History

(Since 1952)
Introduction

Ichiura Housing & Planning Associates Co., Ltd. was originally founded in 1952 when Japan was expecting to see an end to the postwar reconstruction years.

Then, in less than a decade, a period of rapid economic growth arrived. The booming national economy sparked a sharp population growth and a demographic concentration influx into large cities, which caused a serious housing shortage in urban centers over time. In the face of this issue, the government sector began to implement large-scale initiatives to increase the housing supply.

Against this backdrop, we started our business focusing mainly on the planning and design of public apartment complexes and housing estate projects, while advancing into the field of New Town projects in the 1960s, with the aim of helping improve the housing and living environments of the public at large. The urban housing situation began to improve around 1965, chiefly due to an increased number of private housing providers, who contributed to expanded housing supply capacity. Statistically, the per annum number of housing starts rose to 1.86 million at its peak around 1972. In many large urban areas, the severe housing shortage problem was being resolved, and as a result, the focus of the housing supply market began to shift from securing the quantity of housing units to enhancing their standards and quality. Responding to new emerging needs along with the change of the times, we have expanded our business, utilizing our accumulated skills and experiences in engaging in projects in a range of areas, from design of apartment complexes and housing estates, rehabilitation of housing estate environments, improvement of built-up urban areas, development of housing technologies-and housing supply for the elderly, to conducting survey research on various housing-related issues and examining governments’ housing and town planning policies.
1 | Starting Out (1952–64)

Ichiura Architect & Associates was involved in various types of projects, including commercial buildings and planning for U.S. military bases, before starting to engage in public housing complex design. Our first-ever involvement in this area came in 1954 when we undertook a project for the Ministry of Construction for J.H.C Standard Type 54 C. This was a format for Y-shaped mid-rise tower housing, known as a “Star House,” which contained three units in a three-pronged layout on each floor. The Star House format was invented to offer variation to the otherwise monotonous rows of identical rectangular structure buildings that characterized many housing estates at that time. The order was awarded to our small firm, staffed with a total of eight members, in the spring of 1954.

Development of standard design

We began to secure orders from the Japan Housing Corporation upon its founding in 1955 to create standard designs for public housing complexes, while taking on the design of local governments’ public housing plans. Our planning business thus increasingly concentrated on public housing complex projects. Among major projects we engaged in at that time were the Chikusadai Danchi plan commissioned by the Nagoya City Government (1955) and the Kirigaoka Danchi plan by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government (1956). Through these activities, we steadily built up know-how and experience to establish ourselves as housing estate planning specialists.

The Birth of New Town

In 1961, we participated in the planning of Senri New Town, Japan’s first New Town development project, which was hosted by the Osaka Prefectural Government. We were responsible for the entire sections belonging to Toyonaka City and two sections in Suita City (Momoyamadai, Takemidai), for which the planning was completed in 1967. The highlight of our plan was a pedestrian road network built to cover the entire site, which was the first of its kind and a forward-looking town planning initiative introduced in anticipation of the coming automobile age. In 1961, we also took part in the planning of Meimai New Town in Hyogo Prefecture, which was completed in 1963. These contracts provided us with opportunities to cultivate our technical expertise for New Town planning.

Emergence of urban redevelopment

While enjoying the burgeoning post-war economy, many cities throughout Japan began to show weakness in terms of poor-quality structures, function and environment when compared with more advanced countries. As a part of efforts to improve these conditions, we worked with other firms to conduct reviews of urban redevelopment plans for various

Meimai New Town

Aoyama main street redevelopment plan
districts in Tokyo, including Ginza (1959, Japan Institute of Architects), Aoyama main street (1961, Japan Housing Corporation), Jiyugaoka (1962, Tokyo Metropolitan Fire-Resistant Building Corporation), and western Shinjuku (1963, Tokyo Metropolitan Government), and additionally undertook firebelt plans for Gofukucho in Shizuoka Prefecture (1956) and Okayama City (1960).

For the Aoyama main street redevelopment plan in particular, we began from early on to create a detailed design for an urban high-rise residential complex consisting of buildings standing in a row along the main street. The earliest proposal was made for the Manseibashi high-rise urban apartment (1958, Tokyo Metropolitan Government), which featured a duplex style. Through these engagements, we accumulated technical skills and expertise that were later demonstrated when we engaged in diverse types of redevelopment programs, such as for city redevelopment, urban disaster preparedness/prevention and creating centers for New Town and other housing estates, in many locations, including redevelopment of areas around Kawanishi-noseguchi Station in Hyogo Prefecture.
2 | The Age of Quantity (1965–74)

Development of New Town
From 1965 to 1967, following the Senri plan, we were engaged in the creation of basic concepts and basic plans for the Senboku New Town project, which were commissioned by the Osaka Prefectural Government. We drew basic designs for the residential section with a combined area totaling around 60 percent of the entire section. In addition to using applicable techniques acquired from working on the Senri plan, we introduced new approaches and methods to meet the requirements for themes such as preserving and utilizing local landscapes and vegetation, factoring in the positional relationship with regional centers in the planning of the residential section in terms of layout, land use, housing density and others, and building pedestrian roads incorporating greenbelts (called “green road”). Our achievements from these efforts contributed to the establishment of basic planning techniques for Japan’s New Town development. The greenery-based estate design of Senboku New Town is still praised by many residents, even decades after its completion.


