

Japanese Cultural and Historical Buildings Preservation Project

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Basic Approach

◆ Preservation

- Repairs using traditional construction methods
- Earthquake-resistant work and equipment renewal (while maintaining exterior appearance and design)
- Utilization of the Registered Tangible Cultural Properties System
- Collaboration with national and local governments, residents, and NPOs

◆ Utilization

- Open as a venue for cultural events and learning
- Museum, historical archives, tourist hub
- Café, hotel, commercial facility, gallery
- Regional revitalization linked to the town

The concept of **“preserving while using”** is the mainstream approach in Japan.

Category of historical properties

Era	Buildings and Gardens	Examples
~ Heian period	Temples, Shrines, Palaces, and Noble Residences	Hōryū-ji, Ise Grand Shrine
Edo	Samurai residences and merchant houses	Himeji Castle, Rikugien Garden, Korakuen Garden
Meiji, Taishou	Western-style or Japanese-Western hybrid architecture	Rokumeikan, Tomioka Silk Mill, Former Iwasaki Residence Garden
Syowa	Government, commercial, and residential buildings	Ginza Building, downtown row houses, Western-style houses with attached buildings

Case study : Traditional Japanese House Cafe

Sarutahiko Coffee Nara Kijika Building Store

This is an example of revitalizing an old folk house within a commercial facility. A famous Tokyo-based coffee chain adopted a store design that harmonizes with Nara's historical landscape. It features the fusion of regional character and brand image.



Case study : Registered Cultural Property into distillery

Distillery Water Dragon at Mishima City, Shizuoka Prefecture

*Mr. Sugii knows this president. He also owns a historic renovation company
We can ask them to help us for this project.

The historic building known as “Kaikodo Murakamiya,” originally a clothing store and now a Registered Tangible Cultural Property, has been renovated and reborn as a compact distillery.



Case study : Japanese garden operated by a public incorporated foundation

Sankeien Garden at Yokohama City, Kanagawa Prefecture

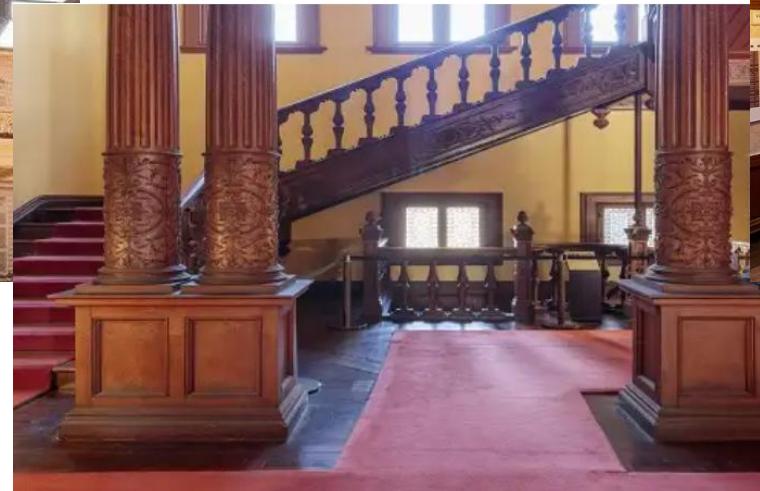
Sankeien Garden is a vast Japanese garden constructed by the industrialist Hara Sankei, who amassed his fortune through silk production and raw silk trade. Although privately owned, the Sankeien Preservation Society, a public interest incorporated foundation, was established in 1953 after the war to preserve this valuable cultural and natural heritage for future generations. It operates with the purpose of conservation, management, public access, and utilization.



Case study : Successful Preservation of Western-Style Buildings from the Meiji Era

Former Iwasaki Residence Western-Style Building Garden at Taito Ward, Tokyo

Completed in 1896 as the main residence of Hisaya Iwasaki, the third head of the Mitsubishi zaibatsu, this building was designed by British architect Josiah Condor, who also designed the Rokumeikan. It is designated as an Important Cultural Property of Japan. Open to the public as a metropolitan park, visitors can tour the interior. Guided tours, lectures, and other events convey the building's history and architectural appeal.



Case study : Transforming an old historical museum into a modern art museum

Kyoto City Kyocera Museum of Art at Sakyo Ward, Kyoto City

This project revitalized the 1933-built “Imperial Coronation Commemorative Kyoto Museum of Art” as a contemporary art museum.

While respecting the historic exterior design of the main building, it features a new entrance with a glass ribbon façade and underwent extensive renovation to create contemporary exhibition spaces.



