

The logo for City & Country Real Estate Matters is a green circle containing the text 'city & country' in white, lowercase, sans-serif font. The ampersand is stylized. Below it, 'REAL ESTATE MATTERS' is written in a smaller, white, uppercase, sans-serif font.

city & country

REAL ESTATE  
MATTERS

A photograph of the Sentul skyline in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In the foreground, a modern train with a red and white livery travels on an elevated track. Behind the train, there are several modern skyscrapers with unique, curved facades. In the background, more residential buildings and a clear blue sky are visible.

## The rejuvenation of Sentul

Rich in history, the former railway hub has been growing in popularity since its gentrification in the early 2000s. Property values have climbed alongside demand, and in recent years many developers have started projects there. Property consultants weigh in on its appeal factors and future prospects.

**Chai Yee Hoong** has the story on Page 4.

# Strategic location, connectivity draw developers

Many property developers have ventured into the Sentul area, just 5km north of KL city, to capture the burgeoning demand from homebuyers



BY CHAI YEE HOONG  
city.country@bizeedge.com

Located 5km north of the heart of Kuala Lumpur, Sentul is a juxtaposition of pre-war buildings with their old-world charm and futuristic skyscrapers that punctuate the skyline.

Steeped in history, the former railway hub went through a period of decline before YTL Land & Development took over the 294-acre Sentul Raya development from Taiping Consolidated Bhd and unveiled the Sentul Masterplan — comprising Sentul East and Sentul West — in 2002, which turned the place around.

Fast forward to today, Sentul is especially well-known for the Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre (klpac), which opened in 2005, and the Sentul Depot event space, which was officially opened by YTL Land in 2018. The area is also fast becoming a desired address to live in with iconic condominiums such as The Capers and The Fennel in Sentul East, and the upmarket The Maple condominium, which is situated in a park.

Nawawi Tie Leung Real Estate Consultants Sdn Bhd managing director Eddy Wong notes that the Sentul neighbourhood today looks very different from some 20 years ago. "The Sentul skyline now boasts iconic high-rises of 40 to 50 storeys and the prices of condos [in the area] have more than doubled from five to 10 years ago, reflecting its increased appeal and demand."

According to him, Sentul's close proximity to the city centre further boosts its appeal, and infrastructure improvements — the completion of the DUKE Highway and the LRT Sentul and Sentul Timur stations as well as the soon-to-be-completed MRT Sentul Barat station that is part of the MRT Putrajaya Line (formerly known as the Sungai Buloh-Serdang-Putrajaya Line) — will enhance the area's connectivity.

Sentul is well connected and enjoys easy access to a network of roads, including Jalan Tun Razak, Jalan Ipoh, Jalan Kuching, Lebuhraya Sultan Iskandar (previously known as Lebuhraya Mahameru) via Sentul Link and the DUKE Highway.

Henry Butcher Real Estate Sdn Bhd chief operating officer Tang Chee Meng says the revitalisation of the whole area has enhanced the living environment and its image and increased its desirability as a place for people to call home. "The unique architecture of The Capers and The Fennel, which have changed the skyline of Sentul, and



Prices of condos [in the area] have more than doubled from five to 10 years ago, reflecting its increased appeal and demand" — Wong



Demand for developments in the area has increased steadily as Sentul is one of the few suburban areas in KL that have many entry and exit points to major roads and highways" — Vetri

the presence of the klpac and the 35-acre private and gated Sentul Park, have also added to Sentul's allure," Tang remarks. Sentul Park is part of YTL Land's masterplan development and was carved out of an existing golf course.

In addition to YTL Land's Sentul Masterplan development, Tang notes that Melati Ehsan's Bandar Sentul Utama (initially developed by Sentul Murni Sdn Bhd) has also contributed to the growth and gentrification of Sentul as a whole.

According to Tang, the property market in Sentul over the last 10 years can be described as active and supported by strong demand. "A number of high-end condos as well as commercial developments were launched during this period, including The Capers, The Fennel, d6 and d7 offices in Sentul East by YTL Land, as well as Bayu Sentul condo by Melati Ehsan," he says.

Metro REC Sdn Bhd's senior real estate negotiator Vetri Kumar notes that Sentul has one of the highest volumes of property transactions within the Klang Valley. "The property market in Sentul has improved dramatically and grown exponentially over the last decade. Due to its strategic location, demand for developments in the area has increased steadily as Sentul is one of the few suburban areas in KL that have many entry and exit points to major roads and highways," he says.

