



The entrance to one of Heiwa Real Estate's FinGATE buildings, also housing the Financial Market Entry Office.

# Breathing New Life into the Wall Street of Tokyo

Heiwa Real Estate's FinGATE offices are drawing investment companies from overseas.

by Tim Hornyak

In 2017, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG) announced "Global Financial City: Tokyo" Vision, a bold vision which aims to restore Japan's capital to its position as a leading financial city. Revised to "Vision 2.0" in 2021, the plan is based on the three pillars of green finance, digitalization of finance, and an increased number of asset managers. To play a part in the realization of this initiative, Heiwa Real Estate Co. has established shared offices in Kabutocho that support growth and business expansion of both domestic and global fund managers and other professionals.

Kabutocho is Japan's historic financial center, Tokyo's equivalent of Wall Street in New York. Kabutocho literally means "helmet town" and refers to the renowned samurai Minamoto no Yoshiie (1039–1106) having buried his armor there. Kabutocho's history as the center of securities and finance in Japan began in earnest with the establishment of the Tokyo Stock Exchange (TSE) in 1878, which fueled the growth of the economy over the next century and became one of the largest bourses in the world. In more recent years there have been fewer companies setting up offices in the

district, but now Heiwa Real Estate, owner of the TSE building, is bringing people back with FinGATE, a collection of shared offices and other facilities in the area.

"We have been trying to revitalize Kabutocho since around 2011 when it became a bit quiet with online trading," says Nakashima Moe of Heiwa Real Estate, which was founded in Kabutocho in 1947. "The neighborhood is changing. It used to be only businessmen in suits but now we're seeing young people on the streets, even on the weekend."

As part of the company's Nihonbashi Kabutocho and Kayabacho Revitalization Project, the share office project began with the opening of the first facility in 2017. The collection has grown to include five facilities of rental offices and event spaces, some with 100-person-capacity seminar rooms. The tenants represent a variety of about 60 enterprises: domestic and international asset management companies, fintech companies, and industry associations.

"We provide support for middle and back offices of financial companies," says Nakashima. "Also, due to our close connections with people from the Financial Services Agency, TMG, and national government agencies, we form a kind of community of people related to finance and securities, which makes us unique." Heiwa Real Estate is one of eight certified office operators participating in a TMG project to provide temporary office space to foreign financial companies considering expansion into Tokyo.

One of the tenants is Frontier Advisors Pty Ltd., an Australian investment consultant business whose clients include pension funds. In August 2022, Frontier Advisors established a subsidiary in Tokyo, choosing Japan over Singapore and Hong Kong because of its business potential.



Frontier Advisors Country Head of Japan, Takayama consults with a client in one of the shared meeting spaces at his office in FinGATE.

"We aim to connect potential clients in Japan with Australian and global investment opportunities as well as to use Japan as a gateway to expand our business in Northeast Asia," says Takayama Alex Yuichi, Country Head of Japan at Frontier Advisors. "One of the merits of working from here is that there are all kinds of financial institutions, including startups and fintechs in the same building, all with different points of view but sharing the same goals as us."

Source: National Diet Library Digital Collections



A map from the Edo period of the Nihonbashi Kabutocho area of Tokyo.

Takayama is now engaged in growing the business including hiring staff and obtaining the relevant licenses to operate as an investment consultant. "Another great strength of this system is that they also have a support office for opening new offices," says Takayama. The office was established in 2021 by the Financial Services Agency and the Finance Bureau of the Ministry of Finance to accelerate the entry of foreign firms into the Japanese market. "It is designed to help newcomers to Japan gain access to the Japanese market," he continued. "The organization provides a one-stop English-language service for new firms entering the Japanese market, including pre-registration consultation, registration procedures, and post-registration supervision. It is located in a nearby FinGATE building, so we consult with them."

"From the perspective of an overseas company, Tokyo has a lot to recommend it compared to other Asian, European, and U.S. regions regarding consideration for a base of operations, including excellent transport and accommodation infrastructure, a sense of safety, and also excellent food," says Takayama. "It's a great city."