



Submitted for:
IFLA AAPME Awards 2023 - 1.1.C) Parks and Open Space

Himeji Urban Park and Cultural Convention Center

-Public space where landscape, civil engineering and architecture are integrated



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01 PROJECT TITLE

Himeji Urban Park and Cultural Convention Center

-Public space where landscape, civil engineering and architecture are integrated

02 PROJECT STATEMENT

Himeji City is located in Hyogo Prefecture in the Kansai region. In addition to the north-south street from the station to Himeji Castle, which is frequently visited by tourists, an east-west axis has been developed in recent years to create a place for cultural exchanges, and this project is the core of such facilities. A public facility complex including large and small music halls, large exhibition halls and conference rooms, and an urban park are located adjacent to each other across the street, and a pedestrian deck crossing the two sites was designed to facilitate smooth traffic on the second floor level to accommodate a variety of events.

For the landscape, the design concept was based on the "hills," a common topography in the area, and two hills were created through the ground design in the park and rooftop greenery on the building. Visitors can walk the gentle hill in the park to reach the second floor level of the building, which is the other hill. . The architecture and landscape are linked in terms of design and functionality to create a unified public space that can accommodate a variety of indoor and outdoor events and activities.

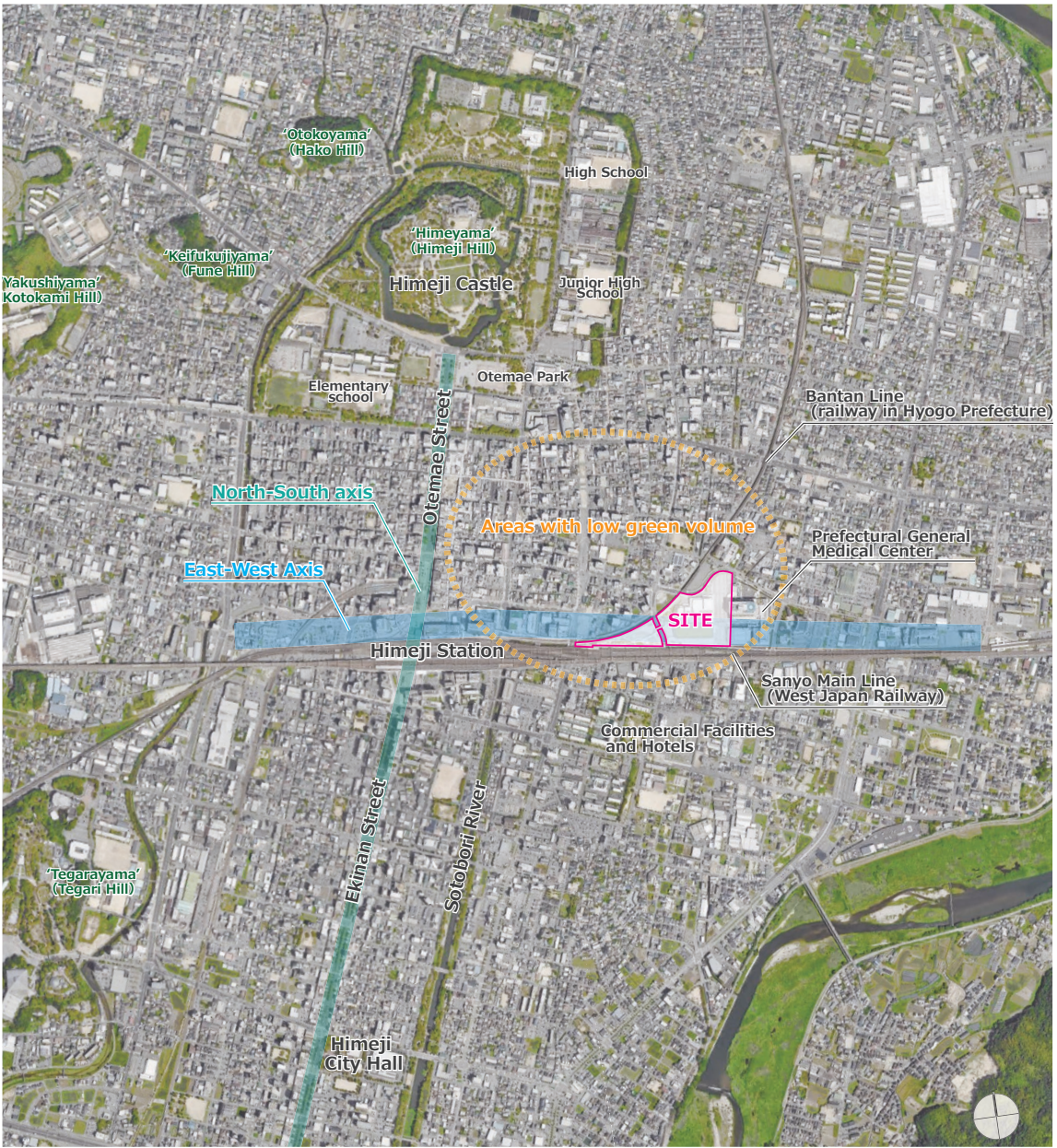
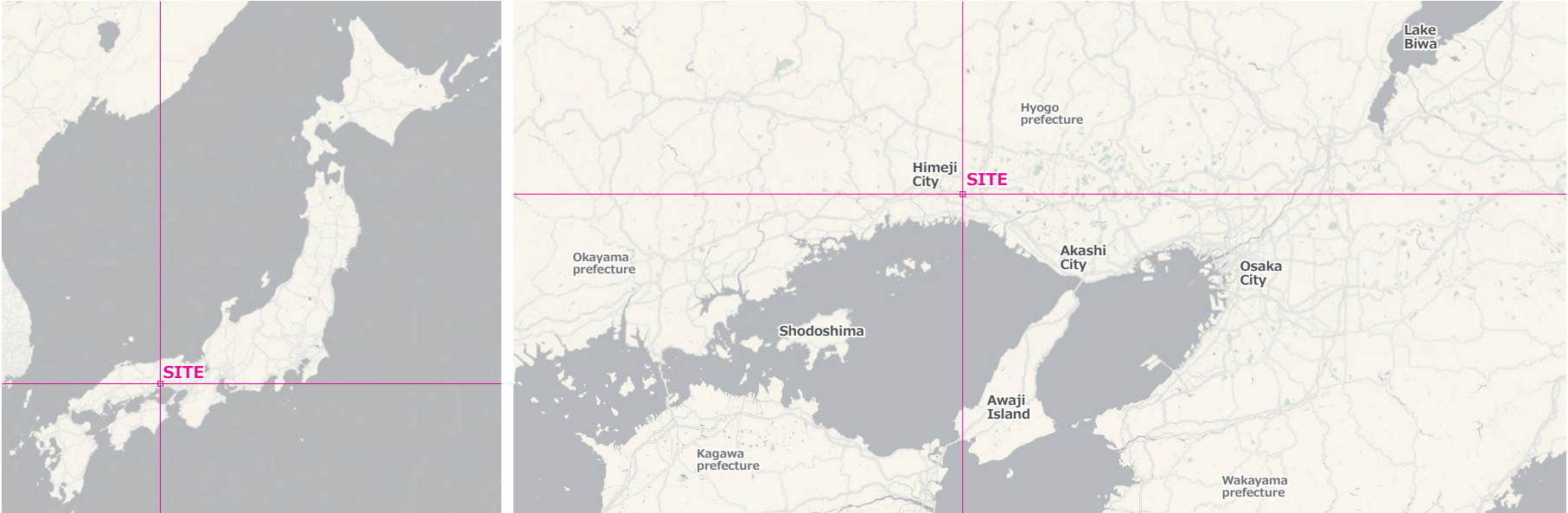
03 PROJECT NARRATIVE

Background and History of the Project

In Himeji City, the elevated railroad line in the vicinity of Himeji Station has been used as an opportunity to develop urban infrastructure such as land readjustment projects in an integrated manner, and the city has promoted the development of not only the north-south street leading from the station, which is frequently visited by tourists, to Himeji Castle and City Hall, but also the east-west axis as a center for cultural exchange. This facility is located in the zone where events are actively held along the east-west axis, and was planned as a facility with the functions of a cultural and artistic center as well as a place to strengthen manufacturing capabilities, develop local brands, and increase the number of people interacting with each other.