Expansion of housing estate planning
At the same time, we expanded our business in housing estate planning. Many engagements were accepted for mid-rise dwellings, including the Hattaso Danchi (1965, Osaka Prefectural Government) and Shakuji Park Danchi (1966, Japan Housing Corporation).

Over the ensuing years, the number of high-rise residence projects increased gradually to accommodate the growing housing demand. We were involved in a number of plans for this type of residence, including major undertakings for Osaka Prefectural Government-owned tower housing estates (1968), three housing estates in Yokohama that were owned by the Japan Housing Corporation for Narakita Danchi (1969), Minamikandaji Danchi (1970) and Minaminagata Danchi (1970), and the rebuilding of Toyama Heights...
(1973, Tokyo Metropolitan Government). In planning dwelling units and buildings for these projects, we adopted measures to achieve better living conditions and external communication than levels enabled by the center-hallway floor plan, a structure that was widely used for high-rise housing at that time.
The Shift from Quantity to Quality (1975–84)

Thanks to the expanded housing supply capacity, the housing shortage issue was resolving itself, which in turn led to the focus of the housing supply sector shifting to improving the quality of housing and urban environments. Seeking to meet emerging needs, an increased number of architectural design firms began to enter the apartment complex design market, which had up until then been very small, resulting in enhanced quality of public housing complexes in many parts of the country.

Ken Ichiura, the founder of our company, passed away in 1981. His position was filled by Hideo Tomiyasu, who was elected as the second President. The firm grew to employ a total of 54 staff members and opened a branch office in Fukuoka in 1977.

New Plan Systems (NPS)

We developed the New Plan System (NPS) to achieve variety-oriented designs for mid-rise residential buildings. We used this system in designing Shimohosoi Danchi (1977, Gunma Prefectural Government) and a 2-story, low-rise dwelling for Nabeshima Danchi (1978, Saga Prefectural Government) in an effort to create a varied style estate. For Iruma-Koyodai Danchi (1982, Saitama Prefectural Government), we drew a plan for 5-story courtyard buildings connected via bridges at the third level. In this plan, an elevator was installed in each building to facilitate use of the bridges, particularly by elderly users. The plan also included an entrance staircase designed to enhance visibility and a rooftop garden on the third floor, as measures intended to promote interaction among residents.

Improvement of the high-rise housing plan

High-rise apartment housing began to become popular from around 1965, but in many of the earliest models, the common area did not receive adequate consideration in planning. Believing that improvement in this area was necessary, we introduced wider hallways and measures for the effective use of rooftop spaces in the planning for high-rise housing projects we took on at that time, including those provided by Karatsu City high-rise public housing (1978), Kanagawa Prefectural Housing Corporation (1979, Wakabadai Danchi) and Osaka Prefectural Government (1982, Shimae Housing).

Extension project for mid-rise housing

We undertook an extension project for mid-rise housing provided by the Osaka Prefectural Government. We laid out an innovative housing estate renovation plan that employed the precast modular construction method to add one additional bedroom and one bathroom to each 2DK unit for the entire building, thereby eliminating the need for involved
residents to temporarily be removed during the work. We adopted this extension method to carry out work for a total of more than 30,000 units provided by the Osaka Prefectural Government to help enhance living conditions in the residence.

**Large-scale development of urban residential areas**

Around that time, idle land area increased in large cities, chiefly at factory sites, and many plans were laid out to convert such factory land to residential use. **Yodogawa Riverside Town** (1980–81, Osaka City Government, Housing and Urban Development Corporation) was a representative project we worked on in this field. Another major engagement was the **Kameido-Ojima-Komatsugawa redevelopment project** (1983–89, Tokyo Metropolitan Government), which focused primarily on building local emergency evacuation centers based on the initiative of urban redevelopment for enhanced disaster resistance for the Koto district. Within this project, we drew plans for high-rise, high-density housing (1,175 units on 3-ha area), including building planning made jointly with the Architectural and Planning Office.

**Multifunction New Town complex and overseas New Town projects**

We participated in a number of New Town development projects, including those for **Atsugi New Town** (1970–82), **Izumi New Town** (1977–85), **Ogi New Town** (1976–79) and **Najio New Town** (1984, revision), which were all commissioned by the Housing and Urban Development Corporation. The plans were created with an eye toward the new-concept New Town planning being introduced around 1975 in response to the change in housing related needs. The new-type town planning was promoted to pursue redevelopment of the existing housing-centered New Towns into multifunctional complexes containing research/academic institutions and other functions in addition to residential facilities.

