

Final

Mother Waldron Playground

Cultural Landscape Report



March 2020

Prepared for
Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation
and
Jacobs (formerly CH2M)

Prepared by



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Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction	1-1
1.1 Management Summary and Project Scope	1-1
1.2 Study Area	1-2
1.3 Historical Overview	1-4
2.0 Site History.....	2-1
2.1 Early Land Use and Development (to 1920).....	2-2
2.2 Urbanization and Playground Development (1920 to 1950)	2-14
2.3 Playground Renovations and Urban Redevelopment (1950-2015)	2-26
3.0 Existing Conditions	3-1
3.1 Introduction.....	3-1
3.2 General Description/Environmental Setting	3-1
3.3 Landscape Characteristics and Features	3-1
4.0 Analysis and Evaluation.....	4-1
4.1 Introduction.....	4-1
4.2 Historical Significance.....	4-1
4.3 Comparative Analysis by Landscape Characteristics.....	4-3
4.4 Evaluation of Integrity	4-12
5.0 Analysis and Evaluation.....	5-1
5.1 Landscape Treatment Approach	5-1
5.2 Treatment Strategies and Design Measures	5-2

1.0 Introduction

Mother Waldron Playground is listed on the Hawai'i State Register of Historic Places for its association with the early twentieth century organized play and playground movements in the United States and as an example of a playground built in Honolulu that demonstrates the influence of the Art Deco and Art Moderne periods of style. The extant 1.35-acre playground, designed by architect Harry Sims Bent, features a symmetrical plan with a comfort station and covered pergolas that reflect the streamlined design influence of the Art Moderne style. The zigzag shape and patterns of the perimeter walls of the playground exhibit a strong geometrical design motif that reflects the influence of the Art Deco style. Other features such as the outdoor ball courts and play areas exhibit popularly held ideas and beliefs of the playground movement about providing organized and supervised recreation for children as a vehicle for social reform.

The playground, built in 1937, was a Depression-era project funded by a combination of City financial resources and labor supplied by the federally funded Works Progress Administration (WPA). Once completed, it became a supervised play space for children from the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Students from the adjacent Pohukaina public elementary school used the playground on a daily basis. Since its inception, the playground has also served as a site for social and recreational activities of adult residents and workers in the community, albeit not continuously.

Very few changes to the playground occurred until the late twentieth century when plans for redevelopment in the Kaka'ako community prompted a number of infrastructure improvement projects. In the early 1990s, approximately 12,700 square feet of playground space were repurposed to accommodate the extension and realignment of Halekauwila Street. The remainder of the playground was consolidated with adjacent land parcels and abandoned street right-of-way to create a 3.4-acre City and County park identified as Mother Waldron Neighborhood Park. Park ownership is shared between the City, Hawai'i Community Development Authority, and the Dept. of Land and Natural Resources.

Due to the changes that occurred in the 1990s, the playground experienced diminished integrity to varying degrees in terms of setting, design, materials, and workmanship. However, the site retains its historic integrity and significance as a playground that exhibits the Art Deco and Art Moderne designs of architect, Harry Sims Bent, and is a local example of an urban recreational site associated with the organized play and playground movement ideas and philosophies of the early twentieth century.

1.1 MANAGEMENT SUMMARY AND PROJECT SCOPE

The intent of this Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) is to document the history and significance of the Mother Waldron Playground historic designed landscape, evaluate its integrity, and provide landscape treatment recommendations. The report was prepared by HHF Planners for the Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation (HART) and Jacobs (formerly CH2M) in association with the Honolulu Rail Transit Project (H RTP). This report reflects applicable provisions of the National Park Service (NPS) including *The Secretary of Interior's Standards for The Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the*

Mother Waldron Playground Cultural Landscape Report

Introduction | Chapter 1

Treatment of Cultural Landscapes (1996), A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports (1998), and other relevant NPS guidelines, standards, and National Register Bulletins.

Through research and analysis of historical and existing conditions, this CLR documents how the cultural landscape associated with Mother Waldron Playground has changed over time. The report describes the historical and cultural contexts that influenced changes to the physical landscape of the site from pre-Western contact to the present, but focuses on the historic period of significance (1937-45). This CLR includes contextual narratives supplemented by historic photographs, maps, and illustrations; documentation of existing conditions; a comparative analysis of current and historic conditions; and an evaluation of significant character-defining features. Also included are landscape treatment guidelines that focus on best management practices to restore, protect, and enhance the historic and cultural landscape resources within the Mother Waldron Playground site.

1.2 STUDY AREA

Mother Waldron Neighborhood Park is a 3.4-acre site in the Kaka’ako district of Honolulu. Kaka’ako is an urbanized community situated on a portion of a low-lying coastal plain, located between downtown Honolulu and Waikīkī (Figure 1.1). The City and County of Honolulu neighborhood park incorporates the extant lands of the original Mother Waldron Playground, constructed in 1937 and bounded by Lana Lane, Pohukaina and Coral Streets, and what would become an extension of Halekauwila Street. In the 1990s, changes to the playground’s boundaries resulted in the combined 3.4-acre park that is bounded by the ‘Ewa edge of the former Coral Street right-of-way and Halekauwila, Cooke, and Pohukaina Streets (Figure 1.2).

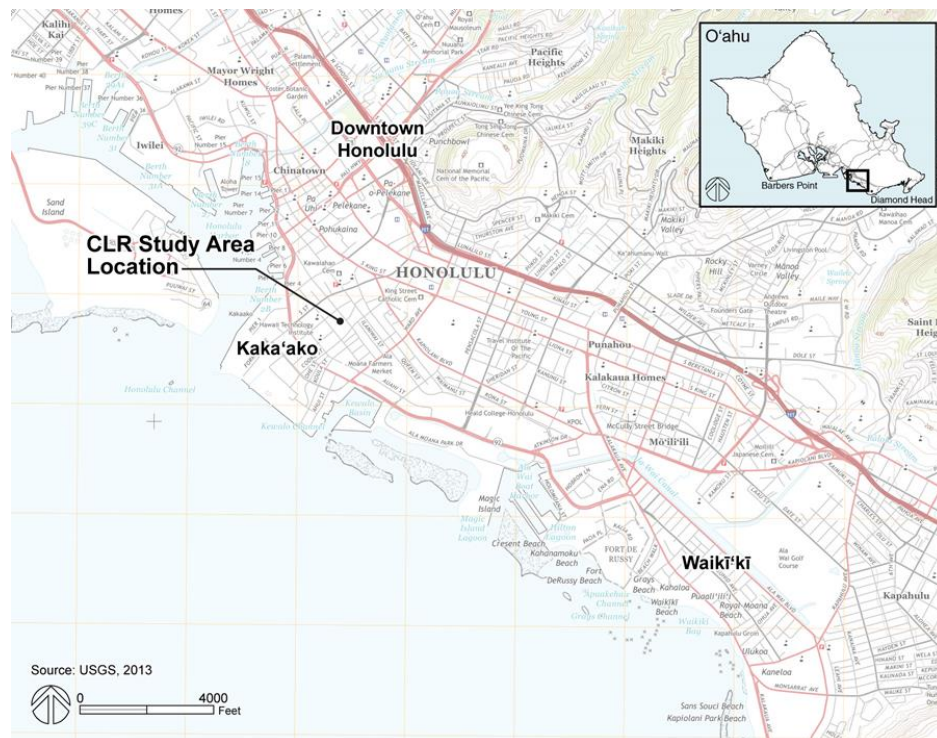


Figure 1.1: CLR Study Area Location. (Base Map: USGS, Honolulu Quadrangle, 2013)



Figure 1.2: CLR Study Area. (Base Map: Google Earth Pro, 2016)

In accordance with NPS guidance for Cultural Landscape Reports and National Register nominations, the study area for the Mother Waldron Playground CLR encompasses the full extent of the significant historic features and land area of the extant playground, but does not include buffer zones or acreage not directly contributing to the significance of the property.¹ A comparison of the CLR study area and the playground boundary in the 1988 National Register Nomination is shown in Figure 1.3.

¹ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Register Bulletin 16A, (1997), 56.

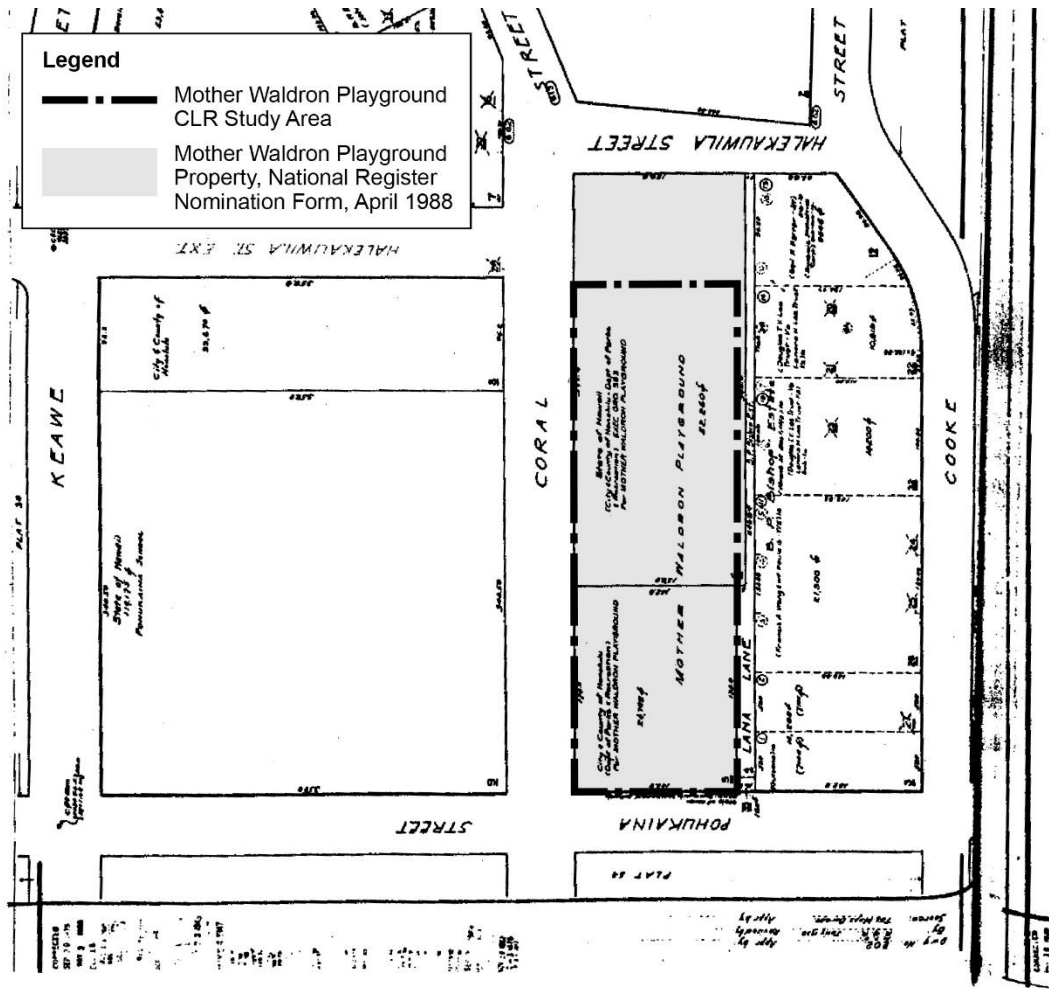


Figure 1.3: Comparison of CLR Boundary and 1988 National Register Nomination

1.3 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Prior to the late eighteenth century, O’ahu was the location of military and political instability. By 1795, King Kamehameha I had conquered and consolidated his rule over most of the major islands in Hawai’i. Soon thereafter, foreigners brought diseases leading to a series of massive declines in the Native population. By the time American missionaries arrived in the early nineteenth century, the people of Hawai’i were experiencing major changes in religious and socio-cultural belief systems. As the Kingdom entered into a rapidly expanding network of global trade, the population of Hawai’i continued to decline, bringing added pressure on traditional political, cultural, and economic systems.

A number of Western missionaries and entrepreneurs became influential advisors to Hawai’i’s monarchs and members of the upper social class or *ali’i*. Under mounting pressure from internal as well as foreign influences, King Kamehameha III implemented a radical restructuring of land tenure that reflected a Western-style system of individual fee title. The Mahele of 1848 resulted in a system of land ownership throughout the Kingdom between the King, the government, and certain chiefs or members of the *ali’i*. Smaller portions of land were granted to the *maka’āinana* (commoners) under the provisions of the Kuleana Act of 1850.

As Hawai'i moved from a subsistence economy to a western capitalist system, property bordering the edges of the central town became increasingly valuable for development. Due in large part to poor drainage, land in the vicinity of the study area remained a salt marshland. However, by the early twentieth century nearly all low-lying ponds and areas in Kaka'ako had been altered through a combination of public and private drainage, street construction, and ground fill projects.²

Kaka'ako evolved from a sparsely populated industrial district to a densely populated urban district, housing hundreds of low-income, immigrant families of multiple ethnicities. The fill and drainage improvement projects enabled the development of clusters of wood-frame dwellings interspersed with shops, churches, cemeteries, and a variety of commercial and industrial businesses. Well-known public facilities in the area included Pohukaina Elementary School, Atkinson Park, a hospital for the confinement of family members of persons afflicted by Hansen's disease, a public garbage incinerator, and a government stable.

PLAYGROUND CONSTRUCTION AND DESIGN

In Honolulu, as elsewhere, many of the parks and playgrounds constructed during the early part of the twentieth century were sponsored by and developed through the concerted efforts of private individuals and civic organizations that were interested in ideas about social reform through the organization of children's playground activities. In the mid-1930s, Federal New Deal funding opportunities became available through the Works Progress Administration (WPA), enabling the development of parks and other public improvement projects throughout many areas of the United States and its territories. The Mother Waldron Playground was one of few public works projects in Honolulu developed using WPA funds.

Part of the impetus for developing urban playgrounds was the belief that supervised recreation gave children the opportunity to develop democratic ideas and values through play. In Honolulu, public school teachers supervised playground activities for a number of years. Mother Waldron Playground was named in honor of well-known elementary teacher, Margaret Waldron (1873-1936), who for many years organized and supervised playground activities for low-income multi-ethnic students at nearby Atkinson Playground. At the time of construction, proponents promoted playgrounds as safe places for children to develop physical as well as social, moral, and other character-building skills.³

URBAN REDEVELOPMENT AND REVITALIZATION

After World War II, Honolulu, like many urban areas in the country, experienced a downward trend in the growth rate of the residential population of its urban core areas. The population of Kaka'ako declined as residents migrated to preferred locations in outlying suburban communities.⁴ Indicative of

² O'Hare, Borthwick, Hammatt, *Final Archaeological Monitoring Plan for the Mother Waldron Park Improvements Project: (TMK: [1] 2-1-051:003,005,006,019 & Portion of Coral Street)* (Honolulu: Cultural Surveys Hawai'i, 2014), 42.

³ Robert R. Weyeneth and Ann K. Yoklavich, *Honolulu: City and County of Honolulu, Dept. of Parks and Recreation. 1930's Parks and Playgrounds in Honolulu: An Historical & Architectural Assessment* (Honolulu: City and County of Honolulu, Dept. of Parks and Recreation, 1987), 7-9.

⁴ G. Blanchard, *Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for Mother Waldron Playground. Unpublished NRHP Nomination Form* (Honolulu: 2013), 13.

Mother Waldron Playground Cultural Landscape Report

Introduction | Chapter 1

the extent of this downward trend in the residential population of the district was the closure and demolition of Pohukaina Elementary School in 1980.