Issues and Assumptions

The plan required the cultural facility and park to be integrated to form a lively and relaxing place which can accomodate a variety of events and to become a new green center that provides a favorable environment for the surrounding residential areas. In addition, the park site is the main pedestrian route from Himeji Station to the facility. However, the site is an obstructed and irregularly shaped area sandwiched between two elevated railroad lines, the JR Sanyo Main Line and the Bantan Line, and requires a multi-level crossing over the road on the way to the park. Under these conditions, a safe, secure, and comfortable space for pedestrian movement was required.



Site Map -Center of Himeji City-



Aerial view before the railroad was elevated



Previous photo (park site)



Previous photo (road between sites)

03 PROJECT NARRATIVE

The concept of the project

The key to this project was the integration of landscape, civil engineering, and architecture to solve the issues.

By doing so, we are able to provide a space that can accommodate the various events and activities that the public demands.

Inspired by the "hills" that are a common geographical feature in the area, the design concept was "A new hill for cultural creation in Himeji," and two hills were created through the ground design in the park and rooftop greenery on the building. Visitors naturally reach the second floor level of the building by climbing the gentle hill in the park, allowing for smooth access to the building.

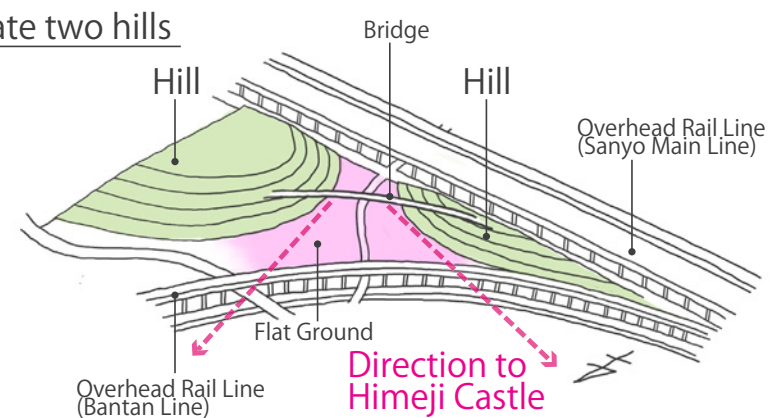


Hills scattered throughout the city of Himeji

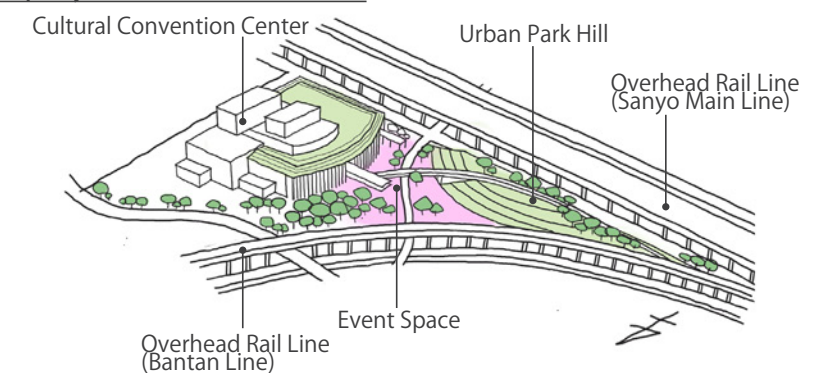
Space Overview

When accessing the complex on foot from Himeji Station, visitors first arrive at the urban park on the west side, entering the park between two elevated tracks and passing through the park's main walkway, which gradually climbs to a higher level. The second-floor entrance hall is connected to the foyers of the music halls and the other floors, penetrates to the public parking lot on the east side, and also provides access to the prefectural hospital on the east side at the second-floor level.

