

Available online at www.sciencedirect.com

Frontiers of Architectural Research

www.elsevier.com/locate/foarSOUTHEAST
UNIVERSITY

RESEARCH ARTICLE

What is a Korean officetel? Case study on Bundang New Town

Emilien Gohaud, Seungman Baek*

School of Architecture, Yeungnam University, Gyeongbuk 38541, South Korea

Received 26 December 2016; received in revised form 29 March 2017; accepted 1 April 2017

KEYWORDS

South Korea;
Officetel;
Housing typology;
Multi-purpose;
Zoning

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify a little-known element in Korea's housing typology: the officetel. A portmanteau of the English office and hotel, the officetel was originally a work facility with adjunct basic living amenities. It was introduced in the 1980s and became widespread in the 1990s and 2000s. Under heavy real estate pressure, its housing component was reinforced at the expense of polyvalent use. Legally ambiguous, the officetel converts urban zones that are officially dedicated to business activities into housing, and this conversion raises questions about the zoning system underlying Korea's land management.

Bundang is a satellite new town of Seoul, and its development coincides with that of the officetel. With this town as a case study, we clarify the concept of the officetel and analyze the different architectural forms it has generated. We use 12 representative cases to analyze the internal structure of the officetel and its relation to the city. We demonstrate that the officetel is a unique housing type, and its peculiar characteristics are related to its origin in office buildings. Such characteristics as high density, compactness, urban compatibility, and versatility should be valorized in the search for new urban housing forms in Korea.

© 2017 The Authors. Production and hosting by Elsevier B.V. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

Korean housing presents an easily recognizable typology that includes radically different housing types ranging from small townhouses to gigantic apartment complexes (*ap'at'ũ*

*tanji*¹). The scenery in Korean cities often reflects this diversity through abrupt juxtapositions. A relatively low city, where individual and small collective housing covers the ground in a compact manner, follows the forest of bars and towers of the *tanjis* without transition.

This situation is induced and reflected by the zoning plan that regulates Korean cities, with distinct housing zones related to different housing types as opposed to exclusive business and commercial zones.² The sharp distinction among different housing types is described in legislation,

*Corresponding author.

E-mail address: smbaek@yu.ac.kr (S. Baek).

Peer review under responsibility of Southeast University.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.foar.2017.04.001>

2095-2635/© 2017 The Authors. Production and hosting by Elsevier B.V. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

in which three types of collective housing and two types of individual housing can be globally distinguished.³

Aside from this official classification are different marginal housing forms, among which the officetel belongs. The officetel entails mixed office and residential use, and buildings of this type are not subject to housing regulation because they are officially classified as work equipment. The precise definition of an officetel is ambiguous even among the Korean population; its definitions include urban studio, post/beam structure housing, polyvalent office, and condominium. The officetel is an alternative to the rigid typology of Korean housing, and its urban and architectural characteristics should be studied from this point of view.

Specific to South Korea, the officetel has been rarely discussed in English. Moreover, the studies conducted in Korean mainly emphasized the legal, social, and real estate aspects of the officetel. In this study, we propose to globally identify the officetel phenomenon and focus on its architectural and urban qualities through a typo-morphological study focused on Bundang New Town. We base our study on research published in Korean, real estate and legal data available online, and site surveys. The case study focuses on 12 representative officetels. It analyses their internal structure (cell plans and access patterns) and relation to the city (volume and façade).

The officetel phenomenon is discussed in comparison with the *ap'at'ũ*, which is a representative of Korean collective housing. The findings are placed within the global frame of research on building typology.

2. Ambiguous concept

2.1. Origin

The word officetel is a portmanteau word of the English office and hotel. The officetel is a type of building that is fairly common in Korean city centers. Overall, it is characterized by a compact volume containing small multi-purpose individual cells. The word officetel is sometimes translated into “studio apartment,” but this translation is reductive. The concept of the officetel has evolved significantly since its introduction and can now refer to diverse realities ranging from small business offices to luxury condominiums and student housing. Located in urban commercial zones, the officetel almost exclusively occupies city centers.

The first officetel was built in 1984 in Mapo-gu, Seoul, by the Korean Development Corporation.⁴ The aim was to offer

¹Every transcription from Korean Hangeul use McCune-Reischauer Romanization.

²See official online description: <http://oneclick.law.go.kr/CSP/CnpClsMain.laf?csmSeq=554&ccfNo=4&cciNo=1&cnpClsNo=2> (consulted 22/12/2016).

³Big collective housing: *ap'at'ũ*, medium size below 4 levels: *yŏllipchut'aek*, small size below 660 m²: *tasedaejut'aek*. Individual house: *tandokchut'aek*, including multifamily houses of less than 330 m²: *tagagujut'aek*. See <http://oneclick.law.go.kr/CSP/CnpClsMain.laf?popMenu=ov&csmSeq=554&ccfNo=2&cciNo=3&cnpClsNo=8> (consulted 22/12/2016).

⁴Different sources cite the same fact, including Yoo et al. (2009). Today the Songjin building is categorized as mixed use (*chusangbokhap*).

small office units that attract individual investors at a time when large office floors did not sell well (Min, 2014). These units were equipped with a kitchenette, sinks, and toilets for a brief sojourn. Long corridors served the cells as they do in a hotel, and this probably explains the concept's name.

The first officetels possessed the function and appearance of offices. Owners could experience an auxiliary accommodation with an ambiguous purpose, such as a place of rest during work-intensive periods or a combined residence and workplace. Later on, the heavy real estate pressure in cities during the 1990s and 2000s compelled developers to reinforce the residential component of the concept and begin commercializing profitable housing programs in city centers with high-density zones dedicated to business activities. The 1997 economic crisis caused the government to deregulate to revive the economy, and this deregulation resulted in the increased development of residential officetels. Progressively acknowledged by law, this practice produced the oxymoron *chugöyong op'isüt'aek* (officetel dedicated to housing). Several of the recently built officetels are merely small apartment units.

2.2. Legal situation

When the officetel concept was first created, using an office space as housing was illegal. The principle was recognized by law only in 1988 when the concept of adjunct housing commodities was introduced. To date, the officetel remains under work equipment (*ilpanöpmusisöl*) with “adjunct housing” (*jun ch'u taek*). The law was highly restrictive in the beginning; it limited the workspace to not more than 70% and the bathroom to not more than to 1.5 m². Relaxation of this law in 1995 paved the way for generalized residential use. The number of officetels used as housing over the country increased from 3668 in 1995 to 232,911 units in 2010.

The generalization of the officetel followed the vicissitudes of the legislation, which varied multiple times through the years. The permissive 1998 law aiming to develop small housing in city centers was followed by the more restrictive 2004 law dedicated to preventing the abuse of the officetel concept, which was then progressively smoothened.⁵

The main legal points distinguishing an officetel from a standard apartment are as follows:

1. fixed percentage of work-dedicated space;
2. sanitary equipment limited in size and nature (no bathtub);
3. veranda and balcony are forbidden;
4. floor heating system (*ondol*) is forbidden or limited to the surface.

However, these dispositions have limits. For example, whatever the restrictions may be regarding sanitary equipment, these can always be installed after building completion as long as proper draining is available.⁶

⁵The evolutions of the law were studied in detail by Min (2014).

⁶Yoo et al. (2009) noticed numerous cases of subsequent modification.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6742560>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6742560>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)