

## NORITAKE FOREST- NEW FORM OF URBAN RENEWAL

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### Summary

Noritake Forest was created to preserve industrial and cultural traditions on the factory grounds where Noritake Company, Limited first began.

Part of the factory was demolished; the historic industrial resources such as concrete smokestacks and brick kilns were preserved to accentuate the uniqueness of the location; and the mass of bricks generated from the demolition were reused to produce a new structure.

Communicating the corporate culture of Noritake as the core of a new commercial area in Nagoya and as a green area that restores the natural environment in the city, this forest is a project aimed at a new form of urban renewal, a place where local residents can relax and engage in cultural activities.

The site is an urban district about 700 meters from JR Nagoya Station. It is located next to Toyota Memorial Industrial Museum to the northwest. The city of Nagoya has positioned this area as a center for industrial tourism.

### 1. Overview of facility

Noritake Co., Limited was founded in 1904 as Nippon Touki Goumei Kaisha, a company that made Western-style tableware for export, and a modern brick factory including a kiln was established on this site. In the 100 years since that time, Noritake has grown to become one of the largest general tableware manufacturers in the world, with production and sales centers in various places around the globe. Noritake has also diversified into such fields as grinding and polishing stones, ceramic materials, electronics and environmental engineering.

Now a new facility has been created on the grounds of the Noritake head office and factory site where the company was founded: "Noritake no Mori," or Noritake Forest. A portion of the factory has been dismantled, leaving the concrete smokestacks, brick kilns and other items of historical value to give a sense of place and history. The enormous quantities of bricks produced by the dismantling operation have been used to design new structures. The other factory-related facilities are being reopened as shops, restaurants, art galleries and so on. In addition to acquainting visitors with Noritake's corporate culture and how it came to be formed, Noritake Forest forms the nucleus of a new commercial space in Nagoya. It is also a green oasis open to the general public that restores nature to the city, a project whose aim is to create a "new form of urban renewal that provides a place for rest and recreation and at the same time communicates culture."

Noritake Forest is located in an urban area approximately 700 meters from JR Nagoya Station, on the site at which the company was originally founded. Adjoining the site on the northwest is the Toyota Commemorative Museum of Industry and Technology. In conjunction with this project, this area is ranked by Nagoya City as a core area for "industrial tourism". The site is also scheduled to be used as one of the venues for Expo 2005 Aichi Japan exposition.

## 2. The birthplace of the modern ceramics industry in Japan

In the early Meiji period, Baron Ichizaemon Morimura, who at the time was engaged in trade with New York and Paris, wanted to create for himself the exquisite white china displayed at the Exposition Universelle de Paris in 1867. In 1904, he founded Nippon Touki Goumei Kaisha, the precursor to Noritake, on the current site (Noritake Shin-machi, Nishi-ku, Nagoya). The factory facilities, which included a kiln, were the state of the art in technology at the time. This was the first attempt in Japan to manufacture white china such as dinner plates, and it represents the birthplace of the modern Japanese ceramics industry.

Following various trial and error efforts, the company was able to overcome the difficulties confronting it, and the first dinner set in Japan was presented to the general public after 10 years of effort. This represented the desire of the founder that all of the people of the world could become like brothers and live happy and prosperous lives.

Since that time, a century has passed, and Noritake is now one of the world's largest general tableware manufacturers. On January 1, 2004, the company celebrated its 100th anniversary. Throughout this long history, Noritake has retained its spirit of ceaselessly confronting the challenges of ceramics technology, and its desire to create a brand beloved by the local community. Noritake Co., Limited has continued to make steady progress in the pursuit of improved lifestyles and the expression of individuality.

To commemorate its centennial, Noritake has created the Noritake Forest, on the grounds of its head office and factory, which is also the site of its birthplace. The facility is designed to acquaint visitors with Noritake's corporate culture, and also to serve as a center of greenery open to the public, one that restores nature to the city. Noritake Forest expresses Noritake's corporate policy of remaining rooted in the local community, while at the same time enhancing Noritake's brand identity with respect to culinary culture.

## 3. Site conversion

The policy of converting the entire site for the new planned facility, while utilizing to the greatest extent possible not only the historical structures but the buildings that were actually used, incorporates Noritake's strong desire to bequeath to the future Noritake's "corporate culture" and its spirit of "contributing to the local community" in the form of a garden open to the public.

