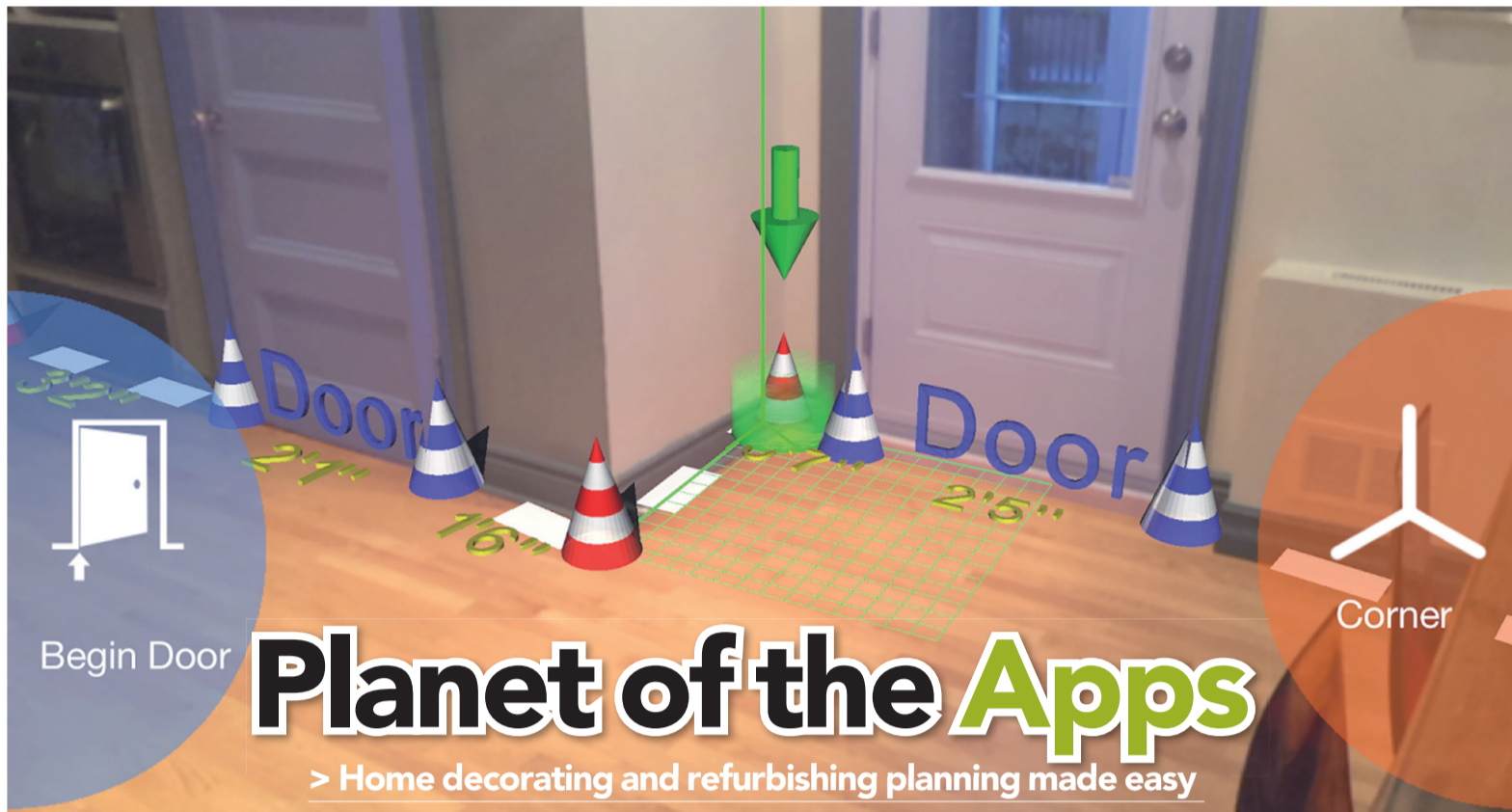


# PROPERTY *insights*



## Planet of the Apps

> Home decorating and refurbishing planning made easy

BY ALYSSA J. OON

**S**EEING a room transform from a bare space into one with character and personality is truly satisfying; but the entire process of getting to that point can be exhausting. So much planning, imagining, shopping, moving around, not to mention energy, angst and stress is endured to get that precise look and feel.

