Takamatsubara Memorial Park for TSUNAMI Disaster
Mourning, Remembering and Recovering
PROJECT TITLE
Takatamatsubara Memorial Park for TSUNAMI Disaster

PROJECT STATEMENT
The Takatamatsubara Memorial Park for TSUNAMI Disaster is a symbol of reconstruction from the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami that occurred in March 2011. It was developed in collaboration with the National government, Iwate prefecture, and Rikuzentakata City.

The park aims to pass down the memories and lessons learned to the next generation, to provide a place for memorial and reflection on those lost in the disaster, and to communicate the strong desire to rebuild to the rest of the world.

In this park and its surroundings, there are places to pray for the victims, remains from the earthquake that subsist as memories of the disaster, and the natural environments of the scenic Takata Pine Grove and Furukawa Marsh that reveal the natural regeneration of the place.

Since the earthquake, experts, developers, and designers have been working together to design this park with the cooperation of the citizens.

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Context
Takatamatsubara Memorial Park for TSUNAMI Disaster is located in Rikuzentakata City, Iwate Prefecture, where Takata Matsubara Park (translated as Takata Pine Grove Park) used to be. It was the prefecture’s most visited beach recreation area, which was loved not only by citizens but also by 1 million tourists and bathers every year.

In March 2011, an unprecedented natural disaster, the Great East Japan Earthquake struck Rikuzentakata City where the park is situated. The whole area was submerged by a tsunami of over 13m height and the Takata Matsubara Park and its Pine Grove were swept away by the wave. Only one pine tree remained, now known as the Miracle Pine Tree. It is a symbol of hope for reconstruction, and it continues to convey the memory of the disaster.

After the earthquake, various reconstruction and restoration projects were carried out. A large-scale seawall with an altitude of 12.5 m was constructed, and various infrastructures such as river embankments and roads were restored. In addition, a hill and embankments were created to relocate the housing to a safe raised area. A new urban area was formed.
Developed on an Area of 53 hectares the Takatamatsubara Memorial Park for TSUNAMI project was launched in 2011.

It is a collaborative work of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (National government), Iwate Prefecture, and Rikuzentakata City to symbolize the recovery from the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011.

Planning and Concept

The park followed three core planning concepts:

- Praying for the lives lost during the disaster
- Passing on the lessons learned to future generations
- Showing a strong will to recover to everyone

It aimed to create an open space that is integrated into the town reconstruction, featuring the National Memorial and prayer facility that has been erected by the national government and the local natural environment and landscapes of the Takata Pine Grove, which used to be a Place of Scenic Beauty, and Fukurawa Marsh, that are being regenerated.

Takatamatsubara Memorial Park for TSUNAMI Disaster can be synthesized as this: “In the place where the Miracle Pine Tree remains, we will convey to the future the lessons learned from the earthquake and the appearance of reconstruction, along with the feelings of mourning for the lives lost”.

Landscape Design and Architecture

Mourning the lives lost

The National Memorial and Prayer facility, developed by the government, is a Place of Prayer that forms the core of the entire park. The proposition was to create a place of prayer where symbolism could be continuously demonstrated.

Therefore, the administration building, consisting of the Roadside Station Takatamatsubara and the Iwate Tsunami Memorial Museum, is designed as a symbolic gate surrounded by a symmetric artificial hills. This space is centered on the “axis of prayer”, a strong straight line extending toward the sea where the tsunami struck. This axis comprises a cut-out space surrounded by walls, a floral tribute spot, a footbridge, and a sea view spot.

Due to the construction of a coastal sea wall during the city reconstruction time, the sea was hidden. The challenge was to integrate the sea into the Master plan of the Park. For that purpose, the “Sea View Spot” was created by using the Coastal sea wall as a stage at the end of the “Axis of Prayer”. It is a place where you can widely observe the sea, the scenic spot Takata Matsubara, the city area, and the surrounding mountains.

The “Axis of Reconstruction”. The Iwate Tsunami Memorial Museum is an exhibition facility for passing on lessons learned from the earthquake, and the Roadside Station Takatamatsubara is a facility for regional development to turn toward tomorrow. These show the past, the present, and the future.

In addition, Tapic 45, a former Roadside Station that is a Remains left from the earthquake, is adjacent to the Administration building and its presence indicates the threat of the earthquake. We regard these east-west connections as the “axis of reconstruction” that form a space where indoors and outdoors are unified.