In an effort to reverse the general state of decline in certain urban areas, both the State of Hawai'i and the City and County of Honolulu focused economic development efforts on redevelopment and reinvestment activities in the Kaka'ako area. In 1976, the Hawai'i State Legislature created the Hawai'i Community Development Authority (HCDA) and designated the Kaka'ako area as the Authority's first Community Development District.⁵ The purpose of the district was to facilitate physical and economic revitalization opportunities in Kaka'ako. HCDA remains the primary planning and permitting authority for the community.

Plans to redevelop and revitalize Kaka'ako added increased pressure and demand for infrastructure improvements. In the 1990s, the Halekauwila Street and Pohukaina Street improvement projects reduced the original size of Mother Waldron Playground. Soon thereafter, the playground boundary was expanded to include property along Cooke and Coral Streets. As a result of those boundary changes, the original 1.76-acre playground evolved into a 3.4-acre combined playground and park.⁶ In 2013, HART initiated an updated NRHP nomination form for the Mother Waldron Playground that reflected changes that occurred after the site was listed on the Hawai'i State Register of Historic Places in 1988. Since 2013, the city of Honolulu has made additional alterations to the comfort station, play court surfaces, and vegetation.

Today, the Kaka'ako district is comprised of a varied mixture of medium- to high-rise residential buildings as well as a number of commercial and older light industrial uses. Recent planning, investment, and redevelopment efforts have created new opportunities for housing, park and open space areas, commercial uses, and light industrial facilities.⁷

Over time, changes to the Mother Waldron Playground have resulted in the loss of some the historic design and integrity of the site. As discussed more fully in Chapters 3 and 4, certain key elements and features of the playground's historic design remain intact. The site continues to function as a playground that reflects the planning and design aesthetic of its period of construction. The playground remains a physical manifestation of social and cultural ideas about playground design and social reform prevalent during the 1930s and 1940s in the U. S. and the Territory of Hawai'i.

5 Hawai'i State Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism, "Hawai'i Community Development Authority," <http://dbedt.hawaii.gov/HCDA/about-HCDA/>.

6 G. Blanchard, *Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for Mother Waldron Playground*. Unpublished NRHP Nomination Form (Honolulu: 2013), 22.

7 Hawai'i State Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism, "Hawai'i Community Development Authority," <http://dbedt.hawaii.gov/HCDA/about-HCDA/>.

2.0 Site History

The physical history for this Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) is divided into three periods. These periods are defined based on changes that occurred within the Mother Waldron Playground CLR study area and its immediate surroundings, as well as larger historical trends and events that influenced the shape and form of the cultural landscape. The periods are broadly defined as follows:

- Early Land Use and Development (to 1920)
- Urbanization and Playground Development (1920 to 1950)
- Playground Renovations and Urban Redevelopment (1950-2015)

This chapter is organized chronologically by period. Each period is introduced by a narrative discussion focusing on the historic context and development known to have occurred during that period. The narratives draw from archival literature, maps and photographs, and previous historical studies and documents, including the Mother Waldron Playground NRHP Nomination Forms.⁸ Documents consulted include *Cultural Impact Assessment for the Kaka’ako Community Development District Mauka Area Plan*,⁹ *Final Archaeological Monitoring Plan for the Mother Waldron Park Improvements Project*,¹⁰ *Final Archaeological Inventory Survey Report for the City Center (Section 4) of the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project*,¹¹ and *Honolulu Rail Transit Project Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Section 4(f) Evaluation and Amended Record of Decision*.¹²

Each narrative is followed by a description of the period’s physical landscape in terms of the relevant landscape characteristics (natural features and responses to natural environment, spatial organization and land patterns, circulation, views and vantage points, vegetation, buildings and structures, and small-scale features). A graphic illustration for each period (“period plan”) and historic maps and photographs depict changes over time in the cultural landscape of Mother Waldron Playground and provide visual images supporting the historical contexts.

8 G. Blanchard, Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for Mother Waldron Playground. Unpublished NRHP Nomination Form (Honolulu: 2013); Don Hibbard, Draft National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for Mother Waldron Playground (Honolulu, Hawaii, 1988); Don Hibbard, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form for City and County of Honolulu Art Deco Parks and Playgrounds, Multiple Property Nomination Form (Honolulu, Hawaii, 1988).

9 Mishalla Spearing, C. R. O’Hare and H. Hammatt, *Appendix D: Cultural Impact Assessment for the Kaka’ako Community Development District Mauka Area Plan, Waikiki Ahupua’a, Honolulu (Kona District) O’ahu Island* (Honolulu: Cultural Surveys Hawaii, 2008).

10 O’Hare, Borthwick, Hammatt, *Final Archaeological Monitoring Plan for the Mother Waldron Park Improvements Project: (TMK: [1] 2-1-051:003,005,006,019 & Portion of Coral Street)* (Honolulu: Cultural Surveys Hawaii, 2014).

11 Hallet H. Hammatt, *Final Archaeological Inventory Survey Report for the City Center (Section 4) of the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project, Kalihi, Kapalama, Honolulu, and Waikiki Ahupua’a, Honolulu District, Island of O’ahu. Vol. ii* (Honolulu: Cultural Surveys Hawaii, August 2013).

12 U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Authority and Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation, *Honolulu Rail Transit Project: Final Supplemental Environmental Impact/Section 4(F) Evaluation and Amended Record of Decision* (Honolulu: September 2013).

2.1 EARLY LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT (TO 1920)

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Human occupation in the Hawaiian archipelago began with the arrival of Polynesians whose ancestry has been traced to the Marquesas Islands.¹³ Archaeological evidence has supported the hypothesis that Polynesians occupied and settled Hawai'i by A.D 600.¹⁴ British sea captain James Cook's arrival to the Hawaiian Islands in 1778 initiated the post-Contact period. The time prior to his arrival is generally referred to as the pre-Contact period.

During pre-Contact times, portions of the eight major islands of Hawai'i existed as independent kingdoms. By right of conquest, each king bestowed control over portions of land in his jurisdiction to loyal warrior chiefs. The chiefs, in turn, granted the use and responsibilities of productivity for various lands to individuals of lower rank. By the mid seventeenth century, Native Hawaiians were implementing a complex system of land use that divided each island into *ahupua'a*. Inhabitants had access to resources within the boundaries of an *ahupua'a* that might have been comprised of anywhere from a few hundred to over 100,000 acres.¹⁵ The ideal *ahupua'a* was a wedge-shaped portion of land bounded by ridgelines or rivers that extended from the upper mountains to the sea that enabled inhabitants to have access to a full range of island resources.¹⁶ *Ahupua'a* were often divided into *'ili*, or smaller portions of land.¹⁷

The contemporary urban district of Kaka'ako is larger than the traditional *'ili* of the same name. Mid-nineteenth-century records indicate that "Kaka'ako" was a relatively small *'ili* inhabited by fishermen and situated on the coastal plain between Honolulu and Waikiki near the present day location of Punchbowl and South Streets.¹⁸ The CLR study area is located within the traditional boundaries of Pu'unui and Ka'akaukui 'Ili in the Makiki Ahupua'a.

By 1795, King Kamehameha I had established sovereign authority over most of the major Hawaiian Islands and a period of relative peace prevailed. The king built royal residences at Waikiki and Kou (close to present-day downtown Honolulu) and both areas were more densely populated than the intervening coastal plain.

13 Patrick Kirch, *Feathered Gods and Fishhooks: An Introduction to Hawaiian Archaeology and Prehistory* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1985).

14 Ross Cordy, *The Rise and Fall of the Oahu Kingdom* (Honolulu: Mutual Publishing, 2002), 10.

15 Jon J. Chinen, *The Great Mahele: Hawai'i's Land Division of 1848* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1958), 3.

16 Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa, *Native Land and Foreign Desires: How Shall We Live in Harmony?* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1992), 27.

17 Jon J. Chinen, *The Great Mahele: Hawai'i's Land Division of 1848* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1958), 3.

18 Mishalla Spearing, C. R. O'Hare and H. Hammatt, *Appendix D: Cultural Impact Assessment for the Kaka'ako Community Development District Mauka Area Plan, Waikiki Ahupua'a, Honolulu (Kona District) O'ahu Island* (Honolulu: Cultural Surveys Hawaii, 2008), 12.

During his reign, the coastal plain between Honolulu and Waikīkī was used for “fishing, landing canoes, producing salt, cultivating taro, and practicing religion.”¹⁹ An 1817 map of the coastal plain between Honolulu and Waikīkī depicts a number of traditional native dwellings near the coastline, fishponds, and salt pans, as well as pedestrian trails that connected Honolulu and Waikīkī (Figure 2.1).²⁰

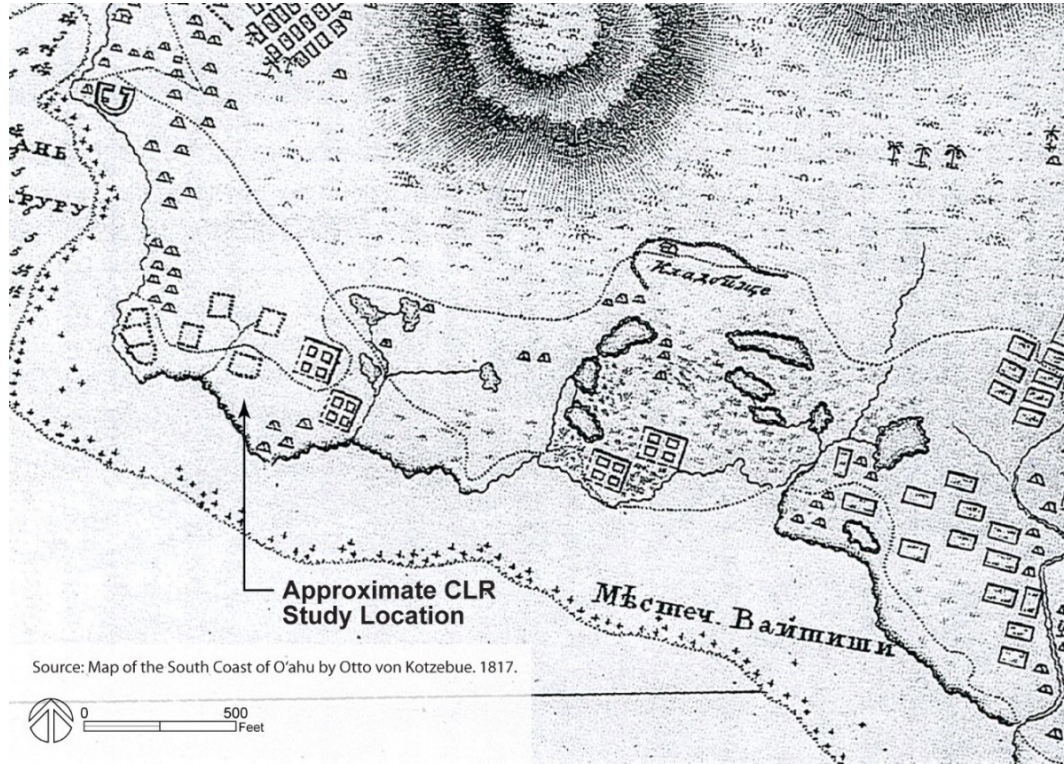


Figure 2.1: The coastal plain between Honolulu and Waikīkī, 1817. (Base Map: South Coast of O’ahu, 1817, by Otto von Kotzebue. (Source: Appendix D, Cultural Impact Assessment for the Kaka’ako Community Development District Mauka Area Plan, 2008)

Following the death of King Kamehameha I in 1819, social and cultural traditions in the Hawaiian Kingdom underwent a period of rapid change. The effect of a massive death rate among the Native Hawaiian population due to a lack of immunity to foreign diseases, coupled with the political and economic influence of foreign missionaries and other westerners, brought added pressure to bear on the monarchy for land reform to enable individual fee ownership of land.

19 G. Blanchard, *Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for Mother Waldron Playground*. Unpublished NRHP Nomination Form (Honolulu: 2013), 12.

20 Hallet H. Hammatt, *Final Archaeological Inventory Survey Report for the City Center (Section 4) of the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project, Kalihi, Kapalama, Honolulu, and Waikiki Ahupua’a, Honolulu District, Island of O’ahu*. Vol. ii (Honolulu: Cultural Surveys Hawaii, August 2013), 70.

Mother Waldron Playground Cultural Landscape Report Site History | Chapter 2

In the mid-nineteenth century, Kamehameha III implemented a new land ownership system that was based on a capitalist system of individual fee title. Under the provisions of the Mahele of 1848, the Board of Commissioners to Quiet Land Titles awarded Land Commission Awards (LCAs) to a number of individuals. Through the Mahele process, land was apportioned between the King, the government of Hawai'i, and various chiefs or members of the *ali'i* or ruling class. The Commission also issued fee simple title land awards to a number of native tenants under the provisions of the Kuleana Act of 1850. Upon issuance of the final LCAs, the ancient land tenure system of Hawai'i ended.²¹

By the time of the Mahele, Honolulu had become the well-established capital of the Hawaiian Islands. The city's boundaries had begun to include adjacent areas like Kaka'ako, making the marginal swamp and intertidal lands of Kaka'ako much more valuable.²² As a consequence, much of the acreage in Kaka'ako was awarded to "the royal family, loyal retainers, and other important people."²³ By the end of the nineteenth century, however, land in the Kaka'ako district was largely owned either by the Government of Hawai'i or prominent people and large estate trusts including Queen Emma, Victoria Kamamalu, Bishop Estate, Victoria Ward, Magoon, and Cooke (Figure 2.2).

Throughout most of the nineteenth century, Kaka'ako remained a sparsely settled area located between the more populous central Honolulu and Waikiki areas. However, its location near the edge of the town made it convenient for "cemeteries, burial grounds, and for the quarantine of contagious patients."²⁴ During the 1853 smallpox epidemic, patients were quarantined at a hospital in Kaka'ako and victims were buried nearby. In 1881, a hospital and receiving station for people suspected of having Hansen's Disease was also established. Contemporary archaeological projects in the area have documented several large cemeteries that date to Pre- and Post- Contact periods.²⁵

Land reclamation activities, drainage and infrastructure improvements began in the late 1800s and continued through the early twentieth century. Material dredged during the construction of the Ala Wai Canal (1928), Kewalo Basin (1929), and other near-shore projects, as well as material generated by the city garbage incinerator, continued to be used to fill low-lying and shoreline areas in Kaka'ako.²⁶ All of the ponds and low-lying areas in Kaka'ako were filled in and additional land seaward (*makai*) of the beach road was created from dredged material (Figure 2.3).²⁷

21 Jon J. Chinen, *The Great Mahele: Hawai'i's Land Division of 1848* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1958), 31.

22 Hallet H. Hammatt, *Final Archaeological Inventory Survey Report for the City Center (Section 4) of the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project, Kalihi, Kapalama, Honolulu, and Waikiki Ahupua'a, Honolulu District, Island of O'ahu. Vol. ii* (Honolulu: Cultural Surveys Hawaii, August 2013), 70.

23 Ibid.

24 O'Hare, Borthwick, Hammatt, *Final Archaeological Monitoring Plan for the Mother Waldron Park Improvements Project: (TMK: [1] 2-1-051:003,005,006,019 & Portion of Coral Street)* (Honolulu: Cultural Surveys Hawaii, 2014), 42.

25 Mishalla Spearing, C. R. O'Hare and H. Hammatt, *Appendix D: Cultural Impact Assessment for the Kaka'ako Community Development District Mauka Area Plan, Waikiki Ahupua'a, Honolulu (Kona District) O'ahu Island* (Honolulu: Cultural Surveys Hawaii, 2008), 12.

