



Urban Redevelopment to Create New Value

How Takenaka Corporation redevelopment projects are bringing new vitality to Japan's urban landscape

In the early 1960s, as Japan prepared to host the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games, the nation's economy was booming and its people were buoyant with a sense of excitement and anticipation. The sounds of construction could be heard everywhere, and in the space of a few years Japan's urban landscape was transformed. Today, with the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games just four years away, Tokyo and Osaka are again undergoing a remarkable transformation.

As one of Japan's leading "super general contractors," Takenaka Corporation is drawing on its proud 400-year history and proven expertise in architectural design, engineering, and construction to play a key role in this urban transformation. Aiming to become "the best partner for society and our customers in 2025," Takenaka's commitment to create a sustainable society for the future is driving a new wave of urban redevelopment and growth. But what form should the cities of the future take? And what new value should they offer? To find the answers, we spoke with Seigo Sato, Managing Officer and General Manager of Project Development at Takenaka Corporation.





Left: Seigo Sato, Managing Officer and General Manager of Project Development at Takenaka Corporation.

Upper right: Abeno Harukas, Japan's tallest building, soars above the renovated Tennoji Park.

Lower right: Ten-Shiba shops and restaurants have brought new customers into the Abeno-Tennoji district.

A Driving Force in Urban Creation

In 1964, the year of the first Tokyo Olympic Games, Takenaka Corporation established its Project Development Department to undertake large-scale urban development projects and create new construction business opportunities. At the time, there were plans to redevelop the Nakanoshima and Dojima districts of Osaka, and development of the Osaka Business Park adjoining Osaka Castle had already begun. It was to fulfill our role as a developer and landowner in these areas that we joined with other companies to pursue these and a host of other urban development and urban renewal projects.

Takenaka has also led the way in urban redevelopment efforts in Tokyo, constructing Yurakucho Mullion, a shopping and entertainment complex on the site of the former Asahi Shimbun head office and Nichigeki Theatre, as well as the Hibiya Chanter shopping and entertainment complex in Tokyo's Hibiya district, and many other projects.

Today, urban development focuses on the creation of buildings and facilities that can contribute to a sustainable society. That is why we always try to take a comprehensive approach that includes everything from planning and design, to construction and ongoing area management after the project is completed.

It is also important for urban creation to meet the changing needs of society, identifying needs and challenges so that we can offer new value to communities and to society.

Changing Urban Areas — Abeno Harukas and Ten-Shiba

Along with Umeda and Namba, Abeno-Tennoji is one of Osaka's largest transportation hubs, offering ready access to Kansai International Airport and nearby cities. Previous Takenaka development and construction projects in the area included Abeno Hoop and Abeno Cues Mall, among many others, all of which have contributed significantly to Osaka area redevelopment. Abeno Harukas was an even more ambitious project, designed to serve as an iconic symbol of the Kintetsu Group, a major Japanese conglomerate whose businesses include railways, real estate, distribution and logistics, and hotels and leisure facilities.

Opened in 2014, the Abeno Harukas is Japan's tallest building, soaring 300 meters above the railway station at its base. Incorporating a department store, museum, hotel, offices, an observation deck, as well as a university and medical facilities, it is a city-within-a-city that serves as Osaka's southern gateway. To provide smoother access to Japan Rail, Kintetsu Railways, subways and other transportation, the complex was also linked to the





surrounding area by a web of pedestrian walkways and bridges that have helped to revitalize the entire Abeno-Tenno district.

We also undertook a park management project, Ten-Shiba, aimed at renewing the entrance to nearby Tennenji Park, which had suffered from underutilization due, in part, to the admission fee that was charged. Working with the Kintetsu Group, which had won a public bid to redevelop and manage the entrance area, we created attractive shops and restaurants surrounding a vast open lawn, and support their ongoing management with planning for special events and promotions. The project has helped to revitalize the entire area, increasing foot traffic and attracting tourists as well as family groups from near and far. To those who remember the old Abeno-Tennoji district, the turnaround has been a source of surprise and delight.

Improving Urban Areas — The Shinjuku Toho Building

The Shinjuku Kabukicho district is one of Tokyo's best-known entertainment areas, but it had experienced a decline in business following the closure of the theaters and cinemas that had previously anchored the area. Members of the local business community and Toho Co., Ltd., owners of the former landmark Shinjuku Koma Theater, were therefore looking for a solution to rejuvenate the district, especially around Cinema City Square. The Shinjuku Toho Building, opened in April 2014 to replace the former landmark, was our solution.

The 130-meter Shinjuku Toho Building symbolizes the rebirth of Kabukicho. Visible from the east exit of Shinjuku Station even at night, with a life-sized Godzilla head installed on the rooftop terrace, it is a much talked-about landmark that attracts visitors from both home and abroad. Incorporating Tokyo's biggest cinema multiplex and a high-rise urban hotel, as well as shops and restaurants, it has greatly improved the area's image and attracted a new range of customers that includes young couples, families, and other visitors.

