

Snakes in the house!

When I first saw my house, it had everything I wanted: Space and good location. In my happiness though, I failed to notice that the adjoining house had been vacant for a while as were two other houses down the road.

Shortly after moving in, my family and I began "receiving" many visitors: Cobras, monitor lizards, rats and all sorts of vermin. Many times I had to call the fire department to catch the snakes and until today, I live in fear that a python might make its way inside.

That's why I now realise two things: First, when inspecting a house for sale, always do so during the day; not at night when darkness can hide things.

Second, pay attention to the neighbourhood. Clogged drains with stagnant water, unkempt plots of grass and vacant or abandoned houses in the midst of

being sold or rented can become dwelling places for aedes mosquitoes and other parasites that can make the environment unhealthy and dangerous.

It is puzzling why owners have a lackadaisical attitude towards maintaining their properties, especially since well kept premises can appreciate considerably in value compared to neglected ones.

By allowing their houses to deteriorate, they are also dragging down the price of those surrounding them.

Radhika S.
Kuala Lumpur

Type of unit: Semi-detached house
Nature of disaster: Snake infestation
Estimated cost of repairs: RM1,000 to RM5,000



PAM president Lee Chor Wah and Architect Centre director Sarizal Yusman Yusoff going through shortlisted entries.

Termite horror



Soon after moving into a house I had bought from a previous owner, I removed some existing cabinets only to find termite trails behind them. However, as I was in a hurry to move in, I decided to scrape them off and paint over.

However, the termites promptly made new holes in the walls and new trails too! Wiping them off only caused them to make more that would double in length the next day.

Fed up with the situation, I engaged a termite extermination company and paid it upfront for a package that was supposed to include fortnightly checks for a couple of months, plus a year's warranty.

After the first visit, it fixed the date for another inspection but never showed up. In fact, it took numerous phone calls to get one of their exterminators to come again, and that second occasion only took place after over a month.

During that time, the exterminator refilled the bait boxes with some chemicals but left without conducting any check on any other wooden structures! Now, another month has passed

since their last visit and I don't think the company is delivering on what it promised. Since it received my upfront payment, I believe it simply doesn't care anymore.

The lesson I've learnt from this experience is that owners should only approach reputable companies and, when it comes to termite extermination companies, engage those with thermal scanning technology.

The company I engaged was due to its "attractive package", but the fact is, I paid RM1,400 for nothing, because they've only come to my house twice, and even then, I'm not certain it is termite free.

Mr. Tan
Kuala Lumpur

Type of unit: Apartment
Nature of disaster: Termite infestation and unprofessional service provider
Estimated cost of repairs: RM2,000 to RM10,000

Smelly, stubborn stains



It seeped. It oozed insidiously onto my pristine white walls and all I could do was watch in horror.

The morbid brown stain the colour of rusted blood grew larger by the minute causing a malicious patch that started to smell. It was an arterial gush from a murdered pipe; it was seeping sewer fluid.

That was the beginning of my nightmare. Over the next few weekends, workmen stormed my home, filling the air with the sounds of hammering, teeth-grinding drilling and acrid smells.

They told me the stain originated from the upstairs bathroom, forcing them to shut it down – and requiring me to have to borrow my housemate's whenever my second bathroom was occupied on a long call.

Taking showers or doing business in unfamiliar surroundings is not something that comes naturally for me, especially on the occasions when I have to lug my clothes and toiletries over to shower and change.

Lesson learnt? Before renting the next house, I will definitely check on the condition of the bathroom and the pipes because trust me, repair works are a nuisance.

Susan Tan
Damansara, Selangor

Type of unit: Townhouse (rental)
Nature of disaster: Leaking downpipes
Estimated cost of repairs: RM500 (plus a lot of hassle and time)

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If you have a horrifying story on home defects, we'd like to hear it. Get the entry forms from www.pam.org.my or www.architectcentre.com.my.

All stories judged worthy of publishing every fortnight will win OKIN termite inspection vouchers worth

RM200 each and RM250 worth of DorteZ locks.

Weekly winners will be in the running to win grand prizes worth more than RM18,000 in total!

You can either email your entry to rst.property@gmail.com or post it to NST-Property, "Your Worst Nightmare

Competition", 4th Floor, Balai Berita, 31 Jalan Riong, 59100 Kuala Lumpur or to Architect Centre Sdn Bhd, 486 Jalan Tangsi, 50480 Kuala Lumpur.

For more information, email info@architectcentre.com.my or call 03-2698 2488.