26 O'Hare, Borthwick, and Hammatt, *Final Archaeological Monitoring Plan for the Mother Waldron Park Improvements Project: (TMK: [1] 2-1-051:003,005,006,019 & Portion of Coral Street)* (Honolulu: Cultural Surveys Hawaii, 2014), 42.

27 Ibid.

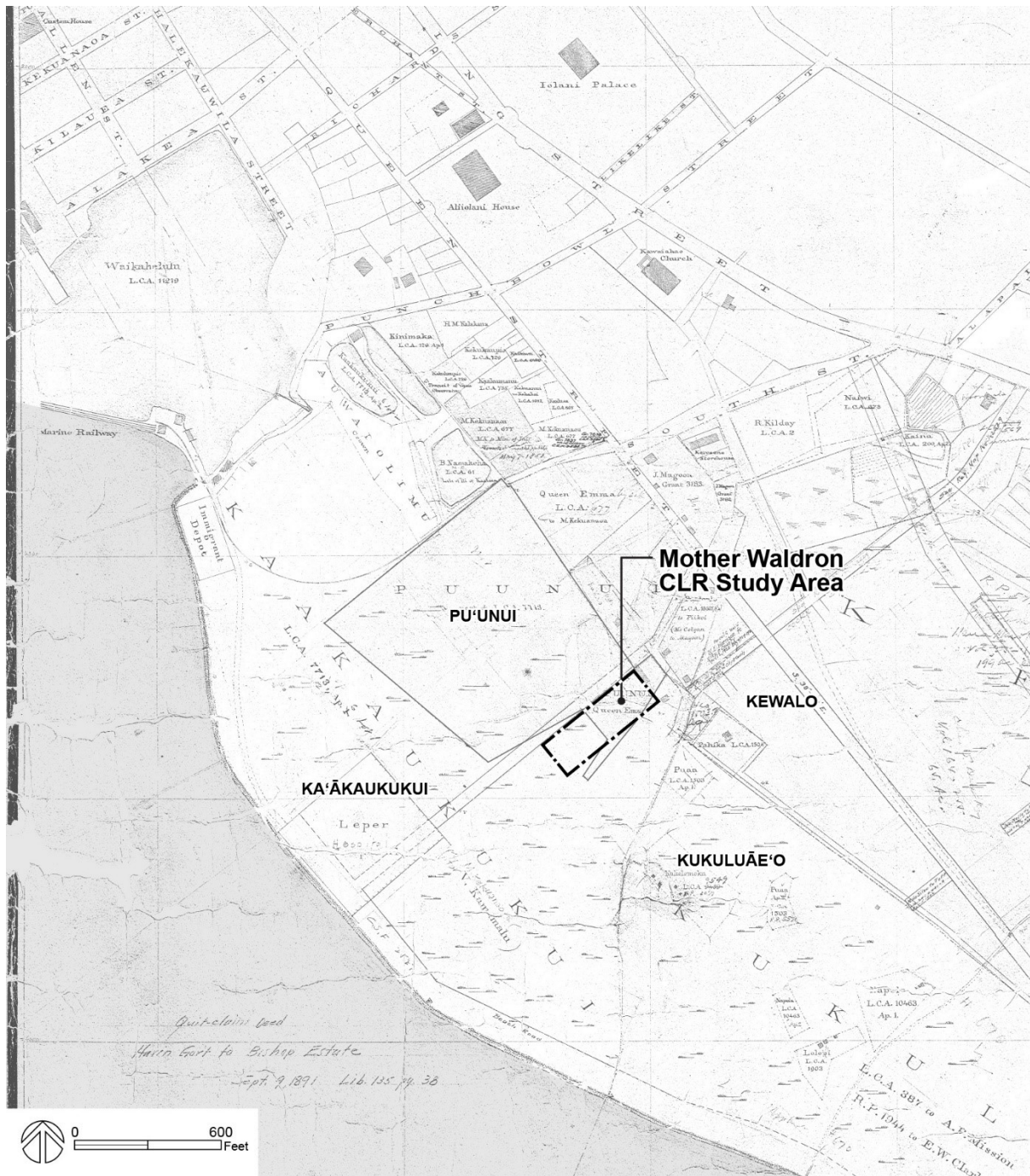


Figure 2.2: Land Ownership and Traditional Location of Pu'uunui and Ka'ākaukui 'Ili, 1884. (Base Map: Map of Honolulu, Kewalo Section, S.E. Bishop, 1884. Registered Map 1090. Source: Hawai'i State Land Survey Division)

Mother Waldron Playground Cultural Landscape Report Site History | Chapter 2

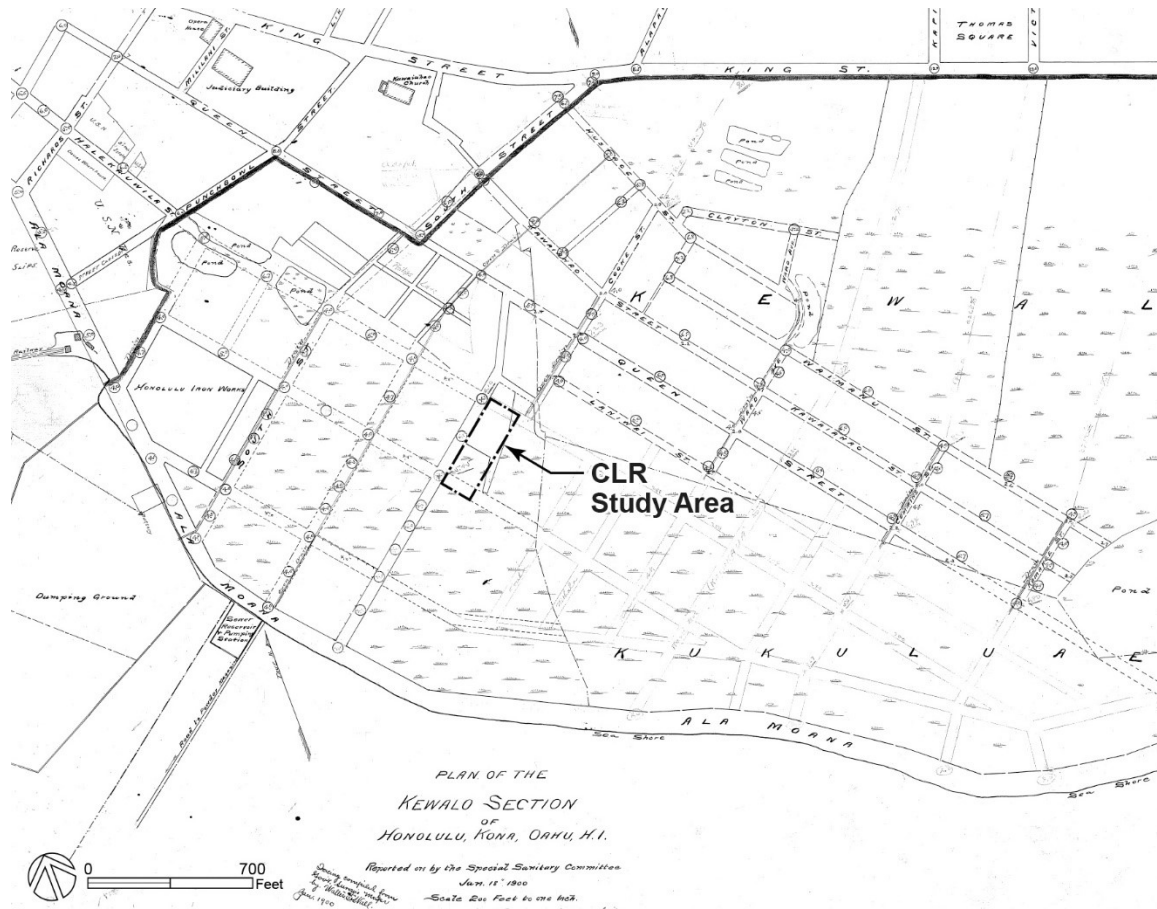


Figure 2.3: Marshland, ponds, planned drainage and street system in the vicinity of CLR study area, 1900. (Base map: *Kewalo Section Registered Map 1090*, dated 1900)

Continued growth in Honolulu spurred changes in the Kaka’ako district from a sparsely populated industrial area to a densely populated residential and commercial district.²⁸ Kaka’ako developed into an urbanized district comprised of small-scale wood frame dwellings and tenements, and low-rise commercial and industrial buildings. Many of the residents in the community worked as fishermen or in the nearby commercial and industrial operations, and Kaka’ako became well known for its residential enclaves of working families of Hawaiian, Japanese, Portuguese, Filipino, and Puerto Rican descent.²⁹ In 1913, Pohukaina Elementary School was constructed between Coral and Keawe Streets. Kaka’ako was a prime location for industrial operations such as the Honolulu Iron Works, lumber yards, and draying companies that needed large spaces for stables, feed lots, and wagon sheds.³⁰ By 1914, the City and County of Honolulu built a public works stable across Coral Street from the elementary school, on the site that would later become Mother Waldron Playground (Figure 2.4).

²⁸ G. Blanchard, *Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for Mother Waldron Playground*. Unpublished NRHP Nomination Form (Honolulu: 2013), 13.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Hallet H. Hammatt, *Final Archaeological Inventory Survey Report for the City Center (Section 4) of the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project, Kalihi, Kapalama, Honolulu, and Waikiki Ahupua’a, Honolulu District, Island Of O’ahu*. Vol. ii (Honolulu: Cultural Surveys Hawaii, August 2013), 86.

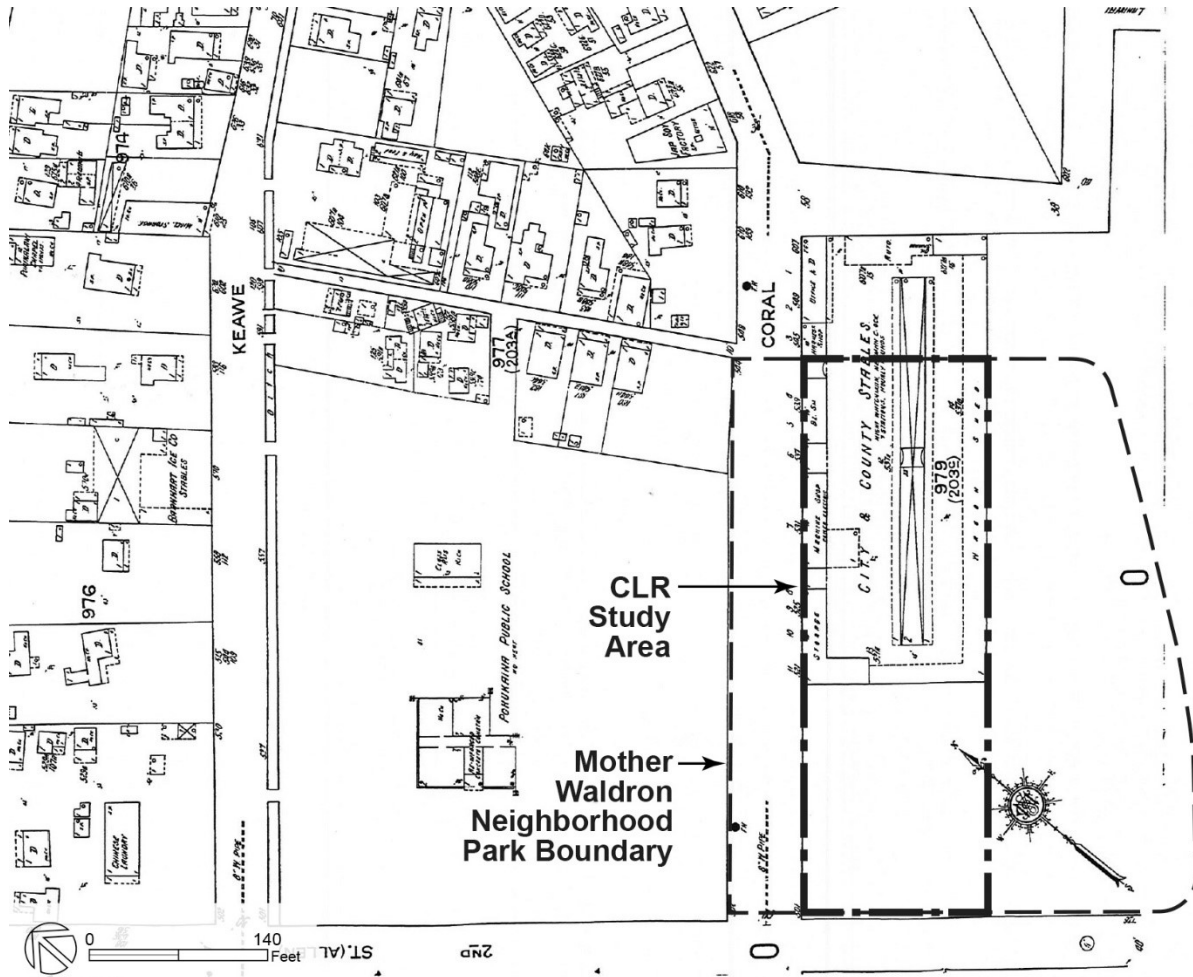


Figure 2.4: Early Land Use and Development Period Plan (to 1920) (Base Map: 1914 Sanborn map)

PHYSICAL LANDSCAPE

Natural Features and Responses to Natural Environment

Kaka’ako is situated on a portion of the low-lying coastal plain of the Makiki Ahupua’a in the southeast part of the island of O’ahu. Makiki Ahupua’a lacked a perennial stream that could provide an abundant supply of fresh water to the coastal plain, which impacted its settlement pattern.³¹ Throughout much of the nineteenth century, the coastal plain of the Makiki Ahupua’a remained a marshland comprised of “exposed coral flats dotted with salt pans and fish ponds.”³² By the latter part of the nineteenth century, material from nearby marine-related dredging projects and the ash and ferrous material from the city garbage incinerator was used to fill low-lying portions of Kaka’ako in response to perceived hazards

31 Hallet H. Hammatt and Rodney Chiogioji, *An Archaeological Assessment of the Mother Waldron Playground/Former Pohukaina School Parcel (6.8 Acres) in the Kakaako District of Honolulu* (Honolulu: Cultural Surveys Hawai’i, 1998), 5.

32 *Ibid.*, 88.

Mother Waldron Playground Cultural Landscape Report Site History | Chapter 2

associated with mosquitos and pond areas as well as the desire to create more land suitable for development.³³ By 1900, government plans had also been drawn up to improve drainage and develop a road system into the Kaka'ako area (Refer to Figure 2.3).

In 1910, the Territorial Board of Health undertook the Kewalo Reclamation Project in the area bounded by the present-day alignments of Ward Avenue, Ala Moana Boulevard, South Street, and King Street.³⁴ The low-lying marshlands, tidal flats, fishponds and exposed coral reefs of Kaka'ako were filled through improvement projects and involved the construction of drainage projects in conjunction with the deposition of fill material.

Spatial Organization and Land Patterns

Throughout the nineteenth century, the low-lying coastal plain of the Makiki Ahupua'a remained an expansive, undeveloped marshland with scattered dwellings along the coastline and near ponds and trails (Figure 2.5). Its relative isolation and proximity to central Honolulu caused the Kaka'ako area to become a convenient location for "cemeteries, burial grounds, and for the quarantine of contagious patients."³⁵ As land was drained and filled in the first two decades of the twentieth century, the gridded road network was expanded between Queen Street and Ala Moana (compare Figures 2.3 and 2.6). The resulting rectangular blocks were developed with a mixture of public facilities, densely clustered wood-frame dwellings, tenements, and commercial buildings, and large lot industrial uses such as the Honolulu Iron Works.

