

The Construction of Combined Facilities to Enhance Welfare Services

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1. Combined Facilities Defined

Combined facilities are public facilities in which more than one function or purpose are located at the same site. One of the vital elements of a prosperous and livable community is to have ready access to a variety of welfare facilities for elderly as well as child care. But in Japan's major cities, high land prices and land scarcity have made it difficult for local governments, already financially strapped, to find land on which to build the necessary public facilities.

To alleviate the land shortage and at the same time improve public services and encourage inter-generational contact, local governments are increasingly resorting to the construction of multipurpose, combined public facilities rather than traditional single-purpose buildings whenever a public building is being newly built or rebuilt. In central areas of cities as well as sparsely populated areas, there are a growing number of cases in which, for example, abandoned schools are partially rebuilt and converted into adult classrooms, civic centers, and elderly welfare facilities.¹

Combined facilities attempt to address the twin demographic problems of aging and declining birth rate. Idle classroom space is growing, while more and more elderly persons must await openings in designated welfare facilities.²

In Sweden and Denmark, communities have been designed so that the elderly live in housing at prime locations convenient to train stations, while their children's families live in nearby housing and can visit frequently, and restaurants on the site are open to the general public.

Amid the declining birth rate and growing isolation of nuclear families, there is a growing realization of the importance of intergenerational communication in nurturing children's social values and perspectives. The benefits of building more combined facilities and opening up more educational facilities to the general public are becoming increasingly clear.

2. Classification of Combined Facilities

Table 1 classifies the combined facilities in the Tokyo metropolitan area depending on whether they are designed and constructed as combined facilities, or converted from idle school classrooms.

Table 1 Combined Facilities in the Tokyo Metropolitan Area

Ward	Combined facility	Nurs. home/housing	At-home service	Junior high school	Elementary school	Kindergarten	Nursery	Children's club	Children's hall	Facility for disabled	Other	Use idle classrooms
Chiyoda-ku	Shohei elem. school, Fureai-kan social hall, Machikado library											
Chuo-ku	My Home Harumi designated nursing home, Harumi jr. high school, Harumi nursery											
Bunkyo-ku	Yushima elem. school, Yushima at-home service center for elderly, Yushima continuing ed. bldg. Showa elem. school, Showa at-home service center for elderly Nezu elem. school, Kotobuki hall, library											
Taito-ku	Taito-kuritsu Ueno elem. school, Kiyoshima kindergarten, social education center											
Sumida-ku	Sumida Fureai social center Pia-en, Sumida Fureai Center, Sumida Kotobashi nursery Silver Heim, Kinoshita nursery Sumida welfare health center, therapy facility for disabled children, at-home service center for elderly (includes at-home long-term care support center)											
Shinagawa-ku	Togoshidai jr. high school, Togoshidai designated nursing home											
Meguro-ku	Nakane elem. school, civic center											
Setagaya-ku	Setagaya-kuritsu Ohara welfare facility (at-home service center for elderly, nursery, welfare office)											
Shibuya-ku	Owada elem. school, library											
Nakano-ku	Numabukuro nursery, Numabukuro hall for elderly, Numabukuro underground bicycle parking lot, Numabukuro employee's dormitory											
Suginami-ku	Suginami-kuritsu Momoi no. 5 elem. school, Shimoigusa Fureai no 1e social hall Wada elem. school, social center for disabled											
Toshima-ku	Nishi Ikebukuro Kotobuki no 1e (labor welfare hall, children's hall, Kyodo welfare hall)											
Kita-ku	Kita-kuritsu Takinokawa Higashi civic center (Takinokawa Higashi at-home service center for elderly, Takinokawa recreation home, Takinokawa Higashi children's hall) Kita-kuritsu Takinokawa Nishi civic center (Takinokawa Nishi at-home service center for elderly, Takinokawa Nishi children's hall)											
Arakawa-ku	Higashi Nippori at-home service center for elderly, Higashi Nippori 3-chome Hiroba-kan recreation hall											
Itabashi-ku	Takashima no.6 elem. school, Itabashi-kuritsu Takashimadaira Hasunomi Mini-day classroom											
Nerima-ku	Higkarigaoka civic center (Nerima-kuritsu Higarigaoka general welfare office, Nerima-kuritsu Higarigaoka day service center)											
Adachi-ku	Tanknaka jr. high school, at-home service center for elderly											
Edogawa-ku	Shinozaki no.4 elem. school, Shikabone Kusunoki culture center (plus two other combined facilities)											
Katsushika-ku	Koda elem. school, school-age children care club											
Hachioji-shi	Komei day service center, Komei Daiichi nursery											
Chofu-shi	Chofu-shiritsu Someji elem. school, Chofu-shi Fureai social classroom											

Source: NLI Research Institute, based on a survey conducted in January 1999.

