

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

8 March 2016

Dear Rev. Senge,

I am writing to urge you to consider carefully the case for preserving the Administration Building of the Izumo Grand Shrine from demolition. This structure is widely acknowledged as an early masterpiece by the late architect Kiyonori Kikutake. Owing to its daring post-tensioned concrete ridge beams (the first architectural use of this technique in Japan), and multitude of finely scaled, handcrafted details, it is a rare example of architecture encapsulating the social and technological aspirations of an era. Its historic and cultural value to the architectural and scholarly community cannot be overstated.

When I discovered, little more than a week ago, that the Administration Building was threatened with imminent demolition, I was both surprised and disappointed. The building appeared in excellent condition when I visited less than three years ago. Any building more than half-a-century old will be expected to show some patina, but the subtle qualities of daylight on the interior are as fresh as when the building opened in 1963. It is easy to imagine that with minor repairs, the Administration Building could be restored to museum-quality condition.

At each stage of human history, we seem to learn only too late to value the cultural production of those who have gone before us. Just as it seems unthinkable to us today that Frank Lloyd Wright's magnificent Imperial Hotel was torn down in Tokyo nearly 50 years ago, future generations may look back with disbelief at the decision to eradicate Kikutake's masterpiece at Izumo in this particular era. I urge you to consider other alternatives for the future of this much beloved building.

Sincerely,



Mark Mulligan  
Contributing author, *Kiyonori Kikutake: Between Land and Sea*

Associate Professor in Practice of Architecture  
Harvard Graduate School of Design  
mulligan@gsd.harvard.edu