

MAGNIFISSANCE

Timeless Beauty and Wisdom

KENGO KUMA ON LIGHT, WOOD,
AND THE ART OF ABSENCE
專訪隈研吾：讓建築像呼吸一樣自然

A 1,000-YEAR-OLD CASTLE REAWAKENED
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SEEING THE UNSEEN
美在末見處

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Photo courtesy of New Material Research Laboratory



Photo courtesy of Imperial Hotel

Top: The Imperial Hotel, Kyoto, offers 55 guest rooms with views of the historic Gion district. Bottom: Built on the site of the former Yasaka Kaikan Theatre, the hotel preserves the charm of the original historic landmark.

上圖：帝國飯店京都店擁有五十五間客房，客人可以在此眺望祈園區充滿歷史感的景色。下圖：酒店由地標性歷史建築八坂會館改建而成，並盡可能保留了老建築的風貌。

Curtain Reopened

A Kyoto landmark ushers in a new era

Kyoto’s Gion district is a place where the past never truly fades. Lanterns glow softly over cobbled lanes, the air steeped in memory. Soon, something new will rise—not to replace the past, but to spark against it.

Set to open in spring 2026, The Imperial Hotel, Kyoto is bringing new life to an old stage—quite literally. Built on the site of the former Yasaka Kaikan theatre, the hotel reawakens a cultural landmark long central to the city’s identity.

Originally constructed in 1936, Yasaka Kaikan was once the beating heart of Kyoto’s performing arts scene. It famously hosted the annual Miyako Odori—the storied spring dance of Kyoto’s geisha. But over time, the curtain fell. Years of disuse and the threat of seismic instability cast a long shadow over the building’s future.

Now, the story continues—not with curtain calls, but through quiet luxury. The new 55-room boutique hotel will inhabit the same historic structure, officially designated as a registered tangible cultural property of Japan and a historic scenic building by Kyoto City. By preserving its facade—a symbol of profound cultural significance—the design honours Japanese artistry, blending heritage with modern refinement.

Leading the restoration is Obayashi Corporation, the very architectural firm behind the original 1936 design. With over 135 years of legacy, they return to their work with reverence and precision. Traditional Japanese techniques, such as ikedori—a method that allows for careful disassembly and reuse—have been employed to retain key features: the wood-panelled interiors, terracotta embellishments, and even 16,387 exterior tiles from the original building.

The hotel’s design draws inspiration from the five elements—fire, earth, wind, sky, and water—which inform both material and mood. Local woods, Japanese marble, Tokoname terracotta, and regionally sourced stones—including Tamina-ishi from a remote Kagoshima island and the iconic Ōya stone used by Frank Lloyd Wright—bring texture and depth. The connection is more than symbolic: Tokusaburo Kimura, who designed the original Yasaka Kaikan, studied directly under Wright. The American architect’s minimalist approach, with its elegant restraint and harmony with nature, found a kindred spirit in Japanese aesthetics.

As principal interior designer Tomoyuki Sakakida reflects, the hotel is more than a restoration—it is a living bridge. Threading together old and new, tradition and transformation, The Imperial Hotel, Kyoto is a place where history is not preserved behind glass but carried forward, inviting guests to step into an unfolding story flowing through wood, light, and memories.

京都的祇園，是一個歷史在此永不褪色的地方。紙燈籠柔和溫暖的光灑在鵝卵石鋪就的小巷中，空氣裏瀰漫著久遠記憶的氣息。很快，一座酒店將在此開門營業，不過它的到來並不是為了改變或者取代，而是為了與之激盪出新的火花。

這間計劃在2026年春季開業，位於祈園的帝國飯店京都店，最令人關注的，是其建在地標性建築八坂會館的劇院舊址上，從而讓這座長期以來作為京都文化標誌的建築重現生機。

八坂會館最初建於1936年，曾是京都表演藝術的中心。它曾主辦日本一年一度的「都舞」盛會，「都舞」就是指「首都舞」，京都在過去曾是日本的首都。這是一年一度的必看表演，由裝扮華美的藝妓共同跳舞演出。儘管該建築已被日本正式評定為有形文化財產，並被京都市列為歷史風景建築，然而，隨著時間的推移，曾經的繁華逐漸衰落，八坂會館也已閒置多年，還曾受過地震影響而變成危樓。

直到帝國酒店決定將其第四間分店開設在這裏，這座古老會館的命運才出現了轉機。帝國飯店的總體規劃分為保存、改建、增建三個部份，在符合周遭歷史人文環境的前提下對會館進行翻新，最終成為一座擁有五十五間客房的精品酒店，保留傳統，又增添了現代風格，更向日本舞蹈藝術的傳承致敬。

負責翻新工程的是日本著名建築公司大林組，正是他們於1936年修建了八坂會館。這間創辦超過一百年的公司，以敬畏和嚴謹的態度回歸到會館的工作現場。傳統的日本建築技術，例如「ikedori」技術，便是一種將建築舊有部份細緻地拆卸下來，進行再利用的方法。在此次翻新項目中，這種技術非常有利於保持建築舊有的風貌，像是老建築的木質鑲板內飾、赤陶裝飾，甚至16,387片外牆磚，都被小心翼翼地拆卸下來，並重新利用。

酒店整體的設計靈感來自於「火、土、風、天、水」五大元素，這些元素影響著建築的材質與氛圍。當地的木材、日本大理石、常滑市的赤陶，以及本土採購的石材，包括來自鹿兒島偏遠島嶼的多摩石和美國建築設計大師Frank Lloyd Wright曾使用過的標誌性大谷石，為建築帶來了豐富的質感。巧合的是，八坂會館的原設計師木村德三郎，曾經師從Frank，並深受其優雅與自然相融合的設計風格的影響，這似乎與日本傳統美學不謀而合。

正如此次項目的首席室內設計師Tomoyuki Sakakida所言，這間酒店不僅僅是一次老建築的修復，它更是一座活生生的橋樑，將舊與新、傳統與現代巧妙地串聯起來。可以說，京都帝國飯店中所體現出的歷史，不是陳列在博物館中，而是依然存在於當下的生活之中，邀請人們走入其中，在時光的變遷與記憶的流淌間傾聽一段故事。🍵

Photo courtesy of Yasaka Nyokoba Gakuen



華麗新生

日本京都地標建築
翻開全新一頁

Photo courtesy of New Material Research Laboratory

