

IDRC-209e



A Place to Live

More Effective Low-Cost Housing in Asia

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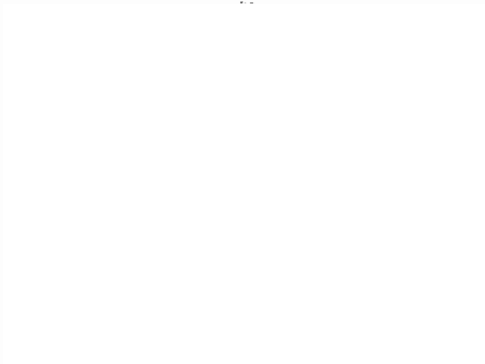
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A PLACE TO LIVE: More Effective Low-Cost Housing in Asia

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Résumé

Dans un climat d'urbanisation rapide et de pauvreté générale, le problème du logement des populations pauvres constitue un défi pour la plupart des gouvernements de l'Asie. Cet ouvrage passe en revue les principaux programmes d'habitations à loyer modéré qui existaient à la fin des années 1970 dans six pays asiatiques.

A Hong Kong et à Singapour, les programmes de logements sociaux ont contribué considérablement à répondre aux besoins d'une grande portion de la population. Cet ouvrage examine l'expérience récemment acquise dans l'aménagement de nouvelles villes et la construction subséquente de logements sociaux. Dans les deux villes-états, on a tenté de mettre l'accent sur la gestion du logement en l'adaptant plus étroitement aux besoins, nouveaux et réels, de la population.

En Thaïlande, aux Philippines, en Malaisie et en Indonésie, des programmes semblables, mais adaptés aux pays, ont été mis sur pied afin d'améliorer les conditions d'habitation de la population pauvre. La plupart de ces programmes visent plus particulièrement les bidonvilles et les taudis des grandes villes, mais certains portent sur les besoins d'habitation de la population rurale. Ces pays ont lancé beaucoup de projets d'aménagement des sites et des services et d'amélioration des services existants. Leurs gouvernements accordent de plus en plus d'attention au problème du logement, et ce changement d'attitude a été renforcé par l'aide financière internationale qu'ils reçoivent depuis quelques années. Des projets innovateurs entrepris par la population même, qui a dans une certaine mesure réussi à satisfaire ses propres besoins d'habitation, viennent s'ajouter en complément des programmes subventionnés par des organismes nationaux et internationaux.

Resumen

Frente a la acelerada urbanización y expandida pobreza, la vivienda para los grupos menos favorecidos se ha convertido en un reto para la mayoría de los gobiernos Asiáticos. Este volumen reseña los principales programas de vivienda de bajo costo realizados a finales de los setentas en seis países Asiáticos.

En Hong Kong y Singapur, el progreso de los programas de vivienda popular para hacer frente a las necesidades de grandes sectores de la población ha sido considerable. Se resume la experiencia reciente en desarrollo de nuevas poblaciones y la provisión de vivienda popular. En ambas ciudades-estados ha habido un intento por colocar mayor énfasis en la administración de la vivienda, haciéndola más receptiva a las necesidades nuevas y reales.

En Tailandia, Filipinas, Malasia e Indonesia, han surgido programas similares, específicos de cada país, para mejorar las condiciones de vivienda de los pobres. La mayor parte de estos se centran en los tugurios y barrios marginales de las grandes ciudades, aunque algunos están dirigidos a las necesidades de vivienda de la población rural. Entre los proyectos destacados en estos países están los de lotes con servicios y los de mejora comunal. Los gobiernos respectivos dedican cada vez más atención a la vivienda para lo cual han contado con el respaldo de la asistencia internacional en los últimos años. Complementando estos programas apoyados nacional e internacionalmente están también los empeños innovadores de la misma gente, los cuales han alcanzado un cierto grado de éxito en la provisión de la vivienda propia.

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Management of Singapore's New Towns

**Lim Kok Leong, Chin Kein Hoong, Chin Koon Fun, Leslie Goh,
and Ong Sze Ann**

The Housing and Development Board (HDB) was constituted by legislation in 1959, in response to an acute shortage in housing coupled with a rapidly expanding population. In an effort to provide low-cost public housing for the people of Singapore, the development of the expertise in estate management necessary to the success of any long-range national housing program was not forgotten.

Housing involves the provision of a bundle of services, in terms of shelter and opportunities for family life, recreation, community living, and economic prosperity. Public housing means more than the supply of houses to the public and should include management and supervision.

Estate management is, therefore, not an afterthought or a by-product of the housing program but a conscious pursuit of specific objectives through the implementation of carefully planned policies. Over two decades of public housing, housing management within the HDB has grown along with the construction program.

Two factors make efficient estate management necessary and vital to public housing in Singapore. First, public housing, no longer viewed as a means to alleviate accommodation shortage, is fast becoming a way of life for about 70% of the population. By 1985 this figure will have grown to 75%. This has implications for the planning and implementation of management policies which are likely to have to devote greater attention to social issues. Secondly, some S\$6.7 (US\$3.35) billion have been invested in Singapore's public housing programs as of March 1981. The size and significance of this capital investment make good estate management a prerequisite for preserving the economic and social value of the individual units and of the estates as a whole.

Estate-Management System

Although six new towns have been completed besides many housing estates, five more new towns are on the way (Figure 1). By the end of December 1980, the Board was managing 346 371 dwelling units.

These housing estates and new towns are all managed from area offices located in the midst of the estates. At present, there are 28 area offices. Besides providing on-the-spot services for the convenience of the residents, this decentralized management system enables direct communication and personal contact with residents and local community organizations.

