

Vertical Living Phenomenon in Malaysia

Wan Nor Azriyati Wan Abd Aziz, Zairul Nisham Musa, Noor Rosly Hanif, Ainoriza Mohd Aini and Abdul Ghani Sarip (Malaysia)

Key words: Cadastre; Land management; Real estate development; Vertical living; social decay; service charge; common area;

SUMMARY

Vertical living phenomenon can be traced in all continents in the world more than decades ago. A number of researchers have collectively agreed that many factors contributed to this phenomenon. Amongst the key reasons are the movement of the people to the urban areas, increasing land value, scarcity of land in urban areas as well as life style. While others argued that the vertical development is the answer to the massive housing shortages, especially in major cities in the world such as in South Korea and Japan. This has result in vertical living as the most common style of living for the vast majority of the people. For these environments where high density is inevitable, there are strong opinion that high rise building development created an urban pathology and social decay in residential areas. In addressing this negative impact, in countries such as Australia, Korea and Hong Kong the state has formulated special provision and legislation pertaining to the vertical building development. Zooming into the Malaysia experience, the emergence of vertical building can be traced in the early 1970s. In the context of Malaysia, the management and maintenance of vertical living building can be divided into two stages. The first stage is before the issuance of Strata Title where the property is under the responsibility of the developer as stated in Sec. 191 of the Housing Development (Control and Licensing) Act and the second stage is after the issuance of Strata Title, where the property will be under the responsibility of the Management Corporation (MC) as stated in the Strata Title Act 1985. The facilities and common areas are shared between the residents. The residents pay a service charge as a fee for the facilities provided, while the MC is responsible for managing the facilities. Questions arise as what are the benefits or cost in vertical living and what are the issues and challenges faced by the households living in the stratified properties? Are the residents satisfied with the management of their properties? Using face-to-face survey on 150 respondents lived in vertical residential units in Shah Alam, capital city of Selangor, the findings suggests that majority are pleased with the amount paid for their service charge due to the fact that they received a good management and maintenance services for their properties. There are indeed more benefits than cost gained from living in vertical units but they perceived lack of understanding in the current legislations have led to less level of satisfaction with this type of life style. This suggests that the government need to play more roles in creating awareness amongst the citizens of the rights and responsibility in living in vertical units.