

Hiroshima City Important Tangible Cultural Property: Former Hiroshima Local Meteorological Observatory

(Designated on July 2000)

①The former Hiroshima Local Meteorological Observatory was built as the Hiroshima Prefectural Weather Station in 1934, then nationalized in 1939, and moved to Kami-hachobori, Naka ward, Hiroshima city in December 1987.

②Although the observatory was atomic-bombed in August 1945, its staff, who survived the bombing, continued the weather observation every single day. In September of the same year, Hiroshima was also hit by the Makurazaki Typhoon (see "A Blank in the Weather Map" by Kunio Yanagida for a detailed description of this incident).

③The observatory is made of ferroconcrete and has extensive values in its architectural construction and design for its fusion of pre-war and modern features of a building.

④Due to the Pacific War (1941-1945), people stopped using ferroconcrete for construction from around 1939. In other words, the Former Hiroshima Local Meteorological Observatory was one of the most recent pre-war ferroconcrete buildings. A pre-war building feature of the observatory can be seen in its vertically long windows, originated from brick buildings designs in the Meiji era (1868-1912). The building is also characterized by the exposed aggregate (cement and stone) finish by washing or by brushing (visible on the exterior walls of the building), and by the honed stone finish (visible on the interior floor and stair handrails of the building). These decorative features are an indication of the enormous time and effort invested in the construction of the observatory.

⑤ There are some novel design features that is sure to have surprised people at the time, such as the thinned eaves that went against the mainstream idea of thick eaves as part of the "face" of a building, and replacing two pillars with just one. Technological advancement with ferroconcrete also made it possible to construct a cantilever structure, used in the staircase leading to the roof of the observatory where the meteorological tower is set up.

⑥Furthermore, arch holes with a spire, which surround the meteorological tower, are situated in structurally important places for waterproofing purposes on the roof. This challenging design indicates the significant level of technical skills required of the architect and the craftspeople involved.

⑦The early Showa period during which the observatory was built is the period when Japan's ferroconcrete architecture reached world class. Japanese people's enthusiasm and passion for Japanese manufacturing is conveyed even today.



(Hiroshima Prefectural Weather Station at the time of completion, 1934)

Cultural Properties Map

Former Hiroshima Local Meteorological Observatory



Handrail with exposed aggregate by honed stone finish.



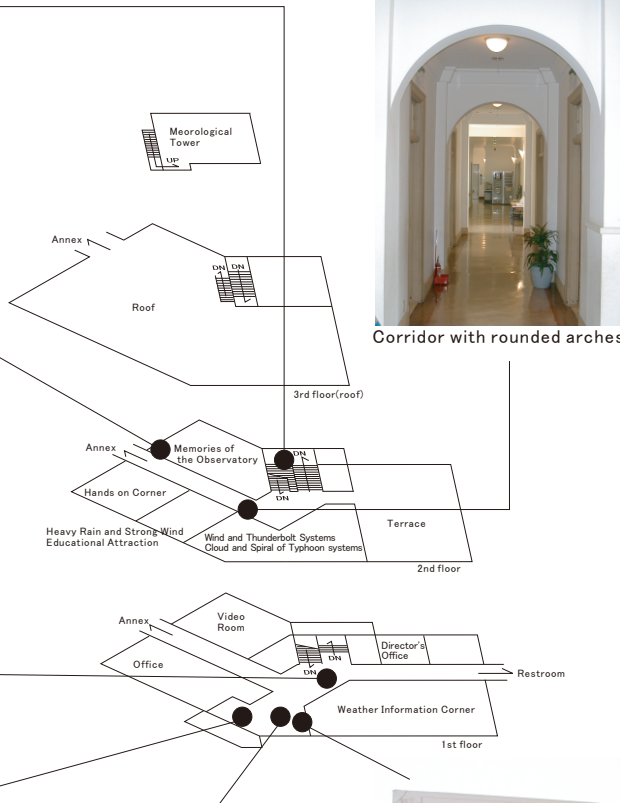
The delicate design of the intersection of the ceiling and wall.



Arches that are shaped in modern designs.



Floor with a honed stone finish, which few craftspeople can do today.



Corridor with rounded arches.



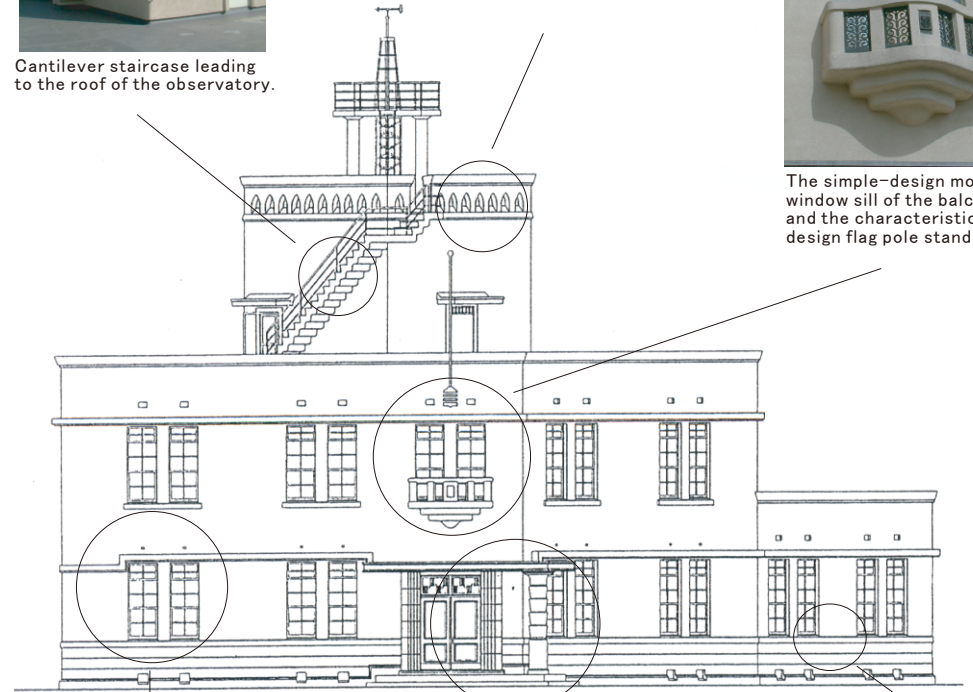
Cantilever staircase leading to the roof of the observatory.



Arch holes with a spire that surround the meteorological tower for waterproofing purposes, conveying the significant level of technical skills required of the architect and craftspeople involved.



The simple-design modern window sill of the balcony and the characteristic design flag pole stand above.



Vertically long windows, a pre-war building feature, and concavo-convex structure on the wall.



Pillar with stacked inverted cones with a honed stone finish, which is hardly found today. Unconventional thin eaves supported by a single pillar challenged the mainstream design of the time.



Exterior wall with exposed aggregate finish by brushing (upper part) and by washing (lower part). The lower grey wall was built using an exposed aggregate finish by washing, i.e. built using mortar mixed with stones and then lightly watered to wash off the mortar on the surface before the cement hardened for the stones to surface. The upper wall was built using an exposed aggregate finish by brushing, i.e. brushing off the surface before the mortar dries.



Exquisite carving made by plasterer which is likely an inspiration from plants.



The beautiful stained glass of the reception at the lobby.