

## **En-bloc sales eroding our 'sense of kampung'**

PLEASE refer to last Friday's article, 'Some Gillman Heights owners fight on for their homes'.

Gillman Heights is an excellent example of what is happening on the collective property sale scene today:

Minority owners fight desperately to keep their homes;

Minority and majority owners find replacement value like-for-like, in terms of location, size and price, does not result in a win-win situation for sellers; and

Collective property sales create social tension in private housing estates, which erodes the fabric of society and our 'sense of kampung'.

The bitter jeers and ugly scenes reported recently at the Bayshore Park extraordinary general meeting, where the minority were not allowed a proper hearing, are becoming typical of collective property sale meetings across the island: Neighbour is pitted against neighbour.

The increasing litigation that accompanies virtually all recent sales attempts is a symptom of a sickness from which society needs relief. This, coupled with an increasing awareness that, in Singapore, your home is not really your home and can be taken from you by your neighbours. All these factors erode our sense of home and innate security.

Finally, many sellers realise too late that, after they have signed on the dotted line, what they thought would be a windfall is actually a shortfall. It takes two to four years to get sales proceeds - by which time the market has negated profits and resulted in sellers having to downgrade or take a loan to pay for their replacement home. The dislocation to the elderly is especially poignant.

What price will we pay for eroding our sense of kampung? What price have we paid already?

**Susan Prior (Ms)**