

Tokyo midtown's architecture development



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The Tokyo Midtown was built between 2004-2007, which is a 101, 000 square meter mixed-use development located in Roponggi, Tokyo, Japan. This project design was begun on August 2002 and the construction of the project was begun on May 2004 and completed on March 2007. There is a 400-year-old Hinokicho Park within the site was refurbished. The U. S. Army was stayed in this site as a barrack during World War II, the Japanese Defense Agency occupied this site after the army left. Consequently, Japanese Government sold the site in 2001 and Mitsui Fudosan won it. There was an archaeological exploration conducted during 2002 and 2003. During the exploring period, over fifty thousand pieces of pottery and two pieces of gold coins from Edo-period (1596-1698) were found out. The mixed-use development includes office, residential, retail, hotel, museum and leisure space. The total floor area of the development is 563, 800 square meters. There are over 50% of the project is designed to be open space.

Tokyo Midtown is located at two main street roads in roponggi district, there is a large lawn included in the site. Besides the class A office, residential units, High-end retail and hotel, and the museum, there is 50 percentage of site area are parks, plazas, promenades and streetscapes. In Tokyo, green space is only a private garden or scared space. The definition of green space is different from other cities. The green space used to be appreciated rather than utilizing. Citizens are not encouraged to use the green space and public events are not promoted to happen in such area. The primary developer, Mitsui Fudosan would like to change this old mind of green area and bring the new trend of Green Park. Thus, Tokyo Midtown was designed to be the new urban oasis in Roponggi district.

Imperial Palace is not only the largest public open space in Tokyo, but also a good case to show the typology of traditional Japanese landscape. The parkland of Imperial Palace is surrounded by the wall, which isolates the palace from the city's context. The cultural and historical valuable of the palace was abandoned, that the landscape of palace is cut off by the wall as an island, and there is no associated development next to the palace. This kind of traditional landscape promotes privacy and peaceful rather than connection between urban context. The developer would like to introduce a new landscape typology to the city. His approach is to create a unique sequence of open space which is new trend of connective landscape.

The project's developer promotes a new Japanese landscape design by creating a unique urban movement in the complex. The Tokyo Midtown a welcoming and attractive space which can stimulate the social and cultural interaction, thus the life of the place will be activated. This project is an architectural expression in landscape which can provide an open and green space for events. The historical green space Hinokicho Park is part of landscape and was refurbished. There are mainly three primary movements for the landscape in Tokyo Midtown. Firstly, the existing park is extended to the newer green areas. Secondly, there are a series of water features begin at the plaza. Thirdly, the water features flow down toward the greenery.

There were 40 mature cherry trees preserved from the old site and transplanted on new site. Those trees are used to create a new cherry promenade by connecting the entry to Hinokicho Park. There are over thousands of visitors attracted to here for gathering and celebrating the cule of seasons, during the blossom season of cherry.

In recent years, podium type development becomes the main new typology of large-scale development, especially in Hong Kong. The advantage of this typology is to provide a convenient and efficient connection from the upper level to the mass transit by the footbridge network. However, this typology has been produced less vibrant street life. The functional relationship between building and urban street grid has been lost. The public space has been separated from the existing neighborhood, thus the development has been isolated from urban street. Tokyo Midtown is a successful large-scale development with podium and tower that diminish the drawback of podium design. It undertakes a more sustainable approach to the new large-scale development. The development of Tokyo Midtown has achieved the sustainable design approach by several criteria as below:

First of all, the development of Tokyo Midtown took the opportunity to integrate this new development into the existing areas by creating great places which can improve the original district and bring a long-term value. This place-making approach is achieved by promoting the public spaces with landscape. The sense of space is created by adding the attractive street furniture and public art in the landscape, such as the lush mature tree canopy in the entrance. This canopy can emphasize the existing site characteristic and enhance the site's cultural and historical value. The landscape design improves the flexibility of space, so that public and private events will be promoted in order to facilitate the social interaction and vitality in this place. For example, the cherry promenade provides the linkage to the Hinokicho Park and also a place for gathering and celebrating the beauty of the trees during the bloom season. Thousands of visitors

attract by it and go there with a blanket, picnic, and drinks. The high quality design of Tokyo Midtown activates the existing space and brings economic incomes, and reflects the character of the surrounding area. This mix-used development incorporated hotel, office, residential, retail, restaurants, museum and parks. It provides a small community for people to live, work and enjoy their leisure time. Besides, the Tokyo Midtown introduces the pedestrian connectivity in both physical and psychological way. Visitors can experience a rich and vibrant pedestrian through visiting the tree-lined street and pleasant walkway. The lining of trees refurbishes the existing subway stop and redirects the ground passenger to the new exit at Tokyo Midtown. The place-making approach is also strengthened by providing high-quality public realm. It lets wide range of activities happen in this area. The unique identity landmarks, the 54 storeys Mori Tower has been incorporated in the whole development which is the tallest building in Tokyo. It increases the attractiveness of the destination.

