instead of corrective measures, we have preventive measures. As far as the maintenance of the facilities is concerned, we use PPM to schedule our weekly, monthly and yearly maintenance checklist.”

Every week, the management team checks on the development’s water features, swimming pool pump system as well as the common corridors’ staircase and lighting. Features that are checked monthly include the cold water pump system, pressure reducing valve, magnetic and door mechanism, main switchboard electrical equipment, Satellite Master Antenna Television system, surveillance system, access card system, lift system, fire fighting system, fire alarm panel system, bomba intercom system and generator set. The water tanks are checked once a year.

Low says, “With long-term preventive maintenance, we get to prolong the lifespan of the facilities and they will last longer than was initially expected. That would also help us save on the sinking fund and expenditure.”

### Cost-saving initiatives

The maintenance fee for The Estate is RM2.96 per share unit. Koh says the collection rate has been healthy and maintained at 99%. She adds that the development has been fully sold and the occupancy rate is currently 67.38% for both towers.

According to Chan, The Estate has been able to achieve a strong collection rate because it is mostly owner-occupied. “If you sell a residential development and it is mostly occupied, people tend to pay their maintenance fee.”

Meanwhile, Koh says that The Estate’s actual amount spent was slightly lower than what was budgeted in 2022. One of the reasons is due to the extra income from fixed deposit interest, facilities income and the sale of access cards.

The overall expenditure variance was underspent by 23%, the contractual operating expenditure was underspent by 15%, non-contractual operating expenditure was underspent by 57%, utility charges were underspent by 8% and administrative expenditure was underspent by 22%.

“From our previous budget, we saw that we could sustain the sinking fund for the next five years. So far, we have not used the sinking fund at all. This [shows] how important the selection of materials is for a development. For The Estate, it’s safe to say that over 80% of the materials used are of high quality, which makes them durable and long-lasting,” says Koh.

Chan concurs, saying: “The project team and shareholders themselves have contributed to choosing all the right materials. We even curated the landscape very carefully.

“We went back to the fundamentals of landscaping, that is, the selection of plants, which is very important in terms of maintenance. We can’t afford to have plants that need to be taken care of every single day. The plants that were chosen are also suitable for our tropical weather; so, they are easier to maintain and will live longer.”

Of the development’s energy-saving features, Chan says The Estate’s energy and cost-saving ideas came into play during the planning stage of the development. “The design of The Estate in this sense is that all the lighting features use LED lighting, abandoning the usage of conventional light bulbs.”

### Quick facts

NAME	The Estate
DEVELOPER	BON Estates Sdn Bhd
DEVELOPMENT TYPE	Residential
SIZE	3.68 acres
TENURE	Freehold
STOREYS	46
UNITS	328
BUILT-UP	2,346 to 5,258 sq ft
COMPLETION	2021
MAINTENANCE FEE	RM2.96 per share unit
OCCUPANCY RATE	67.38%
CAR PARK BAYS	1,389

#### FACILITIES

Function room-cum-badminton hall, swimming pool, wetland, sky lounge, children’s playground, changing room, meeting room, barbecue area, gymnasium, sauna, Jacuzzi, EV charging station, car wash area, yoga room, meditation room, steam room, games room, lounge room, nursery room, party rooms, prayer room, café

#### ENERGY-SAVING FEATURES

Alternate lighting, timer, LED lighting, rainwater harvesting system

#### INDOOR AIR QUALITY FEATURES

Nano scent diffuser

Koh explains, “LED lighting uses much less energy to provide the same amount of light. Using less energy translates into producing less heat. LED lighting also has a longer lifespan than traditional incandescent bulbs. As a result, the management is able to save a lot of money or cut down on electrical expenses.”

Another energy-saving initiative undertaken by HBMK is the use of timers in areas that are not commonly used by residents. “For example, in some areas that do not require lighting because there is enough natural light coming in, the lights are turned on only when it gets dark, from 7pm until the next morning,” says Koh.

Besides energy-saving features, The Estate optimises cost through its rainwater harvesting system, which collects rainwater and stores it in a tank to be used later for numerous purposes.

“At The Estate, the collected rainwater is primarily used by the gardeners for the landscape. Given the abundance of plants and other greenery, the water consumption is significant. So, it is important to have a rainwater harvesting system to support the condominium’s water usage,” says Koh.

In terms of challenges, he cites, for example, the defects liability period (DLP) for The Estate, which will expire in September this year.

“We are still under the DLP. Now may not be the right time to implement some of the energy-saving measures that we have planned because it could tamper with the system, causing the DLP to be null and void.

“That’s the limitation we have but we’re working on a comprehensive plan for things that can be implemented upon the expiry of the DLP. We’ve listed all the assets and equipment that can be upgraded right after it expires.”

### Value creation

As long as maintenance work is carried out to ensure that The Estate lasts a long time, the chances are high that the condo units will enjoy a higher resale value.

Chan says the units were sold around RM600 psf when the project was launched in 2017. Today, they are valued at more than RM900 psf. “That’s a capital appreciation of more than 50%. The current rental yield of 6% to 7% is usually seen in commercial properties. That is evidence of how maintenance can contribute to a property’s value creation. As long as we work to ensure the building and its features last a long time, we will be able to see the property prices rise.”

**10 YEARS AND ABOVE**  
 Non-strata Retail

**GOLD**
**Kluang Mall**

# A mall with a heart for the community

 BY **WONG KING WAI**  
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The town of Kluang in Johor is famous for its coffee and local cuisine. But it also boasts a shopping centre — Kluang Mall — that has enticed international brands like H&M, Uniqlo and Cotton On to open outlets in the second-tier town. This is something that Tenaga Nusantara Sdn Bhd CEO and executive director Tey Fui Kien is proud of. Tenaga Nusantara is the developer and mall manager of Kluang Mall.

For their efforts and keen attention to detail, the mall won Gold in the 10 Years and Above — Non-strata Retail category.

“We are incredibly humbled that we are able to win this award. More so, it is our first attempt ... This win is a form of testament and validation of what the team has gone through in the last 15 years; all the hard work they have put in to manage the mall, to make sure we contribute positively, not only to the growth of the mall but most importantly to the growth of the town,” says Tey.

“We are bringing in retailers that maybe in the past would never have considered Kluang. But now with Kluang Mall, they are making their presence in the town and we feel really grateful for this opportunity.

“Another thing I would like to share is, by winning this award, hopefully it will give a different perception of secondary towns. So we hope to bring a positive impact and get more retailers to come to Kluang, [get] more shoppers to visit secondary towns. And it all boils down to the hard work the team has put in through the years,” she adds.

Kluang Mall, the largest shopping centre in central Johor, is the first 100%-owned and purpose-built mall in Kluang. It sits on 6.5 acres of land and features five levels with a net lettable area of 360,468 sq ft. There are 138 retail lots with anchor tenants such as Pacific Hypermarkets and Department Store, GSC, H&M, Uniqlo, Popular Bookstore and Ampang SuperBowl. There are 930 car park bays.

## The secret to success

“Right now, we are happy to share that as of May, our occupancy is at 99.5%, which is definitely wonderful. We are also in the midst of planning for some enhancement and upgrading work, and we are constantly looking at how we can improve our tenant mix,” says Tey.

The secret to the team’s success seems to stem from data collected from exit surveys, which helped align the mall’s offerings with the community’s needs.

“The first exit survey was done in 2013, the second one in 2016 and we recently completed the third one this year (in March). We are in the midst of analysing the data, so hopefully in July, we can share [the results] with our targeted retailers and tenants. And it will be interesting to see how things have changed, more so post-Covid ... and what happens now, moving forward,” explains Tey.

She shares that they are looking to include more retail categories, including the Muslimah sector and those catering to a younger market. More F&B offerings are also being looked into, she adds.

**Kluang Mall is the largest shopping centre in central Johor and the first 100%-owned and purpose-built mall in Kluang**



**The team that serves the community at the mall**



**GSC brings the latest movies to the community**

## Sustainability and comfort

Effort has also been put into creating a sustainable yet comfortable mall. To reduce energy consumption, LED lights have been installed, reducing its electricity bill substantially by 54%; the parking system is now cashless and ticketless; and, most recently, the air-conditioning system has been upgraded.

“What we did was look at the air conditioner’s chiller operations and we have upgraded it to a system where it is controlled by an automated panel that can regulate the temperature to find a balance between ensuring shopper comfort and reducing utility costs,” Tey explains.

She adds that enhancement work on the mall

PICTURES BY KLUANG MALL



The senior management ... (Seated, from left) Wong Pak Hong, Rafiz Azwan, Tey Fui Kien, Rafiq Rajak and Suhaimi Abdullah. (Standing, from left) Hoe Jien Haw, Salehuddin Ibrahim, Samuel Chong, Cheryl Ham and Vino Wong



MOHD IZWAN MOHD NAZAM/THE EDGE

**Quick facts**

NAME	Kluang Mall
DEVELOPER	Tenaga Nusantara Sdn Bhd
DEVELOPMENT TYPE	Commercial
SIZE	6 acres
TENURE	Leasehold
STOREYS	Five, including lower ground and rooftop
COMMENCEMENT OF OPERATIONS	2008
TENANTS	130 (May 2023)
AVERAGE OCCUPANCY RATE	99% (May 2023)
NET LETTABLE AREA	360,498 sq ft
GROSS FLOOR AREA	808,240 sq ft
CAR PARK BAYS	930

**FACILITIES**  
Information and customer service counter, restrooms and disabled-friendly restroom, WiFi, wheelchair service, baby room, first-aid care room, surau, ATMs, handicapped parking, cashless car park, recycling facilities, helmet lockers and Kluang Mall app

**SECURITY FEATURES**  
CCTV with artificial intelligence and intrusion detection, car park, security patrol and escort, fire alarm and smoke detector system, fire fighting and prevention system, and emergency response team

**ENERGY-SAVING FEATURES**  
LED lighting, ventilated car park, ACMV Energy Saving Programme (in progress), indoor air quality features, UVGI lighting in air handling units, CO2 and humidity monitoring



will be executed in 2024-25. The enhancements will include having more universal design elements that cater to customers of all ages and abilities. "We are still in the midst of planning but we want to make the mall more accessible for people from different walks of life and with different abilities. At the end of the day, the heart of what we do is serving the community. So, how do we create memorable and enjoyable experiences for all the families in Kluang?"

Also in the pipeline is a new interactive space for children and their families. "Preliminary results from the recent Exit Survey 2023, in which 1,499 shoppers were interviewed, reveal that the playground is the most desired new amenity. We are looking at an inclusive play space that offers a variety of physical and sensory experiences aimed

Tenaga Nusantara Sdn Bhd executive director **Vino Wong and Tey** (third and fourth from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief **Kathy Fong**, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards' chief judge **Au Foong Yee**, Minister of Local Government Development **Nga Kor Ming**, *The Edge Media Group* publisher and group CEO **Datuk Ho Kay Tat** and *City & Country* editor **E Jacqui Chan**

(Above) The modern and spacious mall is over 99% occupied. There are numerous F&B outlets catering to the public and more are being planned.

at creating memorable moments for children of all ages and abilities. We are in discussions with potential vendors and hope to finalise a design that will be implemented next year. We are targeting up to 4,000 sq ft for this project, subject to planning and authority approval. We hope to open this space in 2024," says Tey.

**Serving the community**

Community is important to Tey and the team, hence running the mall is not only to earn revenue but also to serve the people of Kluang. "Ultimately, whatever we do, we need to benefit the community. We truly want to be a mall that blesses the community and we want to continue to have the heart to do what we do, to lead with truth, competence and care. These values are very important to us," she says.

As the interview draws to a close, Tey expresses thanks to the judges and also to the awards' evaluation process. She explains that it has helped them see a different perspective on managing the mall.

"We are very thankful for the entire (award) process because it helped us relook at our SOPs. It is like a mini-audit. So these are the things that we have; how do we make it better? What are the areas we can improve on? If not (for the process), we would have just gone on with the status quo.

"So, with the opportunity to submit for this award, we looked at areas to fine-tune or [do] some housekeeping, and [it] continues to motivate us to do better," she says.

THE EDGE MALAYSIA-ILAM SUSTAINABLE  
 LANDSCAPE AWARDS 2023 – Landscape Planning

GOLD

KotaSAS (Precinct 1 - Precinct 7)



## Creating a legacy from humble beginnings

 BY **WONG KING WAI**  
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**K**ota Sultan Ahmad Shah, or KotaSAS, is located to the northwest of Kuantan town and is close to Istana Abdul Aziz. The 2,165-acre township, which is about 30% developed, was previously an oil palm estate for 25 years and had been ready for replanting. However, it was then earmarked for development, which kick-started in 2010.

Developed by KotaSAS Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of Tanah Makmur Bhd, it has delivered 2,800 homes and the township has a population of 15,000, according to Tanah Makmur group CEO Datuk Shahrul Nizam Abdul Aziz.

“Tanah Makmur is the only company with a large tract of land in Kuantan. So we decided to have a proper master plan for this development. And with the help of the Pahang government, we actually plan that one day, KotaSAS will be the new township of Kuantan,” he says.

Shahrul explains that as only one type of crop was planted on the land, it depleted the nutrients in the soil, requiring a collaborative and concerted effort to rehabilitate and transform the land into what it is today. As there are still more parcels to be developed, he estimates that it will take another 10 to 15 years for the township to be completed.

For its efforts in rehabilitating the soil as well as reusing and recycling the elements of the land and its landscape, KotaSAS (Precinct 1 to Precinct 7) won Gold under the Landscape Planning category of *The Edge Malaysia-ILAM Sustainable Landscape Awards*, a feature of *The Edge Malaysia Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023*.

Recognising the challenges of the land, Shahrul explains, “Initially, people were a bit sceptical. Who would want to move and live on an ex-oil palm plantation? So we strategised, with the help of [boutique design consultancy] Pentago, on how we could bring in the population and how we



MOHD IZWAN MOHD NAZAM/THE EDGE

**KotaSAS JV partner Wawasan Intact Properties (Pahang) Sdn Bhd director Datuk Ng Choon Cheng and Shahrul (third and fourth from left) with (from left) The Edge Malaysia editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, The Edge Malaysia editor emeritus and the awards' chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, The Edge Media Group publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat and City & Country editor E Jacqui Chan**

could transform a former oil palm estate into a new township where people could play, live and work at the same time.

“And, of course, in designing the entire landscape for KotaSAS, we were mindful of the sustainability as well as the ESG (environmental, social and governance) elements that were mandatory [to follow]. We wanted to make sure that the population and development could co-exist with the existing flora and fauna, and also the sustainability of the water source and its flow.”

### Tackling the soil issue

Pentago managing director Greg Dall and principal director Wendy Khaw were brought in to help with the landscaping of KotaSAS. Pentago was founded over 30 years ago and offers services in the disciplines of architecture, master planning and landscape.

Khaw recalls how, at the beginning, when Pentago was first brought in, the land offered so much potential but the soil issue had to be tackled first. “The first thing we did was a lot of soil tests. Every

area, whether it was the lake area or the hilly regions, we soil tested the site. We also looked at what other vegetation other than oil palm had flourished there. Some of the areas have mature trees as well. We’ve kept every mature tree and you can see them along the paths.”

She explains that understanding the nature of the site is critical to ensuring that they know what they are working with and to trying to match the client’s intent and vision.

“So once we did that (soil testing), we understood what we could do and what we couldn’t do. That is important because we didn’t want to do trial and error — [that is,] throw everything in and see what survives,” says Khaw.

One of the key areas that has greatly benefited from the attention to detail in terms of the landscape is the food and beverage commercial area called TASEK. Located next to a lake, TASEK has 70,000 sq ft of space with 19 retail shops and 10 food court stalls that serve a variety of food and beverages crafted to the local tastes, and there are other retailers like Pizza Hut, Family Mart and Secret Recipe, Shahrul explains. There is also an outdoor area that is used for various activities such as festive celebrations like Hari Raya and Chinese New Year, as well as other community-building activities.

What is special about this place is that the lake is actually a retention pond but has been beautifully landscaped, says Khaw. It also has an engineered shallow shoreline, making it safe even if someone were to accidentally fall in, she adds.

With the soil issue resolved and the planting and rehabilitation continuing in stages, the focus then shifted to hardscape designs, especially at the two entrances into KotaSAS.

### Encouraging placemaking

At the main entrance of KotaSAS are sculptures made from rocks that were unearthed during the development of the township. They are used as indicators of the legacy and heritage of the area.

PICTURES BY TANAH MAKMUR



An aerial shot of part of KotaSAS, showing how the township has grown since 2010



Residents can enjoy the outdoors at the lake, which has a rehabilitated shoreline



Above: What was once an oil palm estate has been transformed into a liveable and green space

Left: TASEK, the main F&B area of KotaSAS, has an open area for festive celebrations, community building activities, and for the public and residents to mingle



SAM FONG/THE EDGE

From left: Dall, Khaw and Shahrul, who worked closely together in designing and planning KotaSAS

“At the moment, there are two entrances into KotaSAS. One is the main entrance, which is through Jalan Bukit Istana, which is very close to Istana Abdul Aziz, where the Sultan of Pahang resides. Another entrance [is called] the West Entrance.

“As you come in, you will be greeted first by a lake on the right and a properly manicured landscape in the middle. The road is wide and you would see rows of palm trees on the left and right sides of the roads, as well as the hardscape that is made from rocks,” says Shahrul.

He adds that, on the advice of Pentago, a 6km jogging track was built in the developed portion of KotaSAS. It is equipped with security measures such as a panic button and closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras every 200m. The CCTV feed is linked to the auxiliary police control room. Moreover, the area is brightly lit for all to use in comfort and safety.

Dall, who helped with the hardscape and master planning, shares that the hardscape elements “really make a statement, are very instagrammable and encourage placemaking.”

He believes placemaking is critical in order to have a vibrant and meaningful place for people to gather and grow. Dall relates how a shareholder director had been happy to see families mingle and have fun at festive events around TASEK.

“It is so good that we get this feedback because



then they (the shareholders) get excited and realise that this is not about money, not about profit. This is about creating a living city for families,” says Dall.

Khaw concurs and adds, “We also have to be realistic and work with the client on where to spend the money. It is very important to understand, especially in [the] landscape [industry], how you manage your budgets and where to spend the money that will make the best impact. There is no point in bringing in large plant material when the soil hasn’t been treated and it is not going to grow well. I would rather use smaller plant material, treat the soil, make sure the soil can support it and let it flourish.”

To date, about RM20 million has been spent on the landscape transformation in the township. On a monthly basis, RM60,000 is spent on the maintenance of the lush landscape that everyone enjoys.

### The new administrative centre

KotaSAS is expected to further expand in the years ahead, owing to several key milestones. First is the completion of the Pusat Pertadbiran Sultan Ahmad Shah building by year’s end which will see over a thousand civil servants working in the township. This, Shahrul highlights, will be a catalyst for the growth of the area.

Moreover, the East Coast Rail Link will have a

station, currently called KotaSAS Central, in the township. “We are lucky that KotaSAS has been chosen to have the only station in Kuantan,” says Shahrul.

He reveals that since four years ago, the developer has been actively marketing its products as well as being innovative in its design, including revamping its construction methods using Industrialised Building System, which allows houses to be completed in eight to 15 months. This is also in line with the developer’s ESG commitments to reduce waste and dependency on foreign labour.

In terms of the near-term plans within KotaSAS, Shahrul reveals that the developer will be launching 777 residential units and 126 two-storey shophots.

“This township will be witnessing the [opening of the] first new cancer hospital on the East Coast which will soon be supported by a hotel and serviced apartments. Other than that, we are in discussion with interested parties to open a university,” he adds.

Having a clear vision and the desire to create something despite challenging circumstances has resulted in a new township that is rapidly expanding. There are even plans to acquire more land for future expansion. Regardless of how big KotaSAS becomes, its desire to create a green and sustainable township that caters to all will never dim. ■

**THE EDGE MALAYSIA-ILAM SUSTAINABLE  
 LANDSCAPE AWARDS 2023** – Landscape Planning
**GOLD****Setia Bayuemas Lake Park**

# Placemaking for the larger community



Setia Bayuemas Lake Park is a 10.25-acre public park. The former retention pond has been transformed into a vibrant community space.

BY **WONG KING WAI**  
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The slight whiff of the sea breeze made me think for a moment that I was at the beach, but this was not the case, as I was in Setia Bayuemas Lake Park. This 10.25-acre park is situated in the ongoing development of Setia Bayuemas, a 545-acre freehold mixed-development in Southern Klang.

This centrepiece of Setia Bayuemas is a community park that allows residents to enjoy the outdoors and learn about the plants in the park. A careful study was done to rehabilitate the land surrounding the lake and ensure that the right plants were brought in.

These efforts have impressed the judges, who named the park the Gold winner in the Landscape Planning category of *The Edge Malaysia-ILAM Sustainable Landscape Awards*, a feature of *The Edge Malaysia Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023*.

“For us at Setia Bayuemas, it is an achievement. It has put us up there in acknowledgement of what we have pushed for and achieved so far,” says S P Setia Bhd senior executive vice-president Datuk Yuslina Mohd Yunus.

“We have [also] turned a retention pond into what you see right now. Three years ago, you would not have seen what you see today. This park is something that we believe we have contributed to the community in this area.”

## A place for nature and outdoor activities

Yuslina explains that the park was built for placemaking, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic, when people started to appreciate their health, nature and being out of the house more.

S P Setia divisional general manager Razly

Mohammad Rus concurs: “Five years back, this area was a bit sleepy and needed a boost. So, this park is not only a place for communal gathering but also for placemaking. It also offers the community a place that can be used as a recreational centre.

“This is also a multi-purpose park, where we aim to educate the community about the importance of nature and sustainability. This park also enhances the economic and property values of the area.”

## Respecting the land

Coming up with the idea for a park that would draw people was the first step. Actualising it was the next, and that came with several challenges. S P Setia senior manager landscape of Setia Bayuemas Mohd Nizam Duaji explains: “We engaged an ecologist because the area has been there for quite some time. So, we needed to study what was happening and what existed in the area. We didn’t want to destroy everything during the construction of the park. We took into account all the input from the ecologist; then, along with the landscape architect, we planned from there.

“Whatever we place in the park is according to the ecological point of view. That is why we have developed certain areas as a fish hatchery, where we breed the fish before we release them into the lake. We also placed a tree trunk in the lake for migratory birds to rest,” he says, adding that the lake was originally filled with water plants, which didn’t allow much space for fish to breed.

Razly chimes in, saying: “Before we started, we did an inventory of the existing flora and fauna with the help of the ecologist.”

Nizam says a study of the quality of water

CONTINUES ON PAGE 44

MOHD IZWAN MOHD NAZAM/THE EDGE



Yuslina and S P Setia chief operating officer Datuk Zaini Yusoff (third and fourth from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards’ chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, *The Edge Media Group* publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat and *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan

PICTURES BY S P SETIA



With the placemaking park, S P Setia believes it has achieved its objective of encouraging people to go out and enjoy the outdoors



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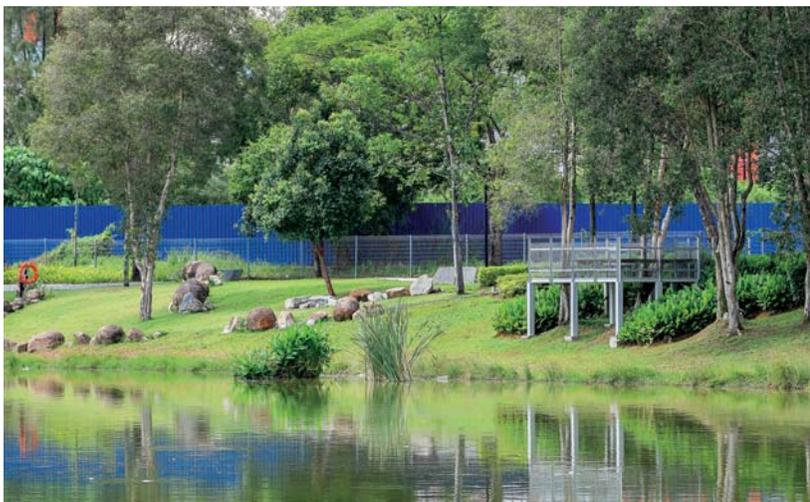
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PICTURES BY SHAHRILL BASRI/ THE EDGE



The fountain operates only at certain times of the day, saving on energy while aerating the lake



The Melaleuca Deck provides a comfortable spot for visitors to enjoy views of the lake and fountain as well as the breeze



Birds are common visitors to the lake area, and the abundance of dragonflies indicates that the water quality of the lake is good



For safety purposes, lifebuoys are placed strategically around the lake

## Striking a balance between nature and community living

### FROM PAGE 42

showed that it had a unique quality that meant only certain types of fish species could survive in it. It was a mix of saltwater and freshwater, or brackish water, and it also reduced the breeding of mosquitoes.

Razly says baseline data from the study allows the developer to monitor the growth and progress of the park's biodiversity.

Asked about their favourite spot in the park, Yuslina says: "It's the walkout spot called Melaleuca Deck because you can enjoy both the fountain and the breeze there. You get the breeze only in certain spots along the lake."

(From left) Razly, Yuslina and Nizam are proud of how all the hard work to transform the park has borne fruit



Razly chooses the same spot as well, from which one can take in the view and enjoy the ambience with the breeze and shade.

Nizam says, "I like the area towards the end of the park where there is a shelter. You can view the full perspective of the park from there, which is the nearest point to the fountain. The area has special meaning for me because we managed to turn an unsightly area into one where people love to sit and relax."

### Secure and safe space

As this is a public space, ensuring residents feel secure and safe is paramount. Razly says: "We realised that this was a huge lake and posed certain issues with regard to safety. That is why we have lifebuoys at a few spots around the park in case of any untoward incidents. We are also aware that, because it is open to the public, there is an issue of security as well. So, we erected perimeter fencing around the park and provided security guards as well."

Yuslina says that as more houses are built in the area and more people move in, the developer will add more lights to the park, which is open from 7am to 7pm, so that it will be even safer to use and be open for a longer period of time.

She says, "One of the challenges is striking a balance so that nature is not disturbed and we don't have to spend so much maintaining it."

For now, SP Setia is paying for the maintenance of the park but when it is time to hand it over to the authorities, Yuslina says, it will be easy for them to maintain, as much thought has been put into the park to ensure it is practical and functional. Nizam is in close contact with the authorities to ensure they are able to continue with the maintenance of the park.

Says Nizam, "We practise sustainable landscape maintenance. For example, we did not throw away all the cut branches and grass clippings. The main-



The developer has installed tags identifying the plants and trees in the park

tenance contractor collects everything and turns it into compost. So, we save costs in transporting the landscape waste."

Razly adds: "One of the sustainable features in maintaining the park, which we will convey to MPK (Majlis Perbandaran Klang), is that we use water from the lake to water the plants. Also, the water quality has improved because of the aeration that we have done, so it can be used to water the plants."

Setia Bayuemas Lake Park has come a long way from when it was just a retention pond. It has been transformed into a vibrant and engaged space today, which goes to show that working with nature results in a win for everyone.



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10 YEARS AND ABOVE  
Multiple-owned Strata Office

SILVER

## Oval Damansara

HBMK



The 34-storey Oval Damansara comprises a six-floor podium block, 27-storey office tower and basement parking

 BY PRIYA DEVAN  
city.country@bizedge.com

# Turning things around

Oval Damansara is a unique building, thanks to its oval-shaped structure and façade, which is fully decked out in aqua-coloured glass cladding. “The glass is quite a challenge to clean and it does cost a lot; so, we usually clean it once every two years. But it’s an added advantage to the building, as it provides a good amount of natural lighting into the offices,” its building manager Yeap Soon Hong tells *City & Country*.