Sometimes the start, where one has to sit down to plan and visualise the outcome of the room, is the most difficult. Taking in the entire picture can be overwhelming. Fortunately, we live in this era called “The Internet of Things” where modern innovations make life easier. Planning the layout of a room is almost effortless ... “a piece of cake” – with digital programmes. Moreover, it can be done right where you are, with just an app (or two), on your smartphone.

### MAGICPLAN (IOS & ANDROID – FREE)

Carrying around a piece of paper with scribbles and sketches of your room layout and its measurements is old school. Magicplan makes measurement-jotting simple with a few clicks of the shutter and swipes of the finger.

What makes Magicplan stand out is its clever use of augmented reality to measure the dimensions of a room and create floor plans from it. Users just need to stand in the middle of a room while holding their phone (though it is advisable to use tablets instead), open up the

app and begin the process.

Think of it as taking a panoramic photo. With the free version, users can carry their room dimensions with them on-the-go, making shopping for the home a breeze. Paying a small fee will allow you to export floor plans in different file formats and even customise the layout of your home for better visualisation.

### IHANDY CARPENTER (IOS & ANDROID – FROM RM7.57)

So you did not have to wrestle with a measuring tape while taking down the dimensions of your rooms, but what about when you are out shopping for furniture and you need to measure an item ... but the measuring tape is back home? iHandy Carpenter saves the day this time by placing (in your hand) five essential tools - a plumb bob, a surface level, a bubble level bar, a steel protractor and a steel ruler.

A steel ruler, specifically, would be of great help with measuring the dimensions of furniture to know if it will fit in the room or not. The app provides the user with two ways of measuring using the “steel ruler”: use “screen length snap” – where the user swipes the screen left or right to move the ruler along; or “free moving” – where the screen detects the phone’s left or right movement and moves the ruler accordingly.

The app also works well in tricky situations like hanging up wall pieces or drilling in floating shelves perfectly using the surface level



feature. Although some calibration needs to be done before using the app, the instructions provided makes calibration effortless.

### HOZZ INTERIOR DESIGN IDEAS (IOS & ANDROID – FREE)

Houzz has a database of over 11 million high-resolution photos of home interiors and exteriors. It is a cross between Wikipedia and Pinterest, but for home design.

Houzz is helpful in the planning and visualising stage of home decoration. The planning process for each room is made easier with the ability to search for ideas by room type i.e. kitchen, dining room, powder room, baby room, living room, deck, etc. These photos are actual designs used by professional interior designers and the common



Houzz-user.

Photos can also be saved to make reference easily accessible when needed.

Unfortunately, users residing in Malaysia will not be able to make use of Houzz’s shopping features as most of the brands are not available locally. Then again, with the internet, hasn’t the world become a much smaller place and a mere click or two away?

### NIPPON PAINT COLOUR CREATIONS OR DULUX VISUALIZER MY (IOS & ANDROID – FREE)

Choosing the perfect colour for the next paint job can be tough. Trips to the hardware store to get paint chips and references back home to visualise it in “the” room



takes time. But these colour visualisation apps make the task like child’s play.

Both apps have the same core feature, which is simply to open up the app on the phone or tablet, snap a photo of the room or home exterior, then scroll through the catalogue to apply your desired colours.



Dulux offers an app with a modern layout, with advanced features where you can visualise colour in either photo or video instantly. Users can also “pick” colours from everyday items like flowers or paintings and the app will suggest similar or the closest colours from their catalogue.

Photos, inspirations and selected products can also be collated into one “place” for easier reference and planning.

Meanwhile, the Nippon Paint app provides a helpful “price checker” tool for better budget planning. It also has a “handy store locator” function that can point you to a nearby store to get your paint.

### SUN SEEKER: 3D AUGMENTED REALITY VIEWER (IOS & ANDROID – FROM RM28.19)

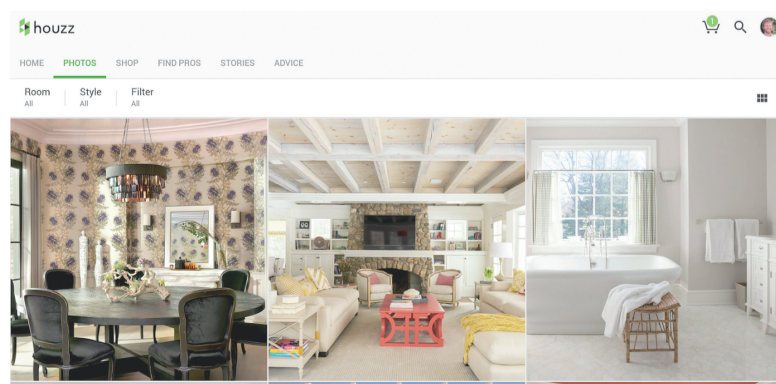
For people who love, live and breathe natural lighting, Sun Seeker is a good app to acquire. Sun Seeker uses the device’s



GPS, magnetometer, accelerometers and gyroscope to find the correct solar position and path for your current location and device orientation.

