

Program Summary:

A modern reinvention of traditional Japanese bathhouses, this private sports club projects a serene, refined demeanor in sharp contrast to the chaotic surroundings of Tokyo.

Program Statement:

In Japan dwellings were small and few people had private baths or rooms for entertaining, so public bathhouses became important places within a neighborhood. They provided a hygienic function, but also served as social places centered around bathing and conversing. This new private wellness club is a modern reinvention of the traditional Japanese bathhouse, providing facilities and programs specifically designed to maintain health and foster community. The club focuses on high-level personal service for its members and the interior design needed to bridge the wide gap between a utilitarian fitness club and a luxurious resort.

The project goals were:

- Create a unique interior language for each unique space based on its function but with design threads which link all the spaces together as a cohesive whole.
- Create an interior design solution which can bridge the wide gap between a utilitarian fitness club and a luxurious resort.
- Although a private club, create a transparent building with a welcoming and public presence, one with a serene and refined demeanor in sharp contrast to the chaotic surroundings of Tokyo.
- Use durable, cost-effective, and sustainable materials but ones with the appearance of luxury and sophistication.

IA255.01

Building Area: (sf)
64,000 SF

Cost per Square Foot:
\$344.00/SF

Construction Cost
\$22,000,000

Date of Completion:
June 1, 2016



IA255.02

Located in dense Tokyo on a steep hillside against a major highway, the site was once a country estate containing hot springs, forests and a spectacular view of Mt. Fuji, which all served as design considerations.

Expressing internal functions within a refined massing of varying scale, this innovative design for a private sports club negotiates the complex urban site and blurs the traditional boundary between private and public spaces and activities. The minimalist design echoes an ancient calmness in opposition to the frenetic context.

Although a private club, the intent was to create a transparent building with a welcoming and public presence, one with a serene and refined demeanor in sharp contrast to the chaotic surroundings of Tokyo.

IA255.03

Located on a steep hillside against a major highway, the site was once a country estate containing hot springs, forests and a spectacular view of Mt. Fuji, which all served as design considerations.