Yeap was assigned as the building manager by the Management Corporation (MC) and takes instruction from the appointed property management company, Henry Butcher Malaysia (Mont Kiara) Sdn Bhd (HBMK).

Completed in 2012, the 33-storey building has a six-floor podium block and a 27-floor office tower. Oval Damansara boasts 311 offices and retail lots that have built-ups ranging from 249 to 6,202 sq ft. There is an additional basement floor with 763 car park bays.

Situated along Sprint Highway in Taman Tun Dr Ismail (TTDI), Oval Damansara is near SS2 and Damansara Utama and easily accessible from other parts of Selangor as well as Kuala Lumpur.

The current occupancy rate of the building is about 90%, with 89% occupied by locally owned companies and the remaining space by internationally owned companies. HBMK was appointed property manager of Oval Damansara in 2020. The assigned onsite team is led by HBMK operations director (commercial properties) Lee Choon Hoe.

Oval Damansara is the Silver winner in the 10 Years and Above — Multiple-owned Strata Office category in *The Edge Malaysia Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023*.

## A sombre past

“When the developer handed the building over to the owners, it had a property management company appointed by the developer. Owing to



MOHD IZWAN MOHD NAZAM/THE EDGE

MC committee member Johnny Khor and Lee (third and fourth from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards’ chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, *The Edge Media Group* publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat and *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan

poor service, the joint management body decided to take a bold step to manage the building themselves by employing their own building management staff,” says Yeap.

“The word ‘maintenance’ does not really cover the work that the building has undergone. When the building was handed over by the developer, the car park required upgrading, and the back route to the loading bay was only grass. The committee worked to modify and repair whatever that was necessary.

“When the building began to age, which caused management issues to become more complex, we decided to appoint a professional property management firm,” says Yeap, adding that that is how HBMK came into the picture on March 15, 2020, just three days before the pandemic lockdown.

Account manager Low Sook Ling says that, after HBMK officially took over Oval Damansara’s

management in August 2020, it discovered that the building did not have a property management system. “The system was unable to generate receipts for multiple transactions and there were no receipt numbers for some of the receipts generated. We also found that there were RM125,000 in unidentified banked-in funds in the account, so we had to check each one.

“Also, the bank reconciliation [statements] were not up-to-date, by one or two years. So, they had to engage a third-party accountant to do it on a yearly basis. Basically, we had to reconcile all of their past accounts,” Low says.

HBMK then used a new and improved accounting software tailored for strata property management, she adds.

## Upgrades made

At Oval Damansara, planned preventive maintenance is regularly carried out on both the services provided and the mechanical and engineering (M&E) systems in the building.

Lee says there are two checklists for internal maintenance: one for plumbing and the other for electricity. Checklists are also supplied to service providers for the three main categories — lifts, chargemen and the firefighting system.

In addition, in-house technicians monitor service providers when they carry out routine maintenance and servicing tasks. Lee says, “If the service provider’s performance is deemed to be subpar, management will get in touch with them and discuss how to proceed in order to enhance their performance.”

He says the team had to replace the fire extinguishers, as it had already been 10 years.

“We’re also working on repainting to give the interiors a new look. We are in the

CONTINUES ON PAGE 48



# Menara I Sentrum

## A Towering Icon of Distinction and Prestige

Rising with grace and majesty, Menara I Sentrum dominates the skyline, symbolizing the pinnacle of corporate success and visionary design. Its sleek façade and meticulous craftsmanship make a striking statement, capturing the essence of modern sophistication.

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# Prioritising financial sustainability

**FROM PAGE 46**

midst of getting approval for cleaning the façade, which involves all the glass cladding.”

Other long-term maintenance plans include waterproofing parts of the building from the water sprinklers, polishing the marble and granite flooring, upgrading the landscape and resurfacing the road at the entrance of the building.

The building has 20 lifts, which is a plus and minus, says Yeap. “We have two types of lifts: low-rise ones, which serve the podium levels; and high-rise ones, which serve the office tower. We do have long-term plans to maintain them, as we have a yearly contract with KONE, an elevator company from Finland. They have been maintaining our lifts ever since the building was completed; we’ve never had any major issues so far.”

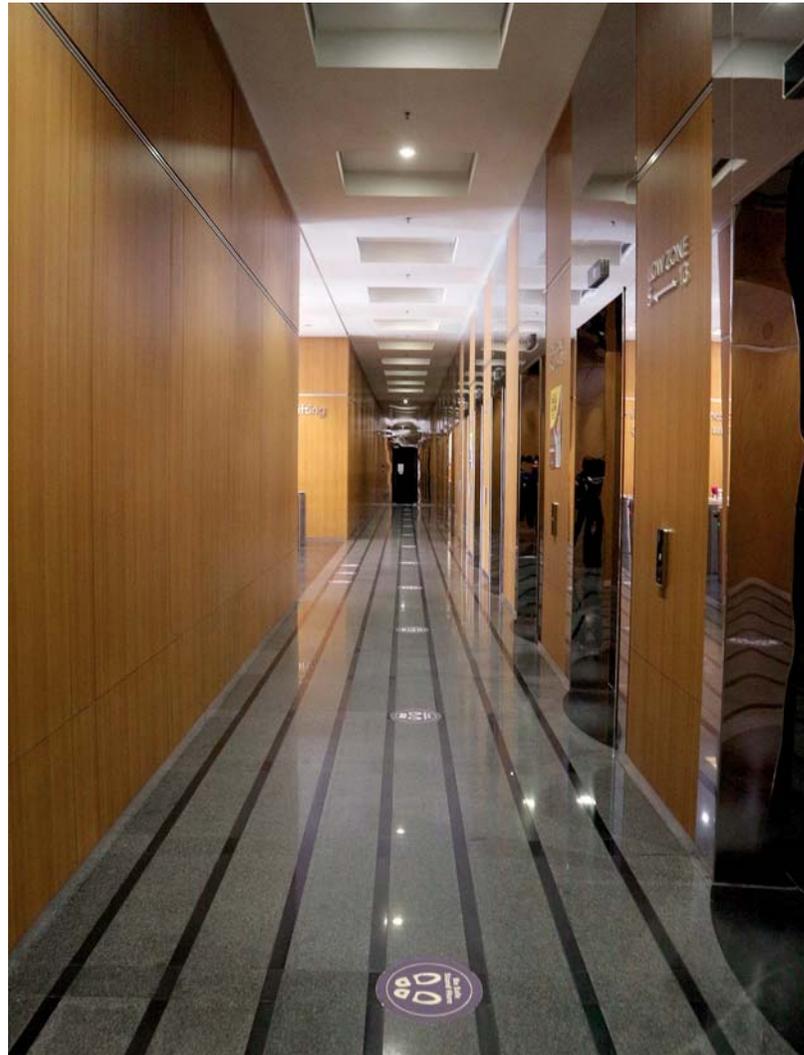
To solve the lack of parking space in the building, the management came up with a free shuttle service called the OtterBus. According to Yeap, the OtterBus, which operates from 8am to 7pm, has five pick-up points and stops: Oval Damansara; TTDI MRT station; 3 Damansara shopping centre; Glo Damansara Mall; and Wisma TA in Damansara Kim.

**Cost optimisation**

The maintenance fee at Oval Damansara is RM3.45 per share unit. According to Yeap, as at November 2022, the collection rate was 95%, and a month later, it was 89%. The average collection rate was 98% for the whole year.

He says: “Of the total due, 90% were below three months, 8% were between three and six months, and 2% were below six months. The collection was kept at a very healthy level.”

There has also been no maintenance fee increment since 2014, Yeap says. “We were able to keep the maintenance fee at the same level because of three main factors; prudent financial management in terms of spending and earning; constant attention to maintenance so that there was no major damage; and having committees and tenants that have a high sense of responsibility in terms of using the facilities with care,” Yeap says, adding that he expects the maintenance fee



There are 20 lifts in the building

to remain the same for the next couple of years.

Low concurs, saying; “In the past years, we always had a surplus but, recently, the increases in minimum wage and electricity tariffs have slowly eaten up our accumulated funds. From our analysis, our current surplus can last for up to 10 years at most.

“The budget, as compared with the actual spend for Oval Damansara, was kept at a minimal variance, whereby the extra income was coming

**Quick facts**

<b>NAME</b>	Oval Damansara
<b>DEVELOPER</b>	Palmgold Resources Sdn Bhd
<b>DEVELOPMENT TYPE</b>	Office
<b>TENURE</b>	Freehold
<b>STOREYS</b>	33
<b>BUILT-UP</b>	249 to 6,202 sq ft
<b>COMPLETION</b>	2012
<b>MAINTENANCE FEE</b>	RM3.45 per share unit
<b>AVERAGE OCCUPANCY RATE</b>	90%
<b>NET LETTABLE AREA</b>	512,412 sq ft
<b>GROSS FLOOR AREA</b>	704,231 sq ft
<b>CAR PARK BAYS</b>	763

**AMENITIES**  
Free bus shuttle service to and from the TTDI MRT station

**FACILITIES**  
Food court

**ENERGY-SAVING FEATURES**  
Energy-saving LED light bulbs and tubes for common areas, timer-controlled air-conditioning and outdoor signages as well as manually controlled energy savings system for lifts after office hours, weekends and public holidays

**INDOOR AIR QUALITY FEATURES**  
Air-conditioning with built-in auto ventilation

from fixed deposit interest, sale of access cards, visitor parking and lobby rental.”

Overall expenditure variance, Low says, was underspent by 9%, contractual operating expenditure was overspent by 2%, non-contractual operating expenditure was overspent by 41%, utility charges were underspent by 3% and administrative expenditure was underspent by 13%.

As part of its cost and energy-saving features, some of the facilities’ conventional induction lights have been upgraded to LED lights.

“The lights have been gradually changed since 2016. This was an initiative started by the previous management. The change led to a reduction in electricity costs in the long run. Costs saved are about RM 10,000 per year. There is also a reduction in the cost of ballasts and bulbs at roughly RM2,000 per year,” Lee says.

In addition, all air-conditioning and lighting in Oval Damansara are on a set timer system and centralised. The management team is looking to equip the building with solar panels in the near future, which Low estimates would cost RM200,000 to RM300,000.

In terms of psf value, Oval Damansara witnessed a downward trend, which Yeap says was caused by the after-effects of the pandemic.

“It’s no surprise that the office building sector, or non-Grade-A office buildings, are not doing very well at the moment. In 2019, the average psf value of a unit with built-ups from 1,500 to 1,600 sq ft at Oval Damansara was RM600 psf. In 4Q2022, the average price for the same sizes dropped to RM443 psf,” he adds.

There are signs of recovery, however, as yields and rental rates are returning to pre-pandemic levels, says Yeap. “From the lowest rental yield of 4.6% in 2Q2022, Oval Damansara had a yield of about 5.6% in 1Q2023. For a 1,560 sq ft unit, the average rental rate was RM4,000 per month. Now, we’re seeing the trend moving towards pre-pandemic rates.”



(Standing, from left) HBMK senior area manager Katherine Yong and Low. (Seated, from left) Lee, Yeap and HBMK account executive Norzaki Zainal



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**BELOW 10 YEARS**

Single-owned Office in a Mixed Strata Development

**SILVER****Menara 1 Sentrum**

# Only the best for its tenants



Only two tenants of Menara 1 Sentrum — a purpose-built, Grade-A commercial office building located within the KL Sentral CBD — have moved out in the past five years

BY **RACHEL CHEW**  
 city.country@bizedge.com

**T**he Malaysian office property market is undergoing a challenging period. Not only is there more incoming supply while the absorption rate remains slow amid the market recovery from the pandemic, but shifting market behaviour and office space preferences have also put pressure on many building owners in town.

Nonetheless, Pelaburan Hartanah Bhd (PHB), owner of Menara 1 Sentrum in Kuala Lumpur, seems unperturbed as rental and occupancy rates for the building rose organically throughout the pandemic.

“We were affected by the pandemic like everyone else, but we are grateful that the impact on Menara 1 Sentrum has not been as severe for us. In the past five years, we have only had two tenants move out due to business rationalisation. Other than that, our occupancy rate actually improved to 97% currently from 87% in 2020,” PHB group managing director and CEO Mohamad Damshal Awang Damit tells *City & Country*.

Menara 1 Sentrum won Silver in the Below 10 Years — Single-owned Office in a Mixed Strata Development category for *The Edge Malaysia Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023*.

Menara 1 Sentrum is a purpose-built, Grade-A commercial office building located within the KL Sentral central business district on the pivotal point along Jalan Tun Sambanthan. The building is connected to NU Sentral Shopping Mall and KL

Sentral Station with multiple connectivity options, such as MRT and LRT access, KL Monorail and KLIA Express.

Completed in 2013, Menara 1 Sentrum boasts a net floor area of approximately 425,000 sq ft and a large floor plate of column-free office space with built-ups ranging from 16,000 to 18,000 sq ft. The office floors start from Levels 6 to 31, while Levels 1 to 5 make up the mall. There are also four levels of basement parking. The office component is divided into low and high zones, offering common facilities such as a sky lounge lobby on Level 6, 24-hour security, a programmable destination cased pro-logic lift system and an integrated smart card access system.

“The building is slightly under 10 years old, but we take pride in its fairly well-maintained condition. [Therefore,] we didn’t have much upgrading work in the past. However, as some of the fixtures and facilities are at the end of their lifespan after 10 years, we foresee there will be more upgrading projects, for which we’ve already planned in terms of execution and budget allocation,” Mohamad Damshal shares.

He adds that with the assistance of the appointed building management company — Knight Frank Property Management Sdn Bhd (KFPM) — Menara 1 Sentrum is maintained under a planned operating expense budget and always has a five-year capital expenditure budget plan.

Established in 2016, KFPM currently manages a portfolio of office, retail and residential properties in excess of 32 million sq ft of net lettable area across Malaysia. Although it only took over the building



KFPM managing director Kuruvilla Abraham and Mohamad Damshal (third and fourth from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards’ chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, *The Edge Media Group* publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat and *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan

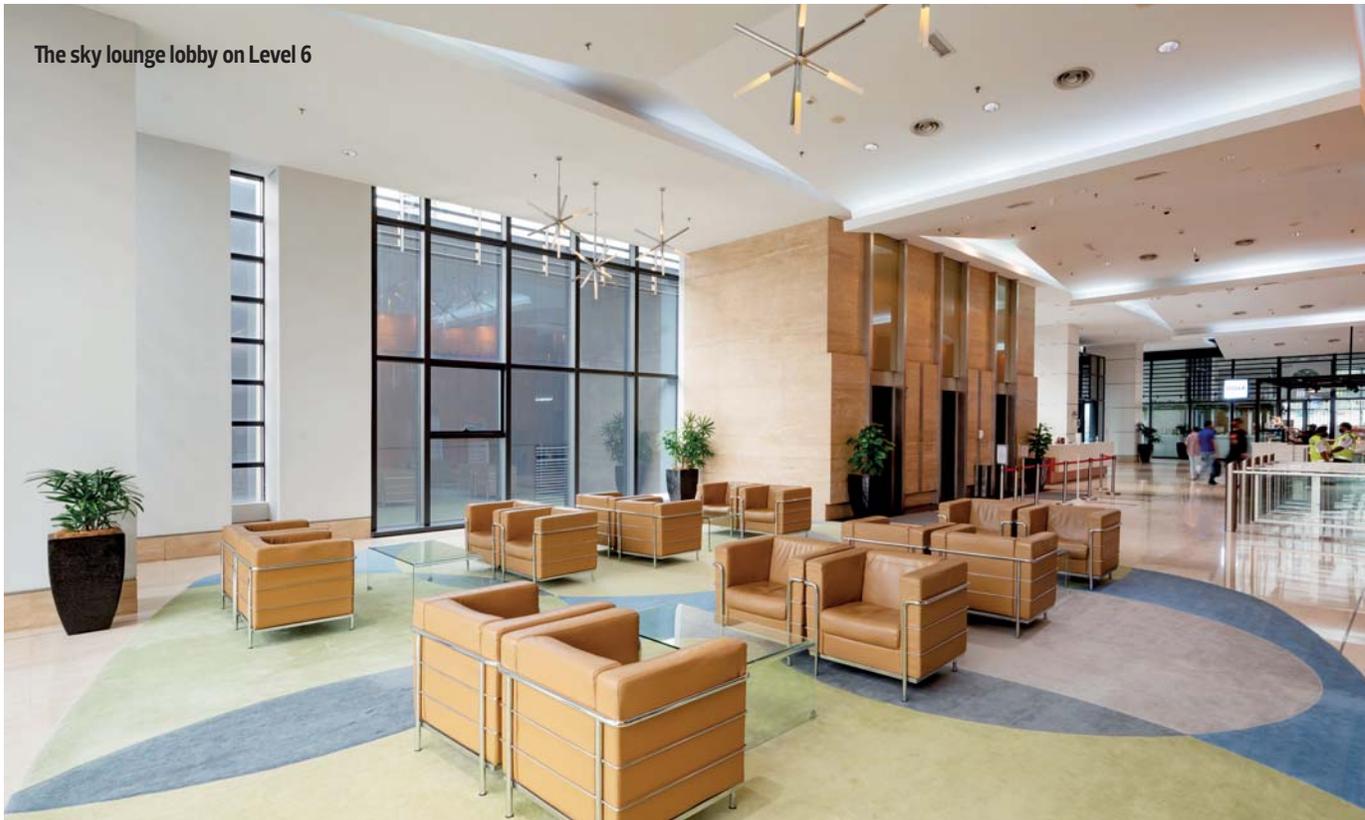
management role for Menara 1 Sentrum in 2020, PHB is satisfied with its high standard of services, good industry experience and well-established, professional management system.

“Many of our tenants are MNCs [multinational corporations], which expect an international standard of building management service. This is also why, when we were selecting our building manager, we benchmarked our criteria against the international standard,” Mohamad Damshal explains. “We believe quality speaks for itself; only a

PATRICK GOH/THE EDGE

PICTURES BY PHB

The sky lounge lobby on Level 6



SHAHRIN YAHYA/THE EDGE



**Mohamad Damshal: Though Menara 1 Sentrum is not the latest, newest offering in the market, we take pride in it. What's more important to us are the satisfaction level of our tenants and management quality.**



**Menara 1 Sentrum offers a large floor plate of column-free office space**

well-managed building will attract quality tenants and continue to win their loyalty. This is evident from our list of MNC tenants, some of whom have been with us for many years and keep expanding their space here in Menara 1 Sentrum."

### 'Happy problem'

Though he declines to disclose the key MNC tenant in Menara 1 Sentrum due to security concerns and a non-disclosure agreement between the building owner and its tenants, Mohamad Damshal shares that office space in the building has always been in high demand and that some potential tenants have waited months to secure a lease.

Apart from the strategic location, Mohamad Damshal attributes the "happy problem" to the overall package of the building: tight security; Malaysia Digital status (formerly known as MSC status); in accordance with Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design standards and Malaysia Green Building Index requirements; practical layout; and tip-top property management service.

"It is never an easy task to upkeep a building. Aside from the day-to-day building maintenance, tenants count on immediate action or measures when the unexpected happens," Mohamad Damshal notes.

For example, during the Covid-19 outbreak, PHB reacted quickly to further improve ventilation and indoor air quality to mitigate airborne transmission of the virus and other diseases within the building. In addition to adopting guidelines

issued by the Ministry of Health, KFPM also went the extra mile to ensure the hygiene and safety of all building occupants, such as by installing air ionisers in common areas and scheduling maintenance and servicing of the air-conditioning and mechanical ventilation system.

The heart of this operation, which comes from the building control system, has also been closely monitored, especially the CO2 level in the air handling unit and fresh air intake reading. KFPM ensures the data is properly recorded and the settings of each operation system are accurate as per the specification.

"PHB is quite generous in terms of expenditure to upkeep the building because we see the value in upgrading and enhancing projects that benefit our tenants and us in the long run. Of course, we have a yearly capex budget but are not afraid to commit ourselves for the comfort and safety of our tenants, who have entrusted and stayed with us for many years," Mohamad Damshal says.

He adds that the office property segment is having a trying time with more supply than demand. "It is true that there are more incoming new office spaces with attractive lease packages and smarter building technologies; hence, we have to constantly review and enhance our capabilities, be it in software or hardware."

### All elements carefully considered

PHB plans to enhance the green features of Menara 1 Sentrum, such as by installing solar panels

### Quick facts

NAME	Menara 1 Sentrum
OWNER	Sentral 384 Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of PHB
DEVELOPMENT TYPE	Office
TENURE	Freehold
STOREYS	37
COMPLETION	2012
MAINTENANCE FEE	RM8.50 psf (inclusive of rental)
AVERAGE OCCUPANCY RATE	97%
NET LETTABLE AREA	425,063 sq ft
CAR PARK BAYS	700

#### AMENITIES

Shopping malls, F&B outlets, fine dining restaurant, hotels, banks, public transportation network such as buses, LRT, MRT, KTM Komuter, KTM Intercity, Monorail, KLIA Express and KLIA Transit, complete with covered walkways as well as easy access to all major highways.

#### FACILITIES

Sky lounge lobby, 24-hour security, covered parking bays, programmable destination cased pro-logic lift system, integrated smart card access system and F&B amenities

#### ENERGY-SAVING FEATURES

Motion sensor lighting, low-E glass, programmable lighting switch and Automatic Backwash System

#### INDOOR AIR QUALITY FEATURES

Ionizer at common area, PAHU use filter class G4 (synthetic type) and FCU use class G1/G2 (nylon net type)

and a rain harvesting system, to reflect its commitment to the environment and stay relevant in the current competitive office market. Apart from that, it realises the importance of ensuring cost efficiency and optimisation, particularly when economic conditions are adverse.

"While cost-cutting is solely focused on reducing expenditure, cost optimisation is broader in scope. As well as cutting costs, cost optimisation activities can include the reallocation of funds so that investment in one area leads to even greater savings in another area," Mohamad Damshal says.

There are several initiatives implemented in Menara 1 Sentrum to ensure cost optimisation is achieved, such as the adoption of the building automation system, motion sensor lighting within washrooms, a centralised air-conditioning system with variable refrigerant volume and the use of energy-saving lights.

Apart from that, every element of Menara 1 Sentrum's design has been carefully considered, right down to the external metal louvre screens, which provides a unique aesthetic feature and sun shading system. This ultimately makes the indoor environment better for occupants as it balances the temperature, humidity and intensity of light. All these render Menara 1 Sentrum an energy-saving building where less electricity is consumed by offices due to proper sun shading around the building.

"Though Menara 1 Sentrum is not the latest, newest offering in the market, we take pride in it. What's more important to us are the satisfaction level of our tenants and management quality, which has been reflected positively in our yearly tenant satisfaction survey," says Mohamad Damshal.

He adds that winning the award is another recognition for the team, which has been working hard to meet the expectations of tenants. It is also an affirmation of PHB's strategy to provide only the best to its tenants. **E**

BELOW 10 YEARS

Multiple-owned Strata Residential

SILVER

## Dedaun Condominium

# Buoyed by community spirit

 BY CHAI YEE HOONG  
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Nestled at the end of a cul-de-sac off Jalan Ampang, Kuala Lumpur, Dedaun Condominium is the epitome of exclusivity, with just 38 units on a one-acre parcel. Completed in 2014, the low-rise property of only 10-storeys is also fairly green, with its lush landscape and creeping foliage softening the effects of the property's granolithic finish as well as the red clay brickwork courtyard and porte cochère upon entry.

Comprising larger units measuring 3,240 to 7,128 sq ft, Dedaun is dotted with courtyards, walkways and reflective ponds with sculptures, and offers facilities including a 20m pool that overlooks the city skyline, an open-air multi-function deck, a fully equipped gymnasium with panoramic views, a children's pool, a playground and a jogging track.

Dedaun's Management Corporation (MC), led by five management committee members, has appointed Henry Butcher Malaysia (Mont Kiara) Sdn Bhd (HBMK) as the building's property manager since end-2021.

Dedaun took home the Silver award at *The Edge Malaysia* Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023 under the Below 10 Years — Multiple-owned Strata Residential category. The project previously received a Bronze in 2019 in the same category.

The changing of the guard at Dedaun was at a very critical juncture when the property was facing legacy issues, says the treasurer of the management committee, Iskander Ismail Mohamed Ali.

"2020 marked the emergence of Covid-19 and the mandatory lockdowns. These were very challenging times. We had a few critical legacy issue-related projects — the pool deck repairs [on Level 10], the removal of invasive plant roots [in the main pipe on Level 9] and the upgrading [of the rotting] playground set — that were expensive.

"There was a certain level of dissatisfaction with the property developer and its property management company, which led the MC to take the necessary steps to change the property managers. When Henry Butcher came on board, their professional and efficient operational template gave them a quick grasp of the outstanding issues," he says.

Apart from seeing to the completion of the critical projects mentioned, Iskander says the new property manager, together with the MC, also managed to make other improvements to the property. They include the refurbishment of the rest area at Level 10, with waterproofing work done and the installation of a deck for the planter box; replacement of the swimming pool deck with the addition of a new shower area; replacement of the playground set; planting of new trees; refurbishment of the timber walkway on the ground floor; installation of LED lighting at the jogging track, main lobby, main entrance and exit lane; installation of the Jaga apps system to improve communication within the community; replacement of the energy battery operated power supply for all lifts; and repair of some broken Shanghai plaster panels on the façade.

As building manager Farah Wahida Ismail describes, all the improvements were necessary. "For example, we did the waterproofing work on Level 10 because it previously had a planter box, which affected Level 9 and caused leaking issues. We removed all the soil and plants, redid the waterproofing

Dedaun Condominium is a low-rise property with just 38 exclusive units measuring 3,240 to 7,128 sq ft



MOHD IZWAN MOHD NAZAM/THE EDGE



Lee and Iskander (third and fourth from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards' chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, *The Edge Media Group* publisher and group CEO Ho Kay Tat and *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan

and converted it to wooden decking. Also, the previous wooden playground deck was already rotting, so we replaced it with a new one made from good quality plastic."

Iskander adds: "Also, the trees that surrounded the property had outgrown roots, causing pressure on the walls and causing them to tilt. So we had to deal with that very quickly because otherwise the walls would eventually collapse. The pool area and the playground were a mess as well and it was dangerous for children to be playing there."

Additionally, the damaged EDPM (ethylene propylene diene monomer) rubber layer that covered the playground area had also been removed and re-

placed with Japanese grass; more LED lighting was installed at the two basement car park levels; and some security features were upgraded, including a new access card system and the replacement of the barrier gate, says Farah.

### It takes a village

All the improvements at Dedaun were made possible by the close working relationship between the MC, Henry Butcher, as well as the community of owners and residents.

"Henry Butcher responds to resident queries and issues quickly and has become an invaluable part of the communication chain between residents, owners, the MC and, quite importantly, the respective regulators and their regulations," says Iskander.

Management committee member Syed Mohamad Zein Alum Al Bahar adds that key personnel like Farah and building technician Muhammad Afiq Sulaiman have been instrumental in the well-being of the property. "Afiq was already here before Henry Butcher, so in the transition, he was retained because he knows the building inside and out."

In addition to having an efficient working relationship between the MC and the property manager, Farah says that being proactive and doing preventive maintenance is also key.

She says: "Rather than being only reactive, where by we wait to repair things when they are faulty, the team looks proactively ahead to any possible maintenance issues and anticipates any necessity for an upgrade.

"A low-density luxury property like Dedaun requires a high level and standard of upkeep. Our well-trained maintenance team performs general repairs and preventive maintenance on all the building's M&E (mechanical and electrical) systems and equipment, and conducts inspections — which are guided by a comprehensive checklist to ensure all aspects are being monitored closely — on a planned frequency. On top of that, Dedaun is supported by a panel of contractors with various expertise to help with any breakdowns or repairs. It is essential for the maintenance of a building to work like a gear-wheel where all components synchronise and align."

