

立法會 *Legislative Council*

LC Paper No. CB(1)1037/14-15(02)

Ref: CB1/PL/HG

Panel on Housing

Meeting on 6 July 2015

Background brief on design of new public rental housing flats prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the design of new public rental housing ("PRH") flats, and gives a summary of the major views and concerns expressed by Members when related issues were discussed by the Panel on Housing ("the Panel") and in the Council in the 2012-2013 to 2014-2015 legislative sessions.

Background

Allocation standard of PRH flats

2. Under the existing government policy, PRH flats are provided to low-income families who cannot afford private rental accommodation, with the target of providing first flat offer to general applicants (i.e. family and elderly one-person applicants) at around three years on average. The allocation standard of PRH is no less than 7 square metres ("m²") internal floor area ("IFA")¹ per person as far as resources permit. Over the past 10 years, the actual IFA per person of PRH tenants has increased to about 13 m². PRH households with a living area of less than 5.5 m² IFA per person is considered to be "overcrowded".

3. In 2001, the Hong Kong Housing Authority ("HA") launched the Territory-wide Overcrowding Relief ("TWOR") Transfer arrangements, which

¹ According to the Code of Measuring Practice issued by the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors, IFA is the area contained within the enclosing walls of a unit measured to the interior face of the external wall or separating wall.

are held once or twice a year to enable overcrowded households to apply for transfer to larger flats². In 2005, HA further introduced the Living Space Improvement Transfer Scheme ("LSITS") to allow PRH households living in flats with an average IFA of less than 7 m² per person to apply for transfer to larger flats³. LSITS is launched once a year.

Design of PRH

4. According to the Administration, to better utilize land resources, HA considers all suitable sites, regardless of the size, and develops PRH in the most cost-effective and sustainable manner in order to meet public demand. In the past decades, HA adopted a standard-block design approach in public housing developments. Starting from 2000, due to limited availability of land resources, the topography, size and configuration of public housing sites have become more complicated. As a result, HA has switched to a site-specific design approach.

5. At present, the design principle of "Functional and Cost Effective" has been adopted for every PRH project, with the incorporation of "Standard Modular Flat Design". There are currently four types of modular flats (**Appendix I**) –

- (a) one/two-person flat with an IFA of 14.1 m² to 14.5 m²;
- (b) two/three-person flat with an IFA of 21.4 m² to 22 m²;
- (c) three/four-person flat with an IFA of 30.2 m² to 31 m²; and
- (d) four/five-person flat with an IFA of 35 m² to 36.1 m².

6. Among the new PRH flats to be built for the period of 2014-2015 to 2018-2019, about 18% will be one/two-person units, about 23% will be two/three-person units, about 37% will be one-bedroom units (for three to four persons) and about 21% will be two-bedroom units (for four persons or above). The numbers of PRH flats by flat types to be completed for the period of 2014-2015 to 2018-2019 are set out in **Appendix II**.

² According to the Administration, after implementation of the TWOR arrangements, the number of overcrowded households has dropped from 3.1% of all PRH households in 2001 to about 0.4% of all PRH households as at end September 2014.

³ Since introduction of LSITS and until end September 2014, the scheme has benefited more than 11 000 households.

7. According to the Administration, compared with previous designs, the current modular flat design ("MFD") of PRH provides internal living space of better utility; the ratio between kitchen and bathroom against living and sleeping areas is more rational and can cater for various family combinations. Besides, it is more flexible for partitioning and placing of furniture. Other design enhancements include cross-ventilating windows to enhance natural ventilation, enhanced universal design for tenants of all ages and different physical conditions, and improved design of plumbing, drainage and electricity supply systems.

Major views and concerns expressed by Members

8. Issues relating to the design and living space of PRH flats were brought up when the Panel discussed HA's policy on "Overcrowding relief in PRH estates" and "Modular flat design for public housing development" at its meetings on 3 June and 2 July 2013 respectively, and during the briefing on the Public Housing Construction Programme ("PHCP") of HA for the period 2014-2015 to 2018-2019 at the meeting on 9 December 2014. At the Council meetings on 5 June 2013 and 27 May 2015, Hon CHAN Hak-kan and Hon Frederick FUNG raised questions relating to the living space of existing and new PRH flats. The major views and concerns expressed by Members are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Allocation standard

Allocation of flats to PRH tenants affected by redevelopment programmes

9. Some Members relayed concerns from PRH tenants affected by redevelopment programmes (e.g. the redevelopment programmes of Shek Kip Mei Estate and Pak Tin Estate) about the new design adopted for the redeveloped PRH flats allocated to them as it provided smaller living space than that of their PRH flats before redevelopment. Members enquired about the reasons for reducing the space standards of the new PRH flats, and suggested that the Administration should assess the resulting impacts on the affected tenants.