We also advanced into overseas New Town development markets. Major projects we participated in included **Mashhad New Town** (1973, Iran), **Cajamarca Mine City** (1973, Peru) and the **North Jordan Comprehensive Development Plan** (1978).

**Housing related survey**

Around 1975, we launched a full-scale survey research service aimed at improving the quality of housing and living conditions, utilizing the achievements and technologies we had built during the course of engaging in various projects in the past. Our earliest activities performed in this service area were related to the following themes: the **habitability of high-rise high-density housing** (1974, Osaka Prefectural Government), housing supply aimed at strengthening the foundation of family life, which was proposed by the Ohira Administration (1979, Ministry of Construction), and identification and systematization of housing-related demand (1979, Housing and Urban Development Corporation), among others.
4 | Pursuing Variety, Considering Local Features, and Catering to the Elderly (1985–94)

By around the year 1985, the primary demand for standard type housing had generally been satisfied, and the weight of the housing supply sector began to shift toward meeting the needs for rebuilding and relocation in pursuit of better living conditions and environments. Reflecting this market trend, demand for rebuilding public housing began to increase. That demand continued expanding to reach a peak during the economic bubble years from 1986 to 1991, pushing up the number of housing starts to a record 1.7 million units per annum, contrasting the previous sluggish years. At the same time, it became clear that Japanese society was facing the irreversible trend of a rapidly graying population, and governments began to implement necessary actions in broad areas.

Launch of the HOPE Program
The HOPE Program, which was introduced nationwide in 1982, was created to encourage regional public housing services to reflect local characteristics and revitalize local economies through the offering of services. From the very start, we supported municipalities in many parts of the country in formulating respective plans under the program in cooperation with experts and local organizations, and undertook planning for implementation. We served a number of local governments, starting from HOPE Program of Gotsu City (1984), followed by Osaka City, Wakayama City, Oe Town, Kanra Town and others. In addition to the HOPE Program, we began to engage in the design of many local apartment projects that incorporated regional uniqueness. Among the earliest examples are Miyakomatsu Danchi (1985, Notsu Town Government, Oita Prefecture), which used seared cedar board as building materials, and the Hakamagoshi Danchi (1988, Sakurajima Town Government, Kagoshima Prefecture), in which measures against volcanic ash were introduced.

Promotion of two-step supply systems
In an effort to facilitate diversified housing supply systems, we participated in a demonstration program for the two-step supply system developed by the research team led by Kazuo Tastumi, professor at Kyoto University, drawing a design for Inokodani Danchi (presently Este Minamisenri, 1987–88, Osaka Prefectural Housing Corporation).

Research on and practice of housing for the elderly
Our first service activities related to the theme of an aging society was conducting research in 1984 on consignment from the Ministry of Construction regarding building public housing systems required for such a society. Following this, we began to engage in the planning of housing projects for the elderly in

Miyakomatsu Danchi
Inokodani Danchi
various locations. One such project was the Fujisawa Silver Housing Project, which was undertaken in 1987. The project was to provide serviced housing (including nursing care) for the elderly based on national systems, which was the country’s first effort toward this end. The concept of the initiatives we developed for this project was consolidated into the government’s housing master plan, and has since been passed down as part of the Basic Plans for Housing. We offer support to municipal governments across Japan in creating local plans based on the national Basic Plan.

Century Housing System (CHS) activities
As a part of efforts aimed at increasing the durability and prolonging the life of apartment complexes, we participated in the Century Housing System certification program organized by the Ministry of Construction to encourage activities that enhance housing functions. Utilizing this program, we offered designs for housing for public apartment complexes in many locations that achieve a longer useful life.

Townscape development
Our early major achievements in townscape development were made as a block architect selected for the planning and design of the Belle Colline Minamiosawa (1990, Housing and Urban Development Corporation) within Tama New Town, which was highly evaluated. In this project, we also assisted in the creation of design guidelines while drawing the design for the assigned block. We also participated in the Makuhari New City Residential Areas plan (1988–2009, Chiba Prefectural Government), drawing up the master plan. Following this, we organized planning and design meetings with a host of townscape-related experts, such as city planners, architects, and garden designers. One key result from these efforts was the production of attractively unconventional urban residential landscape centering on mid-rise apartment houses built along roads.

Pursuing diversity for New Town development
We participated in a number of new-concept New Town projects that pursued the diversity of New Town development, including plans for Saito International Culture Park City (1985–2010, Osaka Prefectural Government, Housing and Urban Development Corporation, Saito (International Culture Park City) Promotion Council), Kansai Science City (1985–2006, Kansai Research Institute), and Culture Town, a New Town within the Kobe-Sanda International Park City (1988–2001, Hyogo Prefectural Government). In the Culture Town project, we worked on the planning and design of Washington Village and Hyogo Village sections. For the former task, we sought advice from Seattle-based specialists in developing a plan to build a fenceless residential site in roadside areas surrounded by greenery, as well as establishing appropriate maintenance systems, which were actually adopted.