A pathway is placed on the “axis of reconstruction” that leads to the disaster remains Tapic 45, and it has a gradient that gives the impression of descending into the disaster-stricken area.
**Memory**

In the park, various remains were left from the disaster and are now regarded as important resources to pass on the memory of the earthquake and tsunami to future generations. These convey the magnitude of damage caused by the disaster, such as the height of the tsunami. Discussions with citizens were organized to either keep or remove those remains since they can be traumatic memory. Therefore, the solution was to design the surrounding of the remains purposely. For example, mounds were created with trees to smooth the view of remains from the city side.

**Tapic 45**, which was a roadside station, is a remains where the ground level is preserved as it was immediately after the disaster. The tremendous power of the Tsunami is visible at the exterior and the interior of the building with Pine tree trunks of the previous Pine Grove stuck inside. Trees centered on cherry blossoms were planted in the surrounding area. From March to April, Prunus speciosa blooms. In addition, a mound of soil was designed to softly hide the remain from the city side.

**Kesen Junior High School**. On the disaster day, the three-story school building was submerged in a few minutes, but the results of daily training are demonstrated and all students and staff were able to evacuate before the tsunami arrived. This remain is showing that training in flooding areas is an important knowledge to pass on.

**The foundation of the conveyor belt** that has made great achievements in shortening the construction period for the raised embankment work in the damaged urban area is positioned as a “reconstruction remains”.

**The Miracle Pine Tree** is the only remaining pine from the forest of Takata Pine Grove. Immediately after the earthquake, it supported people’s hearts and continues to exist as a symbol of reconstruction.

**Regeneration**

To regenerate the former Takata Pine Grove, efforts are underway to grow seedlings from the Miracle Pine Tree branches cuttings and seeds collected from pine cones, as well as seeds from the previous Takata Pine Grove’s pine cones that were picked up and preserved by neighboring residents. On May 27th 2017, some of them were planted at the first commemorative tree planting event with citizens. We will continue to carry out long-term upbringing activities such as weeding, cutting vines, and thinning in collaboration with local communities.

In Furukawa Marsh, after the disaster, various natural environments such as tidal flat environment, brackish water environment, and pond environment have been gradually regenerated. For the conservation of such a natural environment, we merely left it to the succession of nature, avoiding topographical changes as much as possible, for the habitat of migratory birds and fishes. After the tsunami, we also observed the resurgence of Mizuaoi (Hyacinth family) endemic to this zone. Conservation measures were taken such as setting up a temporary pool from the construction stage and temporarily transplanting the soil containing seeds.

**Safeness - Safe evacuation route to raised areas**

The Takatamatsubara Memorial Park for TSUNAMI Disaster is located in the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami flood zone. In the unlikely event of a disaster, evacuation routes and evacuation signs are placed so that people can safely evacuate from the park to the evacuation area on the city side. Since this park is about 2km long in the east-west direction, there is a total of four evacuation routes connecting to the nearest evacuation site. Currently, disaster prevention training is organised periodically to ensure the safety of people.
These photos are showing the situation, within the park, before and after the disaster. The whole forest and seawall were swept away by the tsunami. We can visually understand the destructive power of the earthquake and tsunami that hit this area.
Takamatsubara Memorial Park for TSUNAMI Disaster aims to create an open space that is integrated into the town reconstruction. The local natural environment and landscapes of the Takata Pine Grove, which used to be a Place of Scenic Beauty, and Fukurawa Marsh are to be regenerated.
The Park is a collaborative work of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Iwate Prefecture, and Rikuzentakata City. There are places to pray for the victims, remains from the earthquake that subsists as memories of the disaster, and natural environments of the Pine Grove and Furukawa Marsh.
The “axis of prayer,” consists of a cut-out space surrounded by walls, a floral tribute spot, a footbridge, and a sea view spot. The sea view spot is a location where you can observe the sea, the Pine Grove, the city area and the surrounding mountains.
The on-axis pathway leading to the earthquake disaster remains Tapic 45 is an image of descending to the damaged land.

The connections between the Administration building and the remains Tapic 45 is the “axis of reconstruction” that unified the indoors and the outdoors. A pathway is placed on this axis that leads to the remains and gives the impression of descending into the disaster-stricken area.
Some of the remains from the earthquake have been preserved to show the power of the tsunami and pass down the memory and lesson. Because of the trauma caused by this disaster, it was decided to smooth the view of remains from the city side.
Nature returns gradually since the disaster. A disappeared endemic specie “Mizuaoi” has been found on the site during inspections. Areas were created to encourage the recovery of this flower. Also, plantation such as the renewal of the Takata Pine Grove were arranged with local communities.
Maps and graphic informations help people to understand the concept and purpose of the park. Since the park is located in a Tsunami flood zone, evacuation routes and evacuation signs are placed to move from the park to safe areas on the city side.
Elements such as light provide visibility, comfort and enhance the design purpose of the Memorial Park.