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A PROJECTHOME.SG GUIDE

The 7-Step *Buyer's Framework*

Your structured walkthrough to confident property decisions in Singapore,
whether you're buying your first home or your fourth.

2026 EDITION · FOR SINGAPOREAN & PR BUYERS

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INSIDE THIS GUIDE

What You'll Find

Buying property in Singapore is one of the largest financial decisions you'll ever make. This framework breaks the journey into 7 clear, structured steps designed to keep you ahead of impulse, hype, and overwhelm. We round it out with a deep dive on our proprietary evaluation tool.

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A FRAMEWORK, NOT A FORMULA

Why a Structured Framework Matters

Most buyers don't fail because of bad deals. They fail because of unstructured decisions. This 7-step framework was built from thousands of conversations with Singaporean buyers and upgraders. It won't tell you *which* property to buy. It will give you the structure to figure that out clearly, calmly, and on your own terms.

1 Structured, Not Rushed

Each step builds on the last. Skipping ahead, especially past Step 1, is the single most common cause of buyer's remorse.

2 First-Timers & Upgraders

Whether this is your first BTO or your fourth condominium, the framework adapts to your stage. Investors will find it useful too.

3 Data-Backed Decisions

Each step pairs intuition with data. Steps 3 and 4 are supported by our proprietary NAVIS PrimeKey Analysis tool.

4 Talk to Us Anytime

Every step ends with a CTA to reach a ProjectHome.sg representative, because some decisions deserve a real conversation.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Work through the 7 steps in order on your first read. Bookmark steps to revisit as your search progresses. When you reach **Steps 3 and 4**, the NAVIS PrimeKey Analysis pages (after Step 7) give you a deeper evaluation lens, available exclusively through a ProjectHome.sg representative.

STEP ONE OF SEVEN

01

Define Your Why & Budget

Before you browse a single listing, get crystal clear on intent and affordability. Your "Why" shapes everything that follows, and your budget isn't the same as your loan ceiling.



STEP ONE

01 Define Your Why & Budget

Owner-occupier and investor decisions look very different, and a "stretched but legal" loan can quietly undo a great purchase. This step is about anchoring your search in *your* reality before the market starts shaping it for you.

- ✦ **Define your "Why":** Common "Why" factors include own-stay versus rental yield, family planning (kids, in-laws nearby, school catchment), capital appreciation for a future upgrade, retirement downsizing, or investment diversification. A young couple planning children has very different priorities from a single professional optimising for rental yield. Write your top two reasons down. They will resolve almost every trade-off later in the framework.
- ✦ **Calculate your TDSR cap of 55%:** Total Debt Servicing Ratio limits your total monthly debt repayments, including car loans, credit card minimums and personal loans, to 55% of your gross monthly income. The bank's IPA calculation uses this hard cap, so know yours before viewing.
- ✦ **Apply MSR 30% if buying HDB or EC:** The Mortgage Servicing Ratio caps your *property loan* repayment alone at 30% of gross monthly income for HDB flats and Executive Condominiums. MSR is stricter than TDSR, and the binding constraint for most public housing buyers.
- ✦ **Account for BSD, ABSD, legal fees and renovation:** Beyond the downpayment, budget for Buyer's Stamp Duty (progressive 1 to 6%), ABSD if applicable on second-and-beyond properties, legal fees (S\$2,500 to S\$4,000), valuation fees, agent commission where relevant, and a renovation buffer of around 5 to 7% of purchase price for HDB and meaningfully higher for older resale units.
- ✦ **Stress-test against a 4% interest scenario:** Today's package rate isn't tomorrow's. Run your monthly payment through a 4% stress rate (above current floating-package levels) and check if you could still service it comfortably with 6 months of reserves untouched. If not, lower your target price, not your buffer.

Need a personalised affordability assessment?

Speak to a ProjectHome.sg representative for a confidential review of your numbers.

[GET HELP →](#)

STEP TWO OF SEVEN

02

Understand HDB, EC, or Private

Each property class has its own eligibility rules, financing, and resale dynamics. Choosing the wrong category early is one of the costliest mistakes Singaporean buyers make, and the EC rulebook has just been rewritten.



STEP TWO

02 Understand HDB, EC, or Private

Eligibility, financing, MOP, and resale liquidity differ dramatically across HDB, Executive Condominium (EC), and Private property. Get the category right and the rest of the framework gets easier. Get it wrong, and you'll be solving the wrong problem for months.

