

Oguni Town Kitazato Elementary School Gymnasium



Architectural Outline

This was a project to rebuild the gymnasium of an elementary school in a mountain village. Approximately 100 students were enrolled at the time of the project, and that number was decreasing. We conducted a workshop with local residents, and the idea of using the school for other purposes was discussed. By situating the gymnasium between two other existing buildings standing on east side and west side, the surrounding galleries function as circulation route through the whole school. Transferring the special classroom like kitchen and library to the East Side building, eastern part of the school is reorganized for the social education and community use. Wood is used for both structure and finish to express the importance of forestry to the area. Cedar box trusses were used on the roof of the gym. Clerestories were installed between the enormous trusses to let in daylight, which is reflected off cylindrical panels. A soft light fills the arena, which is covered with wooden louvers. The color and intensity of light change gradually depending on the movement of the sun and the weather.



Architectural Data

Name	Oguni Town Kitazato Elementary School Gymnasium
Location	2473 Kitazata, Oguni-machi, Aso-gun
Main function	elementary school gymnasium
Developer	Oguni-machi
Architects	Kaoru Suehiro & NKS Architects
General contractors	Hashimoto Construction
Site area	7,822 square meters
Building area	1,840 square meters
Total floor area	1,147 square meters
Extent	2 aboveground floors
Structure	Wood, partly reinforced concrete
Construction period	July 2002 - March 2003
Total construction cost	259 million



Kaoru Suehiro

- 1961 Born in Oita Prefecture
- 1984 Bachelor of engineering, Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering, Kyushu University
- 1986 Master of engineering, Kyushu University
- 1986-90 Designer, SKM Architects and Planners
- 1990-91 Representative, Emergent Architects of Tokyo
- 1991-94 Master of engineering, Berlage Institute, Netherlands
- 1993 Designer, Herman Hertzberger, Netherlands
- 1994-98 Assistant lecturer, Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering, Kyushu University
- 1998 Principal, NKS Architects

●Principal Works

Kobayashi clinic (1997); Weekend house in Mitsuse(1999);House in Minakazedai(1999);House with funnel roofs(1999);YKK Kurobe Horikiri Dormitory(1999); Norimaki house(2000);House with 3 courtyards (2001); LKB(2002); Raw house in Kanoya(2002);Rouji unita clinic(2002);House in sakanoichi(2003)

●Awards

- 1998 Silver Prize, Japan Federation of Architects & Building Engineers Design Competition
- 1998 Prize, Fukuoka Prefecture Residential Architecture Culture Award
- 1999 Bronze Prize, Japan Federation of Architects & Building Engineers Design Competition
- 2001 Grand Prize, Fukuoka Prefecture Beautiful Community Development Award, Residential Category
- 2002 First Prize, Nishi-Arita Town Center Complex Proposal

Photo : Masaki Miyai