Yokohama-Shanghai technology exchange
In 1973, Yokohama City achieved a world’s first by concluding a friendship city agreement with Shanghai...
City. As a part of bilateral exchange promotion activities, the Yokohama City Government organized a program to propose town development plans and necessary technologies for selected districts in Shanghai. Since its launch in 1989, the exchange program made steady progress, producing significant results, in contrast to the cooling political relationship between the two nations caused mainly by the Tiananmen Square incident. We were part of this program from the very beginning as the survey and planning leader of the initial project, and continued our involvement for six years, offering proposals to North Zhongshan Road Zhujiawan District Center Plan (1989–90), True Light New Town Plan (1991), Survey on Shanghai City’s historical structure preservation status (1992, jointly with The University of Tokyo), the plan for mall development around West Nanjing Road (1993) and the plan for urban center redevelopment and living environment improvement in the Caojiadu area (1993–94).

Rebuilding of the public housing complex
The years around 1990 saw many housing estates across the country undergoing rebuilding. We undertook planning and design for many reconstruction projects, among the largest of which was Tokaichiba Apartment (1983–2000, Yokohama City Government), the city’s largest housing estate, with 36 ha of site area. Having completed the planning for the entire site in the seven years leading up to 1990, we also engaged in the design of some of the buildings. The Tokaichiba rebuilding project employed the Japan Housing Corporation for housing provision, representing Japan’s first large-scale public housing regeneration project introducing the organization’s service. Another large regeneration project involving our company was rebuilding the Harumiya Apartment (1987–1994, Osaka Prefectural Government), which was planned as part of a larger city redevelopment plan for Higashi Osaka City. This project was to incorporate various public functions, including a city hall and other public services and cultural facilities, into the plan for rebuilding a housing estate at the city center, a concept widely adopted for similar urban housing estate reconstruction projects.

We also provided services to improve deteriorating living environments in urban residential areas. Specific projects included the Shinyamashita district environment improvement plan (1984–87, Yokohama City Government) and the Osaka City pre-war tenement district improvement plan (1983–90).

Development of timber rahmen structure methods
We started developing Original Timber Rahmen (frame) Structure Methods, aiming to increase the seismic resistance of wooden housing. In 1986, we took part in the Ministry of Construction-hosted New City Housing Competition, in which our proposal for a new urban wooden detached housing estate (using a timber Rahmen structure for town development) was selected to receive a prize. We continued our efforts to further develop this technology, which resulting in
obtaining general certification as stipulated in Article 38 of the Building Standards Act in 1994. In that same year, we set up the RHS Institute jointly with Orimoto Structural Engineers in order to promote and pursue development of this technology.

In 1993, Hideo Tomiyasu became Chairman, and Akira Kobayashi was elected as the new President.

The Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake reconstruction projects
We participated in a range of public and private efforts directed at recovery from the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, which occurred on January 17, 1995. The entire staff became involved in the following projects: survey of the situation regarding immediate damage, planning for Kobe City’s restoration and comprehensive improvement plans for urban residential areas in the Rokko district (1995, Housing and Urban Development Corporation, Kobe City Government), planning and design of the Kobe New Eastern City Center residential area development (HAT Kobe) (1995–97, Housing and Urban Development Corporation), and supporting the rebuilding of condominiums and town restoration council activities in western Ashiya and Moriminami districts.

Housing estate regeneration and Urban-renaissance
From around 1995, the government began full-swing promotion of “market-oriented, stock-focused” housing policies and the “urban renaissance” concept for city planning. Following this new direction, Housing and Urban Development Corporation was dissolved and reorganized as Urban Development Corporation (1999), a move aimed at shifting the focus of service from the volume supply of housing units and sites to the improvement of urban foundations. Also, in 1997, the Central City Planning Council issued a recommendation that included its basic recognition that it was necessary to transform urban fabric by controlling expansion to achieve a compact town structure based on the view that the nation was facing a historical turning point from the phase of promoting social urbanization to that of maintaining an urbanized society. In line with this advice, the government launched a range of initiatives, such as urban renaissance projects (2001) and urgent urban improvement programs for designated areas (2002).


