

# Something new in an old part of the city

BY WONG KING WAI

Ludwig van Beethoven's *Symphony No 5*, which took him about four years to complete, is a seminal piece of classical music. Private real estate company Star Effort Sdn Bhd — a joint venture between BinaPuri Properties Sdn Bhd and Goldmine Properties Sdn Bhd — hopes to create something similar in Kuala Lumpur with Opus Residence.

The RM400 million project, comprising two 32-storey towers, is coming up off Jalan Maharajalela, in Jalan Tallala in Kampung Attap, and will offer a panoramic view of the city skyline as well as the future Menara Warisan Merdeka.

An aerial view of the area where Opus Residence is coming up

## Musically inclined

"Opus is a very musically inspired name, which we thought was most suitable for a demanding 21st century market. We believe life should be as beautiful as a piece of music — fast and slow tempo as well as good pitch," BinaPuri group executive director Matthew Tee explains to *City & Country*.

The façade will have an array of rhythmic louvres, in which different spaces will be expressed differently. For example, the residential units will have vertical fins and louvres while for the common facilities, these will be horizontal.

"For this project, we have proposed only two main colours — black and gold — to express a sense of prestige," Tee points out.

BinaPuri executive director Ng Keong Wee says their target market comprises the young and upwardly mobile who like to live in the city.

Opus is located within walking distance of the Maharajalela Monorail Station and the upcoming MRT station at Menara Warisan Merdeka, which is slated for completion in 2018, about the same time as the development. It is also a short drive from Jalan Bukit Bintang, the premier shopping strip in KL, and nearby Victoria Institution, one of the top national schools in the city.

For those familiar with Jalan Maharajalela, what springs to mind is the traffic congestion. However, Goldmine marketing director Dave Hoong does not believe this will be a major issue.

"From what we know, the council's plan and the Greater KL plan is to increase KL's population. So, in the future, connectivity would have improved, which should mitigate the traffic congestion," he says.

## Orchestrating the project

Located on 1.31 acres of freehold land, Opus' twin towers will be serviced by four lifts each and feature 357 units with 1, 2 and 3-bedroom layout. Tower 1 will have 205 (63 one-bedroom, 46 two-bedroom and 96 three-bedroom) units and Tower 2, 152 (42 one-bedroom, 23 two-bedroom and 87 three-bedroom) units. With built-ups ranging from 700 to 1,100 sq ft and an average selling price of RM1,000 psf, each unit will be fitted with a video intercom system. There are no penthouses.

One of the challenges for the developer was the constraints on the land. Says Ng, "The land is actually 80ft wide but because the back road of Jalan Tallala is not wide enough, we had to surrender 20ft of it. That reduced our buildable and saleable area but we needed to do it so that the back road could be widened for entry into Opus."

Be that as it may, Tower 1 of Opus, which has been previewed since late 2013, is fully booked.



KENNY YAP/THE EDGE

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The show unit of Opus Residence's 1-bedroom apartment



Tower 2 is being marketed in Shanghai, Taipei and Guangzhou and about 30% of its units have been taken up. The official launch of Opus is targeted for the end of this month or early next month.

The units in Tower 1 are basic without any fittings but Tower 2 is being positioned as premium and will come with Calvin Klein furniture and kitchen appliances, including a dishwasher, a built-in fridge and dryer/washer, from Slovenian company Gorenje, says Tee. He believes Opus will be the first development with such furnishing and fittings.

Ng says when it came to the design of the residential units, their brief to the architect was to ensure space was not compromised. "The 700 sq ft units feature only one bedroom, so it could be of reasonable size and have a bathroom that is spacious, not tight

and narrow. This was done to ensure the units are comfortable and not cramped."

Of late, the trend has been to build "bite-size" units of less than 700 sq ft. However, Opus boasts much larger units, which, says Tee, was due to new regulations. "A new guideline from Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur states that not more than 30% of the units can be less than 650 sq ft. We believe DBKL doesn't want too many small units and too many investors in the market."

To cater for city living, the developer has put much thought into the facilities for Opus' residents, including food and beverage outlets, two shared facility podiums, sky terraces atop each tower and an automated garage door system for added security.

The ground floor houses the lobby and three F&B outlets with a total net lettable area of 5,000



PICTURES BY STAR EFFORT



erties, they mainly front Jalan Maharajalela. Beyond that, the buildings are all institutional.”

If a new development came up in the area, it would most likely be more suitable for investment rather than owner occupation, opines Chen. He believes once Menara Warisan Merdeka is up and running along with better infrastructure, property values in the area will appreciate.

