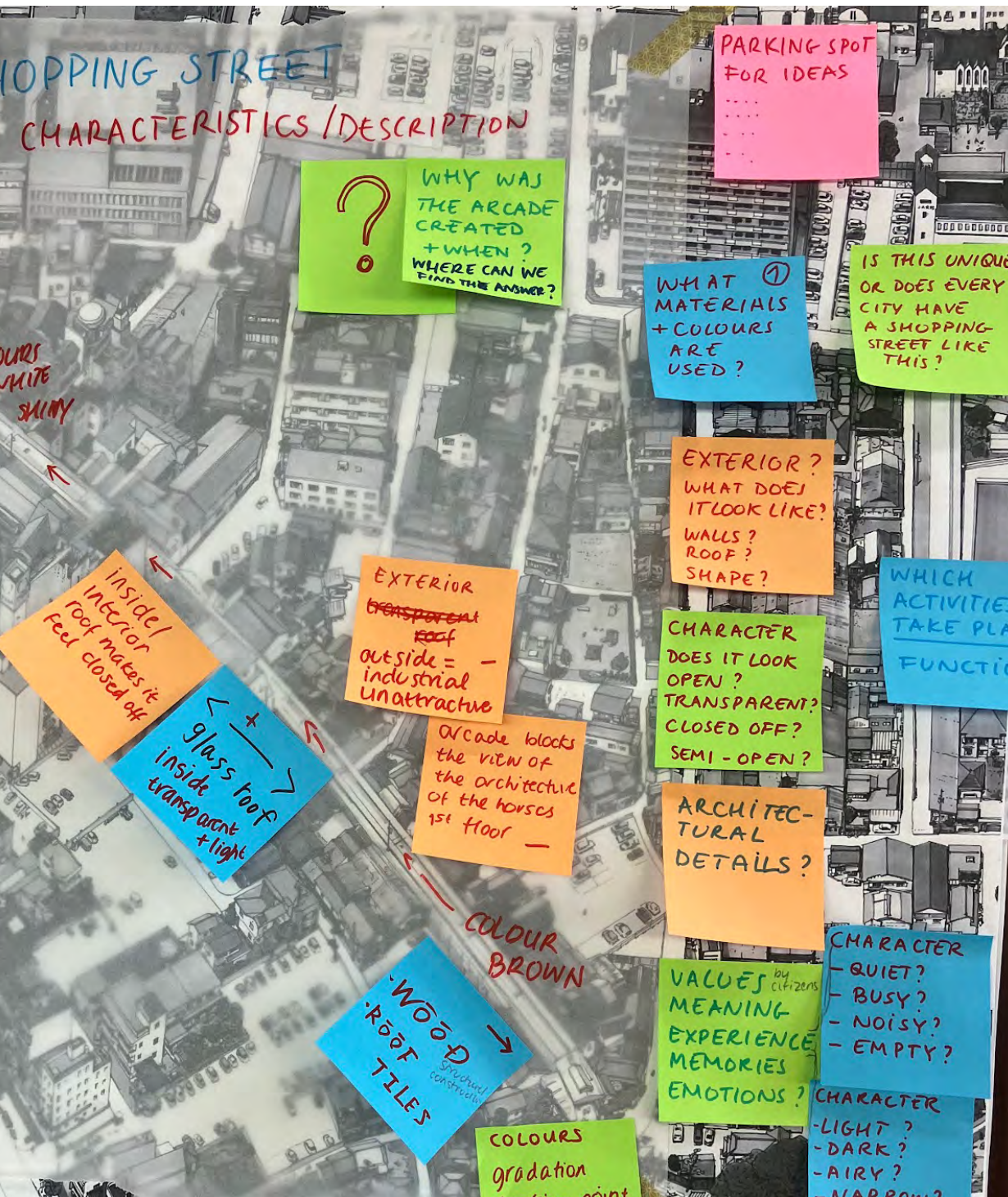


# REUSE, REDEVELOP & DESIGN

Report of an explorative workshop  
on the Future Perspective  
of Kurashiki's Historic Core





Cultural Heritage Agency  
Ministry of Education, Culture and Science



NOTRE DAME SEISHIN UNIVERSITY

NPO法人

倉敷町家トラスト

くらし・き・になる

We live in the future of theirs.



倉敷市  
Kurashiki City

JNACA



Netherlands

creative industries fund NL

Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE)  
Notre Dame Seishin University  
NPO Kurashiki Machiya Trust  
Kurashi-ki-ninaru Area Platform  
The Municipality of Kurashiki  
Japan-Netherlands Architecture and Cultural Association (JNACA)  
Royal Netherlands Embassy  
Creative Industries Fund NL

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1. Biographies of the coordinators
2. List of participants
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4. The Machinami Charter

# FOREWORD

by Hitoshi Narikiyo

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The workshop presented in this report was planned as part of the “K2067 Project,” a collaboration between Notre Dame Seishin University and NPO Kurashiki Machiya Trust. In this project, executed by means of a seminar under the aegis of prof. Narikiyo, the year 2067 has been targeted for the future vision of the City of Kurashiki.

The collaborative parties have been creating this vision for the future since 2022 with assistance from the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, and established the Kurashi-ki-ninaru Area Platform in June 2023. The existence of this platform has greatly contributed to enriching the content of this program, including study sessions and meetings at Shinkeien.

The “Kurashiki Bikan Historical Quarter” was designated as a city preservation district already in 1968. A year earlier, Kurashiki City had drawn up a policy to preserve the townscape as part of its vision for the future of the new city that would merge with the surrounding cities. Our goal of 2067 is intended to depict a vision of the future 100 years from 1967.

We believe it is necessary to create many opportunities for dialogue across generations and to pass on the will and experience of urban development that makes use of history. This program aims to discover and develop the next generation by providing an opportunity to think about the future of the Kurashiki Bikan Historical Quarter and surrounding area, as well as create new interest in the region through global collaboration and exchange of knowledge on historical urban development.

Many young people participated in the workshop, not only from nearby areas, but also from far away (e.g. Kyushu, Kyoto, Tokyo). I was touched to see how the high-quality learning opportunity attracted interest, and I also felt hope in meeting future generations and discussing and learning together. In addition, it was also valuable to exchange opinions with elementary school students.

Our Japan-Dutch exchange began when I studied Urban Heritage Strategies (RCE and Erasmus University Rotterdam IHS) in the Netherlands in 2014. Subsequently, Jean-Paul Corten visited Kurashiki in 2016. In 2022, NPO Kurashiki Machiya Trust, Japanese Association for MACHINAMI Conservation and Regeneration, and RCE collaborated to hold an online study session (JP-NL Historic Urban Landscape Meeting in Kurashiki). The accumulation of 10 years of exchanges led to this special opportunity. I would like to thank the Dutch Embassy and JNACA for making this exchange possible.

Thanks also to those who helped with workshops and excursions. We would like to thank the Kurashiki City Board of Education, Sanyo Shimibun, Fukutake Education and Culture Foundation, and Toyota Foundation for their cooperation in disseminating information. We also received great support from Kurashiki Kokusai Hotel for allowing us to use the venue. We would also like to thank Nishina Shoten. We would also like to thank the symposium panelists for their fruitful discussions.

Through this opportunity, I once again realized that Japan and the Netherlands can share and learn from each other about issues related to urban development that incorporates history. I would like to continue to work together with the Netherlands and put into practice an approach that connects historic urban landscapes to the future.



# 1. INTRODUCTION

by Jean-Paul Corten

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In this report we present the findings of the workshop Reuse, Redevelop and Design as executed between 5 and 10 November 2024 in Kurashiki, Japan. During the workshop we explored the future perspective of Kurashiki's historic core. In this exploration we distinguished between three spatial scales. On a macro-scale we investigated the full historic core. On a meso-scale we looked into the Ebisu Shopping Street and surrounding area. On a micro-scale we examined the former city hall premises and surroundings.

The aim of the workshop was to define to what extent Kurashiki's historic features can accommodate current needs. The underlying presumption is that once the historic features bear relevance to a current society, they have a greater chance to survive, will be looked after and can be passed to a future generation.

The outcomes of our exploration were presented during the symposium titled, Reuse, Redevelop and Design on 10 November in the former city hall premises. The outcomes address Kurashiki's local authority as well as those of its private sector. They may also be helpful in NPO's future activities. We hope the outcomes will be supportive for a vital future of Kurashiki and its citizens.

The workshop was a joint endeavor of Notre Dame Seishin University (NDSU), NPO Kurashiki Machiya Trust (KMT) and the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE), a department of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. NDSU was represented by Hitoshi Narikiyo. KMT was represented by Yasunori Nakamura. The RCE was represented by Jacqueline von Santen and Jean-Paul Corten and was supported by Yukiko Nezu from Urbanberry Design Amsterdam. The three parties cooperated closely with the municipality of Kurashiki (represented by Kyohei Kuwata), Kurashi-kinaru Area Platform and Tom Fast's seminar students of Notre Dame Seishin University. The workshop was supported by the Japan-Netherlands Architecture and Cultural Association (represented by Daiki Nakagawa), the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Japan and the Creative Industries Fund of the Netherlands.

