

## **Ascott Reit buys prime greenfield site for S\$62.4m to build first co-living property in one-north**

By Leila Lai, The Business Times THU, SEP 20, 2018

ASCOTT Residence Trust (Ascott Reit) has acquired a prime greenfield site at Nepal Hill in Singapore's research and innovation business hub one-north for S\$62.4 million, the company announced on Thursday morning.

It plans to develop the 60-year leasehold site into a co-living property managed by the Reit's (real estate investment trust) sponsor, The Ascott Limited, under its co-living brand lyf. The property, which will be named lyf one-north Singapore and offer 324 units over a gross floor area of more than 73,447 square feet, is slated to achieve its Temporary Occupation Permit by 2020 and open in 2021. It will be Ascott Reit's maiden development project.

The site was put up for sale by JTC Corporation in a two-envelope concept and price tender, and received four bids. Tenderers were evaluated based on their proposed concept and tender price, with the concept proposal including the design concept, the community building programming, and the general building requirements.

The one-north estate where it is located has attracted more than S\$7 billion worth of investments in industries such as biomedical, info-communications and media. It is also a talent development hub with several world-renowned business schools and corporate universities in the area.

Ascott Reit's bid of S\$62.4 million for the site was the highest of the four and nearly S\$13 million more than the second-highest bid of S\$49.5 million by Ascendas Nepal Hill Property. Its proposal features creative use of communal spaces and comprehensive programmes to promote social bonding, wellness, personal development and business networking.

"Compared to acquiring completed properties, this investment not only allows us to have an early entry at a lower cost, enjoy development profits, but we can also expect higher yield in the long term," said Bob Tan, chairman of Ascott Residence Trust Management Limited.

"The strong government support and private sector investment in one-north give us further confidence to invest in the site. This is an important move to build Ascott Reit's pipeline of quality yield-accretive assets in Singapore, a mature hospitality market with stable performance, especially since it is becoming harder to find immediately accretive assets in the country."

lyf one-north Singapore will be located next to one-north MRT station and a 30-minute ride to the Central Business District. Guests will enjoy a fully digital customer experience and communal amenities such as a lap pool, social kitchen, fitness area and barbeque garden.

Said Aaron Tham, JTC's director of new estates: "lyf one-north Singapore's contemporary architectural design and community building programmes will provide an attractive accommodation option for working professionals.

"This contributes to JTC's initiatives to create a vibrant and conducive environment in one-north for innovative minds to congregate, collaborate and create."