### (1) Post-industrial design

Various industrial assets within the factory site were used as design elements to create a space that expresses the richness of Noritake's history and individuality.

#### 1) The "recreation" of spaces

It was decided to verify and recreate the symbolism and interrelationships of the smokestacks and brick ovens, as well as the enormous quantities of brick produced by the dismantling operations. For the natural environment, it was decided to create an effective natural environment based on an evaluation of the surrounding greenery.

Nippon Touki Goumei Kaisha

1909 The factory at the time of the company's founding

1962 Noritake Head Office and Factory

The 10-meter high smokestacks, which were revealed when the factory was dismantled, were regarded as a landmark. They serve as the daytime "face" of the facility and are also lit up at night. Together with the other historical structures, they recreate the appearance of the site in its heyday. A brick flue that stretches underground for 100 meters connects the smokestacks. A section of the flue has been carefully preserved, and a large sloping path leading to the flue and a bridge passing above the path have been provided to show the historical value of the structures while providing various ways for people to approach the site.

The enormous quantities of brick produced through the dismantling of the underground flue were piled up to create a retaining wall for the sloping path, called the "Yoheki" Kiln Wall. The wall is the result of participation by the company and the workers at the site who exchanged opinions while pursuing the design. Its

completion required not only the permission of the owner but careful selection of bricks at the site, edge surfacing and a study by a stonemason to determine the proper way to use them to build the wall.

The intent of the design was to show the value of the existing structures and demonstrate that they can be used to the greatest extent possible. Even manufacturing facilities that have ended their service possess significance as a page of history, and they can present an example of post-industrial design in the urban environment.

## 2) "Integrated" space design

The row of smokestacks in the center of the site serves as a clearly understandable "entrance gate" for visitors. The rotary and parking area are located next to this entrance gate. A linear garden path linking the commercial facilities and the natural greenery has been provided as a clear axis. A promenade also links the facilities with one another, and its function as an axis has been emphasized by the addition of a line of symbol trees and a waterway. This creates a space that is easily understandable and in which visitors can walk stroll without getting lost.



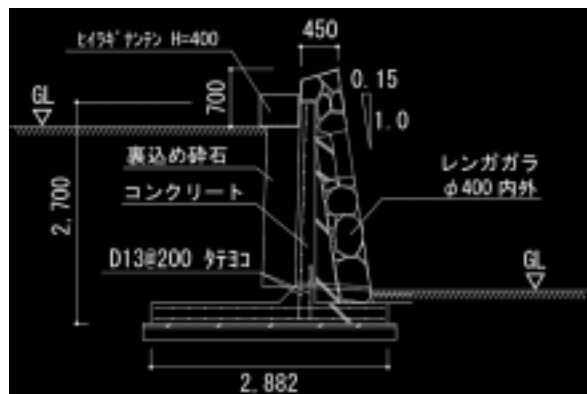
*Sloping path leading to underground flue and "Yoheki" Kiln Wall*



*Smokestacks and flue*



*Flue dismantling created enormous quantities of bricks*



*"Yoheki" Kiln Wall made of dismantled bricks*



Site layout

While providing each zone with a unique individuality – history, living organisms, night view, spaciousness, "closed-in" feeling, waterfront, forest, field of flowers, manufacturing, commerce, education and so on – the aim was to create a new urban landscape with diversity of both appearance and functions for each part of the site. The various spatial elements dotting the site – shrine and shrine grove, lawn, rows of trees, monument, memorial tree, sculptures and so on – are integrated by the landscape in terms of both space and sequence.

For the boundaries with the surrounding area, fences with high visibility were provided to make the facility as open as possible, to provide a rich green environment to passers-by.

## (2) Forest in the city

The design concept was to provide a bright urban garden that was open to the local community. Within this garden, the attractive environments showcasing Noritake's high quality products as contributions to culinary culture, as well as various activities related to culinary culture, would be presented.

In this way, a natural environment was recreated in the middle of the city as an urban garden for the local community, comprising a bright and distinctive garden and a rich environment made up of the changing seasons, a waterfront, groves of miscellaneous trees and so on.