The workshop was executed with the help of a diverse group of enthusiastic participants. They are mentioned in annex 2.

This workshop was part of a longstanding cooperation between Japan and the Netherlands on heritage management. The cooperation is directed towards knowledge exchange between experts of the two countries, for the benefit of both. The cooperation is conducted within the Dutch policy framework on International Heritage Cooperation.

This workshop was executed within the project Re-think, Re-use. Lessons between the Netherlands and Japan, coordinated by HOH-Architects Amsterdam. Within this project three workshops were conducted; respectively in Sumida, Hokkaido and Kurashiki. The findings and lessons of the bilateral cooperation will be published and presented in 2025 during Osaka's World Expo.



# Kick off lectures

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The workshop programme started on Tuesday 5 November with a visit to the Kurashiki Higashi Elementary School, located close to the historic core. The Dutch team presented itself to the gathered students to explain their background and the reason for their visit to Kurashiki. After that six teams of older students presented their research and proposals for improving the city, focusing on tourism and a clean city, wheelchair-friendly access and other pressing topics. By means of a Q&A the presentations were discussed. Interpretation was provided by students of the Notre Dame Seishin University, Department of English Language and Literature.

That same evening the Dutch team presented itself to the workshop participants and local experts and residents. The evening was co-hosted by the Kurashiki-ninaru Area Platform. The Dutch experts lectured respectively on Heritage and Tourism, the Dutch Practice in Heritage Management and on Community Participation. The lecture programme was followed by a discussion with the audience. The event was also screened and attended online.



01



02



03



04



05



06

- 01. Hitoshi Narikiyo & NL team
- 02,03 Kurashiki Higashi Elementary School
- 04. Yashunori Nakamura, NPO Kurashiki Machiya Trust
- 05. Jean-Paul Corten, Yukiko Nezu, Jacqueline von Santen
- 06. Shinkeien



# Input

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Input to the workshop participants was provided by means of lectures, meeting with local experts and site visits.

Site visits were conducted on Tuesday 5 November and Wednesday 6 November. The first day the participants walked the entirety of Kurashiki's historic core. They were introduced to the macro-scale area of Kurashiki (which includes the Bikan area) and meso-scale (being Ebisu Street and surroundings), guided by NPO Kurashiki Machiya Trust and Prof. Hitoshi Narikiyo. Wednesday 6 November we focused on the micro-scale. Kiyoshi Nishimura (Urabe architects) guided us through the former city hall as designed by Kenzo Tange and renovated by Urabe architects, as well as through the annex library and natural history museum, both added to the former city hall by Urabe architects.

The first day the participants were received by Masahiro Nishina (Nishina Architect & Associates) in their office located in the Bikan area. Masahiro gave us a short introduction about the urban planning of Kurashiki.



01. Site visit in the historical district  
02. Site visit in the historical district  
03. Kenzo Tange building roof  
04. Visiting at a local architecture office  
05. Lecture by Urabe Sekkei  
06. Lecture about traditional building in Kurashiki

## Lectures were provided by the following experts

- Kyohei Kuwata (municipality of Kurashiki, Urban development promotion section) lectured on the Kurashiki-ninaru Area Platform which started in 2022. The platform focuses on 6 themes: living, business, education, leisure, creativity, and skills. The activities are open to the public, such as theme meetings, management meetings, youth member sessions and expert lectures and meetings. Our workshop fit into the last category.
- Kiyoshi Nishimura (Urabe architects) lectured on Kenzo Tange's city hall design, Shizutaro Urabe's renovation of the premises and his additional design of the library and museum.
- Munehito Yoshida (Researcher and Kurashiki City Community Development Cooperation Team) lectured on his doctoral research concerning the state of surviving traditional buildings in Kurashiki's historic core.

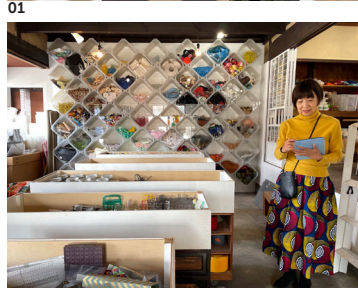


# Excursion

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On the morning of Friday 8 November the workshop paid a visit to Tamashima. It is located at the mouth of the Takahashi River and is part of Kurashiki City district. It used to be a port town in the low marshlands off the Seto Inland Sea. The warehouse we visited was renovated by Nishina Architects in recent years. The structures still remain in the Shinmachi-dori wholesale district on the tide embankment, built in the early Edo period. Ms. Rino Yasuhara (Yashuhara warehouse) kindly received us and showed us around. We also visited the experimental projects called Creative Reuse, run by IDEA, INC. A workshop facility, IDEA R LAB, located in Tamashima. The owner, Ms. Hiroko Otsuki, is the 9th generation of the adjacent Japanese house and has an impressive background in the modern creative field in Japan, much as the president of IDEA Ltd, museum education planner, executive adviser to the Okayama Cultural Arts Associates, etc. She creates a lot of activities based here, childrens workshops, circular economy workshops, etc.

That same morning we also visited Mabi-cho. In 2018 floods and torrential rains in western Japan caused the highest number of casualties there in the Heisei era. In Okayama Prefecture 61 people lost their lives and three persons remain missing to this day. The Mabi-cho area of Kurashiki City was severely inundated by the record-breaking rainfall that hit the western part of Japan, causing eight levees on four rivers to burst. For future disaster preparedness Kurashiki City has developed the Mabi-Fureai Park for the further development of the region, including the creation of a disaster-prevention base to build a disaster-resistant infrastructure and a space where people can feel and enjoy the river to promote the rich natural, historical and cultural attractions of the region, and to create new attractions, vitality and liveliness in the region. Our bus driver, Mr. Hiroyuki Hirai (Director of Hinomaru Taxi, whose's company is located in the middle of the then flooded area) shared his experiences during the tour. The Okayama River Secretariat (Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism) explained to us about the huge interventions in the landscape (using former river branches) to prevent future damage by floodings.



01. Tamashima old dike street  
02. Tamashima warehouse  
03. Tamashima circular activity  
04. Tamashima circular activity  
05. Mabi Fureaispace  
06. Mabi river improvement site

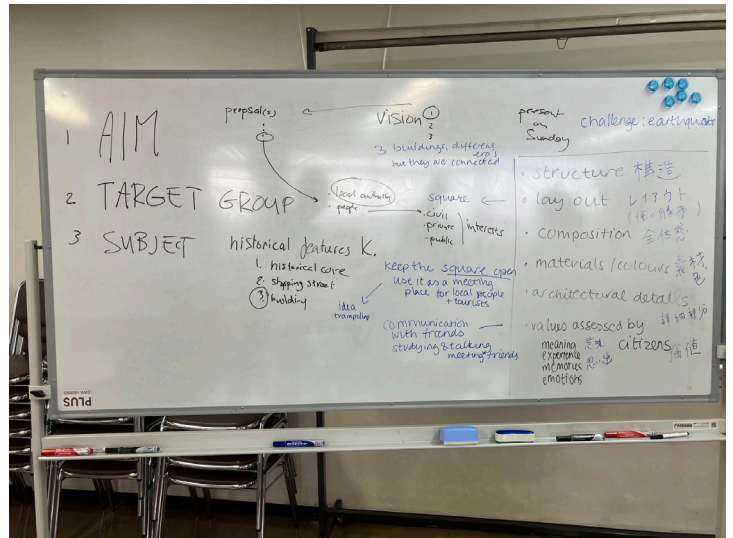
# Analyses

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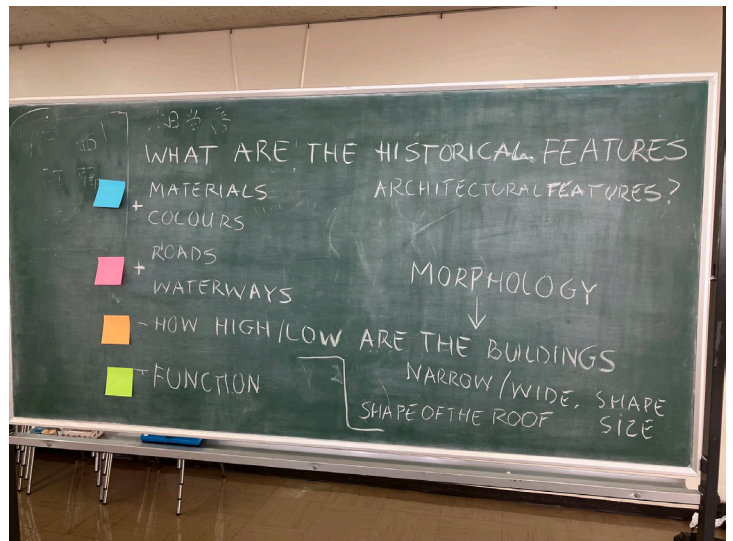
The historic features in the three areas were investigated systematically by defining the (infra) structure, morphology, function, related intangibles, materials and colors.

