

**Executive Yuan Central Building:  
A National Historic Site**

**National Designated Historic Site:  
The Story of the Executive Yuan Building**

**History of the Executive Yuan Building**

Construction on what is now the main building of the Executive Yuan began in 1937. It was designated a national historic site in 1998 by the Ministry of the Interior for its historical and architectural significance. During the period of Japanese rule, it was home to the Taipei Municipal Office; after Taiwan was handed over to the ROC, it successively housed the Office of the Taiwan Provincial Administration, the Taiwan Provincial Government, and the Executive Yuan. The building is also an important piece of modernist architecture from the late Japanese rule era.

**Origins of Taipei Municipal Office**

In the early days of Japanese rule, Taipei was under direct jurisdiction of the Japanese governor-general of Taiwan. The mayorship was not established until 1920 when Taipei was upgraded to a city and the Taipei

Municipal Office created. Taketohari Goro served as the inaugural mayor. The office originally operated on the campus of Huashan Elementary School, but as needs expanded, construction began in 1937 on a new office building that would become today's Executive Yuan Central Building.

**Site Selection**

Taipei's most flourishing district during the Qing dynasty was Mengjia, and later Dadaocheng following the opening of Tamsui Port. After Imperial Commissioner Shen Bao-zhen received permission in 1875 to establish Taipei Prefecture in northern Taiwan, builders hired by the Taiwan provincial government began constructing a walled city in 1882 and completed the Taipei Prefecture capital in 1884. The site on which the Executive Yuan would be located sat outside the northeast limits of the Taipei Prefecture capital in a barren district called Sanbanqiao.



• The Taipei Municipal Office operated temporarily in the Huashan Elementary School.



After Taiwan came under Japanese rule in 1895, the administrators implemented their own urban plans for Taipei and demolished the city walls. Two major construction projects were undertaken in the city's central and eastern areas to lay out new streets for public buildings, government agencies and schools. In the second phase of urban planning, the administrators selected Huashan district by the northeast corner of the Taipei Prefecture capital as the site for the Taipei Municipal Office.

**Predecessor to the Executive Yuan Complex**

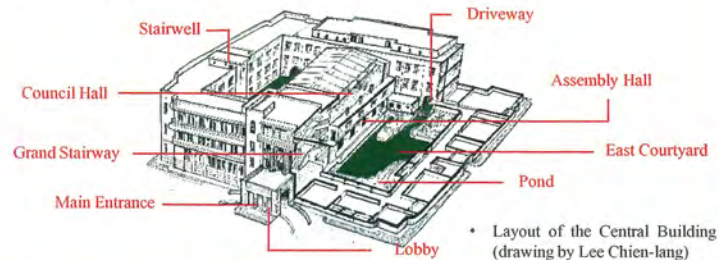
The predecessor to the Executive Yuan complex was the Huashan Elementary School, constructed in 1911. Twenty meters to the front of the main building was a smaller two-story red-brick structure that originally housed classrooms and later became the first home of the ROC Government Information Office. The red structure was demolished in the 1980s.



• The Executive Yuan (rear) in 1973. The front building, formerly classrooms for the Huashan Elementary School, houses the Government Information Office.



• The Executive Yuan today. The symmetrical layout and simple flowing lines are characteristic of expressionist architecture.



**Architect and Construction Firm**

The Executive Yuan Central Building was designed by Ide Kaoru, an architect from the construction department of the Japanese governor-general's office whose well-known works include Taipei Zhongshan Hall, the Jinan Presbyterian Church and the American Cultural Center. The construction firm that undertook this massive project was Hsieh-Chih Association, predecessor to the Tatung Co. When the new building was completed after three years and four months, the overall site covered 24,598 square meters, and the four-story structure with a partial basement had floor space totaling 11,144 square meters.

**Building Usage History**

- ◎ Taipei Municipal Office (1940-1945)  
After the building was completed in 1940, the Taipei Municipal Office moved in the following year. Two mayors served in this building: Ishii Ryucho and Kihara Enji.
- ◎ Office of the Taiwan Provincial Administration (1945-1947)  
After Taiwan was handed over to the ROC in 1945, the Nationalist Government announced an organizational framework for the Office of the Taiwan Provincial Administration and designated the building as its

headquarters. Chen Yi was appointed the province's chief executive.

