

Welcome to The Former Oshima Residence!



~The Former Oshima Residence~

Hours 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Closed Mondays / December 29 – January 3

Admission Free

<Please follow the instructions below>

- Please take your shoes off.
- Please do NOT touch the exhibits.
- Please do NOT smoke/cigarette in this property.
- Photography is permitted.

Information about this building

This building was the former residence of Kotaro Oshima, was a key figure in the industrialization of Karatsu at the turn of the 20th century. His long and broad career extended from the early Meiji Era to the early Showa Era.



This building was built in 1893 and it was relocated to this place in 2017. It's because the new school building was going to be built in the old property.

A Brief Biography of Kotaro Oshima

In 1859, Kotaro was born in Karatsu as the eldest son of Okiyoshi Oshima, the senior vassal of the Karatsu clan at the end of Meiji Era. Okiyoshi made a fortune selling washi, which is Japanese traditional paper, and establishing a fish market.

In 1871, Taikoryo, the first English school of the Karatsu clan was established. Kotaro entered the school as the first graduating class and studied under the tutelage of *Korekiyo Takahashi. Kotaro entered this school when he was 11 years old, as the youngest in the class.

*Korekiyo Takahashi...The 20th Prime Minister of Japan. He was invited as English teacher of Taikoryo when he was young.



Kotaro's youth

In 1872, Kotaro went into Tokyo and entered some school to study more and more. But in 1883, upon his father's retirement, Kotaro became the head of the Oshima family. Then he was called home, and back to Karatsu. With the backing of his father and his associates, Kotaro established Karatsu Bank and took the office as its first president in 1885.



After that, Kotaro achieved some great works. Set up the Industrial Railroad Company and established the Electric Company. In 1934, when the Karatsu Chamber of Commerce was established, he served as the first head.

In 1947, Kotaro passed away on December 17th at the age of 88.

Detailed descriptions of this building

Entrance



There are two motifs near the roof. One is the shape of three butterflies while another is the Kanji of “大”. That motif is says that came from 大島家

(means Oshima family in Japanese).

This house has a stately gate. It was built following the strict rules of traditional Japanese samurai houses. Please feel the quaint atmosphere.



8 tatami mats room

This room was used as a guest room and an alcove post is made by a betel palm tree.

Also, there are Japanese restrooms at the back



right. Those are made of pottery but what the kind of this one is not clear.



There is historical fusuma painting. Those subjects are cherry blossoms and swallows. Also, the traditional carved-openwork-ranma is also

worth noting. Those subjects are plums and sparrows.

Kugikakushi

They are objects which conceal the head of the nail.

There are 5 different types of Kugikakushi in this building.

- Japanese iris(kakitsubata)
- Water caltrop(hishi)
- Japanese maple(momiji),
- wild goose(gan)
- crane(tsuru)



The rarest one is the design of Japanese iris. Because there are only two in this building.

15 tatami mats room



It's called "oosashiki" and it says that this room was used as a master's room. There is also historical fusuma painting.

These subjects are mums and sparrows. Those paintings were also made by Hasegawa Settou who succeeded as an exclusive artist in the Karatsu clan.



▲ Those seem to come alive even after 130 years have passed.

The uncompromising interiors

The hallway which faces 15 tatami mats room is made of ONE pine tree. It's 10 meters long and it is valuable using long trees like this one.



Some glasses facing 8,10 and 15 mats rooms were made during the Meiji era. The characteristic of those is that the view looks distorted through them.



▲ You can enjoy the beautiful scenery of each season.

Tea ceremony room (4.5 mats)

This room was built following the strict rules of traditional Japanese tea ceremony rooms. So, this building is something like an annex.



An alcove post is made by an ebony.

The distinctive wall is called “otoshikabe” in Japanese and the tree is crepe myrtle.



Also, there are other rooms which are 6 mats and 3 mats. An alcove post in a 6 mats room is made by a red pine tree. This room can be used as a tea ceremony room.

Butsuma (An altar room)



This room is where a family Buddhist altar is placed. You can see the traditional Japanese style room there.

Nowadays, it is rare in Japan for a house to have such an altar room.

An alcove post in this room is made by a crepe myrtle.

And the altar was rear because it was equipped with a room. It's also the one which was made about 130 years ago.



Others

- Many stones and trees were used in this building and garden because Kotaro liked those.



- The big square in the center of the garden is the ruins of a warehouse. It shows that the garden is spacious.

Enjoy the four seasons



There are a variety of plants and flowers in the garden so you can enjoy quaint scenery of each season.

The view through the glasses in front of 15 tatami mats room is very beautiful. It's particularly fine in the seasons of new green leaves.



In the autumn, the Japanese maple trees start to turn colorful. You can enjoy the beautiful view of the Japanese autumn.



Those plants and flowers in the garden are used the same ones which were in the old residence as well as possible.