NEW URBAN AND LANDSCAPE DESIGN OF THE NIHONBASHI DISTRICT IN TOKYO

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Waterfront is an area of a city (such as a harbor or dockyard) located alongside a body of water (river, canal or seaside). Urban renewal projects often focus on unused harbors and docklands to transform these neglected areas into attractive urban waterfronts. While the redevelopment of post-industrial dockland, riverside and canal-side sites often poses specific challenges in terms of reclamation, environmental enhancement, and land assembly, there is a widespread recognition that the location of the development near water holds a timeless charm which can attract increased values. Links can also be made with the recognition of heritage as an asset. Once viewed solely as a location for shipping and industry, urban waterfronts today are recognized as areas with tremendous potential for economic development, innovative housing, recreational facilities and connections to natural areas and the environment. Waterfront projects recreate bustle and activity of the area and lead to regeneration of historic places. They are landmarks for tourists and they also offer entertainment alternatives to the local community. Newly developed waterfronts improve the image of the city and attract people.

Nihonbashi is an old Tokyo center, which once had many canals and was the “city on the water”. It was important part of Tokyo, a heart of commerce and culture. Today the Nihonbashi waterfront is largely non-existent. The Nihonbashi River is not accessible and in current state can not attract people. Nihonbashi Bridge - the central point of Tokyo and Japan – has been covered by the Metropolitan Expressway. Nihonbashi has many assets but they are all scattered and it is hard to discover the beauty of Nihonbashi. The rehabilitation of Nihonbashi can be perceived as the rehabilitation of the old waterfront.

The European examples show that such developments are successful and can revitalize not only the district but also the city. If the following elements would be considered and improved at Nihonbashi, it might become the central tourist spots – one which has not been established in Tokyo so far: revalorization of the river and provision of an access to the water, preservation of historical bridges and construction of new ones with particular aesthetic design, re-planning of streets and roads, provision of easy access to the central station and making attractive pedestrian spaces, combination of old and new architecture and creation of landmarks, delivering of long-live, interesting functions to new developments. Partly reconstructed downtown at Nihonbashi could be another point of interest for foreign tourists. Nihonbashi project, comprising of new urban and landscape design, has the potential of changing the image of Tokyo.

1. IMPORTANCE OF THE NIHONBASHI DISTRICT IN TOKYO

Nihonbashi district covers a large area to the north and east of the bridge, reaching Akihabara to the north and the Sumida River to the east and it has a huge heritage. Otemachi is to the west and Yaesu and Ginza to the south. It is a business district of Chūō-ku in Tokyo, which grew up around the bridge of the same name which has linked two sides of the Nihonbashi River at this site since the 17th century. The first wooden bridge was completed in 1603, and the current bridge made of stone dates from 1911.

The Nihonbashi district was a major mercantile center during the Edo period: its early development is largely credited to the Mitsui family, who based their wholesaling business in Nihonbashi and developed Japan's first department store, Mitsukoshi, there. The Edo-era fish market formerly in Nihonbashi was the predecessor of today’s Tsukiji fish market. In later years, Nihonbashi emerged as Tokyo's (and Japan's) predominant financial district. In Edo period, Nihonbashi was built on a network of canals and along the Sumida River, which served for the merchants to bring their goods directly to the heart of the city. Each area was specialized in some kinds of products: fish, vegetables, and clothes. Nowadays, Nihonbashi remains a major business district, but merchants have left place to securities companies and financial institutions. The Bank of Japan and Tokyo Stock Exchange are both located in Nihonbashi.

The Nihonbashi Bridge first became famous during the 1600s, when it was the eastern terminus of the Nakasendo and the Tōkaidō, roads which ran between Edo and Kyoto. During this time, it was known as Edobashi, or “Edo Bridge.” In the Meiji era, the wooden bridge was replaced by a larger stone bridge, which still stands today (a replica of the old bridge has been exhibited at the Edo-Tokyo Museum). It is the point from which Japanese people measure distances: highway signs that report the distance to Tokyo actually state the number of kilometers to Nihonbashi. The “Kilometer Zero” of Japan (Nippōhokoku Dōro Genpyō) is on the middle of Nihonbashi Bridge in Tokyo. Tokyo Station is considered the originating point of the national railway network and has several posts and monuments indicating zero kilometers of lines originating from the station.

