



Minamiaso Railway Takamori Station Community Facility

The area surrounding Minamiaso Railway Takamori Station was developed as part of the creative revitalization of the areas along the Minamiaso Railway line following the 2016 Kumamoto Earthquakes.

The Minamiaso Railway serves as the backbone of regional public transportation for the communities in southern Aso. At the same time, it is one of the most prominent tourism resources in the prefecture, supporting the area's core tourism industry.

The town of Takamori planned Takamori Station, the starting and ending point of the Minamiaso Railway line, and its surrounding area with a focus on permanent residency, tourism, and disaster prevention.

Two buildings—the station house and the community space—along with their eaves,

corridor, and tower, surround a grassy plaza, creating a station where visitors can enjoy the scenery of the Aso caldera.

Furthermore, in light of the need for space to accommodate those sheltering in their cars following the Kumamoto Earthquakes, the community space was designed to serve as a support center for evacuees in cars, and the grassy plaza can also be utilized as a recreational space.



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● Building Plan Outline

While train station buildings are typically oriented towards the surrounding town, Takamori Station faces the opposite direction, towards the railway tracks. It welcomes passengers with a large, open grass lawn. The station building faces the railway tracks to accentuate several unique features: the gentle topography that seamlessly connects the platform to the surrounding townscape; the absence of ticket gates due to on-board ticket inspections, which means anyone can visit the train platform; and the westward view that offers breathtaking sunsets over the caldera. This unique layout was made possible because the project proposal called for a comprehensive overall design that included both the building layout and nearby infrastructure planning, such as the traffic roundabouts and bus stop.

The architecture is divided into two buildings: the station building and the community space, which are connected by eaves, a corridor, and a tower. The ceiling is supported by a three-dimensional interlocking wooden framework called "shura-gumi." The design of this wooden framework varies subtly throughout the structure: it plays outward over the platform area, increases in thickness in the corridor, and appears to stack vertically in the tower. Around the wooden structure, glass curtain walls with anti-UV film have been installed to prevent discoloration from the sun, provide weather protection, and create a reflective effect with the evening sunlight.

The eaves and corridor are designed to facilitate smooth transfers between different modes of transportation. Additionally, benches for viewing the sunset and surrounding scenery, as well as wildflowers native to Aso, were strategically placed throughout. This was all done with the aim of enriching the experience of waiting for a bus or train as much as possible.

The station building and community space feature a fractal-like composition, with rectangular volumes penetrating the four corners of the rectangular main structures. These corners are further diversified with elements like glass windows and benches. The height and position of the glass windows were carefully adjusted to frame views of the grass plaza, the five peaks of Mount Aso, and the railway. The station features many carefully crafted details to enhance its appeal. Miniature railway tracks are used for handrails and door handles, the clock face is altered to encourage sunset viewing, and nighttime illumination is employed to create a captivating nightscape and entice visitors to stay in town after the sun goes down.

As maintaining regional public transportation becomes a national issue in Japan, the role of train stations in conveying the appeal of railways to users is becoming increasingly important. Takamori Station was designed not only as a comfortable space for tourists but also as an integral part of daily life for the local community. It's a place where junior high and high school students can spend time after school, where people can enjoy picnics while watching the trains go by, and where townspeople can spontaneously stop by to admire the sunset. The hope is that this station becomes a memorable place for as many people as possible.

● Architect Profile



Hiroshi Ota

1968 Born in Tokyo
1991 Graduated from Department of Architecture, U of Tokyo
1993 Completed Master's at U of Tokyo
Research Associate at the Institute of Industrial Science, U of Tokyo
2001 Co-founded Neuob Inc.
2002 Co-founded the Tokyo Picnic Club
2003 Researcher at Center for Urban Regeneration Research, U of Tokyo
2009 Lecturer at Institute of Industrial Science, U of Tokyo
2015 Chairman of Neuob Inc.

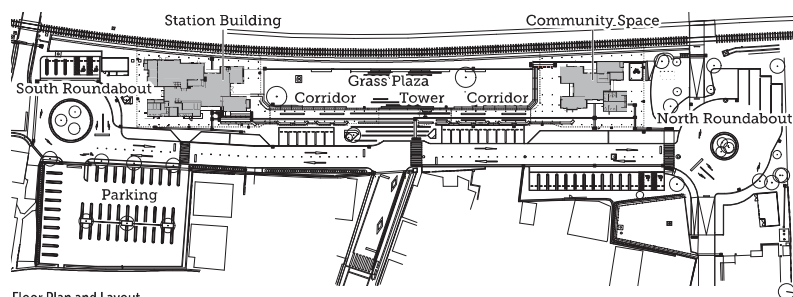
● Main Work

Duet, Kugahara Guest House, Shirakawa Bridge Left Bank Green Space Restrooms, PopulouSCAPE, Picnopolis, Yabuki Daiichi-ku Community Center

● Record of Awards

2013 Winning Proposal for Fukui Central Park Redevelopment Project
2018 Good Design Award (Tokyo Picnic Club)
2018 Featured in AIJ Selected Architectural Works (Yabuki Daiichi-ku Community Center)

Photo by Takumi Ota



Floor Plan and Layout



Elevation View

● Construction Data

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| Name: | Minamiaso Railway Takamori Station & Community Space |
| Address: | 1526-3 Takamori, Aso County, Kumamoto Prefecture, Japan |
| Main Usage: | Station building and community space |
| Operating Body: | Takamori |
| Architect: | Hiroshi Ota |
| Contractor: | Takeuchi Construction |
| Site Area: | 8,551.82m ² |
| Construction Area: | 1,180.17m ² |
| Total Floor Area: | 783.07m ² |
| No. of Floors: | 2 (above ground) |
| Structure: | Wooden |
| Exterior Finish: | Roof: Polyvinyl chloride roofing sheets (1.5mm thick) Exterior Walls: Mortar with a painted finish |
| Construction Period: | November 2021–June 2024 |
| Total Construction Cost: | 988,000,000 yen |



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