Turning to the functional combinations, the most common function for combination was at-home service centers. We found three patterns for combinations: (1) elderly welfare facilities such as at-home service centers, and child care facilities, schools, or nurseries, the most common pattern, (2) elderly housing and child care facilities, and (3) elderly welfare facilities and some other facility, such as facilities for disabled persons, meeting rooms, health consultation offices, libraries, etc.

As for the location of these functions within the premises, we found three patterns: (1) horizontal placement on the same site, (2) vertical placement on different floors of the building, and (3) a combination of these two.

There were three patterns of land ownership and facility management: (1) facilities that are owned, built and managed by the public sector, (2) those that are owned by the public sector, and leased to a social welfare corporation or company in the private sector, and (3) those that are owned and managed by a social welfare corporation or private company, with partial consignment from the public sector.

3. Role of National and Local Governments

The construction or conversion of combined facilities has been studied at the national and local government level. In 1989, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government compiled emergency measures and called on social welfare corporations to purchase land when an elderly welfare facility is to be built in combination with a child care facility, and raised the subsidy ratio for building new buildings on leased land. In 1991, the Construction Ministry formed a study group on advanced uses of public facilities, and studied the construction of combined facilities for administrative and welfare purposes. A Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications study group issued a report in March 1992 on combining post offices and social welfare facilities. The report proposed treating the national network of 24,000 post offices as a national asset, and building post offices containing elderly and other social welfare facilities.

Recently, the Ministry of Construction established a 2.3-billion yen budget to partially subsidize construction of public rental housing containing social welfare facilities such as child care and day service centers.

The Ministry of Education announced guidelines on idle classroom utilization in 1992 containing its basic approach to formulating and implementing conversion plans. In 1997, it sim-

plified procedures for asset disposal related to classroom conversion by greatly expanding the scope of items requiring reporting but not approval, and waiving the need to repay subsidies for conversion of school facilities over 10 years old.³ Furthermore, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Welfare, in March 1998 it compiled a booklet on classroom conversion for distribution to local education committees nationwide.

With regard to the scheduled introduction of public long-term care insurance in 2000, the Ministry of Education has also proposed, as part of its basic approach to the enhancement of long term care services, promoting the conversion of unneeded public facilities into care service facilities. In this paper, we look at three case studies where elderly welfare facilities have been combined with other functions, and consider the present and future of combined facilities.

4. Case Studies of Combined Facilities

(1) My Home Harumi

Location: 1-chome Harumi, Chuo-ku, Tokyo

Land area: 5,040 sq. meters

Building: Super reinforced concrete, 1 floor below ground, 7 floors above ground

Table 2 Description of Facilities at My Home Harumi

	My Home Harumi	Harumi Jr. High School	Harumi nursery
Building	B1 to 4F	B1 to 4F, 5F, 6F	Part of 1F
Floor space	7,340m ²	12,561m ²	952m ²
Operation	Saniku-kai social welfare corp.	Public	Public; capacity 60 children

Source: Chuo Ward Office

Figure 1 Diagram of My Home Harumi Facilities

R		Jr. high school
7		Jr. high school
6		Jr. high school
5		Jr. high school
4	At-home elderly care service center	Jr. high school
3	Designated nursing home	Jr. high school
2	Designated nursing home	Jr. high school
1	Designated nursing home	Nursery school
B 1	Designated nursing home	Jr. high school

Source: Chuo Ward Office

Functions: Designated nursing home (80-person capacity), at-home service center for elderly types B and E, and at-home long-term care support center.

