

SOCIETY OF  
ARCHITECTURAL  
HISTORIANS

(Rev.) Takamasa Senge, Izumo Grand Shrine  
195 Kitsukihigashi  
Taisha-machi  
Izumo-shi  
Shimane-ken  
699-0701 Japan

9 March 2016

Dear Rev. Senge,

The Society of Architectural Historians (SAH) expresses strong support for the preservation of the Administration Building of the Great Shrine of Izumo, Shimane Prefecture, and strongly discourages any efforts to demolish this internationally significant architectural landmark.

SAH is the principal scholarly organization for architectural historians in North America. It does not regularly become involved in preservation issues, and speaks only to issues of national and international importance. We want to underscore the fact that we evaluate threats to nationally and internationally significant architectural resources thoroughly, and do not take positions on them lightly.

We understand that the Administration Building of the Great Shrine of Izumo is imminently threatened by demolition. The Administration Building of the Great Shrine of Izumo, designed by architect by Kiyonori Kikutake (1928-2011), is perhaps the most important extant building adjacent to the Grand Izumo Shrine. The Administration Building of the Great Shrine of Izumo, a landmark of postwar Japanese architecture, uniquely translates traditional forms using post-tensioned concrete beams and precast concrete infill screen pieces. The Administration Building of the Great Shrine of Izumo is an important example of Metabolic architecture, which embraced the forces of renewal, recycling, and transformation, themes which remain critical to our relationship to our ever-changing environment.

We believe the Administration Building of the Great Shrine of Izumo to be of international architectural significance. Its significance was recognized soon after its completion, as it was awarded the 15th Japanese Architectural Association Prize (1963), the Building Contractors Society (BCS) Prize (1965), and the 7th Pan Pacific Award (1964), underscoring the fact that its importance was recognized almost immediately. Kikutake drew inspiration from centuries-old Japanese timber construction traditions to rebuild a nation ravaged by war and natural disasters, and his approach to address societal and technological changes was one of continuous evolution through the present. For this structure adjacent to one of the oldest and most important Shinto shrines in Japan, Kikutake's scheme used state-of-the-art construction technology of pre-stressed precast concrete to rebuild the original administration building, which had been lost to fire. Architects today continue to recognize the significance of the building; in 2005, the Administration Building of the Great Shrine of Izumo by Kiyonori Kikutake was chosen by Docomomo Japan as one of the 100 important buildings representing modern architecture in Japan (*Japan Architect* 57, Spring 2005, 122).

We understand that maintenance issue can be burdensome to those charged with the upkeep of historic buildings, especially those that remain in use. However, the loss of the Administration Building of the Great Shrine of Izumo would be a tragedy for Japan and for the world. To that end, if there is any way that our membership could assist with preservation or maintenance advice, or support the efforts of those charged with those undertakings, we would consider it a privilege to assist in the preservation of this most significant building.

The SAH expresses strong support for the preservation of the Administration Building of the Great Shrine of Izumo, and encourages any efforts to prevent its demolition.

Sincerely,



Bryan Clark Green, Ph.D., LEED AP BD+C  
Chair, Heritage Conservation Committee  
Society of Architectural Historians