

S. A. M. P.

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\$1.5b renewal for a better Kowloon

By CHIU KIT-YING

Central Kowloon will be transformed into a modern urban community when an ambitious \$1.5 billion redevelopment plan for public housing is completed by the early 1990s.

The mammoth project by the Housing Authority involves four former resettlement estates — Wong Tai Sin, Tung Tau, Wang Tau Hom and Lok Fu, which make up nearly all the district's population.

Housing Department officials at a press conference yesterday said it would be the largest ever renewal plan.

The project will halve the estates' current population density and "bring vast improvements to traffic."

The four estates (Mark I and II blocks), built between 1958 and 1964 to resettle squatters, are in poor social, environmental and living conditions.

Under the renewal plan, not only will all the old housing blocks be demolished and redeveloped, but the entire district will also be re-planned, modernised and surrounded with parks.

New domestic blocks of

the latest standards will be erected with provision of all essential facilities.

The scheme will provide about 24,180 units for 135,700 people, or about 2,200 people per hectare.

The population density of the four estates will then be greatly reduced from the 229,700 in 1967.

Three sites are set aside for three Home Ownership projects due to the exceptionally good urban location.

The three HOS projects will provide about 2,000 flats which will be built in the later phase.

A housing official said if the demand for home ownership flats proved greater, some other flats originally planned for rental would be converted.

Announcing details of the plan, the Director of Housing, Mr David Ford, said "it is a massive redevelopment plan by any standard, considering that it involves about 250,000 people and takes seven years to complete."

He also noted the significance of the project in terms of construction scale, in which the blocks would be pulled down and rebuilt, and the substantial amount of money involved.

The total expenditure for

the project is estimated at \$1.5 billion, of which \$110 million will be spent in the next financial year.

A total of \$530 million had been spent in redevelopment work on the four estates since 1976.

Six contracts had been completed and five are due for completion by 1986-87. Eight contracts will be let for completion between 1986-87 to 1989-90, and 12 others to be let for completion between 1989-90 to 1993-94.

Mr Ford said the Housing Department aimed to redevelop all the Mark I and II estates by 1991 and 1992.

"Our redevelopment plan on Mark I and II blocks started 12 years ago, but so far only 50 per cent of the work has been done with the remaining to be finished in the next seven years," he said.

He added that in the middle of next year, the department would draw up plans for improving Mark III and IV blocks.

Mr Ford also noted that to carry out the comprehensive redevelopment plan on Kowloon Central, an overall co-ordinating committee had been formed.

It co-ordinated and advised on the preparation of the plan which included a thorough traffic and transportation study by consultants.

Moreover, he said, the Urban Council, Town Planning Board, Transport Department and the Wong Tai Sin District Board had been consulted.

The project when completed would bring about "vast improvements" to the poor traffic conditions in the district, said the Assistant Director (Planning), Mr A. Crosby.

A lot of the traffic now blocking the roads inside the estate would be diverted to the edge of the western side, he said.

To link the estates internally and externally, safer and more convenient transport and pedestrian networks have been planned.

The Deputy Director (Estate Management), Mr Fung Tung, said the majority of the existing population would be rehoused in the same estate or the new Chuk Yuen estate nearby.

Residents were also given options in the new towns, he said.