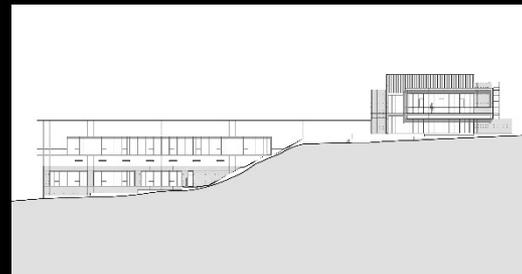
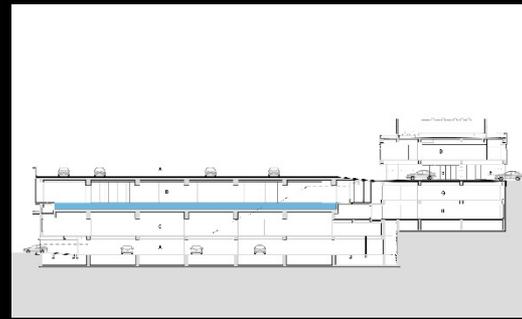
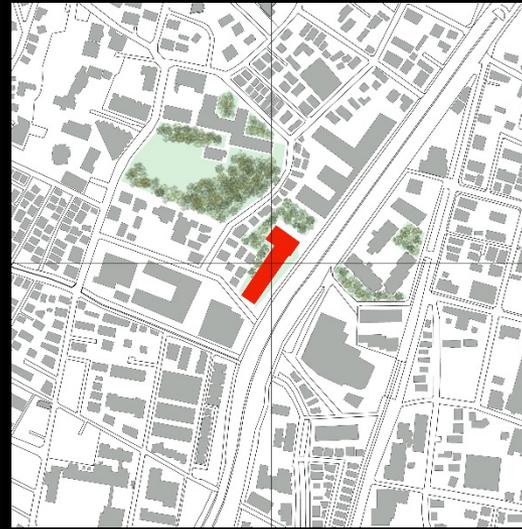
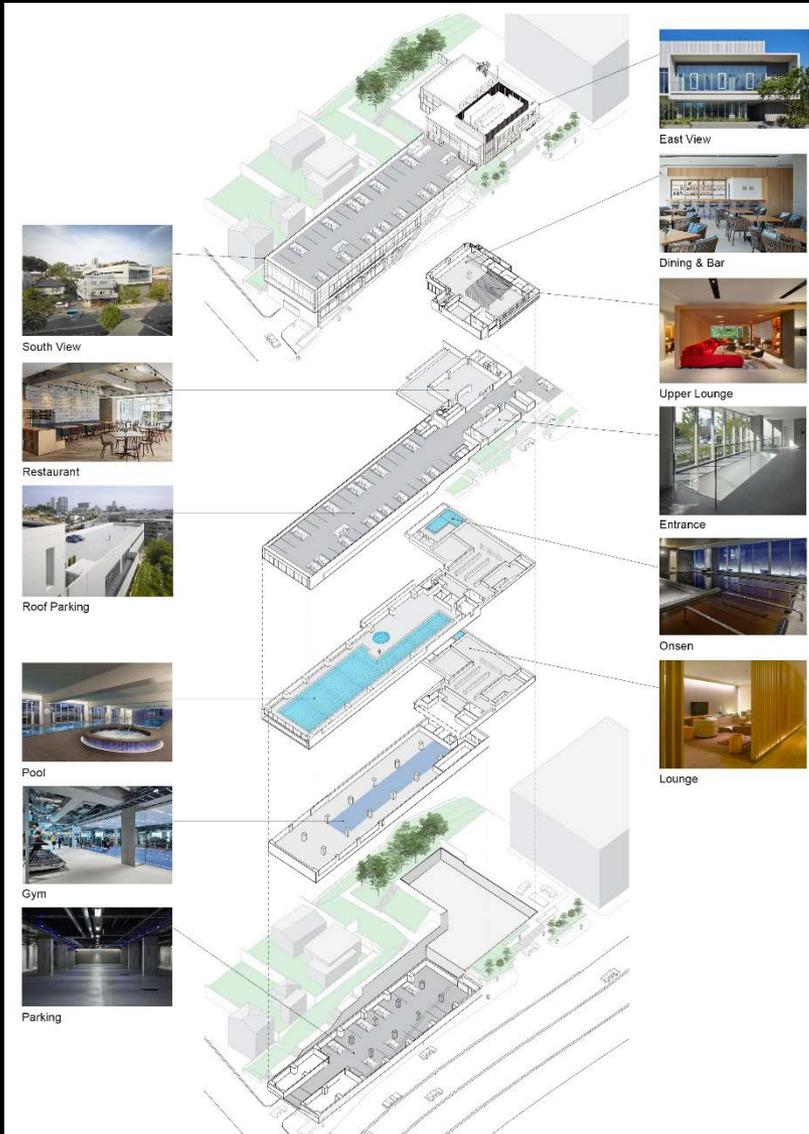
The club functions are separated into sports and social spaces. Each assemblage of spaces is housed separately in white and dark gray concrete volumes which vary in scale related to their function.

The 50-meter swimming pool and the gym below it are contained in the larger volume running north-south, parallel to the highway.

The smaller volume containing the entry, cafe and lounge is orientated east-west, perpendicular to the pool/gym volume.

The first floor entry and café are separated by a driveway providing access to the roof deck parking. The lounge floats above to take in tree-top views.

Member's parking in the basement is accessed from the lower residential street.



IA255.04

The social functions of the club are located on the top penthouse floor and contained within a singular volume fully glazed at both ends to take advantage of the tree-top views.

