

P-TILE for restoring the Registered Tangible Cultural Property: "Diffendorfer Memorial Hall East Wing in International Christian University"



International Christian University (known as ICU in Japan), located in Mitaka City, Tokyo, was established in 1953 as Japan's first liberal arts college. The "Diffendorfer Memorial Hall East Wing" has been cherished by professors and students alike, serving as the heart of campus life.

After more than 60 years since its completion, the building had deteriorated and faced the decision of demolition or preservation. Following extensive discussions, it was decided to preserve the building. Interior and exterior renovation work was planned, and the building was reborn in its new form in autumn 2021.

The renovation project aimed to restore the original appearance of the building while enhancing user convenience by installing features such as an elevator. Tajima's "P-TILE," synonymous with vinyl floor tiles in Japan, was chosen for the lounge, rooms, and corridors, preserving the floor's original charm.

Thanks to ...

W.M Vories & Company Architects Ichiryusha

Tokyo Office Vice manager

Mr. Makoto Sasaki



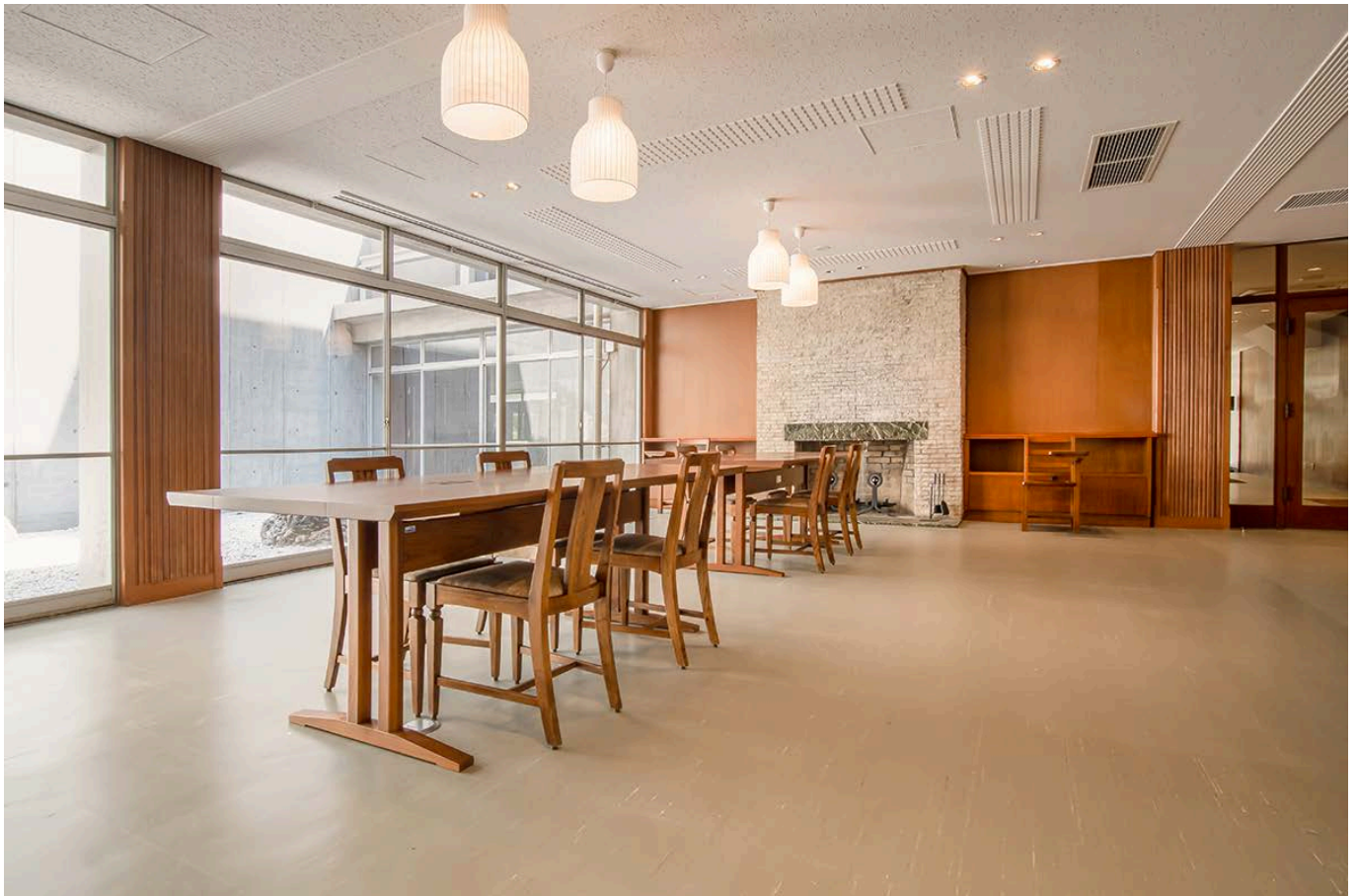
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Introduction

The "Diffendorfer Memorial Hall," named after Dr. Diffendorfer, who contributed to the establishment of ICU, was completed in 1958. It was Japan's first student hall and has remained popular among students to this day. In later years, the West Wing was added, and as part of this renovation project, the original building, now renovated, is referred to as the East Wing.

