

畝森泰行建築設計事務所  
UNEMORI ARCHITECTS



## PRESS RELEASE

OCTOBER 2021

### **UTA/UNEMORI TECO ASSOCIATES CONVERTS COMMERCIAL BUILDING INTO A HEALTH & CHILDCARE SUPPORT COMPLEX IN KITAKAMI**

The Japanese architectural office UtA/Unemori teco Associates, a joint venture between UNEMORI ARCHITECTS and teco, has converted the first two floors of an eight-story commercial building in the city center of Kitakami in the prefecture of Iwate in Japan into an inventive health and childcare support complex with a total floor area of 4,000 sqm. By entirely gutting and converting the first two floors and facade of the existing building and integrating the health and childcare support facilities as well as a public meeting space, UtA/Unemori teco Associates realized a creative and inviting space that acts as a new meeting point for the city's residents. The new complex is structured around a central, open space, featuring gently undulating floors and ceiling, as well as a facade with large windows and entrance area. With the conversion, UtA/Unemori teco Associates showcases their architectural competence for sensitive redevelopments of existing buildings and the re-use of rare space in the city.

#### TRANSCENDING BUILDING TYPOLOGIES

Instead of building a new complex, UtA/Unemori teco Associates converted a central commercial building from 1999 to accommodate the Kitakami health and childcare support center, thus re-using existing space in the city. The two lower floors of the existing building provide a rectangular space and were gutted entirely for the conversion. The architects also completely renewed the facade, featuring a glass front and equipping it with a spacious entrance area with sliding doors.

UtA/Unemori teco Associates structured the space around a central multi-purpose indoor plaza - an open space in the center of the first floor that is accessible to the public thus connecting the city outside with the facility. The high-ceiling plaza consists of an atrium, a café and a reception desk and serves as an entrance and waiting area to the surrounding rooms with various functions such as a facility for medical checkups, an indoor playground, an exhibition room, a consulting room as well as an office area. Transcending the building typology of a childcare center, a number of seating areas with varying textures and sitting heights were installed as a public meeting point in the foyer.

#### PLAYFULLY UNDULATING FLOORS AND CEILINGS

The commercial building consisted of simple rectangular grids that UtA/Unemori teco Associates deconstructed by creating playfully undulating ceilings and floors. The wavy shape provides a fun and unusual floor for the playground, while, as a ceiling, ensuring

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the safety clearance for medical vehicles, leaving adequate duct space above. The ceiling is illuminated across the entire surface, creating a play with shadow and light that lends a sense of depth to the complex. The architects mirrored the wave of the ceilings and floors on the outside of the complex as a striking eave on the facade.

As there were hardly any openings in the exterior walls before, UtA/Unemori teco Associates framed the facility with large windows and glass sliding doors so the interior can be seen from outside, thus reinforcing the open character of the building and its connection to the city.

Ends./

## NOTES TO EDITORS

### FACTS

Location:	Kitakami city, Iwate prefecture, Japan
Principal use:	health center, childcare support, office, etc.
Site area:	3,884 sqm
Building area:	3,097 sqm
Total floor area:	14,216 sqm
Renovation area:	3,947 sqm
Structural systems:	Steel frame
Scale:	1st and 2nd floor of 8 stories
Completion:	March 2021
Architecture & furniture:	UtA/Unemori teco Associates
Structural Engineers:	Design Office MOMI
Mechanical Engineers:	ZO consulting engineers
Sign design:	NIPPON DESIGN CENTER INC. IROBE DESIGN INSTITUTE
Textile Design:	Talking about Curtains
General contractors:	HAZAMA ANDO CORPORATION OBARA CONSTRUCTION Joint venture group
Photo:	Kai Nakamura

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## ABOUT UNEMORI ARCHITECTS

UNEMORI ARCHITECTS is an architectural office based in central Tokyo, Japan. Founded in 2009 by Japanese architect Hiroyuki Unemori, UNEMORI ARCHITECTS aims to create diverse and complex spaces of every scale, thereby developing architecture that is small and simple, yet big and complex at the same time. The ability to deal with projects of diverse scale is one of the major characteristics of UNEMORI ARCHITECTS' work. Their projects are characterized by complex structural layouts while maintaining a simple form, with works ranging from private residences, public facilities, universities, libraries and playgrounds.

