Master Thesis Summary

Architecture and Civil Engineering
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Research:
A study of reconstruction projects in Oshika Peninsula
(Saved by a mollusk)

Abstract- After the earthquake and Tsunami that hit Northeast Japan in 2011 there have been a lot of reconstruction projects going on in the Tohoku area. Many architects and planners have been involved in the effort to quickly rebuild the damaged areas through projects of various sizes. The big cities such as IshiNoMaki were affected in a severe way but it is the small villages along the coast of the Oshika peninsula that the amount of damage could really be felt. 7 years later, these villages are still loosing their young and able seeking better opportunities elsewhere. The aim of the research is to study how Architecture and Community design through their effective interplay can attract young people back to these remote areas by offering them spatial solutions that enable both professional opportunities and entertainment. The focus will be on the small village (56 people) of Maeami Hama where most people are aged 60 or more. The research is based on referencing existing structures and spaces that have been created since the earthquake in 2011 and researching construction techniques and material suitable for the local environment.

Research Method:

The project being site specific, my research method would consist of studying projects around the different sites. Aware that the problem that I chose to solve does not only require an architectural solution but also solutions related to community design and management I will also analyze projects that have been realized in that area. This will include festivals and events around the site such as the Reborn festival. The analysis will be mainly spatial, studying the plans, sections but also their location on the peninsula. On top of that research, it is also necessary to study the economical situation in the area. The chosen village functions around small-scale fishery and aquaculture. It becomes a necessity to understand few things about how revenue is created and also how business is run. All of the methods announced above required site visits in order for me to collect physical data (through pictures and measurements) but also interviews with locals inhabitants. These interviews helped me understand the many perspectives and opinions shared by inhabitants, as well as understanding how they used the space.
Example of References:

Reborn Art Festival Projects:
The Reborn-Art Festival is a new type of festival where people could enjoy “ART”, “MUSIC”, and “FOOD”. Artworks created by renowned artists from around the world in collaboration with local people are being exhibited in the IshiNoMaki and Oshika areas.

Archiaid Projects
Working along the reconstruction team, a group of university regrouped under the name of Archiaid and helped residents on the choice of alternatives for their relocation and reconstruction. The solutions they proposed was not just architectural but included projects that dealt with community design.

Proposal
The aim of the project is to revitalize the area with small-scale interventions on 3 different sites. The chosen sites and their proposal are:

1) Maeami Hama Village
The proposed structures are dwellings merged with farms that are inserted in the slopes of the mountains on higher ground. The dwellings will mainly use gabion walls and wood as materials and will have space for permanent settlers and more temporary ones.

2) The Ocean
The structure proposed here is a floating structure made out of steel cages and buoys. These floating structures would house space for the fishermen to take breaks, small restaurants and also exhibition space for art festivals. The structures will be situated in between already existing buoys water farms.

Conclusion:
With this research and proposal, I hope to provide with alternatives to ways of living in small, remote and mountainous villages. The study of the local Machizukuri, community design and architectural design will help to have a proposal including both the social and the physical aspect of the site. The creation of jobs can be a major attraction for young individuals and families who want to settle somewhere away from the city and It is the architect’s role to design the space that could promote a lifestyle that is local suitable enough. This study will try to examine what has already been done on the site and introduce new ways of living from the local study.

References:
Archiaid Record Book, 2011-2015: Architects’ Pro Bono Outreach following 3.11 (2016), Frick Studio, Japan P.

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Reborn Art festival website: www.reborn-art-fes.jp/article/interview_kobayashiwaterium (January 2016)

Archiaid website: http://archiaid.org/english/