

SUMMARY OF DIRECT TESTIMONY – ADAM WOLTAG
PRESENTATION HEARING
BLOCK 1 – “ĀLIA AT 888 ALA MOANA”
TMK (1) 2-1-56-14, 15 & 16; DPA No. KAK 22-042

I. Name, Place of Employment, Position

Adam Woltag, partner of WRNS Studio.

II. Educational Background and Experience.

I am a proud graduate of the University Lab School. I received a Bachelor of Science Design in Architecture from Arizona State University before earning a Master of Architecture degree from the Southern California Institute of Architecture. I am a licensed architect in both California and Hawaii, and am a LEED Accredited Professional. My resume contains a representative list of projects I have worked on during my career.

I was responsible for opening WRNS Studio’s first office outside of California when I established the Honolulu office in 2014. I currently oversee all design projects that come through the Hawaii office, as well as some projects in California.

III. WRSN Studio’s Experience and Expertise

We pride ourselves in creating some of the most sustainable projects in the United States and are considered an industry leader for creating sustainable projects. The firm has won numerous awards for its work, and is sought out by some of the most cutting edge companies when they want innovative and sustainable designs. We have won 3 National AIA COTE (Committee on the Environment) awards, in 2021 for the Microsoft Silicon Valley Campus, 2018 Janet Durgin Guild and Commons, and in 2010 for the Watsonville Water Resource Center – projects recognized as among the top ten most sustainable buildings in the country. We are also honored to have been recognized by Architect Magazine as the TOP Firm in the Country in both 2013 and 5 years later in 2018...one of only 2 firms to have been recognized as of note.

In Hawaii, we have successfully completed many projects. We are currently managing the construction of the Halewai‘olu Senior Residences and Community Center located on River Street, a high-rise housing project for the City on the edge of China Town. We are also in construction as well as in design phase for several other projects planned for Honolulu and outer islands. Our team includes architects and designers who have worked on high-rise residential projects across markets.

IV. WRNS Studio’s Scope of Work for this Project

WRNS Studio was retained by the developer to act as lead architect and develop a guiding vision for this project.

There were a few major considerations guiding our development of a vision for the Project. First and foremost, the Project was required to comply with the (vested) Mauka Area Rules of the Hawaii Community Development Authority (“HCDA”). The Project was also required to comply with the Kamehameha Schools Kaiāulu ‘o Kaka‘ako Master Plan (“KKMP”). In addition, the developer had a broad vision for the Project.

As a practice, WRNS Studios is heavily vested in “place” when developing a project. We put a lot of effort and thinking into defining what it means to be *of a place* generally, and what the “place” of a particular project will be and how this will impact and influence a design. To answer that question, we look at the history of the project site to understand the nature of the project site as it is right now, and what it is going to eventually evolve and grow into. That principle, along with the rules and long-term vision from the HCDA Mauka Area Rules and the KKMP, helped us understand the needs of this Project from an architect’s perspective.

We followed that standard practice when developing the design for this Project. We found this Project site to be especially interesting because it is bordered by Ala Moana Boulevard, Koula Street, and Auahi Street. Each of those streets have a different character and experience that provided an opportunity to incorporate different design elements and goals in different areas.

V. Summary of the Project.

After gaining an understanding of the Project site, there were two main factors that drove the overall design. First, the character and experience of the three streets this Project touches are very different in how pedestrians and autos engage. That requires design choices that reflect the different characters and experiences along the three streets. Second, one of most unique aspects of site is cultural garden right along Ala Moana Boulevard. That led us to develop a design that amplifies this garden experience and incorporates landscape and garden elements throughout the Project. The integration of the cultural garden into the Project design was especially important because Ala Moana Boulevard is the *civic edge* and forms the formal face of the Project. This is defined and felt in the generous set-back from Ala Moana Boulevard and the integration of the lush green space of the Archeological preserve and how that impacts the architecture.

In contrast to Ala Moana Boulevard, Koula Street has a much more pedestrian focus and Auahi Street serves as a fantastic pedestrian/bike/auto street that stitches across Kaka‘ako. These streets define the urban edges of the Project. The design ensures the Project touches the ground along Koula and Auahi Streets in a way that enlivens streets and makes them part of the community. In addition, because Auahi Street engages with

other parts of the KKMP, that frontage serves as the crossroads and retail aspect of the Project so it will connect to SALT and the rest of the community.

One of our design goals was to activate the building for the residents and the neighborhood. One way the design attempts to accomplish that goal is by including significant building amenities on the ground floor, as opposed to placing all amenities on the podium. The ground floor amenities have been carefully designed to encourage the interactions required to build a true neighborhood. There are places for children to play, areas for residents to meet one another and relax, and spaces designed for comfortable entertaining. Amenity spaces flank and activate the entry Lobby offering more opportunity for connections between residents and guest. The design also incorporates a cross-block driveway that connects Auahi Street to Ala Moana Boulevard and offers access for autos, bikes, and pedestrians.

The design also includes a large setback on Ala Moana Boulevard to accommodate the cultural garden. This large, green area helps to protect and amplify the open feeling along Ala Moana Boulevard. The urban experience is reinforced on Koula and Auahi Streets because the building is close to the street in those areas. The different feelings created along Ala Moana Boulevard and then Koula and Auahi Streets furthers the mixed-use nature of the building and the surrounding neighborhood. In part because of the large setback, the design has more open space than required under the KKMP, which will be a benefit to the neighborhood as a whole.

VI. Sustainability Considerations for this Project.

WRNS Studio considers sustainability on all its projects, and this design is no different. The Project includes a large photovoltaic array over the parking structure, along with additional photovoltaic panels on top of the tower.

Water is precious resource, especially now. The design team is looking at ways to significantly reduce the Project's potable water demands. We are also looking at other technologies and building systems that will further reduce the buildings impact on existing city infrastructure and surrounding properties.

The design also incorporates alternating balcony layouts on the units in the tower. The balconies are designed to provide shade for the unit below, which will shade and cool the building façade and help control the amount of energy required to cool the building. In fact, one of the unique things about this Project is the way the building presents itself to the ocean. The tower is oriented in a way that responds to solar exposure and allows the alternating balconies to provide shade. In addition, the orientation of the design means the building presents itself differently from different locations. The presentation of the building when viewed from the Ewa side is much different than the view from the makai side.

VII. Impact of Consulting Experts.

WRNS Studio retained multiple experts to assist in the design of the Project. This includes civil engineers, traffic engineers, acoustical engineers, archeological experts, and others. Those experts conducted research, performed testing, and made recommendations to ensure the design met the requirements set forth in the HCDA's Mauka Area Rules and the KKMP. Those recommendations have been incorporated into the design that was presented to the Board.