10. The Administration pointed out that it would not be appropriate to solely focus on flat size in the comparison between previous and present PRH developments. The site-specific design approach and principles of "Functional and Cost Effective" with the incorporation of "Standard Modular Flat Design" adopted for new public housing developments had maximized site development potential while achieving cost-effectiveness. The design of new PRH flats had taken into account feedback from tenants and concern groups on flat size and

layout, and incorporated improvements to create a healthier living environment and enhance the flexibility and quality of living space. HA would continue to take on board the views of industry stakeholders and tenants' concern groups about flat size and layout, with due regards to social, economic and environmental needs as well as planning and related legal requirements.

11. The Administration further advised that when making rehousing arrangements for tenants affected by redevelopment programmes, HA would refer to the number of members in the tenant family and follow the established allocation standard. HA would keep the affected tenants updated of the progress of the redevelopment and provide them with relevant information. As regards the suggestion that the Administration should amend the layout plans for the redevelopment programmes of Shek Kip Mei Estate and Pak Tin Estate, the Administration advised that it was not possible to make such amendments as the construction works had already commenced.

Overcrowding relief

12. Some Members considered the thresholds of less than 5.5 m² and 7 m² per person IFA for providing relief under TWOR and LSITS respectively overly stringent by present standards. There was a suggestion that the two thresholds should be increased to 7 m² and 11 m² per person IFA respectively.

13. The Administration advised that the allocation standards were reviewed from time to time. The average actual living space per person in IFA for all PRH households had improved over the years to about 13 m², whereas the numbers of households with living density below 5.5 m² and 7 m² had also been substantially reduced in the past decade. Having regard to the increasing number of PRH applicants on the waiting list and the fact that supply of land for public housing was limited, it was necessary for the Government to strike a reasonable balance between the needs of PRH applicants and the vision of progressively improving the average living space per person.

Provision of appropriate flat mix

14. Members observed that with the increased production of smaller units of PRH flats to meet housing demand, the number of larger flats available for allocation to applicants had reduced. In particular, some Members expressed concerns about the relatively longer waiting time for four-person households to receive a PRH flat offer, with some not receiving any flat offer after having waited for six years. Members urged HA to ensure an appropriate flat mix for new PRH developments to meet the housing needs of small and large families, while maintaining the average waiting time ("AWT") for allocation at around three years.

15. The Administration advised that PRH applicants with a larger family size might experience a longer waiting time for flat allocation. While annual reviews on the forecast PRH flat production and related demographic projection had revealed a greater demand for smaller units, there was also an increase in the number of two- and three-bedroom units to cater to the needs of larger families. Of the new PRH units under the current PHCP, about 37% would be one-bedroom units (for three to four persons) and about 21% would be two-bedroom units (for four persons or above). The Administration stressed that it remained HA's target to maintain the AWT for general PRH applicants at around three years.

Modular flat design

16. Some Members sought elaboration on the performance of MFD and how it compared with non-MFD in terms of water-proofing, noise insulation and construction efficiency. They also enquired whether MFD would be applied to all public housing developments.

17. The Administration advised that all PRH units, be it MFD or non-MFD, were required to meet the same quality standard. Efforts had been made to improve the performance of MFD in terms of water-proofing and noise insulation. Non-MFD would still be adopted where appropriate. As to the efficiency of construction, this would depend on the number of storeys to be built rather than the design of flats, given that a mechanized building process would apply.

18. Some other Members commented that PRH units were not user-friendly. For instance, some of the one/two-person units at Tsui Wan Estate were very long and narrow. There was also a need to improve the ventilation of units by providing opposite windows. The Estate Management Advisory Committees should convene meetings with tenants to identify the problems associated with the design of PRH units and the means to improve the situation.

19. The Administration advised that improvements had been made to the user-friendliness of PRH units. Side windows had been provided in one/two-person units to improve ventilation. Other enhancement measures included the provision of a sunken shower design and more power sockets at one metre above floor level to make them more easily accessible by the elderly and disabled.