In addition mental maps of each area were produced. A mental map gives a visualization of how a person perceives a spatial surrounding, which can be a city quarter, a street or one specific building. Sociologists and social geographers use mental maps to find out how residents' identity and perception of a neighborhood is shaped. In this workshop we used mental maps to analyze the spatial features and current needs. We therefore interviewed people representing civil society (residents), private sector (entrepreneurs) and public bodies (municipality):

- Kyohei Kuwata: The Municipality of Kurashiki, Urban development promotion section
- Aguri Sawae: Cafe owner & Kurashiki City community development cooperation team
- Katstumasa Yamaguchi: Director of Kurashiki International Hotel & Chairman of the association for the promotion of business
- Masahiro Nishina: Nishina Architect & Associates
- Munehito Yoshida: Urban researcher & Kurashiki City community development cooperation team
- Naoki Okamoto: Painter



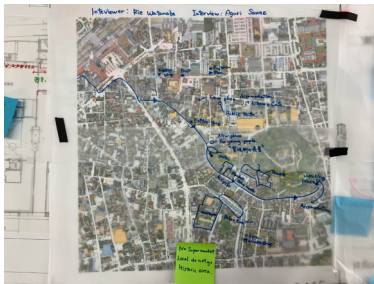
01



02

01. Systematic investigation  
02. Analyses of historic features

# 3. OUTCOMES OF THE WORKSHOP



## KURASHIKI'S HISTORICAL CORE -----

location 1



## EBISU SHOPPING STREET & SURROUNDING AREA -----

location 2



## CITY MUSEUM/LIBRARY & SURROUNDINGS -----

location 3





# KURASHIKI'S HISTORICAL CORE

## Analysis

In analyzing Kurashiki's historical core, group 1 distinguished between six precincts, each bearing its own character.

**Precinct 1**, being the 'Temple Hill', takes an outstanding position as a green landmark in the otherwise flat and built-up cityscape. Unlike the rest of the city its main infrastructure is made up of walking paths. It contains the main Buddhist temple in town and Shinto shrines. It therefore is a place of worship, contemplation, relaxation and leisure.

**Precinct 2**, being the Bikan area, developed in the 17th century along the prominent Kurashiki River, once the city's main connection with the surrounding countryside and the inland Seto sea. The precinct is characterized by its many historic town- and warehouses, built in the traditional architectural style. The buildings in this precinct bear a strong coherence in architectural features, size and position, building materials and colors. The precinct is largely pedestrianized due to its single-tourist function. The Bikan area lacks residential use, as well as services and facilities for Kurashiki's inhabitants. It therefore is 'open only from nine to five'.

**Precinct 3**, located on both sides of the Chuo-Dori Street, has the least coherence and appeal in Kurashiki. The precinct has developed along the city's main Southbound road, running from the central railway station to the South. High-rise blocks have developed rather ad hoc and unplanned, therewith weakening the coherence and spatial quality of the prior cityscape. High-rise buildings dominate the Northern section of this precinct, while low-rise, traditional dwellings dominate the Southern part of this precinct. East of Chuo-

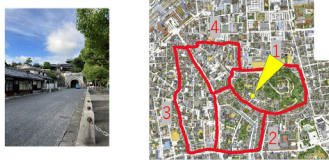
Dori Street ad hoc parking lots alternate with high-rise blocks. The precinct is of mixed use, containing residential dwellings, office space, tourist hotels and some retail shops.

**Precinct 4**, consisting of the city museum/library area, is located along Chuo-Dori Street, Kurashiki's main Southbound road. The precinct was created in the 1960s as the first large scale intervention in the then small scale cityscape, dominated by low-rise, traditional dwellings. The intervention however was carefully planned and designed with high ambitions. The same is true for the Kurashiki Kokusai Hotel at the other side of Chuo-Dori Street. It is the only precinct in Kurashiki's historic core of public use.

**Precinct 5**, Ebisu Shopping Street, connects the Bikan area to the railway station and therefore -being pedestrianized- is the main walking route for visitors arriving by train. The street consists of two-story retail shops and is covered by a huge roof-construction, creating a somewhat depressed atmosphere. At the ground floor shopping storefronts prevail. Most upper floors are blinded, adding to the somewhat depressed atmosphere. Ebisu Street has a long history of retail activity, going back to the beginning of the Edo Period.

**Precinct 6**, the residential quarter North-East of the Ebisu Shopping Street, is a quiet and peaceful residential quarter, mainly lived in by elderly people. The two-story dwellings alternate with ad hoc parking lots, where old houses have been pulled down. The spatial quality is somewhat disturbed by the scattered parking lots as well as by the view on the huge roof-construction of the nearby Ebisu street.

歴史的特徴の分析(analysis of historical features)  
・エリア1  
同和神社を中心とする観形山エリア



歴史的特徴の分析(analysis of historical features)  
・エリア1  
同和神社を中心とする観形山エリア



歴史的特徴の分析(analysis of historical features)  
・エリア2  
倉敷川沿いを中心とする異観地区エリア



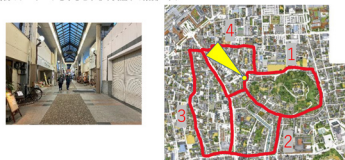
歴史的特徴の分析(analysis of historical features)  
・エリア2  
倉敷川沿いを中心とする異観地区エリア



歴史的特徴の分析(analysis of historical features)  
・エリア3  
市立美術館からアネテラス付近まで中央通りの西側エリア



歴史的特徴の分析(analysis of historical features)  
・エリア4  
高遠町のアーケードを中心とする中央通りの東側エリア





# KURASHIKI'S HISTORICAL CORE

## Future perspectives

13

After analyzing the spatial features of Kurashiki's historical core, group 1 set out to define its future perspective. Map-1 shows the identified development opportunities and -risks.

**Precinct 1**, being the 'Temple Hill', contains development risks. New developments on the hill may easily affect the fragile historic features in a negative way.

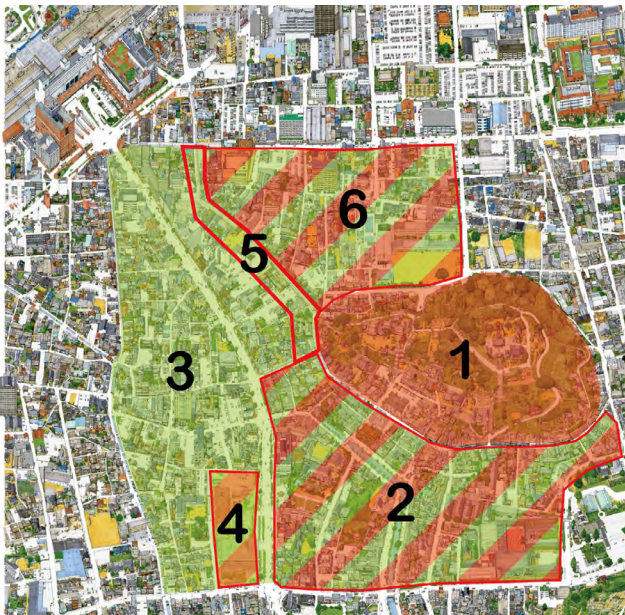
**Precinct 2**, being the Bikan area, offers development opportunities and risks. Adding residential use, services and facilities may strengthen its base of existence and may make the Bikan area more relevant to Kurashiki's inhabitants. At the same time these new impulses may affect the valued historic character. New developments should therefore follow building guidelines.

**Precinct 3**, located on both sides of Chuo-Dori Street, offers development opportunities. New impulses in residential use as well as in office use may repair the spatial coherence that was lost. New building guidelines should be defined to support these new constructions.

**Precinct 4**, consisting of the city museum/library area, offers development opportunities and risks. New cultural and social activity on this spot will reconnect the city parts and people that grew apart. One should however be careful not to disturb the architectural quality of the valued structures. More detailed perspectives for this area are defined in paragraph 3 of this chapter.

**Precinct 5**, being the Ebisu Shopping Street, offers development opportunities. New impulses in the shopping street will strengthen the local use. More detailed perspectives for this area are defined in paragraph 2 of this chapter.

