

## Abstract

The rapidly changing Thai society results in more competition in the workplace, thereby increasing family members' work hours and decreasing the average family size. At the same time, population statistics show an average increase in longevity and an increased abandonment of the elderly. Public housing for the elderly has, therefore, become an important alternative for the aging population who has no other means of support.

The objectives of this research are the following: (1) to study the problems and needs in the public housing project for the elderly, Baan Bangkae; (2) to study area usage in the Project; (3) to study space management that is appropriate for the public housing project for the elderly at Baan Bangkae; (4) to present guidelines for designing and managing Baan Bangkae. This study is a descriptive research; collection of data was done through observation, surveys, photographs, and in-depth interviews with the elderly who live in Baan Bangkae. During 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of February 2005, interviews were conducted with 20 elderly residents who can help themselves and can communicate well with others. These information were then used to analyze the types of problems that occurred within the Project.

It was found from this study that the important issues in the design and planning of the Project were the following: (1) the main problems for the elderly in the Project were primarily health-related; diseases found were bone diseases, problems of mental health, depression, and discouragement. Secondary problems relate mainly to social relationships such as an inability to get along with other residents and frequent disputes. Another major problem involves a lack of economic support (money); (2) regarding the needs of the elderly in the Project, it was found that the elderly needed to participate in various activities in order to take more pleasure in life. They have also expressed the desire to take care of themselves as much as possible; (3) regarding area usage in the Project, it was found that many buildings were not suitable for the living environment of the elderly--making it dangerous to travel between buildings and building-linking areas.

The proposal for designing and improving residence buildings, public buildings, and exterior public areas within residence buildings included the following suggestions. Elevated routes for housing residents should be inclined with hand rails to support the elderly; every entrance and exit should have sloping routes for the elderly residents. For public buildings, the area in front of the buildings should have roof-covered passages between buildings; the exterior public spaces should also have roof-covered routes.

Areas outside the building may also be dedicated to Buddhist-related activities, in order to promote Buddhism and motivate the elderly to use these areas more. Finally, specific suggestions for more appropriate management of the Project consist of a preparation of project assessment and monthly reports, the assessment of the needs and area usage the elderly every 1, or 2-3, months, as well as personnel training in order to increase efficiency and reduce the problem of staff shortage. Personnel training should include issues relating to fundamentals of management, medical treatment, and maintenance of the environment.