

Urban Regeneration of Filled Area Enhancing the Function of City Center

The Case of Lyon Part-Dieu Project in France

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Abstract:

Today most city centers are being exposed to international competitions and require continuous functional enhancement. Considering population decrease and global environment, the functional enhancement not through urban extension but through the regeneration of an existing city center will be desirable. However, most city centers are already filled. It is rather easy to make a new city or to do urban renewal utilizing a large unused site. It is greatly difficult to regenerate a filled area where the landowners' intentions and the economical considerations are strongly influenced.

Lyon is the second biggest city in France, and also plays a major role of Lyon Métropole. The urban regeneration project is progressing in La Part-Dieu district of Lyon that is the business area after La Defense of Paris. La Part-Dieu is the filled area which has little land owned by public. The urban regeneration of such a filled area is very interesting and suggestive.

The purpose of this research is to get knowledge adaptable for the regeneration of the filled areas in Asian cities, reviewing Part-Dieu projects through referring the concerning documents, interviews and fieldwork. In this paper, especially the design concepts what the parties concerned should share in executing their own projects would be focused. There set the four operational systems, 'easy ground and active base', 'skyline', 'cultural crossing', 'Part-Dieu style'. The most remarkable regeneration concept is the principle as being 'non negotiable'. It demands not a strict specification where architectural forms are predefined.

Also the case of Yokohama Station area project is shown to discuss about what we should see in Part-Dieu project. The Yokohama Station area is one of the Yokohama three city centers holding one of the biggest terminals in metropolitan area. However, because of the vulnerability to natural disasters and the insufficient urban infrastructures, the function of city center cannot fully be exhibited. In 2009, the master plan was formulated as the indicator for advancing "town planning suitable as the gate of an international city", to deal with the issues such as internationalization, environmental problems, improvement of Yokohama station and prevention of disasters.

Keywords:

urban regeneration, city center, filled area, sustainable

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1. Introduction

Today most city centers are being exposed to international competitions and require continuous functional enhancement. Considering population decrease and global environment, the functional enhancement not through urban extension but through the regeneration of an existing city center will be desirable. However, most city centers are already filled. It is rather easy to make a new city or to do urban renewal utilizing a large unused site. It is greatly difficult to regenerate a filled area where the landowners' intentions and the economical considerations are strongly influenced.

For the case in Japan, Yokohama should enhance the city center as situated in the Metropolitan area. The regeneration project of Yokohama Station west-gate area ignited by Yokohama Station redevelopment is an undoubtedly future important issue. Compared to the north redeveloping area of Osaka Station housing a large-scale former marshaling yard, Yokohama Station area faces a lot of difficulty where is filled area with many landowners.

Lyon is the second biggest city after Paris in France, and also plays a major role of Lyon Métropole. The urban regeneration project is progressing in La Part-Dieu district which is the business area after La Defense of Paris. La Part-Dieu is the filled area which has little land owned by public. The urban regeneration of such a filled area is very interesting and suggestive.

The purpose of this research is to get knowledge adaptable for the regeneration of the filled areas in Japanese and other Asian cities, reviewing Part-Dieu projects through referring the concerning documents¹⁾²⁾, interviews and fieldwork. In this paper, especially the design concepts what the parties concerned should share in executing their own projects would be focused. The case of Yokohama Station area project would be shown to discuss about what we should see in Part-Dieu project.

2. Topography and history of La Part-Dieu district

La Part-Dieu is located in the east side of Rhône River in Lyon. It is the leading French business district where many companies are headquartered, as well as a major multimodal center with high speed train and airport connections, housing one of the largest shopping center in France.