Nihonbashi is located not far from Tokyo Station and the historical district could be a wonderful gateway to Tokyo. It is easily accessible by foot from the central station. Therefore it may become the main Tokyo landmark and the most important place of interest for foreign tourists. On the other side of the Tokyo Station is located Marunouchi district, which has been experiencing renaissance due to the development of fashionable shops and new sophisticated office buildings with public and commercial space. Nihonbashi Bridge area nowadays is not as popular as the tourist destination, particularly not among foreign tourists. The character of the Nihonbashi is mostly office area with little features of traditional downtown. Two main department stores are located at the long distance within each other and there are not many other shops along the Chūō Dōri between them. Marunouchi and Ginza are more attractive with their upscale shops and department stores, with many buildings featuring outstanding architecture. On the other side of the station, the renovation of Tokyo Station and completion of new Daimaru Department Store and new Yaesu entrance building can boost the direction towards the Yaesu and Nihonbashi. This is the opportunity for Nihonbashi district to redevelop and increase attractiveness for urban travelers and Tokyo citizens.

2. ARCHITECTURAL AND CULTURAL LANDMARKS IN NIHONBASHI

2.1 THE NORTH SIDE

- Nihonbashi Bridge (Nihonbashi 1-1)

Nihonbashi grew up around the bridge of the same name which has linked two sides of the Nihonbashi River at this site since the 17th century. A symbol of the Edo Period, the Nihonbashi Bridge was built by Tokugawa Ieyasu in 1603. It has been admired by the Japanese ever since as a symbol of the Edo Period, the Nihonbashi Bridge was built by Tokugawa Ieyasu in 1603. It has been admired by the Japanese ever since as a symbol of heritage. The Bank of Japan and Tokyo Stock Exchange are both located in Nihonbashi.

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During the Meiji Era, the midpoint of the bridge was selected as the base point for all the major highways of the country. Even now, it is the origin of seven national highways. As such, and with this history in mind, a copperplate sign inscribed with the Japanese words for “Initial Point for National Highways” is buried in the center of the bridge. As the starting point for the five routes of the Edo period, Nihonbashi provided easy access to many parts throughout ancient Japan: Tōkaidō, Nakasendō, Koshūkaidō, Ōsakaidō, and Nikkōtōkaidō.

Shortly before the 1964 Summer Olympics, an expressway was built over the Nihonbashi Bridge, obscuring the classic view of Mount Fuji from the bridge. Throughout the years, the old details of the bridge have been carefully preserved. In recent years, local citizens have petitioned the government to move this expressway underground. This plan was supported by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi but opposed by Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara. Nowadays because of the economic slowdown, the project has been halted.

Mitsui Main Building (Muromachi 2-1-1) is one of the largest corporate conglomerates (keiretsu) in Japan and one of the largest publicly traded companies in the world.

Mitsui Main Building is important western-style structure created in the early Showa that has been designated as an important cultural asset by the government (Fig.2.1/2).

Mitsui Main Building is located in the neighboring super skyscraper the Nihonbashi Mitsui Tower (39 stories high, 4 basement floors) was designed by Cesar Pelli & Associates. It has 39 floors + 4 basement floors containing a hotel, shopping area, and office space. Thirty-two floors above ground, the Mitsui Main Building was completed in 2003. It houses the “Mandarin Oriental Tokyo,” the first of the group's hotels aimed at starting business in Japan. There is also Mitsui Memorial Museum, which is a new style of museum combining its own architectural merits with the outstanding artworks on display.

Mitsui Memorial Museum (Muromachi 2-1-1) opened in October 2005 in Nihonbashi, a site closely related to the Mitsui Group. The collections from the Mitsui Bunko Museum in Nakano ward, with many treasures of Japanese and Asian art has moved to new museum. The Mitsui Memorial Museum is located in the Mitsui Main Building. The entrance to the new museum is located in the neighboring super skyscraper the Nihonbashi Mitsui Tower Atrium. The exhibition galleries will include a detailed reconstruction of the interior of the Joan tea ceremony room, a National Treasure tea ceremony room long related to the Mitsui family. Display of the "beauty of functionality" in the selection of tea ceremony utensils will be contrasted with the display of Japanese and Asian art works in a western architectural setting. These galleries will allow visitors to rediscover the "beauty of form."

