

Future Homes Reimagined Through Sime Darby Property's Concept Home 2030

Imagine if our ancestors did not have the foresight to upgrade their homes and living conditions. Would we still be living in caves? Possibly. And, would we be wishing that we had ancestors who thought about the future generations and acted accordingly? Very likely.

Be it because of a global pandemic, climate change, or simply wanting to create sustainable living, the need to futureproof our lives is now inevitable. Our conventional concept of home and living is constantly disrupted, and it is only prudent that we follow the trend of our forefathers and prepare for what may lie ahead.

The concept of a home is changing as does the way it is constructed. With the climate crisis exposing the short-sighted planning of some homes, property developers are now more cognisant of their responsibility in creating sustainable developments.

According to a 2021 research by the Boston Consulting Group, the property industry is building new forms of housing that are affordable, shared, eco-friendly, flexible, stylish and healthy, with these alternatives to traditional homes making up 4% to 6% of all new residential units built in any given year. The study also shows that the demand for futuristic housing will only increase in the coming years.

"I am excited about the fact that we are not simply wasting our resources in a global crisis. We have learnt so much from the uncertainties and have grown from them. We used the experience gained to focus on how we have built properties over the years and how we can change it by approaching the idea from different angles," said Sime Darby Property Group Managing Director, Dato' Azmir Merican.

As a pioneering property developer with 24 townships and develop-

ments in Malaysia, Sime Darby Property does know a thing or two about sustainable development. It also has a distinguished presence in the United Kingdom as part of the Malaysian consortium to redevelop the iconic Battersea Power Station in Central London. Oh, and it has also been in the industry for 50 years.

Pushing the boundaries

It only takes one spark of genius to revolutionise an industry and you need to look no further than at concept cars to see how new technology and innovative designs can change an age-old sector.

"Visionaries frequently return to the drawing board to develop radical designs that change the fundamental ideas of how a car should look and perform. So, why can't the same be done for our homes?" asks Dato' Azmir.

In a bid to transform the homes in Malaysia, Sime Darby Property has introduced Concept Home 2030 ("CH2030"), an initiative which aims to reinvent how homes can be designed and built in the future. It is a platform that allows architects and visionaries to engage and exchange solutions with industry experts, consumers, and the public to turn great ideas into designs, and great designs into prototypes.

"For years, our homes have been designed based on the 'form follows function' principle and the ideas have remained stagnant. Just look at our terrace homes to see how much the industry needs to be jolted from this lack of progress," said Dato' Azmir, adding that the pandemic has raised some pertinent questions regarding our homes.

"We have been pushed to rethink how we design and build our houses. Are our homes flexible for diverse use of space and functions? Can they adapt to climate change? Can they be built differently? These are the ques-

tions that we want to address through this initiative," he said.

CH2030's goal is to challenge the way we think about homes by exploring themes in relation to the four pillars of the initiative namely Sustainable Solutions, Modern Methods of Construction, Tech-Infused: A Home Brain, and Modular Expandable & Customisable, Dato' Azmir added.

Going circular

As a proponent of the Environmental, Social and Governance ("ESG") principles in its business, Sime Darby Property is aware of the positive impact it can, and has made, in the industry as well as for the communities and the environment. The company sees itself as a Force for Good, and continuously delivers on its sustainability agenda, which is demonstrated by its 2030 Sustainability Goals that align with

the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

Dato' Azmir added: "As the nation's pioneer property developer, we have the responsibility to maintain a scorecard on how we manage ESG for our business and stakeholders. Sime Darby Property has placed sustainability as a hallmark for its business, as well as a signature element in all that the company stands for and achieves."

He believes that property developers should be more circular in their developments and townships, a concept that will be tested via Sime Darby Property's Project Arc at Taman Subang Ria in Subang Jaya, Selangor. This initiative is recognised as the backbone for sustainable development, with the project earmarked to define a new era of community placemaking and bring *joie de vivre* to the township.

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– Dato' Azmir Merican,
Sime Darby Property
Group Managing Director



By designing a circular development that is sustainable post-occupancy of a township, property developers can ensure that communities use recyclable, shareable and replenishable resources to stop the linear model of produce, consume and discard. These principles create a closed-loop ecosystem, with equitable access to resources, while supporting new economies that are productive and not extractive.

