A STUDY ON PUBLIC SPACE
IN PUBLIC HOUSING OF HONG KONG NEW TOWNS

by

LEE KIT YEE
HT004029E

Submitted to Department of Architecture
on December 14, 2001 in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Architecture

ABSTRACT

Public housing in Hong Kong was originally evolved from the underlying concern to provide a shelter for the people. As the affluence of the society increases, people look forward to better quality of housing where they are proud to call "home". We have raised our expectation for the living environment nowadays. We look forward to a decent apartment, as well as public spaces where we can relax and have fun, relieving ourselves from the stressfulness of the everyday life and schedules. The direction of the Hong Kong authority has changed over the years to keep up with the demands of the ever-changing society. Nowadays it is concerned with the building of communities. Urban planning is crucial in the development of the new towns and public housing estates. Public spaces are in many ways used as an instrument to foster the notions of community while relieving the "concreteness" of the building environment.

Despite the effort to provide adequate public space within the housing area, quite a number of open spaces and public amenities seemed to be rarely frequented and under-utilised. Hong Kong has long been suffering from the problems of scarcity of land. The provision of under-utilized public space induces high opportunity cost and might somehow end up with wasted land resource. Why is there provision of facilities for which people are not willing to use? The question may not be whether there is inadequate provision of public space but the suitability of the provision of such space.
This dissertation will focus on the study of relationship between public space and urban planning of public housing and new towns, and its significance in contributing to the success of public housing in Hong Kong.

This dissertation will be carried through case studies of two Hong Kong public housing estates. It seeks to identify planning and design factors of public spaces within the public housing estates and analyse the relationship between provision and usage of such spaces. The analysis will be supported with surveys to the residents.

This dissertation will seek room for improvement in the quality of public spaces within the public housing estates, so as to establish recommendations which might be useful for future developments.

Dissertation Supervisor: Hee Limin
Title: Assistant Professor