

Former Mizusawa Prefectural Office

This building was established in June 1872 as the governmental office of Mizusawa Prefecture. However, it only held that role for three years. The prefecture was created in December 1871, when the Japanese prefectoral system was still in flux, and Mizusawa Prefecture was dissolved just five years later.

After its short use as a prefectoral office, the building served various purposes. In 1889, it became a branch office of the Ishinomaki Public Safety Court, a body that dealt with land- and property-related issues. When the building was reconstructed in 1989, it was modeled on the appearance it had in 1889. Furniture from subsequent Miyagi prefectoral offices was added to represent the legal and administrative styles that later came into popular use.

The entrance is wholly Japanese in style, with an imposing gabled roof and

lattice in a crisscross pattern. However, the rest of the building is a one-story wooden structure designed in the Western-inspired architectural style that characterized Meiji-era public office buildings. Informative displays, memorabilia, and old photographs offer visitors a glimpse into the building's operations over the years. A few rooms have been recreated, such as a courtroom and the bureaucratic office where citizens would submit paperwork. Unlike modern offices where visitors and clerks are positioned on the same level, the Western-style office was set high above the adjacent anteroom. Citizens submitting paperwork would stand on the ground floor in the anteroom and pass their documents up to a clerk kneeling in the window of the office above.