

Apartment/Flat vs. Si He Yuan

Apartment/Flat:

Most people in Beijing, and other cities in China live in high-rise blocks of flats. Modern flats normally have 2-4 bedrooms with one living room, one dining room, one kitchen and one or two bathrooms. Buildings with over 6 stories have lifts operating day and night. It is not uncommon for the ground floor to be occupied by small shops, hairdressers etc. A well established residential area can have a good number of buildings with hundreds or even thousands of households. The 'Wu Ye', or property management team, is responsible for the cleaning, security and other aspects of the residents' daily lives but the households have to pay for these services.

Si He Yuan

A Si He Yuan is a historical type of residence that was commonly found throughout China, most famously in Beijing. The name literally means a courtyard surrounded by four buildings. In ancient times, a spacious siheyuan would be occupied by a single, usually large and extended family, signifying wealth and prosperity. Today, however, most remaining siheyuan are used as mass housing complexes, and suffer from a lack of modern amenities (e.g. lack of central heating, shared public toilets, etc.). The Siheyuan are built in areas called Hutong (little alleys). -- *Adapted From Wikipedia*