Recent developments

20. Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee and Hon KWOK Wai-keung wrote to the Panel Chairman on 29 May 2015 respectively expressing concerns about the

design of new PRH flats and proposing discussion on related issues. The two letters are hyperlinked in **Appendix III**.

21. The Panel will discuss with the Administration issues relating to the design of new PRH flats at the meeting on 6 July 2015.

Relevant papers

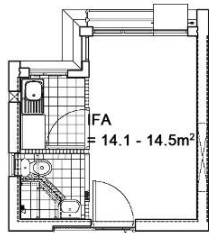
22. A list of relevant papers is set out in **Appendix III**.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
30 June 2015

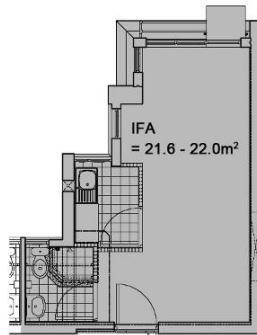
Modular Flat Design

1-Person/2-Person 2-Person/3-Person 1-Bedroom Flat

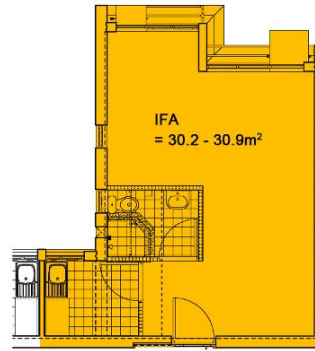
2-Bedroom Flat



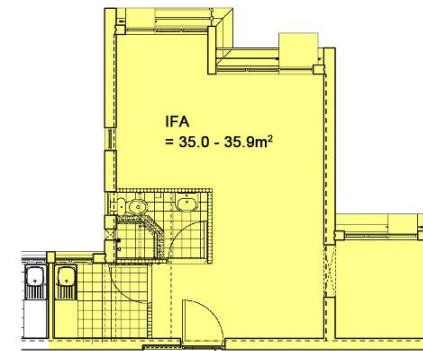
1/2P FLAT TYPE 1a



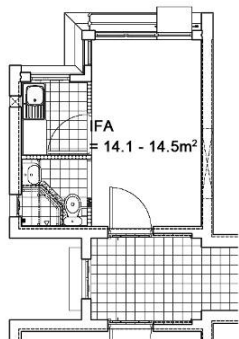
2/3P FLAT TYPE 1



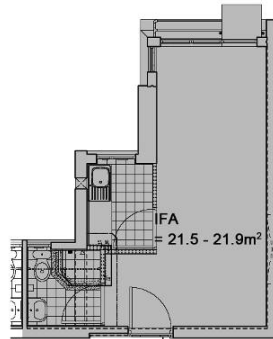
1B FLAT TYPE 1



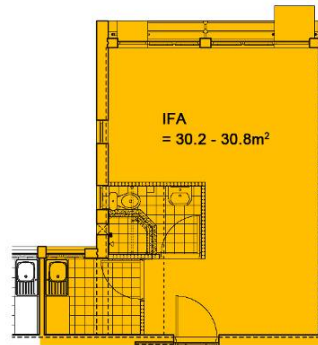
2B FLAT TYPE 1



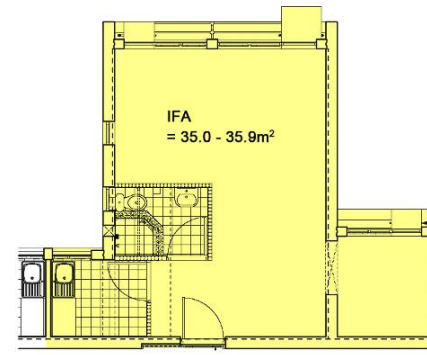
1/2P FLAT TYPE 1b



2/3P FLAT TYPE 2



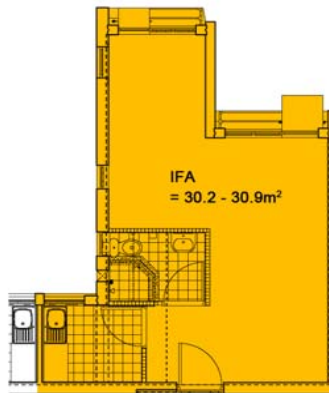
1B FLAT TYPE 2



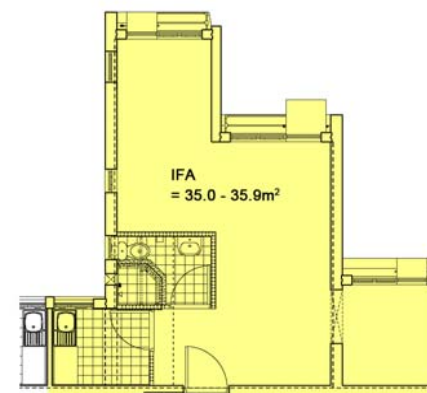
2B FLAT TYPE 2

To address severe noise abatement requirements in some public rental housing sites, the Hong Kong Housing Authority has introduced a new family flat type with side window under the library of Modular Flat Design to reduce the noise by about 2 to 3 dBA.

Source: See Annex 2 to LC Paper No. CB(1)1391/12-13(01)



1B FLAT TYPE 3



2B FLAT TYPE 3

**Domestic Gross Floor Area ("GFA") and number of Public Rental Housing Flats by Flat Types
(2014/2015 to 2018/2019)**

Year of Completion/ District	Flat Type				Domestic GFA (m ²)
	1/2 Person Flat	2/3 Persons Flat	1-bedroom Flat	2-bedroom Flat	
2014/2015					
Urban	200	200	500	100	41 000
Extended Urban	1 000	800	2 000	600	173 000
New Territories	1 100	1 100	1 800	600	185 000
Sub-total	2 200	2 100	4 300	1 300	399 000
2015/2016					
Urban	2 300	3 600	5 400	1 400	574 000
Extended Urban	1 500	1 200	3 400	700	271 000
New Territories	700	900	1 800	500	170 000
Sub-total	4 500	5 600	10 600	2 600	1 014 000
2016/2017					
Urban	700	1 300	1 700	1 100	230 000
Extended Urban	600	900	1 600	500	163 000
New Territories	600	900	900	1 200	159 000
Sub-total	1 900	3 100	4 300	2 800	551 100
2017/2018					
Urban	1 800	1 900	3 600	3 600	525 000
Extended Urban	900	2 000	1 700	2 300	326 000
New Territories	100	200	300	400	45 000