**Precinct 6**, being the residential quarter North-East of the Ebisu shopping street, offers development opportunities and risks. The many empty plots, currently in use as parking lots, offer the opportunity to add residential dwellings, thus repairing the lost urban coherence and quality. Yet the features of the new dwellings should harmonize with the character of the precinct. They should match in volume, size and



development opportunities & risks



# EBISU SHOPPING STREET & SURROUNDING AREA

## Analyse

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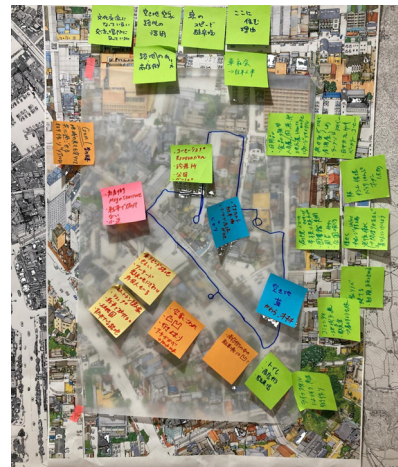
The once-bustling arcade shopping street, located between Kurashiki Station and the conservation district, now stands largely deserted. Most tourists prefer the main thoroughfare from the station to reach the entrance of the historic district, bypassing the shopping street altogether, even though the two streets run parallel to each other. Many of the shops that once lined the arcade are now shuttered, and empty storefronts are increasingly noticeable. In the most extreme cases, entire shops have been demolished and replaced by parking lots or unused public squares. This decline is not unique to Kurashiki, but is a phenomenon seen in regional cities across Japan. The shopping streets around Kurashiki Station are managed by four separate associations. Our focus was Ebisu Shopping Street, on the section starting at the entrance to Tsurugatayama Shrine and its immediate surroundings.

The area is distinguished by a unique urban structure, where a long, high-roofed shopping arcade has been inserted into what was originally a residential neighbourhood. The layout of the area can be described as “deko-boko” (凸凹) in Japanese, meaning “uneven” or “irregular.” From a bird’s-eye view, the vacant land stands out, and the land use is scattered and inconsistent. The surrounding neighbourhood is

primarily composed of low-rise detached houses, with small clusters of buildings extending from the shopping street. Between the houses, there are a number of small local businesses, such as restaurants, pharmacies, and playgrounds, though many areas are dominated by parking lots and vacant spaces.

A variety of colours and materials are present, reflecting the diverse construction periods and building qualities in the area. The metal structure of the glass-roofed arcade creates a heavy, somewhat dated appearance, and the surrounding area often feels empty, with asphalt surface and overgrown grass. The residential buildings are made from mixed materials, reflecting different construction eras and standards of quality.

Despite the current state of decline, the area retains significant potential, especially the structure of the shopping street itself. With thoughtful intervention, it could once again become a vibrant and thriving marketplace, as it was in the past. Currently, the area has a mixed function, but it is not serving the local community as it once did.



# EBISU SHOPPING STREET & SURROUNDING AREA

## Proposal

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The project team, consisting of two students and three adults with diverse skills, sought to integrate their expertise into a unified proposal. The team included an urban design facilitator, an university student majoring in International Communication, a renovation specialist, an architectural and environmental designer, and an architect.

The proposal focuses on revitalizing the shopping arcade, surrounding vacant houses, and empty plots by fostering a connection to the local community and promoting a 'slow lifestyle'. This slow lifestyle concept advocates for bringing small businesses back to the area, reversing the trend in which the food and fashion industries are increasingly dominated by large supply chains. Today, many people drive to shopping complexes on the outskirts of the city, causing small local businesses to disappear. This is particularly evident in the Ebisu shopping street, where the aging population and the departure of younger generations have led to the demolition of surrounding homes. The old houses no longer hold much value for redevelopment, and the system in place is vastly different from European models. Due to the high cost of demolition, many of these plots are simply repurposed as parking lots for commuters, further disconnecting the area from its local users. As a result, the area has been transformed into a space for tourists and workers, with little engagement from the community.

To prevent the area from becoming just another theme park for tourists, the team proposed a strategy for integrating both work and life in a slow-living model, focusing on the shopping street and its surroundings. For food, this could include local bakeries, cafes, urban farms, and shops selling local products. For fashion, we envision a repair café, a denim shop with an attached workshop, and stores offering locally made fabrics. For housing, the focus would be on renovating vacant homes and offering them to the market—not as car-centric developments, but as pedestrian-friendly spaces with an emphasis on bicycles.

The core elements that represent Japanese lifestyle and culture are 'Clothing, Food, and Housing'. The team also introduced a new theme—'Working'. They proposed creating spaces for interaction between locals and tourists, such as a small library, gallery, or community center. These spaces would encourage social engagement and provide shared workspaces where elderly residents could collaborate with younger generations. Additionally, the team suggested flexible one-day rental shops to support local entrepreneurs. This vision aims to create a more sustainable, locally rooted environment that encourages both the residents and visitors to slow down, connect, and contribute to the community's vitality.

<p>ハンドメイドやここでしか買えない一点ものの店を誘致する</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>倉敷の名品であるデニムのショップをつくる</li> <li>修理もでき、how to も教えてもらえる</li> <li>端切れで破れたところを修復</li> <li>倉敷帆布のエコバック</li> </ul>	<p>地産地消で生産者も見える</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>パッケージのない量り売りの食材 八百屋、肉、魚、たまご など</li> <li>畑や田んぼをつくる、収穫体験</li> <li>カフェ 日中から夜営業</li> <li>空き店舗を改修してレストラン</li> <li>ベーカリー、ケーキ、コーヒー</li> </ul>
<p><b>衣   食</b></p>	<p>日用品</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>古着回収、販売</li> </ul>
<p><b>住   働</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>空き家をリノベーション</li> <li>新しく建てる</li> <li>駐輪場と自転車道をつくる</li> <li>地域と観光客が交流できる場所をつくる</li> <li>暮らすような旅</li> <li>公園 休憩や食べる場所になる</li> <li>銭湯</li> <li>小さい図書館や美術館</li> <li>学校 文具屋</li> <li>病院</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>住民がチャレンジする場所 間借りカフェ</li> <li>定年後に働ける場所 若い人に継承</li> </ul>





# CITY MUSEUM/LIBRARY & SURROUNDINGS

## Analyse

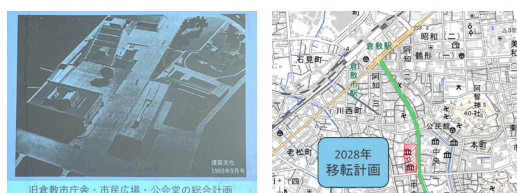
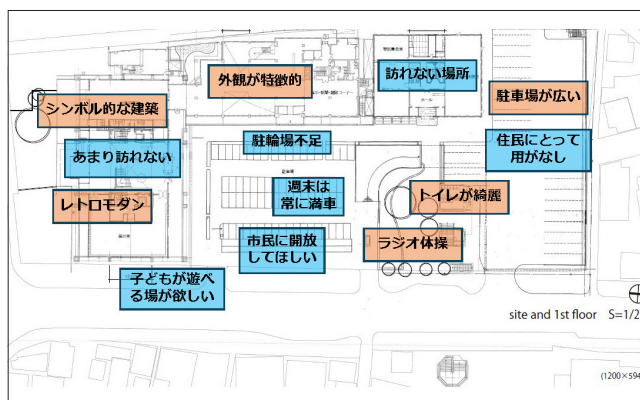
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The Kurashiki City Art Museum was designed as the Town Hall with a large preceding public square by Kenzo Tange (1913-2005), one of Japan's most famous architects. In 1983, the Town Hall was converted to a museum by Shizutaro Urabe (1909-1991), a renowned architect who was born in Kurashiki. Next to the square, Urabe designed Kurashiki central municipal library and Kurashiki City Museum of Natural History, which also houses the Kurashiki City Tourist Rest Area. Together, these buildings function as a cultural zone. Underneath the square there's an underground parking garage. The building by Tange was designated as Tangible Cultural Property in March 2020.

Group 3 consisted of an architect, a student of architecture and a student majoring in urban planning. They started off by analyzing the historical features of the City Hall. Kiyoshi Nishimura, at 3rd generation architect of Urabe Architectural firm, kindly shared his knowledge of Urabe's designs. He has studied all of Urabe's diaries, and showed the importance of studying the sources (buildings itself, photographs as well as documents) in understanding the place and its surroundings.

In analyzing the site, consisting of an ensemble of the museum and library buildings and the large square, group 3 analyzed the historical features. The building by Kenzo Tange was seen as the most important building, because of its imposing character. The difference in scale is an important feature. By analyzing the historical features of the buildings designed by Urabe, the group assessed architectural and social qualities as well. By studying the mental maps it became clear how the buildings are used by the local citizens and what their needs are.

The library and museum will be relocated in the near future so the buildings will become vacant. The square was designed as a large public square (an 'agora'), but nowadays is used as a parking lot, mainly by Japanese tourists. During weekends, it is fully occupied. All the parked cars refute the spatial quality and obstruct public use. How can this space be enhanced? Is transportation actually a risk for heritage? Buses from the central station run only twice an hour. Could a shuttle bus service be introduced?



