The series of activities about the renovation of Koyaguchi elementary school as a preservation of regional heritage

Tomotsune Honda, Kiyoko Kanki, Naoto Tejima, Yoshihiro Narumi, Takayuki Hirata, Environment Creation Support Center

The wooden Koyaguchi elementary school was built in 1937. Almost all Japanese wooden elementary schools had been demolished and reconstructed by RC structures with the reason of corresponding with new education system as well as getting earthquake resistance improvement. The town once decided to reconstruct it in 1996, according to the request for rebuilding the school by citizens soon after Hanshin-Awaji earthquake. On the other hand, some neighbor inhabitants claimed to preserve the existing original building because they highly evaluated that it had been one of the biggest and well sustained buildings in Japan. The discussion on the future of Koyaguchi elementary school buildings had been started around 2001, and our architectural studio have engaged in focusing the preservation and practical use of this historical school building for nearly 10 years and finished in 2011. On the way, the teachers and citizens got agreed for the preservation with updating the school space functions, and now it appeared as the regionally shared heritage. The preservation of Koyaguchi elementary school proved the importance of reexamining the heritage buildings before making decisions which is likely lead along with scrap and build approach. As a result of a long term activities for the project, it could make clear how the educational heritage environment were preserved beyond the conflicts of aesthetical, political, social, cultural and financial problems.