

\$72m face lift for old Chaiwan estate

12 Mark I blocks to be demolished

THE Housing Authority has planned a massive \$72 million project to redevelop 12 old housing blocks in Chaiwan into high-rise modern buildings to improve the living environment of the area.

The area is the Chaiwan (West) Estate which has a population of about 27,000.

Announcing this yesterday, Assistant Director (Redevelopment) of the Housing Department, Mr E.G. Pryor, said Blocks 24 and 25 will be demolished in the initial stage of the programme.

These two blocks house about 850 families or some 5,000 tenants.

The families affected will be offered new flats in the Hing Wah Estate, stage II. But, applications for accommodation in estates elsewhere will also be considered if flats are available.

Letters and information leaflets explaining the scheme were delivered to all tenants on the estate yesterday and tenants of Blocks 24 and 25, which are to be demolished, were been given a guideline on rehousing procedures.

Mr Pryor said the Housing Department staff will be calling on them within the next few days to provide further information and to answer any queries.

An inquiry office will be opened in the estate office to assist the tenants.

"Needy families will be given every assistance through the co-ordinated efforts of various Government departments. Genuine hardship cases will be offered removal and a decoration allowance," Mr Pryor said.

Chaiwan (West) Estate, built between 1959 and 1963, has four Mark I blocks and eight Mark II blocks.

The authority's aim in redeveloping this and similar old estates is to improve the environment of tenants who are presently living in congested conditions and sharing communal facilities. A head start has already been made at Shekkipmei and Taihangtung.

The first phase of the scheme will comprise a 28-storey building, scheduled for completion in the latter part of 1978. It will contain about 670 flats of various sizes.

The flats will all be self-contained, each have its own balcony, toilet with shower, and kitchen.

The initial phase of the redevelopment project will involve a massive decantation programme. Homes for about 850 families have to be provided so that the two blocks can be vacated for demolition.

Chief architect of the Housing Department, Mr Pang Yuk-ling said that when the estate is fully redeveloped the population will be reduced from the existing 27,000 to 20,000 giving a density of about 1,000 people per acre.

The estimated capital cost of the project is in the order of \$72 million. Development work will be in four phases and the whole project will take about eight years to complete.

The 12 blocks affected are Blocks 16 to 27.

"Eventually, the department proposes to demolish 12 vintage blocks which are lacking in private facilities and replace them with six domestic buildings ranging from 12 to 28 storeys.

"One of the features of this redevelopment scheme is the incorporation of a commercial complex along Chaiwan Road and Wantsui Road where the existing Blocks 17, 18, 26 and 27 stand," Mr Pang said.

The complex will include shops, market stalls, restaurants, a supermarket, a bank, welfare premises, nurseries, kindergartens and a carpark.

There will also be two primary schools and a secondary school included in the new layout of the estate.

The flats in the new buildings have areas ranging from 250 to about 400 square feet, and the rents will vary from \$190 to more than \$300.

Some of the tenants, while welcoming the move are complaining about the high rents in the new estate. They are now paying about \$25 a month for a room of 120 square feet.

Mr Pryor pointed out that the Housing Authority runs into heavy deficit in managing the old Mark I estates. In order to improve the environment, the authority is aiming to launch a comprehensive redevelopment scheme to modernise them.

About \$1,000 million will be spent by the authority in 1978/79 on public housing estates and new town development. But it has yet to be decided how much will be used for redevelopment of the old estates.



PRYOR...a \$72 project.