Construction date: July 1992

Purpose and circumstances of construction: My Home Harumi is the first designated nursing home in Chuo-ku. Pushed by strong local demand and a growing population of elderly, the ward purchased land in the Harumi district slated for redevelopment under the Seaside City Sub-Center Development Project. With the aim of community development in mind, the ward decided to concentrate the designated nursing home and other ward facilities in the 1-chome block. Land for the designated nursing home, nursery, and junior high school was acquired by exchange. To offset the effect of depopulation and increase in nuclear families, the combined facility was deliberately made open to the community for the benefit of both elderly persons, who desire the stimulation of being with children, and children, who by interacting with elderly persons can learn the gift of kindness.

Effects of building the combined facility

(1) *Building:* By combining facilities, ample space was secured for the junior high school playground and total floor space of the designated nursing home (over 7,000 sq. meters). The

nursing home's living room faces south and overlooks the Asashio Canal next to the building, creating a comfortable living space for users. Furthermore, the common balconies surrounding the building serve as evacuation routes for both the nursing home and school in case of emergency.

Building management is handled at a central monitoring office, which oversees air conditioning, water works, emergencies, and repairs and maintenance. Facilities for elderly persons are located in the lower part of the building for safety reasons in case of emergency.

(2) *Community interaction and involvement*: The opening of My Home Harumi stimulated interest toward welfare in surrounding communities. In Chuo-ku, four junior high schools and nine elementary schools have already been designated as volunteer activity schools, and they perform volunteer activities such as cleanup campaigns and invite elderly persons to school events.

Ties have been established not only with the junior high school and nursery located on the premises, but at a nearby elementary school as well. Specifically, elderly persons are invited to seasonal events such as the school entrance ceremony, hina-matsuri doll festival, athletic events, and cultural festivals. First year students also receive a tour of the nursing home and help out in the nursing home's summer festival as part of their curriculum. There are thus ample opportunities for volunteer activity and welfare education.

In fiscal 1997, a total of 1,440 students and local residents participated as volunteers in performing sixteen different activities ranging from helping with meals to folding laundry and being conversation partners.

(2) S Plaza

Location: 4-chome, Sugamohara-shi, Kanagawa-ken

Land area: 2,589 sq. meters

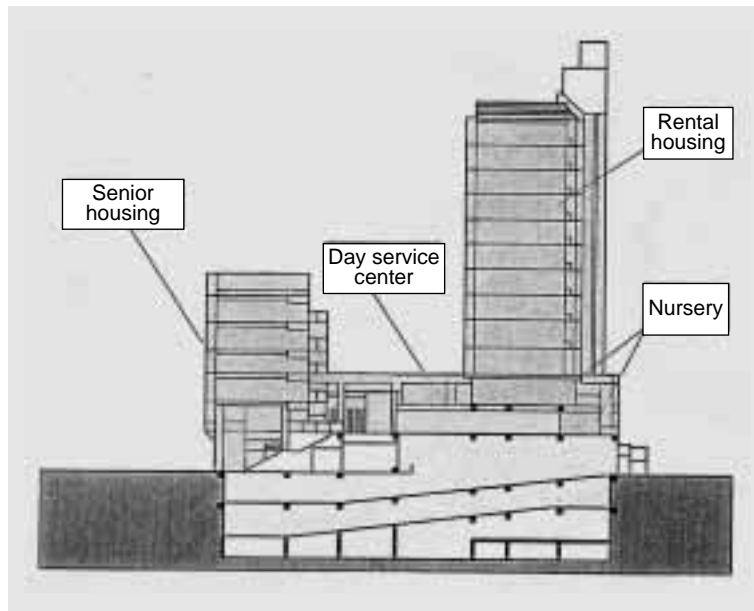
Building: Super reinforced concrete, 2 floors below ground, 13 floors above ground

Table 3 Description of Facilities

Use	Description	Location	Area
Residence			
Designated superior rental housing (Kanagawa Pref. Housing Supply Corp.)	40 units	N wing 4F-13F	7,000m ²
Senior housing (Domi Sagamihara) under private mgt.	60 units: 20 for single persons, 40 for couples	S wing 2F-5F, 6F	
Social welfare facility			
Nursery (Angel Nursery)	Capacity 60 children age 0-6	N wing, 2F, 3F	600m ²
At-home service center (Ciao Day Service Center) nursery, day service under mgt. of social welfare corp.	B type (standard) capacity 15 persons	N wing 2F	550m ²
Other			
Stores	Health care, restaurant	1F, 2F	1,050m ²
Parking lot	59 car capacity	B1, B2	3,600m ²
Small park	Sagamihara 4-chome Chibikko koen	1F N wing	100m ²

Source: Sugamohara City Hall

Figure 2 Cross-Section View of S Plaza



Note: Senior housing is in the left building, designated superior rental housing is in the right tower, and a day service center and nursery are located above the underground parking lot.

