

Safe and secure

SAFETY and security are of paramount concern in Sabah, especially following the Sulu incursion in Lahad Datu early this year. Developers are cashing in on this as focus shifts to the provision of the gated and guarded concept of living.

Although this concept caught on in the Klang Valley several years ago, it is just beginning to register in Sabah. In Lahad Datu, developer Desa Megah Development Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of Imej Warisan, pioneered the gated and guarded concept via its flagship development Seri Permata 66.

Boasting proximity to the town centre and airport, this development introduced the concept of gated and guarded living to Sabah. According to its developers, within the perimeter lies the only swimming pool and gymnasium facility in Lahad Datu, exclusive to residents. It also consists of a professionally-landscaped park with jogging and recreational facilities.

"A large majority of the population in Lahad Datu are immigrants, so reports of cross-border crime are not uncommon. We came up with this guarded and gated concept because people deserve to feel safe in their own homes," says Allison Tey, Desa Megah Development general manager.

She explains that residents are guaranteed safety as every house is connected to the guardhouse via intercom and 24-hour security service patrols. There are also CCTVs in the compound. The development received its Occupancy Certificate (OC) in November last year.

In Kota Kinabalu, the gated and guarded living concept took off in 2005 with the launch of Luyang Perdana by Ireka Corp Bhd, comprising 150 units of terrace houses, 40 semi-detached houses and six bungalows on a 10.4ha. Its perimeter fencing and 24-hour security concept offer a much-needed sense of security.

The Ganang Villa, a gated townhouse complex, followed in 2007, offering similar features. Its success was evident in the twofold price jump a few years after its launch.

Other gated and guarded projects were subsequently launched, such as Taman Manikar in Luyang by Wong Chik Lim Holdings and Taman Amanputra in Jalan Bunga Ulam Raja (Jalan Lintas), near City Mall and the Sabah Golf & Country Club.

This project, comprising 75 housing units, was developed by KK Point Sdn Bhd.

Tey says many gated and guarded communities are springing up but not all strictly follow the guidelines of subdivided titles and proper security. She believes there is a future for gated and guarded properties in Sabah, especially for landed property, as crime is becoming of increasing concern in a state where more than a quarter of the population are foreigners. Statistics show that more than 30% of the crime in Sabah is committed by foreigners.

Tey adds that a housing development that follows proper gated and guarded guidelines would have security guards patrolling the area, with checkpoint stations and CCTVs installed throughout the premises. Every house would also have a direct intercom service to the guardhouse to enable quick and efficient communication in case of emergencies, and all houses would have a uniform appearance.

Gated and guarded properties fetch around RM600 per sq ft in areas around Kota Kinabalu, while similar properties without such facilities are listed for a little lower, in the region of RM500 per sq ft. Many Sabah-based property agents say houses listed under the gated and guarded concept sell more easily than those without it.

