

JOSEPH FERRARO DIRECT TESTIMONY

PRESENTATION HEARING

Land Block 4, Project 1 (Block D) (KAK 23-037)

Q Please state your name, place of employment, and position.

A Joseph Ferraro, FAIA, LEED AP; Principal and Chairman of the Board, Ferraro Choi.

Q Please describe your educational background and experience.

A Please see my resume, marked as an exhibit in this proceeding. I co-founded Ferraro Choi in 1988, and I am licensed in Hawaii and New York. In 2008, I was recognized as a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects for significant contributions to environmentally sustainable professional practice, and I am a past president of the Institute's Hawaii Chapter.

I currently serve as a director on a number of boards including the Hawaii Architectural Foundation and the Liljestrand Foundation, and also serve as a member on various advisory committees, including the University of Hawaii's School of Architecture, and Malama Manoa, a local community-based organization.

Q Please describe your firm's experience.

A Ferraro Choi's mission is to preserve, protect and enhance the natural and built environment through sustainable architecture, interior architecture and research. Since 1988, our firm has provided architectural planning design and interior design services for commercial and institutional projects for private and government clients. My recent projects in Hawai'i include the corporate offices for HEMIC, Central Pacific Bank, and the NOAA Inouye Regional Center on Ford Island.

Our firm is a recognized leader in sustainable design in Hawaii. We value quality design, and strive to provide an environment that is both aesthetic and functional for every project.

Q What has your firm been retained to do for this Project?

A Ferraro Choi has been requested to provide architectural peer review assistance for various projects at Ward Village, including Block D.

Q Please describe the vision and inspiration for Block D.

A In conjunction with the Diamond Head Plaza Park, the IBM Building, and its neighboring tower within Land Block 4, Block D will be a distinctive addition to the pedestrian experience and the skyline in urban Honolulu.

Block D furthers the existing modern urban fabric of Ward Village, while paying homage to elements of Hawaii's historic architecture. Stepped massing, intimate spaces, multi-sloped roofs, and a retail colonnade are reminiscent of the works of influential architects like Bertram Goodhue and Julia Morgan, while also referencing local icons like Charles W. Dickey.

With the use of materials that evoke natural stone masonry, Block D's design is reminiscent of many of Honolulu's historic buildings, including the Dillingham Transportation Building near Honolulu Harbor, and the Alexander Baldwin Building on Bishop Street. This material choice, complemented by natural stone and bronze metalwork, provides a rich texture and plays with light in a manner distinct from glass.

The street-level facade creates an engaging pedestrian experience by emulating early 20th-century Honolulu architecture. Native landscaping is integrated throughout, and the façade appears as a series of smaller, linked buildings. Block D establishes a visual connection between its tower and the street, employing consistent materials and architectural elements.

The ground floor along Auahi Street is particularly architecturally articulated and interactive, featuring a retail colonnade that provides shade and protection from the northeast trade elements while encouraging pedestrian activity. Broad sidewalks, seating, and greenery add to the pedestrian experience, and the colonnade extends towards Diamond Head to Block E, creating a cohesive pedestrian realm.

On Ala Moana Boulevard, the Block D façade along the street continues its human-scale architectural character, integrating with planted berms, pocket parks, and sidewalk seating to create a streetscape that is pedestrian-centric while acknowledging the active thoroughfare.

On the 'Ewa side of Block D, the colonnade leads to an open plaza area with public art. Further 'Ewa, pedestrian pathways lead to a retail space adjacent to an outdoor seating area within the proposed Diamond Head Plaza Park, which establishes a programmatic and visual connection with the park, while providing further activation through retail and leisure activities.

The building's massing is angled in an L-shape footprint to optimize views while respecting the surrounding structures. The massing composition breaks down the scale of the tower and maintains sensitivity to the mauka-makai orientation. Block D complements its neighboring tower, Block E, through stepped building massing that presents architectural variety, while maintaining a cohesive façade along Ala Moana Boulevard.

Block D is an architectural blend of historic references, contemporary urban design, and sustainable elements, creating an integrated, pedestrian friendly, and visually cohesive space within Ward Village.