Create two hills



Deployment of functions

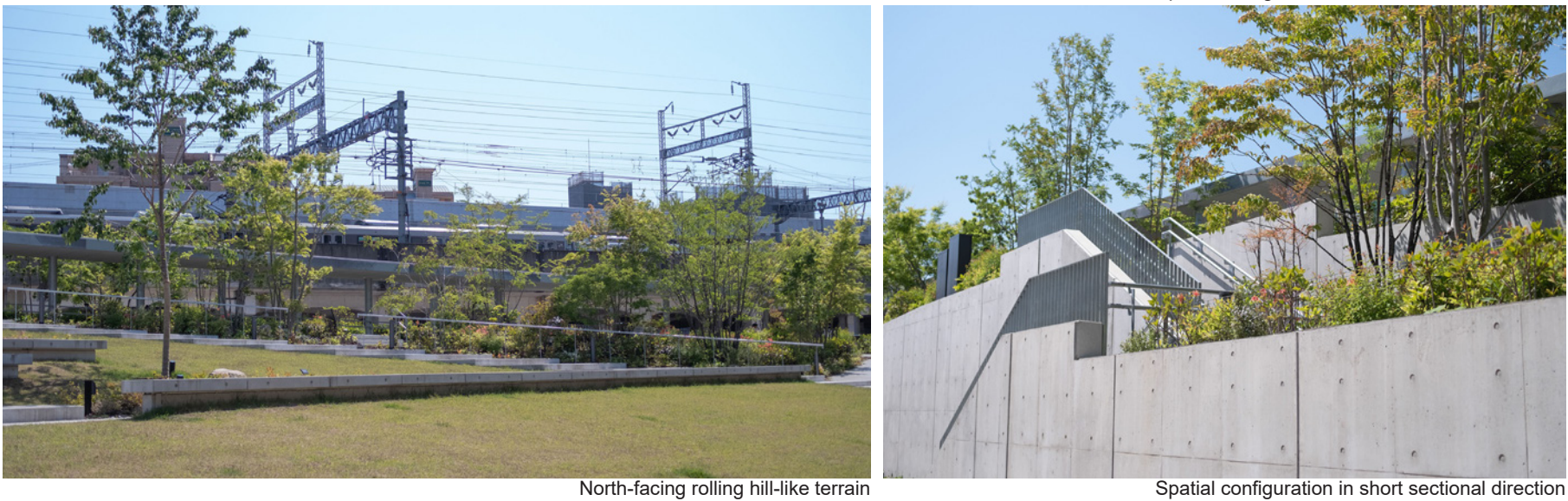
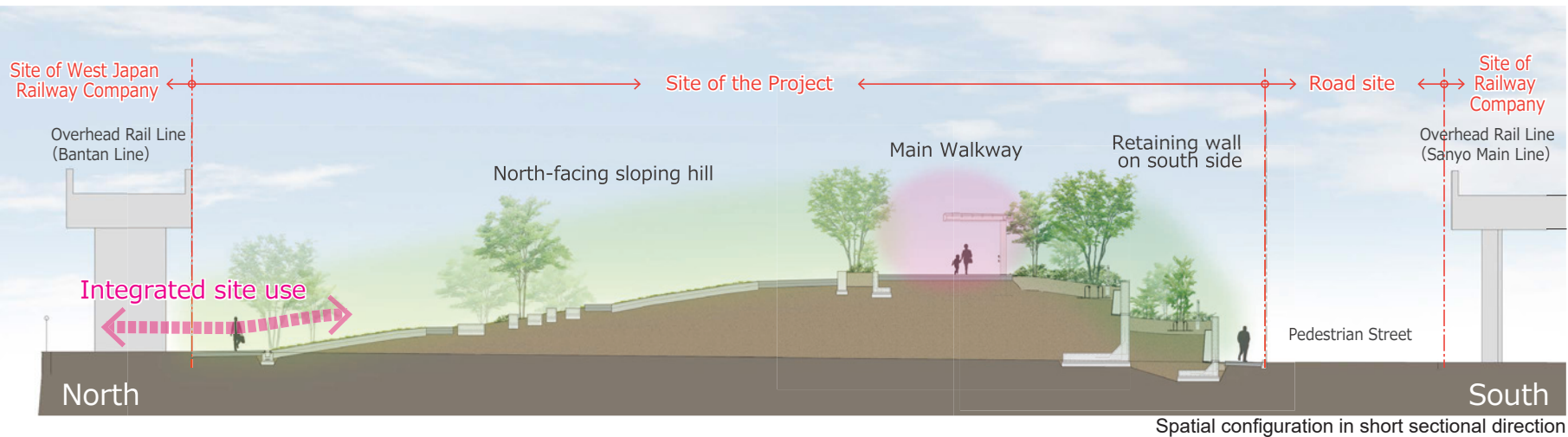
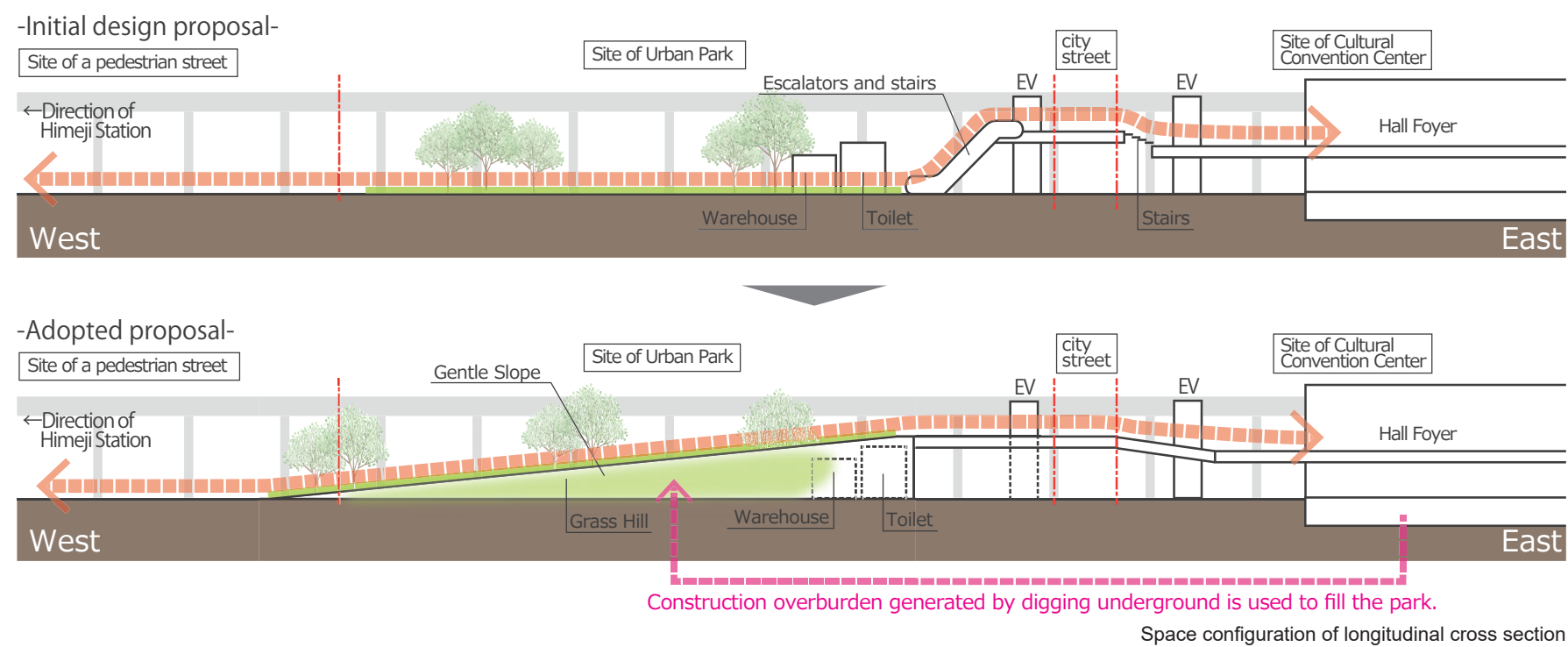


03 PROJECT NARRATIVE

Grand design of the hill shape

The park is part of the main circulation line from Himeji Station to the facility, so it was required to cross over the road on the way. By proceeding along the main park road with a gentle longitudinal slope of less than 4 percent, taking advantage of the long and narrow east-west shape of the park site, we aimed to allow visitors to reach the deck level without being aware of the slope while enjoying a walk in the park, including its seasonal scenery. The the soil left over from the facility construction was reused to form the hill to reduce the cost of purchasing and transporting soil and to be environmentally friendly.

The site is sandwiched between two elevated railroad lines, and a retaining wall was built on the south side where the the elevated railroad of JR Sanyo Line is wide andthe hill is designed to face to the north. The retaining wall on the south side is designed to reduce the sense of oppression by overlapping the retaining walls with a planting strip in between. Along the main traffic line that runs along the ridge of the hill, various patterns of retention spaces were designed to match the shape of the hill, and the activities in the park can be viewed from the windows of trains passing nearby.