- ◎ Taiwan Provincial Government (1947-1957)

The Office of the Taiwan Provincial Administration was dissolved in 1947, whereupon the building became the premises of the Taiwan Provincial Government. Five provincial chairmen served in this building: Wei Tao-ming, Chen Cheng, Wu Kuo-chen, Yu Hung-chun and Yen Chia-kan.

- ◎ Executive Yuan (1957-Present)

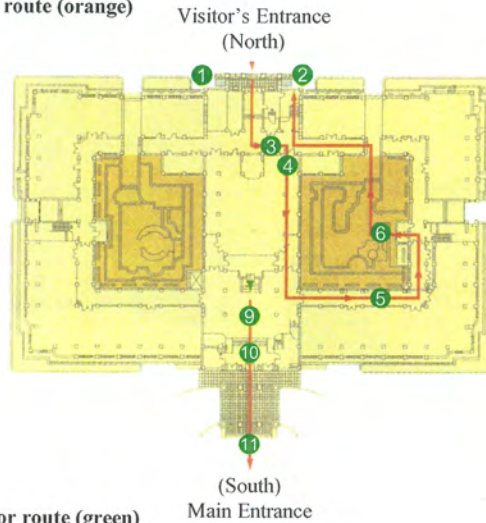
Since the Taiwan Provincial Government relocated to Nantou County in 1957, the building has been home to the Executive Yuan, the highest administrative organ in the country.

The Central Building of the Executive Yuan presents not an ornate appearance but a modernist style that combines simple lines and rectangular shapes. Though the times have changed, its function as a center for top-level administration has not. A national historic site as well as a cultural heritage, it has borne witness to decades of social, economic and political progress. The Executive Yuan welcomes the public to visit the building and learn more about its historical value and significance.

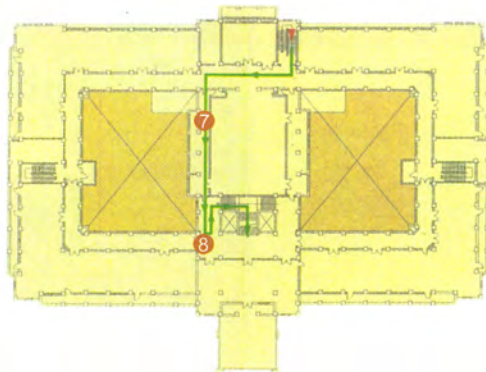


## Executive Yuan Tour Route

First floor route (orange)



Second floor route (green)



## A Tour of the Executive Yuan



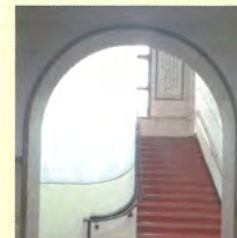
- ① The lower half of all exterior walls is made from stone. The remaining wall space is covered with brown ceramic tiles, dubbed "defense color tiles" for their camouflage protection against air raids.



- ② Water faucets were once installed at the north entrance for the convenience of visitors and automobiles.



- ③ The terrazzo walls of the interior are polished in different colors, forming decorative horizontal bands. The same craftsmanship can be seen at the Taipei City Public Auditorium built slightly earlier (now Taipei Zhongshan Hall).



- ④ Unlike most earthquake-resistant buildings, the Executive Yuan has stairways situated not at the corners but at the midpoints of its four sides. They were built with steel-reinforced concrete, an excellent material for withstanding quakes.



- ⑤ Sash windows. Though the window frames were made of wood and have been used for many years, they are still in excellent condition.





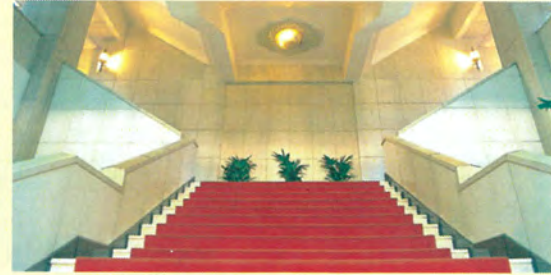
6 Lush flowers and plants transform this inner courtyard into a small garden of elegance and tranquility.



