TOMIGAYA

The second Tokyo project, Tomigaya, is located in a densely populated residential neighbourhood. At 12 m x 15 m, the site is more promisingly proportioned than the urban silver of Azabu-Juban, but in common with the latter, this scheme also seeks to redefine the relationship between a building and its cramped surroundings. A delicate glass pavilion is elevated above the distractions of the Tokyo skyscrapers to create a small urban void, intended as a oasis of stillness and contemplation amid the hurly-burly of human activity below. The raised, one-storey structure (flexibly intended for office, studio or retail use), has a simple roof line and high-level windows on three sides. In a nod to the city's scifi soul, it appears to hover above the open ground like an intangible spaceship. Below ground is a series of vault-like spaces, designed to house office and retail activities. The curved ground floor peels up and pulls away from the perimeter of the site along two of its edges to reveal an entrance stair and lightwell to the space below. The stair descends to a mid-level platform and an external courtyard set within the lower ground floor space, which provides views up to the belly of the spaceship pavilion above. Although Tomigaya easily slots into the dense, super urban jungle of Tokyo, at the same time it gives back a small and precious gift of space to the city and its inhabitants.