



## On the calendar

### May 4

The next HCDA Board meetings will be held. For more information on the public hearings, board meetings or about HCDA visit [dbedt.hawaii.gov/hcda](http://dbedt.hawaii.gov/hcda).

### Kakaako Survey

HCDA's Kakaako Mauka area plan and rules provide a framework for planning and development within the Kakaako community development district. These guidelines were last amended in 2011.

After nearly a decade, HCDA is evaluating suggested improvements and updates to the Rules and may amend them.

We would like to hear your thoughts about Kakaako. Please complete our survey at: [dbedt.hawaii.gov/hcda/kakaako-mauka-area-rule-amendments/](http://dbedt.hawaii.gov/hcda/kakaako-mauka-area-rule-amendments/).

### Know someone?

If you want to include an event, know an individual or a business in Kakaako, Kalaeloa or Heeia that we could feature, or just want more Community Connection, let us know by emailing us at: [dbedt.hcda.contact@hawaii.gov](mailto:dbedt.hcda.contact@hawaii.gov).

## Seeding the district with Salt

Creative ideas in adaptive redevelopment  
By Sara Lin

When a landowner redevelops a site with older buildings on it, the easiest and cheapest option is usually to raze the block and build new. But in HCDA's Kakaako district, Kamehameha Schools (KS) took a risk. Rather than build the large residential tower that was originally planned for the city block fronting Ala Moana Boulevard, bounded by Auahi, Coral and Keawe Streets, KS literally peeled back the layers on the existing low-rise 1970s era buildings to restore the historic structures that were underneath.

The result is SALT, a vibrant 96,000-square-foot commercial center that opened in 2016 with an eclectic mix of local eateries, retail shops and lots of open gathering spaces. Named for the salt ponds that once dotted Kakaako's low-lying wetlands, SALT today functions as the beating heart and community-serving retail center anchoring the district.

Taking an older structure and repurposing it for a new use is known in the development world as "adaptive reuse." The practice has been used on old buildings throughout Kakaako – including the brick American Brewery building that houses HCDA.

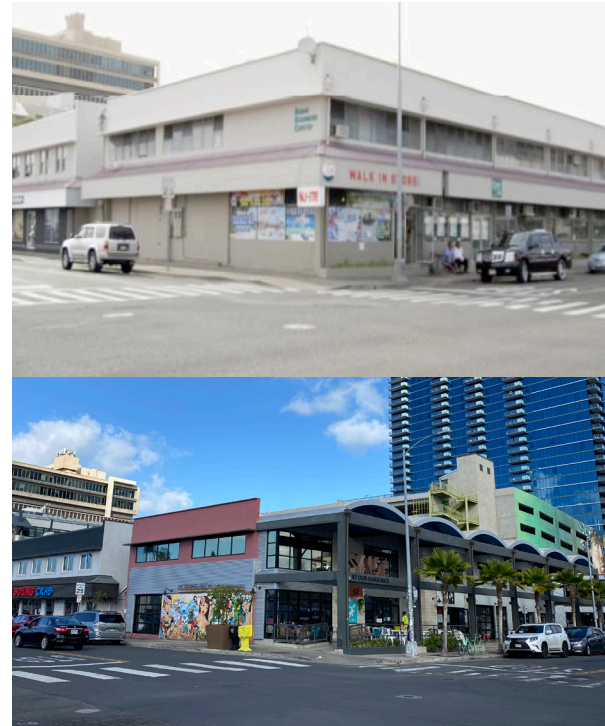
SALT offers one of the most instructive examples of how adaptive reuse can preserve history and architectural elements, yet be updated and innovative creating a gathering place for entrepreneurs, artists, visitors and kamaaina.

"The focus at SALT was to take something old and not tear it down, but refresh it, so that even kamaaina who had been going there for years would recognize it," said Bob Oda, senior planning and development manager for KS at the time.

What used to be an office building at 680 Ala Moana Boulevard was converted into 54 affordable rentals that satisfy part of HCDA's Reserved Housing requirement. The interiors were purposefully edgy with exposed ceilings, imperfections in the concrete walls left in place but painted over. The studio and one-bedroom units weren't fancy but they were functional, a reflection of the intention for Auahi Street to develop into a bustling pedestrian-focused thoroughfare where residents would rather be out in the neighborhood than inside.

Creating a sense of urgency at the ground level was critical, hence the emphasis in building plans for cafes, retail shops and other commercial uses fronting the street.

"We want people to feel like the ground



floor is their living room where they can grab a bite to eat, have a coffee, work remote at a café," said Serge Krivatsy, director of planning and development for KS's commercial real estate division. "It's the energy you get from an activated street."

