

On The Road to Sustainable Well-furnished Flats In Shanghai: Lessons Learnt From Hong Kong And Sydney

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Abstract

“The Day after Tomorrow” pictures the gloomy scene of human’s fate should we keep increasing our greenhouse gases. Global climate change has become one of the most popular topics over the past decade. The slogan sustainable development – meets the needs of the present generation without depriving the needs of future generation – is in the lips of many government officials, green groups and political leaders. Developers in our society play an important role in achieving this target, e.g. some developers in Sydney provide energy saving lights, others provide balcony in Hong Kong. Although bare units in Shanghai offer much flexibility to city dwellers on choosing their own fittings, many people predict that well-furnished flats will replace the bare ones gradually in the near future. Review of policies and provisions of fittings by developers in Sydney and Hong Kong can definitely provide useful information to Shanghai developers and Environment Bureau Officials.

Keywords: sustainability, fittings, residential, Hong Kong, Sydney, Shanghai

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1. Introduction

Residential units for sale are well-furnished in Hong Kong and Sydney. Developers provide renowned kitchen and bathroom fittings to home vendors. Some of them also provide wardrobe and energy saving lights. In Shanghai, residential developers seldom provide the aforementioned fittings to residential purchasers. Without bundling with fittings, residents excel their creativities in choosing their own beloved wall and floor tiles without wasting all the fittings provided by the developers. Yet, such high flexibility also means that home vendors have to find contractors for doing all these tasks. In view of the hectic schedule of fast moving city dwellers, there are more and more voices from the general public and scholars that well-furnished flats should replace the traditional bare flats (Wang, 2003). Apart from that, it is also the government's intention to replace the bare units by well-furnished flats step by step. It has implemented regulations and laws for well-furnished flats "Managing Furnished Residential Units Testing Method" as early as 1997 and "Well furnished flats implementation Method" were implemented in 2001 (Hongxu, 2009).

Since the majority residential units in Hong Kong and Sydney are well furnished, throwing lights on all these examples can provide Shanghai policy makers and developers much information to build their sustainable city. This paper firstly provides a general overall picture on fittings provide by the three places, follow by a review on the policies with regard to residential buildings.

2. Sustainable development

The concept of sustainable development first received attention in 1972 at the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm. The term had not been referred explicitly. Nevertheless, the international community concur that both development and environment could be managed in a mutually beneficial way (United Nations, 2005). The International Union for the conservation of nature and natural resources attempted to provide definition of sustainable development in the book "World Conservation Strategy" as early as 1980. Sustainable development was defined as "the integration of conservation and development to ensure that modifications to the planet secure the survival and well-being of all people" and "development" was identified as "the modification of the biosphere and the application of human, financial, living and non-living resources to satisfy human needs and improve the quality of human life" (Bugri, Glaves, & Ridgway, 2008).

The term "sustainable development," was later defined formally in the report *Our Common Future* ("Brundtland Report") by the United Nations' World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987. Rest on Malthusian's theory of 'environmental limits', the most widely cited definition defines Sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the

present without compromising the needs of future generations to meet their own needs” (Dolan, et al., 2006). Not in camp of Brutland advocators, O’Riordan (1988) points out that while “sustainability was primarily about the environment, sustainable development as a term that ultimately give priority to development”. Sustainable development is progressive in qualitative or quantitative change which ensures sustainable use of resources and the vitality of living systems while promoting synergy between social, economic and ecological systems through the use of multi-stakeholder participation in decision-making, planning and implementation processes with special attention being given to social equity and the processes through which individuals and small groups develop in qualitative terms (Hancock, Labonte, & Edwards, 1999). Other researchers not only highlight the problem of rapid resources depletion and non-economic factors in making sustainable policies, they also promote the use of appropriate technology (Bugri, et al., 2008).

