

Kumamoto Prefecture Ashikita Youth Center



The Tsurugiyama peninsula in Ashikita is located on the coast of the Yatsushiro Sea, halfway between Yatsushiro and Minamata, in the southern part of Kumamoto Prefecture. From a hill close to the shore, one can see the Amakusa Islands across the water. The site is blessed with a view of the beautiful sea, which recalls the Aegean Sea in Greece and a lush natural environment. The facilities are intended to foster youth development through group life activities and training as well as provide support for continued education activities. To use the superb natural conditions of the site to maximum advantage, architects incorporated views of the Yatsushiro Sea to the west and preserved as much as possible the pre-existing topography of the site, particularly the ridgeline on the north side.



Administrative and Training Building, Gymnasium

Architectural Outline

The intention was to simplify structures, materials and forms, to adapt the buildings to the slope of the site down toward the sea and to direct people's eyes toward the water. The buildings have been moved to the back of the site, and a plaza and an open stairway have been created facing the sea. The buildings, arranged around a central void, are in turn a screen framing a view of the sea, a canopy providing protection from the direct sunlight of summer, a windbreak, a colonnade endowing one's field of vision with rhythm and vitality and a landmark punctuating the otherwise uninterrupted extension of outdoor space.

Architectural Data

Name	Ashikita Youth Center
Location	Tsurugiyama, Ashikita-machi, Ashikita-gun
Main function	training and dormitory facilities
Developer	Kumamoto Prefecture
Architects	Gigantes Zenghelis Architects (Elia Zenghelis and Eleni Gigantes), Ryoji Suzuki and Shimamura Architects
General contractors	Wakuda Construction, Tanaka-gumi, Sawai Kensetsu, Kimura Kensetsu, Daido-gumi, Maejima Kensetsu, Matsushita-gumi, Hayanaga Komuten
Site area	125,443 square meters
Construction period	March 1997 - June 1998
Total construction cost	3,957 million

Administrative and Training Building

Building area	1,755 square meters
Total floor area	2,847 square meters
Extent	three aboveground floors
Structure	steel-framed reinforced concrete construction, reinforced concrete construction and steel-frame construction

Gymnasium

Building area	998 square meters
Total floor area	994 square meters
Extent	one aboveground floor
Structure	steel-frame construction and reinforced concrete construction



Profile of architect



Ryoji Suzuki

- 1943 Born in Tokyo
- 1967 Graduated from Department of Architecture, School of Science and Engineering, Waseda University
- 1968-73 Worked for Design Department, Takenaka Corporation
- 1970-71 Temporary staff of Maki & Associates
- 1975-77 Completed master's course, Department of Architecture, Waseda University
- 1977 Established "fromnow"
- 1983 Renamed office Ryoji Suzuki Architect and Partners
- 1997 Professor, Waseda University

●Principal Works

Experience in Material No.20 Azabu EDGE; Experience in Material No.33 Kohunji Temple; Experience in Material No.37 Project in Sagishima

●Awards

- 1970 Silver Prize, Yamagiwa Lighting International Limited Competition
- 1990 Second prize, "La maison de la Culture du Japon a Paris" Competition
- 1995 Second prize, Yokohama International Passenger Terminal International Competition
- 1997 Architectural Institute of Japan Award for Design

Dormitories, Cafeteria and Bath Building

Architectural Outline

The facility's objective is to permit people to enjoy a close relationship to Ashikita's natural environment. For that reason, the facility was housed, not in a single building, but in three separate buildings (Japanese-style dormitory, Western-style dormitory, and cafeteria and bath building) connected by covered walkways. The site has steep slopes. The buildings were situated on two hills (height: 39 meters and 31 meters), affording views of the sea. The facilities are designed to be continuous and to blend in with the surrounding environment. The dormitories are long, winding buildings that are adapted to the topography. Their roofs too have been designed as gentle, continuous curves that blend in with those natural elements.



Architectural Data

Dormitories(Japanese-style building, Western-style building)	
Building area	(Japanese-style building) 1,009.96 square meters; (Western-style building) 1,036.18 square meters
Total floor area	(Japanese-style building) 1,524.78 square meters; (Western-style building) 1,609.35 square meters
Extent	two aboveground floors
Structure	reinforced concrete construction; partly steel-frame construction

Cafeteria and Bath Building

Building area	863.10 square meters
Total floor area	1,124.14 square meters
Extent	two aboveground floors
Structure	reinforced concrete construction

Profile of architect



Elia Zenghelis

- 1937 Born in Athens, Greece
- 1956-61 Educated at Gymnasium Greece and Architectural Association
- 1961-71 Worked at Douglas Stephen and Partners
- 1971-75 Private practice in collaboration with George Candilis, O.M. Ungers and others
- 1975-87 in partnership with Rem Koolhaas, founded OMA (Office for Metropolitan Architecture)
- 1987 Established Gigantes Zenghelis Architects in partnership with Eleni Gigantes

●Principal Works

City Hall (The Hague); Parc La Vilette (Paris); Checkpoint Charlie (Berlin); etc.

Eleni Gigantes

1954 Born in New Delhi, India

- 1985 Graduated from Architectural Association
- 1978-86 Worked at Douglas Stephen and
Partners, OMA and other firms
- 1987 Established Gigantes Zenghelis
Architects in partnership with Elia
Zenghelis

●**Principal Works**

Las Terrenas Resort (Dominican Republic); Moabiter
Werder (Berlin); etc.