Reflecting the Japanese notion of flexible and overlapping space, the penthouse floor is simultaneously used as the member's lounge, library, bar, dining room, and member services. Furniture, lighting, color, texture and ceiling design are all subtly used to define these functions, while still retaining the feeling of a large singular "room".

The centerpiece is a modern pavilion of wood slats floating within this volume. Reminiscent of traditional Japanese temples but undeniably modern, the wood pavilion encloses the bright red seating and fireplace.

Reflecting the exterior building design, the primary architectural elements of floor, wall, and ceiling are neutral gray and white, but enriched by the application of warm white Japanese Oak veneers and furniture.

The elevator entrance vestibule to the Clubhouse features white Japanese Oak on the wall and on the floating ceiling plane above.



- 5 🏠 CLUBHOUSE
- 4 ☕ CAFE
- 3 🌊 ONSEN
🛀 SPA
- 2 🌊 ONSEN
🛀 SPA
- 1 🏋️ GYM
- B 🚗 PARKING

IA255.05

The centerpiece of the Clubhouse level is a modern pavilion of wood slats floating within the large singular space.

Reminiscent of traditional Japanese temples, but undeniably modern, the wood pavilion encloses an intimate seating area featuring bright red custom sofas and charcoal lounge chairs bordering a contemporary fireplace.

The rich color of the white Japanese Oak wood slats and wall veneer provides a warm contrast to the neutral tones of the architecture, a theme carried throughout the social spaces of the club.





IA255.06

The Clubhouse at the penthouse level has tree-top views at both ends of this transparent volume.

Embracing the Japanese concept of flexible and overlapping space, this floor is simultaneously used as the member's lounge, library, bar, dining room, and member services. Furniture, area rugs, lighting, color, texture and ceiling design are all subtly used to define these functions, while still retaining the feeling of a large singular "room".

The rich color of the white Japanese Oak wood wall veneer provides a warm contrast to the neutral tones of the architecture, a theme carried throughout the social spaces of the club.



The quieter west end of the Clubhouse is more informal, with a bar and tables for dining or card games.

IA255.07

Top Photo

A modern version of traditional Japanese Noren entry curtains in bright red, and adorned with the club's logo, highlight the entrance to the locker and bathing areas.

The rich color of the white Japanese Oak wood wall veneer provides a warm contrast to the neutral tones of the architecture, a theme carried throughout the social spaces of the club.

Bottom Photo

White Japanese Oak wood flooring and a vertical slat screen also enrich the relaxation area just off the baths.

The vertical wood slats, similar to those in the Clubhouse lounge, provide a filtering screen from the more private locker room.

Seating in neutral tones are highlighted with colorful pillows and carved wood side tables.





IA255.08

The spiritual heart of the club are Japanese baths, fed from hot springs. The dark water and rich granite are dramatic in the small space. A “Zen” rock garden provides a calming backdrop. The baths are crisply modern in material and detailing, yet convey a sense of history and serenity.

The origin of Japanese bathing is *Misogi*, ritual purification with water and, when entering the hot warm, people to this day exclaim “gokuraku, gokuraku”, which roughly means “divine pleasure”, a good feeling for the body and the soul. The design intent for this new modern spa was to create a space and water vessel so beautiful and so dramatic that the experience of entering it would elicit a similar spiritual response.



