

DESIGNING FOR HISTORY

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# THE LINC, KL

## NATURE'S BARN IN THE CITY

*Nestled at the intersection of Jalan Ampang and Jalan Tun Razak, is the very unique 3-storey retail centre, LINC KL. It spans across 160,000sq ft in space and includes what's touted to be the 'last green area' in bustling KL City. With its barn-like structure, LINC KL stands out strikingly and is easily one of the most distinctive architecture in the city, compared to its towering concrete and sky-scraping neighbours.*

Although officially opened only at the end of 2018, LINC KL is already a familiar architectural hype amongst urban dwellers, thanks to its growing fame on social media. With plenty of *Instagrammable* spaces and an architectural design worthy of being deemed 'neo hipster', LINC KL is well on its way to becoming THE new must-visit place to dine or have a cup of coffee, at least once in recent times. But beyond being a backdrop for awesome Instagram posts, LINC KL exudes a tranquil atmosphere that can only be felt in person.

Inspired by the concept of country barn, LINC KL sports a high exterior wall which amplifies a visual of high spatial volume; while a combination of various edges accentuate its geometrical shape. In line with the barn-style architecture, LINC KL also features rising vertical glass panels with a sprawling horizon of classic red bricks to give the building a rustic-modern façade.

This rustic-modern look continues on into the interior - where raw concrete shapes the walls, and is further given attitude with black steel fittings and a series of nature-inspired murals. The raw finish design style may no longer be something new but the way it all comes together in LINC KL, gives this interior design trend a breath of fresh air. More importantly, it provides a feeling of familiarity and comfort for patrons, while subtly-outlining the natural theme that shaped its blueprint.

If this contrast of country barn with raw, hipsterish design elements in the middle of the city fails to amuse the visitor, then perhaps the blending of greenery that surrounds LINC KL surely will. The surrounding greeneries are more than just appeases the eyes - it blankets this truly unique architecture with a sense of peace and tranquility. A rare feeling to find in the congested capital city of Malaysia.

### So 'Barn' Beautiful

The tell-tale feature of a barn-styled architecture comes mainly from the shape of its roof structure. Usually distinguished by an elongated triangular shape, the roof is accentuated by making it slope down to almost the midpoint of the side walls - a necessity to create more volume within the structure.

In designing the LINC KL, the design and architect team drew inspiration from this basic-but-far-from-conventional structure and reinterpreted it as its key exterior feature. More angles were introduced into the triangular-shaped barn roof and closed off at the bottom to shape a hexagonal protrusion, which doubles as the main roof and a distinctive feature that gives LINC KL its outstanding façade.

### The Beauty and Its Roof

To bring the reinterpreted barn roof of LINC KL to life, the design and architect team faced their first challenge of the project: finding and selecting a roofing and cladding material that could match all the design requirements.

Since the roofing of LINC KL steeps low and down to its side walls, its construction had to be seamless and smooth without protruding edges that would tamper with the direction that the team had in mind. Therefore, the material had to be highly-flexible in order to be shaped and formed without 'discontinuation'. It also had to be resilient enough to hold shape and withstand urban island heat effects.

While shape may have been the key factor in the selection process, colour options of the roofing and cladding material was just as important. The idea was to have colours that could bring out a natural, yet contemporary and lively outlook, while being palate that could be mixed and matched to add a zesty spirit and life to LINC KL.

To achieve these objectives, COLORBOND® steel was the chosen material for the roofing and wall cladding. Practically a household name amongst the building, architectural and DIY communities in Australia, it had the exact qualities that the design team was looking for. It was strong yet highly-flexible, proven to withstand harsh weather and came with a selection of beautiful colours and variants.

The team selected the eye-catching hues of Autumn Red, Almond Beige, Sunflower Gold and Aquamarine from COLORBOND® steel for LINC KL. And to rollform the steel to shapes and material profiles desired, Swissma Snapwelt® was the entrusted one.

Like putting in the final piece to a puzzle, the design team now had what they needed to bring LINC KL to life. A rollformer who understood their vision and a material that checked off everything requirement on their list, LINC KL now stands loud and proud - not at all looking like the typical country barn but an iconic, contemporarily-reimagined architecture.

### In Harmony with Nature

Where other malls have fountains, statues or fancy light fixtures as its centerpiece, LINC KL has three giant ficus trees greeting its patrons and serving as the focal point upon entering the building.

While trees may seem like a humble understatement of a centerpiece, the ficus trees in LINC KL are rich with stories to tell - since they have been growing there for a long time. As the last green area within the city, the developer of LINC KL felt it was only right to preserve these trees. So instead of cutting them down, the design of LINC KL was adapted to retain the trees in its original place.

Looking at how the ficus trees co-exist in harmony with the architecture and design of LINC KL, it is easy to assume that everything was already in the right places for this harmony to be achieved. None of it was coincidental, however. In fact, efforts to preserve the ficus trees posed one of the biggest challenges for LINC KL's designer and architect, as they had to ensure that there was ample space for the trees to grow. The design also had to allow sunlight to stream in freely without exposing its patrons to outdoor weather.

To resolve this challenge, glass walls and windows were used expansively within LINC KL - adding in another fundamental material which gives the structure its unique composition.



Roof & wall cladding profile by Swissma Snapwelt®

### The Life at LINC KL

With the ficus trees as the centerpiece, they ultimately bring life to more than just the building itself. They become a symbol, a landmark within LINC KL itself to locate the cafes, retail outlets and grocer that tenant the mall.

Today, patrons of LINC KL can enjoy their meals while admiring the majestic ficus trees which have witnessed the changing KL landscapes for many decades. And if you are lucky enough, you may even be enjoying your afternoon tea to melodious bird chirps, or treated to a sight of sprightly squirrels around the trees.

These are the lives that have returned to the city, amidst the modern urban scapes of KL.

### A Place for Human Connection

Apart from sustaining itself as a preserve of KL's last green area, LINC KL also aims to be a space that cultivates human connection. We already know from its unique architectural design and concept that LINC KL is unlike any other commercial centre. But what few may realise is that the space has also been designed for people to not just interact with nature, but also with each other.

Through art installations such as the ceiling-high nature-inspired murals; the 41,600 origami doves in 40 colours to represent peace, love and unity; and the open area where patrons can appreciate the majestic view of the old ficus trees - LINC KL offers a place of serenity and tranquility even though you are at the busiest intersection of Kuala Lumpur city.



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