

## Po Heung Estate – Injecting Energy into an Existing Community



Flats are strategically oriented away from the sightline of the railway



The 24-hour pedestrian passage provides convenient access along with an array of retail facilities

The HA is always looking for opportunities to maximise the use of Hong Kong's valuable land resources by building homes for the people who need them. However, many potential sites available pose significant challenges in terms of terrain and local environment. Furthermore, existing communities sometimes express concerns about the prospect of having PRH estates built in their vicinity. One of the HA's key jobs, therefore, is to collaborate closely with local communities at an early planning stage in order to deliver win-win solutions that both optimise a site's development potential while also meeting the needs and expectations of the local community. How we manage this task is well illustrated in our planning process for Po Heung Estate, our latest PRH development in Tai Po.

The Tai Po site of Po Heung Estate was placed on the Application List for land sales in 2004. However, the land sale was never triggered, possibly due to the severe noise issues caused by surrounding vehicular traffic and the adjacent MTR East Rail line, which limited the site's development prospects. In 2009, the HA took over the site and sought ways to maximise its development potential for PRH.

By engaging in local consultations at an early planning stage, we were able to secure the valuable support of the Tai Po Rural Committee. The Committee agreed to surrender the site of their premises next to the development site to create more room for the PRH development. They moved back to the housing estate upon project completion. The surrendered site was amalgamated into the Po Heung Estate development boundary, a move which not only enabled more comprehensive planning but also delivered a gain in development intensity. About 30 additional domestic flats were able to be built as a result, giving a final total of 483 flats. This entire process represented an important milestone in effective collaboration between a local community and the government, and fully exhibited the values of the theme "Building for the Community, Fostering Harmony".

We adopted a single aspect design for the two domestic blocks, with the flats strategically oriented away from the sightline of the railway. This, together with the addition of acoustic fins at strategic locations, was very effective in reducing traffic and railway noise. In addition, the open



Recreational and leisure space for tenants



The community artwork on display in the passageway features local landmarks and themes

corridors of the domestic floors enhanced the comfort of tenants in terms of providing excellent natural lighting and cross ventilation.

We also provided a 24-hour pedestrian passage connecting Po Heung Street and On Fu Road on the two sides of the development. This not only serves as a convenient access route for residents, but makes it easier for local residents to move between the areas near Tai Po Market MTR Station and the Fu Shin Street old town centre. Restaurants and retail shops have also been provided along the pedestrian passage to meet the needs of the local community.

We fully utilised the permissible building height of the site to include a three-storey podium with landscaped flat roofs, thus maximising opportunities for greening and providing more leisure space for tenants. Micro-climate studies were used to refine the estate design to ensure a good environmental performance in terms of wind availability, daylight and thermal comfort outdoors.

Collaboration between community and government in this project was further reinforced through a related community art programme. Local schools were invited to participate in creating a public artwork, with the students involved being able to channel their creativity into the project in a way that enhanced their sense of belonging to the district.

There had been no new public housing developments in Tai Po for more than 20 years. With the population of the district ageing, the completion of Po Heung Estate in 2016 has undoubtedly injected new energy into the district by bringing in new families and a younger generation of residents. In this way, it is helping to create a more vibrant local community.