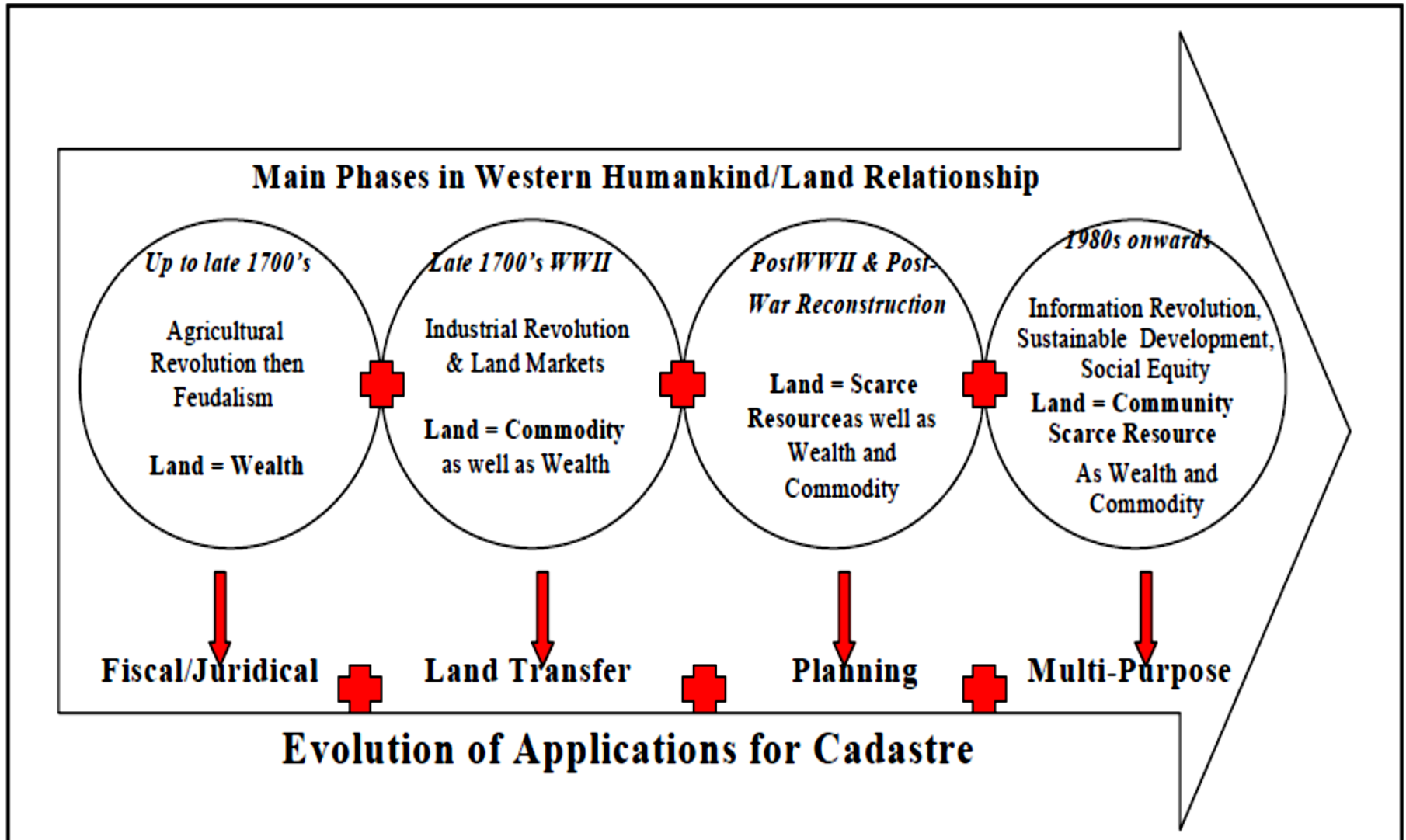


# Urban Land Management

## Lecture-2

**Land ownership and management in United Kingdom-  
Trends, Preferences and Planning Policy**

# Evolution of western cadastral system



(Source: Ting and Williamson, 1999)

# Cadastral and cadastral system

- As a part of land administration, **cadastral reforms are taking place in developed countries**. Since early 1990s, establishment of **fully digitized cadastral systems** has started throughout the world.
- The International Federation of Surveyors (FIG, 1995) defines a **cadastre** as a **“parcel based and up-to-date land information system containing a record of interests in land (e.g. rights, restrictions and responsibilities).”**
- **It generally includes:** a geometric description of land parcels linked to other records describing the nature of the interests, ownership or control of those interests, and often the value of the parcel and its improvements.

# Large private land ownership

- In 1873, 7000 individuals were found to own some 80 percent of the land area of Britain.
- After the First World War, history witnessed the rise in home ownership, the break-up of many large estates, state provision of housing and small-holdings, and the land law reforms of 1922–25.
- An estimated 200,000 individuals (mostly comprising the monarchy, aristocracy and gentry) owned about two-thirds of the Land.
- According to another estimate, about 1700 individuals owned one third of all land.

# State land ownership

- The 20th century saw the expansion, and then contraction, of state land ownership in the UK. At its peak, during the Second World War, **the state owned a sixth of the land area.**
- According to an estimate, the state then owned some 19 percent of all land in Great Britain (including central government 7–9 percent, and local authorities 7 percent).
- In 1984, registers of public agency land recorded **43,000 ha of potential development land**, much of which was **transferred to the private sector** in the 1980s.
- Currently in the UK, the largest government owners are the Defence Estate and the Forestry Commission.