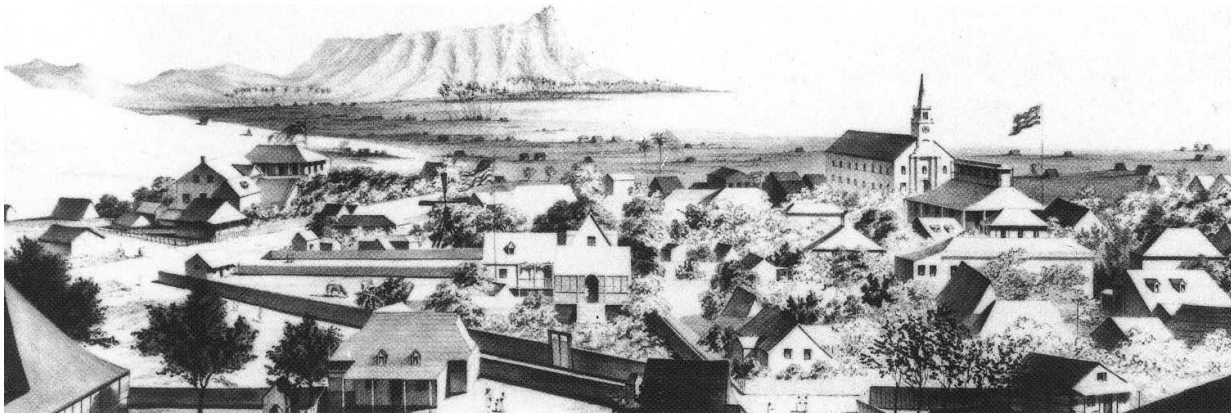


Figure 2.5: 1850 sketch by Paul Emmert depicting the sparsely settled coastal plain between Honolulu and Waikiki. (Source: *Hawaiian Historical Society*; reprinted in Grant et al. 2000:5)

33 O'Hare, Borthwick, Hammatt, *Final Archaeological Monitoring Plan for the Mother Waldron Park Improvements Project: (TMK: [1] 2-1-051:003,005,006,019 & Portion of Coral Street)* (Honolulu: Cultural Surveys Hawaii, 2014), 38.

34 Ross Wayland Stephenson, *The Importance of Planning to Waikiki: A History and Analysis*, PhD diss., University Of Hawai'i, 2008,) 43.

35 O'Hare, Borthwick, Hammatt, *Final Archaeological Monitoring Plan for the Mother Waldron Park Improvements Project: (TMK: [1] 2-1-051:003,005,006,019 & Portion of Coral Street)* (Honolulu: Cultural Surveys Hawaii, 2014), 42.

In 1901, the County built government stables on vacant fill land along Coral Street and Second Street (later Pohukaina Street), land that is now a portion of the CLR study area. Ancillary buildings appear to have been located along the edges of the site, enclosing the stable building and yard. By 1913, most of the city block across Coral Street from the stable and defined by Keawe and Second Streets was encumbered by Pohukaina Elementary School and the generous open space around it. The surrounding blocks were densely developed with small residential and commercial structures arranged in linear patterns reflecting the street grid (Figures 2.7 and 2.8).

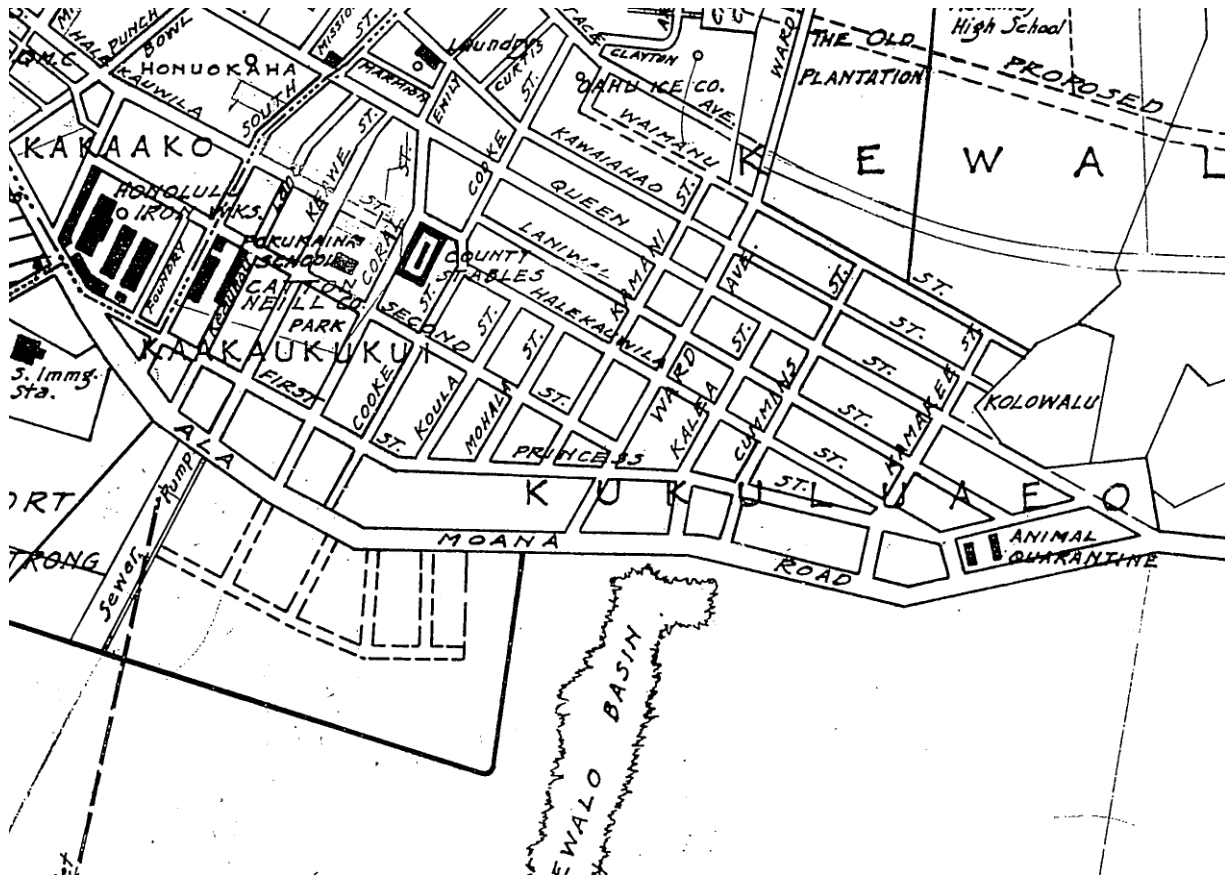


Figure 2.6: Hawaii State Survey Office, Registered Map showing government stables site and Kaka'ako street system. (Source: portion of "Honolulu, Territory of Hawaii," Monsarrat, 1920)

Mother Waldron Playground Cultural Landscape Report
Site History | Chapter 2

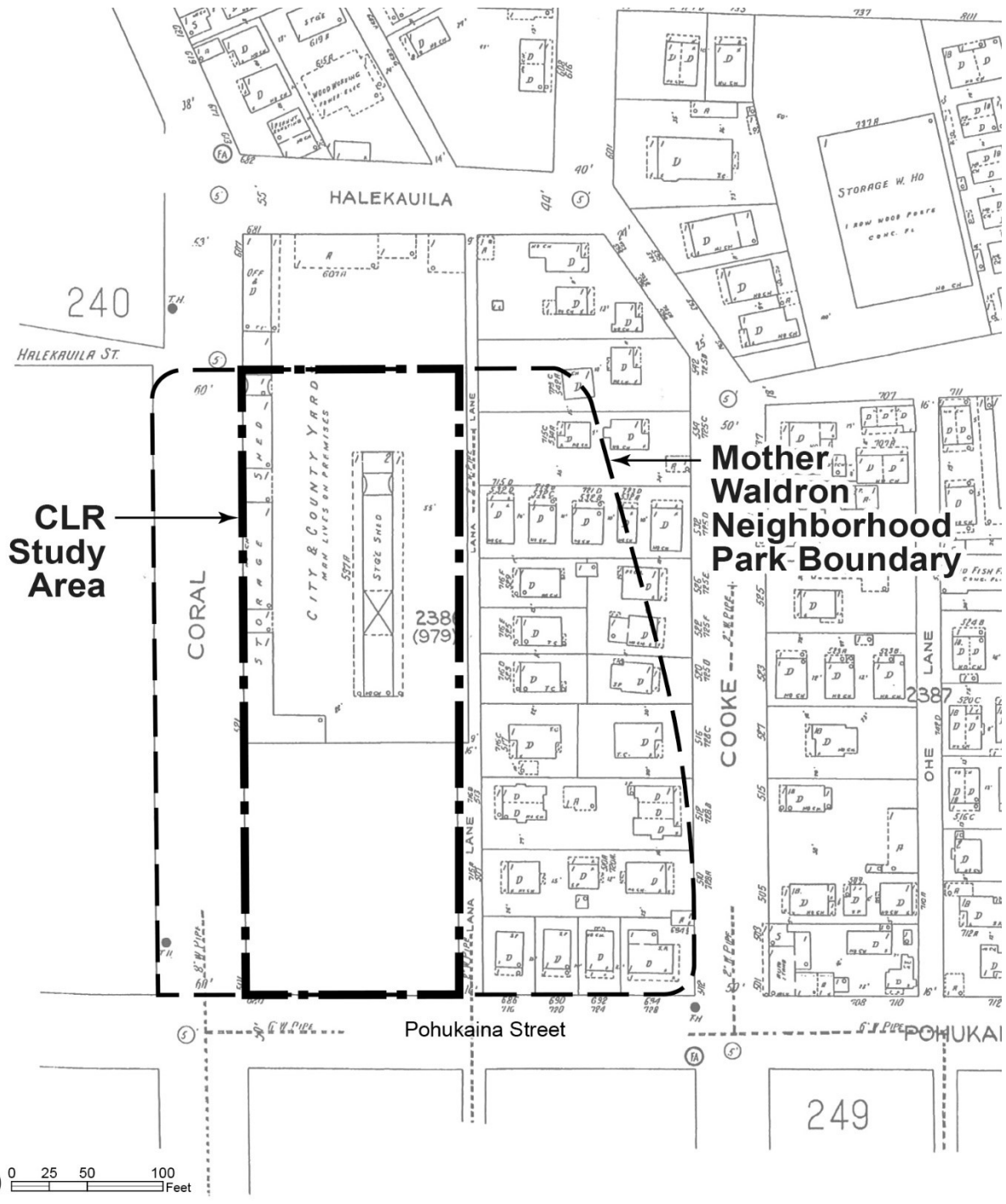


Figure 2.7: CLR Study Area, 1927. (Base Map: 1927 Sandborn map)

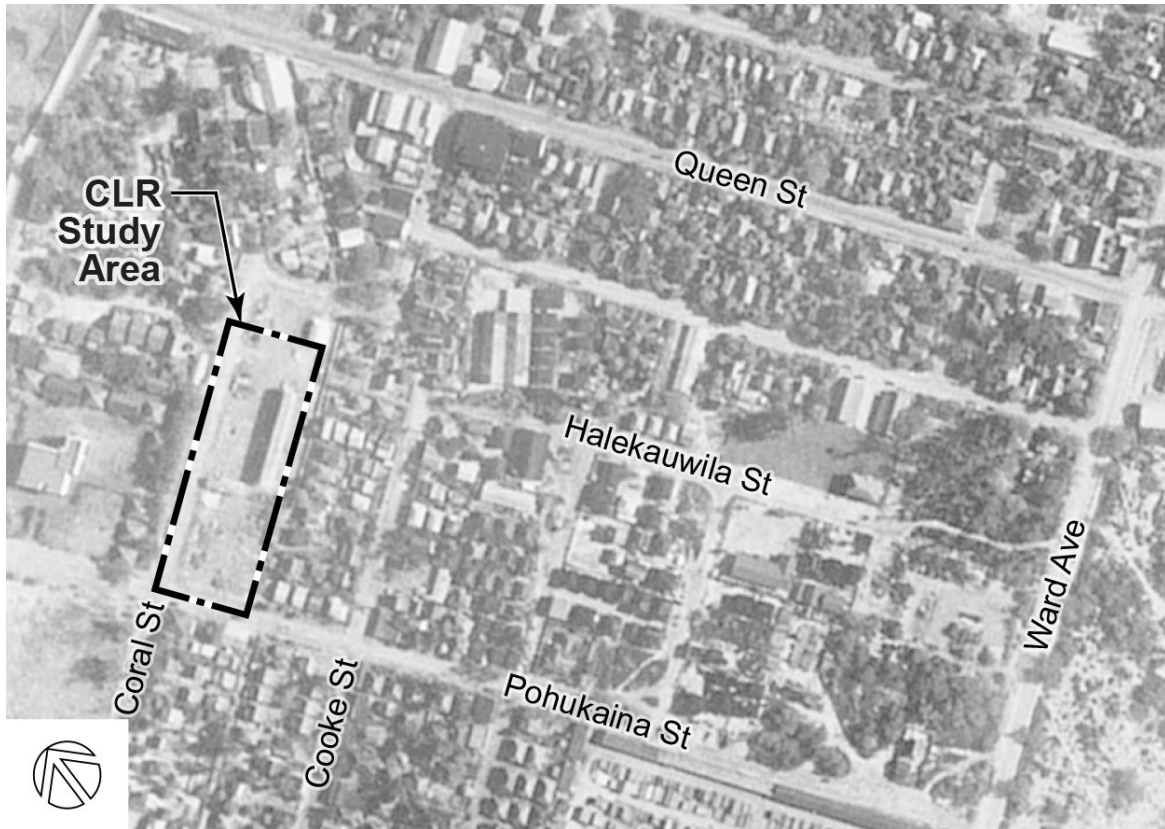


Figure 2.8: 1928 aerial photo depicting the area between Queen Street (top right), Pohukaina and Coral Streets (bottom left), Ward Avenue (bottom right). Pohukaina School and the stables site are visible (left center). (Source: UH Manoa, 1928, c5_66)

Circulation

In pre-contact times, trails through the low-lying coastal plain connected the more populous area of Kou (Honolulu) and Waikīkī.³⁶ By the late 1800s, the major vehicular corridors between central Honolulu and Waikīkī were King Street, Queen Street and the Beach Road. The Queen Street alignment, which was planned to connect to the beach road near Waikīkī, appears to have followed the route of the traditional trail from Kou (Honolulu) to Waikīkī as described by John Papa ‘li in *Fragments of Hawaiian History*, 1959.³⁷

By 1911, Coral Street was the farthest road east of downtown Honolulu that connected the Beach Road with Queen Street until one reached Ward Avenue. Over the next decade, the street grid was expanded across the recently filled lands bounded by Queen Street, Beach Road, Coral Street, Ward Avenue. First and Second Streets (later named Auahi and Pohukaina Streets, respectively) were extended eastward toward Ward Avenue. Cooke, Koula, Mohala and Kamani Streets were added as *mauka-makai* roads

36 O'Hare, Borthwick, Hammatt, *Final Archaeological Monitoring Plan for the Mother Waldron Park Improvements Project: (TMK: [1] 2-1-051:003,005,006,019 & Portion of Coral Street)* (Honolulu: Cultural Surveys Hawaii, 2014), 18.

37 Hallet H. Hammatt, *Final Archaeological Inventory Survey Report for the City Center (Section 4) of the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project, Kalihi, Kapalama, Honolulu, and Waikiki Ahupua'a, Honolulu District, Island Of O'ahu. Vol. ii* (Honolulu: Cultural Surveys Hawaii, August 2013), 88.