Within the limited area of the site, various zones were created, including a grassy pavilion area, a grove of large trees, a grove of evergreen trees, a biotope waterfront, a grove of miscellaneous trees, a flower garden and so on, in order to improve the urban ecosystem with a variety of environments. The landscaping plan was prepared based on a determination of the biota of the surrounding greenery, a study of tree density in the groves, measures to deal with the level of ground water and so on. In addition, Japanese pampas grass and ornamental grasses were used to create a design that would enable visitors to be aware of the breeze, in an effort to express one of the natural features of that locality.

In the area around the site is an accumulation of factories, multiple-tenant buildings and so on. Another objective of the design was to create a new garden that was open to the local community, based around Noritake's history and brand identity, thereby improving the area's image and making a contribution to the local community.

#### 4. A new urban center for communicating information

At Noritake Forest, an open pavilion surrounded by nature is used to hold a variety of special events. The aim of "Noritake Communication" is to fuse jazz, gospel and a variety of other musical genres with nature, in order to encourage international interchange through music.

The "Garden Street Performers" is a project that originated as a result of a chance encounter between Noritake staff members and the curators of the Nagoya Municipal Museum during research relating to the museum's "Amusement Quarters: Festivals, Exhibitions and Street Performers" exhibition in 2002. The places where street performers are able to perform have been steadily decreasing, but performances of outstanding street performers are featured at this pavilion on a regular basis.

There is also a Noritake Forest Fund drive designed to promote the development of the garden. Donations of 1,000 yen each are collected to plant trees on the site, enabling many people to participate in the important activity of creating greenery. As of July 31, 2003, approximately ¥33 million in contributions had been collected; so far, including the trees planted at the time of the garden's opening, 3.5 hundred trees have been planted. Contributors to the fund have their names inscribed on plates and the plates are exhibited on the premises. This enables visitors to search for their names on the plates displayed on the "Yoheki" Kiln Wall of the sloping path.

In addition to serving as a venue for special events, the garden can be used for many other purposes as well. One example is a place for local community support in the event of a major earthquake or other disaster. With its prime location not far from Nagoya Station, this pavilion could house around 10,000 people on a temporary basis if they were unable to return to their homes in the event of an earthquake or the like. In 2002, an agreement was reached with the City of Nagoya. Emergency rescue drills have also been conducted through the cooperation of the Nagoya West Fire Department, Aichi Medical University Hospital and other organizations. Many people came to see these drills, which featured rescue operations by medical and fire department helicopters



*Approach to restaurants*



*Keyaki no Hiroba (Zelkova Square)*



*Outdoor event*

## 5. Conclusion

Noritake Forest is a green oasis in the city that is open to the general public, as well as a center for communicating information about Noritake's corporate policy and corporate culture. Since the facility opened, many people have visited it. Numerous contributions have been made for the upkeep of the greenery, and many people's names are inscribed on the brick "Yoheki" Kiln Wall. Noritake Forest enables visitors to experience for themselves Noritake's contributions to culinary culture through the manufacture of tableware. The garden has enhanced Noritake's brand identity and is highly regarded as one of the industrial tourism attractions being promoted by City of Nagoya.

Despite the lack of other greenery in the surrounding area, a follow-up survey of the natural environment after Noritake Forest opened has confirmed that the creation of a large and diverse natural environment has caused many birds, butterflies, dragonflies and so on to gather here. As the forest matures, it is expected to play a major role in restoring the ecosystem of the city. Noritake Forest not only enables the local community to take pride in the success of Noritake, whose history began here in Nagoya, it also provides the opportunity to enjoy and learn from its diverse natural environment.

This project can be seen as a new method of urban renewal through private sector projects. It is an example of the type of project that will be promoted in the future, aimed at achieving a sustainable city through the creation of social capital.



*Promenade in front of old brick factory*



*Brick oven and biotope*

### "Noritake no Mori" (Noritake Forest)

Location: 1-36, Noritake-Shinmachi 3-chome, Nishi-ku, Nagoya-shi, Aichi-ken

Owner: Noritake Co., Limited

Site area: 44,960 m<sup>2</sup>

Zoning: Semi-industrial zone / commercial zone

Designed by: Taisei Corporation

Constructed by: Taisei Corporation

Period of construction: January - September 2001