Once La Part-Dieu used to be a wet land because of the flood caused by Rhone River. In the middle of 19th century, the large farms owned by the Hospices Civils were sold to the State for military lots. In 1960, the City of Lyon acquired them for the construction of housings and facilities. Then City of Lyon started the construction of a massive residential program guided by the Chapter of Athens. In parallel, the decentralization that would be counterbalance the load of Paris was discussed. The urban project would be designed including an urban center consist of business, administration, culture, commerce and lodgings. According to Lyon, La Part-Dieu would be the center. In the sixties and seventies, La Part-Dieu was formed as a large building complex based on 'slab urbanism' which resulted in separating pedestrian and automobile circulation. (Photo3)

By the end of eighties, according to the increase of economic powers, La Part-Dieu had lacked the unity and shown a fragmental aspect caused by the independent developments whose goals were expansion, utilization and economic equation. Today La Part-Dieu is a strongly functional district, but also a boring district called a 'hole' in the perception of people in Lyon.

3. Project summary

In the autumn of 2009, a highly motivated project committee with members gathered from various Grand Lyon departments was created around the project designers l'AUC. l'AUC is a young designers team who participated in discussion on the Grand Paris project. A series of multidisciplinary workshops were organized around the end of 2009. After thorough discussions, the concept 'contemporary metropolitan hub' was affirmed.

l'AUC, known for "thorough analyses, imagination and creativity", carried out a complete historical study and a careful analysis of some twenty small territories. After this step l'AUC produced the Plan-Guide providing a framework for discussions and negotiations with all participants. Finally, it sets the guidelines which may sometimes be non-negotiable, to impose on the entrepreneurs and to apply to public policy and operational processes.

The director of 'Mission Part-Dieu' explained the dynamism of this project was due to the potential of the site, the governance of Grand Lyon, the high professional skills of l'AUC and the quality of the relationship, understanding and trust between the contracting owners and the team of designers.

At present the project committee 'Mission Part-Dieu' is inside Grand Lyon, but it will be incorporated in September of 2014.



Photo1. Image of models⁴⁾



Photo2. Rue Garibaldi

4. Major themes

The four major themes of the project are shown as follows. While these themes themselves are normal, the attitudes for corresponding them are unique.

Sustainable mobility: It is important to develop the strategy of sustainable transport systems. But it means not only to provide collective types of transport but also to encourage to change people's behavior.

Nature in the city and quality of urban atmosphere: In the Plan-Guide, l'AUC described "natures in town", with an "s". The use of the plural demonstrates that they consider various forms of nature including not only the trees planted in the open ground but greenery grown artificially on the paving stones or the concrete walls.

Regeneration and development: Economically, demolishing is cheaper than regeneration. But in terms of sustainable development, it is far valuable to take account of the cultural aspect and people's lives. Every company should contribute to society through sustainable development.

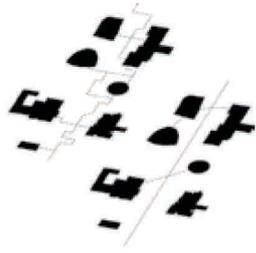
Business district, residential district: This project points to mainly economic purpose. To complete the purpose, it should be also a district for living.

5. Design operational systems

There set the following four operational systems. These operational systems concern spaces. They do not control the shapes or the materials of the buildings, but rather to lead to their design principals.

Easy ground and active base: It is easy to get lost there because of lacking landmarks or orienting views of surrounding city. Also slab urbanism, which separates car traffic and parking from pedestrian walkways, causes this confusing image. Seventy percent of street side spaces is occupied by merely the entrances to parking lots and the delivery areas where nothing happens (Photo4). ‘Easy ground’ aims to remove barriers and bring legibility, designing flows to link between the ground and the higher spaces of pedestrian decks. ‘Active base’ is to connect buildings and public spaces, setting single story shops or services on the foot of buildings along the pedestrian passes. (Fig1)

Journeys



Direct routes

The routes are not determined by a formal composition of the public space, but organised along the lines of the most direct flows between the points of attraction. They are designed for the users, and above all for pedestrians, to promote fluidity and efficiency.

Digital Ground



Part-Dieu.mobi

A Part-Dieu application for smartphones which would make the district not only a “district where one stays and lives” (information about what’s on, when and where...) but also “a district where one can live remotely”, and take away with oneself.