### 美術館（旧市役所）エリア



丹下健三設計のモダニズム建築（1958）  
 ・コンクリートの重厚感、木目調  
 ・複雑な形、現代の紋章造り  
 ・市庁舎として建てられ（1980に移転）、美術館として活用されている市のシンボルである。

### 図書館・博物館エリア



浦辺鎮太郎による美術館への改築と増築（1983）  
 ・倉敷の街並みに合わせたデザイン  
 →アイウィースクエアをイメージした赤、瓦の黒、白壁  
 →丹下建築を街とつなぐ



# CITY MUSEUM/LIBRARY & SURROUNDINGS

## Proposal

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Starting from the analysis group 3 set off the look into the answers to the posed questions.

The aim was to preserve the Tange building and attract more visitors. How can heritage be a means to connect people? It was suggested not to demolish the library building but to adapt it because of its architectural quality and the historical and social value it has for the local citizens. Many citizens have memories of using the library since they were children, and use it as a place to socialize with friends. Both buildings dating from 1983 were considered useful to accommodate current needs for today's society and to have more tolerance for change. A proposal was designed to connect the buildings and create more opportunities for cultural exchange between people of different generations. It was also suggested to connect this ensemble, especially the art museum, with other artistic centres such as Naoshima and Mizushima.

The group found the library building to be the key to connect the city area to the museum. The buildings can function as connectors. The square, currently used as a car park with a parking garage underneath, is an important open space. It was proposed to clear the square of parking spaces as to make it available as a meeting place for local residents and tourists. Events can be organized to add to the liveliness of the city and the neighborhood. Adding more green to the square will reduce the temperature of the city during Summer.



### ゴール

- 広場と図書館の内部を一体とする
- 人中心の文化交流の場に。
- 地元の魅力増大。市民、観光客共に利用を広げる



廃材活用による内部空間デザインの例 (※玉島)



## 4. EPILOGUE

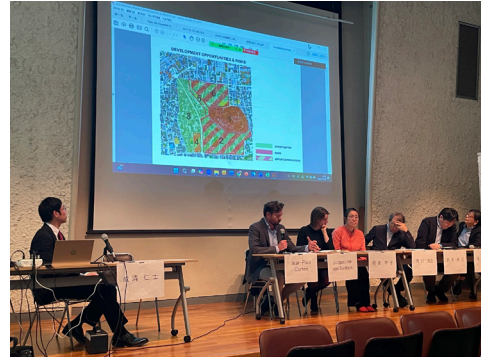
18

The outcomes of the workshop were presented at the symposium Reuse, Redevelop and Design, that was held on 10 November in the former city hall premises. Participants of each of the three groups shared their analysis with the audience and also explained their proposals for improvement. Subsequently the outcomes were debated by a panel of experts. The audience, consisting of representatives of the residents, the private sector and the local authority, participated in the lively discussion. (annex 3.)

The symposium concluded that the relevance of heritage today is no longer limited to the cultural domain. Although history, identity and beauty may still be valid arguments for heritage conservation; other arguments for conserving may prevail. Eco-efficiency is a major one. In a world where natural resources are limited, energy is scarce and CO2-reduction is urgent, keeping what we have should become mainstream. But there is more: heritage also has the ability to serve social cohesion and economic prosperity, provided it is positioned strategically. Thus there is reason to integrate heritage conservation in the spatial domain. Conservation then is not only about building guidelines but also about attracting developments that provide a base of existence for the historical features at stake. Likewise it is about keeping developments at bay that may harm historical features.

The workshop showed that Kurashiki's historical features bear the capacity to accommodate current societal needs. Thus there is reason to further elaborate on the findings and proposals as presented by the workshop. They address the macro, meso and micro-levels of central Kurashiki, and may be helpful for residents as well as for private parties and public bodies. However the findings may need refinement on details and elaboration at an executive level. Execution can be implemented in local policy, engagements by NGO's or practical action by entrepreneurs.

The workshop showed the curiosity, ambition and commitment of young professionals with the subject. This is hopeful for Kurashiki and Japan. The workshop also showed the benefit of global exchange on the subject. Differences in experience and approaches bring new insights and creative solutions. This gives hope for a better world. The gathered parties therefore aspire to continue their collaboration in 2025 during Osaka's World Expo.



01



02



03

- 01. symposium
- 02. local newspaper
- 03. group photo with the mayor

# Credits



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**Translations:**  
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Yukiko Nezu, Hitoshi Narikiyo,  
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**Design:**  
Yukiko Nezu / Urbanberry Design

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## **Annex 1. Biographies of the coordinators**

### **Prof. Dr. Hitoshi Narikiyo**

Hitoshi Narikiyo is an associate professor at Notre Dame Seishin University. He studied architectural history and design theory at Hiroshima University and received his doctorate with a thesis titled "Study on the urban design method in the Early Modern Low Countries". As a director of the NPO Kurashiki Machiya Trust, he has been involved in urban development activities to preserve history of Kurashiki. He completed the course on Urban Heritage Strategies held at the institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies of Erasmus University Rotterdam 2014.

### **Drs. Jacqueline von Santen**

Jacqueline von Santen obtained her degree in architectural history at Utrecht University. Currently she is employed as senior advisor on Integrated Conservation at the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science). She specializes in the assessment of cultural values and features, and core quality assessment in heritage development projects. She was involved as a heritage advisor on many projects the redevelopment of Strijp-S (the former Philips factories in Eindhoven) the Afsluitdijk and the transformation framework for the Peace Palace in the Hague.

### **Yukiko Nezu, MSc.**

Yukiko Nezu, born in Tokyo, earned a Master of Engineering from Tokyo City University in 1996. As a NIFFIC scholar, she studied architecture at the Berlage Institute in Amsterdam. After graduating, she founded an architecture office in Amsterdam. Since 2005, she has been a registered Dutch architect and established Urbanberry Design, specializing in architecture, interior design, urban planning, products, and social design, with a particular strength in conceptual design. Recent projects include renovating 120 staff rooms and 300 toilets at Schiphol Airport, winning 2nd prize for the Dutch Pavilion at Expo 2025 in Osaka, and the Grand AIPH Prize for the Japanese Pavilion at Floriade Expo 2022. She is currently writing a book in Japanese, *Amsterdam - A Bottom-Up Experimental City*. ([www.urbanberry.com](http://www.urbanberry.com))

**Drs. J.P.A.M. (Jean-Paul) Corten** obtained his degree in history at Utrecht University, and later studied planning. He started his career as a researcher in the history of technology at Eindhoven University. Currently he is employed as senior policy officer on Integrated Conservation at the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science). Besides he is affiliated with the Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies, Erasmus University of Rotterdam. He is involved in many urban regeneration projects abroad.



## Annex 2. List of Participants

	First Name	Last Name	Institution	memo	Group
1	Hiroto	Ohara	Hitotsubashi University	Student	1
2	Sota	Takagi	The University of Kitakyushu	Student	1
3	Yuino	Watanabe	Kyoto Institute of Technology	Student	1
4	Yuuna	Arakawa	Alumni of Notre Dame Seishin university	Working adult	2
5	Aoba	Ikegami	Notre Dame Seishin University	Student	2
6	Akiko	Goka	Goka Planning	Working adult	2
7	Jiro	Komoto	Urabe Sekkei	Student	2
8	Hiyori	Mizohata	Setsunan University	Student	2
9	Yukiji	Nakahara	Okayama University of Science	Student	3
10	Maiko	Nakamura	Kyoto University	Student	3
11	Satoshi	Tominaga	Urabe Sekkei	Working adult	3
12	Miyuu	Arakawa	Alumni of Notre Dame Seishin university	Working adult	
13	Natsuki	Ikuta	Notre Dame Seishin University	Student	
14	Satoka	Imajo	Notre Dame Seishin University	Student	
15	Aguri	Sawae	NPO Kurashiki Machiya Trust	Working adult	
16	Saki	Shiomi	Notre Dame Seishin University	Student	
17	Yukina	Namba	Notre Dame Seishin University	Student	
18	Ayumi	Hira	Alumni of Notre Dame Seishin university	Working adult	
19	Rie	Watanabe	Regus Japan K.K.	Working adult	
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### **Annex 3. Minutes of the Symposium**

#### Presentation

After the introduction from Mr. Kyohei Kuwata and Prof. Narikiyo about the positioning of the workshop which is within the city making activity of the municipality and the local NPO, we received words from the vice-mayor. Mr. Corten explained about the challenge of the workshop and three groups of the participants presented their research findings and intervention proposals for 10 minutes each, followed by a Q&A for 5 minutes. Last part of the symposium consisted of a panel discussion that addressed the issues presented before. The audience, consisting of local residents and experts participated in the lively debate that followed.