The north facade of the East Wing, which faces the main building across the plaza, features a gently curved surface that blends harmoniously with the surrounding lawn and trees. On the south side, facing the lounge and other rooms, balconies and railings emphasize horizontal lines in the design. Despite its construction in the 1950s, elements of Vories' modern and contemporary architectural style are evident throughout the building.

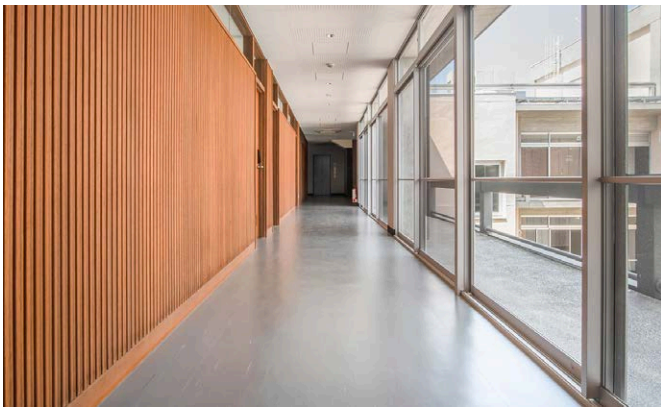


P TILE Classic P-41

Historical Significance of the building

There was much discussion inside the ICU regarding whether to rebuild or preserve this historic building. Amidst these discussions, DOCOMOMO JAPAN, an organization dedicated to the preservation of modern architecture, designated the East Wing of the Diffendorfer Memorial Hall as an "Architecture of the Modern Movement in Japan" in 2016. This recognition elevated the building's academic reputation and reinforced the decision to preserve it, ensuring the continuity of memories for current students and alumni, as well as honoring the spirit of the building.

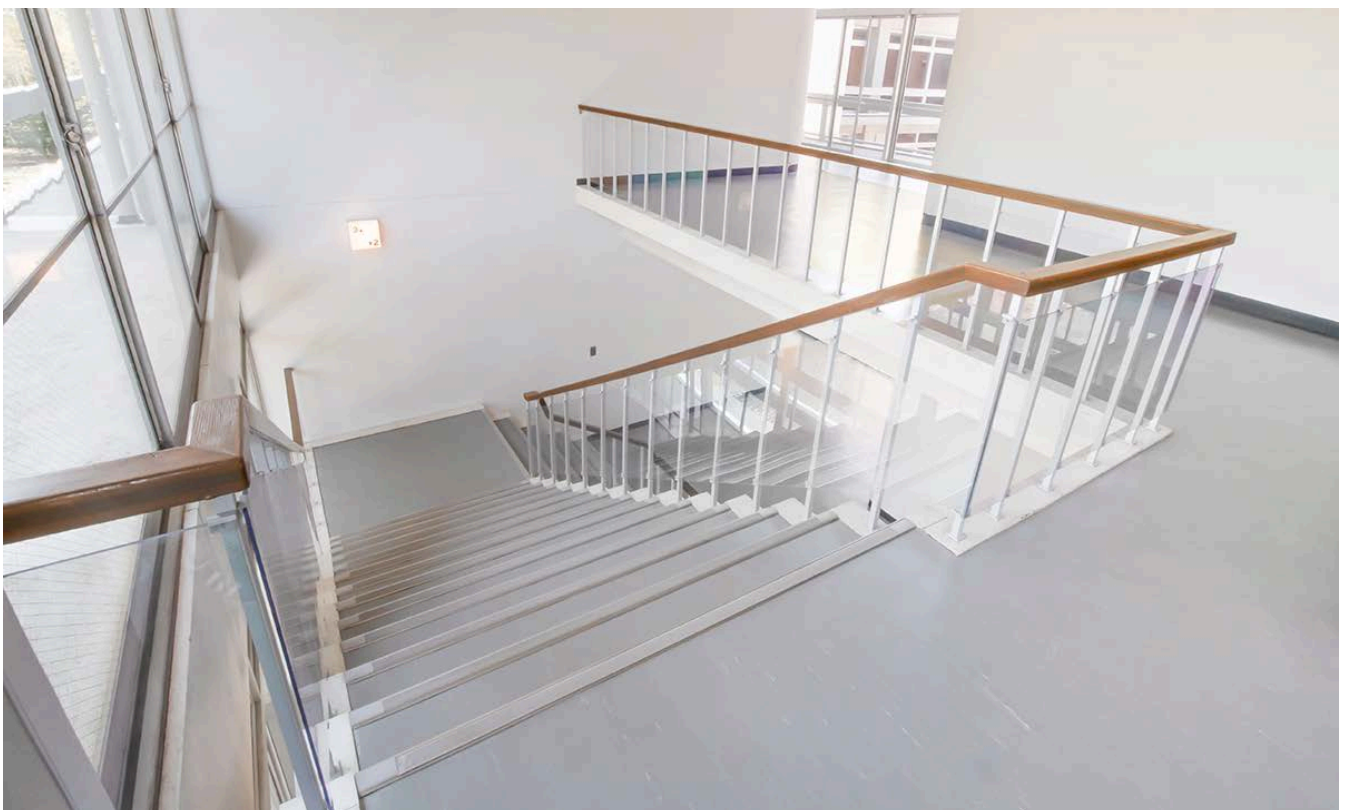
As a result of these efforts, the Council for Cultural Affairs of the Government of Japan reported to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology in November 2022 that the East Wing of the Diffendorfer Memorial Hall should be registered as a Tangible Cultural Property of Japan. Its ongoing use and preservation are now gaining increasing attention.