Fig1. Easy Ground²⁾

Skyline: In ten years, nearly half of the existing floors will become unfitted for new energy performance rules and standards. Also to enhance the economic aspect, they will increase available floors up to 1,500,000 m² as compared to the present 900,000 m² surfaces. This project should intensify its polarity to be more visible and more integrated. The one of the singularities of Lyon rises in its wonderful view points. The skyline of La Part-Dieu will be the form of mountain chains providing the depth to the Lyon’s panorama. (Fig2)

The cultural crossing: ‘Creative diagonal’ that will extend from Les Halles Paul Bocuse to Place de Francfort, including the Municipal Library (Photo5), the Auditorium (Photo6), Cinema complex and bookshops. The cultural facilities would not be always financed by public but could be shared and managed by consortium of companies.

The Part-Dieu style: La Part-Dieu is one of the key areas of the Lyon architectural heritage. The Monecy-Nord buildings, the Municipal Library, the Auditorium and the “Crayon” high-rise (Photo3) are the emblematic Part-Dieu landmarks. A sustainable recycling approach should use the potential of what already exists as ‘hidden resources’. It must not be expressed solely through a style of objects, but also through ‘contents, programs and combination of programs’. (Fig3)

The most remarkable regeneration concept is the principle as being ‘non negotiable’. It demands not a strict specification where architectural forms are predefined. Mission Part-Dieu will lead each concrete project to be able to think and act for itself through this open platform.