Mitsui Department Store (Nihonbashi Muromachi 1-4-1) is not far from the Nihonbashi Bridge. Mitsukoshi Department Store's Head Office (Honten). Nihonbashi Mitsukoshi is the oldest department store in Japan and was founded in 1673 with the yagō (shop name) as “Echigoya,” a store specializing in kimono sales. Ten years later in 1683, Echigoya took a new approach to marketing, instead of selling by going door-to-door, they set up a store where buyers could purchase goods on the spot with cash. Mitsukoshi is the root of Mitsui group. The imposing building now occupying the site was built in 1935 where two lion statues guarding the main entrance. The building was designed in Renaissance style and survived until today (Fig.2.1/4). Lyon sculptures are from 1914. Today they are constantly surrounded by people who use it as a meeting point and the sound of pipe organ music wafts into the air around the entrance thrice daily. The new wing of Mitsukoshi Department Store has been completed in 2004. Mitsukoshimae Station on the Tokyo Metro is named after the adjacent Mitsukoshi department store.

Fig.2.1/1 Nihonbashi Bridge     Fig.2.1/2 Bank of Japan     Fig.2.1/3 Mitsui Main Building, and Mitsui Tower
Historic shops abound in this area include Yamamoto Seaweed Store (Yamamoto Noriten) (Murorachi 1-6-3), established in 1849 (Fig.2.1/5), Kamamo Fish Cake Store, and Nihonbashi Funasa (Murorachi 1-12-13) selling tsukudani (various foodstuffs boiled in soy sauce) and burdock roots. Nihonbashi Funasa was opened for 140 years. Founded in 1862, Funasa helped pioneer the creation of tsukudani, a popular preserving and flavoring technique. Funasa tsukudani consists of various sea foods and vegetables, which are boiled down at a strictly controlled temperature in special sauce using soy sauce. Tsukudani is a favorite among sake lovers as an accompaniment to fine sake (comparable perhaps to caviar), and enjoys a permanent spot on the dinner table in many Japanese homes. Ibasen (Kobunachi 4-1) has been established in 1590. It deals in washi (Japanese handmade paper) and bamboo products. It was famous as a leading ukiyo-e print publisher in the late Edo period. Nihonbashi Kaishin (Murorachi 1-13-5) is another tsukudani shop but enjoys a history of over 4 centuries as opposed to its younger relation Funasa. At just 300 years old but still as historic is Ninben, a bonito store. All of these shops has been consistently exhibited only the most excellent of products, true to both their specialization and also their long-standing reputation, making a visit more than worthwhile.

Coredo Nihonbashi (Nihonbashi 1-4-1)

Another traditional shop at Nihonbashi is the Yamamotoyama tea shop (Fig.2.2/3). It has been selling green tea since 1690 and plays a major role in Japanese tea history as the popular gyokuro brand of tea, a very high quality green tea, originated at this store.

Kite Museum (Nihonbashi 1-12-10)

The Kite Museum (Tako-no-hakubutsukan) is another Nihonbashi attraction. It is located on the fifth floor of the restaurant Taimeiken, famous for its delicious omrice (fried rice enveloped in an omelet). It exhibits mainly typical Japanese traditional kites, like Edo nishiki-e dako, and other Japanese kites from all over Japan, together with kites from China and other Asian countries. On display are even three-dimensional kites, inducing a never-ending degree of interest in the visitors. This unique museum displays about 3,000 kites collected from various places around Japan as well as from all over the world.

Bridgestone Museum of Art (Nihonbashi 2-7-6)

It is an outstanding art museum displaying artworks of a wide range of genres including ancient Western art objects and modern paintings. The Bridgestone Museum of Art devotes itself to the collection and exhibition of works of Impressionism and other modern European paintings, as well as Japanese Western-style paintings from the Meiji and following eras. It was first begun in 1952, when Ishibashi Shojiro, founder of the Bridgestone Corporation, opened an art museum in the newly built Bridgestone Building and there exhibited his private collection of artworks. In 1956, the Ishibashi Foundation was established, and in 1961, almost all the works in the Ishibashi Collection were donated to the Foundation, forming the nucleus of the present permanent collection. The Bridgestone Museum of Art has continued thereafter to enrich its collection, while always striving to provide an outstanding environment for the appreciation of art.