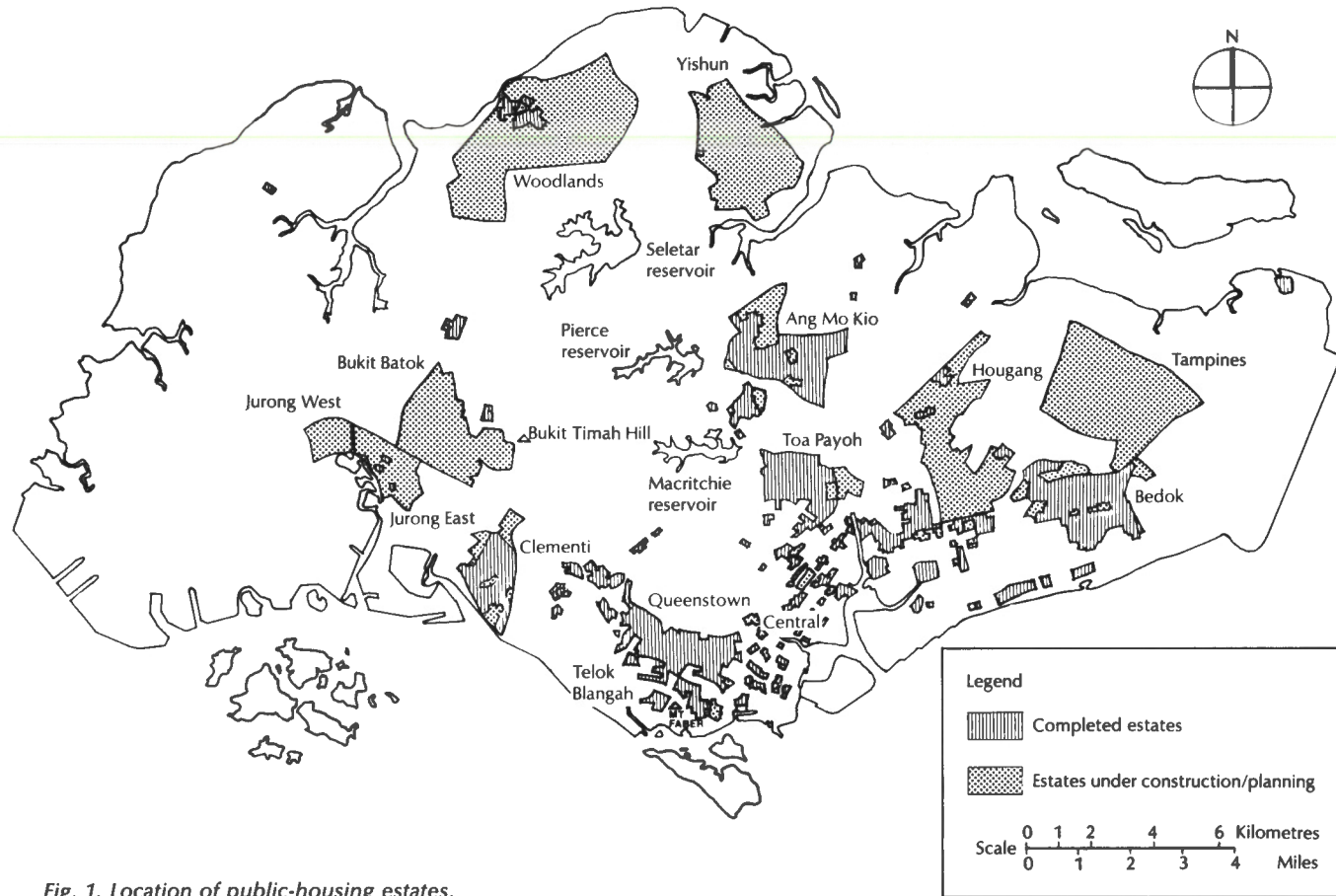


Fig. 1. Location of public-housing estates.

The area offices are guided by a central organization called the Central Administration that is responsible for the formulation, coordination, and implementation of management policies. Collectively, the Central Administration and the area offices form the Estates Division of the Board.

Each area office has its own administrative hierarchy and supporting staff to carry out the day-to-day management of about 15 000 units. The administration of the area offices (Figure 2) covers the following:

- tenancy and lease supervision
- property maintenance and repairs
- conservancy works and services
- management of car parks
- provision and upkeep of trees and landscape
- management and control of hawkers
- collection of rent and other financial matters, and
- fostering good landlord and tenant relationships.

Also, there is an Essential Maintenance Service Centre (EMSC) that operates round-the-clock to provide prompt attention to breakdown of essential services such as electricity or water supply failure, lift breakdown, sanitary chokage, overflowing water tank, or water-pipe leakage. EMSC's nerve centre at HDB headquarters has a direct telephone communication system (hot line) to receive and transmit calls directly to area offices where maintenance and lift-rescue teams are stationed for immediate response. All EMSC vans are equipped with VHF radio telephones so that rescue crews can be directed to the next job without delay.

Trends in Estate Management

When the HDB first embarked on the task of meeting the acute housing shortage in the early 1960s, the primary objective was to build the maximum number of units within the shortest possible time at the most economic cost. Limited by the scarcity of resources, the standard of housing was austere and the scope of estate management was confined to physical maintenance and functions expected of a house building agent, i.e., rental collection and conservancy.

The emphasis on service and maintenance was secondary to the more urgent need of rehousing. Although cognitive at that time of the immense social, cultural, and psychological upheavals associated with rehousing, the pressing circumstances of the day were such that the building program rather than the community was the focus of attention.

The sample household survey conducted in 1968 showed that the majority of the tenants were satisfied with their living environment (67% with flats, 72% with estates). However, clearly some have failed to adjust to their new environment as a way of life, because they brought with them socially deviant habits of vandalism and littering.