Property prices in the area, Vetri notes, have steadily gone up over the years. "One such example is Maple Condominium, where units are currently typically priced at RM1 million from RM900,000 in 2013. Its price per sq ft has grown from about RM550 to RM700 over the past six years." Vetri believes the number of developments in Sentul will continue to grow and the area will have good opportunities for both homebuyers and investors.

In addition to eateries and restaurants, residents in the area also enjoy a myriad of amenities such as a post office, UTC Sentul, clinics, schools, major banks — CIMB, Public Bank, Maybank, Hong Leong, HSBC, Bank Rakyat and Affin Bank — petrol stations, a police station and convenience stores.

#### Ongoing developments

Sentul's appeal has attracted many property players to the area and there are a growing number of new developments. Ongoing projects include SkyAwan's Residence by SkyWorld Development, One Maxim by Maxim Holdings, Sentul Point by UOA Group, Vista Sentul by Platinum Victory, Rica Residence Sentul by Fajarbaru Builder Group, M Centura and M Arisa by Mah Sing Group and Sen-

tul Works by YTL Land.

Projects in the pipeline, Tang says, include the d2 and d5 commercial developments, which will be undertaken by YTL Land in Sentul East.

According to Vetri, UOA Group is planning to have another lifestyle-related project opposite its Sentul Point development. "Both developments will be linked by an overhead bridge across Jalan Sentul to become one sizeable integrated development over the next few years," he says.

He notes that Phase 1 of Sentul Point, comprising 1,400 suite apartments and 39 units of strata shopoffices in two blocks, was handed over in June last year, whereas the second phase, comprising 952 units of suite apartments and 103 units of strata shopoffices, is scheduled for vacant possession in the first half of 2021.

As for Mah Sing, the developer launched M Arisa in 2019 following the successful launch of M Centura in 2017, Wong notes. M Arisa comprises two blocks with a total of 1,598 units, offering built-ups from 350 to 1,025 sq ft with prices from RM290,000 to around RM650,000, similar to prices at M Centura, which comprises two blocks with 1,413 units.

Platinum Victory's Vista Sentul, Wong notes, comprises two blocks with a total of 705 units with prices starting from RM329,800 and built-ups ranging from 689 to 1,216 sq ft.

#### Positive outlook

Amid challenges in the market today, the property experts remain positive on the outlook for Sentul's property market.

"In the immediate to medium term, demand for properties will be affected by the economic slowdown and job insecurity brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, the ongoing trade war between the US and China and the current political uncertainties locally. In the long term, however, the prospects for Sentul are definitely bright in view of its strategic location close to the city centre, availability of public transport, a good road network and the uplift of overall living conditions and its image over the past 25 years," says Tang.

Fundamentally, says Wong, Sentul ticks all the boxes in terms of its central location and proximity to the city centre, the improvements to its connectivity and transport infrastructure, affordable prices (generally below RM500 psf) and regeneration, with new developments featuring modern and attractive designs. "All these will translate into increased demand and the accompanying price appreciation," he notes.



Ongoing developments in Sentul

PROJECT	LAUNCH YEAR	ESTIMATED COMPLETION	NO OF UNITS	PROPERTY TYPE	PSF (RM)	PRICE (RM)	PILOT (P/100P)
Sentul Point by UOA Group	2016	1H2021	1400	Serviced residence / Serviced apartment	550 to 700	370,000 to 757,000	700 to 1001
Rica Residence Sentul by Fajarbaru Builder Group	2017	2021	473	Serviced residence / Serviced apartment	500 to 700	345,000 to 847,000	657 to 1,238
M Centura by Mah Sing Group	2017	2021	1413	Serviced residence / Serviced apartment	500 to 650	328,000 to 797,000	650 to 1,000
SkyMeridian (Tower A & B) by SkyWorld Development Group	2018	2021	780	Serviced residence / Serviced apartment	500 to 700	320,000 to 895,000	581 to 1,318
M Arisa by Mah Sing Group	2019	2024	1598	Serviced residence / Serviced apartment	500 to 650	299,000 to 655,000	550 to 1025
Minest Residence by M Nest Development	2019	2023	1,366	Serviced residence / Serviced apartment	375 to 550	300,000 to 750,000	832 to 1,239
Sky Award 5 Residence by SkyWorld Development Group	2020	2024	615	Apartment	375	300,000	800



In the long term, the prospects for Sentul are definitely bright in view of its strategic location, availability of public transport, a good road network and the uplift of overall living conditions and its image" - Tang