Mother Waldron Playground Cultural Landscape Report Site History | Chapter 2

between Halekauwila and First Streets; only Cooke Street continued to the Beach Road, named Ala Moana Road by 1920. The northern edge of the stable site was bordered by a short road segment that dated to 1900, which by the 1920s was considered part of the Halekauwila Street, although it was offset from the new road's alignment. A narrow drive, Lana Lane, bordered the eastern edge of the stables site, separating it from the adjacent residences.

Views and Vantage Points

Throughout the nineteenth century, Kaka'ako's flat expanse of open and relatively undeveloped marshlands afforded panoramic views in all directions. Key visual landmarks from the district included Punchbowl Crater and the Ko'olau Mountains to the north, Diamond Head to the east, and the steeple of Kawaiha'o Church rising above low-rise urban development to the west, and the ocean to the south (Figure 2.9).

By the end of the nineteenth century, scrub brush and some canopy trees had grown along the inland fringe of the marshland impeding views both to and from the area. As low-rise development occurred on the fill lands, roads provided view corridors and tall features such as the mountains were visible backdrops from other open vantage points, such as the school site and possibly the stable site.

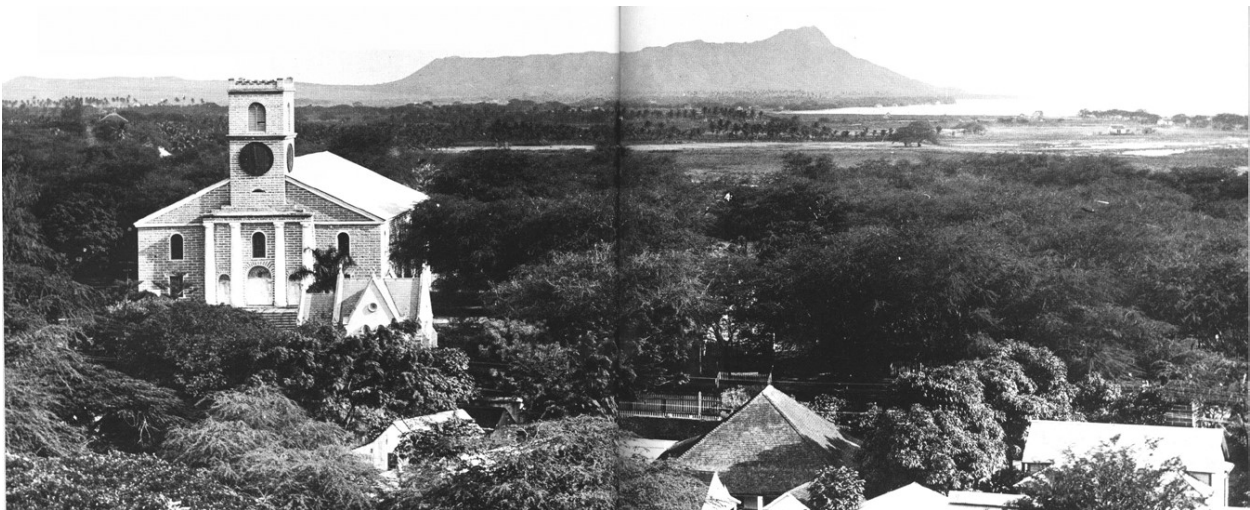


Figure 2.9: Circa 1887 photograph looking east across the lowlands of Kaka'ako and Waikiki to Diamond Head; Kawaiha'o Church in left foreground. (Source: *Hawai'i State Archives, Henry L. Chase Collection; reprinted in Stone 1983:84-85*)

Vegetation

Coastal marshland areas are known to have been frequented by Native Hawaiians to gather medicinal plants and *pili* grass, the latter of which was used in the construction of traditional thatched dwellings.³⁸ Sparse vegetation and clusters of coconut palms have been depicted along the shoreline in mid-nineteenth-century drawings. Once the wetlands were filled in the early 1900s, the Kaka'ako coastal

³⁸ Mishalla Spearing, C. R. O'Hare and H. Hammatt, *Appendix D: Cultural Impact Assessment for the Kaka'ako Community Development District Mauka Area Plan, Waikiki Ahupua'a, Honolulu (Kona District) O'ahu Island*. (Honolulu: Cultural Surveys Hawaii, 2008), 16.

plain was mostly devoid of vegetation until scrub (brush) became established, followed by intentional landscaping that occurred concurrently with the development on these lands.

An aerial photo (ca. 1928) recorded large canopy trees scattered among the many small houses and buildings in the vicinity of the CLR study area, but there were no distinctive street tree plantings (Figure 2.8). An exception was a row of trees along Coral Street on the school site. The stable site was devoid of vegetation.

Buildings and Structures

By October 1901, plans had been drawn for new stables to house the mules and horses, wagons and rolling stock of the county's public works department, initially planned to front Keawe Street.³⁹ By February 1904, a newspaper article indicated that "all that hinders now is the weather."⁴⁰ The stable complex was ultimately built northeast of the Coral Street/Second Street (Pohukaina) intersection on the land that would later become Mother Waldron Playground (Figure 2.10). The complex consisted of an elongated, two-story wood-frame barn near the center of the lot. The barn had a side-facing, double-vented shed roofline and open double-loaded bays that enabled horses to be quartered on both sides of the building. Each bay was further defined by an arch that opened onto the yard. A 1914 Sanborn map



Figure 2.10: Government Stables in Kaka'ako, built ca. 1904, (Source: "Honolulu Highways and Byways: Lake Dwellers in the Suburb - Regeneration of the District and the Japanese Invasion," *Honolulu Advertiser*, Section 2, (March 29, 1908), 9)

39 "Govt Will Build New Stables for Public Works," *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, October 26, 1901.

40 "Holloway Ready At Once to Build Stables," *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, February 19, 1904.

Mother Waldron Playground Cultural Landscape Report Site History | Chapter 2

shows narrow, rectangular ancillary buildings along the perimeter of the site, which included shops and storage sheds for rollers, harnesses, tools, wagons, scrapers and plows, and an office (Figure 2.4). By 1927, the northern half of the barn had been removed, and by 1928, most of the perimeter buildings were no longer extant (Figure 2.7). However, there was a wall along the east edge of the stable site (Figure 2.8).

Between the latter site and Cooke Street, there were many small houses in rows up to four deep from the street. Dense geometric clusters of similarly sized buildings occupied all the blocks in the vicinity of the stable lot. While the interior of school site remained largely open around the main building, several classroom buildings and a cafeteria lined Coral Street.

Small-scale Features

Documentation related to small-scale features in the CLR study area was not found, however by the 1920s, there may likely have been objects within the government stables complex (such as feeding troughs, hitching posts, and equipment), on the school grounds, and within the yards of surrounding residences. Utility systems for water, sewer and electrical were generally constructed within the street rights-of-way.

2.2 URBANIZATION AND PLAYGROUND DEVELOPMENT (1920 TO 1950)

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Kaka'ako continued to grow and densify as an industrial district. Workers, many of whom were Native Hawaiians, immigrant Asians, Europeans, or Euro-Americans, occupied inexpensive wood-frame dwellings in the surrounding neighborhoods while working at Honolulu Ironworks, the harbor, machine shops, shipbuilding and repair industries, lumberyards, and small neighborhood shops and businesses.⁴¹ By the 1920s and 1930s, the Kaka'ako district was comprised of a mixture of one-story cottages, two- and three-story tenements, and a number of ethnic "camps" interspersed with commercial, industrial, and public facility buildings.⁴²

In response to similar mixed-use and housing conditions in urban areas nationally, influential and well-organized groups of citizens sought to effect social change through the physical transformation of American cities. At the turn of the twentieth century, the national Playground Movement developed in response to public concerns about the physical and social welfare of underprivileged children living in congested urban areas. Reform-minded women were often at the forefront of local efforts that resulted in the creation of hundreds of municipal playgrounds and schoolyards, public athletic fields, and outdoor play spaces for children.⁴³

Unlike the scenic open-space parks of the nineteenth century, municipal playgrounds constructed during the 1920s and 1930s were modest in size and designed and operated to provide safe, organized, and

41 O'Hare, Borthwick, Hammatt, *Final Archaeological Monitoring Plan for the Mother Waldron Park Improvements Project: (TMK: [1] 2-1-051:003,005,006,019 & Portion of Coral Street)* (Honolulu: Cultural Surveys Hawaii, 2014), 42.

42 Donald D. Johnson and Phyllis Turnbull, *The City and County of Honolulu* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1991), 308.

43 Robert R. Weyeneth and Ann K. Yoklavich, *City and County of Honolulu, Dept. of Parks and Recreation, 1930's Parks and Playgrounds in Honolulu: An Historical & Architectural Assessment* (Honolulu: 1987), 2.

supervised recreation for children in urban neighborhoods.⁴⁴ Playground supervisors organized and monitored children’s games, sports teams, and other recreational activities. One of their primary tasks was to ensure that each playground was free from bullying, “adult loafers,” and gang activities. Moreover, supervisors acted as role models to help in the socialization and Americanization of immigrant children.⁴⁵

Early efforts at the national level focused on convincing city officials that public recreation was a municipal responsibility.⁴⁶ In Honolulu, the privately funded Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Association (FKCAA) initiated the development and operation of some of the city’s first playgrounds.⁴⁷ The group established playgrounds in Chinatown, at A’ala Park, Kamamalu, and Atkinson Playground in Kaka’ako (across Foundry (now Pohukaina) Street from Pohukaina School. In 1922, the Honolulu Parks Commission was established and headed by Julie Judd Swanzy, prominent citizen and president of the FKCAA. Influenced, at least in part, by concerns about the welfare of children from poor or immigrant families, the commission, set about developing and operating new municipal playgrounds. By 1936, the commission supervised some forty playgrounds and social centers throughout Honolulu.⁴⁸

During the 1930s, Honolulu officials utilized federal funds through Roosevelt’s New Deal programs to employ workers in public works projects and to supervise playground activities. Honolulu Park Board chairman Lester McCoy employed architect Harry Sims Bent to design and supervise construction of the city’s public parks. Bent had arrived in Honolulu in the late 1920s to supervise construction of the Academy of Arts for the firm Bertram Goodhue Associates. Following this work, Bent stayed in Hawai’i, eventually opening his own practice. He worked on nearly all public park projects in Honolulu during the 1930s, including Ala Moana Park (1934), Kawananakoa Playground (1937), Mother Waldron Playground (1937), and others. His work is particularly noteworthy for the creative use of simple materials in creating Art Deco and Art Moderne architectural design elements. Projects constructed during the collaboration between McCoy and Bent are examples of the “golden age” of park building in Honolulu.⁴⁹

The 1.76-acre site that included the City and County Stables was transferred from the territorial government to the city in 1930 and 1931.⁵⁰ Its central location within densely-developed Kaka’ako and across Coral Street from Pohukaina Elementary School was optimal for a new playground. The site was first proposed to be named for Margaret “Mother” Waldron at this time, but she refused the honor. Several years later, Bent’s plans for this playground were approved by the Park Board in 1936, and Mother Waldron’s name was given to the park following her death that same year. Margaret Waldron began her career teaching fourth grade at Pohukaina School. Outside of education, she was the volunteer playground director at nearby Atkinson Park and a welfare worker in Kaka’ako. She was credited with nearly single-handedly ridding Kaka’ako of its gangs and turning their members into model

44 Ibid., 6

45 Ibid., 5-9

46 Ibid., 2.

47 Ibid., 3

48 Ibid., 4

49 Ibid., 13

50 G. Blanchard, *Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for Mother Waldron Playground*. Unpublished NRHP Nomination Form (Honolulu: 2013), 17.

Mother Waldron Playground Cultural Landscape Report Site History | Chapter 2

citizens through her organized activities for the district's youth.⁵¹ In 1937, Mother Waldron Playground was constructed for a total cost of \$50,000. The City funded approximately \$32,000, while the federal Works Progress Administration funded the balance, including labor.⁵² The park opened on September 20, 1937, to much fanfare with city officials and over 2,000 others in attendance, and a performance by the Royal Hawaiian Band. At the time, the playground was heralded as one of the most modern recreational facilities in Honolulu.⁵³



Figure 2.11: Aerial photo showing Mother Waldron Playground, 1952.
(Source: University of Hawai'i, Mapping and Geographic Information Systems:
<http://guides.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/magis>)

Bent's symmetrical plan featured a central comfort station with curved pergolas, a broad open lawn, and numerous play courts.⁵⁴ The comfort station and lawn separated the junior and senior children's play areas that contained volleyball and basketball courts. The senior playground also had handball courts, while the junior playground had playground equipment.

Bent delineated the playground from the surrounding streets with 3-foot-high, zigzag-shaped walls. The design of the walls featured courses of concrete brick with horizontal and vertical perforated openings and a decorative horizontal band. Each corner of the park contained a curved entry wall with rounded piers at the pedestrian openings. The landscape design was symmetrical as well as aesthetic and functional.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² "Playground to Open Monday," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, 1937.

⁵³ "Children Play as Park Opens," *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, September 21, 1937.

⁵⁴ Harry Sims Bent, *Plans for Mother Waldron Park*, Microfilm, City and County of Honolulu, Department of Parks and Recreation (Honolulu: June 12, 1936).

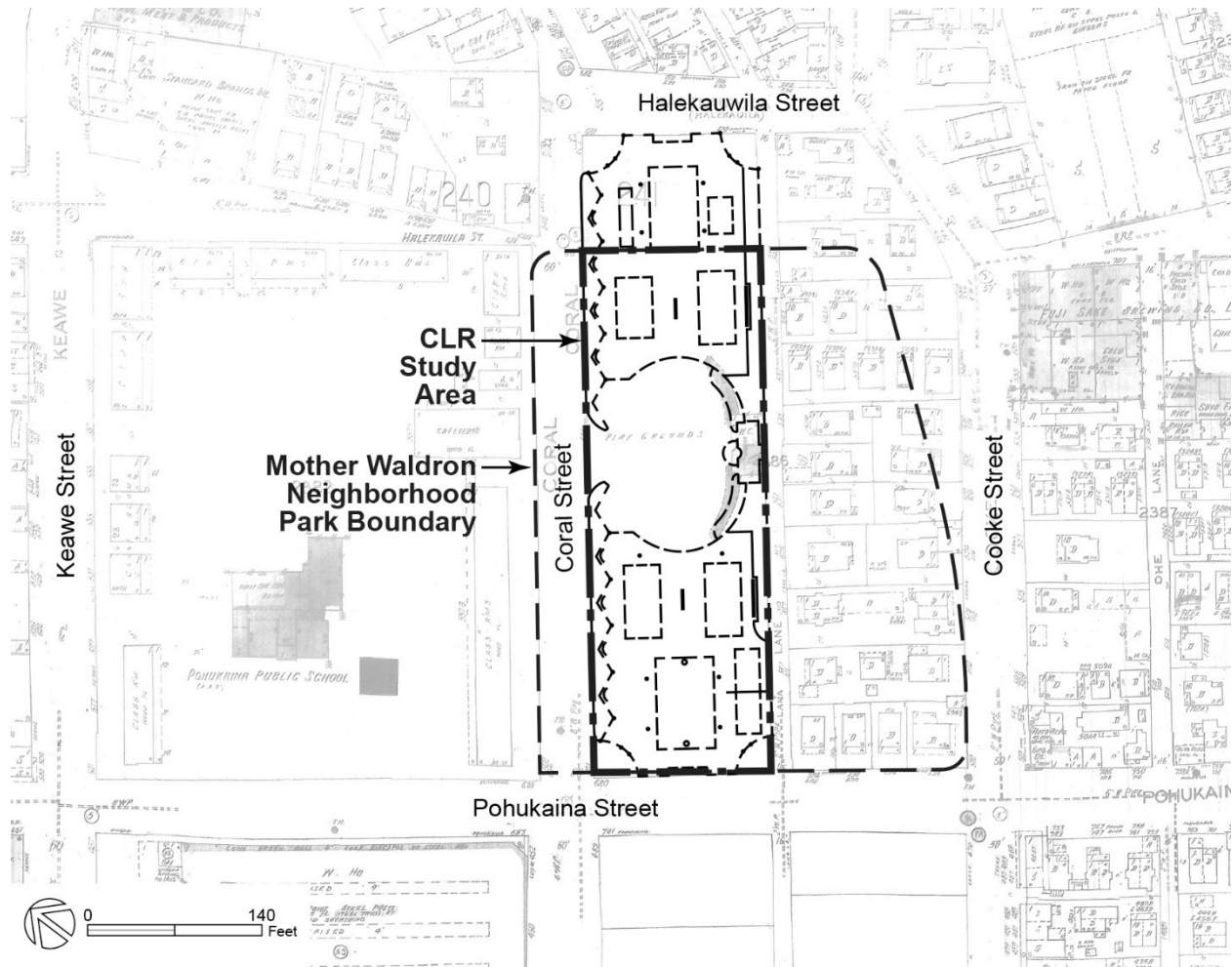


Figure 2.12: Bent's general layout for Mother Waldron Playground overlaid on 1950 Sandborn map.