Source: Sugamohara City Hall

Construction date: March 1998

Purpose and circumstances of construction: Developed jointly by the public and private sectors, the facility was designed to contain both social welfare facilities and commercial facilities. The guiding concept was to build a multi-generational urban center where everybody from infants to the elderly live and interact with each other.

The development is located 400 meters from Sugamohara Station, the city's gateway, in a commercial and business district with access to major traffic arteries. Despite its prime location, the land was occupied by deteriorating low-rise buildings (lumber mill, swimming pool) and was not being used efficiently.

The landowner at first intended to build a hotel or one-room apartment building, but decided on a senior housing project after looking at profitability considerations and the growing population of elderly persons. The residential portion of the building is managed by a building management company, and an at-home service center is located on site. The shortage of nurseries as a result of the city's population growth, as well as requests from the city, convinced the landowner set up a social welfare corporation to operate the at-home service center and a nursery.

Of the total construction cost of 3.95 billion yen, national, prefectural, and municipal subsidies supplied 1.06 billion yen, while other forms of assistance were also provided.⁴

Effects of building the combined facility

(1) *Building construction:* From the perspective of facilities management and to avoid conflict of functions, the residential and non-residential functions are clearly separated. The lower floors contain social welfare and commercial facilities, while the residential section for both families and elderly housing is located in the middle to upper floors. There is a central square on the Plaza's second floor that is open to the general public.

Elderly residents say they enjoy the view from the senior housing because they can see children playing in the central square and on the rooftop garden of the nursery. Furthermore, elderly persons frequently come into contact with children when visiting the at-home service center, since the center and nursery share the same driveway and entrance.

In addition, since the at-home service center and nursery also share office space and the kitchen to improve efficiency, elderly persons enjoy almost the same menus as the nursery.

(2) *Community interaction and involvement*: Located between Sugamohara Station and Nishimon shopping district, try to enliven the local shopping district with the redevelopment, the food and daily necessities used at the at-home service center and nursery are purchased from local shops. When the facility first opened, staff were assigned to the task of promoting interaction with the elderly, but this was dropped in favor of spontaneous interaction because of scheduling conflicts (the elderly took a morning bath and became active in the afternoon, while the nursery children took naps in the afternoon).

Being highly independent, residents in the senior housing hire their own helpers as needed rather than visiting the at-home service center. Due to vastly different levels of independence and awareness, there is almost no interaction between the senior housing residents and at-home service center users. In addition, the nursery's enrollment was closed before the opening of the nearby designated superior rental housing for families with young children. But the nursery does offer a monthly meeting on child care to the general public in the community child care center located on the second floor of the at-home service center.



Note: Elderly from the Ciao Day Service Center interact with toddlers from Angel Nursery.