Secondly, Tokyo Midtown has well integrated with the infrastructure and the surrounding transport network. It provides a high standard connection to the transit and improves the connection between site and surrounding area at the ground level. Tokyo Midtown is not a project only concern the spatial quality within the site boundary, but also to provide the mix-used development with a wider site context and great impact on surrounding area. Citizens criticize that walled developments issue would be raised as the project with infrastructure is easily being isolated from the urban due to the poor integration of surrounding. This project includes 5 buildings, a high-end retail, luxury department, class A office space, luxury department, medical

center. These 5 buildings surround a skyscraper with 248m height. The whole development is well integrated to the adjacent park and the Roppongi railway station. Roppongi railway station is a famous station along the Toei Oedo Line. Tokyo Midtown provides a successful access to the exit of railway station through the spatial arrangement of the open space. There is good public transport connection provided. The Roppongi railway station is well connected to the public transport interchanges within the Tokyo Midtown. The site is quite near the Roppongi Hills development which is less than 0.8 kilometer. The Roppongi Hill is surrounded by the vehicle-dominated road infrastructure and connects to podium of Tokyo Midtown. The majority of the edges are connected to the street level, it breaks down the traditional podium language. This project has well integration between land use and the transport in both physical and social aspects.

Sustainable strategy

Large-scale development usually bring negative impact on surrounding area or the wider context, as developer usually only focus on designing the area within the site, the adjacent area may not be their concern. Tokyo Midtown is a large-scale development which has been well integrated with the surrounding area. The design of this project is base on the sustainable development principles and the urban design guidelines, so that it will keep integrating and sustainable in a long-term period. The resource efficiency and environmental friendly approach is also adopted in development. The floor area of the whole development is concentrated in one quadrant of the site, so that the urban park area can be maximized. There is more than 40 percent of the site area is designed as an urban park which act as a main

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connection between the site and the community greenbelt. Tokyo Midtown promotes sustainability at the neighborhood and district levels, the spatial quality of the pedestrian environment at the street level is enhanced. As a result, the walkability and the livability within the site area and also the district are gradually improved. The location and proportion of program of the whole development is concerned to improve the sustainability in environmental, social and economic aspect. There are over 150 shops and restaurants offered in the high-end retail area, 500 luxury residential units, several office towers, a Ritz-Carlton hotel, 800-seat conservation center and an art museum provided in development, which can benefit the district in social and economic way. The large green open space which occupies 40 percent of site area can benefit the district in environmental way. The open space is designed to guide visitor walk from surrounding streets and sidewalk to the site. A sense of “on the ground” is promoted by touching the earth and nature. There are some view corridors, transparent material, bridges and plazas visually open and connect to the open space in order to lead the visitor from the park to the nature. The design of water feature is to lead the visitors to the park and guide them down through meandering pathway to the 21_21 Design Museum and the traditional Japanese Garden.

New district 's image

Before the completion of Tokyo Midtown, Roppongi was a well-known district as a night town. Roppongi was a place which is full of entertainment hub and with abandoned traditional neighborhood. The developer Mitsui Fudosan would like to change the public perception of Roppongi district from a night town to an update image which is a vitalized daytime district. Tokyo Midtown

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is a development to provide a balance mix of business and living place to the district, in which the cultural amenities will be highly respected. Moreover, Tokyo Midtown is a hope as business and economy revival of Japan, it designed to represent the best characteristic of Japanese society by the mixed-use development. The Japanese government treats it as a priority urban redevelopment area". This mixed-use development has integrated with a public park , which promotes an environmental friendly and commercial active attraction in this district, thus it benefit to the entire neighborhood and enhance the economic value of Roppongi. To match with this large green park, the famed Suntory Museum of Art was relocation. Consequently, the green park, museum, Tokyo National Art Center and Roppongi Hill will be well connected. The community park is merged with the existing greenbelt and connects to those abandoned nearby green space such as the grounds of Tokyo government cemetery and a Shinto religious shrine.