Haibara Washi Store (Nihonbashi 2-7-6)

Haibara was established in 1806 in the Nihonbashi district of Edo (modern day Tokyo) as a retailer in washi or Japanese handmade paper. Haibara, an old washi store, offers washi in various colors and an extensive line of washi related products as well. Haibara's washi ranges from those featuring traditional Japanese patterns to others decorated with more modern designs making the selection process very enjoyable. Paper making is a highly respected traditional craft in Japan, and the paper itself is used, not only for drawing and artwork, but as decorative wrapping at such important occasions as coming of age, weddings, funerals and when paying respect to one's ancestors.

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Eitaro (Nihonbashi 1-2-5)
The shop first cracker shop in Edo was established in 1880 offers traditional Japanese meals and sweets. In 1857 the shop was set at the present location. Eitaro So-honpo has been selling sweets since the Edo period and its tea room offers both Japanese tea and traditional sweets (Fig.2.2/2).
3. PROBLEMS OF WATERFRONTS IN JAPAN

If we take a look at waterfronts of foreign cities, for example in Köln in Germany, expressway along the Rheine River was demolished and highway tunnel was built, and the park was developed on the vacant lot. In Düsseldorf, the main line was also laid underground; the old streets have been restored along the Rheine River. In Boston, the expressway was also laid underground; and in Seoul, the demolition of Cheongye Expressway for renovation of waterfront has been realized. These urban renovation projects of rivers and lakesides based on the reconsideration of relationship between rivers and roads are very impressive with the charm of waterfront landscape regenerated in a city.

At these examples of urban renovation, three scales of spaces can be identified: architecture, landscape, and river/basin. Such scale-conscious approach to urban renovation should be also realized in Japan. Although in Japan often each scale has been separately debated, the project has not developed through the collaboration to implement the combination of these scales. Consideration for architectural scale can be seen in public open space along the Shibuya River, where trees were planted. Even though the trees appeared, the design for the site did not utilize river through creation of open space including a river.

There are two types of waterfronts in Japan: riverfronts in the city centers and waterfront along the seacoast, usually not in the center but at the new reclaimed land. While sea waterfronts have been quite successful — for example in Tokyo or Osaka — riverfronts have been facing many problems. Firstly rivers have been polluted, and secondary cities have developed back to the rivers. Rivers have been neglected and their attractiveness of being a part of the nature, not valued in urban planning. To renew the urban areas, the urban planning method must be surveyed from the standpoints of a wide range of fields such as architecture; agronomics including greenery; landscape design and its cultural background; and others. When considering future urban renovation utilizing waterfront, it is visible that urban planning has not essentially worked and that rivers have been excluded from urban planning in Japan. The historical relation between river, waterfront and urban space has been lost in many cases. Therefore the relatively poor treatment of rivers and coastlines is something the Japanese state has been desperately tried to alter.

The transition of rivers (emerged/developed or lost) in areas around Tokyo since the fourteenth year of Meiji Period, shows that quite many rivers and canals have been lost because of coverage, reclamation and diversion to sewage line, and that waterfront have been severely damaged. The renovation of the Sumida River and the Murasaki River are noteworthy examples of practical achievement in Japan. Nowadays, the discussions concerning rivers and waterfront renovation have been centered on the Kanda River, Nihonbashi River, Shibuya River, Dōtonbori River and Horikawa in Kyoto. The projects for revitalization of urban areas are conducted within the government-led “Urban Renaissance” policy.

New concepts for the next step of urban renovation should utilize waterfront with water, river, waterway and greenery at the cores, aiming to realize a city coexisting with nature. For that purpose, concrete scenarios should be designed and proposed e.g., scenario for spatial land use from the viewpoints of three spatial scales, the one focusing on water and material circulation and the one focusing on eco-system.

4. BASIC IDEAS FOR NIHONBASHI PROJECT

4. 1 MAJOR FEATURES OF WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT

The factors that have led to waterfront opportunities are well known. These have combined to create sites of abandonment. These sites, being adjacent to water, now offer us unique opportunities. However, as Malone point out (1996), neither the factors that have created opportunities for redevelopment not the processes of renewal fall outside the common framework for urban development. The urban waterfront is, simply stated, a new frontier for conventional development process (Malone 1996). Both types of development and the forms of capital on the contemporary waterfront are common to other parts of the city. What makes the contemporary waterfront interesting is the high visibility of this form of development. The high profile of their locations means that waterfront projects are magnified intersections of a number of urban forces because the economic and political stakes are higher on the urban waterfront. Indeed, through changes in technology and economics and the shifting of industrial occupancies, the waterfront has become tremendous opportunity to create environments that reflect contemporary ideas of the city, society and culture.