She adds that one of the many factors that contribute to the excellent maintenance of Dedaun is how well communication is maintained among the property management team, the committee members and all the outsourced service providers



From left: Lee, Farah, Syed Mohamed Zein, Iskander

## Quick facts

NAME	Dedaun Condominium
DEVELOPER	Selangor Dredging Bhd
DEVELOPMENT TYPE	Residential
SIZE	1 acre
TENURE	Freehold
COMPLETION	2014
UNITS	38
STOREYS	10
BUILT-UP	3,240 to 7,128 sq ft
MAINTENANCE FEE	RM5.89 per share unit/64 sen psf (Sinking fund: 59 sen per share unit/6 sen psf)
AVERAGE OCCUPANCY RATE	92.10%
CAR PARK BAYS	175

### AMENITIES

Foreign embassies, banks, restaurants, Gleneagles Hospital, International School Kuala Lumpur, Sayfol International School, Ampang Park LRT and MRT stations

### FACILITIES

Gymnasium, swimming pool, children pool, playground, multifunction hall, jogging track

### ENERGY-SAVING FEATURES

LED lights, timer and sensor at basement 1 and 2 car parking levels, main entrance, exit area and jogging track

### INDOOR AIR QUALITY FEATURES

Units come with sliding doors and wraparound glass windows in the living, dining, family room and master bedrooms, admitting generous amounts of natural light and fresh air into the spaces.

who all share a mutual interest in retaining the functionality of the facilities.

Iskander chimes in: “Having respective group chats between the MC, property manager, owners and residents have helped get issues resolved. This allows for rapid news dissemination and problem response ... or when owners have some issues and want contacts for maintenance, places to eat and so forth.

“Generally, the residents are fairly [close-knit]. A few even socialise regularly, especially during the Covid-19 lockdowns, which was a very stressful period. We also have resident-run yoga classes that are regularly held in Level 9’s meeting room. There’s even a small garden patch for vegetables started by an owner several years ago,” he adds.

The community spirit at Dedaun has been exemplary. For instance, when one of the guards’ service term in the country ended, the residents started an envelope collection for him.

“I have been in this industry for almost 10 years and I have never seen this kind of great collaboration and supportive community and management. They are really supportive of us and each other when making decisions. I rarely see that in other condos,” says Farah.

## The price of exclusivity

One of Dedaun’s main challenges is rising material costs and financial sustainability. “One of the unfortunate outcomes of the events of the past few years is the rising cost of materials. Within this environment, there are a few critical capital and maintenance expenditures that have to be dealt with. To be able to deal with these and simultaneously record yearly surpluses of income over expenditure while maintaining a healthy cash balance may require a [further] increase in service charges,” says Iskander.

According to him, the original service charge of 29 sen psf was much too low to cover expenditure and resulted in deficits.

“[Over the years], we had to recommend service charge increases to the owners to reach some degree of financial stability. Fortunately, the owners were able to see our point. I think most, if not all of us, were really uncomfortable having a deficit. We



needed to cross that line and have healthy finances. With the last increase recommended at the last annual general meeting, the level is currently about 70 sen psf.

“At the same time, both the MC and the property manager have made cost control a major priority. Expenditure that can be postponed for later or when cash flow improves is done so. Meanwhile, Henry Butcher has been doing a lot to make sure that our costs are well controlled. Right now, our budget is still looking at a slight deficit because costs have gone up.”

Based on the property’s budget variance report, the actual year-to-date expenses used up between January and December 2022 were 101% of the total income, with a deficit of 1%, compared to the projected expense cost of 109%. The 1% deficit was due to the increase in minimum wages effective May 2022, according to the MC. In terms of collection rate, Dedaun is at a healthy 99%.

Henry Butcher area manager Keith Lee notes that Dedaun’s low density and its higher service charges are essentially two sides of the same coin.

“Dedaun only has 38 units. In terms of collections, we can only get that particular amount. To keep on having a healthy collection, by the end of the day, we may still need to increase the mainte-

PICTURES BY PATRICK GOH/THE EDGE



nance fee. To get that kind of exclusivity, sometimes you have to pay more,” he says.

Farah notes that Dedaun’s property values have also been affected, mainly by the Covid-19 pandemic.

“Our main vision now is to enhance the market value of Dedaun through efficient maintenance. Having clear and transparent house rules for residents also help to achieve this aim.”

She notes that Dedaun’s average price was around RM923 psf from 2017 to 2022. The latest transaction saw a 6,711 sq ft unit transacted at RM6.03 million for about RM900 psf, and the latest transacted rental is RM9,500 or RM2.93 psf per month for a 3,240 sq ft unit. The current rental yield is around 3.75%.

Meanwhile, Dedaun is currently 92% occupied with 18 units held by foreign nationals, 17 units by locals and three units vacant. Of the total occupied units, 23 units, or 61%, are tenanted while 12 units, or 31%, are owner-occupied.

## Towards a sustainable future

In terms of the cost optimisation initiatives at Dedaun, Farah notes that all the conventional induction lighting has been replaced with LED lighting in common and service areas.

“Dedaun has saved around RM1,000 to RM1,500 in electricity costs per month. In addition, we also recorded a reduction in the cost of ballast and bulb of approximately RM2,000 per year.” She adds that a lighting timer system and an adjusted timer for pumps are also used.

Dedaun enjoys healthy indoor air quality from within the units, whose design features sliding doors and wraparound glass windows, to having ventilation fans and ducts installed at all M&E rooms and the car park area as well as exhaust fans throughout the building.

Syed Mohamad Zein says the MC is also looking at EV charging stations to be more green.

Other plans in the pipeline include treating the Shanghai plaster façade of the property. “We’re looking into it right now to see what ways we can salvage and treat the façade,” says Henry Butcher’s Lee.

To future-proof the property, Farah believes that having enough funds and a well-thought-out maintenance plan are important.

She says: “Throughout the year, the MC has been practising a healthy balance sheet by planning for the budget at least two to three years [in advance]. We believe that planning the operational budget for the long term will help allocate the expenditure wisely.

“Apart from that, we have been increasing maintenance fees progressively, whereby the service charge and sinking fund have been increased by 10% effective January 2023. The MC is planning to propose another increase of 10% at the AGM this year, but before this decision is made, all aspects will be reviewed by the team to ensure all owners are able to fulfil their responsibilities.”

According to Iskander: “We currently have a fairly healthy balance sheet. But with costs going up, it will eventually deplete, so we’ve got to be able to think ahead of that curve.”

BELOW 10 YEARS

Multiple-owned Strata Residential

SILVER

Pearl Suria Residence

# Doing it right from the start

BY RACHEL CHEW  
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One would say that Pearl Suria Residence is fortunate to be built at such a vibrant site in Old Klang Road, Kuala Lumpur — hence, the significant capital appreciation of more than 30% since the project's handover in April 2016. However, the success of a project is never based on luck or the location alone, but also in-depth market feasibility studies and comprehensive project planning to ensure every decision is done right from the start.

“There are some negative perceptions of mixed-use developments, such as the underoccupied retail component that affects the overall image of the building, or security loopholes due to multiple entrances and loose security. However, all these can be avoided if we plan the project right from the beginning by having the right mindset to create a mini

ecosystem in the project itself, as well as carefully curating the floor map design,” says Datuk David Lim Boon Huat, chairman of Pearl Suria Residence's Management Corporation (MC). He is also part of Aikbee Timbers Sdn Bhd, the project's developer.

Having been involved in the project from the planning stage to the project completion and handover, and now as one of the residential unit owners and chairman of the MC, no one understands Pearl Suria Residence like Lim. It also explains his excitement when Pearl Suria Residence was announced as the Silver winner of the Below 10 Years — Multiple-owned Strata Residential category in *The Edge Malaysia* Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023.

Pearl Suria is a 24-storey mixed-use development with a 3-storey neighbourhood retail mall from the ground level, and 18 storeys of residential units from Levels 7 to 24.

Pearl Suria Residence, the residential component, features 403 units with built-ups ranging from 800



Pearl Suria is located in the heart of Old Klang Road



HBMK executive director Ronny Yong and Lim (third and fourth from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and awards' chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, *The Edge Media Group* publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat and *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan

to 1,200 sq ft. The maintenance fee psf is 35 sen, excluding the sinking fund, and the collection rate has always been maintained at 90% and above.

“The occupancy rate of Pearl Suria Residence is about 80%, whereby 40% are owner-occupied and 60% are tenanted. The tenants are mostly small families and young professionals. The [management] office has a strict tenant management policy. We request a copy of the tenancy agreement and record the number of people per household,” says Low Hon Keong, managing director of Henry Butcher Malaysia (Mont Kiara) Sdn Bhd (HBMK).

HBMK has been appointed as the property management company for Pearl Suria Residence by Aikbee Timbers since day one.

“While it is the owner's freedom to do whatever they want for their unit, such as short-term rental for side income, as this project is strategically located and surrounded by many amenities and easily accessible, we, as a property management company, our role is to ensure the guests follow our house rules strictly during their stay, or we will not hesitate to take the necessary action to ensure the comfort and safety of all residents,” Low notes.

That is why short-term rentals can hardly “survive” in Pearl Suria Residence due to the many restrictions in the building, he quips. Hence, the lower rating in third-party short-term rental platforms.

## Carefully curated project

Recalling the project's planning stage, Lim shares that Pearl Suria was designed with a clear market positioning and objective — to create an ecosystem and let the building's workmanship and property management quality speak for themselves and the company's brand.

The mixed-use development was planned and built with a separate entrance and car park zone for the retail mall and residential component to ensure minimum security loopholes, less confusion on direction, efficient traffic flow planning and easy long-term management.

Though the formation of the sub-MC is still in the planning stage for Pearl Suria, Lim says the two components are managed by different teams and under separate accounts for fairness, transparency and clarity. It is also worth noting that Pearl Suria Residence was handed over with the strata title issued soon after, hence there was no Joint Management Body before the formation of the MC.

“All these plans and strategies should be done ahead, as early [as possible] in the project planning stage, so that you won't have so many afterthought problems after the handover. As much as

### Quick facts

NAME	Pearl Suria Residence
DEVELOPER	Aikbee Timbers Sdn Bhd
DEVELOPMENT TYPE	Serviced apartment
TENURE	Leasehold
STOREYS	24 (18 storeys for residential component)
UNITS	403
BUILT-UP	800 to 1,200 sq ft
COMPLETION	2016
MAINTENANCE FEE	35 sen psf
AVERAGE OCCUPANCY RATE	80%
CAR PARK BAYS	510

#### AMENITIES

Shopping malls, commercial hubs, schools, medical centres and hospitals, offices, restaurants and eateries

#### FACILITIES

Gymnasium, swimming pool, barbecue pit, multipurpose hall, reading room, children's playground, sauna and lounge area

#### INDOOR AIR QUALITY FEATURES

Ventilation fans in all mechanical and electrical rooms

you wish to improve, but when everything is done, you can't turn back time, so there is very little you can do. These unsolved problems will eventually affect the building quality and, subsequently, the property value," Lim notes.

He adds that high-quality and efficient property management is important to prolong the lifespan of the building and its facilities. It is also crucial in maintaining the building's high collection rate.

"Even during Covid, our maintenance fee collection rate was maintained at a high level. We also increased our maintenance fees for the first time a few years ago due to rising management costs and minimum wages. It was approved by our residents without any problem. I attribute it to the overall good building management, both in hardware and software, that our residents can see and feel it for themselves," says Lim.

He adds that Pearl Suria Residence has had zero break-ins and many original furnishings and fittings in the common areas are still in very good condition.

"For example, the sofa we are sitting on has been here since day one and very well used," Lim says. "The developer also added some decorative items in the common area after the handover, such as paintings, to make the place cosier. Today, they are still here, looking exactly the same, well appreciated and taken care of by the residents and the property management team."

A well-managed property, he says, will attract quality buyers and tenants.

"Old Klang Road is a popular address due to its strategic location. There are people from different states and backgrounds who want to stay in this area and they are spoiled for choice. Therefore, if we want to attract like-minded occupants, first, we need to set a clear market positioning and build up the image of the project," Lim shares.

Pearl Suria Residence, he adds, attracts people who want to grow their family in a peaceful and serene setting amid the bustling and vibrant city, with daily conveniences right below in the retail mall.

According to HBMK, Pearl Suria Residence's current asking monthly rental ranges from RM2,000 to RM3,000, depending on the unit size, condition and furnishing. Most of the tenants have been in Pearl Suria Residence for many years and are satisfied with what they paid for.



(Left) Some of the art pieces in the common area of Pearl Suria Residence, and (right) the gym that overlooks the swimming pool



(From left) HBMK account manager Munif Azhan Mahmud, operation director Lee Choon Hoe, Low, Lim, HBMK building manager Khairul Shazuan Khairudin and on-site technician Asadul



The common facilities are still intact, thanks to proper care since day one

"The healthy rental growth speaks for the value of the building. Besides good property management, credit also goes to the good tenant mix in the mall. We have good restaurant choices downstairs [in the Pearl Suria Mall], and across the link bridge, there is also a hotel, more shops and Jaya Grocer," says Lim.

#### Upgrading plan

Given that Pearl Suria Residence is a rather "young" building with proper management and care since the beginning, the overall condition of the building has remained good and the façade is appealing. This means not many upgrading works had to be done in the past few years, except for the recent change of swimming pool tiles.

"With the approval of residents in the annual general meeting, we upgraded the swimming pool tiles to mosaic tiles. Moving forward, we are also planning to add more security cameras in the car park area to enhance the overall security features in Pearl Suria Residence," says Low.

The upgrade, he adds, will help to save on manpower cost in the long run, as it will require less physical patrolling and fewer security personnel to be stationed in the car park.

"It also gives a sense of security for our residents who leave or come home at midnight," he says. "Pearl Suria Residence is running on a very healthy balance sheet and the MC has no problem funding the security upgrade." ■



10 YEARS AND ABOVE  
 Multiple-owned Strata Residential

SILVER

Mont'Kiara Banyan

# A well-maintained tropical paradise in Mont'Kiara

 BY WONG KING WAI  
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Mont'Kiara Banyan is a welcome respite from the hustle and bustle of the main road of Jalan Kiara in Mont'Kiara. Its lobby is blocked by a row of shops, and guests and residents are greeted by soothing water features at the drop-off area.

The low-density, 147-unit condo was developed by Sunrise Bhd (now UEM Sunrise Bhd) and completed in 2007. It sits on three acres of land and has a Thai-inspired design that gives it a resort ambience.

Mont'Kiara Banyan has been managed by SCM International Property Management Sdn Bhd since 2021, alongside the Management Corporation (MC) committee. Its collection was 98.08% in 2022, which bodes well for future replacement and maintenance work that will be required in this older building.

For its success at maintaining the building and taking care of the community, Mont'Kiara Banyan is the Silver winner in the 10 Years and Above — Multiple-owned Strata Residential category in *The Edge Malaysia Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023*.

“(Winning this award) means quite a lot to us,” says MC chairman Chuah Seong Pin. He relates that with SCM’s help, they were able to improve operations and processes.

“(The win) symbolises the commitment of the previous chairman (Lillian Siaw), down to me and the commitment put in, and the efforts of everyone together with SCM as well. We really see a big change today compared to four years ago,” he adds.

One visible improvement, according to Chuah, is the overall cleanliness of the condo. Another is the grassing of a sloped area that was previously bare land, resulting not just in creating greenery but also preventing erosion. Residents have also benefited from improved maintenance for facilities such as the swimming pool.

## Meeting of minds

There are only four committee members in the MC. Chuah explains that the number was decided upon during an annual general meeting because of the small number of units in Mont'Kiara Banyan. “A smaller committee doesn’t mean it is not good; it is just more reflective of the true scenario. If it is a 400-unit condo then it makes sense to have more committee members.”

The committee members work well together and will challenge each other on how they perform their tasks to ensure that the best outcome is achieved. Also, they each have their own strengths. For example, Chuah is meticulous by nature and goes about looking for things that need to be done around the condo. Another member takes care of contract matters, yet another monitors longer-term projects while the last, who likes online shopping, sources for replacement items at affordable prices.

By dividing and conquering, they have seen a lot of improvements, Chuah says, adding that the committee works closely with SCM.

Mont'Kiara Banyan has a Thai-inspired design theme. It has only 147 units and was completed in 2007.



MOHD IZWAN MOHD NAZAM/THE EDGE



Mont'Kiara Banyan Management Corporation past chairman Lillian Siaw and SCM International Property Management Sdn Bhd joint group chairman Datuk Ling Keak Ming (third and fourth from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards' chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, *The Edge Media Group* publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat and *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan

“The engagement with the MC is on a different level. They themselves are like a subcommittee. That is one of the best practices we see at this site, which is why they deserve to win. They (the MC) are very hands-on and there is very little internal politics,” says SCM joint group chairman Raymond Cheah.

Chuah adds, “The four of us made it clear that we would not take a token fee for serving. We just do it for our own sake because we all live here. It comes from us wanting to solve things and we are not going to take one cent from the condo.”

Dispute management is always a challenge for any MC and at Mont'Kiara Banyan, it is no different. Chuah explains that to handle this, they have two WhatsApp chat groups, one with the property managers and the other without. The committee discusses an issue, votes on the matter and then informs the rest of its decision.

SCM building manager A Kumereshwaran Anandasekaran, who is stationed at the condo, adds that some disputes arise because of a lack of knowledge on the residents’ part about what is their responsibility and what is the management’s responsibility. As such, the management tries to explain matters, which helps to resolve disputes.

PICTURES BY MOHD SHAHRIN YAHYA/THE EDGE



Above: The refurbished tennis court

(From left) SCM International Property Management Sdn Bhd joint group chairman Datuk Ling Keak Ming, Cheah, Chuah, Kumereshwaran and SCM International Property Management Sdn Bhd director Ling Li Wynn



The children's play area



The airy and spacious gym looks out to the swimming pool



The calming water feature at the lobby that greets guests and residents alike



The sunken badminton court with high ceilings in the building next to the swimming pool



The facilities area has a resort feel

**Quick facts**

NAME	Mont'Kiara Banyan
DEVELOPER	Sunrise Benchmark Sdn Bhd
DEVELOPMENT TYPE	Residential
SIZE	3 acres
TENURE	Freehold
STOREYS	35
UNITS	147
BUILT-UP	2,138 to 4,863 sq ft
COMPLETION	2007
MAINTENANCE FEE	RM4.10 per share unit
AVERAGE OCCUPANCY RATE	90%
GROSS FLOOR AREA	678,697 sq ft
CAR PARK BAYS	426

**AMENITIES**  
International schools, retail and F&B outlets, banks, clinics and other conveniences

**FACILITIES**  
Multipurpose hall, badminton court, children's playground, swimming pool, mini Jacuzzi, kid's pool, barbecue area, gazebo, changing area, sauna, tennis court

**ENERGY-SAVING FEATURES**  
Variable Speed Drive is used for better flow control for heavy-duty pumps in addition to providing energy savings. LED lights are used to reduce energy consumption.

**INDOOR AIR QUALITY FEATURES**  
Supply ventilation fan systems, which pressurise outside air into the building using a duct system, are used to create good indoor air quality. Exhaust fans are also used in common areas.

**Looking ahead**

Chuah says that because Mont'Kiara Banyan is an older building with a smaller number of units than other condos, this "naturally translates into higher maintenance costs per unit". To counter this problem, the committee and SCM came up with several simulations to arrive at the most suitable maintenance fee so that the condo would continue to be well maintained.

Additionally, several matters are being looked into. One is the setting up of a room to store packages ordered online by residents. "You have more and more e-commerce items and people travel and are not around, so there are a lot of packages down here (in the lobby) for a long time," he explains.

Another is undertaking a refurbishment of the condo. Over the years, some refurbishment work has been

done but has not been in keeping with the original design theme. The committee, with help from SCM, shortlisted architects for the new job. After selecting one, Chuah gave the architect the condo's original brochure to understand its design and intention.

He explains that the committee decided to be neutral and to allow the professional to come back with a proposal. When the proposal came back, the committee members were happy with the design, Chuah says. Now the proposal will be put up for the vote before work can begin.

Mont'Kiara Banyan is a good example of how efforts by a small group of owners, whose chief objective is to ensure their homes are well taken care of, have resulted in a strong working relationship that has benefited everyone. There is still work to be done but residents can rest assured that their welfare and that of the condo are in good hands.

10 YEARS AND ABOVE  
 Multiple-owned Strata Residential

SILVER

Tara Condominium

# Partnership between owners and property manager bears fruit

 BY RACHEAL LEE  
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The function hall at the 21-storey Tara Condominium in Ampang Hilir, Kuala Lumpur, features wooden-framed swivel glass doors, a design that was popular in the 1990s. After all, the condominium was completed in 1992. Nevertheless, the classic design still feels relevant 31 years later.

The doors open up to the swimming pool, around which there is new timber flooring. Next to it is a newly erected structure, a glass building that houses the gymnasium.

Other upgrades have also been done. These came about when the residents decided to be proactive in the management and maintenance of the building. Management Corporation chairman Md Noor Nordin explains that he had worked in Australia before returning to Malaysia a few years ago and witnessed the awful management and maintenance of the building at the time.

"I told [my neighbour] Datuk Seri Giles Bien that we should take over the management and change the management company. That's when we brought in Hartamas Asset Management Sdn Bhd on Jan 1, 2016," he recalls.

He adds that the owners were initially reluctant to invest in the management and maintenance of the building when he and Giles laid out the upgrading works. Eventually they came around, understanding that the upgrading would make the building look nicer with a quality space and create better value.

Tara Condominium is the Silver winner of the 10 Years and Above — Multiple-owned Strata Residential category in *The Edge Malaysia* Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023.

## Owners' support

"Datuk Seri Giles and I brought together all the owners to see our point of view — that the condominium was not well managed, at least not to our standard. We convinced the owners that Tara needed to look more modern. When Tara was built, it was one of the better condos in Ampang Hilir. But eventually, the [market] design changed and the use of glass is [now] more common to give the perception of a more spacious area," says Md Noor.

"Giles had been the chairman and was involved in works such as redesigning the façade. He did a great job, while the committee gave ideas on how to improve on the development. Tara was looking a bit dated, and Giles — being an architect — did a lot of work at no cost. For many years, he was the chairman and this year, I became the chairman. We work together very well."

Hartamas Asset Management director Patrick Chong thinks it is important for the residents to volunteer for the management and maintenance of the building. "It is not easy as it is a volunteer job. The residents have to spend their time contributing and supporting, and that takes a lot of effort. Having a committed committee is important," he says.

There were several issues in keeping Tara Condominium in good condition after 31 years and a lot of time and money have been spent in upgrading the building, he adds.



Tara Condominium was completed 31 years ago

SUHAIMI YUSUF/THE EDGE



PATRICK GOH/THE EDGE

Chong and Giles (third and fourth from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards' chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, *The Edge Media Group* publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat and *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan

## Upgrading work

"For example, we changed the pool deck to timber tiles and built a new gymnasium. Then, we upgraded the fire fighting system and the control room. We also repainted the façade of the building and installed an aluminium louvre to cover the yard area of the building," says Chong.

The repainting of the building also involved roof repairs and external window sill sealant work, while the installation of the aluminium louvre improved the uniformity of the building's external façade.

The previously rotten wooden trellis structures at the swimming pool were replaced with new trellis with powder-coated aluminium.

Improvement of the fire protection system included the addition of a fire curtain in the genset room, installation of a pilot cylinder in the low-voltage room, installation of a tripping device for the exhaust fan in the carbon dioxide panel as well as replacement of the fire hydrant pipe.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 60



## Sunway Emerald Residence Wins GOLD For Best Managed & Sustainable Property in Malaysia

Nestled within the serene landscape of Sunway City Iskandar Puteri, Sunway Emerald Residence is a magnificent 22-acre hilltop development that offers breathtaking lake views. Perfectly situated, the property is just a stone's throw away from all the conveniences and essentials that residents require in their day-to-day lives.



Gerard Soosay, CEO of Sunway City Iskandar Puteri

“Building a community is not about constructing walls, but about creating bridges that connect individuals, empower their voices and inspire collective growth. As a Master Community Developer, we are proud to make this vision a reality with Sunway Emerald Residence”

“I believe we won this award by excelling in the basics and fostering a strong partnership between Property Management, JMB, and the Residents. It serves as a reminder that we can achieve remarkable success through consistent excellence in the fundamentals”



Ramond Yeoh Hooi Choon, Chairman of Sunway Emerald Residence's JMB

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PICTURES BY SUHAIMI YUSUF/THE EDGE



The pool deck has been changed to timber tiles

## Planned preventive maintenance helps to reduce operating expenditure

FROM PAGE 58

The fire protection system panel was also upgraded and has since been relocated to the control room from the guard house.

The electrical system has been improved with the installation of TNB Smart Meters for all units to allow for more accurate meter reading. There was servicing and maintenance of high transmission and low voltage equipment to ensure the safety of the electricity supply, along with genset servicing.

“An additional fibre-reinforced plastic water storage tank [was installed] as a reserve tank in the event of water disruption to maintain the comfort of the residents. [Then Hartamas Asset Management building manager and current area manager Thuaibatul] Aslamiah [Md Salleh] has been here since day one and she has been helpful,” says Chong.

“We had a long water disruption in 2016 and she went to Air Selangor to request for extra tanks to be sent to Tara Condominium. The committee appreciates her efforts. It is important to get good personnel to manage a building.”

Md Noor concurs. “I am involved in the manufacturing business and employ many people from different countries. I recognise skills and how to make things happen because things don’t just happen. I have always praised her,” he says.

“It is never easy to do anything well. We are fortunate that everyone knows each other here. We have rules that everyone must abide by.”

The proud Tara Condominium owner adds that there are rarely any defaulters. Aslamiah points out that the management has no issues in terms of collection.

“We use a friendly way to remind the owners if they pay the service charges late because they might be travelling. We approach them through WhatsApp. Once we remind them, they will pay. And so far, there have been no major issues.”



(Standing, from left) Hartamas Asset Management building manager Mohd Dzahir Abd Halim, Aslamiah and Low. (Seated, from left) Md Noor and Chong.

Chong adds that as the management knows all the owners and the relationship is personal, it helps with the collection. Tara Condominium, with 68 units and built-ups ranging from 1,079 to 5,400 sq ft, has an occupancy rate of 95%, with the majority being owner-occupiers.

As a veteran of the manufacturing industry, Md Noor is no stranger to planned preventive main-

### Quick facts

NAME	Tara Condominium
DEVELOPER	Tan & Tan Developments Bhd
DEVELOPMENT TYPE	Residential
TENURE	Freehold
STOREYS	21
UNITS	68
BUILT-UP	1,079 to 5,400 sq ft
MAINTENANCE FEE	RM44 per share unit (Sinking fund: RM4.40 per share unit)
AVERAGE OCCUPANCY RATE	95%
GROSS FLOOR AREA	325,019 sq ft
CAR PARK BAYS	111
AMENITIES	International schools, hospital, shops and F&B, golf club, supermarkets, hotels
FACILITIES	Function hall, gymnasium, swimming pool, car wash, table tennis, table football, security intercom system, automated external defibrillator
ENERGY-SAVING FEATURES	LED light bulbs with motion detector, lights and thermostat in common areas

tenance. Thus, he understands the importance of such an exercise in building management and maintenance.

“We don’t wait for things to break down and then repair or fix them. It is about planned preventive maintenance and supervision. We always remind the management to do the walk and not just the talk.”

Planned preventive maintenance helps to reduce ad hoc repairs and maintenance, says Chong. “In the long run, it helps to reduce operating expenditure and the disruption of comfort.”

Hartamas Asset Management associate director Low Siang Fong reckons that planned preventive maintenance helps Tara Condominium plan ahead of the budget needed for any upgrade and maintenance. “We plan ahead what needs to be done first based on the fund.”

