

auri research brief

No. 19

Um, Woon Jin

Assistant Research Fellow

Yeo, Hae Jin

Associate Research Fellow

Lim, Hyun Sung

Assistant Research Fellow

Basic Research for Architecture Based on the Unification Age

Park Geun-hye's government has emphasized the basic direction of unification, including through the 2014 Preparatory Commission established after announcing the Dresden Declaration (August 7, 2014) on reunification, and National Liberation Day (August 15, 2014). When it comes to the architectural industry, it is integral to restore the cultural homogeneity, this requires two Koreas to start conducting small projects such as cooperative excavation and conservation of cultural heritage and agenda for co-prosperity together.

The first purpose of this research is to establish a basic summary of existing reunification-related discussions, and the second is to establish unified architectural policy provisions and step-by-step objectives and tasks to prepare for unification. For this purpose, this research considers the architectural framework from three angles. First, it deals with the economic, industrial, and technological aspects of territorial and urban architecture and the construction and building production systems in the architectural field. Second, it examines the institutional process and residential life services regarding the neighbourhood living facility. Third, in the cultural aspect of construction, it aims to recover the homogeneity form the future-oriented common values between the two Koreas.

This divides the trend of the architectural industry into policies, businesses, and the private sector to figure out the progress of preparations for unification.

In terms of the policies, the direction of governmental policies and architectural projects in preparation for unification—conducted under the supervision of the Committee and central departments for Unification Preparation—were examined. In the business sector, development and maintenance projects—planned from the perspective of social economy, industry, and technology—academic exchanges focusing on the cultures, and cultural events are considered. Considering the policies, the Committee for Unification Preparation, the Ministry of Unification, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport have been pushing ahead with various projects. And various information about North Korea has become available to the private sector following the collapse of the former socialist state. When it comes to the business sector, various economic cooperation projects including Kumgang Tourism Development and the Kaesong Industrial Complex Project were initiated; however, although some of the projects proceeded, those projects have had difficulty moving on to the next step: the full-fledged exchange step.

For future integration after unification, recognizing differences between the architecture of North and South Korea is a key consideration. The building materials and professionals in North Korea are examined in regard to the economy, industry, and technology. It is seen that outside of Pyongyang, the buildings in the majority of regions are of the quality of South Korean buildings in the 1980s; and the construction material business is poor due to a lack of basic industry. In addition, architectural legislation and standards are examined from a social perspective, while architecture in a socialist city is examined from a cultural perspective. The strongest distinction between the South and the North is that in North Korea, the government controls the establishment and use of architecture. It is known that there have been some buildings owned by individuals; however, manpower and construction materials are managed by the government through an construction master plan.

The two Germanies had not established any specific policies on architecture and urban construction before their unification. However, their intention was to achieve balanced development by reducing the gap between the development of urban construction in East Germany and West Germany by reinforcing the policies which had already been in place in West Germany, and applying them to the architectural projects of East Germany. It is examined how the subprograms of urban development support contributed to balancing and revitalizing the cities of the East and West after policies on architecture and urban construction, so-called ‘Urban Development Support(Städtebauförderung)’, which had already been pushed ahead with and implemented in the West, were introduced.

Eight major challenges were identified: “Modellstädte,” “Städtebauliche Sanierungs-und Entwicklungsmaßnahmen,” “Städtebaulicher Denkmalschutz,” “Städtebauliche Entwicklung von Wohngebieten,” “Erschließung von Wohngebieten,” “Städtebauliche Weiterentwicklung großer Neubaugebiete,” “Soziale Stadt,” “Aktive Städtebauliche und Ortsteilzentren(Zentrenprogramm).”¹⁾ To resolve each task, several policies were put into place for pilot city projects, urban development and maintenance, and preservation of cities’ cultural heritage. The remarkable point of this is that it established strategies for regional development: Städtebau; urban renovation, of major cities by allocating roles to the central government and local governments; and it has been promoting the policy of the “Social Welfare City” by associating the urban project with pre-existing welfare and benefits.

Major Tasks	Introduction of Policies
Immediate action is to be taken in accordance with structural changes in the system.	Implementation of urban architectural plan Pilot city projects
Underdeveloped urban reconstruction of former East Germany	Preservation of cities’ cultural heritage Urban development Urban maintenance
Residential improvement of former East Germany	Development of residential areas Improvement of access to residential areas Large-scale development of areas for new construction
Social convergence	Social welfare city
Decline of cities due to population movement	Städtebau Ost/West
Vitalization of regions	Vibrant cities and downtown areas Small cities and local governments

It is essential to suggest practical, stage-by-stage objectives related to architecture. The first stage is to set up the basic rules on architecture for the cooperation of the North and South, the second is to make preparations for unifying the legal systems of the two Koreas, and the third is to establish an integrated legal system. The unification plan has continuously maintained the fundamental principle of unification; each government has been suggesting concrete policies toward North Korea on a practical level. Park Geun-hye’s administration has declared “Establishment of a foundation for peace and unification” as one of the four governmental pillars, and suggested a “Trust-building process on the Korean peninsula” as the strategy for it; the administration also set normalization of the relationship between the two Koreas as a major governmental objective.