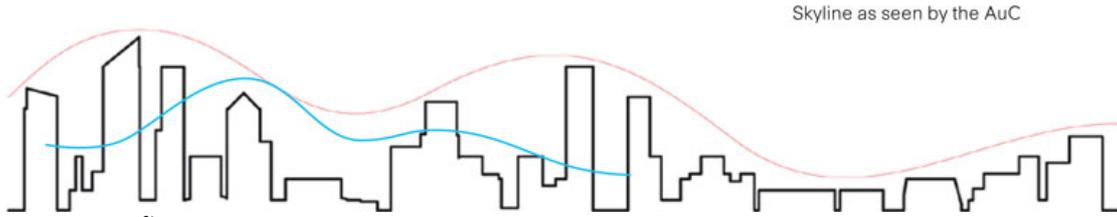


Fig2. Skyline²⁾

The "Part-Dieu Heritage" buildings

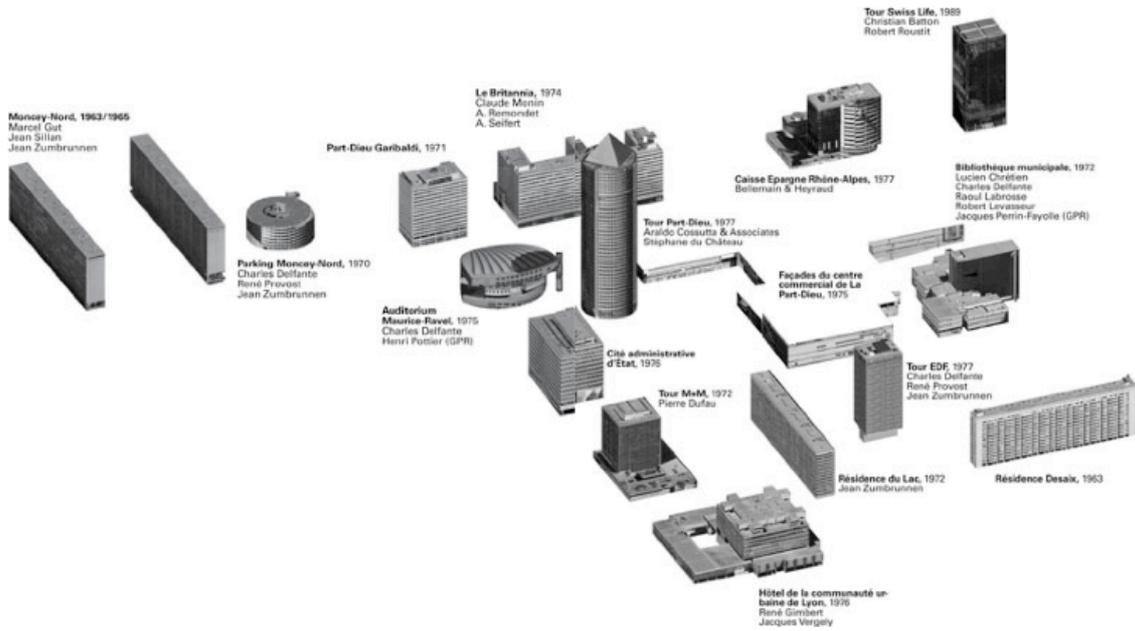


Fig3. Part-Dieu heritage buildings²⁾



Photo3. Pedestrian deck around Tower Crayon



Photo4. Entrance to car parking



Photo5. The Municipal Library



Photo6. The Auditorium and Tower Crayon

6. The case of Yokohama Station area⁵⁾

The Yokohama Station area is one of the Yokohama three city centers holding one of the biggest terminals in metropolitan area. However, because of the vulnerability to natural disasters and the insufficient urban infrastructures, the function of city center cannot fully be exhibited. In 2009, the master plan was formulated as the indicator for advancing “town planning suitable as the gate of an international city”, to deal with the issues such as internationalization, environmental problems, improvement of Yokohama station and prevention of disasters.

The master plan consists of the future town images, the subjects for realizing future town images, the strategies of town planning. The three future town images are “the town which people chose”, “the town which attracts people”, “the town which people is proud of”. As the subjects for realizing each future town image, several contents are listed. The seven strategies of town planning correspond to each subject. The three future town images and the seven strategies of town planning are shown as follows.

the town which people chose

1. Yokohama center strategy – open port for Asian exchange center

- > formation of the activity and exchange base connected to the world utilizing the closeness to Haneda airport
- > formation of the gate of the international city Yokohama
- > improvement of the function as the major base for the Metropolitan area
- > formation of the attractive living and cultural base

2. Environmental creation strategy – lead the world by future city initiative

- > improvement of the energy efficiency and reduce of the environmental load in case of urban renewal
- > town planning where people feel nature such as water, wind and green
- > formation of good environment through the participation of residents

3. Safe and security strategy – toward the space where every people can meet together safely

- > enhancement of prevention of disasters through collaboration of private and public sectors
- > formation of safe and security system utilizing the town power

the town which attract people

4. impressive space strategy - the production of unforgettable scenes

- > creation of the townscape as the gate of Yokohama
- > formation of the townscape where people feel Yokohama, considering the spatial features of each part of the area.

5. comfortable network strategy – creation of neighborhood where people can enjoy walking

- > improvement of the connection of east and west of Yokohama station
- > formation of legible and comfortable pedestrian space
- > creation of the unique and nice streetscape

6. transportation shift strategy – promoting the usage of public transportation

- > enhancement of the function as the node of transportation
- > development of transportation policy giving public transportation priority
- > solving the complication of pedestrians and bicycles

the town which people is proud of

7. collaboration strategy – everybody makes and brings up

- > formation of the organization and the platform driving town planning
- > area management mainly composed of local people
- > improvement of the town value circulating of action, result and verification

As the future town image concerning space, “the town which attracts people, filled with comfortable and impressive scenes” is presented. And as the strategy for realizing this town image, “impression space strategy - the production of unforgettable scenes”, is shown. The “impression space strategy” consists of the following four parts.

- 1) Formation of the townscape (public facilities such as buildings, station plaza and bridges) as the gate of Yokohama, which is impressive and full of unforgettable scenes. (Fig4)
- 2) Formation of the buildings which symbolize the Yokohama Station area.

- 3) Formation of the prospect scenes which consider the visibility to the place utilizing the feature of Yokohama such as the streets and the rivers. (Fig5)
- 4) Formation of the townscape considering the spatial features of each part of the area.

These phrases are too abstract to show what we need in executing real town planning.