✦ **HDB (BTO vs Resale):** Compare Build-To-Order against open-market resale on price, wait time, location flexibility, and lease tenure. Factor in MOP (5 years standard, 10 years for PLH), the Ethnic Integration Policy (EIP) quota, income ceilings for grants, and the difference between fresh and ageing 99-year leases.

✦ **Executive Condominium (New Ruling Changes):** Recent EC rules introduce four major changes every buyer should price in:

- **MOP raised to 10 years** (up from 5 years)
- **Full privatisation delayed to 15 years** (up from 10 years)
- **First-Timer Buyer quota raised to 90%** at initial launch (up from 70%)
- **Second-Timer Buyer restriction raised to 2 years** (up from 1 month)

Net effect: ECs are now meaningfully more long-term commitments. Plan for a 10-year stay before any thought of selling, and factor the slower privatisation curve into your exit assumptions.

✦ **Private (Freehold vs 99-Year & ABSD):** Decide between freehold (rarer, premium pricing, no depreciation curve) and 99-year leasehold (more common, faster turnover, lease-decay considerations). For second-and-beyond properties, factor ABSD into your total cost. The rates for Singaporeans, PRs, and foreigners differ materially and shape your structuring options.

✦ **Decoupling vs Selling (when each makes sense):** Couples already owning property who want to buy a second often weigh decoupling (transferring full ownership to one spouse so the other becomes a "first-time buyer") against selling the existing property. Each path has stamp duty, financing, and CPF implications that compound over time. This is rarely a back-of-envelope decision.

EC ruling changes affecting your plans?

Discuss your scenario with a ProjectHome.sg representative for clarity on what's changed.

[DISCUSS →](#)

STEP THREE OF SEVEN

03

Shortlist by Location & Lifestyle

Don't fall for "hot district" lists. Those are lagging indicators. Use a personal scoring framework that weighs your real life: commute, schools, family proximity, and future URA master plans.



STEP THREE

03 Shortlist by Location & Lifestyle

By now you've defined your Why, budget, and property class. This step narrows the map. A great property in the wrong location for you is still the wrong property, so let's get your location filter sharp before chasing addresses.

- ✦ **Map your top-3 daily routes:** Plot your real commute paths (office, parents'/in-laws' homes, children's school, regular gym or social spots) against MRT and bus connectivity. A 5-minute walk to MRT carries a measurable price premium, and saves you years of quality-of-life over a decade of ownership.
- ✦ **Check the URA Master Plan:** The URA Master Plan reveals upcoming amenities, rezoning, and infrastructure changes years before they hit headlines. Look for incoming MRT stations, regional centres (e.g. Jurong Lake District, Punggol Digital District), and zoning shifts that will reshape your shortlisted area's character and its values.
- ✦ **CCR vs RCR vs OCR (Know Each Region's Behaviour):** Singapore's market splits into three regions with very different dynamics. **Core Central Region (CCR)**, covering districts 9, 10, 11, Downtown Core and Sentosa, offers prestige and strong rental demand but has shown slower price growth in recent cycles. **Rest of Central Region (RCR)** balances lifestyle with appreciation and is ideal for upgraders. **Outside Central Region (OCR)** typically shows the strongest first-time-buyer demand and price growth, especially around new MRT lines and regional hubs. Match the region to your "Why" from Step 1.
- ✦ **Score each shortlist on three dimensions:** Lifestyle fit (daily liveability), growth potential (5 to 10 year price trajectory), and exit liquidity (how easily you can sell when the time comes). Force-rank these against your top two "Why" factors, and be honest when one factor wins over the others.
- ✦ **Visit at three different times:** Walk the surrounding area on a weekday morning, a weekday evening, and a weekend afternoon. Noise, foot traffic, traffic congestion, parking pressure, and sun exposure all reveal themselves at different times, and they all matter when you've signed the OTP.

NAVIS PRIMEKEY ANALYSIS



Want a deeper evaluation? Our **NAVIS PrimeKey Analysis** scores projects across 8 investment pillars including MRT connectivity, school proximity, and growth-hotspot exposure. See page 17.

STEP FOUR OF SEVEN

04

Evaluate Like an Investor

Even if you'll live in the home for 30 years, life happens. Buying with an exit-aware mindset protects your downside and maximises optionality. This is where emotion meets evidence.



STEP FOUR

04 Evaluate Like an Investor

Even owner-occupiers benefit from investor-grade scrutiny. Life situations evolve: jobs change, families grow, parents need care. An exit-aware purchase protects you against the day you discover your "forever home" needs to become someone else's.