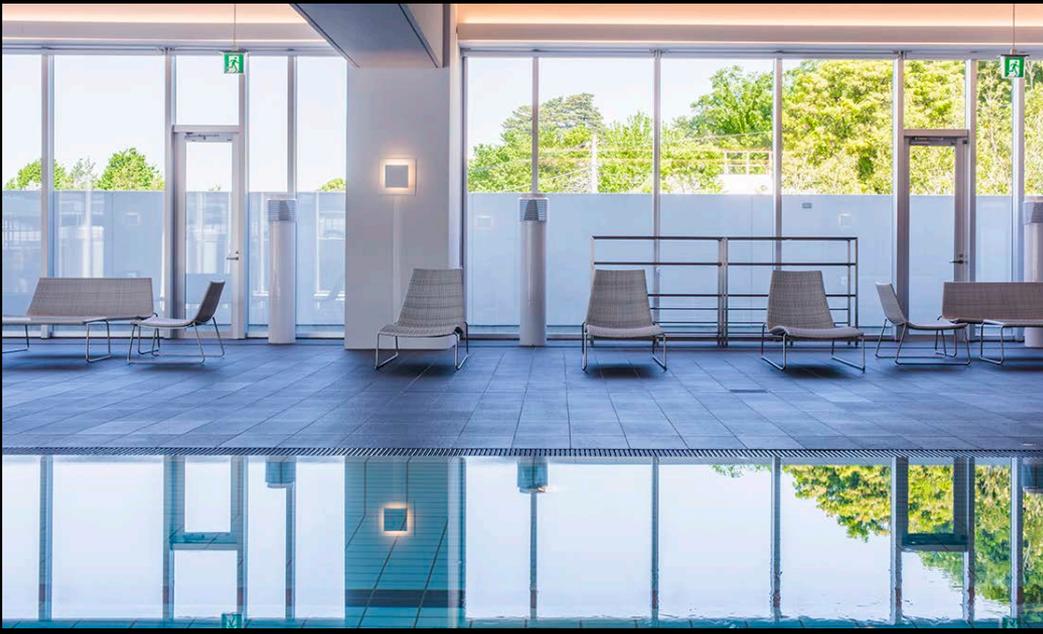
IA255.09

The 50-meter pool is raised level with the highway, allowing private swimmers and passing pedestrians to visually engage each other. The minimalist white, gray and blue interior allow the water to become the primary design element, appearing mirage-like, sleek and highly reflective, capturing reflections of the city beyond.

Variable sources and scenes allow for a multitude of lighting effects, ranging from functional to highly dramatic, particularly when viewed through the large windows. The large circular spa appears to float above the pool deck, this effect created by a perimeter cove light at its base.

The robust concrete structure of the pool volume supports a parking deck above.





IA255.10

Contained in the largest of all the club's spaces, the minimalist white, gray and blue interior design allow the water to become the primary design element.

Completely flush with the surface of the dark-tiled deck, the water appears mirage-like, sleek and highly reflective, capturing alluring reflections of the city beyond.

The end walls are clad in dark blue glass tiles, enhancing the reflective quality of the space.

Simplicity is difficult to achieve. The minimalist aesthetic embraced by the client for this unique building meant that the construction quality had to be near perfection. The slightest deviation in the crisp massing and refined interior finishes would be readily visible and disruptive to the overall design effect.

Fortunately, craftsmanship is an art-form in Japan and the building was assembled with great care and respect.

IA255.11



Top Photo

Located below the pool, the concrete structure of the basement-level gym is exposed and mirrors are employed to visually expand the low space and facilitate personal workouts.

A blue work-out floor mat mimics the 50-meter swimming pool on the floor above.