Upon completion, children and adults in the community used the playground on a regular basis. Students at Pohukaina Elementary School played there during recess and lunch breaks. Adults used the play courts for nighttime recreation and social activities such as *bon* dances, music and dance performances, and even political rallies. Street parking around the perimeter of the park provided easy access for residents as well as visitors. In 1941, 60,000 persons were reported as having used the park during the daytime and another 26,000 used the site for evening sports and social gatherings.⁵⁵

In the 1940s, Honolulu, like many cities in the United States, reorganized playground administration and operations under municipal parks and recreation departments. The Honolulu Park Board merged with the Recreation Commission to form the Board of Public Parks and Recreation. After World War II, the board focused on restoring and rehabilitating municipal parks that had been used, and in some cases damaged, by the military during wartime defense operations.⁵⁶ By the end of the 1940s, the focus of

55 Robert R. Weyeneth and Ann K. Yoklavich, *City and County of Honolulu, Dept. of Parks and Recreation, 1930's Parks and Playgrounds in Honolulu: An Historical & Architectural Assessment* (Honolulu: 1987), 21.

56 Edward J. Lyons, *Honolulu's Parks Are Green Again*, 1949.

Mother Waldron Playground Cultural Landscape Report Site History | Chapter 2

playground planning efforts had changed in favor of providing play equipment that promoted children's free play and imagination rather than the structured and supervised playground environments developed during the two previous decades.⁵⁷

As Honolulu continued to grow, land near the urban core became increasingly valuable. In Kaka'ako, residential lots were consolidated and redeveloped with warehouses and light industrial uses while many residents moved to suburban communities. In some cases, the low-cost housing of an earlier era was determined "dangerous and unfit for human habitation" resulting in families being subjected to evictions to facilitate the demolition of housing and expansion of warehouses and other facilities.⁵⁸

By 1950, lot consolidation and redevelopment had begun to change the historic development patterns and spatial organization of the Kaka'ako district. The residential lots between Mother Waldron Playground and Cooke Street remained virtually unchanged, however, even though residential lots *makai* of Pohukaina Street were cleared, consolidated, and redeveloped as warehouses. Fire insurance maps indicate that in the surrounding community, a number of small land parcels were consolidated and redeveloped, while some single-family dwellings were converted into duplexes.

PHYSICAL LANDSCAPE (PERIOD PLAN: FIGURE 2.13)

Natural Features and Responses to Natural Environment

Mother Waldron Playground was built on former marshland that had been filled, graded, and developed at the turn of the twentieth century. The playground site and adjacent lands were flat and the soil was comprised of dredged material. Minimal site grading was required to accommodate construction of the park's buildings and large level play courts.

Spatial Organization and Land Patterns

The narrow, rectangular 1.76-acre playground site was oriented northeast-southwest (*mauka-makai*), demarcated by the surrounding street grid and dense housing on the eastern half of the city block. Following demolition of the stable complex, the site was open and unencumbered. Construction of the playground was consistent with Bent's symmetrical design that featured a centrally located, rectangular comfort station with curved pergolas (covered walkways) extending from each end. The building was located on the southeastern edge of the site and faced an open, oval-shaped lawn on its northwest side.

The park's main pedestrian entrance on Coral Street was centered on the lawn and comfort station. The northern third of the site was the younger children's play area and the southern third was for older children. Both play areas were spatially quite open due to the expanse of paved courts and low play equipment. Bent's site plan used simple combinations of angular and curvilinear surfaces to create and define the shape and edges of the walls, building, pergolas, benches, and walkways and entrances as well as open spaces for the lawn, ball courts, and play equipment.

57 G. Blanchard, *Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for Mother Waldron Playground*. Unpublished NRHP Nomination Form (Honolulu: 2013), 14.

58 "City Unable To Help Families Facing Eviction," *Honolulu Advertiser*, 1947 ; "70 Families in Kaka'ako Must Move By 31st," *Honolulu Advertiser*, 1947.

Low walls along the three street edges of the site physically defined the park but provided a sense of visual openness and connection between the park and its surroundings. A taller wall (5 feet high) along the southeastern edge physically and visually separated the park from the alley (Lana Lane) and the dense residential enclave beyond.

Through the 1940s, development patterns and land uses around the park remained relatively consistent. Except for the spacious school grounds across Coral Street, the immediate surroundings included small residential and commercial buildings.

Circulation

Pedestrian circulation on and around the site remained virtually as designed and built in the 1930s (Figure 2.13). Formal access from the Coral Street sidewalk to the central lawn was via a wide concrete landing and curved, red clay brick step and landing between the paired posts. Four identical corner access points were designed with curved concrete sidewalks and almond-shaped brick landings between each set of corner posts. A single row of mortared red clay bricks lined the concrete walks and planting islands. The central lawn, which was lined with a 6-inch-high red brick curb, provided access to and between the comfort station/ pergolas and the large, paved junior and senior playground areas. The pavement was constructed of “bitumuls armorcoat” (asphalt) topped with squeeze coats of “laycold” (rubberized bitumen), over a rolled coral base.⁵⁹ Within each of those areas, the various playground equipment and courts were organized in fairly symmetrical fashion and visually demarcated with lines painted on the hard surfaces of the playground.

Two 12-foot-wide curved concrete walkways, topped with flagstone pavers, extended outward from each end of the comfort station. The walkways were covered by pergolas and connected to the entries into the men’s and women’s restrooms. Fronting the center of the building were two semi-circular, 2.5-foot-wide coral flagstone steps and coping surrounding what was designed as a circular pool (10-foot diameter). Bent’s drawings indicated the outer step was 6 inches above the lawn and the inner step was 3 inches higher. The pool basin was about 2-1/2 feet deep with a drain, underwater light, and fountain jet.⁶⁰

A review of period photos could not determine if the Lana Lane service gate Bent had planned was built and/or extant in 1950.

There was little change to the vehicular circulation system in vicinity of the park. Between the late 1920s and 1950, portions of the Cooke Street right-of-way were widened by approximately 10–15 feet between South Queen and Halekauwila Streets and a portion of Lana Lane was widened by approximately 6 feet. Concrete sidewalks and street curbs defined three edges of the park along Halekauwila, Coral, and Pohukaina Streets; the fourth side was defined by a 5-foot-high concrete brick wall abutting Lana Lane.

⁵⁹ Harry Sims Bent, *Plans for Mother Waldron Park*, Microfilm, City and County of Honolulu, Department Of Parks and Recreation (Honolulu: June 12, 1936).

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Views and Vantage Points

The most prominent and designed sightline associated with Mother Waldron Playground was from the Coral Street entrance toward the central alcove of the comfort station and pool and fountain at its base. Within the park, views outward from the pergolas toward the Pohukaina Elementary School and views looking *mauka-makai* across the park were largely unobstructed. From within the park and the Coral and Pohukaina Streets rights-of-way, there were views of the Ko'olau mountains above the low-rise buildings that lined Halekauwila Street (Figure 2.14).

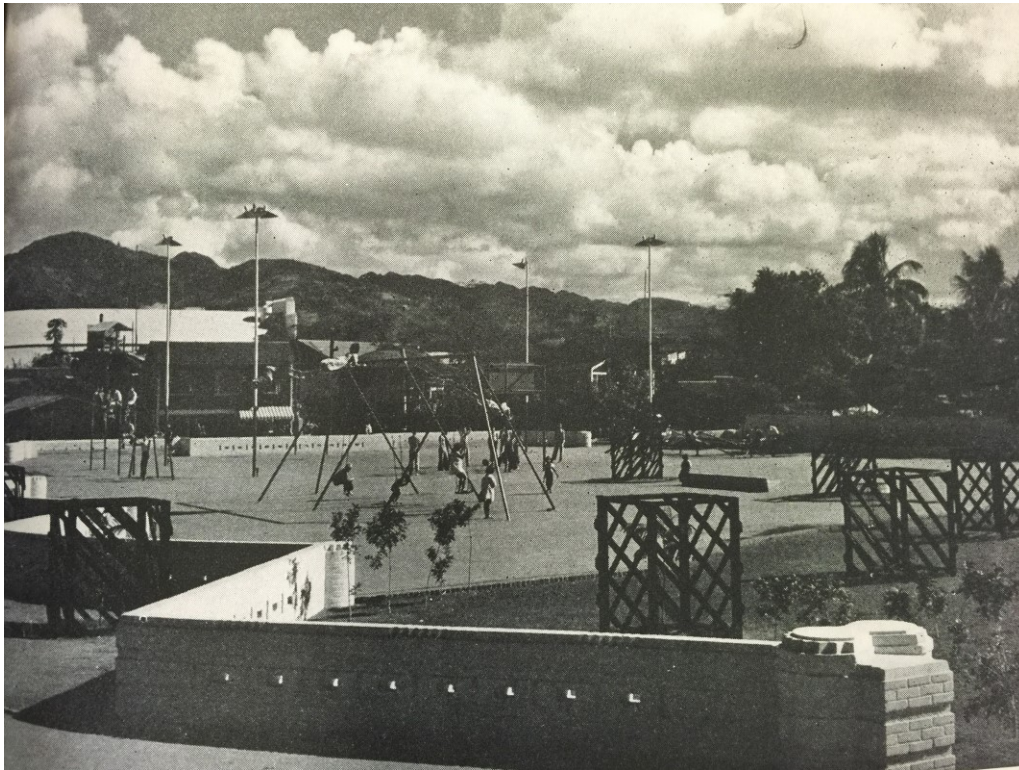


Figure 2.14: Photo of the junior playground from the main entrance of Mother Waldron Playground along Coral Street, ca. 1938. Young tree plantings are protected within the lattice cages. The Ko'olau Mountains are prominent in the background. (Source: *Honolulu Park Board, Your Parks: Annual Report for 1938*)

Vegetation

At the time of construction, period photos indicate that the vegetation plantings on the site closely followed Bent's General Layout Plan for the park. Bent identified linear "planting spaces" around the perimeter of the park, primarily in spaces between walls and pavement. Bent's planting plan was not found; therefore, specific plant species are unknown. However, a limited number of period photos indicate the use of shrubs and lawn and/or groundcover in these areas. The central "General Park Area" was identified as a "lawn and planting space," and a period photograph near the main entrance recorded some shrub plantings inside the Coral Street wall.

Trees were strategically and symmetrically sited throughout the park to achieve functional and aesthetic results. While the tree species Bent called for and planted remains undocumented, photographs from the 1930s and later photos and drawings indicate that they were canopy trees (versus palm species). Bent created attractive streetscape edges by planting (likely) royal poinciana within the triangular and rectangular planting spaces formed between the perimeter walls and sidewalks and at each of the four corners of the site. There was a row of seven trees (also likely royal poinciana) in a planting space along the wall that paralleled Lana Lane. Along the edges of the central lawn, three trees were planted next to the lawn's brick curb on each side of the main entrance, and another tree was planted at the end of each pergola. These tree species are unknown. Trees at each end of the central bench in the paved playgrounds provided shade. The plan indicates these trees were planted in round tree wells edged with bricks.

Little detailed information about extant vegetation in the 1950s was obtained. Aerial photographs indicate the presence of canopy trees arranged in a linear fashion along the Coral Street perimeter of the site and a few remaining along the eastern edge. At least two trees with fairly large canopies were located in the lawn near the end of each pergola.

Buildings and Structures

Bent's designs for the playground's buildings and structures utilized contemporary design elements reflecting two styles popular at the time. Art Deco was popular from the 1920s through 1940s and utilized vertical lines and geometric patterns.⁶¹ Its counterpart, the streamlined Art Moderne style, (popular in the 1930s through 1940s) was characterized by horizontal lines, flat roofs, smooth surfaces, and curvilinear edges. Bent's design emphasized beauty as well as functionality.

Comfort Station and Pergolas

The design of the one-story, concrete brick comfort station incorporated the smooth lines and rounded edges of the Art Moderne aesthetic. It featured a flat roof capped with zigzag coping identical to that found on the perimeter walls as well as a modified rectangular plan with rounded corners and columns. Courses of recessed brick formed horizontal lines across the building's façade, and decorative grills were created by horizontal and vertical openings in the front and rear brick walls. The building had a central

61. G. Blanchard, *Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for Mother Waldron Playground*. Unpublished NRHP Nomination Form (Honolulu: 2013), 19.

Mother Waldron Playground Cultural Landscape Report Site History | Chapter 2

storage room (accessed from the rear) and a toilet area on either side. At the center of the comfort station's front facade, Bent designed a fluted engaged pilaster-like alcove with steps around a circular pool at its base.

At each end of the building was a curved pergola with a flat roof and curved edges supported by unadorned, cylindrical, brick columns. The pergola roof extended two feet beyond the walkway on both sides.

Perimeter Walls

The playground was enclosed by concrete brick walls of varying heights and designs. Bent's plan identified a solid, straight, 5-foot-high wall capped with a precast concrete coping on the rear boundary along Lana Lane. A 2-foot-high "brick curb wall" topped with thin padre tile (terracotta) ran parallel to, and 7–11 feet inside the higher wall as well (Figures 2.15 and 2.16).

