

Habiquad touts pre-fab, low maintenance homes

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By Rabindra Rooplall

Imagine during a hot and humid day, you enter your home which has no air condition unit or fan but it is naturally cool all day long.

This is the new wave of buildings that will be hitting the market in Guyana and the Caribbean as a company called Global Building Systems, “Habiquad” is preparing its first set of buildings here in Guyana.



One of the houses under construction in La Parfait Harmonie

Housing developer and Managing Director of Habiquad, Vernon Wilson who designs pre-fabricated houses has started his design in La Parfait Harmonie Housing Scheme, West Bank Demerara.

On a tour of one of the buildings that is a two-bedroom, single-bath residence under construction, and is set to be completed in six weeks, Wilson said such a building which is low income will cost \$4.5M and depending on the upgrades, the price will differ. However, the present price would include electrical installations, painting and the necessary internal fixtures.

Noting that the building material for the external wall being used is fibre cement boards added with 50% porcelain cement, which is 99% biodegradable, Wilson said that the internal walls are made of polyethylene, which is also used on the flooring in addition to sheetrock which is also biodegradable.

In addition, the roof is being covered by polycarbonate which has a UV ray reflector which assists with 30 degrees difference in temperature inside the building, while the walls are also insulated to minimise heat from entering the building.

“Even solar stoves can be provided for the hinterland residents who want to build their homes but don’t have electricity....we can build houses from \$4.5M to \$200M.”

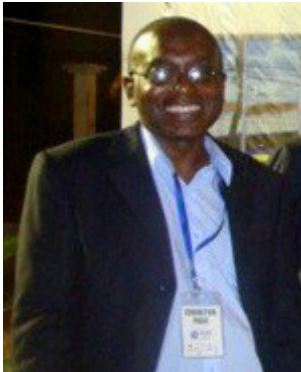
He said that the houses that will be built will be low maintenance, since owners would not have to worry about the walls cracking or sinking, boards shrinking or breakage to the walls from a heavy hit.

Adding that the building structure can be built up to three stories high, without structural steel and pass national and international building codes for structural integrity, fire, earthquake and moisture, the Managing Director said the building is capable of withstanding a category five hurricane and a magnitude three earthquake, “that is how strong the structure is, when the building is completed no one would ever know that it was a pre-fab house...” “One of these houses will be given a 20-year guarantee.”

Underscoring that there are plans to seek government permission to build an industrial manufacturing site in Linden where 400 persons can be employed, Mr Wilson said that prefabricated homes are dwellings manufactured off-site in advance, usually in standard sections that can be easily shipped and assembled.

He also noted that the processes are safe, durable, energy-efficient and environmentally-friendly and qualify for Energy Star Program of the U.S. Department of Energy.

Marketing Director of Habiquad, Allison Butters-Grant, said a typical 1,500-square foot Habiquad structure can be delivered to the construction site, ready-to-assemble, in 30 days or less days.



Managing Director of Habiquad, Vernon Wilson

She said that would reduce construction time and manpower, since a one-story 1,500 square foot building takes a crew of six trained workers approximately one week to assemble, with reduced construction waste and reduced cost of clean-up.

Adding that the material would arrive onsite in pre-cut lightweight sections so it can be fastened together using ordinary power tools, the Marketing Director disclosed that the company is dedicated to bringing safe, affordable housing and community structures to the people who need them most.

“We succeed by establishing strategic partnerships that provide jobs and economic benefit to communities and countries where we do business by offering support to local charities and institutions whose missions are consistent with Habiquad company values. “For persons in the low income bracket, maintenance of a wood and/or cement house will be more expensive in the long term, however for the houses Habiquad offers, far less maintenance is needed,” Mrs. Allison Butters-Grant asserted.

The company registered in October, last, with the Ministry of Housing, and many of the

current pre-fab home designs on the market have jovial, eclectic elements of postmodernism, or the clean, simple lines of futurism.

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