

## Property inspection now available in Sabah

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KOTA KINABALU: Independent building inspection is now made available in Sabah through Architect Centre under the auspices of the Malaysian Institute of Architects. With rising consumer expectation on quality workmanship, there is a need for professional building inspectors to look out for building defects that may affect property buyers financially and socially, according to Architect Anthony Lee Tee of Architect Centre.

The Architect Centre is a joint venture by PAM with Archicentre Ltd, a fully owned subsidiary of Australian Institute of Architects. The latter is a prestigious household name in the Australian building industry with 28 years of experience performing a wide range of building inspection services and advisory.

Through Architect Centre's inspections, done so far, it is found that one in five properties in Peninsular Malaysia has some major faults in plumbing, roofing or dampness which would financially burdened the owners for repairs and maintenance in the immediate future.

"For older properties, safety features such as fire-fighting features (e.g. fire doors) and active systems like hose reels, extinguishers and detectors are usually not regularly maintained. Concrete cancer and structural leaks (from open slabs) are also prevalent and expensive to remedy. These leaks have serious safety and quality-of-life implications including capital depreciation for the property owner," Lee said.

Despite regulatory measures, guidelines and standards imposed by the government, many problems still persist. Several contributory factors include lack of supervision, unskilled labour, communication breakdown and integrity.

He noted that a defect has its own history and by understanding the contributing factors that give rise to the defect, the source of the problem can be determined. Thus it cannot be denied the essential value of professional property inspection.

He was quick to emphasise the independence of the Architect Centre. "It acts for the benefit of all parties – the purchaser, developer and project architect – and directly raises the standard of the construction industry."

Purchasers are ensured of the quality product minus all the surprises such as non-compliance with specifications in the Sale and Purchase (S&P) agreement, Occupation Certificate not issued yet, incomplete construction and utilities not connected and defective architectural items.

It serves as a marketing tool for responsible developers by raising standards to meet client expectation.

One of Architect Centre's initiatives aimed at improving workmanship quality is the Blue Ribbon certification programme. Properties will be inspected based on the newly established Malaysian Construction Industry Standards (CIS 7:2006) Qlassic. Basic regulatory compliance check to ensure that the property is virtually problem-free when it is handed over to the purchaser.

Smart developers would take this innovative opportunity to leverage on the Blue Ribbon Certification to enhance property value and boost stakeholders' confidence. This award is a testimony of their commitment to building quality excellence.

As a qualified third party inspector, it carries out its functions without fear or favour. It states and records what is seen and elucidated from the nature of the given problem. An objective and unbiased statement of fact provides the basis towards resolving issues in the interest of all stakeholders.