For Tara Condominium, apart from ensuring the safety of the residents, proper maintenance is important to preserve the aesthetic value of the building which, in turn, will affect the commercial value of the building.

The in-house technician conducts periodic inspections according to a checklist, which includes mechanical and electrical (M&E) equipment, plumbing and sanitary system, CCTV, access card system and all the riser rooms.

Corrective maintenance is carried out when necessary to ensure equipment and systems are running again upon repair or replacement. This is important to identify the reason for a failure and to allow actions to be taken to eliminate or reduce the frequency of such failures in the future.

The management performs a routine walkabout inspection on all aspects of the property, including all the common facilities, plumbing and sanitary system, and the building’s M&E rooms, and installation in accordance with the designed operation specifications.

Aslamiah reckons that the next challenge for the building is the Setiawangsa-Pantai Expressway built next to it. “With the expectation of dust and noise from the highway, it is a challenge we will need to tackle when it opens to the public.”

Md Noor retains his love for Tara Condominium, noting that it is a nice building with a clean and quiet environment. “The residents are well behaved and it is a harmonious community. It is about the mindset and organisation in managing a building. All these help to create a pleasant living environment.”



The gymnasium building is a new addition to the development



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10 YEARS AND ABOVE  
Non-strata Residential

SILVER

The Hills, Horizon Hills

PICTURES BY HORIZON HILLS



The Hills precinct is part of the 1,228-acre Horizon Hills township, which is located in Iskandar Puteri, Johor

# More than a decade in the making

BY **CHELSEA J LIM**  
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One of the earliest and biggest precincts in the Horizon Hills township, the 106.26-acre The Hills comprises 1,136 link houses, cluster homes and bungalows. Launched in 2007, the precinct has had a high standard of maintenance and upkeep over the years.

“Our goal is to ensure a well maintained and sustainable living environment for the residents [of The Hills and other precincts]. So, it has always been about taking care of the people and environment and for the residents to live peacefully,” says Horizon Hills Development Sdn Bhd general manager Jim Woon.

Located in Iskandar Puteri, Johor, Horizon Hills was jointly developed by Gamuda Land (property arm of Gamuda Bhd) and UEM Sunrise Bhd and. The 1,228-acre township has residential and commercial components as well as a golf course.

Managed by Horizon Hills Property Services Sdn Bhd (subsidiary of Gamuda Land), the property management team won the Silver award in the 10 years and Above — Non-strata Residential category at *The Edge Malaysia* Best Managed and Sustainable Awards (BMSPA) 2023.

This is not The Hills’ first award at the BMSPA. The precinct previously received Special Mention in the Below 10 Years — Non-strata Residential category in 2018.

Other precincts in the township have also won awards at the BMSPA. D’Suites bagged the Gold award in the Below 10 Years — Multiple-owned Strata Residential category in 2019 and The Cove received the Gold award in the Below 10 Years — Non-strata Residential category in 2020. The township also struck gold at *The Edge Malaysia-ILAM* Sustainable Landscape Awards 2020.



MOHD IZWAN MOHD NAZAM/THE EDGE

## Creating vibrancy

For the residents, being the heart of The Hills, having a vibrant community not only elevates the liveliness of the neighbourhood but also creates a sense of security.

“Every morning and evening, we can see residents running, jogging, cycling or walking their pets around the neighbourhood. Some even jog at night,” says Woon, pointing out that there are 5km of cycling lanes and walkways around the precinct.

To him, seeing residents around the neighbourhood at night is a sign of a safe environment.

“You can see people are encouraged to come out and walk, even in the middle of the night, because they know the place is safe,” he says, adding that the management places an emphasis on making sure all the streetlights in the precinct are functioning properly.

Woon says the shaping of this environment did not happen overnight.

Woon and Gamuda Land club, township and property management director Tang Meng Loon (third and fourth from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards’ chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, *The Edge Media Group* publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat and *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan

“In the initial years, we had a lot of foreign buyers investing in properties in this precinct but we could see that the units were empty,” he recalls, adding that most of the units owned by foreigners were for investment purposes or who stayed there only on weekends.

Woon reveals that prior to the pandemic, the ratio of local and foreign residents stood at 80% and 20% respectively. However, some foreign buyers were unable to enter the country during the pandemic and 10% had to dispose of their units.

He observes that more Malaysians are moving into the township and the precinct, living there full-time and making the neighbourhood livelier than ever. The Hills currently has an occupancy rate of 76%, of which 90% are locals.

To further boost the vibrancy of the The Hills, the property management team is in the midst of constructing two basketball courts. “These are some of the enhancements we are putting in place for the use of residents’ to [boost the vibrancy of the neighbourhood].”

## Investing in enhancements

The team has also undertaken enhancement projects over the years. Some of the enhancements include digitalisation initiatives such as the GL Lifestyle Mobile app, strengthening the security system and investing in advanced machinery for upkeep efficiency.

To tend to the residents’ needs swiftly and ensure they are aware of the actions taken by the property management team, the GL Lifestyle Mobile app was introduced in 2019. Its broad functionality includes visitor registration, facility booking, food and grocery delivery from nearby shops, payments and fees, feedback forms, emergency button and access to notices and circulars.

“The residents are able to forward their needs or feedback to us on anything, from the common areas

### Quick facts

NAME	The Hills
DEVELOPER	Horizon Hills Development Sdn Bhd (a joint venture between Gamuda Land and UEM Sunrise)
DEVELOPMENT TYPE	Residential
SIZE	106.26 acres
TENURE	Freehold
STOREYS	2 and 3
UNITS	1,136
BUILT-UP	2,000 to 8,000 sq ft
COMPLETION	2010
MAINTENANCE FEE	RM194 to RM424 per month
AVERAGE OCCUPANCY RATE	76%
AMENITIES	Invictus International School, SJK (C) Ming Chih, kindergartens and enrichment centres, Horizon Hills Golf & Country Club, neighbourhood shops at the Horizon Avenue and The Yard featuring various F&B outlets.
FACILITIES	Outdoor gymnasium, playground, 30km walking and jogging path, 13km bicycle lane, pocket parks and gardens across the township
ENERGY-SAVING FEATURES	LED lighting, solar and WiFi-operated CCTV

to things that may affect their house,” says Horizon Hills Property Services township manager Eric Kee.

This allows the property manager to keep track of any issues that arise in the neighbourhood and swiftly address feedback and complaints. Woon points out that there is a high usage of the app among residents, especially during the Movement Control Order (MCO) period.

“The residents were not familiar with the [app] when it was introduced. However, due to the MCO, they began to familiarise themselves with the app,” says Kee.

Safety and security is paramount and constantly needs reviewing and enhancement to make sure there are no blind spots in the security system.

“We have had incidents of house break-ins and domestic workers running away in the early years. So, we decided to strengthen our neighbourhood’s security tier,” says Woon.

The Hills initially had a three-tier security system. Over the years, it has been strengthened to a five-tier system — 24-hour security patrols, perimeter fencing, home security alarm system with panic button, electric fence, and solar and WiFi-operated CCTV, which was introduced in 2022.

There are also body cameras attached to security guards as an additional feature to deter crime, as these would be able to record footage for evidence when needed.

Other investments included the purchase of an industry-grade road sweeper and an electric-powered vacuum machine. The purpose of purchasing such machinery is to hasten work efficiency when it comes to the cleanliness of the precinct.

“We used to receive complaints of dry leaves not being swept away by workers or that the cleaning was not done on time. After we started using this machine, we have not received as many complaints as before,” says Kee.

### Cost savings

All the initiatives implemented by the management are to ensure lower operational and labour costs.

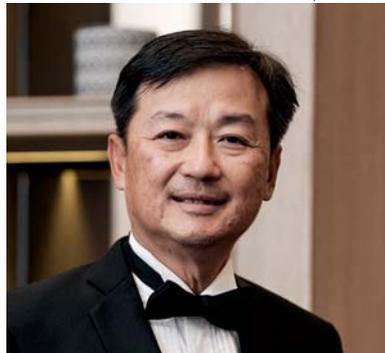
“We could foresee that the labour cost would be a challenge to maintain the landscape and environment. So, we purchased this machine to cut down on the headcount, and the machines are more efficient than workers,” says Kee.



The 106.26-acre development comprises 1,136 link houses, cluster homes and bungalows

Below: The solar and WiFi-operated CCTV is the latest addition to The Hills’ security features

LOW YEN YEING/ THE EDGE



Woon: We make sure to keep the residents informed on what is going on and what actions we will take to resolve the problems

LOW YEN YEING/ THE EDGE



Kee: We have tried to find a balance between workers and machinery



The industry-grade road sweeper has helped to reduce the annual operational cost

The solar and WiFi-operated CCTV requires minimal maintenance, thanks to the solar cells that fully charge the battery to be used for night-time operations. The management team also reduced the number of security guards to 30 from 34.

In all, there has been an annual operational cost savings of RM187,464. The use of the industry-grade road sweeper and electric-powered vacuum machine alone has allowed the team to reduce five workers, with a yearly savings of RM31,200.

“These are the lessons we learnt during the MCO. We faced a shortage of manpower and increasing labour cost. We tried to find a balance between workers and machinery,” says Kee, adding that they are moving in the direction of being less reliant on manpower.

### Communication forges strong relationships

Unlike a strata development, where the maintenance is only between the property manager and management committee, the maintenance and upkeep of a non-strata development is under the



purview of the local council. Though the property management team is still very much involved in the maintenance of The Hills, it also has to engage with the local council when it comes to the maintenance of common areas.

To make sure there is active engagement with the local council, the team took the initiative to form a 24-hour WhatsApp group with the local council in 2020.

“We work very closely with the maintenance team and subcontractors from the local council. We also have the personal contact number of the person in charge of the maintenance department at the local council. This way, we can update them on any issues that arise and follow up on any pending issues,” says Kee.

Woon and Kee effectively act as a bridge for the residents to communicate with the local council. “We make sure to keep the residents informed on what is going on and what actions we will take to resolve problems,” says Woon.

### The challenge ahead

A non-strata development requires the formation of a residents’ association (RA). This is a challenge that the team is still facing, even after 15 years.

The residents are not willing to form the RA just yet, says Woon. Even though most are still reluctant, some are beginning to be more open to the idea.

Kee explains that the Horizon Hills team had previously pushed the idea of forming an RA among the residents.

“We are more than willing to hand over the maintenance of the precinct to the residents if they wish to take over and form an RA. They do understand the importance of an RA. However, with development still ongoing, they are not going to form one. Maybe when the project is completed, they will consider forming one,” says Woon. **E**

BELOW 10 YEARS

Sustainable Affordable Housing

SILVER

Selangorku PR1MA Lakefront Homes @ Cyberjaya

# Redefining affordable housing scheme projects

BY RACHEL CHEW  
 city.country@bizedge.com

The government has been building public housing since the country's independence in 1957. It regards the scheme as a way for the lower-income groups to own their own homes and live in better conditions. While the scheme has succeeded in providing shelter and increasing the overall home ownership rate, it is also an open secret that low-cost housing in Malaysia has been deteriorating over the years. This is due to issues such as poor maintenance owing to inadequate funding for the long-term upkeep of the development and repair works caused by a low collection rate.

"We strive to change that [perception] because we know how to do it. We have a team of experts who know property management inside and out. They have also been involved since the project's inception. The thoughts and opinions shared [by the property management team] have prevented many long-term [property management] issues and afterthought in many of our projects, including Residensi Selangorku PR1MA LakeFront Homes," says Aw Sei Cheh, chief operating officer of Avaland Bhd (formerly known as MCT Bhd).

Avaland is the developer of Residensi Selangorku PR1MA Lakefront Homes (RSPLH) in Cyberjaya, Selangor. Developed under the joint-venture affordable housing scheme between the Selangor state government and PR1MA Corp Malaysia, the project comprises 1,932 units spread across four buildings of 22 storeys each. With a standard built-up of 850 psf, the units were priced from RM280,000 to RM285,000.

Unlike most of the government-initiated affordable housing projects, RSPLH comes with comprehensive facilities such as a swimming pool, jogging track, children's playground, outdoor gymnasium, wading pool, multipurpose hall, half basketball court, futsal court, barbecue pit, multipurpose room, surau, badminton court, kindergarten and nursery. There is also a three-tier 24-hour security guard service with CCTV surveillance at this gated-and-guarded residence. The monthly maintenance fee is RM1.45 per share unit, excluding the sinking fund.

RSPLH not only received a commendable 74% Qlassic (Quality Assessment System for Building Construction Works) score, it also achieved a high collection rate of 97% despite the higher-than-average maintenance fees for similar projects, as it provides a full range of facilities. This reflects the residents' satisfaction level and their strong commitment to the upkeep of RSPLH.

Adding to its achievements, RSPLH was named the Silver winner in the Below 10 Years — Sustainable Affordable Housing category in *The Edge Malaysia* Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023. It is also the only winner in this category for this year.

"We take pride in our brand name and reputation. Regardless of the market positioning and the selling price, we implement the same project quality plan from the commencement of construction work. We also set the same standard for QA/QC (quality assurance/quality control), simply because we believe everyone deserves to have a safe and comfortable home. It is one of our company missions and it is in our DNA," says Aw.



PATRICK GOH/THE EDGE

RSPLH JMB chairman Muhammad Ikhwan Affandi and Lim (third and fourth from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards' chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, *The Edge Media Group* publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat and *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan



SHAHRIH YAHYA/THE EDGE

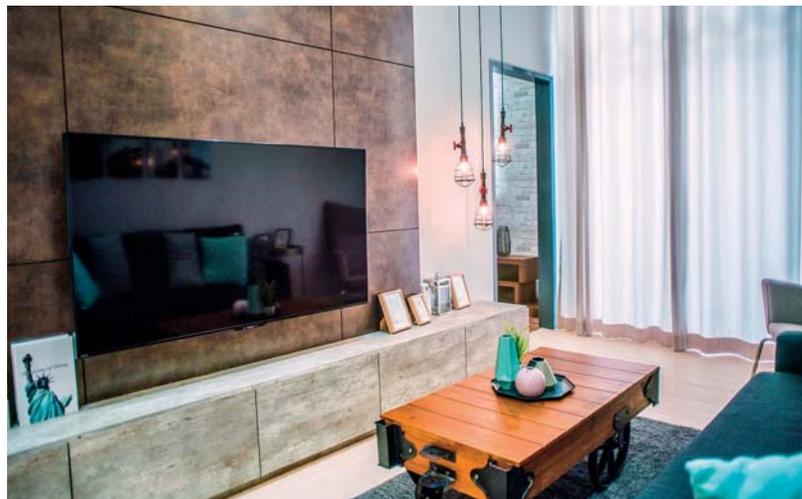
(From left): Lim, Aw and Rafidah

## From A to Z and beyond

Avaland's property management arm, MCT Property Management Sdn Bhd, has been the appointed property management company for RSPLH since the project's vacant possession in 2020.

"The property development business is no longer about build and leave. It is more like a service provider now to ensure that the product we built continues to serve our homebuyers well. It is one of many reasons we started our own property management business in 2014. There is no other way to know better what buyers really need than to create ongoing engagement and stay connected with

A show unit in RSPLH



them. Through the [property management] process, we can collect useful data, apply it to our next project and continue to evolve to be better," Aw notes.

This explains why Avaland decided to fork out RM3 million to upgrade the lake near RSPLH. The upgrading works, which include landscaping and adding new facilities such as a jogging track, will commence in August and is slated for completion within three months.

The project is fully funded by Avaland and the cost of maintaining it will not be passed on to the residents of RSPLH or its sister project next to it, LakeFront Homes.

"The lake is under the responsibility and management of the local authority, but we decided to do [the upgrading works] and many people wonder why because developers usually do this to attract buyers. However, RSPLH was 100% sold when it was launched and it is now more than 70%-occupied. The market response of RSPLH was so overwhelming that it actually spilled over to LakeFront Homes next door, which was sold at the market price," Aw says.

The move, he explains, was made because Avaland sees itself as a service provider rather than just a developer. "We want to make sure that the environment is always pleasant even after the project is completed and handed over, as our buyers who trusted us are staying there."

While he declines to disclose the estimated monthly maintenance cost for the lake, Aw says security and electricity make up the two biggest costs. The team will ensure the lake's sustainability by using solar panel powered lighting, outdoor furniture that requires minimal maintenance, durable jogging track surface material and slow-growing trees in the park.

## Building a close-knit community

Avaland property general manager Lim Tek Guan, who is also a registered property manager, says that managing a government housing scheme project like RSPLH is challenging as the maintenance fee rate is not as high as other open-market residential projects.

"We need to be very precise in budgeting, making sure every penny is well spent. At the same time, we also need to keep educating our residents about community and strata living as most of our

PICTURES BY AVALAND



residents are first-time homebuyers from the lower-income segment and have not experienced living in a stratified building before. For us, the challenge is more on how to build the community than the hardscape maintenance in RSPLH,” Lim says.

The team set clear house rules from the start, especially timely payment of maintenance fees. This explains the project’s good collection rate since its handover.

“It is about how we engage residents with the human touch and create a positive community living culture. Through close engagement with our residents during the HOVP (handing over vacant possession) period, we discovered many didn’t understand the need to pay the maintenance fees and sinking fund. The strategy to achieve a high collection rate is to educate these owners on how important these funds are to upkeep the property,” Lim explains.

In addition, the management team maintains constant communication, disseminates information and provides notices and guidelines regularly to the owners. “We even do briefings on a one-on-one basis [on the house rules] and the strata residential concept. We explain these during their visit to our management office for any enquiries or during their applications to carry out renovations.”

RSPLH’s building manager Rafidah Mohyiddin highlights that the human touch is crucial to build a close-knit community.

“Residents will be convinced if you walk the talk by showing them that the maintenance fees they pay every month really go towards the upkeep of the place. They want their home to be clean and well maintained, so they are proud of it.

“In fact, the residents really care and love their home [so much so] that they even took the initiative to do some mini upgrading projects. For example, we recently repainted our multipurpose hall. The JMB (joint management body) approved the budget and provided the paint and tools, while the work was carried out by our residents voluntarily. It took them three weeks to complete the project and it was done beautifully,” Rafidah shares.

She describes the relationship between the onsite management team and residents as close and transparent, and they constantly exchange opinions and suggestions on how to make RSPLH a better place to live.

“We place high importance on customer satisfaction with property management after HOVP. So, we conducted a Post-VP Customer Satisfaction Survey in the 10th month after HOVP, and we had a positive rating of 80% — encompassing those who rated it as satisfactory, good and excellent. In the next survey in the 20th month [after the HOVP], this positive rating moved up to 95%. This shows a healthy trend towards quality building management in the long term,” she notes.

Aw attributes the achievement to the dedicated team, saying: “This is very important because we are not just selling customers a building. Providing quality property management is how we live out our mission of creating communities and enhancing lives. With good-quality property management, building operations and maintenance can be carried out effectively.”

On winning the award, he describes it as a great recognition of the proper planning, diligent efforts and professional service rendered for the benefit of its residents.

“This award validates our commitment as a company that serves Malaysians from all walks of life through our luxury, middle-class and affordable properties. It highlights that our commitment to quality and service extends to all segments, including affordable ones like RSPLH,” Aw concludes. ■



The lake (above left) will be upgraded soon by Avaland; the basketball court (above)

The children's playground

### Quick facts

NAME	Selangorku PR1MA Lakefront Homes @ Cyberjaya
DEVELOPER	Lakefront Residence Sdn Bhd (a subsidiary of Avaland Bhd)
DEVELOPMENT TYPE	Residential
SIZE	18.78 acres
TENURE	Freehold
STOREYS	22
UNITS	1,932
BUILT-UP	850 sq ft
COMPLETION	2020
MAINTENANCE FEE	RM1.45 per share unit
AVERAGE OCCUPANCY RATE	71%
CAR PARK BAYS	4,056

#### AMENITIES

Lakeside living surrounded by amenities such as shops, shopping malls, bank, petrol stations, school, public facilities, clinics and medical centres. There are ample educational institutions nearby, such as Multimedia University, Cyberjaya University College of Medical Sciences, University Malaysia of Computer Science and Engineering, Open University Malaysia, Cyber Putra College, ELC International School and SRK Cyberjaya. Shopping is convenient with shopping malls such as Dpulze Shopping Centre, Tamarind Square, Gem in Mall, IOI City Mall and The Mines Shopping Mall.

#### FACILITIES

Swimming pool, jogging track, children’s playground, outdoor gymnasium, wading pool, multipurpose hall, half basketball court, futsal court, barbecue pit, multipurpose room, surau, badminton court, kindergarten and nursery. The gated-and-guarded residence also has a 24-hour security guard service with CCTV surveillance.

#### ENERGY-SAVING FEATURES

Solar panel

THE EDGE MALAYSIA-ILAM SUSTAINABLE  
 LANDSCAPE AWARDS 2023 – Landscape Design

SILVER

## Summit Park @ Southville City

# A cooling walk in an urban forest

 BY WONG KING WAI  
 city.country@bizedge.com

Living in a city with little or no interaction with nature can result in a skewed view of outdoor activities. With little respite from the sweltering heat on some days, it was a welcome surprise to notice how much cooler it felt when walking within the urban forest of Summit Park @ Southville City in Bangi, Selangor.

This 9.62-acre central park within the 428-acre Southville City township was meticulously planned to ensure it featured plants native to Malaysia while providing enough activity spaces for all members of the community.

One highlight would be the playground, which is certified by the Playground Safety Association of Malaysia and specially designed for children of various ages. The features include contrasting colours of blue for flooring and orange for play equipment to help users with vision limitations and sensory disabilities navigate the area, a 9.3m Rocket Tower that stands as an iconic landmark, good illumination in the evenings and plenty of concrete benches for park users and their families to sit and rest.

Additionally, there are numerous walkways and bicycle paths offering fitness buffs a good workout in a secure and safe environment surrounded by healthy and thriving plants.

In recognition of all the hard work that went into this urban forest park, Summit Park @ Southville City won Silver in the Landscape Design category of *The Edge Malaysia-ILAM Sustainable Landscape Awards*, a feature of *The Edge Malaysia Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023*.

"Landscaping has always been part of our (Mah Sing's) design DNA, we focus on it, but because we never won anything significant before, this award means a lot to us for a start. Nowadays with more and more ESG (environmental, social and governance) requirements, landscaping will play an even bigger role when it comes to our developments in terms of design and sustainability. Also, people like to be around green spaces," notes Mah Sing Group Bhd CEO of Property Subsidiaries Benjamin Ong.

While Mah Sing is known for building affordable housing, Ong wants that reputation to also include good landscaping.

## Township centrepiece

Summit Park, according to Ong, is a welcome change for Southville City residents, who like the serene and peaceful environment. Moreover, the abundance of natural greenery offers plenty of benefits for the well-being of young and old alike, be it mental, physical or emotional.

"Summit Park is the centrepiece, but we connect the entire township to the centrepiece so there are walkways, jogging tracks and bicycle lanes. They are all very wide, and [along these paths] there are also natural flora and fauna that add to the centrepiece. I think that is the beauty of Southville City," he says.

Summit Park had two main technical challenges that had to be resolved and this was done in a very systematic and pragmatic manner, according to Mah Sing Group senior manager for landscape Vera Tam.

"The first challenge for Summit Park, before we transformed it, was actually the site condition. Originally, it was barren land with poor soil quality.



MOHD IZWAN MOHD NAZAM/THE EDGE



Ong (third from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards' chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, *The Edge Media Group* publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat and *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan

So, we conducted a site assessment and soil tests. We came up with two solutions," Tam explains.

"The first was cluster planting. When you cluster the trees, you can form a bigger planting space, then from there replace the top soil in a bigger space. The cluster planting technique encourages trees to compete with each other and promotes natural growth. That was the first thing we did, treating the soil.

"The second thing was we planted nitrogen-fixing plants. We planted trees and shrubs, like peanut, so when they degrade or decompose in the soil, they add nitrogen to make the soil fertile.

"At the site now, after three to four years, the trees are all growing beautifully. That means the soil has been correctly treated," she says.

The other challenge is the landform, Tam says.





SAM FONG/THE EDGE



Tam (left) and Ong worked closely to ensure that Summit Park is a welcome respite for city folk



PICTURES BY MAH SING

Users enjoy the cooler temperature in the park as it is surrounded by an abundance of trees



The outdoor gym equipment is sheltered under a green canopy



The cluster planting technique encourages trees to compete with each other and promotes natural growth



The playground, which caters to children with various abilities, has sturdy and long-lasting equipment



To strengthen the slopes and treat the soil, nitrogen-fixing plants were planted



Due to the steep engineered slope, interlocking blocks were used to allow topsoil to be put in for planting purposes

“Originally, [the site] was a very steep engineered slope, so we had to treat the slope. There were two ways to do so: the first was to plant the peanuts, because they are very helpful in stabilising the soil, and was the first thing we did. Then, we used an interlocking block wall, which we put in front of the slope area, about 1.5m away. After that, we put in the topsoil and then planted the trees. Now you can’t see the engineered slope, only greenery.”

Thanks to this conscientious planning, the temperature in the park is slightly lower than normal. Ong highlights this as being part of the feedback from residents who frequent the park and live in Southville City.

**Sustainable ideas for long term**

To ensure the park is easy to maintain and sus-

The park management ensures there is plenty of greenery for all to enjoy as well as activity areas for those who like a good workout

tainable, Ong highlights several initiatives.

“Bearing sustainability in mind, we asked ourselves how the park would continue for the next 10 years or more to come ... so we acquired better and longer-lasting playground equipment,” he says. “After three years, it still looks nice and new because it is sturdy, something that will stand the test of time.”

More than that, the company is also planting trees that require minimal attention. “We try to plant trees that can thrive on their own in our weather, and also help lower the temperature and improve air quality. It eases the mind and enhances the liveability of our customers.”

As sustainability is top of mind for Ong and his team, that also relates to the maintenance cost aspect.

To mitigate future issues involving maintenance costs, he and his team work closely with the authorities to find out from the latter what they are comfortable about maintaining. This way when the park is handed over, it will continue to be well taken care of and used by the community. At pres-

ent, since the township is still being developed, the developer is maintaining the park; so far, the monthly landscape maintenance cost is RM18,650.

It is never easy creating a space where people can gather and commune with each other, and also connect with nature within an urban setting. For the team that created Summit Park, the award is certainly an achievement its members will always be proud of.



**BELOW 10 YEARS**  
 Mixed Development (Entire)

**BRONZE**
**Sunway Velocity**

# Communication is key for a vibrant community

 BY CHAI YEE HOONG  
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Sunway Velocity in Kuala Lumpur is a vibrant township today, nine years after it was first launched and developed by Sunway Group's property arm, Sunway Property. Sitting on sites formerly occupied by light industrial lots, old workshops and squatter homes, Sunway Velocity is modelled after Sunway City Kuala Lumpur and its formula that has transformed a mining wasteland into a thriving township.

A stratified mixed-use development, Sunway Velocity comprises six key components: residential (V Residence Suite, V Residence 2 and V Residence 3 with 1,338 units of serviced apartments in total); commercial (V Office, V Office 2, Designer Office, Signature Office 1 and Signature Office 2 with 745 units of office suites and shops, and Visio Tower); hospitality (Sunway Velocity Hotel); education (Sunway University); healthcare (Sunway Velocity Hospital); and retail (Sunway Velocity Mall with 1.4 million sq ft of retail space).

The integrated development, bounded by Jalan Peel, Jalan Cheras and Jalan Shelly, is also designed based on the 5Ds of transit-oriented development principles: density, diversity, design, distance to transit, and destination accessibility. Located 3.8km from the city centre, Sunway Velocity is connected to two MRT stations (Cochrane and Maluri) via covered linked bridge walkways as well as to major roads namely Jalan Cheras, Jalan Peel, Jalan Pudu, Jalan Loke Yew and Jalan Tun Razak and highways such as the SMART Tunnel, Kuala Lumpur-Seremban Highway, New Pantai Expressway, Maju Expressway and Besraya Eastern Extension Expressway.