3. Provisions of fittings in Sydney, Hong Kong and Shanghai

3.1 Provisions of fittings by developers in Shanghai

In shanghai, even though the majority of residential projects are empty units with no floor and wall tiles, bathtub, bedroom doors (Table 3). Some people suggest that developers should provide well-furnished flats instead of bare units because 1) developers have better idea on structure of the dwellings, furnished by developers can reduce the possibility of structure destruction due to residential units owners’ ignorance. Full-furnished flats can increase the durability of the housing unit. 2) Residential owners cannot obtain as low price as the developers when they purchase these fittings by themselves. 3) Providing these fittings by developers can decrease the time and the refurbishment costs during the early time of movement (Wang, 2003) . Hongxu (2009) concludes that provisions of fully furnished flats must be one of the process in housing industrialization. Putting lens on provisions of fittings by developers in Hong Kong and Sydney can provide developers in Shanghai ideas on provisions of fittings in the future well-furnished flats.

District	Percentage of Empty Units	Residential Available for Sale in 2004-2007	Developments
Baoshan	90%		80
Changning	51%		41
Chongming	100%		4
Fengxian	85%		27
Hongkou	90%		28
Huangpu	55%		11
Huangpu	67%		3
Jiading	93%		42
Jingan	33%		18
Jinshan	92%		25
Licheng	100%		1
Luwan	61%		23
Minxing	93%		102
Nanhui	89%		44
Pudong	80%		151
Putuo	85%		59
Qingpu	97%		29
Songjiang	89%		84
Xuhui	81%		62
Yangpu	85%		40
Zhabei	85%		34
Unknown	88%		24

Table 1 Percentage of Mao Pi Fang in 22 districts in Shanghai .(Shanghai Soufun, 2009)

3.2 Provisions of fittings by developers in Sydney

Since 1945, Australians enjoyed relatively low housing costs and high rates of homeownership (Beer, Kearins, & Pieters, 2007), residential vendors enjoy full provisions of fittings provided by the developers. Some developers even provide more than one design schemes to their potential customers (See Table 1).

Dwelling projects Descriptions of Fittings by developers

<p>Village Quay(Billbergia Developments Pty Limited, 2009)</p>	<p>“All apartments have air conditioning...wired with cable and internet. Bathrooms and ensuites are luxurious with quality contemporary fittings. All balconies are equipped with gas, power and tap as standar”.</p>
<p>The Peninsula (Meriton, 2009a)</p>	<p>“ Each apartments are fitted with air-conditioning, Large balconies, Floor to ceiling tiled bathrooms, Floor to ceiling windows and blinds. All stainless steel European appliances, Built-in wardrobes in all bedrooms, Free to air TV points in all living rooms/bedrooms, Internet cabling, Energy saving lights”</p>
<p>359 King(White, 2009)</p>	<p>White oak rustic timber flooring, gourmet designer kitchens, stainless steel kitchen appliances, built-in-wardrobes, floor to ceiling ceramic tiles in bathroom, bbq gas point to terraces, security video intercom to entry, air conditioning</p>
<p>Sugarmill Apartment Stage 2(Gold Abacus Development, 2009)</p>	<p>Modern kitchen with Caesar stone bench tops, Audio/video intercom security system, Superb quality finishes in the common access area and apartments, Use of well-known and reliable Australia brands. e.g. “Fisher and Paykel” electronic appliances</p>
<p>Discovery Point(Gold Abacus Development, 2009)</p>	<p>Stainless steel Smeg appliances, Highly durable reconstituted stone benchtops, Sleek bathrooms and kitchens, with glass splashbacks, imported satin vitreous, floor tiles, concealed fixtures, Mirrored, built-in wardrobes, Fisher & Paykel dryer, Timber floor option to Premium apartments, Ducted air conditioning</p>
<p>Trio(Frasers Property, 2009)</p>	<p>There are four interior schemes to select from: with timber veneer accents and polyurethane cabinetry, Ceasar Stone surfaces and stone or colourbacked glass splashbacks...and the use of pivot doors is a rare application of commercial detailing in a residential environment. Kitchens vary from neat galleys to eat-in affairs around a timber bench. Some apartments have island benchtops, others have integrated laundries and flexible storage. Many of Trio’s bathrooms have a unique internal 'wet room' - shower and bath, side by side, enclosed with translucent glass have high quality wall or vanity mounted fixtures and a soothing palette of neutrals. Other apartments have dual access points which allows bathrooms to be used as both an ensuite to the main bedroom and by guests.</p>

