

International Symposium: Devising the City

Creative Neighborhoods--Changing Society through New Residential Environments

What constitutes a rich residential environment?

Is a rich residential environment not the result of a creative relationship between an urban strategy or policy based on a future vision of habitation on the part of administrative authorities or experts on the one hand and the needs of the public or the community divorced from any consideration of market principles on the other?

Japan experienced rapid economic growth from the postwar period through the 1960s. The government initially supplied public housing in massive numbers, and these helped set a standard of what households ought to be like. However, from the 1970s, its basic policy changed from the supply of rental housing to the promotion of homeownership. Today, this housing policy based on economic growth remains for the most part unchanged, even though the bursting of the economic bubble in 1991 and the economic crisis of 2008 imposed severe economic constraints on the ownership of homes.

In addition to such economic changes, problems arising from social changes such as the increasing diversity and complexity of family and community structures and human relationships in recent years are raising questions about the nature of the residential environment. How is Japan, which is already an aging society with a declining birthrate that will see its population shrink even further in the future, to care for the elderly? Today we must reexamine the nature of the residential environment with the future in mind and develop a new social system to realize a desired vision.

In this symposium, which has 'creative neighborhoods' as its theme, we, together with experts from Japan, France, the Netherlands and Chile, will consider the question of the diversity of a sustainable society in order to discover how rich residential environments and new communities of humane character can be constructed and cities renewed. We will consider the nature of the social system and urban strategies that form the context for the housing policies developed in response to economic and social changes and the history of the supply of social (i.e. public) housing in different countries. In addition, we will study, through actual examples, processes for nurturing communities and methods of public participation in small-scale urban development and investigate the diversity of future urban initiatives and the possibilities of new residential environments generated by 'commons' (i.e. common resources).

Dates for Symposium; February 22nd and 23rd, 2014

Venue: YCC, Yokohama

[Part I: February 22nd]

Initiatives for Neighborhoods: Considering Urban Initiatives

Modern society--and the residential environment is no exception to this--has been premised on industrialization and a widely-shared, standard image of what constitutes everyday life. Particularly after World War II, vast numbers of housing projects (or 'social housing' in Europe) were constructed in the suburbs to relieve the housing shortage created by a concentration of population in cities. They were based on standardization, rationalization and homogenization and aimed at the development of functionalist residential environments. However, the supply of public housing constructed in massive numbers has decreased sharply since the 1970s. No new housing projects are being constructed, and existing housing projects are facing problems of the dilapidation of buildings and the aging of residents.

If we are to reexamine and reorganize public (or social) housing projects constructed after the war in the 1960s and 1970s, we must first consider what it means for large numbers of diverse people to live together today and what is an appropriate environment for such a purpose. We must also reexamine the problem of 'subject and strategy in cities' and ask ourselves who should take the initiative and what sort of initiative (or strategy) is necessary in constructing an appropriate residential environment.

With that question in mind, we will investigate on the first day of the symposium the forms--that is, new and diverse forms--communities and initiatives ought to take in developing residential environments in the future. We will also discuss through an examination of actual examples from different countries how residential environments in a sustainable society can be constructed and what forms of cooperation that task will require among the different parties involved such as local governments, NPOs and educational institutions.

INTRODUCTION

13:00-13:15

Concept of the symposium

Koh Kitayama (architect, Director of Y-GSA)

KEYNOTE SPEECH

13:15-14:00

Fumihiko Maki (architect)

SESSION1. Residential Environment and Urban Strategy

14:00-16:30

[Presentation]

Kees van Ruyven (Spatial Planner, formerly, City Planning Bureau of Amsterdam)

Dominique Alba (XXXX, APUR, Paris)

Yosuke Hirayama (prospective participant; professor, Kobe University)

[Discussion]

Kees van Ruyven, Dominique Alba and Yosuke Hirayama
Moderator: Riken Yamamoto

3. Who Will Take the Initiative in the Residential Environment?

[Presentation]

Moriko Kira (architect, Amsterdam, the Netherlands)

Diego Torres (architect, ELEMENTAL, Santiago, Chile)

Kazuhiro Kojima (architect; professor, Y-GSA)

[Discussion]

Moriko Kira, Diego Torres and Kazuhiro Kojima

Commentator: Asato Saito (Professor of Yokohama National University)

Moderator: Teppei Fujiwara (architect; associate professor, Y-GSA)

[Part II: February 23rd]

Commons for Neighborhoods: Who Will Access the City? What Will They Share?

We must learn to bring our minds to bear on the environments we live in, and establish ties between our relationships and those environments, if we are to achieve rich, sustainable residential environments. New technologies such as the Internet are also building new forms of social capital--human relationships that are not based on agrarian, collaborative endeavor or territorial ties.

Such social changes raise issues having to do with the development of new communities in the residential environment. On the one hand, how are we to renew existing contexts? On the other, how are communities generated by the nature of public character, human ties and networks to be incorporated into those contexts?

On the second day of the symposium, we will focus on an issue that may hold the key to these questions, namely programmatic mixes (i.e. the addition of other functions to the function of housing) and social mixes (i.e. the combining of different generations and people). We will also address the concept of 'commons' (i.e. shared resources) which experts in many different fields feel is important in tackling these problems.

Today, when society is undergoing radical change, the nature and the social impact of 'commons' (which are not only spaces rooted in land or place but factors having to do with historical or cultural value) are becoming very different from what they were in the past. We will reconsider the nature of 'commons' in different countries from the perspective of the residential environment and discuss who should take what sort of initiative in creating new communities if we are to construct sustainable societies. We will also investigate if the idea of 'commons' can lead to the development of 'creative neighborhoods'--the theme of this symposium--that is, if diverse and creative societies and residential environments can be created together with neighborhoods.

3: Reexamining through Housing the Relationship between the Social System and the System of Habitation

13:00-13:30

[Presentation]

Riken Yamamoto (architect)

4. New Ways of Administering Society

13:30-15:55

[Presentation]

Takuto Sando (architect, 403architecture[dajiba])

Takuma Tsuji (architect, Tsubame Architects)

Yutaro Muraji (architect, Moku-chin Kikaku)

Ryohei Suzuki (urban designer, ballon)

Commentator: Yoshifumi Ikejima (Associate professor, Yokohama National University)
and Teppei Fujiwara

Moderator: Riken Yamamoto

5. Creative Network Generated by Collective Living 16:10-19:25

[Presentation]

Philippe Vassal (architect; Lacaton & Vassal, France)

Diego Torres (architect, ELEMENTAL, Santiago, Chile)

Koh Kitayama

[Discussion]

Philippe Vassal and Diego Torres

Yoshiharu Tsukamoto (prospective participant; architect; associate professor, Tokyo Institute of Technology)

Commentator: Toshio Otsuki (architectural planning; associate professor, University of Tokyo)

Moderator: Koh Kitayama

6: Conclusion 19:25-19:30