In meeting this problem, many interim measures have been attempted including the use of the mass media to instill goodwill and civic consciousness, and to advocate good social habits. National campaigns against littering and vandalism were carried out with legal support. Tenant participation in maintaining their environment through the Block Representative Scheme was encouraged. The main functions of this scheme were to

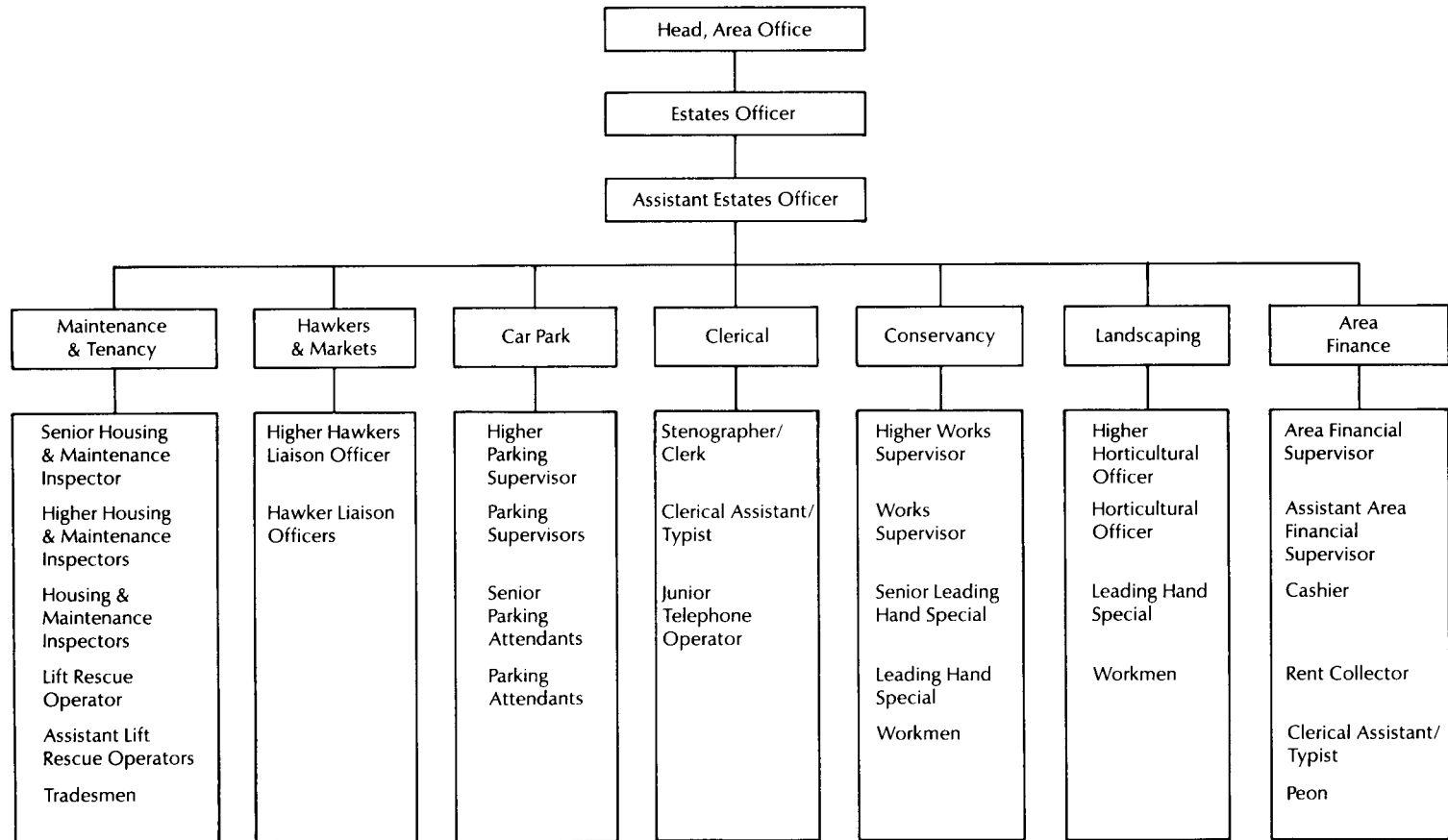


Fig. 2. Organizational setup of area office.

act as liaison intermediaries between the Board and the residents, to organize and coordinate the joint efforts of the residents in various campaigns and in the promotion of a community spirit, and to discourage anti-social habits.

An appraisal carried out 3 years after its conception, however, revealed that the Block Representative Scheme had inadequate support from the residents partly because of the fact that the concept of a high-rise, high-density living environment was new to many people. Moreover, the Board's prime concern then was the solving of the urgent housing backlog and, hence, it was unable to provide the administrative backup to ensure the scheme's success.

By the 1970s, the backbone of the acute housing problem was broken and by the end of 1980, some 1.7 million inhabitants constituting about 70% of the total population lived in public housing. It will be instructive to reflect on the past priorities and to chart new directions and policies for the future.

In this self-examination, cognizance is taken of the socioeconomic changes in the country. The growing affluence and improving standards of living as a whole have led to significant changes in the socioeconomic profile of the HDB residents. Whereas the early HDB residents were mainly resettlers of poor and large extended families, residents today are drawn from economically stable nuclear families who opted on their own accord to reside in HDB flats.

The character of the HDB residents is also undergoing a dramatic change, for most are no longer rent-paying monthly tenants but are house owners with a stake in their properties. To achieve the national aim of creating a home-owning democracy, bigger and better-designed flats are built that are sold under the "Home Ownership Scheme." This scheme, first introduced in 1964, gained a foothold in 1968 when the use of Central Provident Fund (CPF) (equivalent of Social Security) contributions were permitted toward payments for the flat. By the end of December 1980, of a total of 346 371 dwelling units under HDB management, 62% or 214 594 units had been sold to the public under the "Home Ownership Scheme." There were 78 180 applications on the waiting list to buy HDB flats compared with 8394 applications to rent.