#### Team 1

title: To Create a Shared Vision on the Future Development of Kurashiki

members: Sota Takagi, Yuino Watanabe, Hiroto Ohara

#### Team 2

title: Creating a shopping district that is close to lifestyles

members: Yuuna Arakawa, Aoba Ikegami, Akiko Goka, Jiro Komoto, Hiyori Mizohata

#### Team 3

title: Connection Square

members: Maiko Nakamura, Yukiji Nakahara, Satoshi Tominaga

Moderator: Prof. Hitoshi Narikiyo

#### Panelists:

- Jean-Paul Corten (RCE)
- Jacqueline von Santen (RCE)
- Yukiko Nezu (Urbanberry Design)
- Kiyoshi Nishimura (URABE SEKKEI) ([www.urabesekkei.jp](http://www.urabesekkei.jp))
- Prof. Nobuharu Suzuki (Yokohama City University)
- Prof. Emeritus, Yuichi Fukukawa (Chiba University, Japanese Association for Machinami Conservation & Regeneration) ([www.machinami.org](http://www.machinami.org))

Moderator: Prof. Hitoshi Narikiyo

#### Discussion

Prof. Narikiyo opened the discussion by exploring the similarities and differences between NL and JP. The discussion is meant to find the common ground for future collaboration for the good of both.

Prof. Narikiyo: What can we share?

Jean-Paul: today both countries are much more occupied with heritage than 50 years ago. We may question why. We now have to deal with limited resources and energy. Therefore, as responsible citizens, we have to consider what we have before we build something new.

Prof. Suzuki: Difference between NL & JP is about decline in population in JP. The Dutch took immigration and opened to a new culture but in JP only tourists. Building something new is not anymore in our generation but how to use resources is the issue. As I mentioned in the example in Yokohama city, reuse of old buildings was for economic reasons. Also Kurashiki's heritage can potentially support economic prosperity. Old buildings are not only to be restored. Group 2 gave a proposal to reuse the shopping street and vacant houses, and group 3 is to reuse Urabe's buildings. In that sense we are sharing the same issue that Jean-Paul addressed.

Yukiko: In NL we face the same issue. The only difference is the mixed culture and background of history. It is very important to share common ground in every governance scale.

Prof. Narikiyo: In Kurashiki young people started activities. Now in this workshop we open a view for a wider area and district. What kind of activities could be added?

Yukiko: For example, it could be small activities to share one by one like Tamashima activities. Every part of the object we daily use comes from all over the world. Thinking deeply about what and how it affects our daily life. You might start to use empty spaces near you for your life if you are in NL.

Prof. Narikiyo: Are SDGs and historical heritage related?

Jean-Paul: Sustainable Development is an umbrella concept that is largely connected to conservation. Heritage is not only a victim as stated in SDG 11.4 but can also be an asset. Many of the SDGs might be able to reach the goal by using heritage.

Jacqueline: The most interesting discussion during the workshop was what heritage is. How old does this have to be? Is there a limit for the age? Are there different categories? How to deal with a 100 year old building? How to deal with post-war heritage? Should it be a unique character? Here Australia's Burra Charter helps us in 'understanding place!'. Meaning to analyze the what, the why, and the how. From there one can determine the tolerance of change.

Jean-Paul: If we are working in conservation, we work in a strange paradox: if we want to keep the heritage we have to develop it. If we don't develop, we lose it. How much can we change before we lose it. Where can we add things and start to develop. I'd be interested to learn from how they struggle this question in Japan.

Mr. Urabe: The project of Ivy Square designed by Urabe(1974) was to keep the facade. But to keep it, it costs. We found a new function to have a meeting place but the council that evaluates the preservation of historical heritage was worried to lose the character... But it was necessary to get a new function.

Prof. Narikiyo: It will also be necessary in the future to review the methods of judgment and evaluation systems related to the preservation of historical heritage. Professor Fukukawa, what are your thoughts on changes to historical heritage?

Prof. Fukukawa: Jean-Paul said sustainability is an issue connected to heritage. Keeping historical areas and buildings is the best achievement of SDGs and even for climate change. What we shouldn't forget is that it is a resource and an all-time community base as well. That is always a very important aspect in history.

Prof. Narikiyo: It is important to learn from history of conservation effort. Heritage is not a victim but an asset. It is important to act on a small scale. There is a community platform nowadays in Kurashiki, let's use it and work together.

Prof. Suzuki: Predecessors did a lot of work to keep heritage but the difference between NL&JP is, in Europe it could be regulated to keep but in Japan it is necessary to make a consensus with the owner to keep heritage. Even we have earthquakes. So, the regulation is different. By the way, Jacqueline told the discussion about heritage. How does it work in NL? Could post-modern buildings also be a heritage? I heard about Dudok in the lecture. How about those modern buildings?

Jacqueline: It is also a question and debate in NL. The previous heritage limit was 50 years. But the current act has no age limit. Modernist buildings like Dudok are on the list. We also listed some post war buildings. We are currently exploring heritage from the period 1965 - 1990. We discuss with experts and citizens. How should it be valued? We wrote a short history of the development of 1965 - 1990. We list buildings that represent the most important history. Also, important development of architecture. The biggest challenge is that we include opinions of citizens not only of expert.

Prof. Fukukawa: When we think of *Machiya*, wooden townhouses built using traditional methods before 1950, historical building amount is different between NL&JP. There is no time to evaluate and value each Machiya individually, and if they are not all targeted for preservation soon, they will all be lost in the near future. Even though it is in a rather dilapidated state, it needs to be treated as an important heritage building.

Prof. Narikiyo: Wooden buildings can be partly renovated. What we can share in NL. The excursions of Mabi and Tamashima have similarities with NL. Mabi's flood in 2018 but in NL 400-year-old development as a water city. Tamashima has a dike and warehouse.

Yukiko: It was an enjoyable week-long workshop. I thought the pressure cooker could be used in Japan. It is important to increase the number of collaborators with ideas. In this way, we can reflect own expertise to the city.

Jacqueline: It is a pleasure to be here and to think about the 400-year relationship between the Netherlands and Japan. The key word is connection. Interlocks of chain-like connections. I look forward to future connections.

Jean-Paul: We learned only a small part during the workshop and will elaborate in the future. But the preliminary conclusion is, if we would like to pass heritage to the future generation, if we want the heritage we cherish today to be relevant, if we want to provide it with a future perspective, it is not enough to only look into the building guideline. We also have to consider possible developments. The workshop gave an idea of the development opportunity and the development risk of Kurashiki's historic feature. Area-1 offers development risk; new developments will easily affect the historical historic features in a negative way. Area 2. offers opportunity and risk. Adding residential use may strengthen the base of existence of the Bikan area. Yet new impulses also bear the risk of harming the harmony. Area 3. offers development opportunity in residential use private services and public facilities. Careful guidelines are needed. Area 4. offers opportunities and risks. New cultural and social activity may connect separated city parts and people. Yet new developments may affect the quality of the buildings. Area 5. offers development opportunities. New impulses in the shopping streets may strengthen local use. Area 6. offers opportunities and risk. Many empty plots used as car parking lots offer opportunities for constructing new dwellings. And may thus support urban coherence and quality. Yet new dwellings should harmonize with the character in the existing.

Prof. Fukukawa: 1&2 are conservation areas.. 3.4.5.6 doesn't have any special restriction that has to have any way to keep old buildings right now. Empty plots of 6 become expensive high-rise development. There is a gap between the preservation district and the historical area, and there are blank areas in the preservation system. There are different kinds of regulations but we all over Japan face the same issue. Not only the historical district but the surroundings to include for town planning. The Historic Urban Landscape Approach as defined by UNESCO in 2011 which Jacqueline mentioned, does not have a strong influence but we have to look at it carefully. In Japan we have the "Machinami charter", charter for the conservation of historic towns and settlements of Japan adopted by the Japanese Association for Machi-nami Conservation and Regeneration, 2000 that we have to look and challenge how to place in practice. It is a new task for the younger generation.



## **Annex 4. The Machinami Charter**

### Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Settlements of Japan The ‘Machinami Charter’

Adopted by the Japanese Association for Machi-nami Conservation and Regeneration, in October 2000.  
Assented to by ICOMOS Japan National Committee, in December 2000.  
Revised in July 2020.

#### **Preamble**

Those of us who wish to uphold the tradition of historic towns and settlements for future generations hereby proclaim a ‘Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Settlements of Japan’. Herein the term ‘Historic Towns’ refers not only to those towns whose streets are lined with traditional buildings, but includes settlements and surrounding settings where such traditional buildings are found.

To conserve historic towns means to respect, protect and foster the historic and cultural characteristics of a specific area, which also leads to protecting and fostering the history and culture of Japan. Historic towns are the cultural heritage of all Japanese people, and therefore, all Japanese people are responsible for their continuing existence.