The administration of the 23-acre mixed-use development, while still governed by the Joint Management Body (JMB), is currently structured as multiple components under one Management Corporation (MC) with sub-MCs. By doing so, all internal service roads and infrastructure will be owned, controlled and maintained by the MC. Common infrastructure namely Velo Garden (a two-acre public park), Nanjing Street (a vehicle-free elevated walkway that links the entire development to the MRT and LRT interchange stations), the pedestrian bridge, common roads and landscape are overseen by Sunway Property & Facility Management Sdn Bhd (SPFM).

Sunway Velocity has picked up the Bronze award at *The Edge Malaysia* Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023 under the Below 10 Years — Mixed Development (Entire) category.

## Build-own-operate model

Just like Sunway's other integrated townships and developments, Sunway Velocity leverages the group's build-own-operate model to ensure lifelong growth for the development's community, says Sunway Property senior executive director of property development division (central region) Chong Sau Min in an email interview.

"With the build-own-operate business model, Sunway remains the largest investor in Sunway Velocity, owning 63.5% of the entire Sunway Velocity development. As part of the community with an

A build-own-operate model allows for optimal maintenance of the entire Sunway Velocity, a 23-acre stratified mixed-use development



MOHD IZWAN MOHD NAZAM/THE EDGE



interest in long-term growth in terms of ensuring good property management, good traffic management and capital appreciation, our interests are aligned with those of the community. We also look to ensure that the development is continuously improved and well maintained as a whole in order for the resident and business community in Sunway Velocity to continuously thrive as well as for long-term capital appreciation and good rental yields.

"The benefits of this model of management mainly allow for the optimal maintenance of the entire development, leverage the synergies between the components without compromising the autonomy of the different components and deliver additional benefits," he says.

Chong notes that the team ensures maintenance, repairs and upkeep are handled effectively to enhance the entire community experience while ensuring the long-term success of the development in terms of capital appreciation and continuous footfall.

"In terms of financial management, we have an equitable and transparent management of the budget while deriving cost savings from economies of scale.

"When it comes to governance, everyone has a say in a democratic decision-making process, whether it be on matters of sustainability or security. We believe this promotes transparency, accountability, collaboration and a sense of ownership. We also

Sunway Property & Facility Management Sdn Bhd senior manager of property Goo Chee Kang and Chong (third and fourth from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards' chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, *The Edge Media Group* publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat and *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan



Chong; As part of the community with an interest in long-term growth ... our interests are aligned with those of the community

have standards and protocols in place to provide a useful framework for managing conflicts and disputes in accordance with the set guidelines and procedures to ensure a harmonious relationship within the community.

"We also hold social events and community activities that bring the community together to encourage a community spirit," he shares, adding that Sunway has organised 25 community events within the development.

## Strategic, sustainable initiatives

According to Chong, multi-owned developments of this scale can suffer from a lack of cooperation among the operators or managers of each component. "This might lead to poor maintenance, physical obsolescence, vacancies and ultimately depreciation in the value of the development. Additionally, the absence of leadership can also fail to drive the long-term success of the development and lead to a poor tenant mix, poor budgeting control and difficulties during conflict resolution."

To mitigate such issues from arising, Sunway has a few strategic initiatives in place. "One is remaining in the development as a co-investor of the development. We can then provide leadership, good property management, and adopt all the public walkways and linkages to the public transport network from the local authorities to ensure a safe and pleasant neighbourhood," he says. "We believe that Sunway's continued presence in the development as well as its continuous marketing and development initiatives ensure



(Clockwise from top) The two-acre Velo Garden; Nanjing Street is a vehicle-free elevated walkway linking Sunway Velocity to the MRT and LRT interchange stations; Sunway Velocity Mall has 1.4 million sq ft of retail space

**Quick facts**

<b>NAME</b>	Sunway Velocity
<b>DEVELOPER</b>	Sunway City Sdn Bhd
<b>DEVELOPMENT TYPE</b>	Mixed-use
<b>SIZE</b>	23 acres
<b>TENURE</b>	Freehold
<b>COMPLETION</b>	2023
<b>COMPONENTS</b>	Residential, commercial, hospitality, education, healthcare, retail
<b>MAINTENANCE FEE</b>	RM3.98 per share unit
<b>AVERAGE OCCUPANCY RATE</b>	85%
<b>STRATA LOTS</b>	1,593
<b>CAR PARK BAYS</b>	5,879

- FACILITIES**
- Two-acre Velo Garden
  - Nanjing Street – a vehicle-free elevated walkway that links the entire development to the Cochrane and Maluri MRT and LRT stations
  - Electric vehicle (EV) charging station

- ENERGY SAVING FEATURES**
- LED lightings, EV charging stations, bicycle parking lots, rain water harvesting system, VVVF (variable-voltage, variable-frequency) regenerative for lifts, sleep mode function for lifts and escalators, sensor lightings for wash rooms and mail rooms

- INDOOR AIR QUALITY FEATURES**
- Bi-annual audit according to ICOP IAQ 2010
  - Implementing smoke-free policy
  - Legionella test
  - Air handling units total cubic feet per minute (CFM) performance test (pilot measurement at main ducting)
  - Indoor temperature and relative humidity of air-conditioned common facilities are maintained at 24°C and at 45% to 65% respectively
  - Mechanical and electrical (M&E) rooms are built with noise insulation to prevent noise pollution
  - Indoor air quality assessment by an independent IAQ Assessor

the long-term sustainability of the development.”

The scope of maintaining and managing a development like Sunway Velocity includes infrastructure maintenance, community engagement, budgeting and financial management, promoting sustainable practices, preparing for emergencies, safety and security, as well as growth management.

“We ensure timely repairs, upgrades and proper maintenance to ensure that infrastructure is well-maintained and expenses are kept manageable; we engage and communicate with the community to effectively address concerns, foster a sense of belonging and a sense of collaboration, and facilitate access to the various components; and we balance and manage finances well and leverage the group’s networks and economies of scale to keep outgoings manageable,” says Chong.

“Additionally, we help balance development with environmental conservation and address issues such as energy efficiency and green spaces, as well



as encourage sustainable practices within the community; and we ensure that everyone is aligned on emergency responses for the safety and well-being of residents especially during challenging situations such as the nationwide lockdowns due to Covid-19.

“Besides using technology to manage the safety and security of the community, one of the key initiatives we have implemented is the creation of a centralised security command centre that monitors every aspect of the security within the development. This has delivered operational efficiency, optimised resources and reduced security costs for the development. Ultimately, we also plan for long-term growth and we aim to manage growth within the community sustainably,” he adds.

Sunway Velocity is equipped with sustainable features including energy-efficient LED lighting, sleep mode function for lifts and escalators, VVVF (variable-voltage, variable-frequency) regenerative for lifts, a rainwater harvesting system, the provision of electric vehicle charging stations, bicycle parking lots and connectivity to public transport via covered link bridges.

“We also ensure the air quality is consistently maintained and prevent sick building syndrome by having our engineers conduct bi-annual audits on the maintenance and performance of the HVAC systems throughout the entire development according to the Industry Code of Practice on Indoor Air Quality 2010. We have also implemented a smoke-free policy in Sunway Velocity, conducted legionella tests, utilised non-volatile organic compound materials and fixed condensation and water leaks,” Chong adds.

**Fair and equitable administration**

One of the key factors that Chong attributes to the successful management and maintenance of Sunway Velocity is maintaining a strong relationship with the community within the development, guided by the MC and sub-MC framework. “We are in constant communication with all stakeholders within the development and we utilise technology to ensure that communication reaches everyone.

“With the different components having different intensities of use for common M&E services, facilities and common properties such as roads, parks and landscapes, SPFM adopts a fair and equitable administration of all components within the mixed-use stratified development that is aligned with the Strata Management Act. The interests of all parties are protected equitably and responsibilities are fairly shared according to their respective intensities within the development,” Chong explains. “Additionally, we also ensure a strong mix of tenants and consistent footfall for businesses within the development.”

According to Chong, Sunway Velocity has an overall occupancy rate of 85%. “We have managed to see an increase in property values of more than 30% over the last two years. We continuously work with all the stakeholders to increase footfall for the development, ensuring that it remains a vibrant community.”

BELOW 10 YEARS  
Mixed Development (Entire)

**BRONZE**
**Teega @ Puteri Harbour**

# Full-time attention for a better outcome

 BY **CHELSEA J LIM**  
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Residents of Teega @ Puteri Harbour are afforded a panoramic view of the Straits of Johor and Singapore from the Sky Lounge on Level 27. In fact, Teega is only 22km from the Malaysia-Singapore Second Link.

Developed by UEM Sunrise Bhd and completed in 2017, Teega is a mixed development with three 35-storey towers sitting atop a five-storey car park podium. Delivery of vacant possession took place in 2018.

The 10.08-acre development comprises three components: residential (Teega Residence with 736 condominium units and Teega Suites with 556 serviced apartments), office (Teega Tower with 51 office units) and commercial (Teega Walk with 28 commercial units).

Teega's residential component comprises 70% local and 30% foreign residents. The units are mostly owner occupied. Both Teega Residence and Teega Suites boast a large number of facilities in their compounds.

At Teega Tower, tenants — which are in various industries such as oil and gas, logistics and engineering — include Dialog Plant Services Sdn Bhd, AWH International Logistics Sdn Bhd, GSD IDC Services (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd and Aero Malaysian Engineering Centre (AMEC).

Teega Walk is home to F&B offerings and convenience stores such as Tribus Restaurant, YSL Freshmart, Les Bouchons Restaurant and MyNews.

Teega won the bronze award in the Below 10 Years — Mixed Development (Entire) category at *The Edge Malaysia* Best Managed and Sustainable Property Awards 2023.

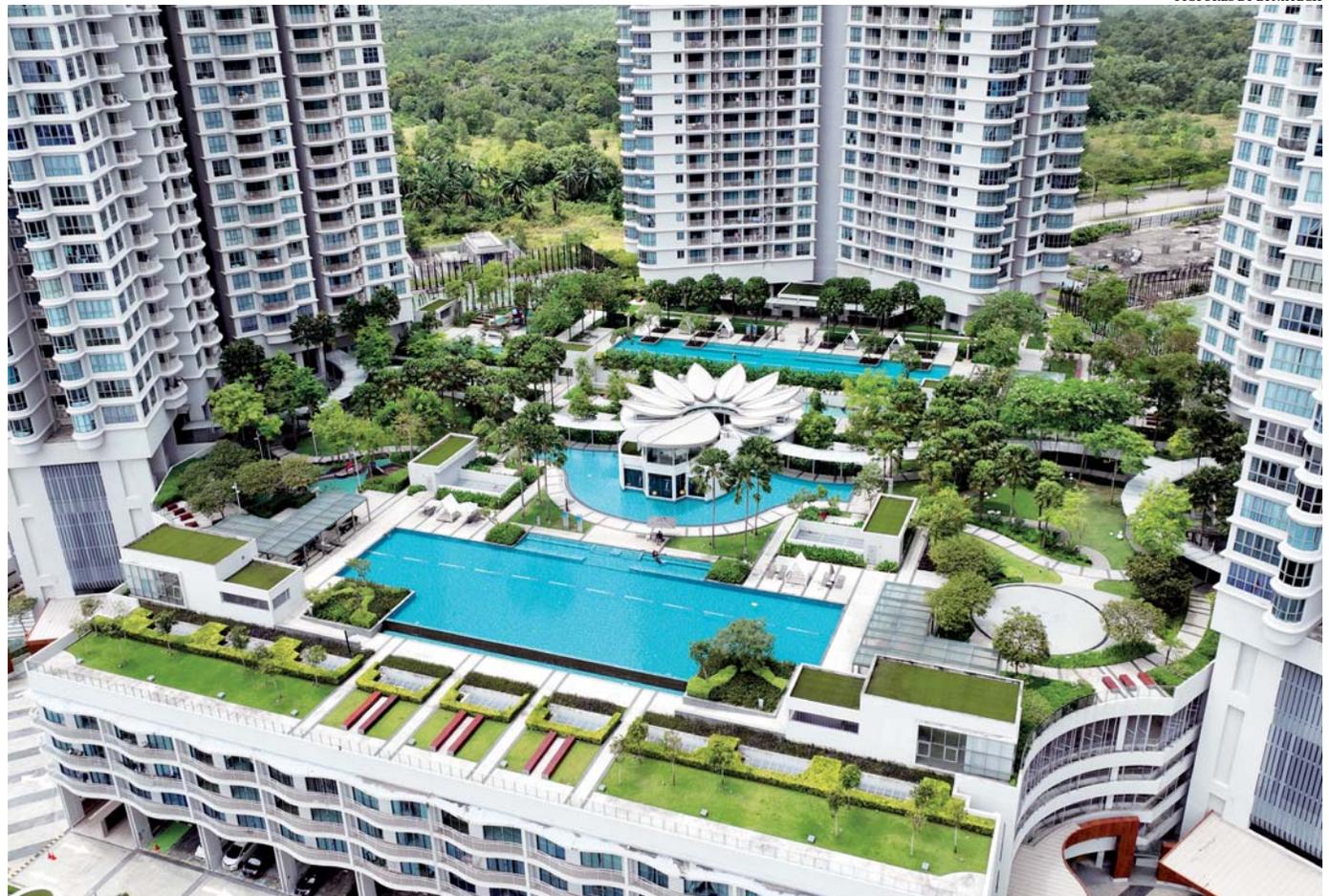
Teega joint management body (JMB) chairman Jeff Saw and secretary Sukhjeet Singh Sekhon, as well as property management company SCM International Property Management Sdn Bhd group chairman Raymond Cheah and building manager David Lim, spoke to *City & Country* in an online interview. The JMB's goal is to ensure Teega residents' needs and well-being are taken care of while property manager SCM ensures that the property runs smoothly.

Trust is an important element in the working relationship between the JMB and property manager, they say. "We treat this partnership like a corporation. We [the JMB] set the guidance, targets and objectives for [Lim and his team]. We give directions and leave Lim and his team to execute them," says Saw.

They also hold meetings to discuss the property's finances, as well as the maintenance, enhancements and upgrades. A WhatsApp group is one of the main communication channels between the two parties. There is a separate WhatsApp group for the residents, from whom the management team gets feedback and comments and tends to their needs quickly.

"Those on the committee have to be predominantly people who live here [at Teega] full-time," says Sukhjeet. This ensures that the committee is well versed with circumstances at the development and is more equipped to deal with the issues, he adds.

"We've always maintained that the committee should be made up of people who are hands-on, who see things. They know what's going on and what needs to be [done] rather than being an



Teega @ Puteri Harbour is a 10.08-acre development comprising residential, office and commercial components



Teega Residence has 736 condominium units

armchair [member]. It is a challenge but we are lucky to have good leadership and a chairman who tries to harness the strengths of various parties to mould the group dynamics."

Teega has a maintenance fee of RM3.10 per share unit across all of its components. "No one raised an issue about the [maintenance fee] at the AGM. Everybody is happy," says Saw.



Saw and Cheah (third and fourth from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards' chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, *The Edge Media Group* publisher and CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat and *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan

Cheah says that more importantly, it is how the funds are managed. "Is everybody trying to look out for themselves or is everybody looking to build a great community here?"

"I think what Teega has managed to achieve is to build a great community. The [committee members] are very receptive to not only their [own units] but to the entire development as well, whether it is the walkways [at the commercial component] that need to be upgraded or the lift lobby [at the residential component] that needs to be [fixed]."

"Having a good mix of committee members and a selection criteria are critical to ensure that the money is well spent on all of the components rather than on just one component, in terms of maintenance and upgrading."

Will there be a revision of the maintenance fee?

PICTURES BY LYNXTECH

MOHD IZWAN MOHD NAZAM/THE EDGE

MOHD IZWAN MOHD NAZAM/THE EDGE



Teega Walk is a two-storey retail component with 28 units



Above: The Sky Lounge on Level 27 has an unobstructed view of the Straits of Johor and Singapore



Left: The playground

**Quick facts**

<b>NAME</b>	Teega @ Puteri Harbour
<b>DEVELOPER</b>	UEM Sunrise Bhd
<b>DEVELOPMENT TYPE</b>	Mixed-use
<b>SIZE</b>	10.08 acres
<b>TENURE</b>	Freehold
<b>STOREYS/ UNITS/ BUILT-UP</b>	Teega Residence: Two 35-storey towers with 736 condominium units of 886 to 4,457 sq ft Teega Suites: 556 serviced apartment units in a 35-storey tower, with sizes ranging from 485 to 1,621 sq ft Teega Tower: A 26-storey tower with 51 office suites ranging from 2,103 to 2,363 sq ft. There is a 4,888 sq ft Sky Café Teega Walk: A two-storey retail component with 28 lots, ranging from 515 to 3,341 sq ft
<b>COMPLETION</b>	2017
<b>MAINTENANCE FEE</b>	RM3.10 per share unit for all components
<b>AVERAGE OCCUPANCY RATE</b>	Teega Residence (60%) Teega Suites (61%) Teega Tower (63%) Teega Walk (28%)
<b>NET LETTABLE AREA</b>	44,747 sq ft
<b>GROSS FLOOR AREA</b>	1,907,332 sq ft
<b>CAR PARK BAYS</b>	2,464

**AMENITIES**  
Food and beverage (Tribus, Les Bouchons, Single Origin), shopping (MyNews, YSL Freshmart, the Pasar, Mall of Medini, Sunway Big Box), Puteri Harbour Ferry Terminal, Marina Walk, Fraser’s Hotel, Legoland, Gleneagles Hospital, Educity, Stellar International School, Starkindle English Learning Academy, post-natal services and laundry

**FACILITIES**  
Children’s pool, lap pool, viewing deck, tennis courts, air-conditioned gymnasium, outdoor fitness zone, wellness garden, herb garden, pool-side barbecue area, barbecue terrace, children’s playground, games room, childcare centre, multipurpose function halls, leisure lounges water features, dry fountain, changing room, management office, tai chi deck, yoga deck, Sky Garden, Sky Lounge, Sky Function Room, EV chargers, lounge/sitting area

**ENERGY-SAVING FEATURES**  
LED lightings, Internet of Things timers and switches, inverter-type air-conditioning system, VRV air-conditioning system for office tower, Heli-fan, VSD system for motors/pumps, rain water harvesting system

**INDOOR AIR QUALITY FEATURES**

- Ducted air conditioning for indoor common areas
- Ventilation system for air circulation (Toilets, changing room, elevators, bin rooms, and so on)
- Heli-fan in the Teega Suites lobby



**Cheah:** Having a good mix of committee members and a selection criteria are critical to ensure that the money is well spent on all components rather than on one component



**Lim:** We implemented LED lighting in all the common areas



**Saw:** When everyone is happy, then only can we make a vibrant community



**Sukhjeet:** We’ve always maintained that the committee should be made up of people who are hands-on

“It is unlikely for us to change the maintenance fee unless the JMB strongly thinks so,” he says.

**Cost optimisation**

Teega was not spared from the impact of the Covid-19 lockdowns, which included the collection rate. However, due to the healthy collection rate before the pandemic, the JMB was able to mobilise a Covid debt relief programme, whereby residents who were able to pay three months of their maintenance charges up front would get the third month free, says Sukhjeet.

“When we took over in September last year, we accrued a sizeable debt and we started to issue letters of demand. We have reduced the debt by almost a third.” He adds that the current collection rate at Teega is 95%.

Meanwhile, Lim, who has an engineering background, has found ways to minimise electricity consumption at the development. According to him, Teega started its energy-saving plan in 2019 after he noticed that the development had been using a lot of electricity, which led him to study the consumption patterns.

In 2022, the property manager decided to implement Tenaga Nasional Bhd’s Enhance Time of Use (ETOU) tariff, which contributed to a cost savings of 6% to 8% on their bills each month. In addition, all of the lights in the common areas have been replaced with LED bulbs.

“We implemented LED lighting in all the common areas. What makes the LED lighting different is that it can go into idle mode. In a lot of places, the LED bulbs are installed with a motion sensor, whereas the LED bulbs that we implemented to go into dim mode emit only 3 watts [when no one is around],” says Lim.

Another initiative that he and his team are exploring is a “special coating” to be applied on the main switchboard and distribution board panel, as well as the motor and pumps termination ports, to reduce electricity consumption by 5%. Lim says the plan is currently in the mock-up stage and the property manager is working with a Singaporean company to implement it in August.

**Building a community**

Community building has been an essential component of the JMB’s goal to create a vibrant and flourishing community in Teega and Puteri Harbour as a whole.

JMB president’s Saw points out that before they could build a vibrant community, solving basic details such as tending to the needs of the residents and any property maintenance needed are key. “When everyone is happy, then only can we make a vibrant community,” he adds.

Saw notes that initiatives have been taken to build a vibrant community. “[Quick] response from SCM is very important because sometimes people have certain complaints that must be looked into immediately. When people are happy, that’s where a vibrant community comes in. It will then allow us, the JMB, to further engage with the master developer [UEM Sunrise] of Puteri Harbour to bring in more F&B and commercial activities for people to come to this area.”

As part of the initiatives to build a vibrant community, retailers at Teega Walk provide discounts for the communities in Teega as well as the wider Puteri Harbour area. “This is to encourage the residents here and their neighbouring residents to patronise Teega Walk,” he says.

10 YEARS AND ABOVE  
Multiple-owned Strata Office

BRONZE

## Binjai 8 Premium SoHo



Above and right: Binjai 8 Premium SoHo is a 40-storey tower that comprises 310 units



# Juggling between cost and income

BY RACHEAL LEE  
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At least 13 years after *City & Country* interviewed UOA Development Bhd for the launch of Binjai 8 Premium SoHo, the development is in the news again, but for a different reason. It is the Bronze winner in the 10 Years and Above — Multiple-owned Strata Office category of *The Edge Malaysia Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023*.

Located off Jalan Binjai, Binjai 8 Premium was intended to be a serviced residence. It was later converted into a Small Office Home Office (SoHo) development to meet the demand for live-in working spaces at the time.

The 40-storey tower comprises a total of 310 units and limited retail units. The layout offers options from one to four bedrooms, sized from 750 to 1,785 sq ft.

Currently, the units in Binjai 8 Premium SoHo are used as offices and residential units. There are also owners who rent out their units as Airbnb units, according to treasurer Tan Swee Yeong.

### More income

Henry Butcher Malaysia (Mont Kiara) Sdn Bhd (HBMK) has been the property management company for Binjai 8 Premium SoHo since 2015. At that time, the account was running a deficit. Also, owing to its nature as a commercial development, Binjai 8 Premium SoHo incurred a higher tariff on its utility bills.

To tackle its cost and income issues, measures were taken to enhance income generation for

HBMK associate director Chen Woei Guang and Ho (third and fifth from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards' chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, *The Edge Media Group* publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat and *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan



Binjai 8 Premium SoHo. HBMK executive director Ho Kim Heung says the service charge was raised to 50 sen psf then, from 20 sen.

"It was a huge increase but we promised the floor that we wouldn't increase in the next two to three years. Since 2015, we have never increased [again] and our account has a surplus now. The commitment from the committee is very important and we also have other side income such as the car park and retail units ... That helps a lot," he adds.

When HBMK took over the management of Binjai 8 Premium SoHo, both the basement and five-level car parks were free to access and had no parking system.

Tan says a parking system was implemented, incorporating the installation of a ticketing and access card mechanism.

"The parking became chargeable via a per-entry or monthly pass. Parking became a substantial income for Binjai 8, which could be used to cover many maintenance costs," he adds, noting that a cashless parking system was introduced for the visitor parking in the basement in August 2022.

The management has been in charge of the car park to save money, Ho says, and the income from the car park contributes 10% to 15% to the total service charges.

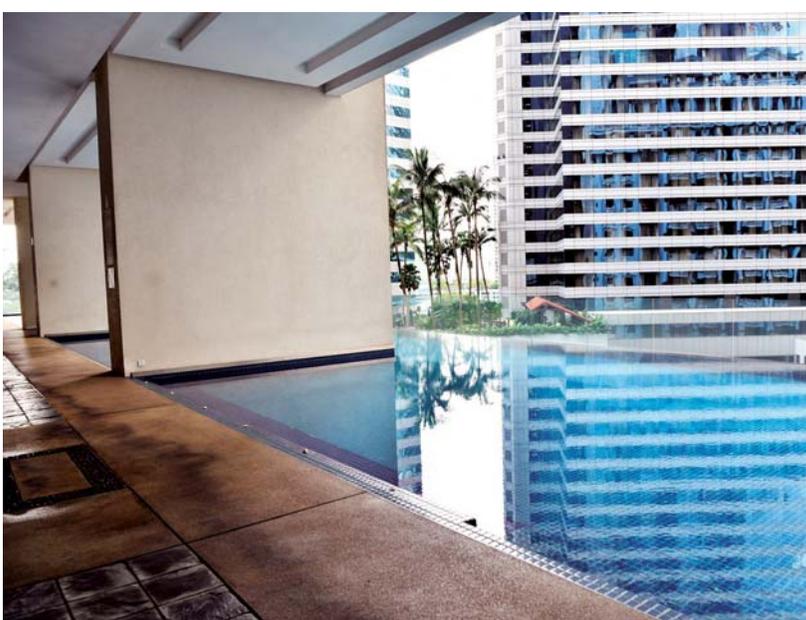
Similarly, there were initially no retail units on the ground floor, but the management subsequently made an application to Kuala Lumpur City Hall, seeking permission to introduce these units. It has since brought in retailers such as convenience retail chain store myNEWS.com and Zus Coffee. This move has also increased the monthly income for the development.

Other changes to the development include the upgrading of the turnstile system. Originally, there were only three gates connecting to the main lift lobby; it was later upgraded to five gates to cater for the increasing traffic flow.

Also, Binjai 8 Premium SoHo recently awarded the rooftop waterproofing project to a company selected by the Management Corporation (MC) after several rounds of interviews and the project is now pending mobilisation.

Ho says there are plans to upgrade the lobby to cater for food and parcel delivery as well as a better check-in flow for visitors and Airbnb guests. It expects to enhance the overall aesthetic of the lobby and the check-in process.

Depending on the interior design to be proposed by the designer later, Tan says the MC is looking to add in more retail units on the ground floor for more income. He is cautious, however, not to make the lobby too crowded.



“If we [can] monetise the space, we would love to do so ... We are going to present [the upgrading idea] at the AGM for review and approval. We hope to have a better floor plan for everyone,” he says.

#### Office space in KLCC

Tan owns two units in Binjai 8 Premium SoHo; one has been rented out and the other is his office. “I am an original buyer. I bought two units from the developer and I am still keeping them. I bought them for investment purposes. In my younger days, [when] I worked in the KLCC area, I always thought it was hard to get an office space of 1,500 sq ft or smaller here, and there are not many individually owned offices.

“So, I thought it was a good opportunity to own an office in the KLCC area [with Binjai 8 Premium

**From top: The facilities at Binjai 8 Premium SoHo include a rooftop event space; swimming pool; and gymnasium**



From left: HBMK building manager Keith Lee, HBMK assistant building manager Renuga Razakerisnan, Tan and Ho

SoHo]. Before the pandemic, the occupancy rate was about 80% and now it is 82%. It has never dropped below 75%.”

He adds that the development has a good mix of owner-occupiers (31%) and tenants (51%). The space is used mainly for office purposes. The remaining 18% belong to people stationed outside of Kuala Lumpur and who do not occupy their units every day.

Meanwhile, the Airbnb units are mostly managed by agencies.

Asked about the challenges of safety and security in managing a development with residential, office and Airbnb units, Tan says it is not as complicated as expected.