Metrohomes Sdn Bhd director See Kok Loong agrees with Chen. “The future is bright as [the new tower] will transform the landscape of the area once it is completed together with the MRT station.”

See describes the area as old and while it was attractive in the past because of its close proximity to the city, it does not have the same appeal any more. He too believes a new development in the area will lift property values in the future, although this will take time due to the age of the neighbourhood. See does not see the high-income group moving into the area but opines a new development will probably attract investors who wish to rent out their units, and singles and foreign buyers who want something close to the city.

“Malaysians rely a lot on private vehicles and they prefer to stay outside the city, where there are more amenities, such as neighbourhood malls, and space,” he explains. “However, the good thing about this area is that it is close to the city and is mature with shopping malls, offices and hospitals. It lacks schools, which does not make it very suitable for families with children.”

At present, See notes, the people living in the area are those working in the city or studying there. “The average price of the old apartments there is very low – RM500 psf. A new project would fetch RM800 to RM1,200 psf because of today’s land value and construction costs plus all the new DBKL regulations, such as development charges and conversion premium.”

According to Chen’s records, at the nearby Menara Belfield Condominium, a transaction was done in the middle of the year at RM300 psf. Two years ago, the units, whose built-ups range from 926 to 1,065 sq ft, were going for RM250 to RM300 psf.

Some of the units in the Choo Cheng Khay Apartments in the area were transacted at RM280 psf in mid-2014. With built-ups of 1,654 to 1,664 sq ft, these units were transacted at RM220 psf two years ago.

As infrastructure and amenities improve, it will not be long before areas such as Kampung Attap slowly change. Like the musical journey of *Symphony No 5*, only time will tell what their future holds. ■



KENNY YAP/THE EDGE

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An artist's impression of the facilities at the development

sq ft. Levels 2 to 7 will comprise parking space while Level 8 is the family facilities podium with a swimming pool, fitness area, meditation garden and rock climbing gym, among other features.

The residential units are located on Levels 9 to 15 while Level 16 is the wellness centre with spa-like facilities like a dipping pool, hydro therapy Jacuzzi and sauna and reading pods. Levels 17 to 32 will have more residential units.

The rooftop of Tower 1 will have a barbecue area, water features and a panorama lounge as well as a family lounge with a mini-theatre. Tower 2 will feature a recreational area with game tables, such as foosball and billiards. There will also be water features, a cyber-lounge and al fresco dining area.

A feature that Tee believes no other high-rise de-

veloper offers is the automated garage door system for the car park for added security. He says during off-peak hours, tenants may utilise the system with the touch of a button. However, this system’s final operational procedure is still being discussed.

**Investors' option**

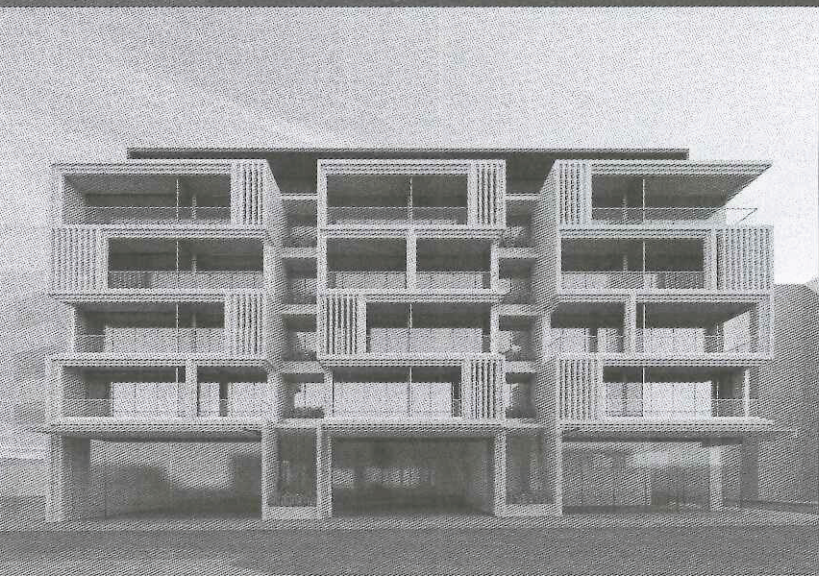
The section of Jalan Maharajalela where Opus is located is not considered a prime area of the city centre as it is one of the older parts of KL. However, the nearby monorail station and the city’s growth is slowly affecting property values there, albeit slowly.

“This area is not a commercial centre and is very institutional,” says Landserve Sdn Bhd managing director Chen King Hoaw. “The landmark there is Dewan Pustaka dan Bahasa. As for commercial prop-

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