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Artists impression of Shorefront in Penang comprising 115 units of sea-front low-rise (six floors) and low-density condominiums.

DESPITE the prevailing soft property market, YTL Land & Development Bhd sees demand for good projects persisting and will proceed with a number of residential projects in Kuala Lumpur and Penang.

The company's upcoming projects for launch are Pantai Peak at Pantai Hillpark, U Thant Place at Jalan U-Thant, new phases in Sentul West and Sentul East in Kuala Lumpur, and Shorefront in George Town. According to YTL Land executive director Datuk Yeoh Seok Kian, landed properties will be least impacted, as the sector is largely driven by genuine demand for occupation by purchasers, even as these developments may have moved away from city centres. Gated and guarded developments are also well sought after given residents' priority for safety and security these days.

"We will have to keep on innovating to handle changing circumstances in the business environment. To ensure new projects are economically and socially viable, we have always offered quality properties at prime locations at competitive pricing. The market acknowledges this fact, and our competitiveness is one of the main draws to all our property previews and launches in the past. This level of confidence in our properties helps a lot as we move on and continue to grow," Yeoh tells StarBizWeek.

He says past experiences have demonstrated the importance of right product offerings that meet the needs and expectations of the various market segments. The company is responding to a new generation of savvy property purchasers who are opting for well-planned integrated townships in good locations, are secure, and have good public transportation networks by road and rail.

Yeoh points out that YTL has in fact undertaken developments in “undesirable” addresses including disused mining sites, in and out of the city; where it placed a lot of emphasis on planning and development details, tried unprecedented concepts, and added value to the real estate.

“The success of our innovative concepts is reflected in the current secondary market demand, price appreciation and improvements to the communities that we build. Most of these developments are award-winners in their respective categories in the local and international property awards. This is the direction that we will take as we move on from here,” he stresses.



Yeoh: 'We will have to keep on innovating'.

YTL Land has landbank of some 1000 acres in the Klang Valley, Perak and Penang, and unbilled sales of approximately RM1bil.

He says Pantai Hillpark, the last piece of hillside development in Bangsar-Petaling Jaya area, is based on the concept of green living, comprising a collection of semi-detached houses and bungalows on an undulating hillside parcel.

U Thant Place is another niche development along the Embassy Row of Jalan U-Thant in the city centre. It comprises 18 exclusively designed houses within a low-rise and low-density condominium enclave.

In Penang, Shorefront comprises 115 units of sea-front low-rise (six floors) and low-density condominiums. The project with a gross development value of RM320mil is located at Lebuhraya Farquhar in the north-eastern tip of Penang island.

“This is one of the last remaining sea-fronting locations within George Town - feted as Malaysia’s Unesco World Heritage Site in 2008 and a showcase of unique range of heritage buildings from different eras, and art and culture co-existing alongside modern developments,” Yeoh explains.

Among the unique features of Shorefront is that it offers options in terms of floor space and layout, and infuses contemporary luxury with colonial era architecture. The gated and guarded enclave features a clubhouse with a lap pool that overlooks the open sea.

For privacy, each lift core is designed to serve only two units, creating a private lift lobby as entrance foyer for each condominium unit.

Boon from good connectivity

Yeoh is excited of the potential of YTL Land's Sentul West and Sentul East projects in Kuala Lumpur.

The mixed development project at Sentul East comprises both residential and commercial units. The latest phases are d2 and d5 which are low-rise commercial developments designed by internationally renowned architects. d2 is designed by Iroje Architects from South Korea, who is the designer of the clubhouse at the Great Wall Commune in China, and d5 is by Riken Yamamoto from Japan.

Yeoh says the projects have been awarded the MSC Malaysia Cybercentre status which will serve to reinforce Sentul East's credentials as a business address. Talks are underway with two multinational corporations to be potential tenants there.

d2 and d5 will complement Sentul East's newest commercial buildings, d6 and d7, which were designed as a pair of "gateway buildings" along Jalan Sentul "to challenge the norms of the typical office prototype".

He says d7 will incorporate a central courtyard which encourages social gatherings and meetings of the minds; providing a healthy alternate to a conventional office setting.

Explaining the concept, Yeoh says: "The architectural formation and design of d6 and d7 have created an inspiring artful setting where anyone from the world of design and creativity can come together, be inspired and share their design ideas."

Both buildings have become a natural draw for architect firms and international design brands which provide the right ambience and inspiration to build a world-class design centre.

Yeoh says fitting into the context of a larger vision of aesthetic considerations in the urban renewable environment, YTL Land has in place the unique Sentul East Design Centre (SEED) which leverages the strong connections of design and creativity in d6 and d7.

"The objective of SEED is to establish the centre as a future domain for artistic and creative pursuits, as well as to create a lively art and cultural scene at Sentul. Its exciting line-up of activities will include art exhibitions, art jamming sessions, heritage and culture talks, movie nights, and talks and dialogues on design and architecture," he explains.

SEED is currently home to a suite of leading design brands that include Ligne Roset, Armani/Casa, Ximula, Herman Miller, Rossana Cucine, Smeg, Gira and Erco.

Yeoh adds that the developments in Sentul under the company's ongoing urban regeneration master plan focus on sustainability in growth and builds on the characteristics of Sentul as a historic railway town.

The Sentul Master Plan provides a framework to preserve the best of Sentul's rich past, its natural resources and existing infrastructure, while maximizing opportunities that come with each new development.

"Sentul today is easily accessible by rail transportation. The KTM Komuter and two LRT stations are located strategically in the heart of Sentul East, all within walking distance of each other.

"Sentul East is also earmarked as a hotspot to benefit from the proposed integration of its existing rail lines with MRT Line 2 – the Sungai Buloh-Serdang-Putrajaya Line (SSP Line). This is really good news for our Sentul developments, as the integration will afford greater connectivity and the expanded mobility choices," he points out.

Yeoh says YTL Land is also looking to reap synergistic benefits from greater integration with the proposed MRT Line 3 or the Circle Line which provides an orbital link between areas such as Mid Valley, Mont Kiara, Sentul East and Ampang.

"We envisage the transformation of Sentul into a world-class public transportation hub. This is an exciting direction for us as the master planner as it serves to achieve our vision of a sustainable neighbourhood where land use and public infrastructure upgrades are integrated into vibrant hubs of mixed-used activities," he says.