Dwelling projects Descriptions of Fittings by developers

Sienna By The Bay(Meriton, 2009b) “Free-flowing living areas are graced with floor-to-ceiling windows and blinds, maximising the natural light, views and enhancing the overall sense of spaciousness. High ceilings and floor-to-ceiling tiled bathrooms provide a lustrous look throughout. Durable and easy to clean vitrified tiles offer an aesthetically pleasing home environment. Kitchens feature stunning stone bench tops, European stainless steel appliances and stylish chrome tap ware. Ample pantries, handy eat-in areas and convenient breakfast bars are also available. Many apartments offer dual aspects allowing you to enjoy cross-flow ventilation. Media spaces are included in most apartments; and all bedrooms have been thoughtfully planned with built-in wardrobes providing ample storage...individually controlled air-conditioning system and provisions for Pay TV and high-speed Internet.”

The waterfront(Payce Lifestyle Development, 2009) AAA rated water fittings and fixtures, Louvre screens, Awnings, Facade articulation and insulation, Alternate power generation sources including photo-voltaic panels, Storm water and black water treatment and re-use, Carbon and water metres.

Table 2 2009 Real Estate Developments in Sydney CBD on sale in Real Estate Australia Group (Real Estate Australia Group, 2009)

3.3 Provisions of fittings by developers in Hong Kong

Similar to housing developers in Sydney, developers usually provide basic electrical fittings, fancy wall and floor tiles, window frames and cupboards in Hong Kong. Sometimes, developers also provide high density DVD players, iPod and LCD TV. Some of the developments provide balconies; greatly reduce the use of electrical fans and air-conditioning in times of gentle wind. Table 2 illustrates all the residential projects currently on sale on Hong Kong Island listed in Midland Realty, one of the largest estate agent (except Aqua 33 (Midland Realty, 2009b) and Lime Habitat (Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited, 2009) because no relevant information is available).

Developers	Descriptions of Fittings by developers
Garden East (Hopewell Real Estate Agency Limited 2009)	“Wood-laden private balcony, designer furniture, branded mattress & high quality duvet & pillows, split-type air conditioning with heating function, fully high density iDTV, LCD TV, DVD player, iPod with alarm clock, branded electrical appliances.”
The Babington (Wheelock Properties (Hong Kong) Limited, 2009)	“Timber doors with wood veneer are provided for all bedrooms. Living/dining rooms and bedrooms finished with engineering wood flooring and wood skirting. Walls and ceiling of living/dining rooms and bedrooms finished with high quality emulsion paint. Powder-coated aluminum window frames and sliding doors with glass panel. Bay window sills are finished with natural stone. Kitchen doors are solid core with wood veneer and fitted with glass panels; flooring & wall finished with tiles; aluminum suspended ceiling with downlight. High quality kitchen cabinets with solid surfacing, double composite sink and counter top. Other kitchen appliances include: chimney type hood; built-in gas hob; refrigerator and microwave oven; built-in electric oven; fully electronic control washer & dryer. In Bathroom, Timber door with wood veneer; floor finished with natural stone and walls finished with ceramic tiles up to false ceilings. Gypsum board suspended ceiling with down lights. Sanitary wares include water basin, water closet, bathtub, shower cubicle, bath/shower/basin mixe. Balcony & Utility Platform Floor finished with wood decking. Metal balustrades are provided.”
Mount East (Midland Realty, 2009a)	“Renown Japanese brand ‘Daikin’ Central air conditioning system, "Miele" electrical appliance in kitchen, cooling system, Hidden humidifier, dryer, heater are located in bathroom ceiling... Water proof television in master room”
The sail at Victoria (Tong Yan Development Company Limited, 2009)	Electrical appliances and sanitary fittings to be provided or installed in each residential unit.
SOHO 38 (Kerry Properties Limited, 2009)	Walls and ceilings of bedrooms and living/dining rooms are finished with high quality emulsion paint. Floors of bedrooms and living/dining rooms are finished with high quality Italian tiles and timber wood skirting. Floors of balconies and utility platform are finished with high quality tiles with recycle plastic wood decking. Floors of flat roads are finished with homogeneous tiles. Bedroom and bathrooms (door): Hollow core with painted finish.