(3) Ogura Public Elementary School, Uji City

Location: Nishibata, Ogura, Uji City

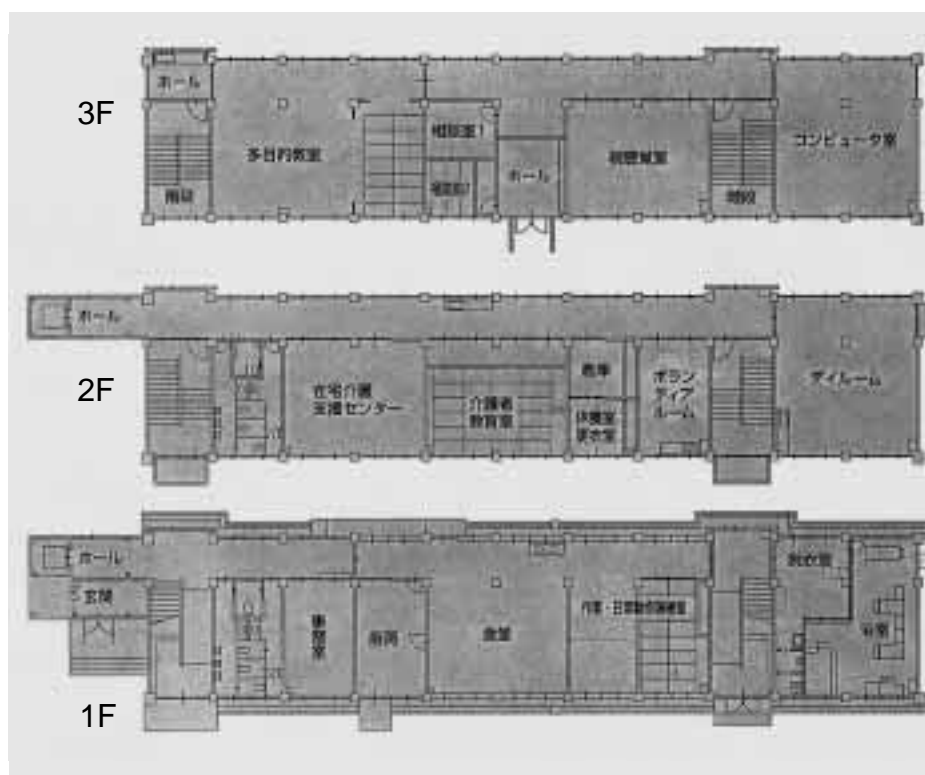
Total floor space: 1,017 sq. meters

Building: Super reinforced concrete, 3 floors

Description of facilities: There is a type B day service center on the first floor, an at-home

care support center and day home for highly independent elderly persons on the second floor, and a new computer room and audiovisual room of the elementary school on the third floor. Operation of the elderly welfare facility has been consigned to a social welfare corporation.

Figure 3 Floor Plan of Ogura Elementary School



Note: The first floor contains a day service center with cafeteria, activities room, and bathing room. On the second floor are the at-home care support center, staff classroom, volunteer room, and day room for independent elderly persons. The third floor contains the school's multipurpose room, AV room, and computer room.
Source: Uji Municipal Office

Construction date: April 1995

Purpose and circumstances of construction: Uji City, on the southeastern fringe of Kyoto, grew rapidly as a commuter town for Kyoto and Osaka. While new schools were built to accommodate the increase in young children and school age children, the number of elementary school students peaked in 1982 and junior high students in 1986 and have been declining. At its peak in 1980, Ogura Elementary School had 37 class groups and 1,431 students, but by fiscal 1994 eight classrooms had become vacant, and the student population has dropped by half from the peak. Under the national administrative decentralization scheme introduced in 1993, the school was the first case to link the use of idle classrooms to the creation of much needed welfare facilities.⁵ The simplified application procedure was used to have the Ministry of Education convert idle classrooms, along with an application for exemption from repay-

ment of school land subsidies.

Although the exemption was not approved, the special measure for conversion of classrooms into welfare facilities for the elderly was granted on the condition that it be a non-profit operation, and that it did not hinder school activities.

Effects of the combined facility

(1) Building: The facility is housed in the remodeled North building, the oldest of three school buildings on the compound. The third floor is connected by a new walkway to the South building, while the elderly welfare facility has its own entrance and an elevator to the second floor. The construction cost for the elderly welfare facility totaled 189 million yen, while remodeling of the school portion amounted to 71 million yen. It was the first project under Kyoto's subsidy program for converting existing facilities into day service centers. The project achieved cost savings of 580 million yen compared to the alternative method of building the facility on newly purchased land.

(2) Community interaction and involvement: Typically, daily interaction between the school and day center occurs with children voluntarily visiting the center during lunch break. The interaction is natural as children sing songs or play musical instruments learned in class, read picture books, and play traditional games. Interaction also occurs at school events and in classrooms where the elderly are invited, for example, to discuss their wartime experiences, exchange letters, or coach the go club.

Since Ogura elementary school has been in operation for 125 years, there are former students among the day home users who feel an affinity for the place.

5. Evaluation and Prospects of Combined Facilities

The following observations and comments are based on inspections and interviews at the above and other combined facilities.

(1) Public administrators

The aim of combined facilities is to make the most efficient use of scarce land and reduce costs by concentrating diverse functions such as hospitals, visiting facilities, and nurseries at a

single location. Moreover, convenience to users is enhanced by combining facilities such as family housing, nurseries, elderly housing, and at-home service centers. On the other hand, the combined facilities could also fail in their original purpose if users of different facilities do not interact with each other, or if impediments arise in facility use and management.