7 Council Hall. This spacious conference room has an imposing 9-meter high ceiling that stretches 24 meters across.



8 Diamond-motif carvings lend an air of classical architecture to these door panels.



9 The grand stairway in the entrance lobby. The handrails and walls were recently fitted with a stone finish to give the stairway brighter, softer colors.



10 The diamond pattern favored by art deco stylists can be seen on the door panels and windows in the main entrance lobby.



11 The front façade rises to a flat roof rather than a triangular pediment. At the main entranceway, a pair of columns with clean contours can be seen on each plane: square columns at ground level, ridged columns on the second level, and diamond-shaped columns on top.



## Ten Architectural Features

1. The architectural design as a whole reflects a 1930s world trend. This trend was influenced by the theory of functionalism as espoused by the Bauhaus School in Germany. The interior space is clearly divided according to function while the exterior design is a combination of simple squares and horizontal lines.
2. The building forms a squared-off figure "8" that surrounds two courtyards. Each room has its own place in a hierarchy of importance based on function. The balanced arrangement of the hallways and stairways on each floor facilitates easy entry and exit by personnel.
3. Balconies were constructed on the east, south and west sides originally to shield the building from sun and rain. Though the interior has since been equipped with air conditioning, the balconies still serve to conserve energy in Taiwan's hot and humid climate.
4. The balconies and parapet wall surfaces are rounded near the building's corners, giving the exterior a streamline style favored by expressionism. The horizontal balconies and railings generate a strong contrast to the vertical giant columns at the central entrance.
5. The simple round columns are built without caps, reflecting the strength of steel-reinforced concrete. The two square columns above the main entrance are decked with simple horizontal ridges to accentuate the entrance's image. These square columns and horizontal lines reveal the influence of the American architect Frank Lloyd Wright.
6. The exterior walls are covered with brown ceramic tiles, known at the time as "defense color tiles" because it provided camouflage against air raids.
7. The building's mostly flat rooftop represents a shift in style from eclecticism to modernism. The wall above the central entrance is covered in a spiraling diamond design. Atop each of the north and south entrances are a pair of ridged columns that reveal the influence of art deco.
8. The Council Hall is located at the heart of the complex on the second floor. Improved construction techniques at the time enable the room's steel trusses to stretch 24 meters across.
9. The interior walls are covered with terrazzo polished in different colors, forming decorative horizontal bands. These were finished by the precast method and executed with fine craftsmanship. The terrazzo material was made from Hanshui and Qili stone produced in Yilan.
10. The stairway railings are simple and unadorned. Unlike in conventional buildings, the stairways are located not at the corners but at the midpoints of the four sides. They were built with steel-reinforced concrete for stronger seismic resistance.

## Executive Yuan Location



### Tour Hours:

- Fridays 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (including lunchtime)
- Entrance: No. 2, Tianjin Street, Taipei City

### Make an Appointment (required for groups of 3 or more):

- Online: Please visit the Executive Yuan Tour site <http://www.ey.gov.tw/eyvisit/en.html> to make an appointment at least two days (by 5 p.m. that Wednesday) before your desired visit. You will receive a confirmation from the system.
- By fax: Please download a tour appointment form from the Executive Yuan Tour site and fax the completed form to (02) 3322-1599.
- Check status: Please call (02) 3322-1699 to check the status of your appointment.

### Notice for Visitors:

- (1) Upon arrival, please show proof of identity and pass through the security check.
- (2) Please dress appropriately. No pets, food, tobacco or gum are allowed inside the complex.
- (3) Please stay on the tour route and refrain from entering non-tour areas. Speak softly at all times.
- (4) Please do not carry signs, banners or dangerous objects during the tour. Any appeals or requests to meet officials will not be accepted.
- (5) The Executive Yuan will be temporarily closed to visitors if work is cancelled due to a typhoon, an earthquake or other reasons, or if the tour areas are undergoing renovation or construction.

### Public Transportation:

- Mass Rapid Transit (MRT):
  - BL12/R10 Taipei Main Station (Exit M7) : Bannan Line (Blue Line), Tamsui-Xinyi Line (Red Line) and Taoyuan Airport Line
  - BL13 Shandao Temple Station (Exit 1) : Bannan Line (Blue Line)
- Bus:
  - No. 5, 227, 247, 261, 307 or 652 to the Executive Yuan
  - No. 257, 262, 605 or the Zhongxiao Line bus to MRT Shandao Temple