1) “Pilot City Projects”, “Urban Development and Urban Maintenance”, “Preservation of Cities’ cultural heritage”, “Development of Residential areas”, “Development of Areas for New Construction”, “Social Welfare City”, “Vibrant Cities and Downtown Areas”

Plan for Unification of Korean Community and Phased Direction of Architectural Field

		The First Step	The Second Step	The Third Step
Steps in the Plan for Reunification of the Korean Community		Reconciliation and cooperation	Federation between the North and South	The unified nation
Park Geun-hye Government's Policy towards North Korea		Development of inter-Korean relations Peace policy of the Korean peninsula Establishment of foundation for unification		
Architectural Field	Step	Time for North-South exchanges	Time for preparation for the unification	Stages of unification
	Direction	Establishment of fundamental principles for cooperation in the architectural field in the North-South exchange – Reciprocal exchange and cooperation – Economic · sociocultural community – Cooperation with international community	Federation between the North and South Preparation for unifying the legal systems of the two Koreas	Implementing integration of established legal institutions
		Center on architecture from a cultural perspective	Architecture from a social perspective Architecture from economic, industrial, and technological perspectives	

The three objectives of the “Trust-building Process on the Korean Peninsula” are “Development of inter-Korean relations,” “Peace policy of the Korean peninsula,” and “Establishment of foundation for unification.” The purpose of the development of inter-Korean relations is to establish economic, social, and cultural communities through the expansion of mutual interests of the two Koreas as well as mutual exchange and cooperation and redefinition of the inter-Korean relationship through common sense and international norms. The peace policy of the Korean Peninsula aims at “phased unification”; that is, it pursues alleviation of military confrontations through sustainable peace and establishment of economic and cultural communities that facilitate development from “small-scale unification” to “large-scale unification” achieved through institutional and political integration. The purpose of the establishment of a foundation for unification is to enhance Korean society’s capabilities for unification in cooperation with international societies.

In addition, considering the preparations for architectural projects, it can be important to investigate the projects for unification. Sudden changes—happening regardless of the policies on unification—may sometimes be important factors affecting unification. In the broad scope of architectural projects, sudden changes such as large-scale population movement can also be important factors that require phased preparation for unexpected situations. However, this study will review and suggest the tasks required for phased unification by exploring “the plan for reunification of the Korean community” that has been an official method of South Korea for unification; the reason why this method was selected as the subject to explore is because it’s the fundamental approach for unification, and it is necessary to prepare various standards for the plan. In this respect, exchange between the two Koreas should be prioritized; in terms of proceeding with the project, it can be considered that cooperative architectural projects be conducted in collaboration with international organizations through cultural exchange and in a humane way.

A List of Architectural Tasks from a Cultural Perspective

<p>To design cultural heritage and architectural assets for recovery of homogeneity between the two Koreas</p> <p>– Projects for making the best use of buildings that have value as cultural assets</p>	1	Project for the UNESCO appointment of the two Koreas' architectural heritage
	2	Project for exchange of maintenance engineers for architectural heritage
	3	Collaborative work in compilation of the history of Korean architecture
	4	Project for developing historic sites of the two Koreas as tourist attractions
	5	To publish a map of architectural assets of the two Koreas
<p>To pursue architecture that establishes cultural value for the community in the future</p> <p>– Task for designing modern and future architecture</p>	1	To publish a glossary of the architectural fields of the two Koreas
	2	Issue roadmaps related to the architectural trends of the North for an understanding of the real state of the North's architectural industry
	3	To hold an architecture design contest for the North regions after unification
	4	To hold a Hanok (Traditional Korean house) design contest of the two Koreas
	5	To operate an exhibition hall for the architectural culture of the unified Korea
	6	To organize a training program to improve understanding of the North's urban architecture

A List of Architectural Tasks from a Social Perspective

Architecture from the perspective of the legal system – Improvement of existing buildings and underdeveloped regions	1	Project for improving the functions of old buildings
	2	Support project for the improvement of buildings in rural areas and mountainous areas
	3	Support project for the cattle sheds of rural areas
	4	Joint establishment of a plan for constructing a model farm complex
	5	Remodeling plan for each type of existing apartment house
Buildings to provide the public service for resident lives – Demand estimation of types of new buildings and supply plan	1	Project for expansion of medical facilities
	2	Technical support project for an eco-friendly sanitarium for tuberculosis
	3	Technical support project for an eco-friendly sanitarium for tuberculosis
	4	Expansion projects for schools, kindergartens, childcare centers
	5	To set the standards for adequate residential buildings for the supply of new houses

A List of Architectural Tasks from Economic, Industrial, and Technological Perspectives

Collaboration on architectural projects between national territory and the urban sector – Large-scale development project with cooperation through international exchange	1	Collaborative project on urban housing
	2	Improvement and maintenance project on residential environment of the basic settlement area
	3	Architectural project connected with the economic development project
Productive capacity in the architectural field and architecture-related tasks – Building materials, construction professionals, improvement of technologies	1	Improvement plan and examination of the capability of producing building materials
	2	To design a plan for the supply of construction professionals
	3	To design a plan on developing technology by taking account of the disparity in techniques between the two Koreas
	4	To operate industrial training centers in major cities

This research aimed to obtain basic data for future research by examining the architectural projects that have been implemented in the past. It suggests the tasks for future projects by reinvestigating the past discussion on the unification based on this basic data. Because of the limited information about the regions in North Korea, it was difficult to figure out the real status of the buildings in the North; nevertheless, it is still necessary to make preparations for the unification for future research. The first roadmap was suggested for the future project after the current trends in the architectural field and policies were examined. In the early stage, the feasible tasks for establishing a foundation for unification are suggested by discovering and proceeding with architectural cooperative projects with North Korea, architectural policies for unification, and founding and operating a consultative research group. In terms of the objectives and strategies of future projects, it is essential to actualize the architectural project and prepare an integrated strategic plan through continuous cooperation with government departments and professional groups.

Key words : Unification of Korean Peninsula, Buildings in North Korea, Exchange in the Architectural Field

