

# Penang gets new landmark

■ By AUDREY DERMAWAN

GEORGE TOWN, Penang, will soon have a new landmark in the Penang Times Square to be developed by Ivory Properties Group.

It will be built on a 5.2ha prime land site which used to house the country's second largest tin smelter, Escoy.

Its general manager and director Chok Keng Vui said Penang Times Square will be "an urban village within the city".

It is aimed at meeting the State Government's aspiration to bring back the population to the city of Georgetown.

"It is also set to be a place where the historical events in the past will be retold and future events unfold, a place where Georgetown will relive its glorious past," Chok told the Business Times.

The company had last July submitted a copy of the building plans to the Penang Island Municipal Council.

"We are currently awaiting the green light. If all goes well, work on the project will begin by next August," he said.

He declined to reveal the group's investment in the project but it is learnt that the cost will be about RM400 million.

The project will be divided into four phases and the entire project is expected

to completed by 2008.

Phase One, known as Birch The Plaza, will comprise the building of 308 units of business suites equipped with the state-of-the-art facilities. They include a gymnasium, sauna, swimming pool, meeting room, jogging track, a green lung as well as commercial complexes.

Birch The Plaza strives to marry the old with the new.

"With an architectural language that points towards the future and yet retains the olden days' charm of Georgetown, we are proud to introduce a new vocabulary to the urban fabric," he said.

Phase One will take at least three years to complete.

Phases Two and Three will comprise residential components coupled with exhibition halls and a private college while Phase Four, with neo-classical design, will house an art's colony, a museum and a food centre, all of which recreates heritage buildings.

Chok highlighted that of the total hectare, 0.12ha will be left undeveloped.

"We feel that it is important for us to maintain the green lung and to ensure that Penang in future will have a designated site to launch its various festivities and celebrations," he added.



**SOPHISTICATED:** An artist's impression of Birch The Plaza, to be built under the Phase One of the Penang Times Square project, located along Jalan Datuk Keramat, Penang.