And this can be a statement for future development of Nihonbashi area. Currently the Nihonbashi district has been developing but still it needs a large revitalization plan. Also Nihonbashi River does not provide an attractive public space and there is a little feeling of the waterfront feature of the
Nihonbashi area. It seems that the opportunity to redevelop Nihonbashi district lies in its waterfront. Waterfront development in Nihonbashi can be related to the aspect of “new waterfront development in historic city”. In such context, some inspiration can be taken form the developments of historic European cities. Nihonbashi area revitalization can be part of the process of the making the image of the city – providing Tokyo remarkable opportunities to undertake many environmental and urban regeneration efforts.

Redeveloping the waterfronts becomes a challenge in the quest to enhance urban quality in the construction of the image of the modern city. In fact, this quest is often directed to limit the negative effects of vehicle traffic and to introduce innovative means of transportation and to revitalize run-down residential zones, etc. The popular elements used to obtain these results are: opening up the waterfront to the public, through the successive measures of appropriation of the border zones between city and water (sea, river, lake), development of accessibility to the waterfront – pedestrian access is essential as well as various modes of land and water transport, limitations on vehicle traffic – have often become one of the city’s main pedestrian zones, upgrading waterborne transport through the familiarizing public with the system and improving modal interchanges, developing intermodal stations as attractive and complex urban structures, emphasis on the visual design of embankments, the piers, selection of viewpoints, maintaining the quality of water.

Nihonbashi is the type of waterfront that does not occupy old industrial area but historical rivers and canals that were used for the transport and leisure in Edo Period and which have been neglected in modern townscape and which historical features have not been completely displayed. The term adequate for the Nihonbashi is the “historical center”. The solutions from the European historical waterfronts can be applied and transformed at Nihonbashi. In case of Nihonbashi, the remaking of the image of the city can be propelled by a series of important projects. These include the revitalization of transportation infrastructure – changing the elevated expressway into an underground, introduction of LRT system, the cleaning of the river and hydrological improvements, as well as urban development along the water and in the vicinity of the Nihonbashi Bridge.

4.2 HOW NIHONBASHI COULD BE TRANSFORMED INTO A HISTORIC DOWNTOWN WATERFRONT AND TOURIST SPOT?

There are several elements of the waterfront landscape that should be considered in development project:

- revalorization of the river and provision of an access to the water
- preservation of historical bridges and construction of new ones with particular aesthetic design
- re-Planning of streets (including promenades along the river) and roads (consideration of LRT, removal of car traffic on some streets and traffic restrictions on others), provision of easy access to the central station and making an attractive pedestrian space
- combination of old and new architecture and creation of landmarks
- delivering of long-live, interesting functions to new developments

4.2.1 The river and access to the water

The examples from all over the world show that the renewal projects restore environmental health of the city, and add new life into the city. The first aspect of the Nihonbashi project is the river. A project that is the most comparable to Nihonbashi is the Cheonggyecheon project in Seoul. At Nihonbashi, there is no access to the water and the river does not play a role in creation of public spaces. Therefore, Nihonbashi should have restored its old image of a city with the water, with a direct approach to the water.

Because the vertical distance to the water is quite big, about 2.5 m, it will take dozens of meters to construct a slope on the river side with the direct approach to the water. It means that some existing buildings along the river would be necessary to demolish, to make a space for a waterfront. The space along the Nihonbashi River should accommodate a river walk and with some facilities along the river, including park. The distance between the water and river walk should consider operation of boats for the river cruises. Depending on place, at some locations distance to the water can be closer and in some less close. In Europe the rivers in the middle of the city are used for transportation or for cruising or just for small boats and the distance to the water also vary but promenades along the rivers are very common (Fig.4.2.1/1).

Buildings along the Nihonbashi River have the back sides projected towards the river. Usually these are rather unpleasant elevations because the scenery to watch is at the street not at the river. It can be called a “negative riverscape”. When the buildings which face the river will have nice elevations with windows ad flowers, the riverscape will totally change and will be more attractive.

To make a riverspace attractive and pleasant, building along the Nihonbashi River should be improved and designed considering riverside elevation. Nice windows and shop entrances should be located at this side. The riverside should be a frontal side of the buildings.