Utilizing public housing stock
We supported the creation of the government’s public housing stock comprehensive utilization systems by

Kobe East New City Residential Areas (HAT Kobe)
Tamadaira Danchi
participating in the preparation of manuals for appropriate selection of the improvement approach. At the same time, we assisted municipal governments of Yamaguchi Prefecture, Saitama Prefecture, Hitachi City, Minato Ward, and others in formulating local plans for comprehensive utilization of public housing stock. We engaged in a number of large-scale housing estate renovation projects, including formulating large-scale remodeling plans (2001) and regeneration initiatives regeneration of housing stock (2002) for housing estates in Hyogo Prefecture, as well as specific planning and design for comprehensive remodeling of the Hikarigaoka Danchi (2001, Ishikawa Prefectural Government), Horai Danchi (2001, Fukushima Prefectural Government, Mori Sekkei), and Hieda Danchi (2003–04, Yamaguchi Prefectural Government). For these remodeling plans, we adopted technologies to newly add hallways to the staircase-type, mid-rise house structure to enable greater efficiency in elevator use, as well as step-less access to each unit. Related to this, we worked with Nippon Steel Corporation to jointly develop the hung corridor method that can reduce the cost of building corridors (which received a prize in the Better Living-hosted Parts Development Competition in 2002), for which we succeeded in trial construction (2005), a necessary step for commercialization of the technology.

**Reconstruction of Japan Housing Corporation-provided housing**

Japan Housing Corporation went into high gear to implement rebuilding plans for the large volume of housing it supplied to large-scale housing estates around the late 1950s. We participated in some of these projects on a continuing basis over the long term, specifically for Tamadaira Danchi (1989), Uenodai Danchi (1995–2008), Higashikurume Danchi (1995) and Toyoshikidai Danchi (2004–11), undertaking master planning, building layout design, residential building design, and formulation of design guidelines, among others.

**Reconstruction of condominiums**

At the same time, many privately provided condominiums began to face the need to rebuild old structures, which was becoming another serious issue that needed to be addressed. We also played a pioneering role in this field, supporting the reconstruction of Shinsenrinishi-machi K-A Danchi (Forme Senrichuuo, 1995–96), which was the first condominium regeneration project in Senri New Town. This was followed by Fukaya Daiichi Apartment (Garden Hills Senrichuo, 2001–03), another Senri New Town house, Momoyamadai Danchi, Toyonaka City Asahigaoka Daini Apartment, and others. Through these operations, we acquired specialist experience and know-how, which we subsequently drew on when working on related government initiatives such as
developing systems that allow the smooth promotion of condominium reconstruction (General Technology Development Project hosted by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure Transport and Tourism, 1998–2001) and the study for legislation to the same effect.

**Consideration of local characteristics and the needs of the elderly**

Regarding the ongoing requirement for housing planning to reflect local characteristics and accommodate the specific needs of an aging society, our efforts were developed building on past achievements made during the 1980s. We pursued traditional local coloring in drawing a housing design for each of the following municipality housing projects: **Wood Town Takarabe** (1989, Takarabe Town Government, Kagoshima Prefecture), **Manatsu Danchi** (1990–94, Naze City Government, Kagoshima Prefecture), **Shiratsuchi Danchi and Sanbonmatsu Danchi** (1991–95, Mito Town Government, Yamaguchi Prefecture), **Shinei Apartment** (1993–94, Kusunoki Town Government, Yamaguchi Prefecture), **Horinouchi Danchi** (1992–96, Kumamoto Prefectural Government), **Tonoue Danchi** (1993, Notsu Town Government, Oita Prefecture), **Sukisaki Danchi** (1998–99, Moriyama Town Government, Nagasaki Prefecture), **Kohata Danchi** (1997–98, Aomori Prefectural Government), **Nishijusanbugyo Danchi** (2000–01, Ibaraki Prefectural Government), and others. Our contribution to these projects was highly valued. For the theme of catering to the aging population, while promoting the government-led Silver Housing (housing for the elderly) projects in various locations, we launched pioneering efforts in planning and design for collective house projects. Part of these efforts resulted in the production of the multi-generational collective house planned for a series of **Hyogo Fureai Apartment** public housing units for disaster victims (1995–98), and collective-style housing for the elderly planned for **Motohara Sukoyaka Apartment** (2001, Nagasaki Prefectural Government).

**Sustainable housing**

By around that time, protecting the global environment was widely recognized as a social challenge that imposed on every sector (including housing) a new requirement for taking environmentally responsible actions. As an approach to this theme, we collaborated with Iwamura Atelier to jointly develop **Fukazawa Environmental Symbiotic Housing** (1997, Setagaya Ward Government), which gained a strong reputation as one of Japan’s earliest models of sustainable housing and received a World Habitat Award in 2001. Following this, we further pursued efforts in this area, working on **Hasune San-chome Apartment** (1998, Tokyo Metropolitan Government), **Miyoshikitanagai Morinosato Danchi** (1998, Saitama Prefectural Government), **Asada Hills** (1999, Yamaguchi Prefectural Government), **Okuwa Danchi** (2002, Ishikawa Prefectural Government), **Ogoori-no-oka** (2002, Usuki City Government, Oita Prefecture), **Heart Island SHINDEN** (1997–2010, Japan Housing Corporation), and others. In planning the SHINDEN...
Fukazawa environmental symbiotic housing

Sukisaki Danchi

Tonoue Danchi

Shiratuchi Danchi

Wood town Takarabe

Nishijusanbugyo Danchi

Asada Hills

Ogori-no-oka
project, which marked the corporation’s first certified sustainable housing effort, we focused in particular on townscap design for the massive housing estate located near the center of Tokyo.