“When we prioritise a sustainable and circular development, property developers can start from early-market engagement to deliver solutions that support the sustainability agenda which fulfils the needs of our communities,” said Dato’ Azmir.

Bold, innovative ideas

When Tesla first introduced its battery packs (now called Powerwall) in 2012, many critics were sceptical of the claims that homeowners could ‘store electricity for solar self-consumption, time of use load shifting, and backup power.’ As of November 2021, the company has installed over

250,000 units of the residential home battery pack globally, and the idea is now hailed as one that is revolutionary towards mitigating the effects of climate change.

Dato’ Azmir believes that such innovative idea needs to be incorporated in Malaysian homes, to make them sustainable, adaptable, as well as technology-driven - and CH2030 will provide the right platform to test these new technologies. “You can imagine how much good we can make if we start generating our own electricity and go beyond relying on the grid,” he said.

Bold ideas in the construction field are aplenty, for example, the prefabricated construction or “prefab” method which is transforming the industry in the more developed parts of the world.

“The components are made off-site in a factory, which are then transported and assembled on-site to create a structure. This method is proven to streamline the construction process and reduce waste, and yet it is not practised here. There are reasons for

this and why the economics doesn’t work but we must change that,” said Dato’ Azmir.

The convergence of technology is capable of revolutionising the industry, with innovative solutions such as Augmented Reality (“AR”) which lets project managers inspect jobs without having to be on site. It enables collaborations between multiple stakeholders, allowing them to visualise changes and their effects on a project in real time.

Besides AR, advancements in the 3D-printing technology is speeding up the manufacturing processes for construction equipment and materials, which can possibly reduce the cost in the long run.

“Consequently, such technology may help reduce the development cost which can be accrued to benefit the property buyers in the future. We must remember that at the end of the day, how and why we develop these future-proof homes are to benefit our most important stakeholder - our homebuyers,” said Dato’ Azmir.

Designing the future

They say that the best way to predict the future is to invent it, so when better to design the way of living for tomorrow than now?

Sime Darby Property is always on the lookout to incorporate smart elements in its developments, in preparation for a sustainable future, and CH2030 provides a great starting point to achieving that vision.

Dato’ Azmir hopes that the CH2030 initiative will encourage the industry to work together in building homes of tomorrow for the future generations.

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“We cannot rest on our laurels especially when we know that we can do better as an industry and Sime Darby Property’s CH2030 is dedicated to pushing boundaries with futuristic, inspirational ideas that will disrupt the way we design, develop and build homes of the future,” he said.

Discovering the Homes of the Future

In August 2021, Sime Darby Property partnered with the Malaysian Institute of Architects (“PAM”) to organise the Concept Home 2030 Competition (“Competition”) to challenge visionaries in the built realm to redesign the quintessential Malaysian terrace homes.

The Competition received a total of 171 registered participants which marked the highest number of registrants in the history of PAM’s competitions. A total of 10 registrants have been shortlisted to move into the next stage namely: Area Architects Sdn Bhd; Arkitek Oma Sdn Bhd & Shah Architect; Arkitek Seni Kenyalang Sdn Bhd; B.F.K/Chaw Boon Kit; Cheong Gin Yong Architect; Cipta Teguh Architects Sdn Bhd; Min Wee Architect; Qhawarizmi Architect; RE Design/Boon Zi Yang and Veritas Architects Sdn Bhd.

This Competition is an excellent platform to showcase the participants’ problem-solving skills which will continue the evolution of homes in Malaysia, starting with terrace homes. Participants were pushed to reimagine how life could be in 2030, and to express their vision through the design of a conceptual future home that is modular, innovative, smart, and sustainable.



A number of impressive submissions show excellent potential in disrupting the industry namely ideas such as gamifying property-owning experience using blockchain, and innovative construction methods that are expandable and customisable to evolving lifestyles.

The Competition is currently in Phase 2 during which the finalists will have to prepare their presentation to best showcase the concept after the workshop with industry experts for the final submission. The Competition also features a ‘People’s Choice Award’ where the public can now vote for their favourite submission(s) at <https://concepthome2030.simedarbyproperty.com>. Winners of the competition will be announced during a live event on 22 January 2022.



Scan the QR code for more information on CH2030: