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# Blue Ribbons for your home?

If you're getting visions of your home draped, pinned, or wrapped in blue ribbons fresh from the haberdashery, you're way off the mark.

The Blue Ribbon is actually a certification to be awarded by Architect Centre Sdn Bhd (ACSB). As part of its long-term plan, it is preparing to form strategic partnerships with housing developers, contractors and master builders with a view to granting the certification to their newly-built or refurbished properties.

"A Blue Ribbon Home (status) offers peace of mind and assurance that the house is built to a high standard without serious defects, in accordance with the conditions of inspection set out in the centre's inspection report," said ACSB general manager Hussein Hamzah.

"This award can also be a valuable marketing tool for property developers and home builders to gain a heads up."

Hussein explained that ACSB's Blue

Ribbon Report serves to testify that no serious defects are present in the properties, and vendors receiving a certificate can display it on all sales literature and signage.

"We hope industry players will take advantage of attaining the proposed Blue Ribbon Home certification to add value to their property and gain buyers' confidence," he added.

Meanwhile, ACSB, which was set up under the Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia (PAM) umbrella, is also planning to carry out Master Class training workshops for local tradesmen such as plumbers, carpenters and construction workers in order to upgrade their skills and improve workmanship.

Since ACSB's launch on May 8 this year by Minister of Housing and Local Government Datuk Seri Ong Ka Chuan, the centre has received good response for inspections of newly-acquired properties.

ACSB offers property inspection services conducted by accredited and

experienced architects who would serve well to help the industry in identifying weaknesses in the construction process.

"We expect demand for our services to rise ... more so at this time as buyers are more cautious in their spending, especially on property," said Hussein.

"Even for newly completed houses, we can be of service to buyers as we can make a list of rectification or defect works to be carried out for developers to undertake during the Defect Liability Period."

He noted this simple step could save individuals and organisations a lot of time and money.

"When defects are not identified by specialists at an early stage, such as problems caused by shoddy workmanship or inferior materials, they can be more costly to buyers and developers when rectified later," he explained.

Thus far, the centre has received support from industry players that

include the Real Estate and Housing Developers' Association, Association of Consulting Engineers Malaysia, and the Master Builders Association of Malaysia.

"The centre has also taken on a proactive role in educating the public on housing and building safety through fairs, seminars and conferences," he added.

ACSB recently concluded an essay competition jointly organised with NST-Property, and sponsored by Johnson Suisse, Kian Contract Sdn Bhd, Panmart Development Sdn Bhd and Okin Pest Management Sdn Bhd, to relate real-life stories on how defects in housing and buildings affect its occupants and owners.

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