**Development of new timber structure methods**

In the area of housing technology development, our activities developing new timber structure building methods (RH structure method, AK joint) advanced steadily to achieve full-fledged practical application. The RH structure method was developed to attain high performance in seismic adequacy, fire resistance, sound isolation and durability. This technology was employed for building three-story wooden apartment houses in a number of municipality-hosted housing projects, including Oshibedani Apartment (1995, Kobe City Government), Eguchi Apartment (1998, Kagoshima Prefectural Government), Tan-no Daini Housing Estate (2000, Saikai Town Government, Nagasaki Prefecture), Tegatayama Daiichi (2002, Akita Prefectural Government), and Kanaibuchi Danchi (2003, Gunma Prefectural Government and Takasaki City Government). Regarding the AK joint technology, we participated in Bingo-no-ie promotion project (1998–2001, Fuchu City Government) and Sekishu-no-ie Man-yo promotion project (2002, Masuda City Government), which were selected for the government-led comprehensive programs for wooden housing promotion. For those projects, we supported the building of a prototype house using AK joints as well as the establishment of production and supply systems for the technology. Due to those introductory activities, the AK joint was adopted to build wooden apartment houses in a number of local public housing projects, including Makizonokodani Apartment (2000, Kagoshima Prefectural Government), Amadatsuhrasa Danchi (2002–04, Kagoshima Prefectural Government and Sendai City Government), Mine City Raifukudai Apartment (2002–04, Yamaguchi Prefectural Government), and Yamana Danchi (2003–08, Takasaki City Government).

In 1998, Akira Kobayashi became Chairman, and Takemasa Sato was elected as the new President.
In April 2005, we changed the company name to the current name of Ichiura Housing & Planning Associates Co., Ltd. This move aimed to confirm employees’ awareness of the corporate mission of “contributing to society through the housing business,” which had been passed down over the decades since the company’s founding, and to announce our commitment to fulfilling the mission internally and externally.

In 2008, Takemasa Sato became Chairman, and Katsumi Uchida was elected as the new President.

In June 2006, the Basic Act for Housing was promulgated and took effect in Japan, which was the country’s first-ever modern-age basic legislation related to housing and living. This was a symbolic event indicating that the post-war housing administration had entered a new stage as a result of the development maintained over the past 60 years since the end of the World War II. Japan’s administration began to steer its course to encourage transfer service provision functions from the public to the private sector. In the housing and town planning related industry, as part of the policy changes implemented in and after 1990s and partly driven by the structural reform led by the government from around the turn of the century, direct supply of public housing was considerably reduced. This “privatization” policy was further pursued through promoting public-private partnership (PPP) schemes for organizing infrastructure improvement projects and private financial initiatives (PFI) in the field of public housing supply, and a substantial number of housing projects were formed using these schemes. Perceiving these industrial trends as changing with the times, from the early 2000s, we sought appropriate approaches for advancing into the new business model field, while continuing with our pursuit of the public housing and urban development business as we had done previously. In particular, we set our sights on forming public-private partnerships in undertaking public housing projects, making effective use of our expertise and achievements built up over years of operation in this area.

**PPP/PFI projects**

Our first PFI project was organized for the improvement of the Jiyugaoka Danchi (2006–11, Numazu City Government). Following this, we successfully bid on four projects: rebuilding Aobadai Icchome Apartment (2007, Meguro Ward Government), improving Nakanohoncho Yonchome Apartment (2007, Nakano Ward Government); rebuilding Shimizumachi Apartment (2009, Meguro Ward Government), and improving Bentencho Jiyugaoka Danchi

Tobu Danchi
Corporatehouse Apartment (tentative name) (2011, Shinjuku Ward Government). All were joint projects with Tokyo Metropolitan Fire-Resistant Building Corporation. In October 2006, we formed an architect consortium, ABILITY 11, in order to mount a joint bid (that we ultimately won) for a Kumamoto City-hosted competition for construction undertaker in the Type II urban redevelopment project for Kumamoto Station East A district: Kumamoto Forest City Center, representing the first project of its kind in Japan. This success was followed by additional winning bids for other PPP/PFI projects, specifically for rebuilding Suita Fujishirodai Apartment (2009, Osaka Prefectural Government), Sakai Minaminagao Apartment (2009, Osaka Prefectural Government), Koshien Kyubancho Danchi (2009: Phase 1, 2011: Phase 2, Nishinomiya City Government), Takemidai Apartment (2010, Nishinomiya City Government) and Tobu Danchi (2011, Shizuoka Prefectural Government). For preparing proposals for each of these projects, we demonstrated solid planning ability and technological capabilities cultivated through our years of engagement in residential area and urban development design, which were adequately recognized by reviewers.