Table 3 Residential development projects for sale in Hong Kong Island, Hong Kong 2009

3.4 Lessons learnt from the two cities

To combat climate change, developers in Sydney and Hong Kong provides different sustainable fittings or fixtures. Some of the residential developers in Sydney provide energy and water savings fittings. Developers in Hong Kong provide balconies for better natural ventilation to save much electrical energy and introducing sunlight.

Indeed, sustainable well furnished flats also need support from home vendors. Some of them change fittings in kitchen and bathroom (Hand, Shove, & Southerton, 2007), replacing them with their beloved water closet, washing basin etc. All these make them less sustainable than conventional bare flats. To minimize this, some developers in Australia have introduced different schemes for home vendors. In fact, some of the developers in Shanghai also implement similar plan.

	Sydney	Hong Kong
Different Interior schemes for vendors to select	Trio(Frasers Property, 2009)	N/A
Water saving and re-use fixtures	The waterfront Lifestyle Development, 2009)	N/A
Alternative power generation sources	The waterfront Lifestyle Development, 2009)	N/A
Balconies	N/A	SOHO 38 (Kerry Properties Limited, 2009)

Table 4 Comparisons of provisions of sustainable fittings in Sydney and Hong Kong

4. Sustainable policies in Sydney, Hong Kong and Shanghai

To be well-prepared for the upcoming well-furnished flat market in Shanghai, apart from reviewing the existing fittings provided by developers, a review of policies in the three places also help.

4.1 Sustainable development policies in Shanghai

Significant economic growth and urbanization has been recorded in China recently (Newell, Chau, & Wong, 2009). To further enhance people's living environment, Shanghai has spent money on establishing the environmental impact assessment and access system according to planning and regional environment (Fannfang, 2009). Buildings with height less than or equal to 24 m and with the length of building façade of 80 metres or more have to be separated by a minimum of 6 metres (Council for Sustainable Development, 2009).

Although the developers usually do not provide the air-conditioners to home vendors, number of fixing position for those air conditioners has to be designed according to the flat's area and number of bedrooms—an indirect way to control the number of air conditioners which release hot air to the surrounding (Shanghai Environment, 2008).

4.2 Residential building Sustainability policies in Australia

In Australia, almost a quarter (23 per cent) of Australia's total greenhouse gas emissions are a result of energy demand in the building sector (Centre For International Economics, 2007). Building Sustainability Index (BASIX) facilitates home designers to achieve the goal of sustainability by a web-based, self-assessed instrument to visually represent the energy and water scores on a scale (Vijayan & Kumar, 2005). Since July 2004, all the newly design buildings must obtain a BASIX Certificate, they are mandatory required to reduce water use by 40% (Holloway & Bunker, 2005) and 25% greenhouse gas emissions as compared to homes of the similar type with conventional designs. Once they reach the targets in the assessment, a BASIX Certificate will be issued (Holloway & Bunker, 2005).

The assessment begins once the dwelling designer creates a project portfolio. Background information of the building e.g. site location, dwelling size, floor and landscaped area are required for energy and water assessment. Different fittings which use water such as showerhead, toilets, tap fittings, swimming pool, and different appliances contribute towards the water score (Vijayan & Kumar, 2005). To meet the 40% reduction target to conserve water, some residential developments connect to a suitable recycled water supply for outdoor water use, install dual flush toilets, shower heads and tap fittings with a 3A rating (Taylor & Weber, 2004).