The conservation of historic towns in Japan began in local cities with a rich historic background, at a time when the natural and historic environments were being destroyed on a wide scale. This has grown to full-scale in places such as Kyoto and Tsumago, and rapidly expanded into a movement of residents and citizens in several other regions. In 1975 the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties was revised, and the system of Preservation Districts for Groups of Historic Buildings was established.

The Japanese Association for Machi-nami Conservation and Regeneration, was founded in 1974 as a liaison and co-operation organisation for local residents’ movements, in all regions that promote the conservation of historic towns. It has held the National General Meeting for Historic ‘Machinami’ Towns every year since 1978. The Japanese Association for Machi-nami Conservation and Regeneration has proposed conservation of historic towns as an effective method and way of thinking for machizukuri ‘community building’, and has encouraged activities led mainly by residents’ and citizens’ movements.

We believe that the right to live in a generous and comfortable environment is included in the fundamental human rights acknowledged by the Japanese Constitution, and that historic towns are an important structural component of such an environment. In respect to working out urban and regional planning, we ask that the value of historic heritage be acknowledged, and that the historic context of the region be given serious consideration.

At the present time, various projects related to the conservation of historic towns are being developed. However, although the value of historic towns is becoming more widely acknowledged than it has in the past, the risk of invaluable towns disappearing still persists in various places. This charter has been written out to encourage the rediscovery of history and culture in areas that contain historic heritage, and to promote machizukuri with pride and attachment. It is our desire that the theory and principles of town conservation presented here will be shared by a wide range of people, and that the charter will become useful in machizukuri that takes into account the individual character of each location.

#### **1. Definition of historic towns**

Historic towns specify a group of houses and the surrounding artificial and natural environments, which compose the living space of an area. The term also refers to the complete overview of the life and activities of residents within this space. As much of the contemporary Japanese daily life environment moves towards a

trend of urbanisation and homogenization, historic towns play an increasingly significant role in recounting the history of Japanese life, and furthermore, as bridges linking the past and the future.

Historic towns today have inherited from the distinctive qualities of former times, when the local community was lively and the people living in an area shared a common set of values. These people had pride, and felt responsibility and obligation in keeping their towns. Historic towns can thus be regarded as the expression of a comprehensive system of such values.

## **2. Elements composing historic towns**

Elements such as the house and its surrounding settings, along with the life that develops within it, can be considered as one indivisible whole.

The material elements that compose historic towns are not only restricted to houses, architecture and built structures, but also include agricultural land, forests and vegetation, mountains, landforms such as rivers, lakes, and seaside. These do not only compose the nearby and distant landscape, but were as a whole, the stage for the daily life and activities of the residents. The harmony created between man-made structures including houses, and the natural landscape extending around them, is the source of attraction held by historic towns.

## **3. Conservation of historic towns**

The aim of conserving historic towns is not only to save groups of houses and the surrounding landscape as material objects, but to attempt to reconstruct the relationships between the daily life of the residents, the houses, and the surrounding settings. In contemporary civilisation where everything changes rapidly, it is extremely difficult to keep things looking exactly as they have in the past. By carefully protecting our historic heritage, we reveal the intrinsic system of values specific to a given area, and continue the endeavour to hand these on accurately to following generations.

## **4. Traditional Japanese houses and characteristics of their organisation**

Generally speaking, traditional Japanese houses as material objects and their grouping have the following characteristics.

a. The main structure is composed of timber posts and beams. The concept of the wall as a weight-bearing structure has not been utilised. In order to respond to climatic conditions, large openings that ensure ventilation and keep exposure to sunshine at a minimum have always been required.

b. The house combines working and living spaces. The doma (beaten earth-floored area) which occupies nearly half of the ground floor, parts of the toori-niwa (doma that extends through the house), as well as those rooms facing the street, can be considered as space used for vocation or housekeeping work.

c. The inner living space with boarded or tatami floor, has several successive rooms separated by light partitions. The order of omote (front, or formal) to oku (back, or domestic) is determined by the relationship of the rooms to the entrance, or the presence of simple fittings. This order is bound to an expression of formality and social relationships, more than functionality.

d. These houses are placed under similar environmental conditions, which give their style homogeneity. Houses with the aforementioned characteristics, grouped according to certain rules (e.g. alignment alongside roads) compose historic towns and settlements.

## **5. Composition and characteristics of historic towns**

In the case of historic towns, at the time when a town or settlement was founded, the topography and natural conditions were skilfully read so that the boundaries could be fixed, and the road network, waterways and distribution of the site could be set. A hierarchical relationship between buildings and roads, as well as the distribution of large or small sites and buildings were determined. This position of roads and site allotments remain even today. In many cases, even though there might have been changes in the style or appearance, ditches and waterways have kept their former position and function. In other words, historic towns, because they retain the important elements that make up the frame of a town, transmit the layout of the town. These traditional architectural groups or structures, together with the regional heritage, are the artefacts that show the layout and history of the town and the settlement. These then become the main core of machizukuri.

## **6. The importance of conservation**

The topography and the nature of ground, a climate with high temperature and high humidity, and the fact that architectural structures are built of mainly vegetal material, can all be the cause of severe disasters. Due to such conditions, the typical life span of traditional Japanese housing is short. In spite of this, what has formed historic towns rich in local character, is a continuous practice of conservation, which includes the transmission of techniques to replace decayed material with new material, and is the result of a cycle that has been repeated many times over the course of centuries. Moreover, techniques, customs, and a set of values locally held in common, are integrated into daily life and the traditional events of the year. The role that these have fulfilled in maintaining historic towns is not small. In terms of historic towns' conservation, it is necessary to appreciate the importance of maintenance of the buildings and their surroundings.

## **7. Towns to keep living in**

Conservation of historic towns differs from the conservation of historic monuments, mainly because it is impossible to restrict the object of conservation to the material elements within given limits, as it would be for historic monuments. The continued use of traditional techniques linked to architecture, and daily living within certain standards, are also considered important actions leading directly to conservation. In other words, conservation of traditional houses or structures -as material objects- is an important element in the conservation of historic towns, but not its final purpose. That people should remain living there, that a vibrant life should develop, and that traditions be given new life and revive, is the aim of the conservation of historic towns.

## **8. Adapting to changes**

Conservation of historic towns is compatible with the respect of authenticity (composed of factors such as design, material, techniques, setting, tradition, function, etc.) that has become the international standard in cultural heritage conservation. To keep living in historic towns is to keep questioning the meaning and contents of authenticity within life, and is even a necessary condition to bring dynamism into tradition.

As long as life and vocational occupations continue, changes are impossible to avoid. Accepting changes while respecting the authenticity of historic towns is a challenge that the local district should address collectively. These changes come in such forms as inevitable exchange of material, addition of new functions, reuse of design or space from the past, and influence of overwhelming foreign culture. For such changes not to have a destructive impact on traditions it is

necessary to be prepared to constantly rediscover and confirm historic values.

### **9. Residents-led machizukuri**

The main constituents of the conservation of historic towns are the residents of that district and the local community. This is because historic towns are the record of how the ancestors of the residents have lived, and the fruit of their labours. That residents become conscious of local history and cultural uniqueness -including intangible performing arts, religions, and festivals, transmit them orally, inherit and emphasize them is the basis of future local development.

Every local charter for the conservation of historic towns has so far played a great role in forming mutual agreement among the local community. Local residents should make express provision of theories, rules, and aims for historic towns' conservation that reflect cultural uniqueness in charters or norms, and make the most of them in their daily conservation action. This practice, in conjunction with the process of harmonious teamwork, is effective in machizukuri conducted by local residents. It is expected that this charter will henceforth be useful in every region as a common reference for this aim.

In conservation plans made on the basis of long-term perspectives, issues such as: characteristics that the area should enforce and take over, acceptable limits of alterations, their concrete guiding principles, functionality of houses or fire prevention, must be defined after thorough independent discussion of residents.

### **10. Residents' movements and education**

The movement for the conservation of historic towns was initially aimed at conservation of cultural properties, but progressively deepened and expanded as a movement by which residents themselves reassess culture, and even characterise local features. In present times this movement can be expected to have numerous faces, as one of many environmental movements of the 21st century.

In order to encourage understanding and pride towards conservation among residents, sustained environmental education is necessary. More specifically, one should be aware of the risks present in periods of change from one generation to the next. The main tenets of conservation of historic towns have not yet been established. Within the environmental problems that have expanded into planetary scale, conservation of historic towns is one of the key issues that must be asserted, and repositioned continually. It is also necessary to make the effort to include the problem of historic towns' conservation as a part of environmental education programs for children.

### **11. Duties and co-operation of administration, scholars and experts**

We acknowledge that measures and assistance by the central government and regional municipalities in the conservation of historic towns, apart from those in the system of Protection of Cultural Properties are gradually becoming more numerous. Regional municipalities are expected to provide both administrative and financial support to machizukuri based on the conservation of historic towns led by residents. This machizukuri having a comprehensive character, support that goes beyond the frame of vertically divided administration and free from established practice is necessary.