“Henry Butcher proposes a very good check-in system, and the safety and security is so far so good. There has never been any major incidents. There are surveillance cameras on every floor and the guards make frequent patrols,” he explains.

“The management has a records of which units are Airbnb because registration by the owners is required. Surprisingly, managing a mixed-use development like this is not as complicated as we thought, or maybe Henry Butcher has done a great job.”

Tan says winning the award is an achievement for the development. “We hope it will help increase public awareness of this building and the units become more in demand. It also helps [take away the stigma] of a 10-year-old building.”

To ensure the quality of the maintenance and management of the building, Ho stresses that planned preventive maintenance and regular check-ups are important. It is also easier for the management to propose a budget for the necessary major upgrades and repairs.

Regular planned preventive maintenance is carried out in Binjai 8 Premium SoHo, encompassing not only the service providers but also the building’s mechanical and electrical systems, as well as licences and certificates. A comprehensive inspection schedule is followed, covering various items on a daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, yearly, or biennial basis.

As an office building in the KLCC area, Ho says, the building’s façade and lobby are important elements, as they represent the building.

#### Quick facts

NAME	Binjai 8 Premium SoHo
DEVELOPER	UOA Group
DEVELOPMENT TYPE	Commercial
SIZE	0.932 acre
TENURE	Freehold
STOREYS	40
UNITS	310
BUILT-UP	750 to 1,785 sq ft
COMPLETION	2012
MAINTENANCE FEE	45 sen psf (Sinking fund: 5 sen psf)
AVERAGE OCCUPANCY RATE	82%
GROSS FLOOR AREA	701,280 sq ft
CAR PARK BAYS	Multi-level car park: 256 Basement car park: 120
AMENITIES	Shopping malls/supermarkets, shops, F&B, banks
FACILITIES	Swimming pool, sauna, gymnasium, meeting room, sky lounge
ENERGY-SAVING FEATURES	LED lighting in most corridors
INDOOR AIR QUALITY FEATURES	Windows in most corridors, 216 fan coil units equipped with high-efficiency particulate air filter

Next would be the air-conditioning system, lift and water supply.

“Then, to make ourselves more competitive, everything has to be up-to-date because it is in the KLCC area. Our main concern is cost and income, so the car park is very important to us because it generates income for us,” he says.

“The recently announced tariff increment means an additional RM25,000 per month in the utility bill [for common areas]. To overcome the challenges, we need to do a lot of [energy-saving initiatives and] planned preventive maintenance such as LED lighting in most of our corridors, motion sensors and ensuring that the air-conditioning system has no leakage. We also look at the latest technology that will help save costs.”

**10 YEARS AND ABOVE**  
 Non-strata Office

**BRONZE**
**Plaza OSK**

# Keeping up with the times

 BY **RACHEAL LEE**  
 city.country@bizedge.com

The 23-storey Plaza OSK, owned by OSK Holdings Bhd, has changed a fair bit since *City & Country's* last visit in 2019. The office building in Jalan Ampang, formerly known as Menara MBf, was completed almost 40 years ago in 1984 and has undergone a major facelift, in both hardware and software.

It has a land area of 57,597 sq ft, total built-up area of 320,410 sq ft and net lettable area (excluding the car park) of 234,873 sq ft.

Plaza OSK is the Bronze winner of the 10 Years and Above — Non-strata Office category in *The Edge Malaysia* Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023.

In an interview with *City & Country*, OSK Realty Sdn Bhd CEO of property investment Sara Fang Horton explains that an old building is akin to an old car, which needs to be maintained to ensure it has a long lifespan. Much of the equipment at Plaza OSK was ageing, hence the need for a refurbishment.

OSK Realty is the property management subsidiary of OSK Holdings.

“When we took over the building in 1997, we made sure that the maintenance was done on time, but it has been 25 years. So, we started a major refurbishment in 2019. We made five physical changes and ensured that they were running well so that we could provide the right environment for our tenants to run their businesses,” she says.

Changes were made to the chiller system, lift system, toilets, surveillance system and basement car park. The water-cooled chiller system has been replaced and the lift system has been modernised to include an upgraded interior and lift motor room.

Plaza OSK now uses the Personal Occupant Requirement Terminal system, a destination dispatch lift system where terminals with card readers are placed at each floor. After passengers scan their access cards at the terminal, the system predicts the best lift car to respond and the terminal will show the allocated car the passenger will take to get to their destination.

The toilet upgrade is an ongoing project, as only the facilities on 10 floors have been upgraded so far.

The CCTV cameras have also been changed from analogue to high definition, while the basement car park has been repainted and lights have been replaced to give it a fresh look. Pay-per-use electric vehicle chargers have also been installed in the car park.

“The other type of refurbishment is the [software] to promote good mental health for our tenants. We have a gymnasium, where tenants can engage a personal trainer at a nominal fee. We want to [help] our tenants stay healthy and the idea is that, if they want to avoid traffic jams after work, they can go to the gym [first],” Horton says.

In addition, the Solar PhotoVoltaic system has been installed on the rooftop, and the black acrylic floor directory has been upgraded to a digital signage at the building's main entrance.

All lighting in the common area has been replaced with energy-saving LED bulbs and lighting



Plaza OSK went through a major refurbishment in 2019

PATRICK GOH/THE EDGE


 OSK Holdings group chief financial officer Ng Lai Ping (third from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards' chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, *The Edge Media Group* publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat and *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan

in the common washroom has been incorporated with timer and motion detector control. A Building Automation System has also been adopted for centralised air-conditioning.

Certain air-handling units (AHUs) have also been replaced because of wear and tear. The new AHUs are equipped with inverters, which has resulted in 20% savings in electricity consumption compared with the previous AHUs.

### Creating a better environment

Horton notes that the refurbishment has created a refreshing work environment for the tenants and staff in Plaza OSK.

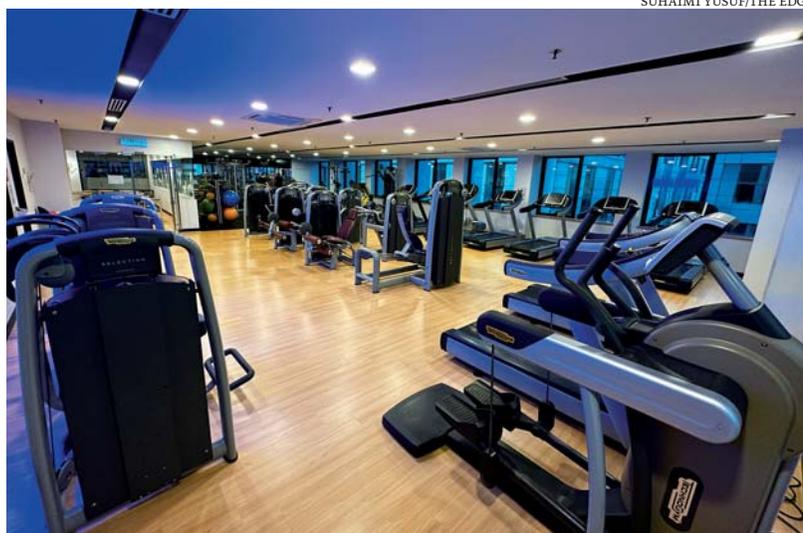
“After refurbishment, our maintenance requires fewer materials, fewer skilled labour hours and less time to complete the works, resulting in an overall cost saving. In the long term, it also helps with energy saving; we at least maintain our operating expenditure and consumption of energy [especially now, when the tariff has increased]. And I welcome ESG (environmental, social and governance), as our world needs it. What ordinary people like us can do is very minimal on energy

PICTURES BY OSK HOLDINGS



Amenities in Plaza OSK include the Chillax Zone (above) and gymnasium with personal trainer services (below)

SUHAIMI YUSUF/THE EDGE



saving compared with what corporate giants can do,” she adds.

OSK Realty has completed Phase 1 of the refurbishment and will start work on Phase 2 soon. Still in the works is an upgrade of the food court on Level 2, to give it a better environment and raise its hygiene level. Plans are afoot to set up a café on the ground floor so that office workers can have meetings in a casual environment.

Horton notes that it will be a café with al-fresco seating. While it will be run by an operator, OSK Realty will determine the look and feel of the café.

“All of these as well as future plans for improvement would eventually provide better amenities as well as a modernised office working environment for our current tenants. At the same time, it addresses the competition brought on by the oversupply of office space in the market,” she says.

“We are looking at how we can further improve. We want to look into things the environmentally friendly way, how to insert ESG into our planned preventive maintenance. For example, we are going for a more environmentally friendly cleaning method such as steam cleaning because chemicals can damage our equipment. It is something we are doing now. The challenge will be the cost. It will cost a bit more now but the benefit is long term and the lifespan of the equipment will be longer.”

She adds that OSK Realty is looking to digitalise its property management system to ensure that the maintenance works are done well.

### Increasing tenants' satisfaction

Horton explains that the decision to improve and upgrade the building is also to increase both staff and tenant satisfaction as well as their comfort level, while contributing towards the group's sustainability initiative, with the intention to increase the value of the building to achieve higher rentals.

“The other reasons and motivation to replace or carry out improvements to Plaza OSK are also very market-driven. We want to stay competitive in the office industry and provide top-notch service to our tenants in a quality, reliable and highly functional office tower,” Horton says.

“With our location in the city and near public transport, we feel that it is not just the address but we are providing a quality environment for the tenants. Good maintenance can have a positive impact on the capital appreciation of the building. Ultimately, we want Plaza OSK to be well known in Kuala Lumpur and Malaysia as a building with a good working environment, and that is safe, clean and equipped with the latest facilities.”

**Horton: We made five physical changes and we make sure that they are running well so that we can provide the right environment for our tenants to run their business**



The car park features a mechanical slider (above) and pay-per-use electric vehicle chargers (right)



### Quick facts

NAME	Plaza OSK
DEVELOPER	Plaza MBF Sdn Bhd
DEVELOPMENT TYPE	Office
SIZE	57,597 sq ft
TENURE	Freehold
STOREYS	23
BUILT-UPS	2,500 to 9,650 sq ft
COMPLETION	1984
COMMENCEMENT OF OPERATION	Took over in 1997 (formerly Menara MBF)
AVERAGE OCCUPANCY RATE	97.45%
NET LETTABLE AREA	236,325 sq ft
CAR PARK BAYS	296

**AMENITIES**  
Canteen, RHB Bank, Bank of China, myNEWS.com

**FACILITIES**  
Gymnasium with personal trainer services, Chillax Zone, pantry with BACFREE filters for drinking water

**ENERGY-SAVING FEATURES**  
Solar panel (21kWp) directly used to offset building power usage; car park upgraded with LED lighting for lower energy consumption; washrooms equipped with motion sensors and timers to reduce energy usage; Building Automation System for air conditioners to increase efficiency in energy usage

**INDOOR AIR QUALITY FEATURES**  
Air purifiers, AHU filters

Plaza OSK has an in-house security team to ensure the quality of the building's safety and security. It offers female drivers “walk to your car” security service after 7.30pm.

With tenant management relationship focusing on personal touches, OSK Realty hopes that Plaza OSK will stay relevant in the highly competitive office market in Kuala Lumpur.

The building enjoys an occupancy rate of 97.45%, with OSK Holdings taking up 13 floors, or 41.8%. Its tenants include Bank of China, Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Malaysia and China Airlines.

Horton notes that, as the building ages, the biggest challenge is to maintain its ageing equipment. “We do routine preventive check-ups and change the parts of our equipment according to the scheduled replacement timeline. We have professionals in many different fields from whom we seek input for our repair and maintenance works.

“Foreseeable challenges come from new office buildings in the vicinity. Therefore, to attract new potential customers, we have incorporated more facilities to accommodate workers in and visitors to Plaza OSK. In the coming years, we will carry out more refurbishment and enhancement works to ensure that we will always be a competitive address.”

10 YEARS AND ABOVE  
Non-strata Office

BRONZE

## Wisma Consplant

BY PRIYA DEVAN  
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Grade A office buildings are usually considered the best in the market, from the way they look to the way they operate. Sporting tempered glass and aluminium cladding on its façade, Wisma Consplant is one of the few Grade A office buildings in Subang Jaya.

“There are not many properties in Subang Jaya that have heavy glass cladding, so I’d like to think that’s what makes Wisma Consplant an attractive landmark in Subang Jaya,” Pelaburan Hartanah Bhd (PHB) group managing director and CEO Mohamad Damshal Awang Damit tells *City & Country*.

Spread across a 3.87-acre freehold parcel in Subang Jaya, Wisma Consplant consists of Wisma Consplant 1 and Wisma Consplant 2, which come with annex buildings. The west annex of Wisma Consplant 1 comprises 14 storeys while the east annex has nine storeys. Wisma Consplant 2, on the other hand, has 14 storeys in its west annex and 11 storeys in its east annex.

Completed in 1994 and 1987 respectively, both Wisma Consplant 1 and Wisma Consplant 2 have units with office spaces of between 1,000 and 8,000 sq ft, and tenants can select from a variety of floor plans.

Wisma Consplant 1 features a four-level basement car park, while Wisma Consplant 2 has a three-level basement car park. In addition, the buildings are equipped with underground tunnels that provide convenient vehicle access to Jalan Persiaran Jengka in Subang Jaya.

The amenities offered include a main lobby, round-the-clock security, covered parking bays for seasonal parkers with licence plate recognition (LPR) systems, a building access card and turnstile system, a dedicated operating access card for lifts, a tenant-directive LED screen, a showroom, banks, F&B outlets and a surau.

Facilities in Wisma Consplant include a covered multi-level basement car park bays, 18 high-speed lifts in both towers, telecommunication facilities and a grand lobby entry. The building has a total of 1,051 parking bays.

Wisma Consplant emerged as the Bronze winner under the 10 Years and Above — Non-strata Office category of *The Edge Malaysia Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023*.

The development is owned by PHB, a wholly-owned operating subsidiary of Yayasan Amanah Hartanah Bhd (YAHB). Knight Frank Property Management Sdn Bhd (KFPM) has been the property manager of Wisma Consplant since March 2020.

**Leveraging the MCO**

KFPM came in during a very challenging time, says Mohamad Damshal. “When we give mandates to external property management companies, it is always consistent, which is to provide quality maintenance to the building. KFPM came in during the Covid-19 pandemic, coupled with movement control orders (MCOs). Even though they came in during a challenging time, they still managed to increase the occupancy rate from 69% in 2020 to 81% this year.”

KFPM director Mohammad Syahrizan Shamsudin says one of the challenges that his team faced when they first took over the management was the restrictions due to the pandemic.

“During the MCO, we managed to do a lot of capital expenditure (capex) and upgrading work. We had more time, sort of like a buffer period to re-organise, re-plan and implement our initiatives. We took it as a positive challenge and leveraged the MCO, using that period as an opportunity to upgrade and repair some of the building’s facilities,” Mohammad Syahrizan adds.

The upgrades and repairs made by KFPM when it first came in included upgrades for the lifts of both towers, says Mohammad Syahrizan. “PHB had already started working on upgrading works even before the MCO period, so we just continued from

# Maintaining it at Grade A for a long time



MOHD IZWAN MOHD NAZAM/THE EDGE



there. A recent upgrade was the lift lobby, which was renovated last year.

“We also worked on upgrading the whole plumbing system during the MCO period. This is an old building, so repairing the plumbing system was essential. There were not many people in the building, as most tenants had to work from home, so it was the perfect opportunity.”

**Energy-efficiency and cost savings**

As a Grade A building, Wisma Consplant naturally boasts green features. Mohamad Damshal says, “We have committed a good amount of capex to ensure the efficiency and energy savings of our buildings.”

The indoor air quality is important not only for the occupants’ comfort but also for their health, Mohamad Damshal says. “A proper building ventilation system can prevent harmful air pollutants and health problems. Thus, KFPM works closely with the appointed air-conditioning contractor to ensure the air quality is within the specified

**Mohammad Syahrizan and Mohamad Damshal (third and fourth from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards’ chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, *The Edge Media Group* publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat and *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan**

limits, according to guidelines from the Department of Occupational Safety and Health.”

He adds that Wisma Consplant is also equipped with an air flushing system that replaces indoor air with fresh air. Every building is required to have carbon monoxide detectors connected to a Direct Open Air System (DOAS). Mohamad Damshal says, as part of the safety protocol, if the carbon monoxide detected in the air rise is above the normal level, the DOAS system in the building will open up and let in fresh air.

Other green features of Wisma Consplant include recycling bins in the common areas of the building and a rainwater harvesting system.

To showcase a green architectural design, the building also has green walls at the passage walkway of Wisma Consplant 1. Mohamad Damshal says these green walls are equipped with a watering system, including a timer for automatic watering and fertiliser purposes. The water source comes from the building’s rainwater harvesting system.

For future upgrades, Mohammad Syahrizan says KFPM has a five-year capex and upgrading plan that includes initiatives such as refurbishing the lift lobby for Wisma Consplant 1 and improving the building’s landscape and hardscape.

In terms of cost savings, he says some of KFPM’s initiatives include installing new LED lighting on all floors, which helps reduce the use of electricity; installing water-efficient fittings in plumbing fixtures; and equipping the building with a centralised air-conditioning system with Variable Refrigerant Volume, a technology that circulates only the minimum amount of refrigerant needed during a single heating or cooling period.

He points out that by using hydronic balancing in the cooling system, Wisma Consplant was able to achieve 67% energy savings.

PICTURES BY KFPM

Completed in 1994 and 1987 respectively, Wisma Consplant 1 and Wisma Consplant 2 offer office and retail space



MOHD IZWAN MOHD NAZAM/THE EDGE

(Seated, from left) Mohammad Syahrizan and Mohamad Damshal. (Standing, from left) PHB property management executive Omarulhanif Shahrudin, building manager Mohd Rizal Sidik, PHB corporate communications deputy general manager Mohamad Shahizam Datuk Fauzi and Knight Frank senior manager Ahmad Fadzil Abdul Manaf.



Above: The west wing lift lobby of Wisma Consplant 1  
Above right: A coffee outlet in the building



**Quick facts**

<b>NAME</b>	Wisma Consplant
<b>OWNER</b>	Pelaburan Hartanah Bhd
<b>DEVELOPMENT TYPE</b>	Office
<b>SIZE</b>	3.87 acres
<b>TENURE</b>	Freehold
<b>STOREYS</b>	Wisma Consplant 1 – 14 (West wing) and nine (East wing) Wisma Consplant 2 – 14 (West wing) and 11 (East wing)
<b>BUILT-UP</b>	1,000 to 8,000 sq ft
<b>COMPLETION</b>	Wisma Consplant 1 – 1994 Wisma Consplant 2 – 1987
<b>MAINTENANCE FEE</b>	RM4.50 psf (inclusive of rental)
<b>AVERAGE OCCUPANCY RATE</b>	80%
<b>NET LETTABLE AREA</b>	461,913 sq ft
<b>GROSS FLOOR AREA</b>	250,000 sq ft
<b>CAR PARK BAYS</b>	1,051
<b>AMENITIES</b>	Bank, coffee shops and foodcourt, surau, visitor parking bays, disabled access and facilities, convenience store, space for lease and walkway to malls
<b>ENERGY-SAVING FEATURES</b>	LED lights, water-efficient fittings, rainwater harvesting system variable refrigerant volume for air-conditioners and hydronic balancing system
<b>INDOOR AIR QUALITY FEATURES</b>	Air flushing system that replaces indoor air with fresh air

KFPM also carried out other cost-saving initiatives such as conducting new tenders to obtain lower prices but assure quality service for security, cleaning and pest control, among other services.

“KFPM’s cost-saving initiatives were implemented from March 2020 until December 2022, and the savings accumulated were as much as RM151,365.60, or 26%,” Mohammad Syahrizan says.

**Price trends**

Mohamad Damshal says Wisma Consplant’s rent collection rate is usually more than 90% per month, and the maintenance fee, together with the average rental rate, is RM4.50 psf per month.

The billing and collection of office rental are undertaken by the building owner, as there is no provision of on-site account staff under the current site team, Mohammad Syahrizan says. “So, KFPM’s scope is limited to verifying and compiling the bills or invoices such as electricity bills and invoices submitted by service providers.”

In terms of the budget, Mohamad Syahrizan says all expenses go through a process of two layers of approval from KFPM and PHB to ensure the expenses adhere to the budget and are as specified in the service agreement between the owner and appointed vendors.

**Tenants’ lift on Level 14 of Wisma Consplant 2**



“The first layer of approval involves KFPM’s head office, where the building manager is required to adhere to KFPM’s procurement procedure in obtaining quotes for any repair and maintenance work. Upon receiving the approval from KFPM’s head office, the building manager will submit the approval request to PHB for the second layer of approval.

“Once the approved budget is also approved by the building owner, a copy of the budget and its salient details would then be disseminated to the relevant departments for planning and implementation. At identified periodic intervals (on a monthly basis), variance reports are prepared to monitor the building’s income and expenditures to ensure that operations are within control.”

Meanwhile, Mohamad Damshal says the building’s market value has grown about 4% based on a valuation exercise for the year 2022. “The building is currently going through its first round of tenancy renewals. With the easing of lockdown restrictions amid an improving Covid-19 situation, [economic sectors and businesses are allowed to reopen] and more tenants gradually returning to the office will raise office occupancy levels. It will take some time, however, for the office market to return to pre-pandemic levels.”

He adds that the rental and occupancy levels of office space in Kuala Lumpur are expected to see further pressure, owing to a growing mismatch in supply and demand for office space and the potential adoption of hybrid working models in the private sector post-lockdown. He says the average value of Wisma Consplant stands at RM395 psf.

The rental yield for Wisma Consplant, benchmarked against the most recent property valuation and rental income for the financial year ended 2022, is 4.99%.

“Rental renewals at Wisma Consplant have thus far seen a steady and progressive increase in values, with tenants being happy with the service provided. This yield of more than 5% is deemed very positive, especially in the light of the weakening economic climate and the general oversupply of office space in Malaysia,” Mohamad Damshal says. **E**

**10 YEARS AND ABOVE**  
 Strata Retail

**BRONZE**
**Sungei Wang Plaza**

 The iconic mall  
 has undergone  
 four phases of  
 refurbishments  
 since 1992

# Not your average mall

 BY **CHAI YEE HOONG**  
 city.country@bizedge.com

Sitting on prime land in the city's Golden Triangle and opened in 1977, the iconic Sungei Wang Plaza is one of the earliest shopping centres to be built in Kuala Lumpur, and one of the longest-running malls in the country.

A playground for many in its heyday, Sungei Wang — which translates into “river of gold” — has been synonymous with fashion, beauty and food since the late 1970s and 1980s, and even housed entertainment and recreation facilities such as an Olympic-size ice skating rink, bumper cars, a game arcade, a discotheque and a cinema that could accommodate up to 1,700 people. It was also the venue for fashion shows, beauty contests, artist meet-and-greets, festive countdowns and Chinese opera performances on its rooftop.

Comprising 1.2 million sq ft of retail space over eight levels, as well as three basements and two elevated parking levels with 1,294 bays, the mall has in its 46 years of operation undergone three phases of major refurbishment under its asset enhancement initiative.

The first phase, which took place in 1992, saw the refurbishment of the retail floors. In the second phase in late 2012, the façade and ceilings were repainted, the floors retiled, lift lobbies upgraded and new and improved signage was installed.

Subsequently, for the third phase of refurbishment, a new 132m covered walkway was built along the mall's frontage in Jalan Sultan Ismail, linking the mall to the Bukit Bintang monorail station and Jalan Imbi.

The fourth and latest phase of refurbishment was initiated in 2017, in conjunction with the mall's 40th anniversary. The mall embarked on a rebranding exercise to reevaluate and conceptualise how the space could be used to enhance the visitor experience. From its redesigned logo, the mall's atrium also got a new look in 2019 as well as a new entrance, Pelangi Entrance in Jalan Bulan 2, to ease accessibility for shoppers in Bukit Bintang. In 2022, Sungei Wang Plaza unveiled its new gold façade and new



MOHD IZWAN MOHD NAZAM/THE EDGE

positioning as a beauty and experiential mall, offering differentiated retail and experiential activities.

Sungei Wang Plaza's key anchor tenants include indoor drift kart Blastacars Malaysia; Camp5 climbing gym; JUMPA by Capitaland, which occupies about one-third of the retail space and offers retail, food and beverage and family entertainment; Giant supermarket; MinNature Malaysia miniature heritage gallery; Mr DIY; and the 18,000 sq ft Mega Star Arena.

“We think the mall's rebranding and refurbishment have improved the overall image and desirability of the property. It has also given our existing tenants more confidence and drawn in new tenants,” says Sungei Wang Plaza Management Corporation centre manager Joseph Teo, who oversees all the departments under the Management Corporation (MC). The MC appointed Knight Frank Property Management Sdn Bhd (KFPM) as the property manager in 2015.

Sungei Wang Plaza is the recipient of the bronze award at *The Edge Malaysia* Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023 under the 10 Years and Above — Strata Retail category.

### A new direction

According to Sungei Wang Plaza Management Corporation's previous chairman Ng Yih Chen, the

**Knight Frank Property Management executive director Natallie Leong and Cheng (third and fourth from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards' chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, *The Edge Media* group publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat and *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan**

leasing direction of the mall had to change for it to stand the test of time. “The current retail industry [landscape] is that almost every residential area or suburb has its own mall, which means that the family crowd is less likely to come to the city centre for their daily needs. So we felt that we needed different content.

“And over the decades, the profile of shoppers has changed. There was a time when the toy businesses were paying the highest psf rental in Sungei Wang, and there was a time when F&B outlets were paying the highest. So even though we still have a lot of old-timers here, there has been a lot of turnover. The difference between the first 30 years and the last 10 years was the [tenant turnover rate]. Previously, the turnover was fast and you didn't see the emptiness. But in the last 10 years, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, we lost quite a big chunk, about 20%, of the tenants.”

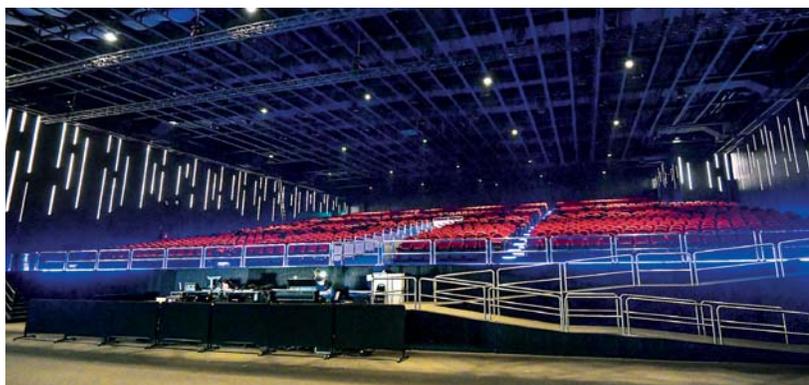
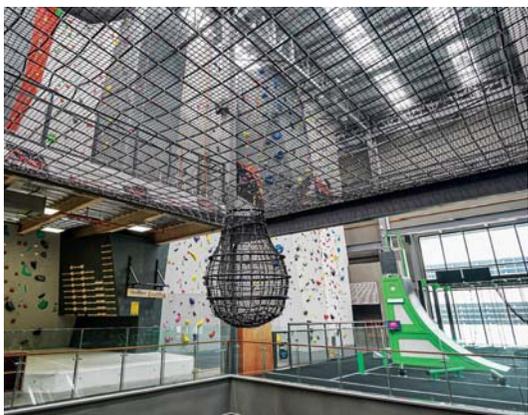
Sungei Wang Plaza hit its lowest occupancy rate during the Covid-19 pandemic at around 65%. “It was probably the lowest in Sungei Wang's 46-year history,” Ng says. “But, because of the resilience of this location, we have recovered and right now we are about 80% [occupied]. We are confident that the mall occupancy will grow above 80% within this year.” He adds that foot traffic at Sungei Wang Plaza has now gone above 2019 or pre-Covid levels at over 1.3 million visitors monthly.