To access building energy, thermal comfort is analyzed by using Deemed-to-comply or Simulation method (Vijayan & Kumar, 2005). In case a building's heating and cooling loads cannot be simulated by software, designers can alternatively get access to 'expert opinion' compliance route (Australian Government, 2005).

The energy and water efficiency mandated by the BASIX system in NSW is definitely a good start (Foran, 2005). BASIX provides quantitative targets for water and energy management. The system also allows sustainability indicators to be added progressively. The nine practice notes included in BASIX system enhance people's understanding and compliance on the new requirements (Taylor & Weber, 2004). Nevertheless, some researchers criticize that 80% of the energy use issues are still left without any guidelines and controls. The inter-sectoral rebound effect could finally increase the total amount of energy and water used. Savings on

physical inputs and lower bills often migrate to additional consumption activities. Or Savings made within one module of the urban system might stimulate additional energy and water used indirectly in other parts of economy or even overseas (Foran, 2005). In 2005 a report drafted by the Productivity Commission, it commented harshly that compulsory minimum energy performance standards in buildings were only a waste of time despite the fact that an extra \$3,878 on average were needed to comply with BASIX at the 25% level. Even though the scheme has been implemented, limited number of schemes are available for installing water and energy saving products (Holloway & Bunker, 2005).

Outside the building envelope, The NSW Housing Code has also shown sustainability initiatives, e.g. the maximum floor area and site coverage of homes is limited to limit energy consumption; minimum landscaped areas are required to enhance housing amenity (NSW Government Department of Planning, 2009). Apart from that, all the residential buildings are required to pass through environmental assessment. It consists of two parts: Environmental Impact Statement (a document which provides information on existing environment, predictions about the environmental effect and recommendations) and Assessment Report (review of the about statement by the general public and government officials) (Elliott & Thomas, 2009).

4.3 Building sustainability policy in Hong Kong

In Hong Kong, the first package of incentives on green features was issued in August 2001 in the Joint Practice Note of Buildings, Lands and Planning Department. Subject to those conditions specified, developers can apply for exemption from Gross Floor Area (GFA) and Site Coverage (SC) calculations when they provide green features in their housing development. These green features under the Buildings Ordinance include:

1. Acoustic fins;
2. Balconies;
3. Communal sky gardens;
4. Communal podium gardens;
5. Sunshades and reflectors;
6. Wider common corridors and lift lobbies;
7. Wing walls, wind catchers and funnels (Buildings Department, Lands Department, & Planning Department, 2004).

Apart from the aforementioned incentives, there is also mandatory requirement on all the housing development projects (with not less than 2000 units) to undertake an environmental impact assessment study on:

1. the suitability of the quality of the local environment for residential development;
2. the compatibility of the proposed project with existing land uses and infrastructure;
3. the impact of the proposed development on the environment (Chiu, 2000).

4. Conclusions

Experiences from Sydney and Hong Kong provide valuable information to Shanghai government officials on future policy makings. In Hong Kong and Sydney, there are specific requirements within and outside the building envelope. In Shanghai, although there are requirements on the building heights and spaces between buildings, there are no specific requirements for fittings within the building envelope (Table 4). When there are more and more well-furnished flats in the future, GFA and SA reduction, mandatory tools for energy and water estimation can be incorporated in building regulations in Shanghai. As a matter of fact, green policies issued by the government do matter a lot, e.g. provision of energy and water savings fittings in Sydney and balconies in Hong Kong are one of the by-products.

	Hong Kong	Sydney	Shanghai
Within the building envelope			
Mandatory tools for energy and water use estimation		X	
GFA and SA reduction when green features are provided by developers	X		
Outside the building envelope			
Environmental Impact assessment	X	X	X
GFA/SA requirement/Space in between buildings	X	X	X

Table 5 Compare and contrast the green features requirement in Sydney, Hong Kong and Shanghai

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