03 PROJECT NARRATIVE

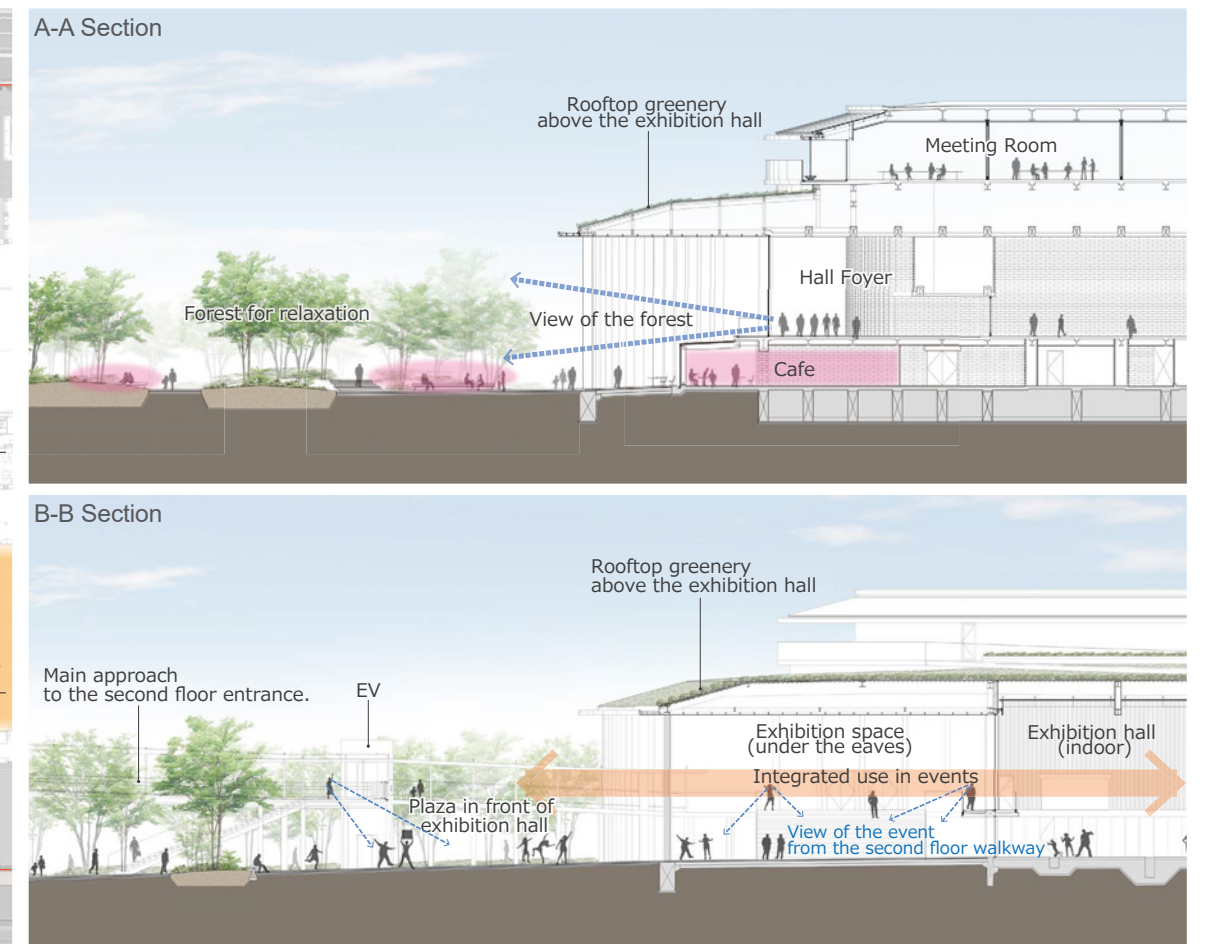
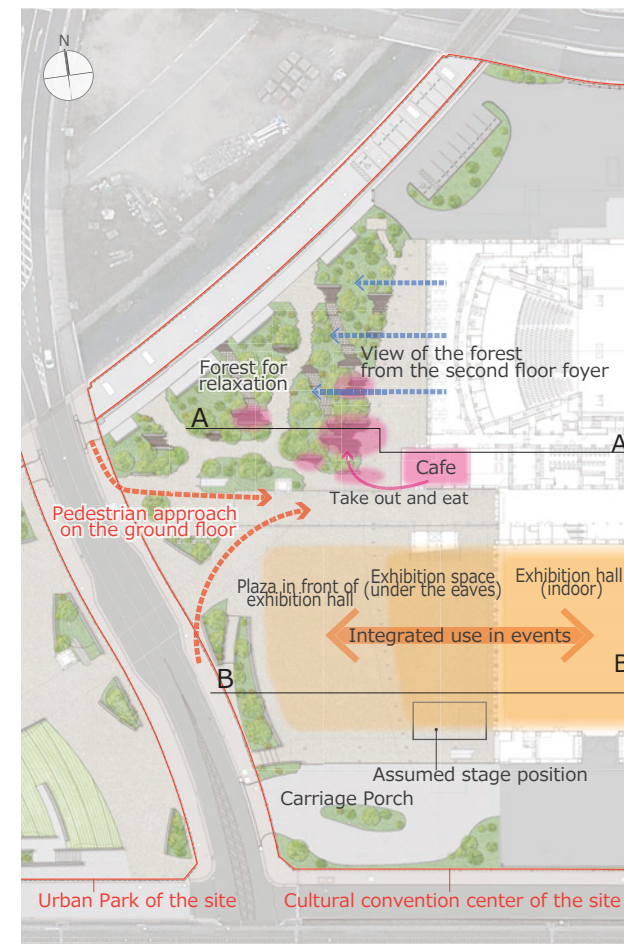
Grand design of the hill shape

On the facility side of the site, the space for events and residences is mainly concentrated on the west side of the building. On the south side of the site, a piloti space and a plaza are designed in continuity with the exhibition space inside the building, making it possible to accommodate a variety of events. Depending on the type of event, it is also possible to open the building's fittings to physically integrate the inside and outside of the building for an event.

On the north side of the site, a forest for resting and relaxation is provided where small groups of people can stay, and is planned to be used in conjunction with the café on the first floor and with the view from the hall foyer on the second floor in mind.

Many bricks are used in the exterior materials of the building of this project, as well as in the interior of the music hall. The landscape architects considered reusing the materials produced in the prototype stage of these projects. By using them as aggregate for precast benches and pavement materials, we were able to reduce the amount of material waste while creating a design that is integrated with the building.

The roof-top greenery of approximately 5,000 m² is located on top of the building to reduce the air conditioning load in the facility, creating another hill for flora and fauna to blend with the local nature.