As the case of Part-Dieu, Yokohama Station area is also a filled area where it is difficult to share such a city vision. Actually the preponderant projects are specified in this plan. There features “the station project that can be proud of in the world” focusing on the station rebuilding project, supported by “traffic conversion / expansion project” and “water city project”.

In the station project, the design concepts such as the station where people feel the sign of water (the sea and river), the deck which improves the connection of the station and the sea, the east and west, the attractive "terminal core", are shown. These phrases refer to space and the architects and designers involved in the station project will be able to share these images.

The related entrepreneurs are specified in the station project. In water city project, it has put emphasis on the maintenance of public owned spaces, such as sidewalks and riversides. Actually there describe spatial images in only the projects where they can control by themselves. It seems that they cannot find the way to share a spatial images with many other related entrepreneurs who hold private lands.



Fig4. Image of station plaza⁵⁾



Fig5. Image of riverside⁵⁾

7. Conclusion: what we should refer from Part-Dieu project

Subjects: La Part-Dieu and Yokohama Station area have something in common: They functions as the gates of international cities holding big terminals. They give economics aspects the highest priority. They need to improve the pedestrian networks. They lack the clear town images despite city centers. They have intention to regenerate city centers with rebuilding of the stations as a turning point.

As different points, while La Part-Dieu is a business district holding many office buildings, Yokohama Station area is rather a mixed-use district with smaller scaled lots and buildings. According to Yokohama Station area, the vulnerability to disaster is one of the biggest issues of the project.

Features of the projects: The both projects give much weight not to control but to project. In case of La Part-Dieu there are many entrepreneurs such as the shopping center, SNCF, many private companies. Grand Lyon and the city of Lyon own a bit of land including of the library,

the auditorium and the public streets and spaces. However, Grand Lyon has to be the project contractor. They have intention to utilize the rebuilding of the stations as a most significant opportunity.

Also they are forced to utilize the maintenance of public spaces. In La Part-Dieu the maintenance of rue Garibaldi is in progress (Photo2), while the master plan of Yokohama Station area put emphasis on the maintenance of riverside (Fig5).

As an important different point, La Part-Dieu emphasizes urban regeneration not by new constructions but by renovations. In Europe, this attitude considering the environmental problems is quite normal, but in Japan with necessity of measures for earthquake and economic priority it is rarely chosen. But with the future society of population decrease and global warming, we have to reconsider the orientation of urban regeneration projects.

Spatial key concepts: Whereas the operational system of Part-Dieu project leads to spatial images, it is also non-negotiable which does not control architectural forms directly. “Easy ground and active base” leads to the openness and activity of the ground level volumes. “Skyline” shows the goal image of the silhouette of the district. “The Part-Dieu style” judges the design value of the existing buildings and shows the reference of architectural design. They are not traditional heritages built just in 1960’s and 70’s.

The expressions in strategies of town planning of Yokohama Station area are rather abstract. For example, the expression such as “considering the spatial features of the district” is found in places. This expression is quite normal as well as “well matched” in Japanese townscape guidelines. These expressions show nothing concrete and mean that it should be inconspicuous and quiet. Actually there are few traditional districts with obvious architectural design codes. This master plan is quite normal and mature among other Japanese ones. Therefore the feature of these expressions is in common with Japanese master plans.

In the master plan of Yokohama Station area, the main titles of the strategies of town planning might be considered as catch-phrases using rather rhetorical expressions. Otherwise some sub-titles seem to have potential to lead to spatial images. “Production of unforgettable scenes” may encourage being conscious of urban spaces. “Creation of neighborhood where people can enjoy walking” will lead to open the ground level volumes. We should place such phrases properly in master plans.

Here the urban subjects and the spatial key concepts are mainly discussed. Naturally the success of the projects depends not only on the concepts but also on the management. In Part-Dieu project, the skill of l’AUC, the through discussion among parties concerned and the governance of Grand Lyon have played an important part. Part-Dieu project show us the importance of both management and spatial key concepts.

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