Bottom Photo

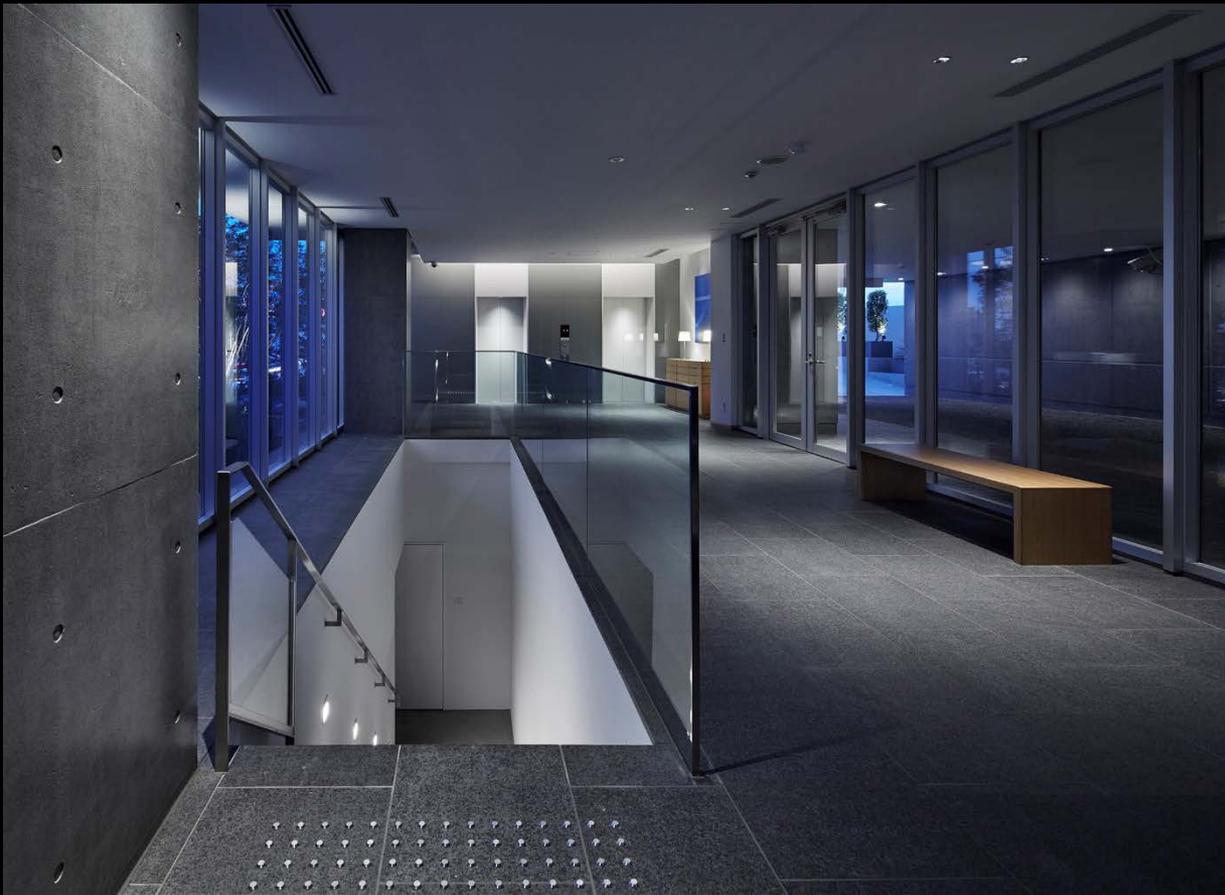
Fitness machines are aligned along enormous windows which look out upon a bamboo grove.

Areas of respite are defined by circular blue area rugs hosting carved wood stools and oversized ottomans.



IA255.12

Reflected in the materials, detailing and lighting of the entry lobby, the overall design intent was to create a transparent building with a public presence, one with a serene and refined demeanor in sharp contrast to the frenetic surroundings of Tokyo.



IA255.13



Expressing internal functions within a refined massing of varying scale, this innovative design for a private sports club negotiates the complex urban site and blurs the traditional boundary between private and public spaces and activities. The minimalist design echoes an ancient calmness in opposition to the frenetic context.

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Project Name:
Aqua Sports & Spa

Project Location:
Setagaya-ku, Tokyo, Japan

Owner/Client:
RamCal

Architect(s) of Record:
(names and addresses)
COE Architecture International-Design Architect
Christopher W. Coe, FAIA
Tokyu Construction Company- Executive Architect

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Landscape Architect:
SOLA Associates

Consultants:
Tokyu Construction Company – Engineer
ILYA Corporation – Interior Designer
SOLA Associates – Lighting Designer
ArtLess – Graphic Designer

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IA255.14

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