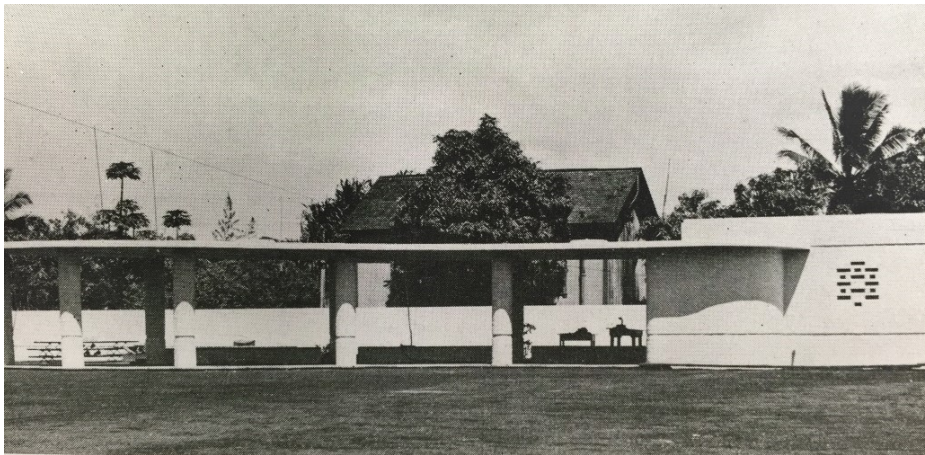


Figure 2.15: The comfort station and *mauka* pergola shortly after its completion in June 1937. Note the residential rooftop beyond the perimeter wall in the background. (Source: Honolulu Park Board, *Your Parks: Annual Report for 1938*)



Figure 2.16: This 1938 photo depicts the nighttime use of the basketball court. Also visible are the 5-foot-high wall along Lana Lane and the low curb wall in front of it, with plantings between. (Source: Honolulu Park Board, *Your Parks: Annual Report for 1938*)

Three-foot-high perimeter walls along Pohukaina, Halekauwila, and Coral Streets featured unique Art Deco zigzag designs. These walls were comprised of several brick courses, with some courses recessed to create horizontal bands. They also featured vertical and horizontal openings. Along Coral Street, the angles of the wall formed triangular alcoves, within which curvilinear benches were built on the interior (playground) side of the wall and trees were placed in the planting beds on the exterior (street side) (Figure 2.14). Along Pohukaina and Halekauwila Streets, the walls had a rectangular zigzag shape. Each of the park's corners had curved walls with rounded piers at pedestrian openings. The coping at each corner pier and at each angle break in the zig-zag walls featured a precast concrete sunburst design. At the Coral Street entry, there were double piers on each side of the wall opening (Figure 2.14).

Playground Structures

The junior and senior playground areas originally contained volleyball, basketball, and shuffleboard courts delineated by painted lines on the expanse of "bitumuls" paving. The basketball hoops were supported by an H-frame metal structure. The senior playground also had two handball courts that shared a common wall covered with masonite. The junior playground contained swings and seesaws (Figure 2.14).

Period photographs confirm that by the 1950s the design of the playground essentially remained as Bent had planned. However, the installation of the shuffleboard courts could not be confirmed. A monkey-bar play structure was located in the junior playground and may have been substituted in lieu of the planned shuffleboard court. No information about the shuffleboard court planned for the senior playground was located.

Benches

Two styles of concrete brick park benches capped with "padre tile" (terracotta) were an integral feature of the park. Straight benches of 18-foot to 36-foot lengths were located within the Halekauwila and Pohukaina perimeter wall alcoves, the low brick curb wall alcoves, and near the middle of each playground. Benches between the pergola columns were slightly curved, aligning with the outer edge of the curved walkway. A semicircular bench was located within each triangular alcove formed by the Coral Street wall.

Utility Structures

Each basketball court was framed by a set of four metal light poles. The tall light poles were fitted with shades to direct light downward onto the court and minimize light pollution (light trespass) onto residential properties nearby. Underground water and sewer lines may have had manhole or hand-hole [utility box] covers at the ground surface. It is unknown whether a landscape irrigation system was designed or installed.

Water Feature

At the center of the comfort station's front facade, Bent designed a 10-foot-diameter circular pool at the base of the fluted engaged pilaster-like alcove. The pool was 30-inch deep with a drain, underwater light, and fountain jet. Two semi-circular, 2.5-foot-wide flag stone steps and coping surrounded the circular pool. The outer tread was 6 inches above the lawn, with the inner one 3 inches higher. Present-

day remnants of the flagstone coping and steps indicate the pool was constructed as designed. The 2013 Draft NRHP Registration Form mistakenly identifies this as a “circular stage,” reflecting current paved condition, not the historic drawings. In practicality, its size was too small for a stage.

Small-scale Features

No stand-alone small-scale features were indicated on Bent’s plans. There may have been posts to support the nets on the volleyball courts, and there were likely some small utility-related features on the site, such as hand-hole covers. Drinking fountains were built into the concave wall niches near each entrance to the restrooms.

2.3 PLAYGROUND RENOVATIONS AND URBAN REDEVELOPMENT (1950-2015)

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In the second half of the twentieth century, Honolulu’s urban core, like those of many cities throughout the country, experienced a decline in population levels and a decrease in the level of private economic reinvestment. Federal funding in the form of credit and home loan assistance for military veterans in concert with government investment in major transportation and infrastructure projects helped to promote growth and development in outlying suburban districts. Public concerns about blight and urban decay prompted the Territorial Legislature to create the Honolulu Redevelopment Agency (HRA) to focus on urban renewal. Early efforts by HRA focused on clearing dilapidated structures and urban blight in Kalihi, central parts of the city closest to the west side of downtown, and the Kapahulu areas.⁶² As the aging building and housing stock of earlier eras deteriorated, a number of residents either voluntarily moved or were required to relocate to other areas to facilitate new commercial development in Kaka’ako.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, many Honolulu residents migrated from the older, ethnically distinct residential districts in favor of subdivisions in outlying areas that tended to be homogenous in terms of age and income rather than race.⁶³ Neighborhood stores and shops once scattered throughout the city and operated by immigrant families gradually started to disappear due, at least in part, to the combined effects of young educated family members entering into higher-paying occupations and the increased use of the automobile to meet family shopping needs.⁶⁴ By the 1960s, the urban core of Honolulu had taken on a “positively lonely appearance after dark and on holidays.”⁶⁵ The population decline in Kaka’ako resulted in the few remaining students leaving Pohukaina Elementary School after 1966 for Royal and Lincoln Elementary Schools. The Pohukaina building then became a special education facility.⁶⁶ In 1967, the Honolulu City Council considered a proposal to replace Mother Waldron Playground with a city parking garage. At the time, proponents cited the widespread belief that Kaka’ako was an industrial area without permanent residents (Figure 2.17).⁶⁷

62 Donald D. Johnson and Phyllis Turnbull, *The City and County Of Honolulu* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1991), 356.

63 Ibid., 358

64 Ibid., 359

65 Ibid., 358

66 Brian Nicol, "Kaka’ako: People, Places and Plans," (Honolulu: *Honolulu Magazine*, 1979), 129.

67 "Park Is For Children, Not Parking, Au Says," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, 1967.

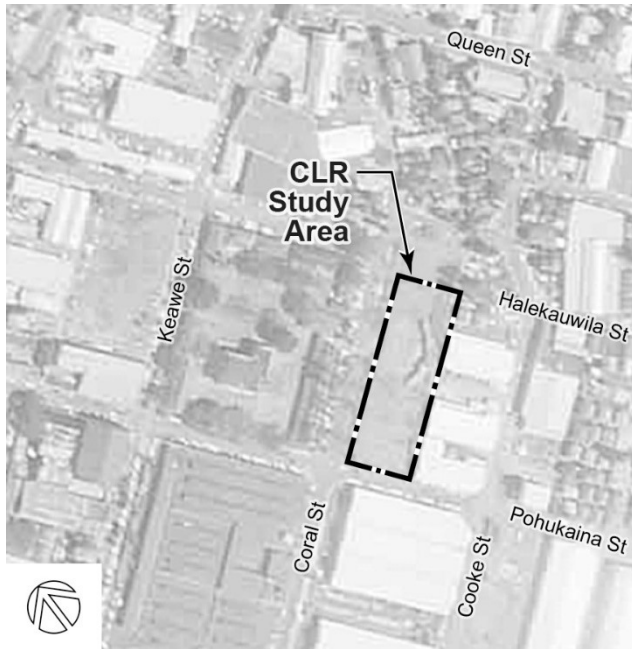


Figure 2.17: Through the 1950s, lands surrounding Mother Waldron Playground and Pohukaina School had largely transitioned from residential/commercial to warehouse/light industrial land uses. (Source: USGS aerial photograph, 3-68, GS-VXJ, dated 1-30-59. University of Hawai'i MAGIS)

In an effort to reverse the general state of decline in older urban neighborhoods, both the State of Hawai'i and the City and County of Honolulu focused on stimulating redevelopment and economic reinvestment activities. Legislators believed that certain underused and deteriorating areas had the potential to improve investment opportunities and provide economic benefits to the citizens of Hawai'i once redeveloped. In 1976, the Hawai'i State Legislature created the Hawai'i Community Development Authority (HCDA). HCDA was tasked with supplementing ongoing redevelopment efforts by promoting and coordinating public and private sector development in designated Community Development Districts.⁶⁸ Kaka'ako was designated as the Authority's first Community Development District and the Authority undertook plans to revitalize the area into a vibrant, mixed-use district of housing, parks, and commercial and industrial uses.

From the time of its initial construction and through the 1980s, Mother Waldron Playground underwent periodic maintenance and renovation with limited effect on the original land area and design of the playground. Records on file with the City indicate that plans were approved in 1967 to add a linear strip of asphalt pavement inside the main entrance to the playground. At some time prior to 1969, a wide, curved swath of flagstone pavement was installed in front of the comfort station to connect the pergola walkways. In 1969, plans were prepared by the City Department of Parks and Recreation to renovate the comfort station, replace damaged or missing tile caps on various benches and walls, repair flagstone pavement near the comfort station, replace missing trees, and add or adjust play apparatuses on the junior side of the playground.⁶⁹ Sprinklers were designed for the planting space along the Lana Lane

⁶⁸ Hawai'i State Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism, "Hawai'i Community Development Authority," <http://dbedt.hawaii.gov/HCDA/about-HCDA/>.

⁶⁹ City and County of Honolulu, Department of Parks and Recreation, *Mother Waldron Playground, Renovation of Existing Building & Appurtenances. Sheet Nos. 1 to 6* (Honolulu: 1969).

Mother Waldron Playground Cultural Landscape Report
 Site History | Chapter 2

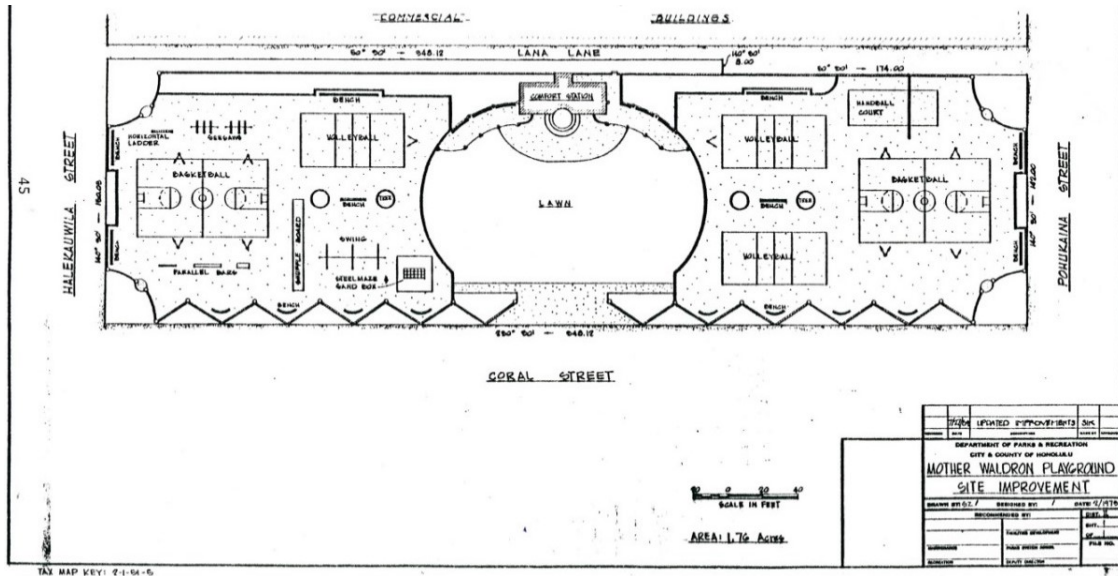


Figure 2.18: This Dept. of Parks and Recreation sketch of Mother Waldron Playground reflects conditions in 1975. (Source: Weyeneth and Yoklavich, 1987, p 45; at MRRC)

wall about 1972, and the play courts were resurfaced in 1978 (Figure 2.18). Although the full extent to which planned renovations and improvements were implemented is uncertain, documents from later decades indicate that changes to the original design of the park were generally minor through the 1980s.

As Kaka’ako became more industrial in nature, and the Pohukaina School building continued to deteriorate, the school’s program (serving just 95 special education students in 1979) was transferred to Kaimuki Intermediate’s campus in 1981, and the Pohukaina School buildings were demolished.⁷⁰

One of the major factors that hindered redevelopment in the Kaka’ako district was an aging infrastructure system. In the 1980s, HCDA began plans to support revitalization of Kaka’ako, including road reconfigurations to improve vehicular circulation.⁷¹ In the early 1990s, Pohukaina Street was widened and related infrastructure improvements installed. The expanded right-of-way encroached slightly into the older children’s playground but did not affect recreation features. The Pohukaina perimeter wall and benches were removed and reconstructed approximately 5-10 feet *mauka* of their original locations. Trees and vegetation were removed and replaced, and a new gutter, concrete curb, and sidewalk were installed.⁷²

Between 1991–93, Halekauwila Street was realigned and widened (Figure 2.19). The project entailed the removal and reconstruction of the playground’s Halekauwila Street perimeter wall, Halekauwila/Coral Street pedestrian entryway, and relocation of two benches to approximately 90 feet *makai* of their

⁷⁰ Peter T. Young, “Images of Old Hawai’i,” <http://Imagesofoldhawaii.Com/Mother-Waldron>. 2013.

⁷¹ G. Blanchard, *Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for Mother Waldron Playground*. Unpublished NRHP Nomination Form (Honolulu: 2013), 8.

⁷² State of Hawai’i, Hawai’i Community Development Authority, “Pohukaina Street,” Kaka’ako Community Development District, Improvement District 2-D. Sheets 14-21 of 91 (Honolulu: 1987).

original site. The pedestrian entryway near Lana Lane was eliminated because the reconstructed Halekauwila wall was extended to join the Lana Lane perimeter wall. The basketball court was also eliminated due to the road realignment. A new sidewalk, concrete curb, gutter, box drains, street lights, and planting areas were installed. In total, approximately 12,700 square feet of the playground was lost to the street realignment.⁷³

Following the realignment of Halekauwila Street, the City created Mother Waldron Neighborhood Park by incorporating land in the 'Ewa and Diamond Head directions of the original playground. As part of the HCDA Kaka'ako Improvement District Project (1994 Cooke Street Expansion Project), the Lana Lane right-of-way and the vacant parcel between the lane and Cooke Street were added to the playground.⁷⁴ The warehouses and other buildings formerly located on this parcel had been razed before the project was initiated. Also as a part of this project, the Lana Lane perimeter wall and the handball court wall were removed.⁷⁵

In conjunction with the Halekauwila Street widening project and other nearby development projects, a number of human remains dating from the late pre-historic or early historic periods were uncovered.⁷⁶ Cooperation between HCDA, the State Historic Preservation Division, the O'ahu Burial Council, and other interested parties resulted in the installation of a reinterment vault near the intersection of Halekauwila and Cooke Streets.⁷⁷ The vault, designed in 1994 as part of the Cooke Street expansion, mark the final resting place of Native Hawaiian *iwi Kūpuna* (human bones) that were uncovered.



Figure 2.19: Aerial photograph from 2000 depicts the Mother Waldron Neighborhood Park following realignment of Halekauwila Street and the incorporation of Coral Street right-of-way and land area to Cooke Street as part of the park. It also shows redevelopment of the former school site and lands *mauka* of Halekauwila Street. (Source: <http://magis.manoa.hawaii.edu/remotesensing/GeoserverFiles/ShpFiles/Oahu/018/jpegs/930>)

73 G. Blanchard, *Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for Mother Waldron Playground, Unpublished NRHP Nomination Form* (Honolulu: 2013), 8.