P TILE Classic P-41



P TILE Classic P-41



P TILE Classic P-41

PLUS TILE P: A revolutionary product in Japan's flooring market post-World War II.

Before World War II, flooring materials in Japan primarily consisted of stone, wood, and ceramic tiles. The first resin tile, introduced in 1955, marked a significant advancement as it was thinner, lighter, and easier to install compared to traditional materials. Tajima Roofing (then known as Tajima Applied Chemicals) developed the "PLUS TILE" (3.2 mm thickness) in response to a request from GHQ/SCAP (General Headquarters, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers).

Subsequent technological advancements led to the development of the 2mm thick 'PLUS TILE P,' which is still sold today under the name "P-TILE." Interestingly, in Japan, "P-TILE" has become a general term for vinyl floor tiles.

"PLUS TILE P" was the vinyl floor tile specified in the drawings for the Diffendorfer Memorial Hall during its construction and completion. Vories selected this newly released vinyl floor tile for the campus, pioneering a space that embodied the dawn of modern architecture in Japan.



For the renovation project

The architectural firm in charge of the renovation was W.M. Vories & Company Architects Ichiryusha, the successor to the Vories Architectural Office established by William Merrell Vories, who originally designed the campus when the ICU was founded.

Mr. Sasaki, who oversaw the renovation design, commented as follows:

"The preservation of the original flooring was immensely beneficial for the renovation of this historic building. The designer's meticulous attention to detail is evident throughout, from the ceiling in the auditorium and the floor in the foyer, to the marble surrounding the fireplace in the lounge, the Copenhagen-ribbed wood walls lining the hallways on each floor, and the exposed cobble gravel finish on the balconies."

"The selection of vinyl floor tiles for the flooring was a carefully considered decision. During the renovation survey, we observed repaired traces and a mixture in the dull-colored flooring, making it difficult to imagine the original condition when it was newly constructed. However, as we observed the balance with the walls and ceiling during the renovation process, we began to envision the space as Vories had intended nearly 60 years ago."

"The goal is to restore the building to its original condition, but it must also be adapted to current usage requirements for practicality. I believe we have successfully addressed the challenge of preserving modern architecture while ensuring its functional use."

Diffendorfer Memorial Hall East Wing

3-10-2, Osawa, Mitaka-shi, Tokyo, Japan

<https://www.icu.ac.jp/>



Tajima's sales person's comment

At Mr. Sasaki's request, we conducted the site survey for the renovation in early summer 2020, just as the COVID-19 epidemic was beginning to spread in Japan. The normally bustling campus, usually filled with lively student activity, was deserted.

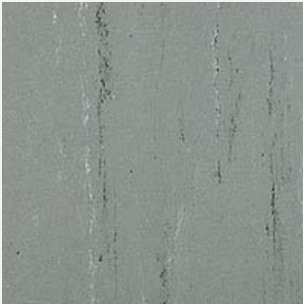
Observing how the dull color of the flooring had faded and blended into the space over the years, it was uncertain if the new flooring would truly complement the environment. However, upon seeing the newly installed P-TILE in harmony with the walls and ceiling, we felt we had captured the modern ambiance that Vories envisioned when he designed the building.

We hope that the building will become a place of memories not only for those who have cherished it thus far but also for new students who will spend their time there in the future.

Tomohiko Watabiki , Hitomi Iwasaki

Tajima Roofing Inc.Floor Material Department,Sales Division

Floor materials introduced in this article.



Tile
P TILE Classic
P-1 , P-13 , P-41