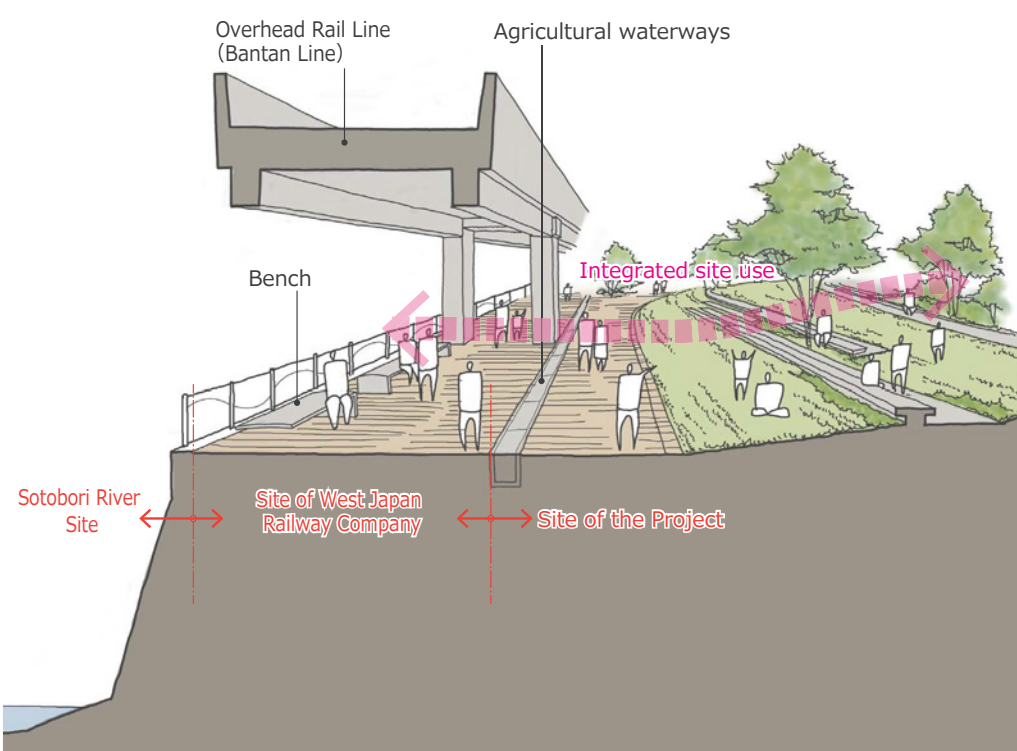
A view of the exhibition space when the event is taking place.

03 PROJECT NARRATIVE

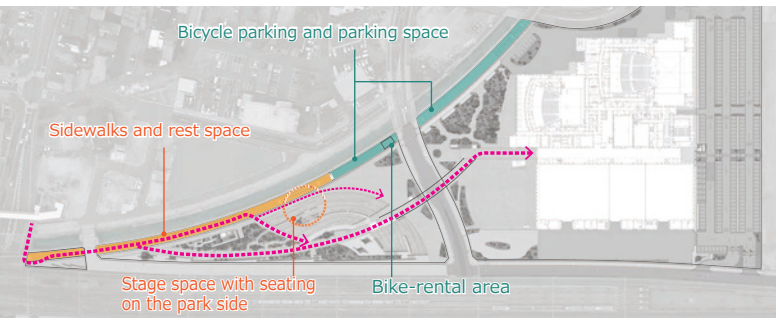
Relationship with the Surrounding Facilities

We discussed and coordinated with the various stakeholders of adjacent railroad overpass and the waterway in the park for mutual use in a design process that transcended administrative frameworks with the cooperation of the project entity.

For the adjacent Bantan Line elevated railway, discussions were held with JR West to plan for integrated use with the park and its facilities, including a retention space, pathways, bicycle parking, and parking lots. Rest areas and pathways are provided adjacent to the park to provide shade and shelter from rain, complementing the park use and encouraging more comfortable use.



Cross-sectional diagram of the elevated Bantan Line

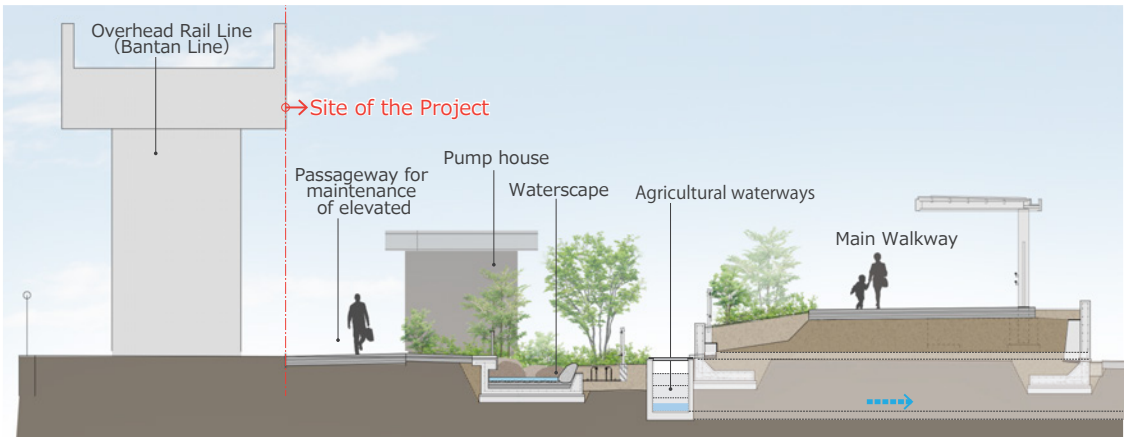
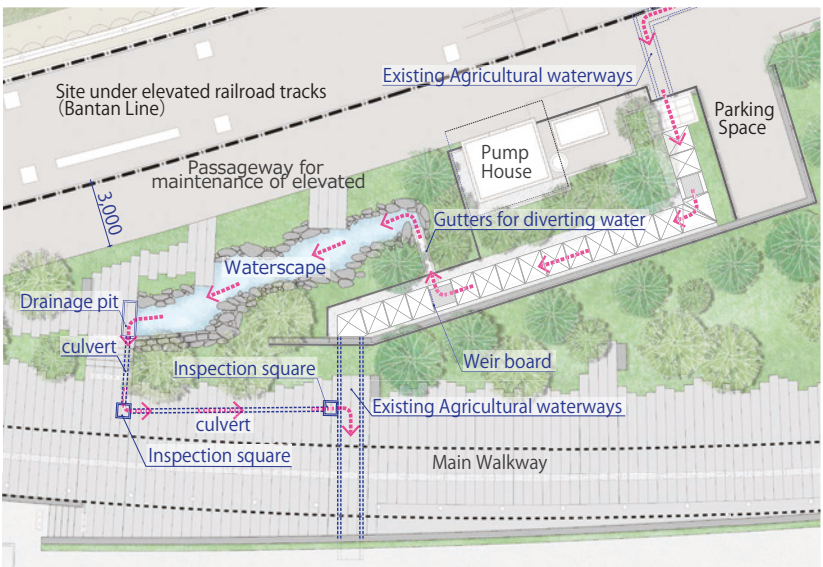


Layout for elevated use

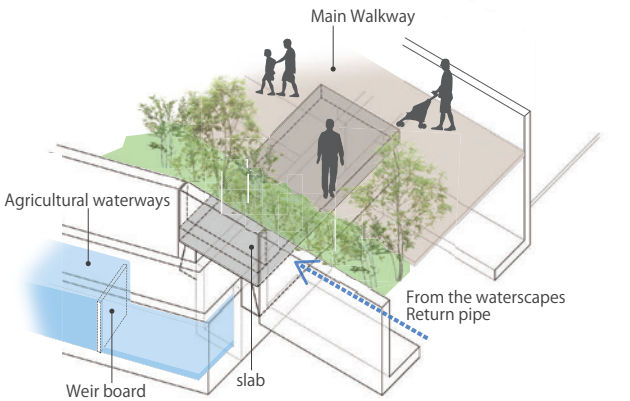


Use of elevated area as a shaded resting space

A weir board was installed to divert agricultural water to the agricultural canal that runs through the site, creating a waterscape facility within the park and a relaxing space where visitors can feel a sense of comfort. The pump house that pumps water from the Sotobori River to the existing agricultural canal was also renovated in an integrated manner with the park. For the main flow line, a floor plate was installed above the waterway, and by crossing over the waterway at a high level, the flow line within the park was established without damaging the existing waterway structure.