Scholars and experts are expected to provide their point of view, and consult the residents through survey and evaluation of historic towns. It is important that residents, public administration, scholars and experts, while appreciating each other's fields, specialities and positions, cooperate in the comprehensive and continuous activity that is the conservation of historic towns.

When promoting the conservation of historic towns, it is not possible to do so without the



support and co-operation of various professional associations or organisations whose aim is historic heritage conservation. Support from organisations having an international scope is especially sought after.

## **12. Disaster prevention**

Historic towns are very often areas with a high density of wooden buildings that are susceptible to fire. Damage also occurs from rising rivers, landslides, typhoons, earthquakes and other natural disasters. A vast amount of wisdom has been passed down from the ancient times, such as how to set up buffer zones for protection from fires, improvement of fire resistance of houses, or the selection of place of residence to prevent water damage. Against any disaster or danger, a strategy should be established in order to limit damages to the historical heritage to a minimum. Likewise, it is expected that techniques to reinforce structural weak points inherent to wooden buildings be established and propagated. On these occasions, it is important to learn from the wisdom of our ancestors.

Municipalities and specialists must be concerned that methods for solving the problems of buildings are not comprehensive, and are asked to quickly prepare an effective plan for fire and disaster prevention, that respects the characteristics to be inherited by historic towns.

## **13. Tourism and activation of local economy**

To be in contact with historic heritage, to learn from it and to be moved by it, is a pleasure shared in common by a great number of people. There are an increasing number of cases where tourism is undertaken based upon traditional industries, and encourages the activation of the area. Tourists and local residents discovering and letting traditional culture grow in mutual communication are to be the new form of tourism in historic towns.

To accept a more than adequate number of tourists prompts historic towns into becoming places ‘excessively dominated by tourists’, be it only locally. Due to a lack of organisation in external investments and too much emphasis placed on tourists’ demands, the phenomenon by which places become ‘excessively dominated by tourists’ continues. This may, in many cases, cause the loss of characteristics of historic towns. Furthermore, it can also turn tourism into ‘pollution’, threatening residential life. We seek to realise harmony between historic towns and tourism, and aspire to an ideal cultural tourism.

## **14. Securing traditional techniques and material**

Historic towns are composed of buildings and structures constructed with traditional techniques and materials, that are prone to damage and changes. The techniques accumulated so far in the repair of cultural property, and trained craftsmen, are equally indispensable to conservation of historic towns and cultural heritage in Japan. Securing materials and techniques that indicate the specificity of the area is becoming an urgent task for the conservation of traditional buildings. We support training courses for craftsmen, mastering of techniques, and so forth.

No effort will be spared in order to secure materials or promote talents that compose elements of traditional Japanese architecture.

## **15. Cooperation and requests to architects involved in town conservation, and other related associations**

In Japan, it has been pointed out that architects have been building without consideration for

the surrounding environment. Architects require a deep insight into the surroundings of the place where the construction of the building is planned. In recent years, examples of buildings that evaluate and use the characteristics of traditional buildings, and give consideration to the characteristics of towns have increased. We welcome such activities of architects rooted in local culture, and show solidarity with them.

It is the duty of urban planners to make plans such that the history of the area is not interrupted.

Respect for the specific character of historic towns is also required on the part of housing developers.

We ask each related association and organisation for co-operation in the search relating to the design of buildings, urban planning, and regional planning worthy of historic towns' conservation.

## **16. Respect of international standards and international communication**

Conservation of historic towns in one country simultaneously attracts other countries' attention. As indicated by the 'World Heritage', a large number of cultural properties have characteristics that transcend one country, as heritage common to humankind. Representing international general principles concerning conservation of cultural heritage are documents such as the Venice Charter, and the Nara Document. Concerning conservation of historic towns, are the Washington Charter, the Tlaxcala Declaration, etc. We have great respect for these international principles.

We make efforts so that all people from the world can enjoy prosperous and attractive Japanese historic towns. At the same time, we pay respect to residents, citizens and experts who make efforts to conserve historic heritage in all countries, and wish to have fruitful communication with these people. It is also our wish that within the international community where diverse sets of values intermingle, people from every country appreciate each other's conservation of historic towns, and sympathise.

## **17. Hope for the 21st century**

The 21st century is a century within which we may overcome the 20th century's hardships such as wars, poverty, and racial discrimination. It is a century of hope in which to build a generous society where humankind is equal.

Conservation of historic towns necessitates peace, and is incompatible with thinking that denies the diversity of countries' and peoples' values. The very action of conserving historic towns and handing them on to the next generations is a means of communication that does not require the use of media such as words or images. We are confident that this is an accurate transmission of our message. We promote the conservation of historic towns not only within Japan, but also through international activities and communication in conservation of historic towns, by supporting and learning from one another.

We believe that conservation of historic towns becomes a continuous, worthy and pleasant activity for local residents, where they themselves are the leading figures of machizukuri. It is with hope that we welcome the 21st century, and promote the conservation of historic towns.

## **18. Entering the 21st century**

Historic conservation of Japan, which began in earnest in Kyoto and Tsumago in 1968, celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2018. During this time, many achievements have been made, such as an increase in conservation areas. However, what has become clear at the same time is that, for

example, even if it is selected a National Preservation Districts for Groups of Historic Buildings, the challenges will not stop. For example, overuse by tourism, community decline due to population decline, and the preservation of the historical environment outside the district will be neglected. In other words, the philosophies and principles listed in 1-17 of this Charter still need to be constantly pursued today in the 21st century.

The 21st century does not automatically overcome the negative legacy of the 20th century and become a hopeful century. Based on this Charter, we will continue our constant efforts with the conviction that the continuous development of various activities that promote historical conservation will contribute to the realization of the 21st century with hope.

The secretarial board of the Japanese Association for Machi-nami Conservation and Regeneration, which is its highest legislative body, has held its autumn secretarial board meeting on 6th October, 2000 in Nichinan City (Miyazaki Prefecture), and has approved this ‘Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Settlements of Japan’. The Charter was then adopted at the 23rd General Meeting of ‘Machinami’ Towns held on the 8th of the same month.

Hereby undersigning, on behalf of all people who love Japanese historic towns,

President of the Japanese Association for  
Machi-nami Conservation and Regeneration  
Daisuke IGARASHI (signature)

The Japan ICOMOS National Committee, in its General Assembly held 16th December 2000, has decided to show deference to the Japanese Association for Machi-nami Conservation and Regeneration for having completed and adopted this Charter as a result of long years of thorough debate. The Committee has also decided to assent to the intent of this Charter. And as a testimony to this, the President of the Committee here by undersigns:

Japan ICOMOS National Committee,  
the President of the Committee  
Akira ISHII (signature)

As a result of examining the update of the “Historic Townscape / Village Conservation Charter” entrusted by the General Assembly, the National Street Preservation Federation Board of Directors has not yet faded the principles and principles listed in 1-17 of this Charter. Recognizing that it should continue to be pursued in the future, it was decided to add “18. Entering the 21st century” to that effect, and the final decision was made at the General Meeting on the day of July 6, 2020.

President of the Japanese Association for  
Machi-nami Conservation and Regeneration  
Yuichi FUKUKAWA (signature)

## **Note about the English translation**

The aim of this English translation of the Machinami Charter is to bring to light the way Japanese people approach and feel about the conservation of their historic living environment, and to help promote exchange and dialogue among people of all countries who are concerned about similar issues. Therefore, it is the intent of this translation to stay as close as possible to the original Japanese text. While at times the English may appear to be somewhat awkward, the translator believes that keeping to the substance and nuance of the original Japanese text, is the best way for the Charter to raise questions and become the basis of fruitful discussion, dialogue and exchange.

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## **Glossary of some key terms of this Charter:**

Machinami Shuuraku 町並み・集落－ Historic towns and Settlements

Machinami, usually translated as ‘Historic Town’, is a Japanese word that includes a nuance of the historic core, in both its tangible and intangible factors, its physical and spiritual aspects, that would be created by a ‘bond of spirits’. It also contains the tone of making a line, hand-in-hand, that applies both to buildings and to people. Shuuraku, the Japanese word for ‘settlement’, is often translated as village. In this Charter it also contains an idea of a community’s surrounding natural and cultural environment.

Machizukuri まちづくり－ Community building

Machizukuri translated ‘Community Building’ in this Charter, is a Japanese word that contains a range of concepts that can lead to a variety of actions related to economical, spiritual, and physical community planning and building. These could also be articulated by different expressions according to the particular context, such as community revitalisation, neighbourhood preservation, or planning with community involvement.

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Translation from Japanese to English:

Yumi Isabelle AKIEDA

Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music,

September 2001