Recently, public-housing management has placed emphasis on the welfare and quality of life of the residents. Community and quality of life, over and above the ordinary relationship of landlord and tenant, will be made an integral part of housing management. Resident participation in management is now actively emphasized. Owners and tenants alike are encouraged to participate in looking after the common properties in their own apartment blocks and neighbourhood whereas the Board embarks on upgrading the quality and design of the estates and their surroundings. To facilitate easier communication between residents and the management, area officers are sited at locations that offer maximum accessibility for advice and consultation.

Today, the role of HDB has changed from that of a house-building and maintenance agency in the 1960s to a community landlord. The expressed aim now is the creation of a gracious living environment where residents would have pride in ownership with a sense of identity and self-reliance.

Estate Management Problems

As we move into the third decade of public housing, the dynamics of change will bring about new problems. To be able to deal effectively with these problems, estate management must evolve with the times incorporating new goals, concepts, and managerial tools. The problems that estate management is likely to face in the 1980s are categorized into two major groups: "new" problems, and manifestations of old problems.

"New" Problems

With the rising standard of living and social expectations in the 1980s, residents will be more perceptive towards their living environment. The provision of shelter alone is insufficient and growing emphasis must be laid on the quality of houses and the amenities provided by the estates. Further, as more new towns are built, a pattern of migration of residents from older estates to these new towns is expected. Those who have experienced living in the first generation new towns are likely to have expectations different from those who live in HDB flats for the first time.

The role of management toward this end is to strive to maintain a high standard of physical management. Estate management cannot afford to be by complaints, i.e., responding only when complaints are lodged. The management philosophy is "Forward Planning," in seeking to stay ahead of the problems by continuously identifying and anticipating them. The decentralization system of estates management by area offices facilitates this.

The area offices, located in the midst of the estates, are in constant contact with the residents and local community organizations. The staff of the area offices carry out daily physical inspection of the estates. The management staff of the area offices are therefore able to monitor development and activities in the estates. If there is any deficiency or lapse in the services, it can be detected early and be dealt with immediately, thereby averting major problems later on.

The heads of area offices and the senior management of the Central Administration meet every month to discuss and resolve problems together. Cross-fertilization of ideas is encouraged. There is also an institutionalized quarterly meeting between the architects, engineers, and planners of the Building and Development Division and the estates officers of the Estates and Lands Division. Such dialogues between the residents and the Board, and amongst the staff within the Board, are essential for effective management. Also, the Systems and Research Department carries out research studies and surveys to provide management with information for planning.

Suggestion boxes are provided at all area offices as an additional avenue for residents to express their suggestions and grievances. This helps to monitor the areas of deficiency in the services. All complaints received are subjected to extensive qualitative and quantitative analysis and are translated into key indices to monitor and evaluate performance. Performance monitoring and evaluation is an important facet of the physical management, and needs to be continuously analyzed, monitored, and evaluated to correct and improve it. Monthly analysis charts and statistics are dis-

seminated to all the area offices to let the staff know their areas of deficiency in which improvements are required and their standards of performance in relation to another area office. Each area office functions as a performance centre and an atmosphere of healthy competition is encouraged. Also, a special action unit conducts a regular inspection of all estates to further help the area office identify and evaluate their maintenance standards.

At the same time, management skills and techniques are refined to produce better results to meet new expectations. A management study of housing and maintenance inspectors has been carried out. Its aims were to evaluate and improve the workload and efficiency, to achieve clearer organizational work flow, and to increase performance standards. Based on the study, a 3-year labour development plan was drawn up that includes the provision of comprehensive in-house training programs. Several changes were also adopted in the operational procedures and systems relating to staff establishment after a management study of area offices was completed in 1978.

There is a need for management to be genuinely concerned about efficient physical management and to demonstrate this concern to its residents. Failure to do so creates an atmosphere of mutual distrust, dissatisfaction, and apathy. These factors will in turn influence residents' own feelings toward the estate and their willingness to participate in its care and maintenance.

As in all other quarters of the rapidly growing economy the problem of increasing labour shortage exists. Every measure, therefore, needs to be taken to mechanize the operations, particularly those that are labour intensive. Within the Estates and Lands Division, a special unit has been set up to study and research this field. A coupon system in car parking has been introduced to save labour. The unit is presently exploring suitable alternatives for the cleaning and refuse collection system and the mechanization of landscaping operations. The efforts by the various divisions are coordinated by a planning, research, and development committee comprising senior officers from the various divisions. If the objectives can be reached with effective mechanization, substantial saving in labour can be achieved without sacrificing the high standard of physical management.

The government's effort in curbing population growth emphasized the setting up of small nuclear families. The physical design and configuration of the HDB flat complement this type of family unit. As a result the extended-family system is slowly being eroded. With the aging of the demographic profile, a dichotomy of flats catering to nuclear families and the growing presence of the aged will emerge. It is the government's intention that children should shoulder the responsibility of caring for their aged parents and there should be preservation and strengthening of the family unit.

Toward this end, management policies have been changed to pave the way for parents and their married children to reside near each other so that the families, though living in separate flats, will be able to enjoy the attendant advantages of an extended family. A joint balloting scheme was introduced in August 1977, under which the balloting date will be determined by the registration of the parents or the children, whichever was earlier. Since the introduction of this scheme, about 4000 families have

registered for flats near their parents or children, and half of these were given adjoining flats or flats in the same estate. A good example of this is a Chua family in which the extended family of 29 members opted for the benefit of the scheme and were allocated five adjacent flats on the same floor in an apartment block at Ang Mo Kio.

Another scheme that gives priority for transfer of rental flats has brought 900 tenant families closer to one another. Recently, the Board created another opportunity for parents and children to live close together by allowing mutual exchange of flats for families with only 1 year occupancy of their flats.

In a preliminary investigation carried out by the Board, it was found that families living together enjoy the following economic and social advantages:

- the financial and emotional support for retired family members
- the retired members can look after the young children, allowing the mothers to continue working
- sharing of expenses by better use of facilities
- sharing of daily routine housework, and
- sufficient privacy for each family unit.

