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A LAW is needed to ensure landscape architects are held responsible for the work they do.

Institute of Landscape Architects Malaysia (Ilam) president Assoc Prof Dr Suhardi Maulan said as professionals, landscape architects should be accountable for any project they undertake.

"This is to ensure that during the design and planning stage, they have thoroughly thought about the plants and materials used and that standards and safety aspects specified are met."

Dr Suhardi said there should be a Landscape Architects Act, similar to legislation like the Town Planners Act 1955, Architects Act 1967 and Registration of Engineers Act 1967 to regulate professionals in the field.

"For example, under the Act, a civil engineer could be held responsible for the collapse of a bridge if it was found to be related to the design aspect."

"The same principle would apply for landscape architects and landscape design if a Landscape Architects Act is in place."

"It would ensure better quality and safety in project management."

In the absence of an Act, Dr Suhardi said Ilam has taken the initiative to ensure the quality of landscape architects in Malaysia.

"In order to become an Ilam corporate member, a landscape architect is required to work for two years before sitting for an exam conducted by Ilam."

"Although the exam is optional, many local authorities require landscape architects to be registered with Ilam to submit plans to government agencies."

Dr Suhardi, who is also Universiti Putra Malaysia's Landscape Architect Department head, noted that the landscape architecture field has evolved over the years.

"In the early 1990s, there was already a guideline by the Town and Country Planning Department (now called Plan Malaysia) for developments to set aside 10% as green space."

"But the game changer was in the mid-1990s, when Malaysia embarked on the development of Putrajaya and the KL International Airport."

"That was when landscape became a key aspect of development projects."

"People started looking at landscapes differently, from just being about open spaces to an important aspect of development."

"Based on that spirit, many developments now consider landscape a very important part of their project and it has even become a marketing tool with new housing projects touting their greenery as a major selling point."

However, Dr Suhardi said there was a need for a paradigm shift to include landscapes in low-end housing projects, government offices and schools.

"Our expertise can be used to design open spaces and classrooms of the future."

"Learning should be fun and not constrained within four walls," he said, adding that landscapes should cater to the masses and not just high-end projects.

"In the west, there is recognition that landscape should not be a commodity which is available only to people who can afford it."

Dr Suhardi said climate change, such as more frequent thunderstorms, has made maintenance of landscape elements such as trees, shrubs, walkways and playgrounds more challenging for local councils and landscape architects.

Regulating profession of landscape architects

Legislation will ensure those in field are held accountable for the work they do, says association president



Kuala Lumpur Sports City in Bukit Jalil, Kuala Lumpur, is one of the developments nominated at the Malaysia Landscape Architecture Awards 2019.



Dr Suhardi says it is time landscape architects are better regulated.



Sunway Montana in Desa Melawati, Kuala Lumpur, has also been recognised at MLAA 2019.



Elmina Central Park in Elmina West, Shah Alam, is vying for honours at the MLAA 2019.



Puteri Cove Residences and Quayside in Puteri Harbour Iskandar, Nusajaya, Johor, has also caught the attention of MLAA judges.



The development in Taman Irian Bayu, Seremban is up for an award too.

Landscape trends in 2019

Bringing the outdoors in

Landscape is not only about the space we create. It is also a borrowed view of the surrounding beauty, capturing the essence and introducing it into the space that is designed as a part of the whole experience. It is constructed in such a way that it frames the view.



Lush is king

Lush greeneries are essential and a sought-after trend, especially for commercial spaces that seek to provide generous green coverage even when working with minimal space. This elevates the value of the exterior space and provides a luxurious green space for urbanites to relax and congregate.



Fluid and irregular

Fluid and irregular shaped layouts used in landscape design are trendy again, as rectangular shapes and lines have become old-fashioned. This creates more secluded spaces, producing a wholesome experience of casual feel and organic spaces.



Floating island

The use of plants in landscape design is evolving. They are used not only on the surrounding land, but also in waterways and reflective ponds. This forms a unique and stunning floating island.



Weaving and woven

The art of weaving has been adopted as a part of landscape features. This complex pattern can be used as a structure in garden spaces, framing it to be an artistically unique space. This creative art form allows landscape spaces to be highlighted as an iconic feature.



Rain gardens

The primary purpose of a rain garden is to improve the water quality of nearby bodies of water. It is also to ensure rainwater is readily available as groundwater for surrounding plants, rather than being sent through stormwater drains straight out to the river or sea. In fact, it can reduce water runoff by allowing stormwater to soak into the ground.



Design with nature

A deep understanding of science and the law of nature helps to design a site that is environmentally sensitive. Creating a nature-themed attraction requires a thorough understanding of environmental design approach and harnessing the hidden potential of the site.



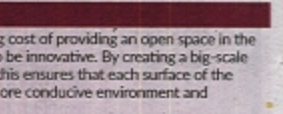
Adventure play

With the growing popularity of extreme games and sports, nature is now a playground for adults. Jungles, mountains and hills are where activities such as mountain biking, jungle trekking and hiking take place. This will also promote the preservation of nature's geological features and the surrounding flora and fauna.



Insta-spot

Bold and unique spaces are now popular attractions for people to take photos of. With this in mind, landscape design draws inspiration from the latest trends by creating spaces with eye-catching and eccentric features that offer a "wow" factor to an Instagram post.



Elevated park

The rapid urban development and rising cost of providing an open space in the city has inspired landscape architects to be innovative. By creating a big-scale urban park on the roof of the building, this ensures that each surface of the urban area is fully utilised, provides a more conducive environment and combats heat island effect.