The app is especially handy when house-hunting because nobody wants to have sunlight glaring in their bedroom window each morning, yet sufficient natural light is needed, especially to dry out the laundry. Homeowners with green fingers will also want to use this app to find the best spots in and around the home for the plants.

There are many more amazing apps that can help in designing and decorating a home. Unfortunately, some good ones are not available in Malaysia while others need a little tweaking to improve efficacy and function. However, at the rate technology is advancing, better apps are definitely out in the horizon to make the whole nine yards of home decoration and refurbishment almost like “a walk in the park”.



► Email your feedback and queries to: [propertyqs@thesundaily.com](mailto:propertyqs@thesundaily.com)

# PROPERTY insights



## Residential sub-sale market report

# A neglected market

> Examining Penang – graphs, charts and information

**O**VER the last few weeks, theSun property ran reports on the residential sub-sale market in various states. Having covered Sabah, Sarawak and Selangor, this week we examine the scene in Penang.

### AT A GLANCE

In general, reports have it that there is an excess in supply of residential property (high-end in particular) in Penang.

Add this to the new launches of residential properties plus the already available sub-sale units on the market, the scene looks positive for housebuyers up north in the Pearl of the Orient.

According to Jabatan Penilaian dan Perkhidmatan Hata (JPPH)'s report, the residential existing stock in Penang at end of 2016 stood at:

- Q1 2016 - 398,661 units
- Q2 2016 - 402,494 units

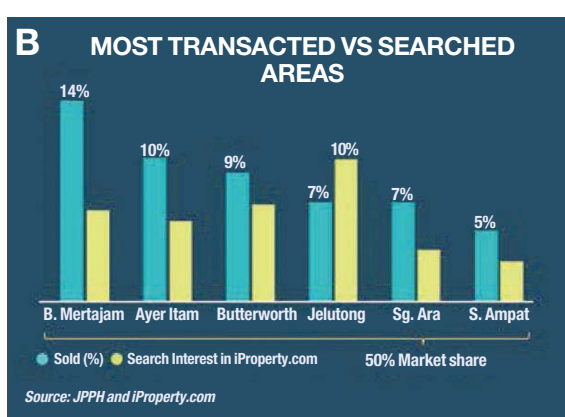
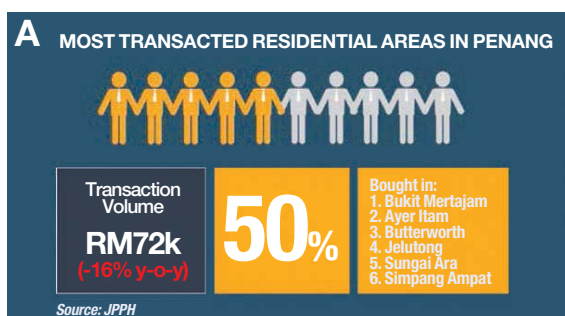
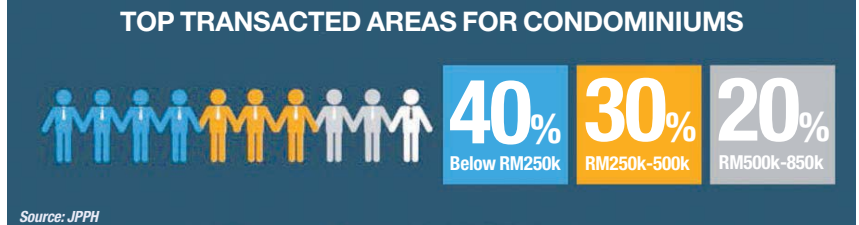
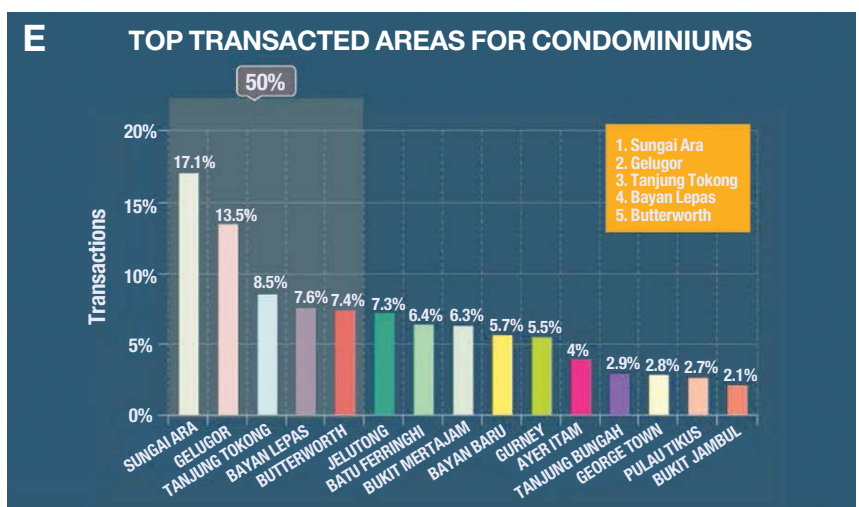
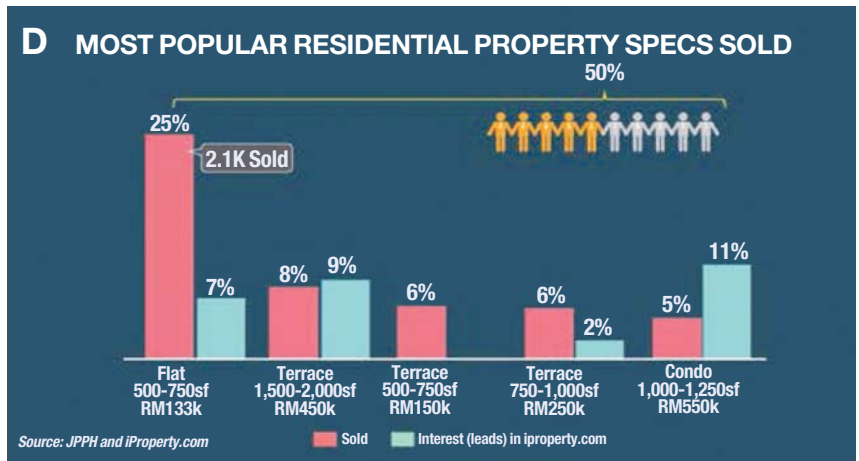
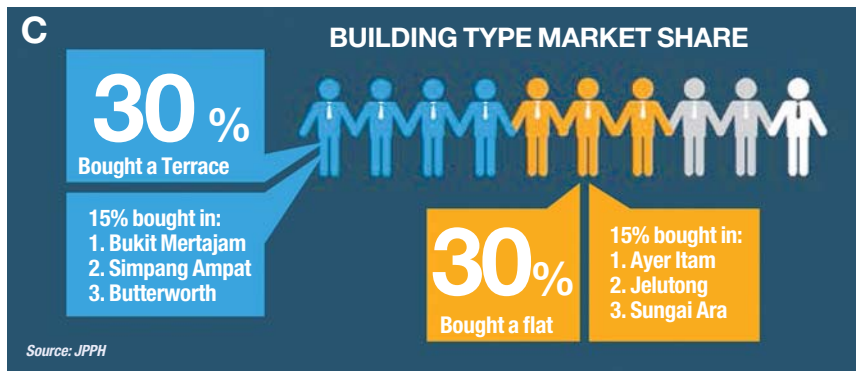
- Q3 2016 - 404,050 units
- Q4 2016 - 407,107 units

Depending on how one views things, an overabundance of anything will affect the status quo, hence, the market and prices.

Whether sub-sale/secondary or new units, the oversupply will possibly lower property prices. If not, buyers should be able to negotiate. Appended are informative graphs and charts depicting the Penang sub-sale residential property market, courtesy of iPropertyiq.com with data retrieved from JPPH.

Follow our section next week highlighting the residential sub-sale market in Johor.

