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**ZONE C:
IS THERE A CHIEF ARCHITECT
POSITION IN YOUR COUNTRY'S
GOVERNMENT/CIVIL
ADMINISTRATION?**

**IF THERE IS, IS IT EFFECTIVE
AND BENEFICIAL TO THE
PROFESSION?**

**IF NOT, DO YOU THINK IT IS
NEEDED?**

JAPAN

The “Chief Architect” in Japan: Two Systems and one example

September 2025

ACA

JIA presentation

A. Legal compliance office 建築主事

B. Townscape review council 景観審議会

C. Proactive example “Yokohama” 横浜都市デザイン室

建築主事 (Kenchiku Shuji), or 'Building Chief Officer'

- Qualification:** 1st class Kenchikushi. Appointed by the governor.
- Function:** They conduct a purely technical and legal review of every building application, ensuring compliance with structural safety, fire codes, and zoning.
- Power:** They hold the absolute authority to issue a building permit. Without their approval, no construction can legally begin.

the 都市景観審議会 (Toshi Keikan Shingikai), or 'Urban Landscape Council'

- **Intention:** The goal is to protect local character by evaluating a project's impact on the neighborhood.
- **Reality:** In many towns and cities, this review has become limited. The focus is often narrowed down to superficial aspects, primarily the regulation of building height and colors.

The screenshot shows the Kanazawa City website's page for color standards. At the top, there are navigation links for '暮らし・手続き' (Living/Procedures), '健康・福祉' (Health/Welfare), and '子育て・教育' (Childcare/Education). The city name '金沢市 Kanazawa City' is prominently displayed. A breadcrumb trail indicates the current location: '現在の位置 ホーム > 組織から探す > 景観政策課 > 業務案内 > 景観 > 金沢市景観計画 > 色彩基準'. The main heading is '色彩基準等に関する色彩見本' (Color Samples Related to Color Standards). Below this, there are social media sharing options for 'いいね!' (Like), 'シェアする' (Share), and 'ポスト' (Post). A note states: '下記の色彩基準等の項目に関わる色彩の代表色彩を見本として表示しています。' (Representative colors for items related to the color standards below are shown as samples). A '注意' (Note) section follows, explaining that the online display may differ from actual values and that reproduction is prohibited. The main content is titled '1. 禁止色「建築物の屋根・外壁や工作物の基調色」として禁止する色' (Prohibited Colors as Base Colors for Building Roofs, Exterior Walls, and Works). It lists four categories of prohibited colors based on hue and saturation. Below the text are eight color charts arranged in a 4x2 grid, each showing a color gradient with a red box highlighting the prohibited range.

暮らし・手続き 健康・福祉 子育て・教育 金沢市 Kanazawa City 文化・スポーツ観光

現在の位置 ホーム > 組織から探す > 景観政策課 > 業務案内 > 景観 > 金沢市景観計画 > 色彩基準

色彩基準等に関する色彩見本

いいね! シェアする ポスト

下記の色彩基準等の項目に関わる色彩の代表色彩を見本として表示しています。

注意

WEB上の画面で公開している関係上、実際のマンセル値と若干異なる場合があります。あくまで参考としてご覧下さい。
また、下記に示す色彩見本は金沢市で作成したものであり、無断転用は禁止します。

1. 禁止色「建築物の屋根・外壁や工作物の基調色」として禁止する色

1. R(赤)、YR(黄赤)系の色相で、彩度が6を超えるもの
2. Y(黄)系の色相で、彩度が4を超えるもの
3. 1・2以外の色相で、彩度が2を超えるもの
1～3については下図参照
4. 蛍光色（見本にはありません）

The Yokohama 都市デザイン室 (Urban Design Office)

A department within the Yokohama municipality.

Objective: Its mission is to create '横浜らしさ' (Yokohama-rashisa) - a unique 'Yokohama-ness'—and to foster human-scale urban spaces.

Methods: It operates through three integrated methods:

Control: Utilizing regulations and legal incentives and restrictions.

Projects: Leading major urban development projects.

Urban Design: Applying design principles to guide public and private development.

Key Function: Its most critical role is *the coordination of various departments within the municipality*. It breaks down administrative silos to ensure that transportation, parks, and building projects all work towards a single, integrated vision.



So, is the Japanese system effective, and is a Chief Architect needed?

- In Japan architects do have relatively large freedom in the design.
- Its weakness is a lack of integrated vision and proactive design leadership.
- The Yokohama model, however, has proven to be uniquely successful and highly beneficial. By coordinating across departments and actively pursuing a design vision, it has created a celebrated urban identity. Their key function is now coordination within the municipality, and integration of people power and professional power. This democratic approach is active in other cities and towns in Japan. It is a system that moves beyond simple regulation to achieve true urban design excellence.



Three buildings that recently approved as Yokohama City Designated Historic Building