

Ishiguro House: City-Designated Historic Site

The Ishiguro family were stewards of the North Satake clan, the rulers of Kakunodate from the 1650s until the end of the Edo period (1603–1867) when the feudal domain system was abolished. The Ishiguro family house is thought to have been transferred to its current location in 1853.

The house and its grounds sit behind an imposing black wooden fence (called a *sasarakobei*) in the northern part of Bukeyashiki-dori. An observation window set into the fence allowed guards to look out onto the streets outside.

Visitors enter the grounds through a gate with a gabled roof (*yakui-mon*) typical of the style used in samurai residences during the Edo period. One component of the gate, a forepole, has been dated to 1809.

Past the gate is the main entryway to the house, which is decorated with a *gegyo* carved board attached to the roof gable. This entrance was reserved for esteemed guests, and there is a secondary side entrance for tradespeople and everyday use.

The roof of the main building is thatched and continues to be maintained in the traditional hipped roof. The garden features an artificial hill, boulders, tall fir trees, and an arbor. Though the Ishiguro family house may appear modest, it is the oldest samurai residence in Kakunodate and shows the family's high standing in the community.

Visitors can buy a ticket to tour the house and the family's collection of early anatomical documentation, books, samurai swords, armor, tools, and other items of historical interest. A direct descendent of the Ishiguro family still resides in the main building and provides English-language guidance to visitors.