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Residential sub-sale market report

# Pre-owned and practical

> Iskandar Malaysia in the spotlight – graphs, charts and information

THE property scene down south in Johor is fascinating, especially since the launch of Iskandar Malaysia in 2006, which include EduCity and Smart City. Besides attracting global investors to set camp and run their mega industrial businesses, Iskandar Malaysia has also enticed foreign land developers and property purchasers. All these, including the host of other developments, have changed lifestyles and the economy, hence stimulated the property industry. Still, many are cautious,

deliberating the poor performance of the ringgit and soft property market situation, especially over the last year – unfavourable to many a Malaysian apparently. Some however, are of the view that “the ball is in the court of the foreigner whose currency is greater than the ringgit, ie Singaporeans. Locals with capital and cash reserves with the power to purchase property in Iskandar now and “sit out the placid spell” have the advantage. This is especially so with the easy payment schemes, rebates and discounts offered by developers, and the

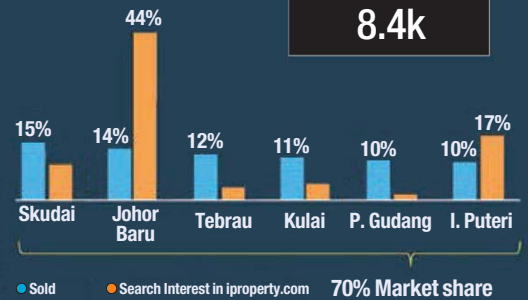
overhang supply of which price tags can be negotiated, if skilfully, bought for a song.

While affordable “products” are expected to be launched, do not discount sub-sale properties, especially in areas with semi-developed projects or those in the pipeline. Below are charts and graphs, courtesy of iProperty.com, with data retrieved from JPPH.

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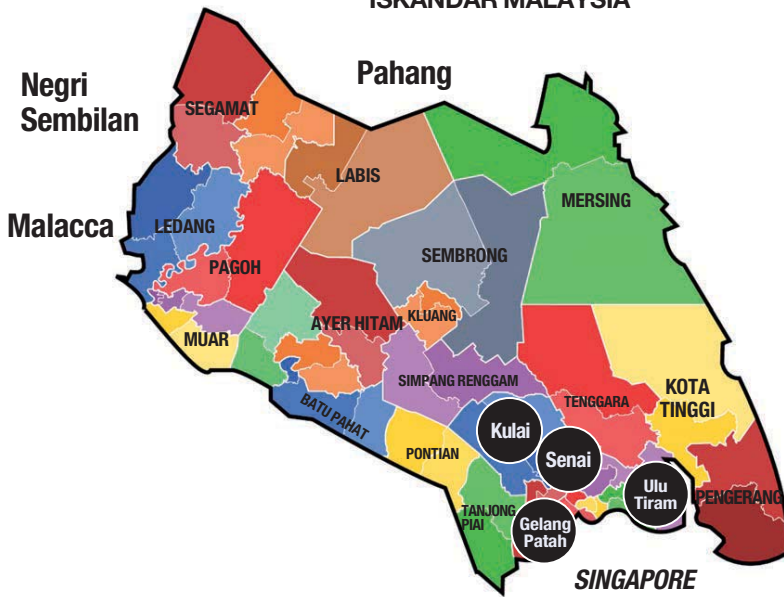
## MOST TRANSACTED AND SEARCHED AREAS IN ISKANDAR MALAYSIA

