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Portland Japanese Garden Collaborates with Kengo Kuma on Major Expansion Opening This Spring

Considered the most authentic Japanese gardens outside Japan, Portland landmark to open \$33.5M Cultural Village on April 2

PORTLAND, Ore. (March, 2017) - The [Portland Japanese Garden](#), celebrated as one of the most authentic Japanese gardens outside Japan, will on April 2 open its \$33.5M [Cultural Village](#) expansion. Designed by world renowned architect [Kengo Kuma](#), who is also spearheading the National Stadium for the [2020 Tokyo Olympics](#), the Garden's new Cultural Village will not only provide additional space to accommodate its rapid visitor growth, but also - and most importantly - enhance its ability to immerse visitors in traditional Japanese arts and culture.

"In this increasingly plugged-in, distracted world, we find many of our guests seek out the peace and respite they find within the Garden," said [Steve Bloom](#), chief executive officer for the Portland Japanese Garden. "With this new Cultural Village, we will extend the Garden's legacy and purpose, providing a heightened sense of tranquility, a more robust educational experience and preservation of significant cultural traditions and art forms."

Architectural Inspiration

Mr. Kuma's design principles of continuity between nature, natural materials, and Japanese tradition make him an ideal match for the Garden's aim. Together with the Portland Japanese Garden's Curator, third generation master garden craftsman [Sadafumi Uchiyama](#), Kuma designed the new Cultural Village, his first public commission in the U.S., to honor the singular experience of each visitor and ensure the serenity is protected for future generations.

"Given its proximity to nature, Portland is unlike any place in the world. This new Cultural Village serves as a connector of the stunning Oregon landscape, Japanese arts and a subtle gradation to architecture," said Kuma. "Working with the Garden has influenced my approach to future projects, especially integrating green and wood. For example, the National Stadium in Tokyo will be rich in vegetation, evoking a feeling of forest in the city."

With this expansion, Kuma and Uchiyama reused and optimized existing land - adding 3.4 acres of usable space to the 9.1 acre property - to create an immersive, fluid journey from beginning to end. To better welcome visitors, the entrance to the Garden at Washington Park features a water garden with cascading ponds, introducing the transition from city to tranquility. To protect the peaceful environment, the Village emulates Japan's *monzenmachi*, the gate-front towns that surround sacred shrines and temples.

Using a combination of locally sourced materials and Japanese craftsmanship, the Village's design is informed by a cross-cultural exchange of expertise. The Tateuchi Courtyard is a gathering space for seasonal activities, performances and demonstrations to educate and enrich the visitor experience. Each new LEED-certified structure exists harmoniously with nature and serves as a mere frame from which to view its exquisite beauty, leaving the Garden as the centerpiece. New buildings include:

- The *Jordan Schnitzer Japanese Arts Learning Center* is home to new gallery spaces, a multi-purpose classroom, the Garden gift store and the Vollum Library, a comprehensive resource on Japanese gardening and related arts.

- A new *Garden House*, where an expanded offering of horticulture workshops will take place.
- At the heart of the village, visitors will find an authentic, intimate [Umami Café](#), which provides a place to rest and refresh while experiencing gracious Japanese-inspired service firsthand. The café features teas and products from Jugetsudo, whose flagship tea cafés in Tokyo and Paris were also designed by Kuma. The café's unique location floats over the hillside at the east side of the Village providing scenic views of the area's surrounding beauty. Constructed using Port Orford cedar and Tyvek, which emulates rice paper, the café floats in nature and fuses harmoniously into its surroundings.

Kuma designed living roofs atop the structures, which absorbs rainwater and prevents water run-off. From a design perspective, the living roofs are likened to the thatched roofs of fishing huts from centuries ago in Japan.

Master Craftsmanship

One of the standout structures is the authentic, medieval [Castle Wall](#) found the west end of the Portland Japanese Garden's new Cultural Village. The building process was led by Suminori Awata, a 15th-generation Japanese master stonemason. The wall measures 185 feet long and 18.5 feet high and was built using traditional hand tools and techniques. In total, the wall has 800 tons of Baker Blue granite from a quarry outside Baker City, Ore.

New Gardens

While the existing Garden has stayed intact and unchanged, the Cultural Village expansion introduces three new gardens designed to demonstrate a wider array of Japanese garden styles and techniques, including:

- *The Entry Garden* with cascading ponds and a water terrace at the entry in Washington Park.
- *Tsubo-Niwa* (small vignette garden) in the Tateuchi Courtyard.
- *Ellie M. Hill Bonsai Terrace*.

The *Bill de Weese Chabana Research Garden* will grow flowers for tea ceremony, furthering the Garden's education focus. A private space, the chabana garden is the first of its kind in North America.

Upcoming Art Exhibitions

With demonstrations taking place weekly, guests will be able to partake first-hand in Japanese culture upon their visit to the Garden. The new gallery space will allow for year-round exhibitions and expanded cultural programming. In celebration of the Cultural Village's opening, the Portland Japanese Garden will host three major Art in the Garden exhibitions this year, each featuring related lectures, demonstrations and activities:

- *Hosokawa Morihiro: The Art of Life, A Rebirth in Clay* (Spring): A celebration of tea culture in the art and life of Hosokawa Morihiro, a former Prime Minister of Japan.
- *KABUKI: A Revolution in Color and Design* (Summer): An exploration of Japan's most flamboyant and fanciful performance art through elaborate costumes.
- *Mirrors of the Mind: The Noh Masks of Otsuki Koukun* (Fall): A look into the elusive world of Noh with hand-carved masks by Otsuki Koukun and elegant brocade costumes from the traditional silk looms of Orinasu-kan in Kyoto.

New Education Model

One of the most important aspects of the project is the development of the International Institute for Japanese Garden Arts & Culture, which will merge traditional apprentice-based learning with current, academic-based study. The curriculum will be focused on learning techniques of Japanese gardening while including lessons in Japanese culture via traditional garden arts, such as tea ceremony and calligraphy. The Institute will be open to the public in 2018.

About the Portland Japanese Garden

Inspired in the late 1950s by growing cultural ties between Oregon and Japan, Mayor Terry Schrunk and members of the Portland community conceived the idea of building a Japanese garden on the site of the old zoo in Washington Park. Their reasons for building a Japanese garden were twofold: providing the citizens of Portland with a garden of great beauty and serenity, while forging a healing connection to Japan on the heels of World War II.

At this time in U.S. history, Japanese gardens were founded across the country as a way to build cultural understanding. Needing no translation, an American could experience firsthand Japanese ideals and values, communicated simply through nature.

The site was dedicated in 1961, and Professor Takuma Tono of Tokyo Agricultural University was retained to design the Garden. Professor Tono's plan included five different garden styles laid out on 5.5 acres. This was quite a departure from gardens in Japan which typically follow one singular style. His intention was to represent different historical developments in Japanese garden architecture and through that communicate Japanese culture to create a cultural exchange. For more information, visit japanesegarden.org.

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