Development of China projects
Starting from the early 2000s, we explored opportunities to launch overseas business (primarily in China). To this end, we set up a liaison office in Shanghai (2004) and Beijing (2006). Since then, we have participated in housing and urban development projects widely in Shanghai, Beijing, Tianjin, Shenyang, Tangshan, Yantai, Qingdao, Lanzhou, Wuhan, Wuhu, Wuxi, Ningbo, Zhenjiang, and Hefei.

We steadily built a track record in China. Two major Shanghai projects—Phoenix City Housing Estate (1999–2001, Shanghai House Property Development), one of our earliest Chinese undertakings, and Lu Ming Garden Housing Estate (2005–07, Shanghai House Property Development)—won a comprehensive grand prize in China’s prestigious national housing design and planning competition, and a silver prize in a Shanghai City-hosted housing award, respectively. In Beijing, Hejin Housing Estate (2008–10, Yashi Group), an apartment project for which we undertook design employing the skeleton infill method, received a number of prizes, including a gold prize in the national building planning and design award. We also won in three international planning and design competitions for housing and urban planning projects: Qizhong Forest Sports City Housing Estate (2004, Shanghai City), Pujiang Town Center Housing Estate (2004, Shanghai City), and Dasi Xinjiayuan Housing Estate (2007, Tianjin City). In addition, from 2012 we engaged in interior design for a project owned by the Green Land Group, the first to be selected for the government-hosted Japan-China Cooperation for Century-lasting Housing program, which aims to provide technical support for achieving long-life quality housing.

Regeneration of housing estates
We continued studying methods of regenerating

Kumamoto Station East district redevelopment project

Shanghai Phoenix City housing estate
housing estates as a key theme. From 2005 to 2008, we participated in a comprehensive study group for joint research at the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT), Urban Renaissance Agency and the Consortium for Building Research & Development, with regard to housing estate regeneration, and as a member, we carried out research on a broad range of themes, mainly related to the planning method, operation method and technological development. One major issue that emerged around that time was the regeneration and restructuring of a large volume of rented housing stock, which was built in great quantities in the late 1960s and early 1970s and provided by Urban Renaissance Agency. In a bid to tackle this issue, we engaged in related work continually over the years, starting from survey research on new housing estate regeneration methods focusing on models built over the decade around 1970 (2006), followed by specific project plans, including a survey of regeneration and utilization of Saiwaicho Danchi (2006) and Takanedai Danchi (2009), town planning for Hanahata Danchi (2008–10) and Sokamatsubara Danchi (2009), and a study on regeneration of the Chiba Complex Housing Estate (2011).

Community-based town management
Area management is one of the recent themes related to housing and town planning that came into focus in the early 2000s. Behind this was an increasing awareness of the social challenge of maintaining vibrant and attractive towns, particularly in city centers. Related sectors were expected to understand the need to shift the weight of town development efforts from infrastructure to the community, and accordingly reshape the approaches to service provision based on the concept of area management. This issue did not relate to urban centers alone, but also suburban residential areas, where the importance of community-led activities was emphasized in order to prevent the decline of local society and the environment as well as maintain the value of real estate assets. We pursued this theme on a long-term basis, with a particular focus on approaches to maintaining and improving living environments through community-based activities. Our specific activities included surveys of community-based town management (CTM) (2002–04, MLIT) and promotion of area management (2007, MLIT).

Basic Program for Housing
The Basic Plans for Housing (National Plan) was formulated based on the Basic Act for Housing, which took effect in 2006. The Plans established new basic housing policies as being “market-oriented,” “stock-focused,” and “locally managed.” In line with the new policies, housing related systems and regulations underwent review for modification and replacement, and received new introductions. We became involved in formulation of the Plans (National Plan), and supported prefectural governments (Chiba, Saitama, Kyoto, Hyogo, Yamaguchi, Nagasaki, Kagoshima) and other municipalities in creating respective regional plans. From 2011, we worked on revising the Plans.

Shanghai Rokumeien housing estate
Beijing Yasu Goukin housing estate
Study on longer-life housing
The average lifespan of Japanese housing is notably shorter than that of other advanced countries, and prolonging it was a long-time issue confronting the country’s housing sector. Efforts to address this issue were accelerated by new initiatives introduced under the Basic Act for Housing, which went into effect in 2006, and the Basic Plans for Housing that were formulated based on the Act. Among these, key initiatives were aimed at achieving super-long life (lasting 200 years) housing. In 2008, bills on promoting long-lasting high-quality housing were submitted to Diet sessions and pilot model programs were launched to encourage activities to achieve such housing. We became a member of the MLIT-hosted study committee on long-lasting high-quality housing (2007–08), conducting examinations necessary for creating relevant guidelines. We have continued offering assistance toward the production of a range of relevant initiatives.