Total Iskandar Malaysia Transaction Volume  
**8.4k**

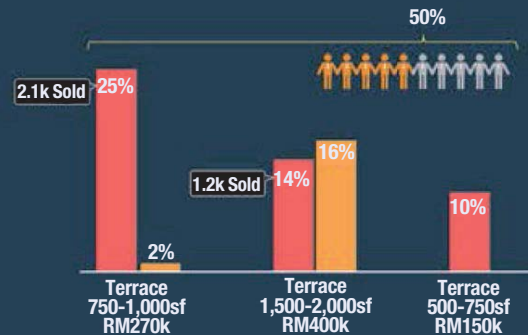


Source: JPPH and iProperty.com

## TOP TRANSACTED DEVELOPMENT LAND AREAS – ISKANDAR MALAYSIA

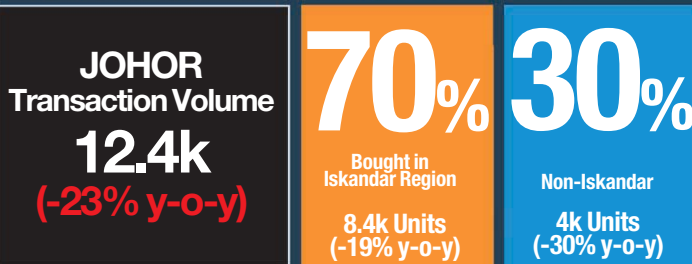


## MOST POPULAR RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY SPECS SOLD – ISKANDAR MALAYSIA



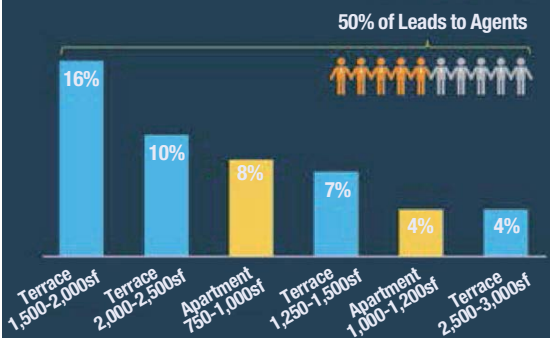
Source: JPPH and iProperty.com

## TRANSACTION MARKET SHARE IN JOHOR – ISKANDAR MALAYSIA VS NON-ISKANDAR REGION



Source: JPPH

## MOST POPULAR PROPERTY SPECS FOR ISKANDAR MALAYSIA – INTEREST IN IPROPERTY



Source: iProperty.com

## ■ Residential sub-sale market

# Pre-owned – pros and cons

### > Re-examining residential property on resale

**O**VER the last month, *theSun* featured a series of articles on the local sub-sale market. Having explored the definition of the term; shared checklists, tips and advice; highlighted the general outlook in the country; and zoomed in on Sabah, Sarawak, Penang and Iskandar, we end the series this week by drawing attention to pros and cons in buying residential resale/sub-sale property.

#### GENERAL OUTLOOK

Depending on how one views things in life – as in the glass half full or half empty – buying a piece of property, put back into the market for sale after it has been lived in, surely doesn't sound very appealing.

Some view it as “second-hand” or “used items”, quite the unthinkable when it comes to purchasing and making a home of. Then again, property investors or those with ringgit and sen running through their veins, especially when it comes to forking out money or making any purchase, think otherwise.

#### THINGS TO CONSIDER

Although new properties are a whole lot more attractive, in both brochures and reality, there are many benefits in buying sub-sale residential property. However, below are a few points to consider before signing the dotted line:

**1) What you see is what you get**  
When buying a residential property put back in the re-sale market, viewing it thoroughly is a must. Happy the buyer who manages to find his or her “dream home”. But first, go through the property with a fine-tooth-comb to ensure you know exactly what you are buying.  
**Hindsight:** Consider any irregularities and flaws as these will need to be added into your “expenses” to get the final figure of how much you will actually be spending when buying a re-sale property. From flooring that may need to be changed to leaks and faulty fixtures and fittings that the seller has included in the sale price – all these add to your expenditure and gives room for negotiation where the price tag is concerned.

**2) Conserve on renovation**  
Depending on the condition of the property and how identical or similar it is to what you actually have in mind for the place you intend to make home of – you could save quite a sum if you manage to find a house that ticks all the right boxes. That said, it would be wise to take your time in looking for a property which meets all your desired requirements.  
**Hindsight:** Never make hasty decisions and do not allow yourself to be put in a spot where you have to make an immediate decision, especially in purchasing a house you intend to live in. Never compromise. If the price is too good to be true, examine the property in detail. Ensure there are no encumbrances on the title and the seller has not filed for bankruptcy. Check for white ant and termite infestation.

#### 3) Matured township with amenities in abundance

There is no right number that fits the bill to describe a matured township. But here are some features that resonate with the likes of one – banks, hospitals, schools and education institutions, pharmacies, clinics, 24-hour conveniences stores and eateries, petrol stations, easy access to public transportation and major highways, parks, open and green spaces, shopping malls, post office, places of worship, leisure and entertainment outlets.

**Hindsight:** While all the above may come as conveniences for many, such places are usually densely populated. Hence, finding the right balance may require one to “give and take” on amenities, facilities and comforts.

#### 4) The choice is yours – outlook, setting, even choice of neighbours (and pets)

When viewing the property, one is advised to talk to the neighbours. Stand back and get the “bigger picture”, taking in the entire setting, look from all angles, from afar. You can actually learn a lot from the folks living next door as they could let you in on crucial information on the property at stake. Besides, you could also take this meeting with the neighbours as an opportunity to learn who you may be living next to in the coming years, if not, the rest of your life.