Relationship between waterscape and agricultural waterways



Relation between main path and agricultural waterways

03 PROJECT NARRATIVE

Experience

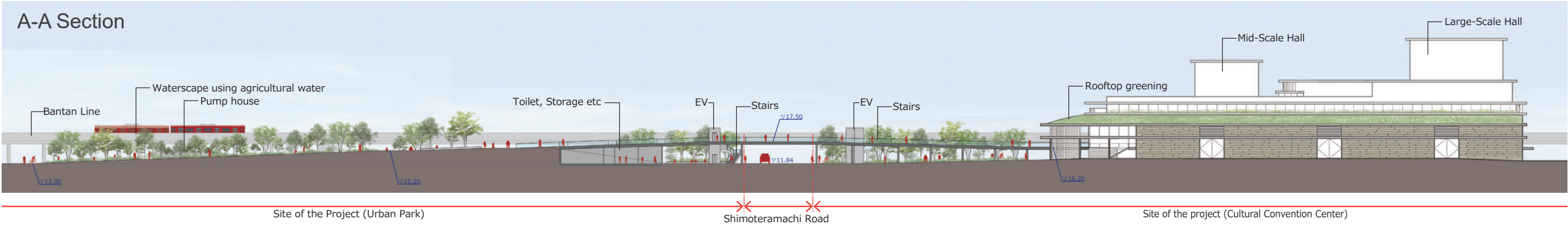
The landscape functions as a receptacle for a variety of activities, from daily use to large-scale events.

This year marks two years since the construction of this facility was completed, and during the two years, the facility has held not only large events that attract people from far and wide, such as concerts of famous artists, but also community events, such as coming-of-age ceremonies and marché.

On a daily basis, a diverse range of people use the space as part of their daily life, including dog walkers, people waiting for the bus at the bus stop, and a nearby daycare center that uses the space as a school yard.

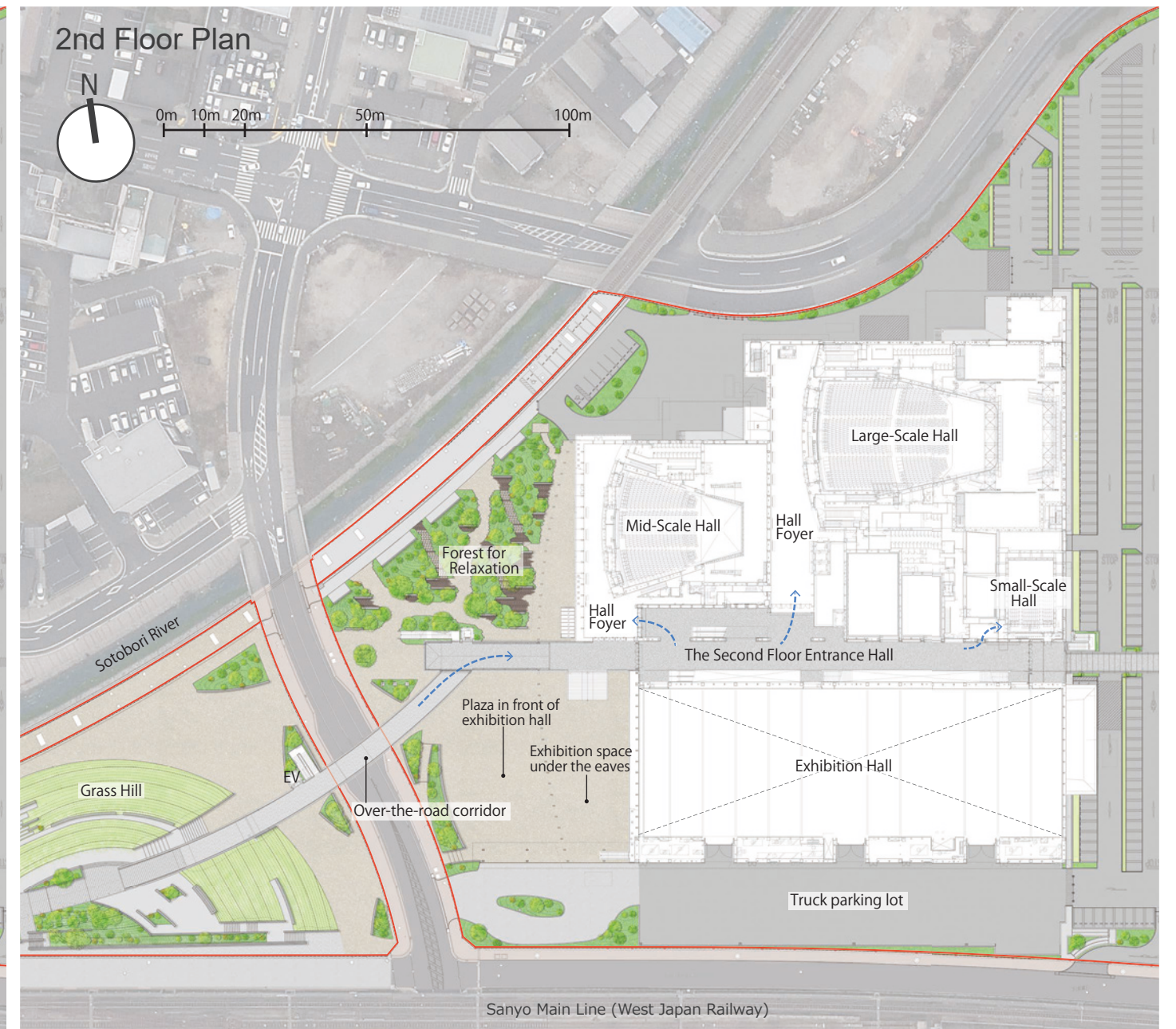
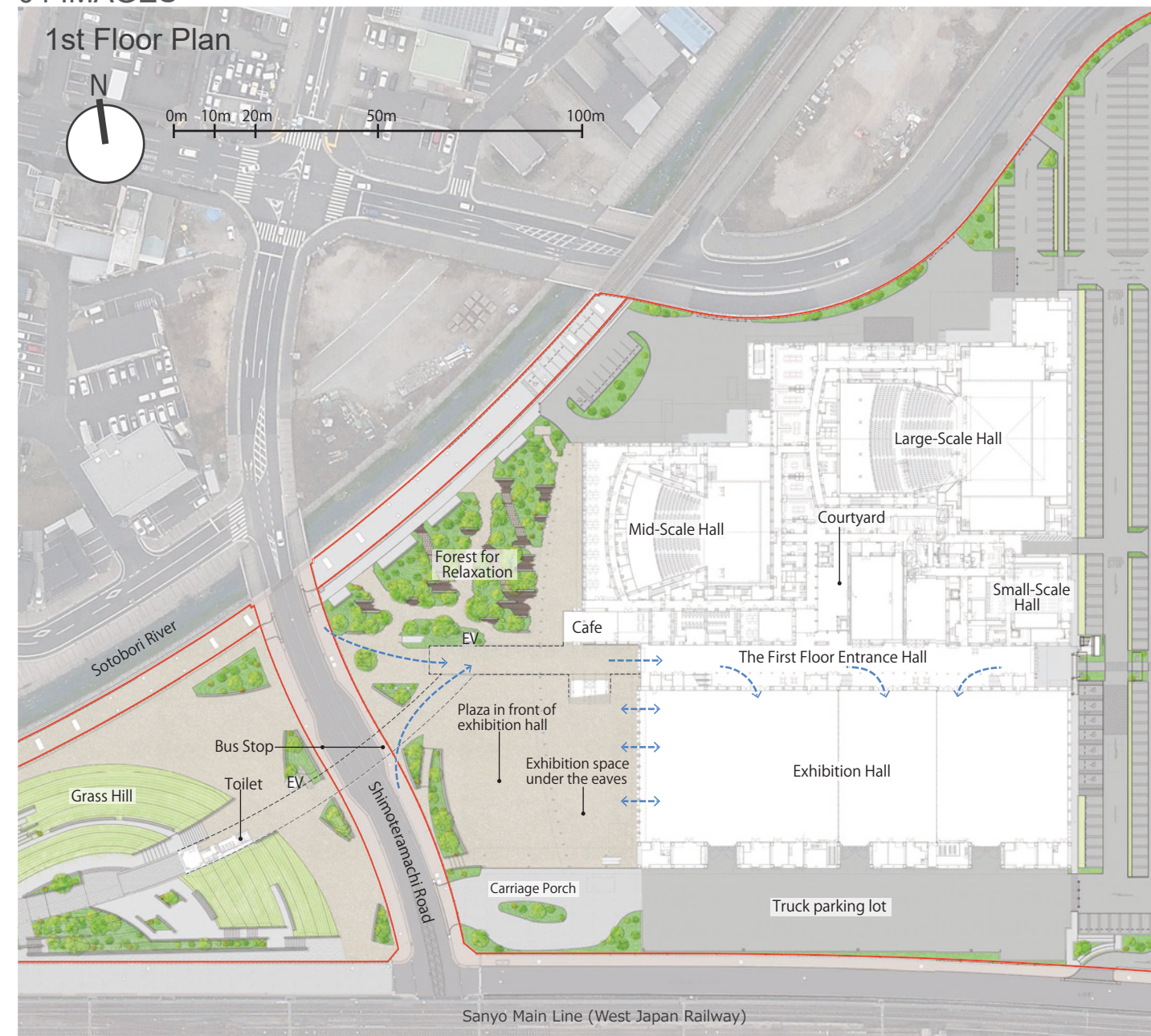
We hope that as the landscape space continues to grow, it will be loved and used more and more by local residents.