Renovation and improvement of condominiums
An increasing number of aging condominiums was another concern that surfaced around that time, with the total number of units in buildings aged over 30 years exceeding one million. To address this issue, the government first developed and implemented regulatory systems for rebuilding, but they did not work as planned. Then, seeking a more effective approach, the government began to consider the possibility of promoting renovation and improvement for prolonged use. In 2012, MLIT organized a working group for renewal of apartment housing stock for a sustainable society (stock renewal working group), presenting its positive stance toward condominium renovation and improvement. We offered research and analysis services on a range of relevant subjects, from a long-term improvement plan and retrofitting for energy conservation and seismic resistance to market effects of the introduced measures, and additionally undertook related tasks such as assisting the work of developing pricing standards for seismic diagnosis and retrofitting services.

Survey related to the Building Standards Act
Following the incident reported in 2005 involving falsification of earthquake-resistance data, we began to receive orders for surveys and research on the Building Standards Act and other laws related to condominiums. Our services offered ranged broadly from basic surveys necessary for revising architect licensing systems, research on the proposed legislation of the Basic Act for Building, and the enforcement status of the Building Standards Act, to basic research on specific systems for design and planning service providers to

Soukamatsubara Danchi (courtyard)
Soukamatsubara Danchi
meet various regulatory requirements, such as construction authorization, periodical reporting, and compliance with defect warranty standards, while identifying the actual situations regarding related service operations.

Housing for the elderly
The sector related to housing for the elderly faced a large transformation spurred by the amendments in 2009 and 2011 of the Act on Securement of Stable Supply of Elderly Persons’ Housing, which required actions to be taken in response to new themes. In response to this situation, we provided services related to the new themes, primarily to the government sector, mainly by assisting local governments in formulating regional plans for the stable supply of housing for the elderly, and central agencies in developing regulatory systems for serviced housing business for the elderly. In 2010, we were first selected to be an administrator of screening and payment operations for subsidy programs launched to encourage the housing business for the elderly (stable supply and serviced housing). We continued this engagement in the ensuing years, making it a new segment added to our service lineup. This new service was further developed by conducting a series of surveys, including follow-ups, case studies, and research on evaluation techniques, aimed at ensuring a stable supply of serviced housing for the elderly, while working for the Urban Renaissance Agency’s Aging in DANCHI project.

The Great East Japan Earthquake reconstruction projects
On March 11, 2011, a catastrophic earthquake hit northeastern Japan, causing serious damage to the region. We participated in government-led recovery efforts. Jointly with partner firms, we undertook urban area reconstruction plans for Noda Village and Fudai Village in Iwate Prefecture, conducting a study on schematic and detailed designs. Following this, we were selected for other MLIT RFPs for a number of study projects pertaining to supplying public housing for disaster victims in the northern part of Iwate Prefecture. These were related to different themes, including planning and supply methods, public-private partnership schemes for providing housing reflecting local characteristics, housing supply with a focus on disaster preparedness/prevention, emergency control and regional revitalization, and temporary provision of housing.

Also, regarding public-private partnership schemes that provide public housing for disaster victims, we conducted research on a set of relevant subjects and compiled the results to create guidelines. Major subjects included implementation of the government programs for purchasing public housing for disaster victims, production systems for rebuilding the homes of disaster victims, support for producers’ groups, and management systems for public housing for disaster victims, including the designation of consignees.

Plan for Revitalization in Noda Village (Master)
Tanohata Village public housing for disasters victims
Based on the results from these activities, we provided a range of services, from developing a scheme to supporting implementation of government programs for purchasing public housing for disaster victims, specifically those hosted by Tanohata Village and Ootsuchi Town (both in Iwate Prefecture) as well as plans led by Miyako City (in Iwate Prefecture) in which land and buildings could be purchased as a set. Subsequently, we were involved in more government projects for public housing for disaster victims in other affected areas, including Otsuchi Town, Yamada Town, Kamaishi City and Rikuzentakata City (all in Iwate Prefecture) as well as Onagawa Town (in Miyagi Prefecture), by developing basic plans and designs. These projects have progressed steadily to begin receiving residents in completed housing.

The disastrous damage caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake and the recent Kumamoto Earthquake highlighted a multitude of housing- and living-related issues that many cities and towns in Japan faced. Such issues include problems with a shrinking population, declining birthrate and a graying society, waning local economies, weakening local communities, aging social infrastructure, deficient emergency response capabilities, and inadequate sustainability initiatives, to name a few. In addition, the public sector needs to improve local service functions in the areas of healthcare and welfare service, public transportation networks, and public finance management. We will continue to demonstrate our accumulated general and specialist capabilities as we work to contribute to solving these social challenges through our business, as we have pursued over years, wishing to improve people’s living quality and housing.