In converting idle classrooms, for instance, unexpected costs may arise in securing parking spaces, evacuation routes, and fire safety standards.^{6,7} In addition, the typical 65-square meter classroom size tends to restrict layout design for converted facilities.

Using projections of population composition, local governments need to monitor the status of usable resources, study the functional aspects of combined facilities, clarify problems related to facility construction and use, and take measures to circumvent difficulties in using the functions. Moreover, they should design and build public facilities keeping in mind the possibility for future conversion of use.

(2) Facility operators

In the three case studies above, My Home Harumi and Ogura elementary school are owned by the public sector, and S Plaza by the private sector. However, the operation of elderly welfare services and nurseries in all three cases is outsourced to social welfare corporations. Combined facilities should help stabilize the business foundation of social welfare corporations, who are struggling with single facilities due to the lower birth rate and decline in children. Moreover, labor cost and space savings are obtained from sharing offices and kitchens.

One problem confronting combined facilities is the rigid vertical organization of local bureaucracies. Elderly welfare, for instance, is handled by the elderly welfare section, while children's welfare issues are the domain of the child welfare section or child care section. Administrators will thus need to coordinate closely with each other in planning, subsidizing, auditing and overseeing combined projects.

The public long-term care insurance program soon to be introduced will allow users to contract with social welfare corporations of their choice, rather than being assigned services by administrators. This will introduce competition in the welfare market, forcing social welfare corporations to enhance services and reduce costs. The issue then will be how best to use the owned land and add more value to services.

(3) Users and local residents

The convenient locations of combined facilities are a boon to users and volunteers, while the opportunity to interact with family and community in a familiar setting help promote normalization. We saw frequent interaction between children and elderly at the facilities we surveyed, and according to facility staff workers, some of the elderly visitors to the facilities thrive on teaching children origami or games.

One thing we observed but did not mention in this paper is the opportunity for employees of combined facilities to use the onsite nursery for their children during work hours.

In building a combined facility, new problems are bound to arise in the community due to changes in traffic volume, noise level, garbage and so forth, making it necessary to obtain the understanding and cooperation of local residents.

Conclusion

Following the asset-bubble period, a wide variety of combined facilities have been built. However, almost no empirical research has been done on the constructive effects of these facilities and their effect on communication between generations.

Considering the low population growth rate and need to promote normalization, combined facilities will play a major role in supplying facilities that anybody can use and that take advantage of existing resources in the community. In the future, we hope to see further discussion and progress toward communities encompassing "from cradle to wheelchair."

Notes

1. In a survey by Nikkei Sangyo Consumption Research Institute (conducted in December 1995 in 47 prefectures and 12 administrative cities), 679 elementary school classrooms and 321 junior high school classrooms nationwide had been converted to non-school use.
2. As defined by the Ministry of Education, idle classrooms are ordinary classrooms that are expected to remain unneeded permanently.
3. The major expansion of categories requiring reporting but not approval in fiscal 1997 (for

schools that are shut down) are: nurseries, child care facilities, designated nursing homes, day service centers for physically disabled persons, residential facilities for disabled persons, rehabilitation facilities for mildly mentally disabled persons, facilities to prevent pollution, disaster facilities, medical facilities and testing facilities, training facilities, government buildings, nurseries (from converted classrooms), and day service centers for physically disabled persons.

4. The Ministry of Construction has a subsidy program for constructing superior buildings, and other types of incentive programs for senior housing and designated superior rental housing. The Ministry of Health and Welfare has two different subsidies to offset construction costs for nurseries and day service centers.
5. This system was passed by the Cabinet in December 1992 and effected in April 1993. With regard to community development projects of local public entities, the national government is authorized to take special measures on a trial basis, and based on the results, consider whether to incorporate them into the system.
6. Under the Building Standards Act, when setting up a welfare facility, an independent partition must be placed between the welfare facility and school facility. To comply with safety regulations, if the hallway is partitioned, a stairway must be placed in both places.
7. Guide signs must be placed at all stairways in a welfare facility for the elderly, and on the ground floor, floors without windows, and the eleventh and higher floors for schools. When elderly welfare facilities and schools are combined, guide signs are required on all floors.