Case study : Utilizing the historic building known as the U.S. Military House

Johnson Town in Iruma City, Saitama Prefecture

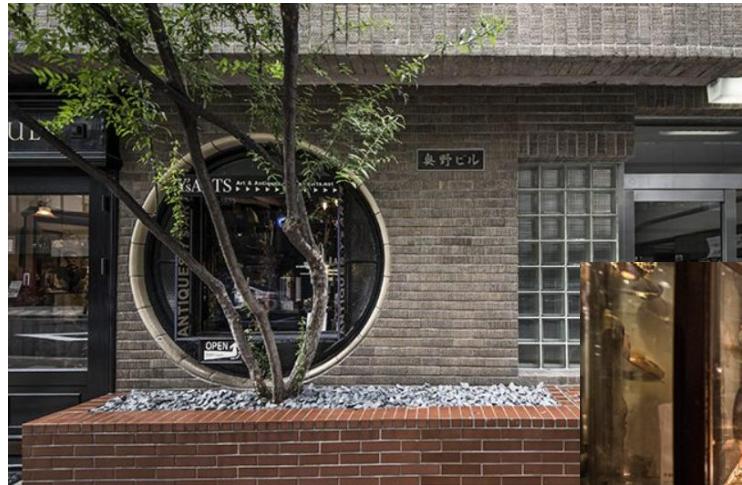
Johnson Town originated from the Isono Housing complex, a single-story wooden rental housing area built close to the former Johnson U.S. Military Base (now the Japan Air Self-Defense Force Iruma Base) for U.S. military personnel. When the owner took over the business in 1996, rather than simply demolishing these deteriorating buildings, they promoted a regeneration project that leveraged their unique atmosphere.



Case study : Adapting historic buildings for modern use

Okuno Building (formerly Ginza Apartment)

Completed in the early Showa period (1932), this is one of Ginza's oldest surviving reinforced concrete buildings. Originally constructed as a luxury apartment building featuring central heating and elevators, it was home to many cultural figures and artists. Its use was later changed from residential to a tenant building, and it now houses numerous art galleries, select shops, and private offices.



The place with many historic buildings

Top 5 Locations Nationwide in Japan for Historical Buildings

Kyoto City (Kyoto Pref.)

Kawagoe City (Saitama Pref.)

Kanazawa City (Ishikawa Pref.)

Hirosaki City (Aomori Pref.),

Kurashiki City (Okayama Pref.)

When focusing on the metropolitan area

Kawagoe City (Saitama Pref.)

Kamakura City (Kanagawa Pref.)

Taito Ward (Yanaka, Ueno, Asakusa , Tokyo)

Central District (Nihonbashi, Kyobashi, Tokyo)

Yokohama City (Naka Ward, Yamate, Kannai)

Bunkyo Ward (Koishikawa, Hongo , Tokyo)

Odawara City (Kanagawa Pref.)

Chichibu City (Kanagawa Pref.)

From purchasing historical buildings to renovating and utilizing them

7 Steps

- ① Information Gathering & Property Selection
- ② Preliminary Research (Regulations & Cultural Properties)
- ③ Acquisition (Purchase or Lease)
- ④ Business Plan & Financial Plan
- ⑤ Design & Administrative Consultation
- ⑥ Construction (Preservation + Renovation)
- ⑦ Operation & Maintenance

Important Points

Primary Acquisition Routes

Real Estate Agencies, Municipal Vacant House and Historic Building Banks
Local Financial Institutions, Chambers of Commerce
Direct Consultation with Owners (Common)

Legal Compliance Check

Urban Planning (Zoning Districts, Floor Area Ratio, Building Coverage Ratio)
Building Standards Act (Existence of Existing Non-Compliant Structures)
Landscape Ordinances and District Plans

Cultural Property Designation Status

National, Prefectural, or Municipal Designated Cultural Properties
Important Preservation Districts for Groups of Traditional Buildings

How to Choose a Designer

Architects with experience renovating historic buildings
Ability to collaborate with cultural property restoration technicians
Familiarity with administrative consultations

Construction work and subsequent operations

Characteristics of the Work

Deterioration often only becomes apparent upon demolition

Requires skilled craftsmanship (plastering, carpentry, roofing)

Construction period tends to be longer than new builds

Common Work Scope

Foundation and pillar reinforcement

Seismic retrofitting (internal wall reinforcement, metal fittings)

Insulation upgrades (primarily floors and roofs)

Complete electrical and plumbing system replacement

Post-Opening Considerations

Regular inspections (for water damage, termites, moisture)

Communicating the building's historical value (storytelling)

Common Traits of Successful Cases

Offering the building's history as an experiential value

Promoting the architecture as a key feature

Building relationships with local residents and government