Sub-total	2 900	4 100	5 700	6 300	896 000
2018/2019					
Urban	1 200	1 000	1 500	1 500	220 000
Extended Urban	1 200	1 400	1 400	1 500	259 000
New Territories	300	600	700	400	103 000
Sub-total	2 600	3 100	3 600	3 400	582 000

Note: The actual figures on flat numbers and domestic GFA may be subject to changes at the detailed design stage, especially for those figures in 2018-2019.

Figures may not add up to the total due to rounding.

Source: Administration's reply to questions raised by Members on the Examination of Estimates of Expenditures 2015-2016 (Reply serial no. THB(H)041) (http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr14-15/english/fc/fc/w_q/thb-h-e.pdf)

Design of new public rental housing flats

List of relevant papers

Council/ Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Housing	3 June 2013	<p>Administration's paper on "Overcrowding relief in public rental housing estates" (LC Paper No. CB(1)1153/12-13(05))</p> <p>Background brief on "Overcrowding relief in public rental housing" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (LC Paper No. CB(1)1153/12-13(06))</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)258/13-14)</p>
Panel on Housing	2 July 2013	<p>Administration's paper on "Modular Flat Design for public housing development of the Hong Kong Housing Authority" (LC Paper No. CB(1)1391/12-13(01))</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)1766/12-13)</p>
Panel on Housing	9 December 2014	<p>Administration's paper on "Public Housing Construction Programme 2014/15 to 2018/19" (LC Paper No. CB(1)289/14-15(05))</p> <p>Updated background brief on "Public Housing Construction Programme" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (LC Paper No. CB(1)289/14-15(06))</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)392/14-15)</p>
Panel on Housing	--	<p>Letters dated 29 May 2015 from Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee and Hon KWOK Wai-keung respectively requesting the Panel to discuss issues relating to the design of new public rental housing flats (Chinese version only) (LC Paper Nos. CB(1)961/14-15(01) and CB(1)961/14-15(02))</p>

Hyperlinks to relevant Council Questions:

Date	Council Question
5 June 2013	Council question (written) raised by Hon CHAN Hak-kan http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201306/05/P201306050278.htm
27 May 2015	Council question (written) raised by Hon Frederick FUNG http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201505/27/P201505270394.htm