4.2.2 Bridges

All bridges along the river should be revalorized according to the character of the district. Bridge forms and architecture are very important in shaping the townscape and they should respect their surrounding. Interesting bridges in revalorized areas can completely change the neutral place into a popular landmark. Some places are only remembered because of the beautiful bridges. Very often bridges become landmarks or symbols of waterfronts. Particularly important are pedestrian bridges because they are usually remembered by people. For example the Millennium Bridge in London has become a face of the London waterfront. Osaka has also its new pedestrian bridge Ukanawabashi at the Minatomachi River Place (Fig.4.2.2/1). Pedestrian bridges at the waterfronts are characterized by innovative structures, lightness, modern sophisticated details, interesting lighting, furniture, and illumination Fig.4.2.2/2, Fig.4.2.2/3. Bridges currently located over the Nihonbashi River are mostly covered by the expressway. They are girder and arch bridges with one exception of the Toyomi Bridge (1927), which is a Vierendeel truss bridge.
4.2.3 Streets, roads and promenades

When we look at the main streets in European cities, for example in Paris - the main boulevard - Champs d’Elysees – is very wide, has rows of trees and also open air restaurants and cafes. Open air restaurants present in many European cities, gives them vibrant and relaxing atmosphere. London has nice promenade along the Thames (Fig.4.2.3/1). Promenades are for pedestrian traffic. These are spaces for people to gather, to walk, to enjoy the views, and to really enjoy the waterfront. Promenade along the water should be wide, with good lighting, and with places to seat. Promenades can be also flanked by buildings on both sides. Promenades are popular in places where there is a lot of activity – commercial, cultural, etc. There should be many types of shops and restaurants, from expensive brand shops and depot stores to popular stores and from expensive restaurants to fast food shops.

At the Nihonbashi, except modern shops and restaurants, traditional ones could become important points of attractions. Particularly, if a small traditional district would be created at the waterfront area, near the Nihonbashi Bridge. Many tourist will come to Nihonbashi, if there will be place created as “old town”, to buy souvenirs, to buy rare hand-made goods, traditional arts and crafts, and to taste traditional Japanese cuisine. In many European cities such “old towns” have survived and have been preserved or have been reconstructed. They consist of the market in center, where people can gather, and small streets with town houses. Traffic has been removed from some old and narrow streets and they have been turned into pedestrian promenades. Streets should be improved to create a popular district for citizens and tourists to walk and have a leisure time at the waterfront. Expressway above the Nihonbashi River should be replaced with an underground road. Currently, streets are busy with a lot of traffic. The main street – Chūō Dōri could become a limited traffic street only for the Light Rail Transit (LRT). The space for pedestrian could be increased and also some open air restaurants and cafes could be installed. Creation of places for people to stop, seat and spend time - is very important to achieve the image of lively city center at the water edge. There are not benches along the Chūō Dōri, and not many pocket parks in the district. Streets with benches, greenery, open air shops will be very inviting for both elderly and young people to hang out, spend time, go for shopping, dinner, etc. Also streets leading to Tokyo Station – particularly Sakura Dōri and Yaeusu Dōri – should be attractive for pedestrians to encourage people to walk from the station to Nihonbashi district and Nihonbashi waterfront area and vice versa. Trees and plant along the road has been a subject for the 2004 law concerning “constructing beautiful lands”. The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MLIT) has also prepared guidelines for forming beautiful scenery (Oguri, 2005). It reflects growing public consciousness about the beautiful landscape and necessity to create a good example in the center of the capital.

4.2.4 Architecture – old and new

Architecture facing river is playing important role in creation of the cityscape. In Europe, it is new architecture, which at the prominent locations is usually designed by famous architects, like London’s City Hall (2002) located at the Queen’s Walk along the Thames River, designed Foster & Partners (Fig.4.2.3.1). There is another interesting building there – the Tate Modern (2000) designed by Herzog and De Meuron. There is also historical architecture, such as buildings located at the Thames waterfront, more notably the Tower of London and the Tower Bridg, etc. (Fig.4.2.4/1). It is very important to connect new architecture with older surrounding. 30 St Mary Axe Building, also known as the Gherkin (2003), designed by Foster & Partners and Arup, is located in London’s financial district and is facing many historical buildings (Fig.4.2.4/2). A high-rise building has been constructed that contrasts sharply against more traditional buildings in London. Medium size buildings are easier to coordinate with historical background. New high-rise buildings are built often as an extension of the old buildings. For example in Marunouchi in Tokyo, all buildings surrounding Tokyo Station has been renovated and built higher forming completely land streetscape.

