

# ENGAGE ARCHITECT CENTRE TO CHECK YOUR HOUSE



**'Don't be penny wise and pound foolish' – Victor**

**KOTA KINABALU:** "Engage the Architect Centre, Malaysia (ACM) to have your houses checked, and do not gamble your life-long saving into lifelong battles against defects in your dream homes!"

That was the advice from Victor Wong (pictured), PAM Sabah chapter chairman in his response to a report published on November 25 regarding bad MM2H property quality.

There are a total of 32 building inspectors in Sabah who are accredited by ACM - 21 of whom are architects and the other 11, either engineers or quantity surveyors.

Their professional services could prove invaluable to house purchasers who are mostly non-technical and unable to judge if the work has been constructed to specifications or if the works are of reasonable quality and workmanship.

Victor says the building inspector's report could protect the rights of the house purchasers, especially when there is a dispute and the case ends up in the Housing Tribunal.

The building inspectors carry out inspections to identify defects during vacant possession and before the expiry date of the Defects Liability Period.

The range of services provided by the Architects Centre are structural deficiencies; defective roofs/ceilings; defective plumbing, dampness, leakages, and electrical safety; slope stability, retaining wall and drainage, and safety, security, regulatory checks on unsafe and illegal renovations.

Victor adds that property is a big investment, and that it will be penny wise and pound foolish, if the building defects are not checked before possession.

"One might end up with recurring cost of maintenance and being unhappy in his own dream home," he says.

To engage the services offered by the architect building inspectors under ACM, one can call up PAM Sabah Chapter secretariat at: 088-232524 or

088-261313.

The professional fees are small, and generally less than RM1 per square foot, depending on the types of building and the complexity of the job.

Referring to the Sabah Housing Conference 2009, organised by the Ministry of Local Government and Housing with the theme "Good Governance Towards Quality Housing and Services", Victor lamented that most people are forgetful most of the time.

"The question of poor quality of workmanship happening to the MM2H properties is a big surprise, since the selling price is over a million ringgit, even for a semi-detached house. How can the quality be compromised for such expensive and profitable project?"

Victor said if such a trend happen to the MM2H homes, then it is unthinkable what will happen to the thousands of units of affordable homes, of which the selling price is much lower.

Meanwhile, he said after the Sabah Housing Conference 2009, all the developers, contractors, architects and engineers were requested to submit their respective resolutions and feedback to the ministry on the conference.

The three resolutions submitted by PAM Sabah Chapter were:

1. The introduction of the building inspection services as part of the process in deterring poor quality of workmanship identifying building defects and rectification
2. The training of clerks of works to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities in the building industries
3. The accreditation of semi-skilled workers such as the carpenters, bar benders, brick layers, plasterers, plumbers, electricians and so on.

Victor says since then, many architects, engineers and quantity surveyors have been trained by the ACM to become qualified and competent building inspectors and have been providing the much-needed inspection services to the housing sector.

He added that the suggestion to have accreditation of semi-skilled workers by CIDB is still relevant today.

The training of workers in their respective trades will improve their knowledge and skills, and therefore likely to improve the quality of the work they are doing.