

## 2,000 families to be moved

By LOUIS NG

ABOUT 2,000 households would be moved out of Mongkok under a redevelopment plan to turn the district into a modern commercial zone.

Mongkok District Officer Mr Bart Ireland revealed that the Land Development Corporation had consulted his office on a major redevelopment project along Reclamation Street, Shanghai Street and Portland Street.

The total area of 1.59 hectares, currently occupied by private residential buildings, would be turned into a modern complex featuring three 20-storey commercial buildings.

If approved, work on the project would start in 1995 and be finished by 1999.

In addition to the commercial buildings, the complex could provide 1,100 square metres of open space, including a playground, rockery, pavilion and ponds.

And with new land available from the West Kowloon Reclamation, Mr Ireland said he hoped the changes would improve the district's image.

"We hope this will thin out the district's population and improve its hygienic standards," he said.

The plan also would serve to raise the commer-

cial values of the district and Mr Ireland said he hoped the project would bring more job opportunities.

A shopping arcade, food court and cinema will be located in the complex, together with a "Bird Street", an alley where bird traders gather to do business.

The complex will also provide off-street terminals for maxicabs.

Mr Ireland said the numerous on-street maxicab terminals now found in the district were a major cause of congestion because they impeded the flow of traffic.

The blueprint for the project, which has been revised several times after consultation, is now in the final stages of approval by the Town Planning Board.

Residents opposed the plan when it was first exhibited in 1991.

But Mr Ireland said he was confident the 2,000 households affected would be willing to vacate the flats to make way for the redevelopment.

"We will have reasonable compensation, according to clearly laid-down guidelines," he said.

But he admitted the affected households would probably have to be rehoused in areas outside Mongkok.

"At present, we have no public housing estates in Mongkok," he said.