Q In accordance with HRS § 206E-5.6, please describe specific components of the Project and how each component will protect, preserve, and enhance desirable neighborhood characteristics.

A The Ward MP has four principal design strategies: 1) connection of public spaces; 2) reconstruction of Auahi Street as a pedestrian promenade; 3) maintenance of mauka-makai view corridors; and 4) enhancements to streetscape design.

Block D's design furthers all of the Ward MP's principal design strategies, and will significantly enhance the street-level activation, pedestrian engagement, connectivity and walkability in Ward Village, while maintaining mauka-makai view corridors.

First, Block D's design, which draws inspiration from Hawaii's distinctive historic architecture, creates a connection with Honolulu's past, while providing modern features, accessibility, and conveniences for pedestrians. These features include the ground floor retail colonnade accessible from Auahi Street, which provides access to the plaza area (and further, the proposed Diamond Head Plaza Park), as well as Block E. The colonnade, and the wide sidewalks, planters, and seating areas, on the ground floor connect and activate the public realm for pedestrians.

Block D's façade along Ala Moana Boulevard is designed to transition the podium to a pedestrian scale and provide interest and activation along this street by using screening, extensive landscaping, and architectural elements to achieve the appearance of a series of smaller, linked buildings reminiscent of those along downtown Honolulu streets throughout the early 20th Century. Planted berms, pocket parks, and a linear botanical garden pathway with an extensive palette of native and ohana tree planting groups, scented flowers, and utilitarian plants extending the entire length of Land Block 4 will enliven and unify the entire Ala Moana Boulevard street front and provide a shaded environment for strolling and gathering.

Block D will also preserve the mauka-makai view corridors. The placement of Block D to the side of the Diamond Head Plaza Park ensures that the Kamake'e view corridor, which leads to the entrance of Ala Moana Beach Park, will be enhanced through the greenery and open space of the park. The mauka-makai orientation and shape of Block D's tower serves to respect views from neighboring developments while also preserving view corridors looking from both Ala Moana Beach Park, and from the mauka areas to the ocean.

Block D's design will be a distinctive and yet pleasing addition to the Honolulu skyline and complements and enhances Land Block 4, Ward Village, and the greater Kaka'ako neighborhood area.

Q How does Block D complement and enhance Ward Village consistent with the Ward MP?

Block D employs design strategies that are consistent with other developments approved by HCDA under the Ward MP.

The Ward MP was developed to provide overall design and development strategies. The plan is not static, and therefore incorporates flexibility on how the plan is implemented given changing market, social and other conditions that occur over its implemented lifetime.

Based on the developments approved by HCDA in Ward Village to date, HCDA has recognized and supported this flexibility in the implementation of various architectural design and development strategies. This flexibility has enhanced the development of Ward Village, as it allows varied approaches to accomplish the overall design goals of the plan.

As an example, two of the four principal design strategies in the plan are to have Auahi Street as a pedestrian promenade and an enhanced streetscape design. While the plan illustrates one of many possible approaches to these strategies, HCDA has approved projects in Ward Village that effectively implement various concepts and designs to develop Auahi Street into a pedestrian promenade and activate surrounding streetscapes. These include ground floor retail / commercial spaces; attractive and distinctive architectural screening of parking podiums; landscaping and outdoor seating areas that encourage pedestrian gatherings; interactive sidewalk elements; and passive areas that appropriately encourage pedestrians to rest or gather in a quiet, convenient setting.

Block D incorporates virtually all of these design strategies in a development that will also enhance the uses on the neighboring parcels on Land Block 4, including the Diamond Head Plaza Park, Block E, and the IBM Building.

As noted above, for example, Block D incorporates retail uses on both its Auahi Street and park frontages, has numerous elements to activate the public realm, and effectively uses architectural screening, landscaping, pathways and gathering areas to activate and unify the Ala Moana frontage on a pedestrian scale.

In my professional opinion, Block D is a unique example of the effective use of the variety of approaches considered and adopted by HCDA over the years to facilitate an enhanced streetscape, which have allowed Ward Village to mature into a more interesting, vibrant, and active community for both residents and visitors.

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