

The oldest section of this building dates back to 1896, and was originally used by the imperial family to relax while enjoying the beauty of what was then an imperial garden. At first glance, the building appears to be constructed in the Stick style, which was a late nineteenth-century American architectural style. However, a closer look reveals that Japanese aesthetics have been blended with a Western architectural style that had become so important at the beginning of the twentieth century. The living room in particular was furnished in a hybrid Japanese and Western style.

The original building was quite small, but was remodeled at least four times over a period of several decades. After the addition of a dining room in 1921, the tiny “rest house” was used also for entertaining guests. The imperial family held many luncheon and dinner parties here, decorating the dining table with flowers from the gardens.

The exterior corridor leading to the old greenhouses was originally open to the elements. The window glass was added later and displays the imperfections that are common to handmade glass of that period. The building has a decorative gabled roof and an extended porte-cochère porch designed to protect guests and their carriages from the elements.

In 2001, the Old Imperial Rest House was designated as an Important National Cultural Property.