These changes illustrate that estate management is a dynamic and an on-going process, forever changing and adjusting to meet the socio-economic changes in the nation.

Manifestations of Older Problems

In preparing for the problems of the 1980s issues not fully resolved in the past have not been forgotten. These include the lack of social integration among the residents on various floors and within the estate itself that results in a general lack of communal identity and attachment.

In the 1973 HDB sample-household survey, about 34% of the respondents admitted that they have never exchanged social visits with their next-door neighbours. More than 50% of the respondents have never exchanged social visits with other neighbours on the same floor. In terms of the scope of neighbourly contacts, it seldom extended to three or more households.

Sociological studies, such as that by Chang Chen-Tung (1975), do not attribute the low level of neighbourliness to the living conditions in our public-housing estate. It is generally accepted that neighbourly contacts increase with increasingly long periods of residence. In the past, villages and towns grew gradually over many generations with neighbourliness and community spirit evolving over the years. In modern development, new towns are planned, built, and filled with people over a space of only a few years.

A greater effort is, therefore, needed in assisting residents to assimilate to the ways of high-rise living and to strengthen the community ties, not ignoring, at the same time, the human need for privacy in social life. The long term management program takes cognizance of this issue, discussed in a later section under "New Directions."

As efforts are being made to upgrade the planning and design standards of new towns, the growing functional and economic obsolescence of the Board's older estates have to be tackled. Over time, a filtering process has been at play as more affluent residents move from these estates into new

towns with bigger and better flats. There is, therefore, the need to rebuild, rehabilitate, and revitalize the older estates. A program has been initiated to make the standard of living environment in the older estates comparable to that of the new ones. It includes providing additional amenities, improving existing buildings, converting one-room flats to larger units, and redeveloping old estates.

A total of 952 one-room emergency flats built in the early 1960s to meet the pressing need for shelter have been converted into larger three-room and four-room flats (Figure 3). Another 7458 one-room emergency flats have been demolished in estates in Bukit Ho Swee, Redhill, Kampong Tiong Bahru, MacPherson, Kallang Airport, and Changi. The demolition has reduced the density in these old estates, yielding valuable land for the injection of social, sports, and recreational facilities and the construction of better and larger flats. For example, the demolition at Dakota Crescent in Kallang Airport Estate would make way for the construction of 406 three- and four-room flats and five-room maisonettes. More open spaces for children's playgrounds, void decks, and car parks are being created (Figure 4). Redevelopment in Kampong Tiong Bahru involved the construction of two blocks of five-room flats, two blocks of three- and four-room flats, a 2-km jogging track complete with a keep-fit centre, and two playgrounds.

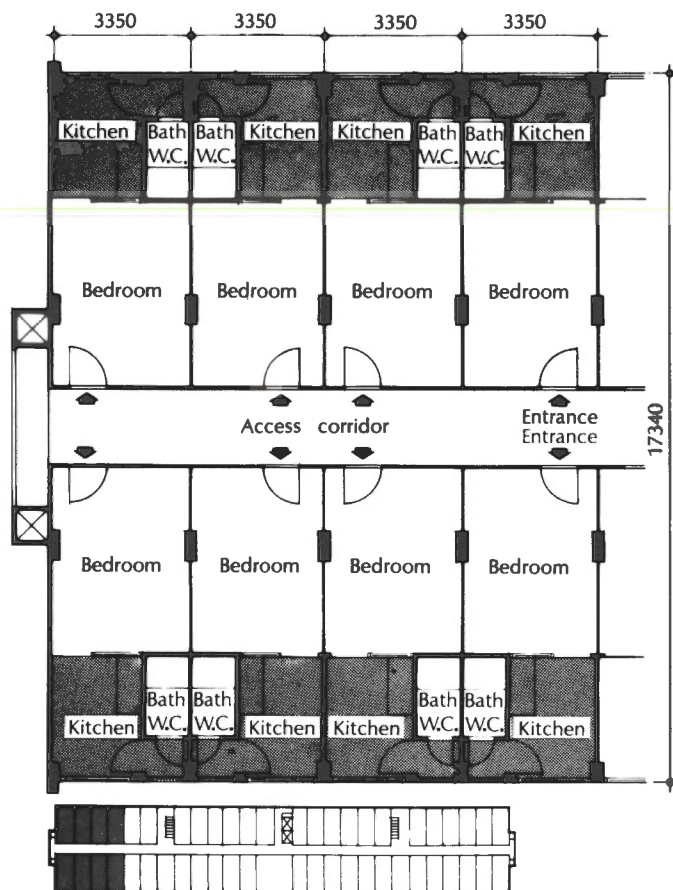
To upgrade existing buildings, additional lifts are installed in those old blocks with only one lift. Steel casement windows are fixed in those flats where open balconies existed before. This provision has improved the appearance of such blocks and the enclosed area has provided more usable space to residents. Other improvements include the water-distribution system, rewiring of old units, and installation of central television antennae. To check physical deterioration, the Board carries out comprehensive repairs and redecoration of the estates in a 5-year cycle. Where there is more rapid physical deterioration, the repairs and redecoration are even carried out more frequently.