**Hindsight:** Take note about the things that irritate or annoy you – crying babies, noisy children, loud or smelly pets, mosquito infested grounds, overly zealous house party people, etc. – or vice versa. You may be all the above and find that your neighbours might give you a hard time if lifestyles are at polar ends.

#### 5) Free of foul smells from toxic newness

Any thing new usually comes with the scent of newness and novelty. But new houses that are left closed reek of sometimes “industrial fumes” from paint, sealants, adhesives, etc. No worries for the sub-sale buyer as interiors will or hopefully will, smell of home. You are also free from noise pollution unless you or your new neighbours are renovating.

**Hindsight:** However, in the case of newly refurbished and renovated houses, interiors dressed with a new coat of paint, or perhaps re-



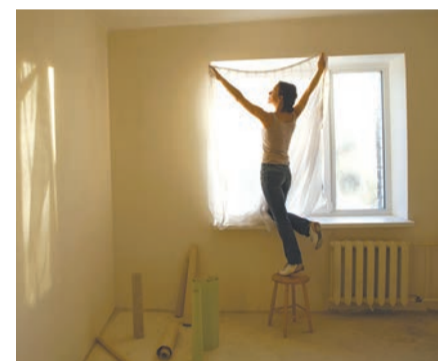
floored/re-tiled, or those given a thorough cleaning with industrial solvents and detergents – you might want to open up doors and windows and “air” interiors before moving in.

#### 6) Security and safety measures

Check on the history of the township or neighbourhood and learn of its past. If there is a housing residences association/committee, check with members on security and safety measures or if there are any issues. From guarded and gated to regular patrols, ensure you are happy with the services, which you will probably need to pay towards.  
**Hindsight:** Besides hefty security and safety charges you will most likely have to bear along with those in the area, you could be called for residents patrol duty.

#### 7) Digital cable tv, internet and phone services

Many houses and high rise residential lots are fitted with these



conveniences. When buying sub-sale, you will probably need to sign up for a new account before use.

**Hindsight:** Do check on availability of the service and clarity as some areas do not receive the best reception. In addition, if you are taking over the previous owner's account, ensure all preceding bills are settled.

#### 8) Identity, characteristic and reputation of housing area

Who does not want to live in an area that is renowned for all the right reasons? From the cleanest neighbourhood to that with zilch burglaries, the most amount of amenities and facilities or the best maintained, etc. Houses in areas like these give its residents a sense of security and pride.

**Hindsight:** If you are not one who is houseproud, your fervent neighbours may give you a hard time.

#### 9) Free from dysfunctional fixtures, furnishings and structural design

Come up with a checklist when viewing any sub-sale property so as not to miss out anything/area of the home. What you see is what you get. Anything which is not in proper working order can usually be rectified or repaired by the seller or else, negotiated to be minused from the agreed property price.

**Hindsight:** If you don't “catch it” before you sign the dotted line, you may end up having to pay for whatever is not in working condition.

#### 10) Negotiable price tag usually lower than new property, sometimes below market price

Depending on various elements to consider like – the built-up, land

area, size and type of property, its neck of woods, facilities and amenities, etc.

**Hindsight:** If the price is too good to be true, take your time and do more research on the property, the title/deed and the owner.

#### 11) No more surprises

When buying property in matured townships, most times there is hardly much land left to construct huge developments. Hence, one is free from surprises like having

a huge white elephant obstructing your amazing view or blocking out the natural air flow, etc.

**Hindsight:** Some may beg to differ as parks and lakes in matured townships have sometimes, in some cases, had to make way for development/construction. However, residents and members of residents associations in matured areas with these open and green spaces will normally give developers a hard time.

#### 12) Matured greenery

In short, a sight for sore eyes indeed providing more oxygenated air during the day. The colour green is also known to rest tired eyes.

#### 13) More homely feel

Though debatable, used goods usually radiate more warmth, hence, more homely.  
**Hindsight:** Used goods that radiate a homely feel may be on its way to decaying, giving way, etc.

#### 14) Chance of getting more than what you bargained for

Looking at this point in a positive light as in, pieces of furniture which you may have said you liked when first meeting the seller and viewing the house as in furnishings like drapes and electrical fixtures or lamps, etc. – the seller may throw in some of these with the sale of the property.

**Hindsight:** You may get more than you bargained for but in a negative light – as in junk, odds and ends, lock-stock-and barrel of defective goods and scrap material.



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