

## Module 2: Start of Bukchon preservation project

#9

Hello, everybody.

Now I'll talk about Start of Bukchon preservation project.

The change of Bukchon was triggered by Gangnam development in 1970s.

To accelerate development activities in Gangnam area,

well-reputed schools in Bukchon moved out

and the landscape of Bukchon changed significantly.

To preserve the uniqueness of Bukchon,

diverse regulation tools were introduced by the central government.

At first, 'Folkloric Landscape Zone' was designated in 1976 to protect the Hanoks in Bukchon,

but the designation had no legally-binding restrictions.

Building height restriction was also introduced in 1977,

but it only covered a small part of western Bukchon, not the whole area.

In 1978, Hyundai Engineering and Construction (HDEC) established

a large office building with 15 stories on the former site of Whuimun High School.

Since then, the preservation of Hanoks became a pressing issue

and more protective measures started to be put in place.

In 1983, the whole area of Bukchon was designated 'Collective Landscape Zone IV',

to protect the Korean traditional architecture  
and maintain the aesthetic landscape in Bukchon.

'Restriction of Construction in Specific Zone' followed one year after  
to regulate the size and style of buildings in Bukchon area.

Supportive measures were also introduced to preserve Hanoks.

An ordinance was made in 1985 to afford the Hanok owners a 50% property tax  
discount.

Despite of preservation policies, many Hanoks were demolished,  
because of the road-widening projects ironically by public sector.

This contradictory approaches provoked complaints from the residents.

In summer 1990, a tragic casualty made protective measures in 1980s reconsidered.

A heavy rain caused some Hanoks to fall down, leading to casualty among residents.

They protested, existing regulations on Hanoks severely infringed on their property rights.

In response to the residents' constant demand for deregulation,

at last the city eased the building height limit up to 10 meters in this area.

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Policy change in Bukchon turned the landscape of Bukchon.

Many Hanoks were demolished and replaced with multi-family housings.

Projects for improving residential environment also strongly pushed these changes  
in Gahoe-dong and Wonseo-dong area.

'Building Design Review' was abolished in the 'Landscape Zone'

and Gahoe-ro(street) was widened.

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Changing Hanoks with multi-family houses,

the deregulation brought the destruction of uniqueness in Bukchon's landscape.

The new developments with high density burdened the old narrow alleys

and aging infrastructure.

At last, a community organization, 'Bukchon Preservation Group' requested a solution for Bukchon's debilitating circumstances

through the 'Saturday Date with the Mayor of Seoul' on Sep. 4. 1999.

It marked the beginning of the collaborative process

involving residents, experts, and the city government to solve the problem of Bukchon.

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After the Saturday Date with the Mayor of Seoul in 1999,

a lot of discussions and debates took place before the start of Bukchon Project in 2000.

First, relevant government officials and resident representatives

created 'Bukchon Task Force'.

Bukchon Task Force, a public-private consultative group held 3 official meetings to discuss the underlying issues for the project.

The results were reported to the Mayor of Seoul three-times.

In the meanwhile, Jongro-gu office also held 2 official meetings

to identify the needs in the area.

Especially, the Mayor of Seoul met and persuaded twice

the residents against the Bukchon Project.

3 public hearings were scheduled, yet 2 were cancelled due to the opposition.

Meanwhile, the city's Housing Bureau formed the 'Bukchon Project Team',

dedicated to the project.

The Bukchon Project Team served as the project manager,

collaborating with Jongro-gu office and SH Corporation.

Seoul Institute also provided a road map for the Bukchon preservation project.

Finally the city government announced the mayoral order No.1002

for the preservation of Bukchon.

Following the mayoral order, the city suggested 'Hanok Registration Program'

to motivate the residents' participation in the Bukchon project.

The Hanok Registration Program was based on the residents' own choice and determination.

Those who registered their Hanoks voluntarily

were given financial support for repair and remodelling

as well as discount or free pass in public facilities such as parking lot.

Also, registered Hanoks were prohibited from deliberate demolition

and subject to repair and remodelling regulations.

This measure was to preserve the unique features of Hanoks in Bukchon.

No deadline was imposed for registration,

so that residents could register their own homes anytime they wanted.

Furthermore, the city government purchased several Hanoks in danger of being destroyed at market price and made use of them as a cultural center, a museum, etc.

In order to show its determination and propose the models of Hanok repair and remodelling,

the city purchased some Hanoks via SH Corporation.

In principle, public purchase of property was made based on the appraised price, but the city reviewed the market prices of the neighboring areas to make the transaction at the level as close to the actual prices as possible.

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After the 'Hanok Registration Program' launched in full scale in July 2001, a field office opened at Gye-dong 135-1 on August 28 of the same year, to deal with the residents' request on the spot.

This field office was the Hanok purchased by SH Corporation.

Five public officials from the city government worked there full time to inform residents of the procedure of Hanok registration and the methods for repairing Hanoks.

The city also revised the city's 'Building & Construction Ordinance' to create a legal basis for the project.

On May 20, 2002, the city government enacted the 'Hanok Ordinance' to carry out Bukchon project in a more organized manner.

The ordinance aims to maintain the architectural beauty of traditional houses and improve their cultural value.

It stipulates eligible targets, such as Hanok registration process and validity, repair subsidy and tax discount, establishment and operation of Hanok Council.

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The Bukchon preservation project was conducted in cooperative partnership between residents, experts, and the city government.

In cooperation with SH Corporation and relevant public agencies, the Seoul Metropolitan Government operated the Hanok Registration Program and purchased Hanok.

The residents, on their part, strived to restore the originality of traditional houses, while offering tourist programs in cooperation with NGOs.

Community organizations such as Bukchon Preservation Group, Association of Citizens Who Love Hanok participated in the development of Bukchon Preservation Plan in cooperation with Seoul Institute.

The Seoul Institute created the plan in line with the administration's direction and residents' request.