New Directions

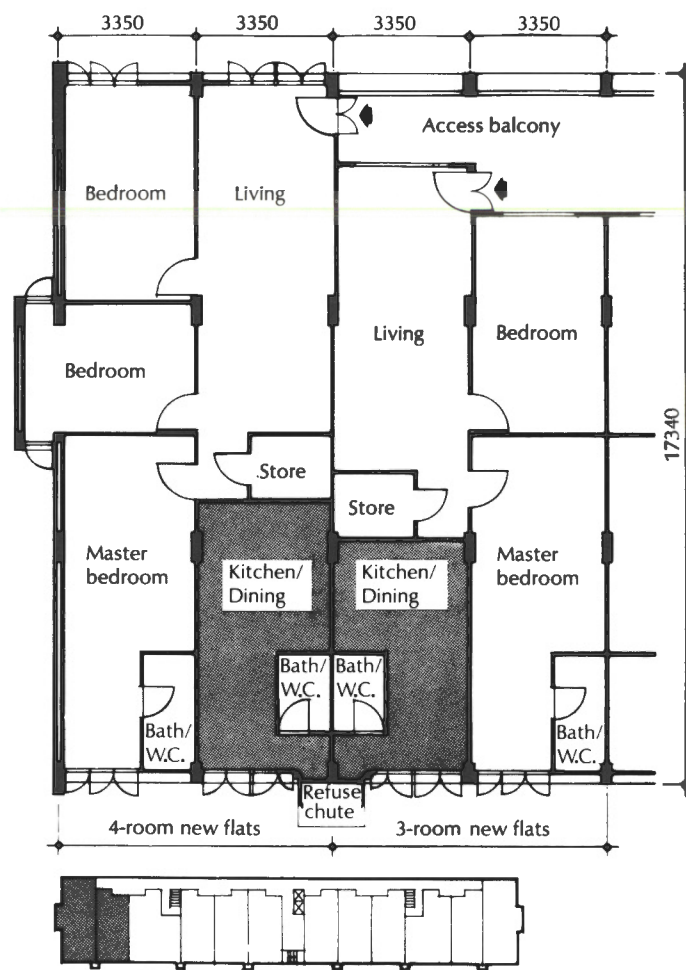
So far, the development of management trends and problems faced by the Board in the last two decades and in the years to come have been described briefly. It remains to highlight the directions that the HDB will take in the management of its new towns.

Under the fifth Five-Year Plan beginning in 1981, a new generation of new towns will be built in the outskirts of Singapore. The ultimate goal is to create entire planned communities, socially integrated with access to housing and associated amenities, freely and equally available to all community members. Toward this end, housing management has a creative role to play in the social transformation and community development of Singapore. It is indeed a formidable task that requires a carefully planned long-term management program. If social integration is achieved, then Singapore as a nation would have taken a giant step in overall social development.

To realize the potentialities that housing possesses in the constructive transformation of individuals, families, communities, and society in general, good housing management will constitute the application of skill and



Block plan (a)



Block plan (b)

Fig. 3. One-room emergency flats (a) before conversion; (b) after conversion.

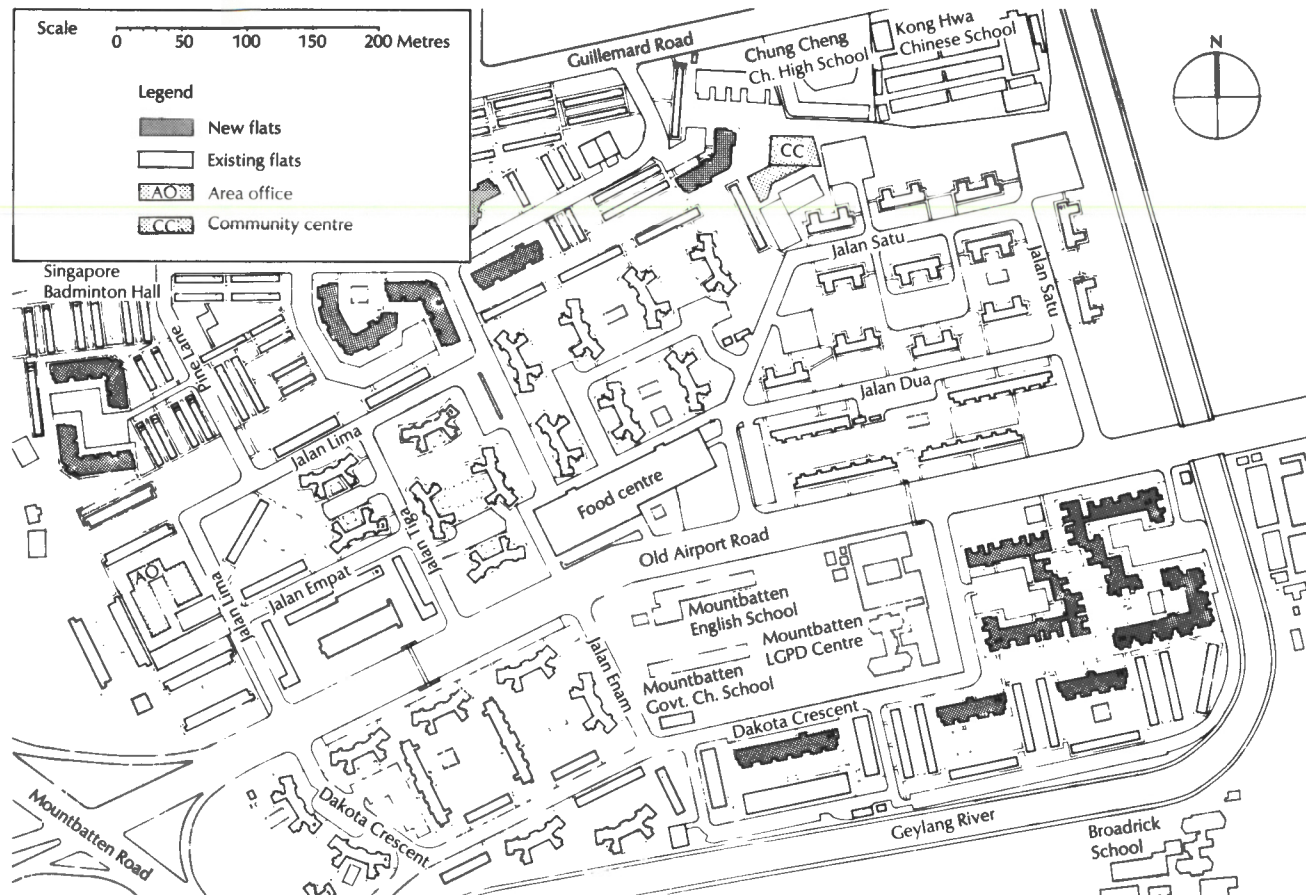


Fig. 4. Kallang Airport/Guillemard Road redevelopment.

resources in caring for the Board's property, its estate surroundings, and amenities. A sound relationship must exist between the HDB as a community landlord and its tenants, and amongst tenants themselves, so that the estate, as well as the individual flats, may give the fullest value to both the Board and the tenants. It is desirable for the HDB that properties should be efficiently and economically maintained and managed. From the residents' point of view, the individual flats should provide an amenable home environment and the focal point of a full and happy family life, whereas the estate surroundings should offer opportunities for greater social interaction in attaining the wider goal of an integrated community life-style.