- ✦ **Compare PSF against district averages:** Pull 5-year and 10-year per-square-foot transaction averages for your shortlisted district and project type. Compare against your target unit's psf. A noticeably above-average psf needs a clear justification: view, layout, scarcity, or a fundamental catalyst. Otherwise you're paying tomorrow's price today.
- ✦ **Look at rental yield, even if you won't rent:** Gross rental yield is the cleanest signal of *demand depth* in an area. A 3.5 to 4% yield in OCR or 3%+ in CCR/RCR generally indicates healthy rental absorption, meaning you'll find a tenant fast if your situation changes. Thin yields signal weak fallback demand.
- ✦ **Track GLS plots and Growth Hotspots (GHS):** Identify upcoming Government Land Sales plots in your shortlisted area. Staged GLS releases tend to escalate breakeven prices and lift surrounding resale values, sometimes by 20%+ over a cluster cycle. Cross-reference with URA's designated **Growth Hotspots** such as Jurong Lake District, Greater Southern Waterfront, and Punggol Digital District. These zones benefit from concentrated infrastructure investment and rezoning catalysts.
- ✦ **Study unsold inventory and developer pricing power:** A new launch with 80% sold has very different pricing dynamics from one stuck at 30%. Heavy unsold inventory means developer discounts and rebates are likely; tight inventory means prices firm up. The same logic applies to resale supply in your micro-market.
- ✦ **Identify two exit scenarios before signing OTP:** Before you commit, articulate two realistic exit paths. For example: "sell after 5 years for upgrade" and "rent out for 3 years then sell". If neither scenario looks workable on today's numbers, you don't have a deal, you have a trap.

**NAVIS PRIMEKEY ANALYSIS**

NAVIS PrimeKey scores **GLS exposure, Growth Hotspot proximity, and rental yield bands** automatically across all shortlisted projects. See page 17.

STEP FIVE OF SEVEN

05

Inspect & Compare: Showflats & Actual Units

Whether you're walking through a polished new-launch showflat or an actual lived-in resale unit, the goal is the same: see past the staging, scrutinise what matters, and compare like-for-like.



STEP FIVE

05 Inspect & Compare: Showflats & Actual Units

New launch showflats are theatre, designed to inspire. Resale unit viewings are reality, designed to reveal. Different property types call for different inspection lenses, and the buyers who win are the ones who know which questions belong where.

- ✦ **For new launch showflats:** Bring a measuring tape. Showflats frequently use scaled-down furniture or omit interior walls to make rooms feel larger. Ask for the official unit mix, sold percentages by stack and unit type, actual floor plan dimensions, ceiling height (especially for upper-floor and ground-floor units), balcony and bay window allowances, and the materials specification sheet. Compare materials and finishes across at least three competing launches in the same micro-market.
- ✦ **For resale unit viewings:** Inspect the actual unit at different times of day for noise levels, sun direction, and ventilation. Look for water seepage marks (especially on ceilings, walls near windows, and bathroom adjacencies), ceiling stains, window leak history, flooring condition, and signs of past structural or partition renovation. Ask about en-bloc potential, age and service history of M&E systems (aircon, water heater, plumbing), and remaining lease length. Every year of lease decay is value you don't recover.
- ✦ **Walk the 500m radius (both types):** Step outside the showflat or unit and walk a 500m circle around the project. Note construction sites, future GLS plots, MRT and bus access, food options, parks and green spaces, schools, and noise sources (highways, MRT tracks, industrial zones). The "before-purchase walk" reveals what marketing brochures never will.
- ✦ **Document everything in photos and notes:** Take dated photos of every viewing, covering floor plans, unit interiors, surroundings, and any defects spotted. Maintain a simple spreadsheet with psf, layout efficiency (usable area ÷ saleable area), facing, floor level, view, ongoing maintenance fees, and your overall gut score. Memory is unreliable after the fifth viewing. Your spreadsheet isn't.
- ✦ **Compare side-by-side using consistent criteria:** Never decide on sticker price alone. Compare units on quantum (total price), psf, layout efficiency, monthly outgoings (maintenance, property tax, mortgage), expected renovation cost, and exit liquidity. The unit with the lowest psf often isn't the best value once total ownership cost is included.

Want a second opinion on a launch or resale unit?

A ProjectHome.sg representative can review your shortlist objectively, alongside you.

[SECOND OPINION →](#)

STEP SIX OF SEVEN

06

Secure Financing & OTP

The Option-to-Purchase timeline and financing rules differ significantly between new launches, private resale, and HDB resale. Get your financing in place before you commit, and know which clock you're on.