Master plan and longitudinal cross section.
The plan takes advantage of the east-west length of the park, with a gentle slope reaching the second floor level, crossing the street, and providing access to the Cultural and Convention Center.

04 IMAGES

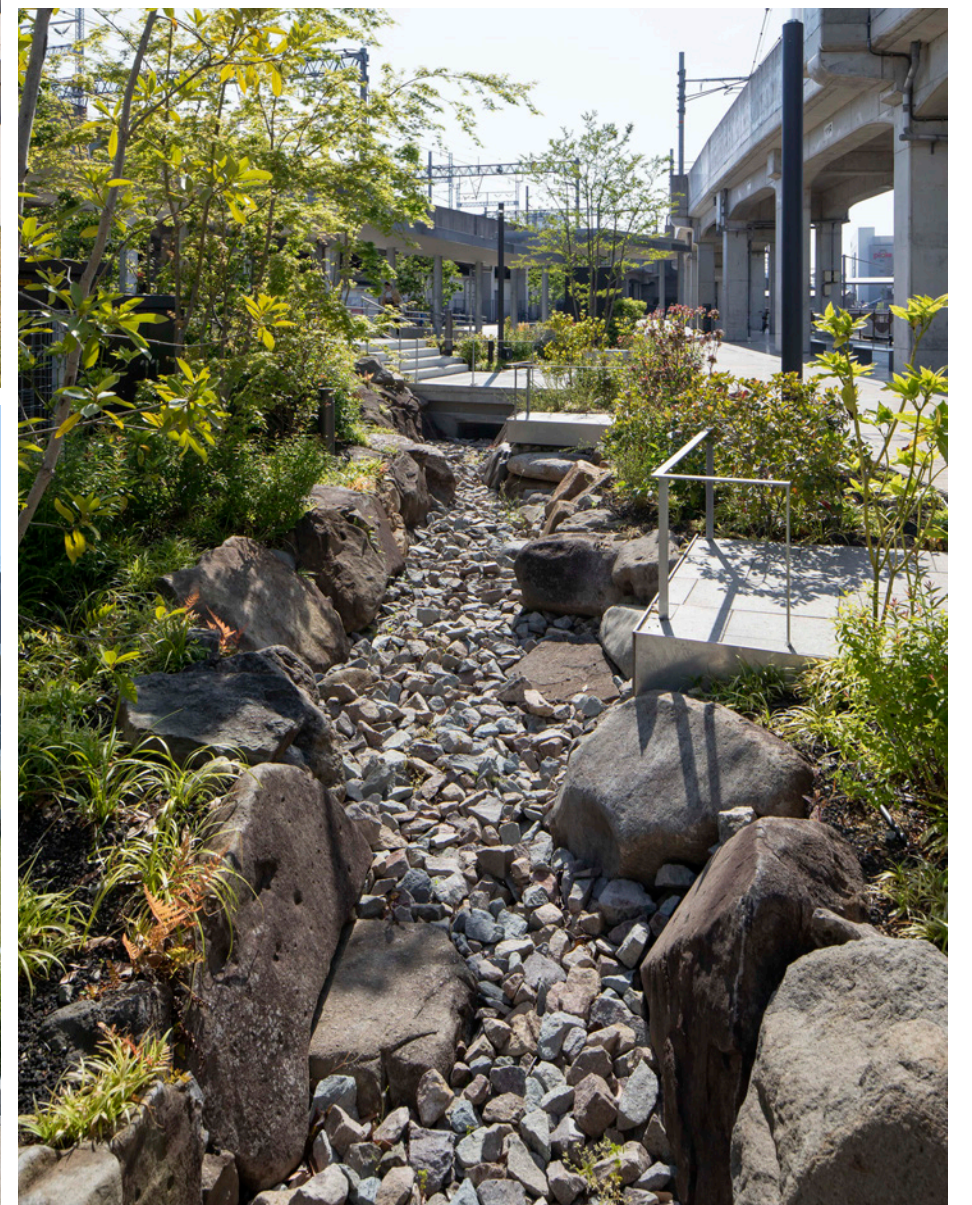


First floor plan, second floor plan and eye-level view to reach the building.
The first floor provides a smooth flow to the indoor and outdoor exhibition areas, while the second floor is continuous to the hall foyer.



Photo of the park's main walkway and a bird's eye view of the park.
The main walkway is gently sloped to allow wheelchairs and strollers to pass without difficulty, and eaves provide protection from rain and sun.

04 IMAGES



Photos of various parts of the city park.
The park is equipped with a variety of staircases that characterize each location, artwork displaying facility nicknames, and waterscape facilities that are used on a daily basis by visitors and citizens.



Crushed bricks for the interior of the large scale hall are used as aggregate for the precast nature of the benches.



The bricks used for the interior of the medium-sized hall are used for the pavement underfoot in the rest area in the forest.