Also in Nihonbashi old buildings are replaced by new and higher ones, such as the Nihonbashi Mitsui Tower. Nihonbashi is now occupied mainly by office buildings. There are also some residential buildings and shops. The dominating architecture is medium-size offices. At the main street - Chūō Dōri, there are many higher offices including new high-rise buildings. Architecture old and new should be of good quality, harmonized with surrounding in the sense of style and size. Green space should be also within the urban structure, in form of small and bigger parks. Combination of older and modern architecture is very attractive for residents and for tourists.
4.2.5 New functions

A typological category, that can be placed alongside others which have been the subjects of considerable debate in the European countries in the past is the “central business district”, another one conceptual type referred to the waterfront phenomenon is “historical center”. This typological category is including a sympathetic growth among the different sectors on order to create a profound unity of the redevelopment for the whole of the urban organism. The formation of models of waterfront development, which took place on the basis of several successful cases which are now the focus of the international literature, led to the spread of examples world-wide, and it is now appropriate to refer to a globalization of the waterfront themes. The risks of this are reminiscent of what happened in the filed of shopping center construction, which experienced a revolution in the final period of the twentieth century; it ultimately led to uniformization on the international scale, not only of some construction standards but also of organizational methods, spatial typologies, and architectural forms. In case of waterfronts, new methods for defining constrain and the potential of each project should be exercised.

Currently, downtown urban centers are trying to win customers over the suburban shopping malls, which sell cheaper products. Customers would always want cheaper products but the environment in which they buy plays also important role. Shopping malls are large, have restaurant and people can spend time with their families there. Nihonbashi, to attract people to come to downtown, should also offer not only products but also atmosphere, interesting surrounding, the stage for the “entertainment”. In that sense, functions should be broad and should include the large array of choices. At first, Nihonbashi should connect with to its past and offer various traditional products - foods, appliances, interior products, souvenirs, arts and crafts, fashion, as well as the best Japanese contemporary products. Historical building could be preserved through the change of its use (Hasegawa, 2006). If the building receives a new function, of a shop, or restaurant, or hotel, its rehabilitation of an important cultural asset will be accompanied by its dynamic function. A small riverfront development could have the shape of traditional Edo district, with traditional wooden buildings housing shops and restaurants. There should be also exhibitions and museums. Restaurants should include the ones on the boats – like yakatabune or amisei. Yakatabune are one of the most popular entertainments in Japan. Dating back to the Heian Period (794-1185), yakatabune were luxuries afforded only to the privileged daimyo and shogun. It was not until the Edo period that yakatabune became accessible to commoners. Then, a riverfront in the center of Nihonbashi should be well accessible and possible to organize picnics, hanami in the spring, observation of seasonal flowers and a place for celebration of seasonal festivals. The water should be accessible in this manner, that people can enjoy it during hot summer. If the district would become livelier, more people will come, and the Nihonbashi downtown will become a true center of Tokyo.

New functions should be appealing for all generations, as well for young people as for middle aged and elderly. Families should have the opportunity to spend a good time together at the Nihonbashi. Except reconstruction of traditional buildings and new construction in traditional styles, there should be also modern architecture connecting these “memoies from the past”. New techniques such as DVD, plasma displays, etc. should be used to enhance the beauty and attractiveness of Nihonbashi. “New life at Nihonbashi” should be achieved by profound connection of the past and the future.

5. CONCLUSION – NIHONBASHI – THE FUTURE

Nihonbashi is continuing to witness change. The new wing of Mitsukoshi Department Store – Mitsukoshi Shinkan has been constructed in 2004, marking the 100th anniversary of its founding. The nearby Takashimaya department store underwent a grand reopening aimed at making it more business in Japan. Its completion brought more international businesspeople and tourists alike to Nihonbashi. But Nihonbashi still need to grow into a high-rise New Muromachi Mitsui Building has also been and it houses the Mandarin Oriental Tokyo, the first of the group’s hotels aimed at developing upscale by adding a tea salon run by a famous chef specializing in French cuisine, as well as a wine boutique offering high-end labels. The super

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