06 STEP SIX Secure Financing & OTP

"Financing" is one word covering three very different timelines. The Option-to-Purchase clock starts running the moment you commit, and it moves at different speeds for new launches, private resale, and HDB resale. Get the wrong clock in your head and you'll either feel rushed or miss your window entirely.

- ◆ **Get IPA early:** Obtain In-Principle Approval from at least two banks *before* viewing seriously. Your IPA validity is typically 30 days, and it confirms your real loan capacity (not the bank advertisement number). Comparing two IPAs also reveals package and rate differences worth thousands over the loan tenure.
- ◆ **New launch timeline:** 5% booking fee paid on OTP exercise; balance of 15% within 8 weeks (cash and/or CPF); Sale & Purchase Agreement signed thereafter. Most new launches follow the Progressive Payment Scheme (PPS), where your mortgage drawdowns happen in stages as construction progresses, meaning you carry a smaller loan during the build phase. Plan cash flow for 2 to 3+ years until Temporary Occupation Permit (TOP).
- ◆ **Private resale timeline:** 1% Option Fee paid to secure the OTP; 14-day exercise window; 4% on exercise (5% total downpayment so far); full completion typically 8 to 12 weeks from OTP. Unlike new launches, funds are fully drawn at completion. Your mortgage starts immediately, so factor full monthly repayments from month one.
- ◆ **HDB resale timeline:** Option Fee of S\$1 to S\$1,000 paid to seller; 21-day exercise window; HDB approval process triggered after exercise, with First and Second Appointments at HDB Hub; full completion typically 8 to 12 weeks after OTP exercise, governed end-to-end via the HDB Resale Portal. Documentation requirements are heavier than private. Start gathering CPF statements, HFE letter, and ID early.
- ◆ **Compare packages and engage a lawyer early:** Compare fixed vs floating mortgage packages over 3-year and 5-year horizons, including lock-in penalties, free-conversion windows, and rate reset triggers. Engage a conveyancing lawyer *before* OTP signing, not after. A good lawyer can flag issues in the OTP wording that cost serious money if missed.

Need help comparing financing options?

A ProjectHome.sg representative can connect you with trusted mortgage and legal partners.

[COMPARE →](#)

STEP SEVEN OF SEVEN

07

Handover, Renovation & Beyond

The keys are just the start. The first 90 days set up the next 10 years of ownership cost and enjoyment, and the post-handover playbook differs sharply between new launch and resale units.



STEP SEVEN

07 Handover, Renovation & Beyond

Most buyers focus everything on the offer and forget the keys are only the beginning. New launches and resale units demand very different first-90-day playbooks, and what you do (or don't do) in those first weeks compounds for years.

- ✦ **New launch (TOP handover) DLP is your safety net:** Upon TOP, you enter the **Defects Liability Period (DLP)**, typically 12 months from TOP, during which the developer is contractually responsible for rectifying defects at no cost to you. Conduct a thorough defects inspection within the first 2 weeks; document *everything* in writing with dated photos. Submit your defects list formally through the developer's appointed defects-handling party. Don't wait. Late submissions outside DLP are your problem to fix.
- ✦ **Resale handover ("as inspected" applies):** Resale units have no DLP. You accept the unit in the condition it was at handover, which is why your pre-completion inspection matters so much. Any major defects must be raised *before* completion or negotiated into the price reduction. Budget for immediate fixes (plumbing, electrical, aircon servicing, locks and security) within the first month, and don't be surprised by hidden issues that emerge in week 3 or 4.
- ✦ **Renovation strategy (phase, don't binge):** Plan renovation in phases and avoid over-customising for resale. New launches typically need lighter renovation (S\$30k to S\$80k) since fixtures and finishes are already modern; older resale units often need a fuller refresh (S\$60k to S\$150k+) for kitchen, bathrooms, flooring, and built-in storage. Resist the urge to spend on highly personalised elements that don't add resale value.
- ✦ **Understand DLP claim process and escalation:** For new launches, know who to contact, how to log defects, expected response timelines, and the escalation path if defects aren't rectified promptly. Persistent or unresolved defects can be escalated to the Singapore Mediation Centre or the courts, but only within DLP. Keep a paper trail from day one.
- ✦ **Set 3-year and 5-year review points:** Diarise a formal review of your property strategy at 3 and 5 years. Re-test your "Why" from Step 1: is it still valid? Has the market shifted? Has your family situation changed? A scheduled review keeps you ahead of the curve, instead of reacting to events after they happen.