Photos of the Cultural and Convention Center's Resting Forest and materials made from reused bricks. The planting and materials blend naturally to create a comfortable space.

04 IMAGES



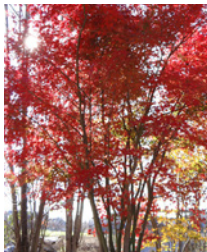
Tree



Fraxinus sieboldiana Blume



Carpinus laxiflora



Acer palmatum



Styra x japonicus



Lagerstroemia indica



Prunus x yedoensis



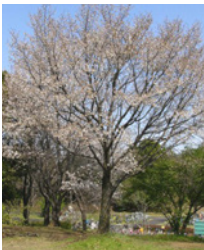
Magnolia stellata



Stewartia monadelph



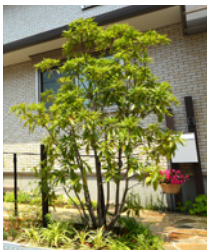
Acer maximowiczianum



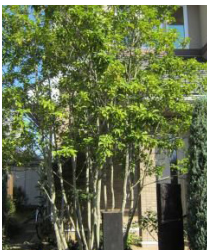
Cerasus jamasakura



Cornus kousa



Michelia figo



Ilex pedunculosa



Ilex chinensis



Daphniphyllum teijsmannii



Lithocarpus edulis

Shrub / Groundcover



Aucuba japonica



Vaccinium bracteatum



Viburnum japonicum



Rhaphiolepis indica var. umbellata f. minor



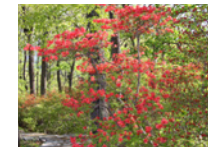
Nandina domestica



Rhododendron dilatatum



Hydrangea serrata



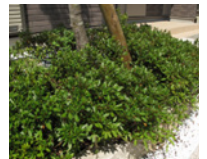
Rhododendron kaempferi



Pieris japonica



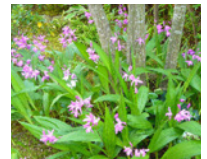
Myrtus communis



Rhododendron indicum



Spiraea japonica



Bletilla striata Reichb. fil.



Ophiopogon jaburan Ophiopogon



Deutzia gracilis



Gardenia jasminoides var. radicans



Iris gracilipes



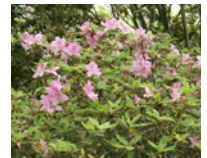
Itea virginica



Rhododendron pulchrum



Dryopteris erythrosora



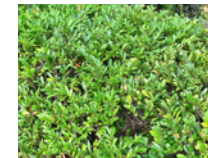
Rhododendron macrosepalum



Saxifraga stolonifera



Spiraea thunbergii



Eurya japonica

Planting Calendar

Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Magnolia figo												
Ilex pedunculosa												
Ilex chinensis												
Daphniphyllum teijsmannii												
Lithocarpus edulis												
Fraxinus sieboldiana Blume												
Carpinus laxiflora												
Acer palmatum												
Styrax japonicus												
Lagerstroemia indica												
Prunus x yedoensis												
Magnolia stellata												
Stewartia monadelph												
Acer maximowiczianum												
Cerasus jamasakura												
Cornus kousa												
Aucuba japonica												
Vaccinium bracteatum												
Viburnum japonicum												
Rhaphiolepis indica var. umbellata												
Nandina domestica												
Rhododendron dilatatum												
Hydrangea serrata												
Rhododendron kaempferi												
Pieris japonica												
Myrtus communis												
Rhododendron indicum												
Spiraea japonica												
Bletilla striata Reichb. fil.												
Ophiopogon jaburan Ophiopogon												
Deutzia gracilis												
Gardenia jasminoides												
Iris gracilipes												
Itea virginica												
Rhododendron pulchrum												
Dryopteris erythrosora												
Rhododendron macrosepalum												
Saxifraga stolonifera												
Spiraea thunbergii												
Eurya japonica												

Tree species to be planted on site.
We also selected tree species that can enjoy seasonal flowers and autumn colors, centering on Prunus x yedoensis'Someiyoshino' and Acer palmatum'Irohamomiji', which have been adopted as famous places in Himeji City.



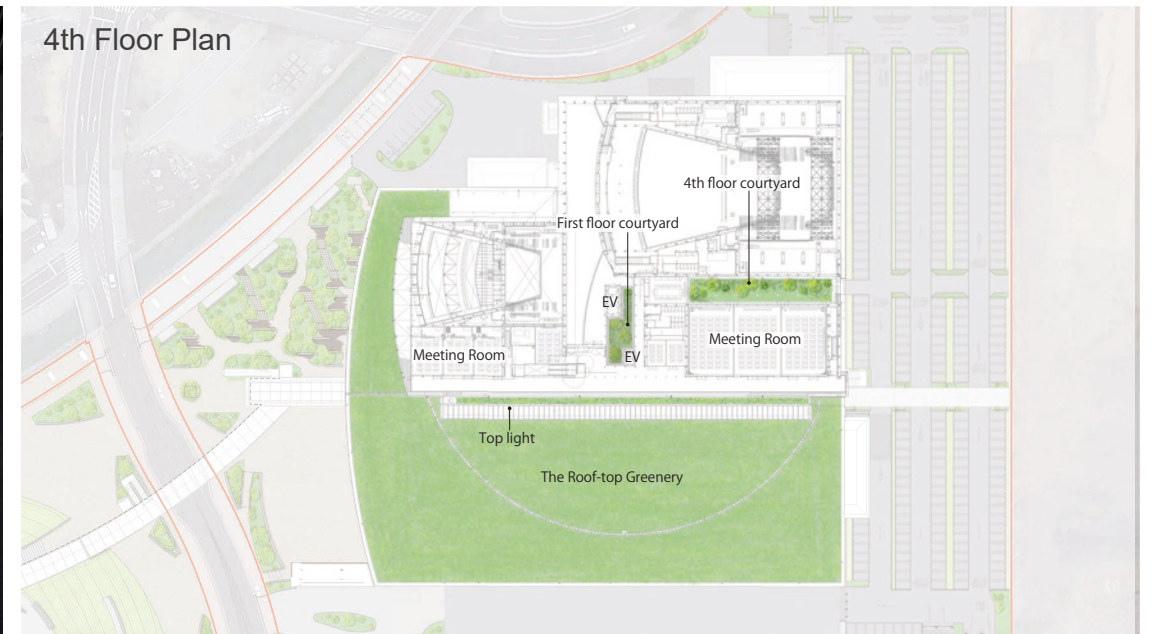
Photo of the interior of the Cultural and Convention Center and the deck above the road.
Both the landscape and the building employ a generously curved design to create a sense of unity.

04 IMAGES



Photos of the entrance hall area.
The top light in the entrance hall allows seasonal and hourly light to shine through, and greenery can be seen in various locations throughout the building, creating a sense of continuity with the outside.

04 IMAGES



Photos of the rooftop greenery on the fourth floor.
Beyond the expansive rooftop greenery, the Shinkansen bullet train running over the elevated railroad tracks can be seen, making it a favorite viewing spot for the public.



A view of the event held at the Piloti.
The area is well divided between the eaves and the plaza area. Stages and small-scale events are held under the eaves, while kitchen cars are located in the plaza.