Townscape Design Pedagogy in collaborative with citizens and students, experimenting “Charrette Workshop” in Takahashi city, Okayama

Masami Kobayashi

“Charrette Workshop”, which is an intensive design workshop by experts, is a well-used town development process in USA and Europe. Adopting this method experimentally in the historical castle city of Takahashi in Okayama prefecture with the seminar students’ education for 20 years, we have received a satisfactory practical feedback. Workshop sessions were 5 to 6 days long, and the students tackled diverse themes every year. The prototypical process was (1) finding issues through research and analysis, (2) discussing strategies with local citizens and officials, (3) envisioning of future alternatives, (4) proposing concrete design solutions to the local people. Latest theme has covered (1) the regeneration of contiguous townscape, (2) waterfront space design along Takahashi river, (3) creation of pedestrian network of historical assets, and (4) the renovation of historical buildings. After these collaborative efforts with citizens and students for 20 years, several professional town designers have been raised, several buildings were well refurbished, and the townscape was improved substantially. Besides the abundant educational benefit for the students, citizens became more conscious about their townscape. City-pride was raised and they have started protecting the townscape actively. Finally, the city was awarded a special fund to improve its townscape (Rekishi Machidukuri Hou) by the national government.

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