# Communal land ownership

- In recent years, there has been increased UK policy interest in **community ownership or management of land and buildings**.
- It is being suggested that **community development trusts** should become more mainstream.
- Recent legislation is facilitating forms of communal ownership and management. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 **increased public access to land**.
- The Commonhold Act 2002 introduced **condominium ownership, mainly intended for apartment buildings**.
- The Scottish Land Reform Act 2003 **abolished feudal land tenure and empowered communities to acquire land with the benefit of charitable status and stamp duty exemption**.

# Tenure shifts

- The 20th century also saw a **decline in leasehold tenure** in different sectors of landed property, and there have been **more purchases of land by property companies**, insurance companies and pension funds, including foreign investors.
- Business property has generally been provided through medium term leases from specialist property companies. But recently the large food retailers have expanded by acquiring land and owning their own stores.
- In the housing sector, a million private flats were held on long leases in 1991.
- Introduction of short-hold tenancies in 1996 encouraged the construction of buy-to-let flats. By 2009 there were **2.6 million privately rented homes**.

# Growth of home ownership

- Growth of home ownership was **the biggest change in UK land ownership in the 20th century**. Mostly of separate dwellings on small land parcels of less than 0.1 ha.
- Private home owners are the largest single category of registered land-owners.
- Owner-occupiers' share of the housing stock increased from 10 percent in 1914 to 71 percent in 2000.
- **Councils controlled one third of the housing stock in the 1970s.**
- **Right-to-buy** legislation resulted in 1.6 million homes switching from council to home ownership in 1980–94.



# Growth of home ownership

- Growth in the housing stock has been accompanied by a **trend of smaller homes**.
- **Average floor space** of a new dwelling in England and Wales is now the **lowest in Europe at 76 sqm** (compared with 92sqm in Japan and 115 sqm in the Netherlands, countries with higher population pressures).
- For all dwellings (new and existing) the figure was 85 sqm compared with 98 in the Netherlands.
- **British homes are fitting more rooms into the same space**, and **older housing survives** because it is bigger and more adaptable.

## Growth of home ownership

- The **density of new housing is also rising in the UK**, and in 2007 it was 44 dwellings per hectare, compared with the garden city planners' ideal a century earlier of 'twelve to the acre,' which equals 30 per ha.
- **Flats and apartments have a growing share** of the housing stock in England.
- It is currently about a fifth, up from 7 percent in 1964 when it was mostly council-owned.

# Land and the planning policy

- The **land use planning system in the UK**, a creature of the 20th century, **has no direct role in land ownership**, yet its statutory responsibility for allocating land use, and hence land value, is central.
- Its concern with land ownership is limited to matching allocation to the supply of development land. **Compulsory acquisition under planning powers is rare**, constrained by compensation costs and public disapproval.
- The planning system operates to allocate land use and mediating between powerful contesting forces.

# Land and the planning policy

- Contrary to the land use planning system in UK, **in the Netherlands, Municipalities buy the land to be developed**, readjusts the parcels into forms suitable for the desired development often many years prior to the implementation of the plan in a certain location, and sells those parcels.
- **A special purpose bank** for municipalities (Bank Nederlandse Gemeenten) **offers attractive low interest loans for municipalities**, making it relatively easy for them to finance their activities in the land market.

# Land and the planning policy

- Policy favours **development on brownfield rather than greenfield** sites, in town rather than out of town.
- Current planning thinking, driven by the new imperatives of climate change, reducing carbon emissions and protecting habitats, is focussed more on **higher housing densities, less car dependency and compact cities**.
- But the existence of **millions of low-density suburban private house-plots** makes a major physical reshaping of settlement patterns difficult.

## Environmental and countryside protection

- The most known and popular planning policy is the Green Belt, which prohibits all 'inappropriate' development over some 13 percent of the land area of England.
- The greater frequency of flooding is affecting land use allocation, with some 10–15 percent of land in England located in flood-risk areas (although 10 percent of new dwellings in 2007 were still being built within such areas).

# Future supply of development land

- Recent surveys of public attitudes to property development in the UK reveal **growing resistance to new development**. **Private house building is opposed** for reasons such as increased traffic, loss of green space, effect on community character, and reducing property values.
- **Pressure to protect ecosystems and environmental resources**, combined with flood-risk restrictions, can be expected to restrict development land supply further in the future.
- The government's house-building plans seem unlikely to be achieved for various reasons including the shrinking base of available development land, local opposition, and credit constraints on the house-building industry.

# Adaptation of existing housing stock

- An under-supply of new housing will have consequences for the existing housing stock.
- Measures to **reduce under-occupation**, especially in older homes, can be expected. They might include:
  - **fiscal incentives** to older households for **shared occupation and ownership**;
  - **more collective housing forms** (hostel accommodation for students and young adults, retirement communities);
- **Further tax incentives to let rooms in one's home; and attitudinal changes to multiple-generation households.**



# Adaptation of existing housing stock- A possible option

- Physical adaptation and **intensification of the existing housing** stock can be encouraged through planning policy measures, such as:
  - **greater domestic permitted development rights;**
  - **policies to allow larger extensions and conversion of existing buildings;**
  - **greater diversity in the housing stock** (e.g. through encouragement of eco-homes, experimental building forms and more underground space);
  - **easier subdivision of larger plots.**