Recent residential transactions

LOCATION	TYPE	DATE	BUILD UP (SQ FT)	PRICE (RM)	PSF (RM)
Taman Dato Senu	Cluster	Apr 2019	574	165,000	287
		Aug 2019	1,033	340,000	329
	Terrace	Jan 2019	912	300,000	329
Maxim Citylights	Serviced residence	Aug 2019	828	400,000	483
		Aug 2019	1,260	510,000	405
Sentul Village	Serviced residence	Sept 2019	1,009	445,000	441
The Capers	Condominium	Aug 2019	947	485,000	512
Sri Sugiyo	Condominium	Dec 2019	1,000	565,000	565
		Nov 2019	1,568	978,000	624
The Saffron	Condominium	Oct 2019	969	243,000	251
		Aug 2019	1,195	280,000	234
The Fennel	Condominium	Mar 2018	1,087	640,000	589
		Apr 2019	1,001	570,000	569
The Tamarind	Condominium	June 2019	1,238	760,000	614
		May 2019	1,189	710,000	607
Villa Angsana	Condominium	Nov 2019	1,345	640,000	476
		Apr 2019	1,066	500,000	469
Sang Suria	Condominium	June 2019	1,421	530,000	373
		Nov 2019	1,109	350,000	316
Polang	Condominium	Sept 2019	1,227	190,000	158
		June 2018	1,292	380,000	294
The Maple	Condominium	July 2019	1,707	1,250,000	732
		June 2019	1,535	1,000,000	651
Bayu Sentul	Condominium	Nov 2019	1,049	465,000	443
		Nov 2019	1,170	500,000	427
Pusat Komersial Sinar Sentul	Apartment	Oct 2019	1,363	562,000	412
		May 2019	1,230	440,000	358
Sky Award Residence	Apartment	Nov 2019	560	190,000	339
Flat Sentul Utama	Flat	July 2019	807	288,000	357
		Sept 2019	678	176,000	260

Recent commercial transactions

LOCATION	TYPE	DATE	BUILD UP (SQ FT)	PRICE (RM)	PSF (RM)
Jalan Sentul	Shoplot	Aug 2019	4,540	2,550,000	562
Taman Dato Senu	Shoplot	Dec 2019	3,457	2,000,000	579
Pusat Komersial Sinar Sentul	Shoplot - corner	Oct 2019	12,781	9,887,372	774
Sentul Raya Boulevard	Shoplot - corner	Sept 2019	10,089	4,000,000	396
Maxim Citylights	Shop unit	Aug 2019	1,009	400,000	396
ij	Office	Oct 2019	872	550,000	631
	Office	Feb 2019	1,001	680,000	679
Sky Award Commercial	Office	Sept 2019	1,894	954,000	504

Vetri similarly thinks that Sentul will continue to experience a further rejuvenation in the years to come as it has become one of the most sought-after markets, being one of the last locations close to the KL city centre. "Although the property market is adversely affected by the current economy and the unforeseen Covid-19 global pandemic, I believe the recent OPR (overnight policy rate) cuts as well as the economic stimulus packages by the government will start attracting investors and homebuyers to re-engage with the property market," he says.

Further revitalisation

The rapid development of Sentul has brought about an increase in its population and vehicular traffic, leading to traffic congestion, especially along the main access roads in the area, notes Tang. "This issue needs to be looked at and addressed by the relevant authorities. Certain parts of Sentul have also experienced flash floods in the past and it would be good if this issue can be resolved."

Tang also suggests a proper resettlement scheme for the remaining squatter areas. "A proper resettlement programme should be carried out to resettle these squatters in modern housing with piped water, electricity supply and proper sanitation to enable these areas to be redeveloped and revitalised. Addi-

tionally, some of the older low-cost flats in Sentul are in need of proper upkeep and a facelift as this affects the overall image of the area."

As the trend in the current property market is vertical living, Vetri notes the importance of making such developments eco-friendly. "The global trend is sustainable environments, and developers need to adapt to that." He adds that features such as a rain-water collection system, electric vehicle charging stations and vertical agriculture are some examples.

"These advancements and changes will attract more potential buyers and investors as the current generation is moving towards a sustainable future in which energy output could be reduced and the environmental impact can be brought down to manageable levels," Vetri says.

To further build a more vibrant community in Sentul, Wong suggests the provision of more public open spaces to encourage community-centric activities as well as a neighbourhood commercial centre that will add to the area's placemaking.

"The Kipac is a good example of a catalytic development that has helped lift and transform the area. Perhaps more of such developments focusing on other areas of interest will speed up the redevelopment and transformation of this neighbourhood that is located so close to the city centre," he says.



Sentul is a juxtaposition of old-world buildings and futuristic-looking skyscrapers