Shinjuku Ward has also supported the area's revitalization by renovating Central Road, a busy pedestrian thoroughfare that leads from Shinjuku Station into the heart of the Kabukicho district. Cinema City Square has also been closed to vehicular traffic, making it more pedestrian-friendly and creating open spaces for outdoor café seating and entertainment events. By creating a safer and more secure environment in which



With a life-sized
Godzilla™
head on its
rooftop terrace,
the Shinjuku
Toho Building
symbolizes
the rebirth of
the Kabukicho
entertainment
district.



people can enjoy themselves, the project has inspired the construction of other new hotels and commercial establishments in the area that have also expanded its potential future growth.

Growing Urban Areas — Osaka Station Environs and Grand Front Osaka

Takenaka Corporation's involvement with Osaka's Umeda district dates back to the late 1920's when we constructed the Hankyu Department Store. The focus of commercial activity in the area had for many years been around the south entrance to Osaka Station, the Hankyu Department Store on the east side, Hankyu Sanbangai underground shopping mall, and the Hanshin Department Store on the south side. In the 1980s, however, redevelopment of the area in front of Osaka Station and in West Umeda shifted the focus to the west side. Since that time, we have been extensively involved in developing an approximately one kilometer stretch of the east-west corridor, designing and building the Hilton Osaka Hotel, the Hilton Plaza East and Hilton Plaza West, as well as the Herbis Plaza and Herbis Plaza Ent, and we have provided ongoing support for the properties' infrastructure and maintenance. In the area in front of the station where it all began, we are also currently redeveloping both the Dai Hanshin Building and New Hankyu Building.

Grand Front Osaka is a project to redevelop the former site of the Umeda freight terminal on the north side of Osaka Station. As one of 12 developers commissioned to undertake the necessary work, we planned and developed Knowledge Capital, a business incubation center with multi-purpose facilities that include

Osaka Business Park, one of Takenaka Corporation's first
urban redevelopment projects.



Development of West Umeda in front of Osaka Station and Grand Front Osaka to the north has revitalized the entire Umeda district.

networking spaces, a theater, a convention center, conference rooms and offices. Conceived to suit the needs of Osaka while bringing new value and functionality to the Umeda district, the center provides corporations, researchers, creators, and the general public with a stimulating environment in which they can freely interact and innovate. Through this and other urban development projects in the area, we have been able to contribute to growth throughout the Umeda district.

Takenaka is also an active member of Grand Front Osaka TMO, an area management organization that uses revenue generated by open cafés and other businesses operated on public property to help fund urban revitalization. In collaboration with Hankyu Corporation, Hanshin Electric Railway Co., Ltd. and the West Japan Railway Company, Grand Front Osaka TMO established Umeda Connect to integrate diverse public and private initiatives across Umeda in a concerted effort to help support the area's continuous growth.

Linking Urban Areas — The Tokyo Rakutenchi Asakusa Building

The Tokyo Rakutenchi Asakusa Building is located in the center of Asakusa Rokku, formerly one of Tokyo's most colorful entertainment districts. Commissioned by the Tokyo Rakutenchi Group, the project aimed not only to revitalize the Asakusa area, but also to support other formerly vibrant commercial districts across Japan that are experiencing a decline in population and a shortage of successors to carry on traditional businesses. Understanding this mission, we were involved in the project from the very beginning, planning and designing a commercial complex and new area landmark that

houses a hotel on its upper floors, and a multi-purpose commercial facility on its lower floors.

The multi-purpose commercial facility, called Marugoto Nippon (Japan in Microcosm), offers floors of exhibition booths for regional governments and communities to showcase local products and foodstuffs. The aim of the facility is not only to market these products, but also to promote awareness of the unique culture and attractions that each region offers. With interest in such regional areas growing among both domestic and foreign travelers, Marugoto Nippon has received much media attention, and many local communities



Bringing new life to the Asakusa Rokku district, the Tokyo Rakutenchi Asakusa Building also promotes growth in cities across Japan.

and regional organizations have expressed strong interest in obtaining space in the facility.

In recent years, both government and private sector entities have been working to replace older structures in the area, and with the 2015 opening of the Tokyo Rakutenchi Asakusa Building as a new area landmark, Asakusa is thriving with a new sense of vitality.

Creating Cities of the Future

The examples described here are just some of Takenaka Corporation's success stories. We recognize that the needs of cities differ by country and region, and that they change and advance with the times. But we are ready to face any challenge, and remain committed to the goals of sustainable urban creation. Drawing on the Takenaka Group's collective strengths, we will continue to innovate in architecture and urban development, creating cities of the future in which people can live safely, securely, and happily.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.
jp.wsj.com

SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION



OSAKA 1-13, 4-chome, Hommachi, Chuo-ku, Osaka 541-0053, Japan Tel: +81-6-6252-1201
TOKYO 1-1, 1-chome, Shinsuna, Koto-ku, Tokyo 136-0075, Japan Tel: +81-3-6810-5000

www.takenaka.co.jp