Achieving this objective requires more than ad hoc management strategies. A multi-disciplinary and holistic approach is needed in setting up a long-term program of housing management in the 1980s. The program involves the planning and specification of goals and strategies, resident education, and resident organization and community relations.

Planning and Specification of Objectives

The planning of new towns requires the coordination of the physical, aesthetic, managerial, and social elements. It is well recognized that the design of the physical environment is a strong determinant of human behaviour and activity. People are better predisposed to social interaction if they are placed in an amenable physical environment with adequate provision of community facilities. A new planning concept, the precinct, is used in the planning of the new towns for the 1980s, which emphasizes the close relationship between physical design and social integration. It departs from the neighbourhood concept of 4000 to 6000 dwelling units, which covers too large an area for meaningful social interaction amongst residents.

Divided into precincts of 500 to 1000 dwelling units, each with its own landscaped square in its geographical centre, complemented with recreational, retail, and community services, residents would be able to perceive a physical and social identity unique to each precinct (Figure 5). For the town centre, a comprehensive range of facilities is planned. These include a bus terminus, area office, social function hall, polyclinic, library, hawker centre, and shops. Barring constraints, each town centre is located in the heart of the new town for accessibility, and some land is allocated for institutional, industrial, and recreational facilities.

A Social Research Unit has now been set up to undertake preparatory research and evaluation on the sociological data of residents. Its major role will be to assist and offer guidance in the formulation of comprehensive management policies.

Residential segregation acts as a physical barrier to social integration. In the planning of new towns, HDB has avoided the pitfall of stratified housing where the poor and the rich are stratified into distinct enclaves with little interaction. The policy of tenant selection here is based on income levels and, within new towns, the units are planned on a mixed basis where rental and sold units, big and small, are distributed heterogeneously.

Resident Education

Resident education is imperative in preparing residents for the respon-

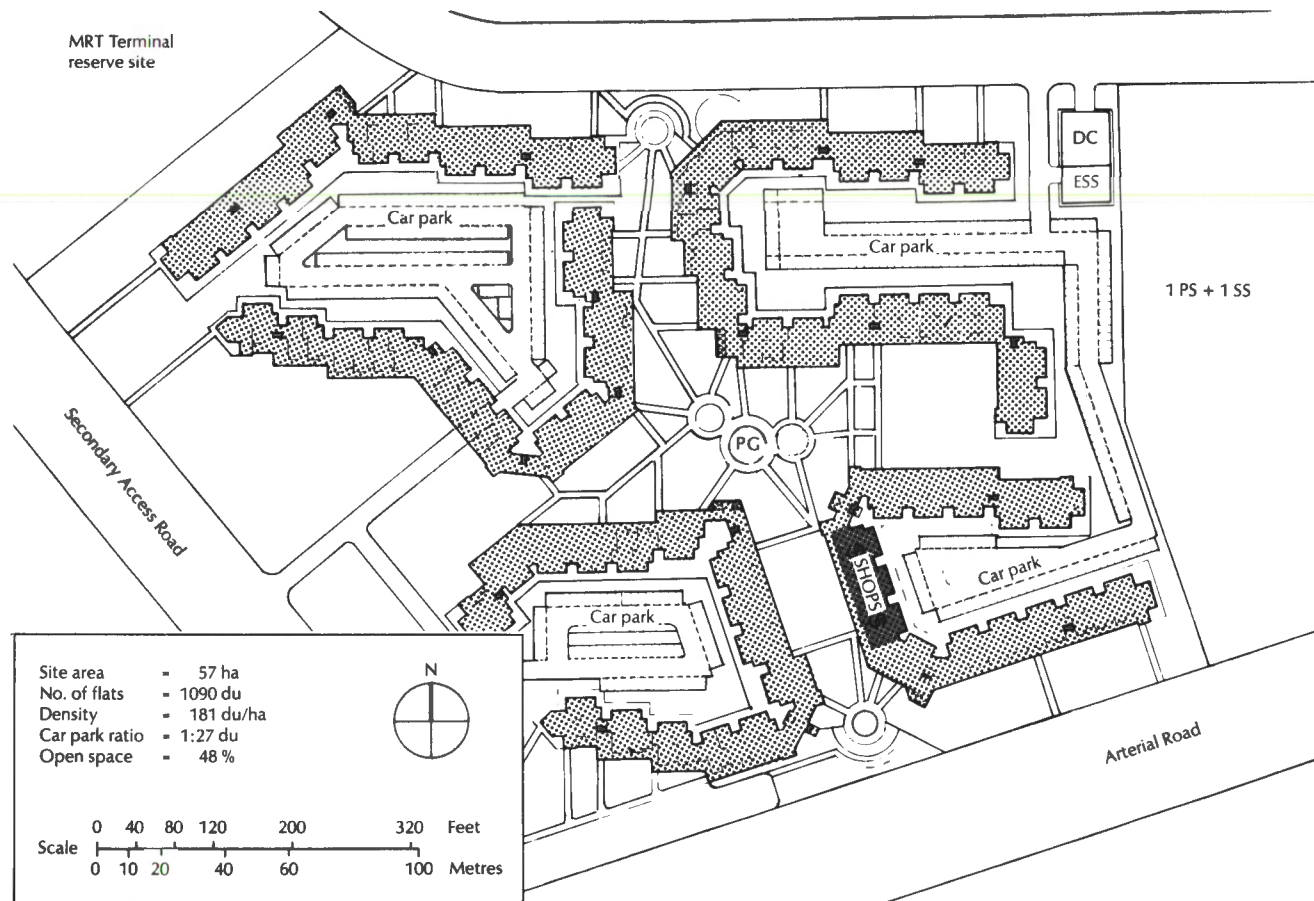


Fig. 5. Precinct layout plan for Tampines.