Ng goes on to explain why beauty and experiential offerings would be Sungei Wang Plaza's niche. “One of the trades that has continued to survive over the decades, and has actually grown in Sungei Wang, is the beauty industry. I think we have the largest concentration of beauty [shops and services] in Malaysia and one of the best in terms of pricing, which brings us a steady stream of regular customers. The stable footfall is a plus point for us.

“While we have to do our best to maintain whatever has survived or thrived here, as that is our strength, for us to remain relevant going forward, we need uniqueness and to have our own niche. This is why, six years ago, we identified that we should be looking at a more experiential kind of trade mix.

“And being in the city centre, we do have a different target market. We're not just relying on

PICTURES BY ZAHID IZZANI/THE EDGE



**Quick facts**

<b>NAME</b>	Sungei Wang Plaza
<b>OWNER</b>	Sungei Wang Plaza Management Corp
<b>DEVELOPMENT TYPE</b>	Commercial
<b>TENURE</b>	Freehold
<b>STOREYS</b>	8
<b>COMPLETION</b>	1977
<b>AVERAGE OCCUPANCY RATE</b>	About 79%
<b>AVERAGE RENTAL RATE</b>	About RM8 to RM35 psf
<b>STRATA LOTS</b>	674
<b>NET LETTABLE AREA</b>	823,945 sq ft
<b>GROSS FLOOR AREA</b>	1,251,158 sq ft
<b>CAR PARK BAYS</b>	1,294

**AMENITIES AND FACILITIES**

Food court, concert hall, rock climbing center, Wi-Fi connectivity, charging stations, Rest & Go areas, nursing room, information desk, event spaces, culture and heritage installations/gallery, prayer rooms, concierge services, wheelchair accessibility, stroller services, courier services, virtual reality zone, supermarket, ATMs, pharmacies, beauty salons, optical shops, jewellery stores, toy stores, kitchenware stores, stationery stores, tailoring and alteration services, electronic and gadgets stores, restrooms, security services, escalators and elevators, parking spaces and post office

**ENERGY-SAVING FEATURES**

- Off-peak tariff rider (OPTR)
- Chilled water system
- LED lighting at atrium and common corridors
- Implemented an energy savings project for the LED lighting and air-conditioning systems

**INDOOR AIR QUALITY FEATURES**

- Scheduled servicing, cleaning and maintenance of air-conditioning and ventilation systems
- Fungus cleaning
- Return air filtration system in AHUs
- Air purification ceiling mounted air cleaner in Sungei Wang Plaza Management Corporation office

the residential crowd but also expats, tourists and travellers. We needed a trade mix that also caters for them,” Ng says.

He adds that the Mega Star Arena has been one of Sungei Wang Plaza’s main crowd pullers, in addition to an event space on the sixth floor. “We are quite fortunate to have Mega Star. And on the sixth floor event space, there are quite a few operators doing events there, which draw a couple of thousand people per event. And when we have events at both the concert hall and the event space, we have a crowd of more than 7,000.

“And this has become a new challenge for us because we have to deal with the traffic dispersal in the mall and surroundings. This is something we are working on.”

The Mega Star Arena at Sungei Wang Plaza, which can fit up to 5,000 people, has hosted many events over the past few months, including concerts by K-pop idol Lee Seung Gi and Malaysian songbird Datuk Seri Siti Nurhaliza. As for the event space, it has hosted live shows like Ben Nicky as well as fan club events.

“We do get a very good mix of crowds. Based on feedback from merchants, such events don’t just bring in the event crowd but also spread awareness to a lot of people who have not been back to Sungei Wang in the past 10 to 30 years and to the youngsters who did not know Sungei Wang exists,” says Ng.

“I would say timing is very much in our favour because we have completed our renovations of the interiors. So when people come, we get a lot more positive comments. We believe this impact will bring in recurring crowds in the future, and this is something the merchants here are very positive about.

“And having experiential tenants like that, I would say we are very much on track with what we have planned, and we are moving in the right direction.”

To move towards its new positioning, Sungei Wang Plaza has its own leasing team on hand to assist owners and tenants. “Previously, most owners didn’t need help; property agents didn’t have a chance to do their leasing here because most owners had merchants queuing up. But over the last 10 years, things have changed a lot. So we started this initiative and communicated with the merchants and owners, to the extent of doing town hall sessions with them to explain the current retail scene.

“We have also come up with a guideline based on the floor plan to recommend to the owners. We even bring in potential tenants and try to rearrange the trade mix according to our guidelines, but we can’t ultimately dictate because we are not single ownership. Nonetheless, we are under one big um-

**Clockwise from top left: The main features of Sungei Wang Plaza include the Camp5 climbing gym, the refurbished atrium, the 18,000 sq ft Mega Star Arena and MinNature Malaysia miniature heritage gallery**

rella, whereby if the mall does well, everyone does well, and if the mall doesn’t do well, the chances of tenants doing well are really not there.”

When it comes to the challenges of maintaining a four-decade-old property, one of them is replacing the hardware. “We have spent a lot of money, and we are not totally done yet. It’s a gradual process. We have set a timeline to complete this within the next five years. Much of the hardware [in this building] has lasted since the first day. It’s not that they are not functional, but there are no more spare parts. We started gradually changing our escalators and lifts about five years ago ... as well as things like lighting, chillers and central air conditioning.”

Ng says that despite needing to spend the money to phase out the old hardware in the building, the MC has given back rebates to the strata mall owners on their service charge. “We have not asked a sen from the owners to do all this. At the same time, they have been getting rebates on their service charge; we started this during the Covid-19 pandemic because they were all suffering from the lower rental income. Even though we are in the recovery stage this year, we are still giving rebates.”

Despite its age, Sungei Wang Plaza has been fitted out with a number of features for energy efficiency and indoor air quality.

One is an electrical prepaid system (EPS), says KFPM executive director Winnie Lim. “In 2019, Sungei Wang Plaza carried out an electrical metre migration to an EPS to enable users to track their usage and manage their expenses better. Each shoplot will have its own individual EPS metre, which can monitor monthly electrical consumption, credit balance, recharge history, live update of present load, energy bill reading and sanction

**From left: Teo, Ng, Lim and Cheng**



load, and energy trend through an app. We have achieved the zero arrears target for electricity distribution to all tenants.

“The mall is also equipped with an off-peak tariff rider, which gives a 20% discount on electricity usage during off-peak hours. We also have implemented an energy savings project for the LED lighting and air-conditioning systems, which have helped us save more than 10% of our electricity consumption daily.”

**What the future holds**

Ng believes that Sungei Wang Plaza’s new positioning will take it through the next 10 years. “After that, it again depends on how well we adapt to the new environment because consumer behaviour keeps changing. There is still room to grow in terms of our experiential offering, but I believe that as we move on and strengthen, things can only get better.”

Sungei Wang will continue to benefit from its differentiated offerings, he adds. “We are not your regular neighbourhood mall, so the trade mix and visitors here are very diverse. For example, if you buy a shirt here that doesn’t fit, you can get it tailored. There are supporting trades here and a circular economy, which you don’t typically see in most other malls because it may be too expensive for some of these trades to survive.”

Meanwhile, location will continue to be a boon for Sungei Wang. “We’re not just in the city; we’re in the heart of the golden triangle,” Ng says. “This means we can cater for all walks of life as we [are near] all kinds of accommodation ranging from two to five stars. And traditionally and up to today, Sungei Wang is known for its affordability.”

MC chairman Andy Cheng concludes: “We do have other strata malls in the country, but in terms of the kind of culture we have here, I think we are the one and only.”

10 YEARS AND ABOVE  
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## Sunway Putra Hotel

BY CHAI YEE HOONG  
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There is an air of elegance in the main lobby of Sunway Putra Hotel, with its opulent marble floors, grand staircase and glass-domed atrium. The 650-room hotel, which forms part of an integrated development with Sunway Putra Mall and Sunway Putra Tower, is nestled within one of Kuala Lumpur's most eclectic, vibrant districts in the diamond triangle opposite World Trade Centre Kuala Lumpur.

The 5-star hotel was formerly The Legend Hotel, which first opened its doors in 1993. In April 2008, The Putra Place — which included The Legend Hotel, The Mall and an office tower — went under the hammer and was eventually successfully bid for by Sunway Real Estate Investment Trust (Sunway REIT) in March 2011. The hotel component was subsequently revived as Sunway Putra Hotel, which began operating with its new brand in January 2012.

Its owner, RHB Trustees Bhd (as trustee for Sunway REIT), saw the need to transform the hotel into a more contemporary and competitive offering in today's climate and started major renovations in 2015, alongside the continued operations of the hotel.

Sunway Putra Hotel Sdn Bhd senior general manager Wilfred Yeo tells *City & Country* that one of the latest major overhauls was done during the downtime of the Covid-19 pandemic. "Covid-19 was literally a good time for us because we were able to turn that into a very good opportunity. We had lifts that were almost 28 years old, so we have replaced all of them. That took about a year and a quarter to do and cost us close to RM3 million."

Another improvement that was made prior to the pandemic includes the upgrading of the hotel swimming pool, he adds. "Those days, swimming pools had a depth of close to 3m. I always say, never compromise on FLS [fire, life and safety]. So what we've done was standardise the pool to just 1.2m so it's safer for everyone."

In keeping up with the times, some of the hotel spaces have also been transformed. "Those days, it was glamorous if your hotel had recreational facilities like tennis courts and squash courts. But it doesn't make sense today. So when we took over, we replaced the courts with meeting rooms. These were some of the major transformations that took place to make the hotel relevant for today's business," says Yeo, who leads the hotel with a team of 11 department heads responsible for over 170 employees.

In recognition of its tenacity to stay ahead, Sunway Putra Hotel has won Bronze in the 10 Years and Above — Specialised category of *The Edge Malaysia Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023*.

**Turning negatives into positives**

It is no easy feat when it comes to maintaining a 30-year-old property, and one of the main challenges is the building's mosaic tile façade. "Those days, it looked good, but today, it is outdated. Also, the tiles only can have so much cement at the back as a base, but after 30 years, that cement thins because of heat exposure and so forth. So when that happens, and heavy rain comes, water will find its way in ... tiles may also fall off.

"So what we're doing is a knock test; there are people on gondolas doing that right now. We cannot remove all the mosaic tiles because some of them are still intact, so the knock test will determine if the tiles are loose, and if they are, we will remove them. We will then treat the façade, and the entire façade will be replastered again. This project is going to take a year and a half and we are estimating it to be completed by the end of next year," Yeo says, adding that the building will also finally get a new colour after three decades.

Another major challenge was the marble floor-



## Creating opportunities with innovation

MOHD IZWAN MOHD NAZAM/THE EDGE



ing, he adds. "The marble flooring is 30 years old, but still looks very good today. It's a lot of work to maintain. During Covid-19 when we were running at 15% occupancy, we turned quite a lot of things around; we stripped the entire marble floor and treated it by sections. After that was done, it was much easier to manage. Now, every night, we have people buffing the marble floor, so you still get that shine. The marble floor was a total revival.

"Here, we have to look at ways of turning negatives into positives, and we do that a lot."

When it comes to the successful management of Sunway Putra Hotel, Yeo says there are three overarching pillars — financial, customer and

Yeo (third from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards' chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, *The Edge Media Group* publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat and *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan

people. "One cannot go without the other. If you don't have the financials and you are putting a lot of emphasis on your customers and people, then you are doing it for show, not for dough. So it is important that whatever we do, it must be profitable, otherwise [we] don't do it."

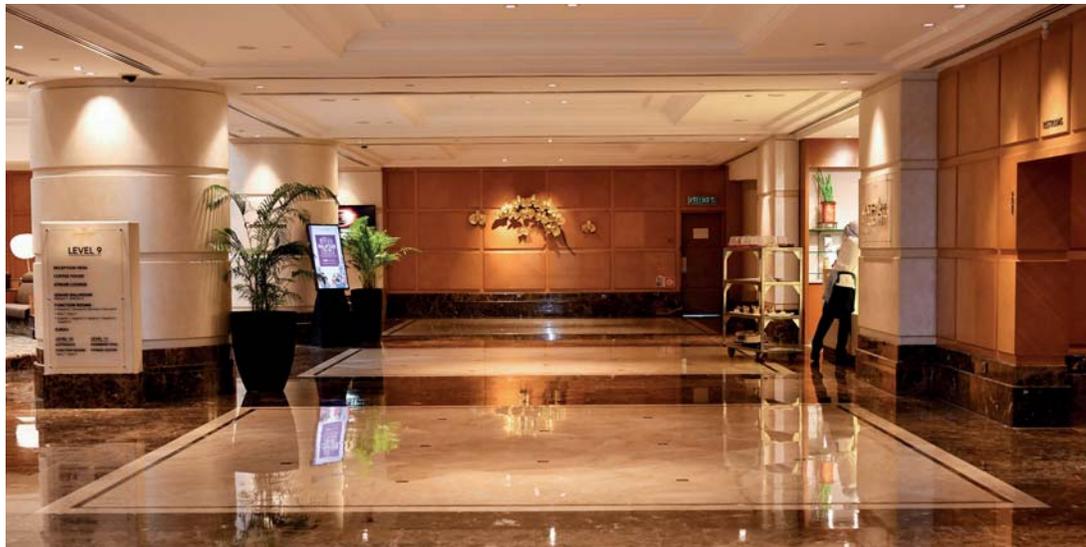
For the customer pillar, Yeo says it is important to work with prices that commensurate with value for Sunway Putra Hotel's guests. "Making a lot of money may look very good in your P&L [profit and loss statement] but your customers may suffer.

"When we reflect value in pricing, we also have to ensure that our guests have a room that they can be proud of. We want guests to experience the five senses — see, smell, taste, hear and feel; so that linen needs to feel softer than the linen in their homes. This is embedded in every staff here; it has become our culture.

"The other thing is an efficient check-in experience. We have done time simulations and trained the staff. And then there's the breakfast; for the price guests pay, we must give them things like scones, *shakshuka* or even something as local as *nasi dagang* or *nasi kerabu*, that they may have heard of but not tried. So that's how we speak to our customers; let it not just be what we say, let it be what the customers say about us."

According to Yeo, Sunway Putra Hotel was recognised by Tripadvisor as one of the top 10% of hotels globally for customer service in May. "And that makes us the top 2% in KL when it comes to customer service."

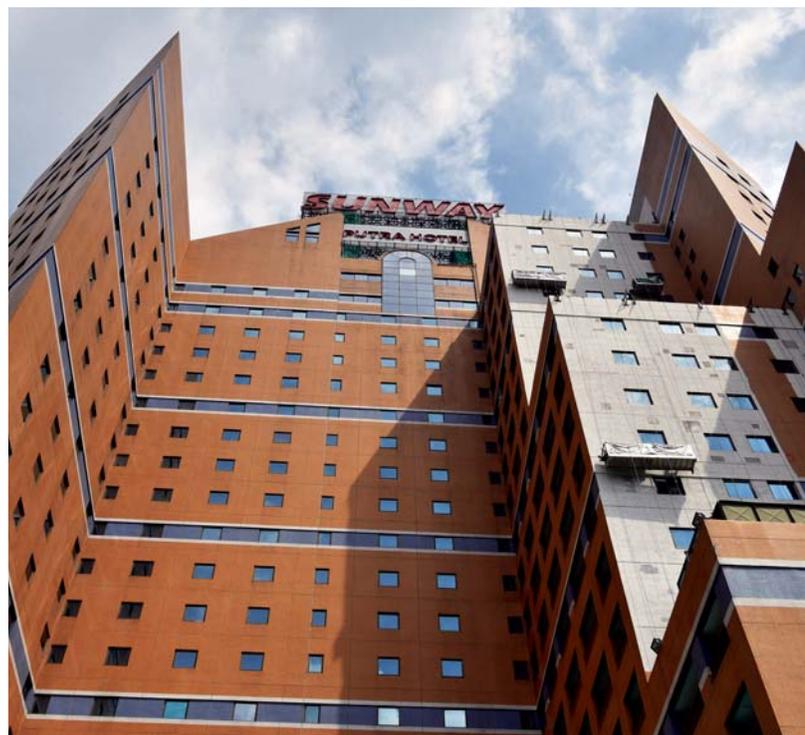
PICTURES BY SAM FONG/THE EDGE



**Top: Sunway Putra Hotel's marble flooring, which was stripped and treated, is now buffed nightly**

**Right: The hotel's façade treatment project is expected to be completed by the end of next year**

**Left: The 30-year-old hotel has undergone major refurbishments since 2015**



**The hotel's swimming pool has been upgraded**

In terms of the third pillar (people), Yeo says Sunway Putra Hotel scored 70% in a Kincentric (formerly Aon Hewitt) employee engagement survey. "It's no point just making money and making your customers feel good but you don't take care of your staff. With these three pillars, and these are all fact-based, it has shown that we have managed well."

Meanwhile, the maintenance aspect of Sunway Putra Hotel is both preventive and reactive, Yeo says. "Occupancy here is about 54% on a weekday and goes up to 85% on weekends. When we are running at 54%, we have [leftover] rooms. So we will close certain floors at certain stipulated periods and put these rooms under preventive maintenance. The scope covers things like painting and repairing wallpaper, carpets, furniture, air conditioning, lights and so forth. This is really to upkeep our assets so we can avoid unexpected equipment failure."

"Reactive maintenance is daily. The engineering team is sent to check on things like our chiller plants, high tension and low voltage areas, all the LPGs (liquefied petroleum gas), lifts and M&E (mechanical and electrical) like water pumps and input all the readings into a system to help us establish a trend. As an example, if a bulb is always fusing, it is no more a bulb issue but could be a cabling issue. That's how we establish a corrective measure so that it doesn't become a long-term issue."

In terms of occupancy, Sunway Putra Hotel is anticipated to hit close to a 58% average this year, up from 45% last year. "Last year, we were already doing 60% of our pre-pandemic numbers, which is very good. This year, if we are looking at 58%, we are going to be close to 80% of our pre-pandemic numbers." The year-to-date (YTD as at June) average room rate is RM260, up from the average pre-pandemic rate of RM205.

Sustainability is also a key focus at the hotel. "We had solar panel installations done last year. We worked with the mall on that because this is an integrated complex. We have also changed all our lights to LED, and consolidated our chillers and

freezers, to save energy and costs. We use timers to optimise air conditioning in the corridors," Yeo says.

Mini bars in the guest rooms are also switched off to save energy, he adds. "We tell our customers that we have deliberately turned the mini bar off, in support of SDGs [Sustainable Development Goals]. And if they like to use it, they can switch it on."

"In terms of water savings, we have put little weights in all the toilet bowls so they only flush 500ml of water. New toilet bowls can have a big and small flush, but not all the toilet bowls here are new so we have to be innovative. We also leave messages telling our guests that linens are only washed after the second night. Unless guests request it, we are SDG-compliant."

The hotel uses recyclable water bottles and has removed all single-use plastics in the rooms, Yeo adds. "We support a local brand called Tanamera for [the toiletries] and they all come in pump canisters."

"This is not about being cheap, it is about being sustainable."

### Quick facts

<b>NAME</b>	Sunway Putra Hotel Kuala Lumpur
<b>OWNER</b>	RHB Trustees Bhd (as trustee for Sunway REIT)
<b>DEVELOPMENT TYPE</b>	Hotel
<b>COMPLETION</b>	1993
<b>STOREYS</b>	29
<b>ROOMS</b>	650
<b>AVERAGE OCCUPANCY RATE</b>	2022: 44% YTD as at June: 48%
<b>AVERAGE ROOM RATE</b>	2022: RM225 YTD as at June: RM260
<b>GROSS FLOOR AREA</b>	833,847 sq ft
<b>CAR PARK BAYS</b>	1,433

#### AMENITIES

World Trade Centre Kuala Lumpur, Sunway Putra Mall, PWTC LRT station, Petronas Twin Towers

#### FACILITIES

Outdoor pools for adults and children, whirlpool, fitness centre, 15 event spaces, 24-hours in-room dining services, coffee house, atrium lounge and soon-to-open Rumah Makan Nusantara — the first and only authentic Indonesian restaurant located within a hotel setting

#### WATER- AND ENERGY-SAVING FEATURES

- Bed linen and towels are not changed daily, and only changed two days after guests check in unless requested otherwise. This reduces water usage and provides cost savings.
- The flushing float has been adjusted and reduced to 500ml per flush in all bedrooms
- All rooms are fitted with LED lights
- Consolidation of chillers and freezers has resulted in energy cost saving
- Timers are installed to adjust the operation timing of the corridors' air-conditioning to run only during the day

#### INDOOR AIR QUALITY FEATURES

To ensure fresh air enters the building, smoke spill systems/fans are activated throughout the entire building weekly. The purpose of this exercise is to bring in fresh air from the outside and into the building to purify and purge the air. It helps to circulate the air throughout the building.



**Yeo: Here, we have to look at ways of turning negatives into positives, and we do that a lot**

### Looking ahead

Not resting on its laurels, Sunway Putra Hotel continues to evolve, with current upgrading works at its lower lobby and a new Indonesian restaurant.

"The Indonesian restaurant will be an additional feature to the hotel and will have a 150-seat capacity. Why Indonesian? Because we don't see many good Indonesian restaurants around. So we are proud to claim that this is the first and only Indonesian restaurant in a hotel, which is going to open in September or October this year," Yeo explains. He adds that the new restaurant has been endorsed by the Indonesian Embassy and was launched by Indonesia's Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy Sandiaga Uno in April.

In the next three years, the team at Sunway Putra Hotel is looking to refurbish the guest rooms, upgrade the convention facilities and renovate the guest toilets.

Yeo shares that the team is also looking at a new room type, AB1 and AB1+, that targets the backpackers market. "AB1 is an acronym for 'a basic one' and we are taking out 60 rooms to do this over two dedicated floors. They are basically a no-frills room, with just a bed, TV, towels and no housekeeping or room service. The guests of these rooms are also not able to use the hotel facilities. This goes back to innovation, and creating opportunities for ourselves." **E**

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**SPECIAL MENTION**

## Iskandar Malaysia Studios

BY **CHELSEA J LIM**  
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Going around Iskandar Malaysia Studios (IMS) in a buggy, the site visit was like a captivating movie magic experience. The 50-acre studio complex has various facilities to cater to the needs of every stage of the filming production — water tanks to film water scenes with water sourced from the lake, a 30-acre natural forest for scenes that need to be shot in a forest setting and a permanent set featuring a Peranakan colonial architecture.

According to the IMS team, the foundation of the aforementioned set is permanent and the façade can be altered according to the settings of the movie. One no longer needs to travel to Penang or Melaka to do the filming; one can just head to IMS and shoot the scenes here in a controlled environment.

Located in Iskandar Puteri, Johor, the one-of-its-kind studio in Malaysia received a Special Mention in the Below 10 years — Specialised category of *The Edge Malaysia Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023*.

Owned by Khazanah Nasional Bhd, the studio was built to catalyse and internationalise the Malaysian creative industry as well as to position the Iskandar region as the hub of that industry.

“It aims to inject life, soul and activity to the Iskandar region. Prior to 2014, the Malaysian creative industry was very domestic-centric with Malaysian producers making content mostly for local audiences. There was not a lot of incoming international production and not a lot of Malaysian content being exported overseas,” says Rashid Karim, the CEO of Iskandar Malaysia Studios Sdn Bhd (IMS Sdn Bhd), the operating company of the studio.

“Until we came in, Malaysia did not have the infrastructure to support big-budget international productions,” he adds.

Big titles like Netflix’s 2014 drama series *Marco Polo* and the Hollywood film *Crazy Rich Asians* were some of the productions that IMS has been a part of.

Commenting on recent reports about the sale of the studio to Singapore-based GHY Culture & Media, Rashid clarifies that the land and building are still owned by Khazanah and the company is only selling its shares in IMS Sdn Bhd to Studio Management Services Sdn Bhd (SMS).

SMS is a consortium comprising the management team of IMS Sdn Bhd and GHY Culture & Media (M) Sdn Bhd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Singapore’s GHY Culture & Media Holding Co Ltd.

Subsequently, Khazanah will lease out the studio to IMS Sdn Bhd.

### World-class sustainable green studio

Rashid expresses hope that IMS will become a world-class sustainable green studio.

The film industry is known to have a huge environmental impact and international studios have been trying to make their productions more sustainable and environmentally friendly.

Rashid says IMS too is finding ways to minimise this impact, although the studio itself already has a certain degree of in-built green aspect when it was initially designed.

“The real benchmark is against big facilities in the US, UK and Australia. We are already getting there. But they are slightly more advanced when it comes to things like using electric vehicles and battery storage instead of diesel genset. I think that’s not so much the function of the facility, but the function of the maturity of that economy.

“What we have been doing consciously over the last few years [is] to build on that aspect. So, we try to take a holistic approach to [greening the studio]. Our focus is on energy and water efficiency.”

“We’ve signed a PPA [power purchase agreement] to install a rooftop solar system for 700Kw [solar panels]. We already have approval from Tenaga Nasional Bhd and the Sustainable Energy Devel-



PICTURES BY MOHD IZWAN MOHD NAZAM/THE EDGE



Rashid (third from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards’ chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, *The Edge Media* Group publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat and *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan



Rashid: Until we came in, Malaysia did not have the infrastructure to support big-budget international productions

# A film studio’s green mission

opment Authority (SEDA). Installation should start in the next few months and [the system] should be operational by the end of the year.”

He adds that they are also going to upgrade the building management system and install more sensors to ensure optimal cold water distribution from the chiller.

On water usage efficiency, Rashid remarks: “Water management, to a very large extent, was already very in-built.”

Through a thorough filtration process, water from the lake is used in filming water scenes, which reduces reliance on the water council. Besides that, it also has a rainwater harvesting system for chiller use.

“Once we are done [with the scene], we can treat [the water] and release it back into the lake. It’s much cheaper for our client as well ... We have also built a water capture system, not for the water tank use but for our chiller. It dramatically reduces our dependency on the water council.”

These incorporations all boil down to optimising the cost of operation and production for the management team as well as for the studio’s clients.

A few other sustainable features that the management team has been exploring are algae production for biomass and undertaking research and development on sustainable products such as the use of medium-density fibreboard as reusable material to build interior film sets.

IMS is currently in talks with a company based in Singapore about the possibilities of this algae production.

### Special skills for unique challenges

Maintaining a studio facility requires a special skill set. Hence, maintenance is done via an in-house maintenance team.

“The difficulty is the skill set required to maintain the facility because it is unique. It’s not a skill set that you can hire off the market because there’s no other facility in Malaysia that has the same equipment and needs as us. So, we spent a lot of time and resources training our team in-house.”

“By and large, we are very conscious of the need to provide our in-house engineering team the training and the resources necessary to maintain the facility.”

### Quick facts

NAME	Iskandar Malaysia Studios
OWNER	Khazanah Nasional Bhd
DEVELOPMENT TYPE	TV and film studios
SIZE	3,484,800 sq ft
FILM STAGES/SETS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five state-of-the-art film stages;</li> <li>• Two fully equipped TV studios;</li> <li>• Three water filming tanks</li> </ul>

### AMENITIES

Production offices, green room, makeup and dressing rooms, commissary and catering trucks, lighting equipment rentals, workshops, post-production facilities, screening rooms, third-party transport services

### FACILITIES

Sound stages, backlots, water filming facilities, production offices, post-production facilities, props rental, wardrobe, makeup, hair, dressing rooms, screening rooms, workshop space

### ENERGY-SAVING FEATURES

- Part 1: Energy efficiency
- Building Energy Index (BEI): 98 kwh/m2
  - Successfully reduce 32% of annual energy consumption compared with the base year (2019)
- Part 2: Water efficiency
- Mixed use of recycled lake water; and
  - Harvested rainwater with advanced filtering (Total capacity: 5,915 m3)
- Part 3: Environmental protection
- R&D on sustainable products: Using medium-density fibreboard (MDF) as reusable material for building interior film sets. (Every 1,000kg reusable set is estimated to reduce 810kg CO2)

Besides that, safety is crucial, especially when there are hundreds and thousands of people running around the studio.