[www.unemori-archi.com](http://www.unemori-archi.com)

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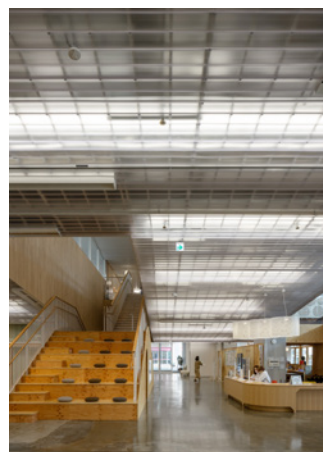
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Selection of the available photographs, floorplans and other plan materials.  
To receive high-resolution images, please contact Brand. Kiosk on: [unemori@brand-kiosk.com](mailto:unemori@brand-kiosk.com)



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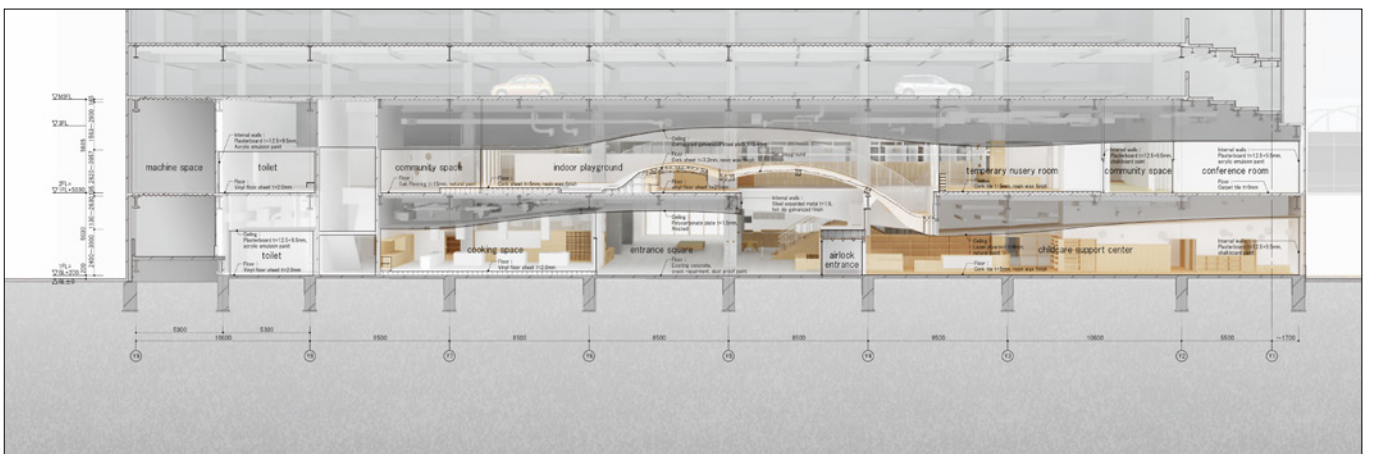
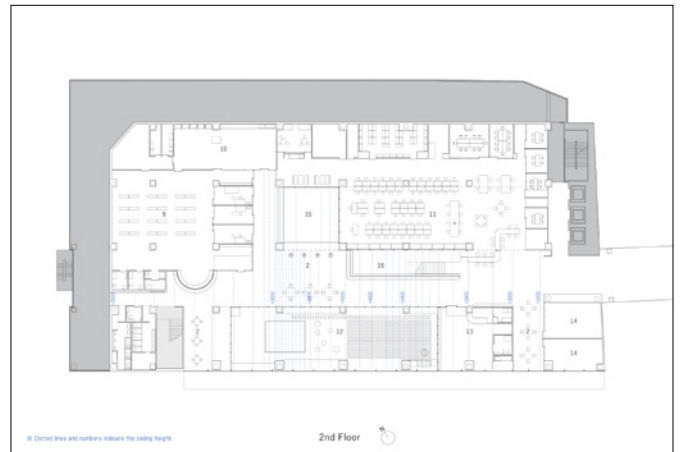
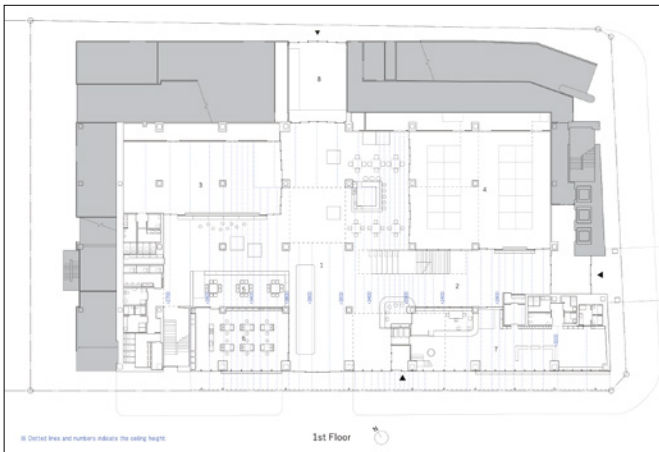
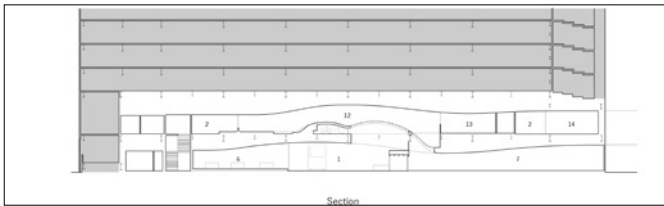
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