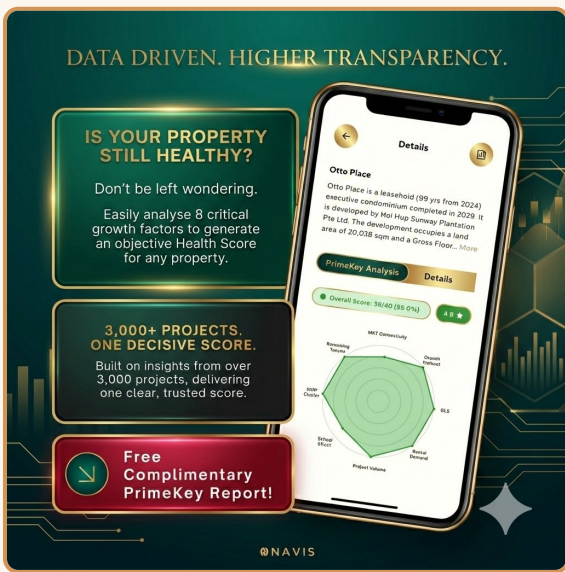
Need a handover checklist or DLP guidance?

Speak to a ProjectHome.sg representative for a customised handover walkthrough.

[GET CHECKLIST →](#)

Data Driven. Higher Transparency.

NAVIS PrimeKey Analysis is a proprietary 8-pillar scoring framework that evaluates new launch and resale condominiums in Singapore. Built on insights from over 3,000 projects, it delivers one clear, trusted score so you can compare projects with confidence.



Why It Works

— Is your property still healthy?

Don't be left wondering. Easily analyse 8 critical growth factors to generate an objective Health Score for any property in your shortlist.

— 3,000+ projects. One decisive score.

Built on insights from over 3,000 projects across Singapore, delivering one clear, trusted score that cuts through hype and noise.

— Visualise the full picture.

Each property is scored on an 8-axis radar chart so you can see strengths and weaknesses at a glance, then compare projects side-by-side.

EXCLUSIVELY THROUGH PROJECTHOME.SG

Get your complimentary PrimeKey Report over a 30-min Zoom session

Go deeper. *NAVIS PrimeKey Analysis.*

Once you've worked through Steps 3 and 4, NAVIS PrimeKey takes your shortlist to the next level. A proprietary 8-pillar scoring framework that evaluates new launch and resale condominiums in Singapore. Built on data, calibrated by market experience, designed for buyers who want clarity over hype.

THE 8 PILLARS OF INVESTMENT SCORING

What PrimeKey evaluates

01 MRT Connectivity

Walking distance to the nearest MRT, a proxy for demand and liveability.

02 Growth Hotspots & Infrastructure

Proximity to URA growth zones with concentrated infrastructure investment.

03 Government Land Sales

Upcoming GLS plots that lift surrounding resale values over time.

04 Project Size & Liquidity

Larger projects offer better amenities, scale, and higher resale liquidity.

05 Remaining Tenure

Lease length impacts financing, CPF usage, and resale value.

06 Proximity to Primary Schools

Within-1km schools drive sustained family demand and price premiums.

07 MOP Cluster & Upgrader Demand

Nearby HDB MOP flats signal future upgrader demand into the area.

08 Rental Demand & Yield

Yield bands by region, a defensive buffer in higher-rate environments.

IMPORTANT TO KNOW

NAVIS PrimeKey is a research and shortlisting tool, **not a valuation**. It supplements (not replaces) property-specific considerations like layout, view, scarcity, and unit-level pricing. Use it alongside Steps 3, 4 and 5 of this framework for the sharpest results.

FREE 30-MIN ZOOM CONSULTATION

See your shortlist scored across all 8 PrimeKey pillars

Book a complimentary 30-minute NAVIS PrimeKey Analysis consultation over Zoom with a ProjectHome.sg representative, and walk away with clarity on your shortlisted projects.

[BOOK YOUR 30-MINUTE ZOOM SESSION](#)



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YOUR NEXT STEP

Clarity. Direction. *Your New Home.*

You now have the framework. The next move is making it personal: your numbers, your timeline, your life. Book a complimentary **NAVIS PrimeKey Analysis consultation** with ProjectHome.sg and walk away with a scored, structured view of your shortlist.

FREE 30-MIN ZOOM CONSULTATION

Book Your NAVIS PrimeKey Analysis

Get your shortlisted projects evaluated across all 8 investment pillars, exclusively with a ProjectHome.sg representative.

projecthome.sg/contact

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