“When we have no production, our team is lean. When we have a production, [we have] thousands of people running around the studio. They would not necessarily be our employees but the crew and cast brought in by the producer. We also have to make sure things are coordinated between different productions.

“We’ve done six productions simultaneously. You can imagine the kind of coordination and logistics required to ensure people don’t step on each other’s toes and also to ensure everything is safe,” Rashid explains.

To ensure order and safety on the studio ground, an onboarding process conducted by IMS’ security team and safety officers is mandatory. Each production must have an appointed safety officer, who is primarily responsible for the safety of that production team. **E**

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**SPECIAL MENTION**

# Menara Majlis Bandaraya Johor Bahru

## Setting a benchmark

BY **PRIYA DEVAN**  
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**M**enara Majlis Bandaraya Johor Bahru (MBJB) is an impressive, well-designed building with many green features.

Its façade, which is adorned with Islamic-inspired motifs, features laminated Low-E glass with a U-value of 2.8 and shading coefficient (SC) value of 0.35. This acts as a sunshade for the building's indoor space, MJB mayor Datuk Mohd Noorazam Osman tells *City & Country* in a virtual interview. (U-value denotes the rating given to a window based on how much heat loss it allows.)

He adds that the cube structure of Menara MJB faces 19° north, south, east and west to maximise daylight in the building. The 15-storey building with an atrium staircase consists of ballrooms, office spaces, meeting rooms, an auditorium, a surau and a rooftop garden, among others.

Located in Plentong, Johor Baru, it also features a recessed ground-floor envelope that offers protection from the sun and rain, plenty of vegetation to improve air quality, horizontal shading for effective protection against direct sunlight in low latitudes and a high-performance double skin in its exterior to improve thermal performance through protection from direct radiation. There is also a central courtyard that provides thermal comfort by removing hot air through solar-chimney principles.

"With the courtyard in place, it has helped improve the thermal performance of the building and also provides natural diffuse light to the inner-office spaces," says Mohd Noorazam.

Menara MJB received a Special Mention in the Below 10 Years — Specialised category in *The Edge Malaysia* Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023.

### Maintaining a green building

A Green Building Index (GBI)-certified building with a carbon score of 48% towards zero carbon, Menara MJB boasts plenty of green features. These include an energy management system to monitor the temperature, relative humidity and digital water meter; motion sensors for lighting that cover over 25% of the building's net lettable area as well as a daylight glare control system where translucent roller blinds have been installed for all office spaces.

Additionally, the building has a rainwater harvesting system for irrigation, with half of it used for landscape areas; and a pneumatic waste collection system that offers a more hygienic and lower carbon-emitting way of disposing waste.

To maintain these features and the building, Mohd Noorazam says the mandate has been delegated to two parties: maintenance company Lubuk Pertama Sdn Bhd and MJB itself.

Lubuk Pertama is currently in charge of Menara MJB's maintenance works, cleaning, system management, complaint management, pest control, risk assessment and utility-saving efforts. MJB oversees the building's landscape and information technology devices and manages events held at the venue.

Mohd Noorazam says the primary maintenance strategy for the building is to follow its planned preventive maintenance (PPM) schedule. "For servicing and monitoring, the maintenance company has a PPM schedule that is carried out according to the frequency of maintenance, such as weekly, monthly, quarterly, yearly, every two years or when it is required."

He adds that the management team also carries out corrective maintenance when necessary to avoid major repairs or damage. "These methods

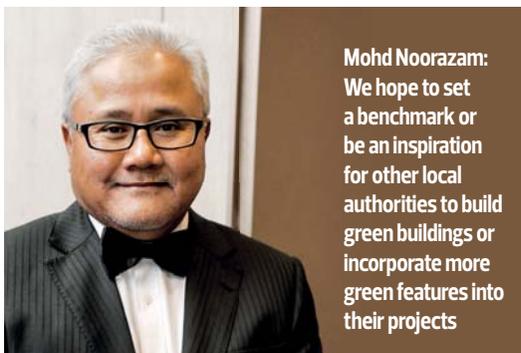
### Quick facts

<b>NAME</b>	Menara Majlis Bandaraya Johor Bahru
<b>DEVELOPER</b>	Astaka Padu Sdn Bhd
<b>DEVELOPMENT TYPE</b>	Office
<b>SIZE</b>	1.37 acres
<b>TENURE</b>	Freehold
<b>STOREYS</b>	15, with 7 basement levels
<b>BUILT-UP</b>	31,589.38 sq ft
<b>COMPLETION</b>	2019
<b>AVERAGE OCCUPANCY RATE</b>	100%
<b>NET LETTABLE AREA</b>	3,033 sq ft
<b>GROSS FLOOR AREA</b>	41,138.42 sq m
<b>CAR PARK BAYS</b>	583

**FACILITIES**  
Café, cafeteria, ballrooms, office spaces, meeting rooms, auditorium, surau and rooftop garden

**ENERGY-SAVING FEATURES**  
LED bulbs, motion sensors and a rain harvesting system

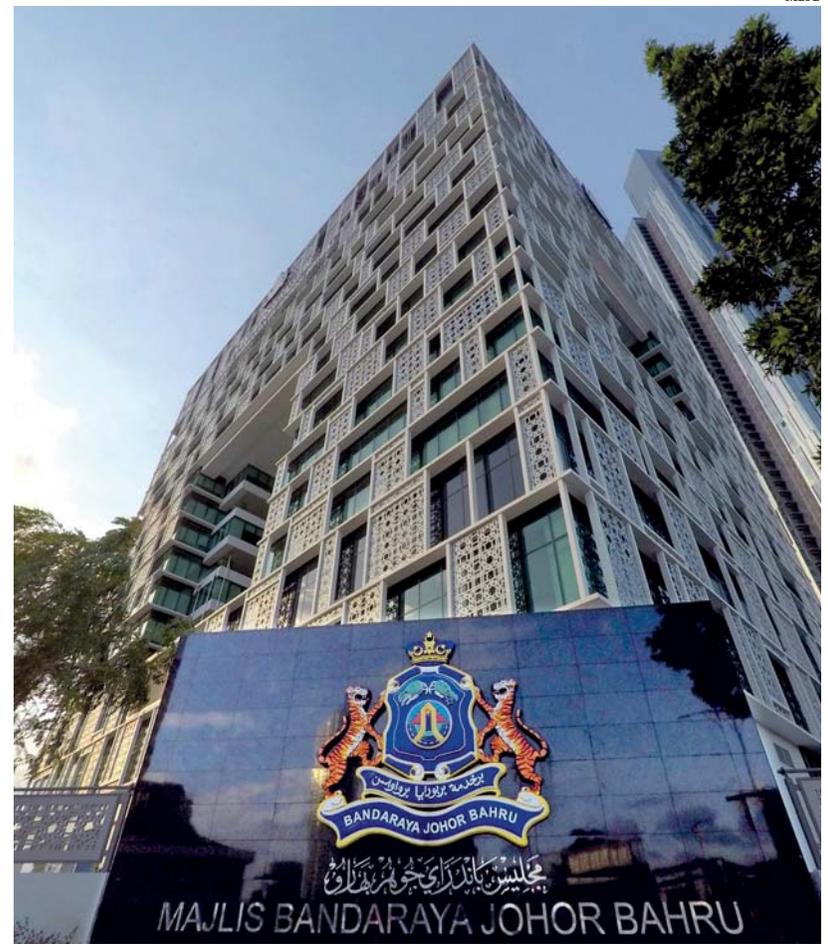
**INDOOR AIR QUALITY FEATURES**  
Exhaust fan and display thermostat to monitor and control temperature



**Mohd Noorazam:** We hope to set a benchmark or be an inspiration for other local authorities to build green buildings or incorporate more green features into their projects

help mitigate the risks of unexpected failure in the building because scheduled maintenance can help identify issues and minimise repair expenses."

As Lubuk Pertama's contract is ending soon, he says MJB will be appointing Damansara Assets Sdn Bhd, the property services arm of Johor Corp, as its replacement. He explains that Damansara Assets was selected as it appears to fulfil MJB's expectations for the building and due to the former's track record in facility management such as in hospitals, office buildings, malls and local markets.



**Above:** The façade of Menara MJB is adorned with Islamic-inspired motifs

**Below:** MJB deputy secretary Nazatul Shima and Mohd Noorazam (third and fourth from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards' chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, *The Edge Media* Group publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat and *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan

MOHD IZWAN MOHD NAZAM/THE EDGE



### Upgrade plans to overcome challenges

High electricity consumption and charges were among the challenges Menara MJB faced when the building was first opened, Mohd Noorazam says.

"We are working on acquiring a stabiliser. The unstable power surges have led to our high electricity consumption, which has also increased bills at the same time. With the stabiliser, we foresee it saving around 20% to 30% in electricity consumption and about 10% in costs," he explains, adding that the stabiliser will cost about RM13,000 per month.

MJB is also planning to change its air conditioning system to reduce electricity consumption. "We're looking to change the system to variable refrigerant volume to reduce electricity usage and have better temperature control. We have a multi-purpose hall on one of the levels, and when there is an event, we have to switch on the air-conditioning for the whole floor because it's centralised. We realised that this is not practical and so we decided to redesign our air-conditioning system."

Other building upgrades include the installation of solar panels and more motion sensors, which he says will be implemented by this October. MJB is also looking to change its building management system to a more efficient one.

Aside from that, he says the vacuum used in the pneumatic waste collection system of the building has become obsolete. The one currently in use is from a European country and lately, it has been difficult to obtain some parts from the continent, he adds.

"We are working with consultants on alternative solutions. We will most likely go with local companies to be safe."

### On a mission

On why the city council decided to build a green building, Mohd Noorazam says, "As a local authority, MJB needs to show [active initiative] that it is promoting the green agenda so we took the lead by creating our own green building. We hope to set a benchmark or be an inspiration for other local authorities to build green buildings or incorporate more green features into their projects."

"In fact, we're also encouraging developers to incorporate more green into their projects and to have more community-based facilities. We currently have 212 buildings that come under MJB's management, so we plan to incorporate green features in those facilities too," he shares.

# Congratulations

## to the winners of



**THE EDGE**  
MALAYSIA

# BEST MANAGED & SUSTAINABLE PROPERTY AWARDS 2023

### EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS

Malaysia's Outstanding  
Sustainable Residential  
Strata Development  
The Binjai On The Park

Malaysia's Outstanding  
Sustainable Office  
Development  
Menara Citibank

Malaysia's Outstanding  
Specialised Development  
Kuala Lumpur Convention  
Centre

Malaysia's Exemplary  
Landscape Design  
The Era Wetlands

### BELOW 10 YEARS – MIXED DEVELOPMENT (ENTIRE)

BRONZE: Sunway Velocity

BRONZE: TEEGA @  
Puteri Harbour

### 10 YEARS AND ABOVE – MULTIPLE-OWNED STRATA OFFICE

SILVER: Oval Damansara

BRONZE: Binjai 8  
Premium SoHo

### 10 YEARS AND ABOVE – NON-STRATA OFFICE

BRONZE: Plaza OSK

BRONZE: Wisma Consplant

### BELOW 10 YEARS – SINGLE-OWNED OFFICE IN A MIXED STRATA DEVELOPMENT

SILVER: Menara 1 Sentrum

### 10 YEARS AND ABOVE – SINGLE-OWNED OFFICE IN A MIXED STRATA DEVELOPMENT

GOLD: Menara Citibank

### BELOW 10 YEARS – NON-STRATA RETAIL

GOLD: IOI City Mall

### 10 YEARS AND ABOVE – NON-STRATA RETAIL

GOLD: Kluang Mall

### 10 YEARS AND ABOVE – STRATA RETAIL

BRONZE:  
Sungei Wang Plaza

### BELOW 10 YEARS – MULTIPLE-OWNED STRATA RESIDENTIAL

GOLD: Sunway Emerald  
Residence

GOLD: The Estate

SILVER: Dedaun  
Condominium

SILVER: Pearl Suria  
Residence

### 10 YEARS AND ABOVE – MULTIPLE-OWNED STRATA RESIDENTIAL

GOLD: Kiaramas Cendana  
Condominium

GOLD: The Binjai On  
The Park

SILVER: Mont' Kiara Banyan

SILVER: Tara Condominium

### 10 YEARS AND ABOVE – NON-STRATA RESIDENTIAL

SILVER: The Hills,  
Horizon Hills

### BELOW 10 YEARS – SUSTAINABLE AFFORDABLE HOUSING

SILVER: Selangorku PR1MA  
Lakefront Homes  
@ Cyberjaya

### BELOW 10 YEARS – SPECIALISED

SPECIAL MENTION:  
Iskandar Malaysia Studios

SPECIAL MENTION:  
Menara Majlis Bandaraya  
Johor Bahru

### 10 YEARS AND ABOVE – SPECIALISED

GOLD: Kuala Lumpur  
Convention Centre

BRONZE: Sunway Putra  
Hotel

SPECIAL MENTION:  
Wisma Darul Iman

### THE EDGE MALAYSIA- ILAM SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPE AWARDS

Landscape Design  
GOLD: The Era Wetlands

Landscape Design  
SILVER: Summit Park  
@ Southville City

Landscape Planning  
GOLD: KotaSAS  
(Precinct 1 - Precinct 7)

Landscape Planning  
GOLD: Setia Bayuemas  
Lake Park

10 YEARS AND ABOVE  
Specialised

SPECIAL MENTION

## Wisma Darul Iman

BY RACHEL CHEW  
city.country@bizedge.com

Wisma Darul Iman, the state-owned secretariat building, is an important landmark in Terengganu. Located on Jalan Sultan Ismail, one of the busiest streets in Kuala Terengganu, it houses the offices of the chief minister and state secretary and is also home to the Terengganu State Legislative Assembly. The 20-storey building is the second tallest structure in the state and one of the oldest buildings in the town.

Construction of Wisma Darul Iman began in 1982 and was completed in 1985. The building was officially inaugurated by the Sultan of Terengganu on Aug 25, 1986. Since then, it has served as a witness to the aesthetic and cultural history of Kuala Terengganu, providing a sense of place and connection to the past.

Instantly recognisable as the tallest building in Kuala Terengganu in the 1980s, Wisma Darul Iman commands attention with its grand presence and unique aesthetics. It has intricate detailing and features that are rare today, such as tiled facades, a traditional Terengganu roof design and full teakwood interiors.

The building received a Special Mention in the 10 Years and Above — Specialised category of *The Edge Malaysia* Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2023.

“The Terengganu State Government recognises the significance of preserving the state’s heritage, reflected in the fusion of modern and traditional Terengganu architecture found in Wisma Darul Iman. It is considered a valuable legacy, offering cultural, educational, aesthetic, economic and inspirational benefits which will be maintained for the future generations of Terengganu,” UDA Holdings Bhd president and CEO Datuk Mohd Salem Kailany tells *City & Country* in an interview recently.

UDA Dayaurus Sdn Bhd, the property management arm of UDA Holdings, has been the property manager for Wisma Darul Iman since its completion. The company plays a crucial role in ensuring smooth operations and providing services to both the building owner and occupiers of the building.

“Our working relationship with the building owner and occupiers is built on open communication, trust and collaboration. We strive to understand their needs and provide tailored solutions to meet their requirements. Regular meetings and feedback sessions are conducted to address any concerns,” Mohd Salem says.

He adds that the building’s occupancy rate has been stable over the years and is currently at 85%. The anchor occupants include government departments and agencies, as well as various state-level offices.

“Managing a building like Wisma Darul Iman presents several unique challenges, such as the preservation of the structure and history. The building holds significant historical and cultural value. It is also a landmark of the state, hence preserving its structural integrity while incorporating modern amenities requires careful planning and expertise,” Mohd Salem explains.

### Upgrading plans

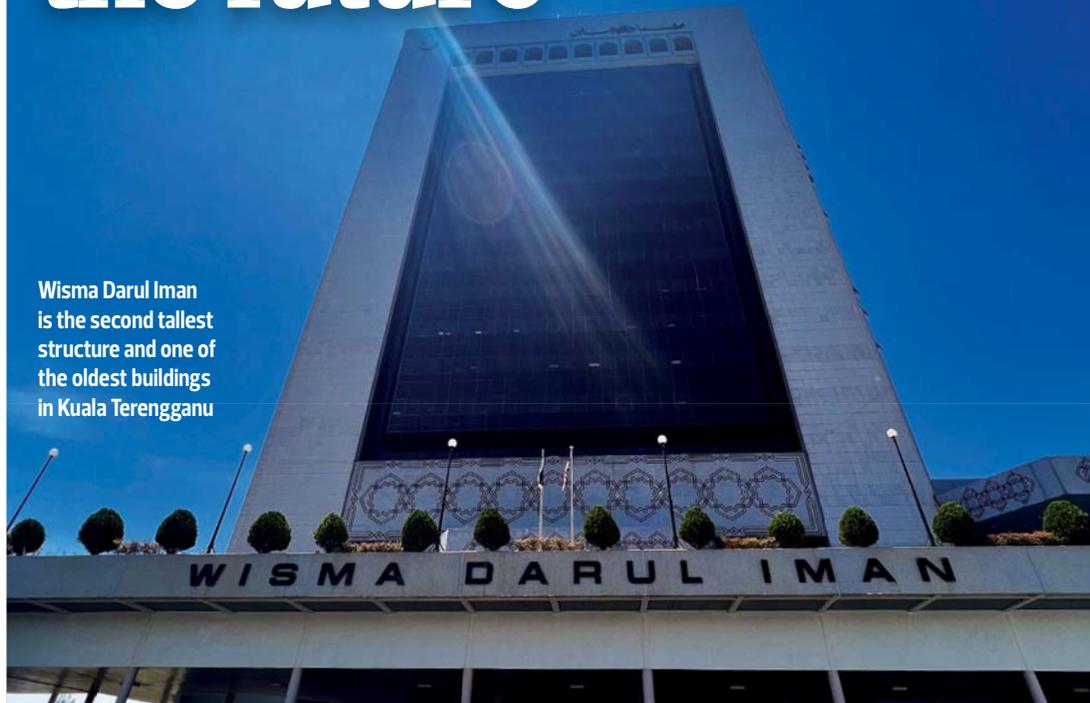
While the building owner has made it clear that it will maintain the façade as much as possible, some interior upgrading works have been done recently, such as giving the common areas and lobby a modern touch to improve the overall experience for occupants and visitors.

Apart from that, as it is an old building, some facilities have been upgraded to meet the evolving needs and expectations of the building owner and occupants in terms of energy efficiency, sustainability and safety.

“Recently, several [instances of] relevant upgrading works have been done, such as the installation of energy-efficient lighting systems and the upgrading of security systems. We replaced the conventional lighting with energy-efficient alternatives to save on energy costs, reduce operational costs and show our commitment to promoting sustainability. We are

# Preserving charm, upgrading for the future

Wisma Darul Iman is the second tallest structure and one of the oldest buildings in Kuala Terengganu



SHAHKIN YAHYA/THE EDGE

Below: UDA Holdings group chief operating officer of asset management Azrudyn Rashid and Terengganu state deputy secretary (development) and Terengganu Economic Planning Unit deputy director Tun Ahmad Faisal Tun Abdul Razak (third and fourth from left) with (from left) *The Edge Malaysia* editor-in-chief Kathy Fong, *The Edge Malaysia* editor emeritus and the awards’ chief judge Au Foong Yee, Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming, *The Edge Media Group* publisher and group CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat and *City & Country* editor E Jacqui Chan

### Quick facts

NAME	Wisma Darul Iman
OWNER	Terengganu State Government
DEVELOPMENT TYPE	Secretariat building
SIZE	Tower block: 352,000 sq ft Podium block: 295,000 sq ft
TENURE	Freehold
STOREYS	20
COMPLETION	1986
AVERAGE OCCUPANCY RATE	85%

### FACILITIES

Banquet hall, theatre hall, convention hall, lecture hall, committee room, state legislative assembly hall, royal room, state legislative assembly office, ceremonial court

### ENERGY-SAVING FEATURES

- The building uses energy-efficient lighting systems such as LED lights
- Heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems incorporate energy-saving features like programmable thermostats, efficient heat pumps and zoned heating and cooling to optimise energy use and reduce waste
- Proper insulation and double-glazed windows help improve thermal efficiency by reducing heat transfer and minimising the need for excessive heating or cooling
- An intelligent building management system monitors and controls various energy-consuming systems, optimising their operation based on occupancy, time of day and other factors
- Water-saving fixtures, such as low-flow faucets, showerheads and dual-flush toilets, have been installed to minimise water consumption within the building
- Energy monitoring systems track and analyse energy consumption identifying areas for improvement and optimising energy usage over time

### INDOOR AIR QUALITY FEATURES

- The building has a well-designed ventilation system that provides a constant supply of fresh air and helps remove indoor pollutants
- Air filtration systems capture and remove particulate matter, allergens and pollutants from the indoor air



MOHD IZWAN MOHD NAZAM/THE EDGE

UDA HOLDINGS



**Mohd Salem: We believe these upgrading works are necessary for Wisma Darul Iman to continue to stay relevant in today’s world**

also improving and upgrading the security system in stages,” Mohd Salem says.

Together with the building owner, UDA Dayaurus has planned several major upgrades for Wisma Darul Iman, such as the modernisation of its elevators. There is also a plan to introduce smart building technologies in Wisma Darul Iman to further optimise energy consumption and enhance building management efficiency and quality.

“We believe these upgrading works are necessary for Wisma Darul Iman to continue to stay relevant in today’s world. It will bring numerous benefits to the building owner and occupiers, as well as let the building continue to serve its purpose even [though] it is an older building,” Mohd Salem notes.

He adds that Wisma Darul Iman has been well maintained over the past 37 years and remains an important office tower in Kuala Terengganu town today.

“It (the Special Mention) is a testament to the collective efforts and dedication of the entire UDA Dayaurus team, the Department of SUK Management Services and the Terengganu State Government. This award holds significant meaning for Wisma Darul Iman and the management team. It validates our commitment to excellence in facility management and showcases the successful collaboration between us, the building owner and the occupants. This recognition will motivate us to continue to deliver exceptional services, preserving the heritage of Wisma Darul Iman and exceeding the expectations of our stakeholders,” Mohd Salem concludes. **E**

# Scenes from the gala night



Judges of *The Edge Malaysia* Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards and *The Edge Malaysia*–ILAM Sustainable Landscape Awards 2023 with *The Edge Malaysia*'s Kathy Fong (fourth from left), Datuk Ho Kay Tat (fifth from left), Au Foong Yee (fifth from right) and E Jacqui Chan (fourth from right)



Ichiro Sukanuma (Panasonic Malaysia) and Anthony Lee (Architect Centre)



*The Edge Malaysia*'s Au, Fong and Ho with Minister of Local Government Development Nga Kor Ming



Lyanna Tew and Benjamin Ong from Mah Sing Group Bhd with MBBJ mayor Datuk Mohd Noorazam Osman



Smile for the camera!



Ong Hang Ping, Charlie Chow and Tracey Ooi of Sunview Group Bhd



Nippon Paint Malaysia's Jon Tan and Tay Sze Tuck with Ham Yean Chung of CMI Malaysia

# Scenes from the gala night



Chan Jin Wy (Bon Estates Sdn Bhd), Datuk N K Tong (Rehda Malaysia), Datin Angie Ng, Datuk David Lim Boon Huat (Pearl Suria Residence Management Corp), and Henry Butcher Malaysia (Mont Kiara) Sdn Bhd's Low Hon Keong and Ronny Yong



Siva Shanker (Rahim & Co International Property Consultants) with Leong Kit May (Malaysian REIT Managers Association)



Ho delivering his welcome speech



Loud cheers from Henry Butcher Malaysia (Mont Kiara) Sdn Bhd's (HBMK) Yvette Saman, Cynane Lim and Benny Cheah



Emcee for the night Nadia Heng



Eddy Wong (Nawawi Tie Leung Property Consultants Sdn Bhd) and Raymond Cheah (SCM International Property Management Sdn Bhd)



Yeap Soon Hong (Oval Damansara Management Corp), Lim Lan Yuan (Association of Property & Facilities Managers) and Kerk Boon Leng



Oliver Wee (Master Builders Association Malaysia), Lee and Jon Tan (Nippon Paint Malaysia)



Dai Nishi (Panasonic Malaysia) giving us a thumbs up



Knight Frank Malaysia

PRESENTED BY



MAIN PARTNER



OFFICIAL SOLAR PARTNER



SUPPORTING PARTNER



SUPPORTED BY



Cheers for the winner!



The Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre team celebrating its victory



HBMK's Low and Paris Tian



Tan Kim Seng (The Binjai On The Park Management Corp)



The Edge Malaysia's Geetha Perumal, Megan Wong and Winnie Ooi with Alex Khor (OSK Property Holdings Bhd)



The lovely ladies of HBMK



Rafiz Azwan (Kluang Mall) snaps a picture of the award



The Edge Malaysia's Chan and Racheal Lee with Tew



SCM International Property Management Sdn Bhd's Simon Leong, Lisa Wong, Alvin Leow, James Lee, Kok Chek Jit, Krishnaraj and Chur Associates' Chris Tan

# Scenes from the gala night



SCM International Property Management Sdn Bhd



Knight Frank Property Management Sdn Bhd and Sungei Wang Plaza Management Corp



Iskandar Malaysia Studios Sdn Bhd



Henry Butcher Malaysia (Mont Kiara) Sdn Bhd



Nga (centre) with MBBJ mayor Datuk Mohd Noorazam Osman (fifth from left) and Alias Rameli from the Ministry of Local Government Development (third from right) with *The Edge Malaysia*, Nippon Paint Malaysia, Panasonic Malaysia, Sunview Group Bhd and Rehda Malaysia



JKG Land Bhd and Praxcis Design Sdn Bhd



Pelaburan Hartanah Bhd and Knight Frank Property Management Sdn Bhd



Mah Sing Group Bhd



Hartamas Asset Management Sdn Bhd and Tara Condominium Management Corp

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Inverfin Sdn Bhd and Knight Frank Property Management Sdn Bhd



Convex Malaysia Sdn Bhd



Tanah Makmur Bhd



Sunway Putra Hotel Sdn Bhd



Avaland Bhd and Selangorku PR1MA Lakefront Homes' Joint Management Body members



Henry Butcher Malaysia (Mont Kiara) Sdn Bhd and Kiaramas Cendana Condominium Management Corp



IOI Properties Group Bhd



UDA Urusdaya Sdn Bhd and UDA Holdings Bhd



Sunway Property & Facility Management Sdn Bhd and Sunway Emerald Residence Management Corp



Knight Frank Malaysia



Maljis Bandaraya Johor Baru



Tenaga Nusantara Sdn Bhd



The Binjai On The Park Management Corp and Henry Butcher Malaysia (Mont Kiara) Sdn Bhd



OSK Holdings Bhd

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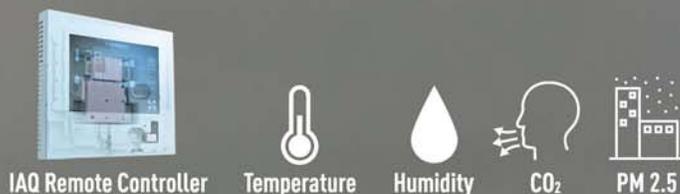
**COMPLETE AIR**  
MANAGEMENT SYSTEM



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