Adaptive reuse projects sometimes result in cost savings by allowing builders to salvage existing materials and structures. But more often than not, developers end up spending more than they would have if they built new.

The most unique and visible historic structures evident at SALT are the Quonset hut warehouse roofs at the corner of Auahi and Coral Streets, where Morning Brew coffee shop is located.

Quonset huts are 1950s-era warehouses made with corrugated steel bent in a half-moon shape. Some locals remember calling them "kamaboko" buildings, after the hot pink fishcake found in saimin. The structures were cheap, easy to build, and effective. Former Honolulu Mayor Frank Fasi encouraged their construction throughout Kakaako to house light industrial industries including metalworkers, auto repair shops and other small businesses.

The half-circle steel structure of the Quonset huts had been covered up with cinderblocks. KS restored and reinforced the original structures which now shade a line of coffee houses and retail shops. "It was an expensive build out," Oda said, but essential to preserving the character of the area. That's the scary part about touching an old building – you never know what's left underneath.

"I think with KS, we're not so much about place



Before & after photos by Kamehameha Schools.



## Salt, adaptive reuse *page 1*

2022 Photos of Salt by Sara Lin

making, but place keeping,” Oda said. “It was important for us to honor the place and make sure it didn’t lose its identity.”

As KS builds out the Diamond Head phase of its masterplan, exposed timber and corrugated metal will continue to be critical design elements to be carried throughout, helping to tie the neighborhood together. And art. There will be more art. “Art brings people into an area,” Oda said.

Perhaps most surprising to everyone involved is how successful SALT is. Communities don’t always turn out how urban planners intend, but in SALT’s case, the project has exceeded everyone’s expectations.

SALT at Our Kaka’ako was awarded the American Institute of Architects (AIA) 2017 & 2018 Award of Merit, and then in 2018, Salt won the Shopping Center of the Year (SCOTY) award, presented by the International Council of Shopping Centers.

Moving forward, KS plans to build a diverse typography of buildings that support the different groups of people who want to

live in Kaka’ako. They are also working on bringing in more greenery.

“You’d be amazed at how much time we spend on trees,” Krivatsy said. It’s a tall order to find native trees that have a thick canopy but don’t ruin the sidewalk with their big roots or drop nuts or berries that can be tripping hazards. Hawaii is hot, and development managers at KS know that they need to provide more shade to encourage more people to walk instead of drive to their destinations.

“SALT has all the stuff we need,” said Sam Chong, a firefighter based at the Kaka’ako fire station, as he was entertaining his 6-month-old daughter while his wife, seated at a picnic table fronting Auahi Street, ate an acai bowl. “There’s a lot of open space, my 5-year-old can run around...and when COVID was going on, there were a lot of outdoor spaces. There’s restaurants, coffee, we used to work out at the gym upstairs. I like that it feels real urban. It’s something that’s pretty unique to Hawaii. It feels modern.”

## What’s cooking?

### Oven-Roasted Spare Ribs *By Sara Lin*

This recipe first ran on June 14, 2021, on Delish.com

This recipe has become a staple in my household. My dad grew up in China, but he went to New York for medical school. He was living on Broome Street in a really dumpy, dingy place. Those times were tough for him—he was an immigrant scraping by. He worked in a restaurant, which is probably where he picked up a little bit of his know-how. Spare ribs were a cheaper but fattier cut of meat, and the dish was easy because it required very little assembly. There’s only a handful of ingredients and they’re off the shelf, especially if you lived in Chinatown. I once asked him how he came up with it, and he honestly doesn’t know. He said, ‘I love to eat. That’s all.’ He doesn’t talk much about those times, but this dish was one of the great things that came out of it.

The Marinade (requires overnight refrigeration):  
1/3 c. scallions, sliced (reserve 1 tbsp. for garnish)  
Additional Ingredients: 2 racks pork spare ribs

3 tbsp. soy bean paste (bottled Chinese-style)  
2 tsp. cornstarch  
Serve alongside Coca-Cola Zero Sugar

2 tsp. sugar  
2 tbsp. red wine  
1/2 c. hoisin sauce

In a large bowl whisk together the marinade ingredients and set aside. Clean and prep the ribs, remove the membrane on the underside of the racks. Slice the racks lengthwise along the bone into individual ribs. Place the ribs into the bowl with the marinade and spread it all over the ribs. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Place ribs on a sheet tray and broil, flipping once until nicely browned, about 5 minutes a side. Lower the oven temperature to 350° and continue cooking ribs for about 35 to 40 minutes, turning once, until cooked through. Garnish with reserved scallions and serve immediately.

<https://www.delish.com/cooking/recipe-ideas/a36597911/oven-roasted-spare-ribs/>