sibilities of building their own community and improving their living environment. The ready acceptance of high-rise living in public estates has greatly facilitated the education process. Although pre-removal education programs for prospective residents do not assume much importance, post-removal education is, however, essential so that residents are able to partake in the use and management of their units and estate environment.

When the new tenant or lessee collects the keys to the flat at the Sales and Lettings Section, they are given a copy of the "Residents' Handbook." This book contains virtually all the information the new resident needs to know to promote happy community living. It lists all the facilities and services that are available, and provides guidelines to help organize moving in — from getting utilities supplied to the renovation of the flat, and making rent and instalment payments.

As soon as the new tenant moves into the flat, the housing and maintenance inspector from the area office pays a visit, at which time the residents are further advised of the facilities and services available in the neighbourhood. The inspector attempts to get to know the new residents and makes himself available for consultation on any problems. He also tries to introduce neighbours to each other. Such efforts often go a long way to help the new residents acquire a sense of familiarity with the people and the estate, which is essential for the generation of community sentiments. The visit also helps to build rapport and establish an easy and effective channel of communication between the Board and its residents.

To further foster a closer communication on issues of common interest and to help establish a common identity amongst residents, the Board publishes a bimonthly magazine, "Our Home," which is distributed free to all HDB households.

Resident education is an on-going process. At periodic intervals, area offices, together with the residents' committees and other community organizations, carry out educational campaigns such as "Keep the Estates Clean," "Anti-Vandalism," and "Safety in the Estates," through which to educate and remind the residents of their social responsibilities.

Area offices also initiate regular mass cleaning campaigns where the residents, together with the community leaders and the staff of the area office, clean up their apartment blocks. Involvement and participation are effective ways of changing a person's attitude and habits. They help bring about a sense of belonging and pride in the living environment.

Resident education not only covers the adult resident population but also extends to the children as well. Children are actively involved in the educational and cleaning campaigns. Good social habits are to be inculcated from a young age. Towards this end, the area offices also maintain a close liaison with the schools in the estate. From time to time, talks and films on the importance of maintaining a clean and healthy environment are organized jointly with the schools and the Ministry of Environment at school assemblies.

Resident Organization and Community Relations

The government has initiated recently a residents' committee scheme to organize residents into committees. The committees are voluntary organizations run for and by residents living in housing estates. Each com-

mittee serves a zone of 500 to 1000 units depending on the geographical boundary and mixture of flats. The long-term objective is to encourage residents to organize themselves in improving their physical environment and to foster a community spirit. It also serves as a useful channel of communication between the residents and public authorities. The concept was mooted in 1978 and, by the end of 1980, there was a total of 190 residents' committees in the various housing estates. This scheme is administered by the Prime Minister's Office and is not run by the Board.

In recognition of its objectives and potentialities, participation in the management and the maintenance of the physical environment by the residents' committees will be actively encouraged. The commitment of the residents to the care and improvement of their environment is essential in creating an identity of community spirit and attachment. The HDB is prepared to share the management responsibilities with the residents and delegate proper and adequate authority to them without undermining its own role.

One of the tasks ahead is to assist the government in strengthening the community ties in housing estates, but this task of realizing better community relations is not an easy one, and is beyond the competency of one agency. HDB input can only be part of a bigger whole.

As a preliminary step, premises were let at economic rentals to social voluntary organizations that establish outreach programs in the estate to assist the delinquents, the aged, and the poor. In community facilities, there are so far completed 130 kindergartens, 50 community halls, and 15 homes for the aged.

For residents who are in hardship, the Board helps them by referring them to the appropriate agency. Tenants facing economic hardship are given a sympathetic hearing by management staff and referred to the Department of Social Welfare or other charity organizations for assistance. Assistance by the Board is also offered in the form of transfer to lower-rental premises. In some cases, the Board may even help a resident find a job in the estate.

The Board liaises closely with various social welfare agencies, community organizations, and other public bodies to help its residents with their problems. Also, a social awareness course was recently conducted in conjunction with the government's Social Welfare Department to prepare the management staff with an understanding of the social environment. This training improves their management skills in their work with the residents and in administering referrals to the various social welfare agencies on behalf of the residents in need of such help. Further seminars, courses, and talks by specialists in this field will be organized to acquire more skills and to sharpen thinking.

Prospects for the Future

The vision in the next decade is clear. There is a gradual but necessary shift in the HDB's focus from mere housing construction to management with emphasis on the social awareness. Therefore, the fundamental issue in the management of future new towns is the redefinition of the scope of estate management. In other words, what is the role of the Estates and

Lands Division in the management of the social affairs of our residents?

The opportunity for social engineering in the creation of planned communities is wide open. However, the HDB is mindful of the increasing complexity of the social aspect of estate management and the dilemmas to be resolved, for overenthusiastic intrusions in the social domain of the residents may carry with them connotations of paternalism and regimentation. Therefore, the call for increased managerial expertise, careful labour planning, and continuous research in the long-term program is imperative.

Social management as a new aspect of housing management is gaining recognition in many areas of the world. There are no particular sets of solutions for all problems as estate management is an ever-changing and ever-challenging process. Despite these seemingly insurmountable obstacles, the 20 years of experience in housing management provides much impetus and confidence with which to forge ahead to meet the objectives.

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