74 *Ibid.*, 7-8

75 City and County of Honolulu, Facilities Development Division, "Mother Waldron Park Expansion," Demolition, Irrigation & Grassing Sheet 1 of 1. Honolulu: City and County of Honolulu (Honolulu: 1991 Rev. 1993).

76 O'Hare, Borthwick, Hammatt, *Final Archaeological Monitoring Plan for the Mother Waldron Park Improvements Project: (TMK: [1] 2-1-051:003,005,006,019 & Portion of Coral Street)* (Honolulu: Cultural Surveys Hawaii, 2014), 48-68.

77 Hallett H. Hammatt and Rodney Chiogioji, *An Archaeological Assessment of the Mother Waldron Playground/Former Pohukaina School Parcel (6.8 Acres) In the Kaka'ako District of Honolulu* (Honolulu: Cultural Surveys Hawaii, 1998), 24.

Mother Waldron Playground Cultural Landscape Report Site History | Chapter 2

In 1994–95, the Coral Street right-of way between Halekauwila and Pohukaina Streets was closed and approximately 25,800 square feet was added to the park.⁷⁸ A grove of kou trees was planted at each end of the right-of-way and grass replaced the street pavement, except for a relatively small rectangular portion near the Coral Street entrance to the original playground.⁷⁹

The 1994 Cooke Street Expansion Project drawings still referred to the 1937 1.7-acre playground site and the land between the playground and Cooke Street as Mother Waldron Playground. However, the 1994, City Dept. of Parks and Recreation project for the “Demolition, Irrigation & Grassing” of Coral Street was called “Mother Waldron Park Expansion.” Various City drawings for site improvements between 1995 and the 2004 consistently refer to the 3.4-acre CLR study area as “Mother Waldron Neighborhood Park” rather than “playground.”

In late 2013, the City and County prepared plans for several site improvements, which were likely implemented in 2014.⁸⁰ Missing trees within the wall alcoves were replaced and groundcovers planted. Most notable was the removal of historical recreational pavement and the addition of lawn in its place.

PHYSICAL LANDSCAPE

Natural Features and Responses to the Natural Environment

There were no significant changes to the topography and drainage of the study area in the latter half of the twentieth century.

Spatial Organization and Land Patterns

The expansion of Mother Waldron Playground in the mid-1990s significantly changed the size, shape and spatial character of site. The formerly narrow, rectangular, and symmetrical playground – clearly defined by walls and roads – was suddenly reduced in length and surrounded by a broad, asymmetrical open space on the Cooke Street side and a narrow landscaped open space on the ‘Ewa side. The playground’s “back side” that formerly abutted Lana Lane and dense development, was now in the middle of the enlarged park space. The playground’s strong and somewhat formal orientation toward Coral Street was diminished by the loss of Coral Street as a vehicular route and the loss of Pohukaina School.

Within the bounds of the retained and reconstructed walls, the arrangement of Bent’s design in which the comfort station, pergolas, and central oval lawn separated the junior and senior playgrounds remained relatively intact, although the symmetry was compromised by the reduction of the junior playground size.

⁷⁸ G. Blanchard, *Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for Mother Waldron Playground*. Unpublished NRHP Nomination Form (Honolulu: 2013), 19.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 7-8

⁸⁰ City and County of Honolulu Department of Design and Construction, “Misc. Site Improvements at Mother Waldron Playground,” (Honolulu:2013).

Land use and development patterns surrounding the enlarged park also changed considerably in the last 50 years. Formerly dense residential lands were replaced with large commercial/industrial buildings, and some of Kaka'ako's first residential mid-rise developments.

Circulation

Historically, there was no vehicular circulation within Mother Waldron Playground; however, modifications to nearby roads in the 1980 and 1990s greatly impacted the size and character of the site, as well as aspects of vehicular and pedestrian circulation immediately adjacent to the site. By 2000, the study area was bound on the *mauka* and *makai* edges by realigned and widened primary, two-lane routes through Kaka'ako: Halekauwila and Pohukaina Streets, respectively. Both street rights-of-way included asphalt traffic and parking lanes as well as concrete curbs and sidewalks. A widening of Pohukaina Street in 1987 impacted the grade difference between the street sidewalk and the senior playground, which required modifications to the original brick steps at the Pohukaina Street pedestrian entries to the park. The Halekauwila Street widening included reconstruction of the pedestrian entry at Coral Street but eliminated the pedestrian entry at Lana Lane.

In contrast with pre-1990 conditions, the enlarged playground/park site was newly bordered on the eastern side by Cooke Street, a primary *mauka-makai* route between Ala Moana Boulevard and Queen Street. The right-of-way included concrete curbing and a sidewalk. Lana Lane, which formerly bordered the playground, was removed during the Cooke Street playground expansion project.

On the western side, Coral Street, which had served as the primary vehicular route serving the playground's main pedestrian entrance, was converted to a landscaped corridor between Pohukaina and Halekauwila Streets, requiring Coral Street traffic to divert around the block. The right-of-way retained the street's concrete curb and concrete sidewalk with a brick header along the length of the playground and retained a large slab of asphalt in the middle third of the corridor.

In addition to sidewalk additions and modifications on the perimeter of the enlarged park site, new pedestrian circulation features were added within the central lawn fronting the comfort station. By 1967, a strip of asphalt had been installed just inside the main entry posts and brick step/landing to provide a paved connection between the two playgrounds. In 2014, this was replaced with new asphalt paving—with curved rather than angled corners—and edged with 6-inch-wide concrete curbs. Also by 1967, there was a wide, arc-shaped flagstone extension at the center of the pavilion, around the flagstone steps, which provided a paved connection between the two pergolas. The circular pool may also have been paved over with flagstone about this time.

Aside from the loss of playground space due to the Halekauwila Street realignment, the extent of the asphalt pavement of both the junior and senior playgrounds remained the same through the twentieth century. The pavement extended from the *mauka* and *makai* perimeter walls to the brick curb that lined the central lawn area and to the curb wall along the Lana Lane edge. City drawings from the 1960s indicate that the asphalt pavement of both playgrounds extended to the zigzag wall along Coral Street by the 1960s, if not earlier.

Mother Waldron Playground Cultural Landscape Report Site History | Chapter 2

However, about 2014, large sections of recreational pavement were removed, and areas planted with grass. Inside the Halekauwila Street/Coral Street ROW entry, asphalt connected to a new play structure and an asphalt path extended along the *mauka* and Cooke Street walls to the comfort station. The interior area became lawn.

On the *makai* side of the central oval lawn, about half of the asphalt recreational courts paving was removed and replanted as lawn. Two basketball courts along Pohukaina Street were installed.

Views and Vantage Points

The 1990s expansion of the playground dramatically changed visual connections between the playground and two adjacent roads. Closure of Coral Street diminished visibility of and use of the main pedestrian entry to the playground and the prominent sightline across the central lawn to the front of the comfort station. The historic “front” of the playground was no longer viewable from this former thoroughfare, which was also the street between the playground and Pohukaina School until the early 1980s. Instead, the site became visually open to Cooke Street across the newly created open lawn. Unlike the former designed, frontal playground view from Coral Street, the new exposure to the playground from Cooke Street was of the rear of the building and its pergolas, and the low curb wall along the rear edge. This view offered no visual relationship with the Bent’s designed symmetry and building placement, orientation and shapes.

Pedestrian-level vantage points from within the playground changed as redevelopment in the surrounding community progressed. Picturesque views of the Ko’olau Mountains became obscured by mid- and high-rise buildings along and inland of Halekauwila Street. The visual connection from the playground to Pohukaina School was lost when the school buildings were demolished in 1981.

Vegetation

A 1967 Department of Parks and Recreation survey⁸¹ indicates that many of the playground’s original trees were no longer extant. Five of the ten alcove planting spaces along Coral Street were missing royal poinciana trees, as was the alcove along Pohukaina Street. Five royal poinciana trees along the Lana Lane wall remained generally consistent with Bent’s plans. No trees were shown in the four round planters within the paved playground areas. While no trees were drawn in the central lawn or in the triangular planting spaces outside the four corner entrances to the playground, the survey may have excluded those areas, as it also lacks spot elevations there. A photo from the 1960s or 1970s confirms that at least one of the corner planting spaces still contained a tree. (Figure 2.20).

A 1978 survey⁸² indicates that many of the missing trees in the Coral Street alcove planting spaces had been replaced. It shows only one (seemingly original) large canopy tree in the central lawn, just *mauka* of the main entry from Coral Street. Aside from limited hibiscus shrubs near the comfort station, the survey did not identify groundcover or shrub plantings.

81 City and County of Honolulu, Department Of Parks and Recreation, "Mother Waldron Partial Topo," Drawing File No. 80/2 (Honolulu: June 1, 1967).

82 City and County of Honolulu, Department Of Parks and Recreation, "Mother Waldron Playground Topo," File No. 80/5 (Honolulu: May 1978).

The City Parks Department's 1991 Tree Relocation Plan⁸³ for the playground called for a replacement royal poinciana tree in the alcove on Pohukaina Street, three along Coral Street, and one along the proposed new alignment for Halekauwila Street. In addition, one large monkeypod tree was transplanted "from [a] Cooke Street site" to the *makai* side of the playground's central lawn.

Vegetation was also introduced into the park expansion areas. Common Bermuda grass, 18 kou trees, and sprinklers were installed at the ends of the Coral Street right-of-way around 1994 (asphalt road pavement was retained in the center portion). The 1994 Cooke Street Expansion Project proposed 15 royal poinciana trees in two narrow rows along the sidewalk, two monkeypod trees at each end of the tree line, and common Bermuda grass between the playground and Cooke Street. The entire site was designed with an irrigation system. A 2004 survey of Mother Waldron Neighborhood Park⁸⁴ suggests that the 1994 plan was implemented. It also shows the addition of a mature monkeypod tree on the

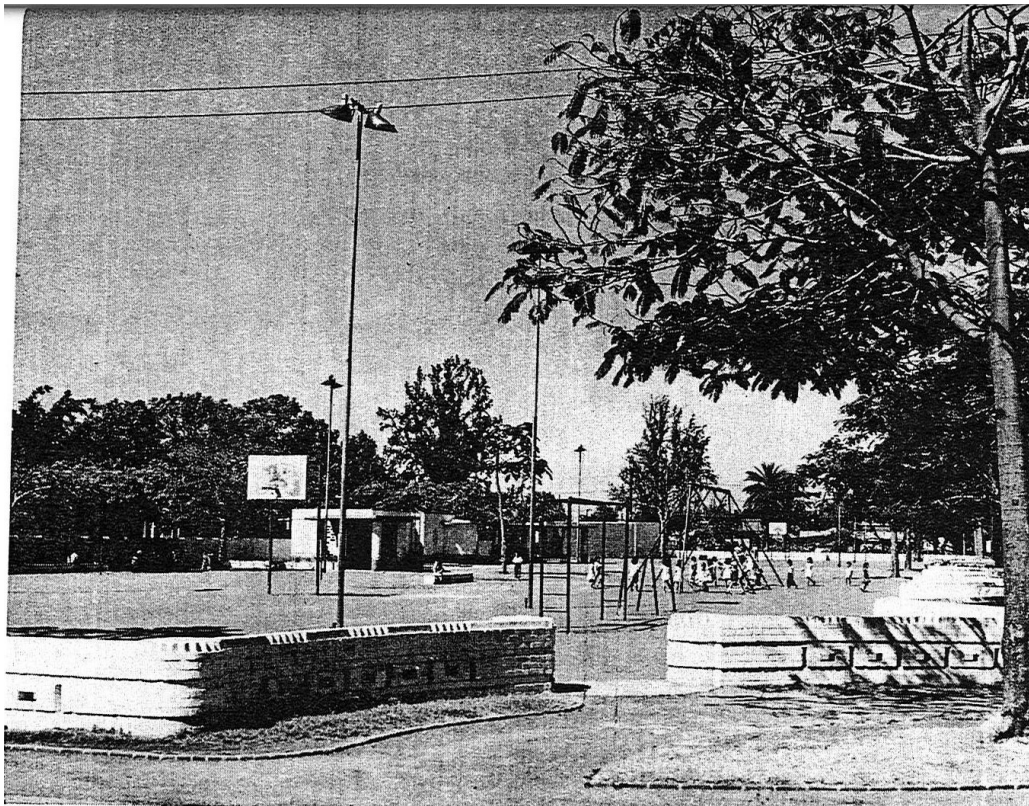


Figure 2.20: View across the junior playground from Halekauwila Street near Coral Street. Note the large royal poinciana tree in the entry planting island at right and canopies of the mature trees along Coral Street beyond it. Royal Poinciana trees along the Lana Lane wall are visible at left. The planting spaces, lined with brick, appear landscaped with grass (ca. 1960-80). (Source: *Weyeneth & Yoklavich, 1987, from Municipal Reference and Records Center*)

83 City and County of Honolulu, Facilities Development Division, "Mother Waldron Playground, Tree Relocation Plan," File No. 80/8 (Honolulu: January 11, 1991).

84 City and County of Honolulu Department of Design and Construction, "Topographic Survey of Mother Waldron Neighborhood Park," Sheet L22-F-7 (Honolulu: June 10, 2004).

Mother Waldron Playground Cultural Landscape Report Site History | Chapter 2

mauka edge of the playground's central lawn. City improvements plans from 2013 indicate the monkeypod on the *makai* side of the central lawn may have been planted as recently as 2013-14.

In alcove planting areas formed by zigzag perimeter walls, the December 2013 site improvement plans showed locations for five new royal poinciana trees, but the plans were later revised and rainbow shower trees were planted instead due to the City's concerns about aggressive root systems and pod litter from poinciana trees. The 2013 plans showed the kou trees at each end of the Coral Street ROW as already existing.

Buildings and Structures

Relatively minor interior and exterior changes were made to the comfort station and pergolas (Figure 2.21). The most visible from the surrounding landscape was the installation of new screen block openings in the front and back walls of the men's and women's restrooms that appears to have occurred in 1969.

As part of the 1990s road realignment and widening projects, the original brick perimeter walls along Pohukaina and Halekauwila Streets were removed. The 5-foot-high wall along Lana Lane and the handball court wall were removed as well, except for the rear wall segment between the building and the gate. Four segments of the zigzag wall along Coral Street and two of the curved brick benches inside the wall were lost in the Halekauwila Street realignment. The Halekauwila and Pohukaina perimeter walls and rectilinear benches were reconstructed to closely replicate Bent's original design with the same materials. A primary difference was that the Halekauwila Street wall was extended toward Lana Lane and no pedestrian entry was reconstructed at this corner of the playground. The Halekauwila/Coral Street pedestrian entry was reconstructed with round posts and curved walls; however, the two original sets of entry posts along Pohukaina Street were saved. City drawings indicate that efforts were made to replace and repair "quarry tile caps" of walls and benches as part of maintenance projects.

Modifications to playground courts and equipment were made over time. The senior playground shuffleboard court had been removed by 1967, and the handball courts were gone by 1995. The basketball court and two volleyball courts were retained and repaved regularly. In the junior playground, parallel bars were added and the shuffleboard court relocated by 1967. A jungle gym was installed by 1978. Major changes resulting from the Halekauwila Street realignment included loss of the basketball and shuffleboard courts, seesaws, and bars. The volleyball court, swings and jungle gym remained until a new play structure and resilient surfacing were added in 2004 in the location of the former swings and jungle gym.

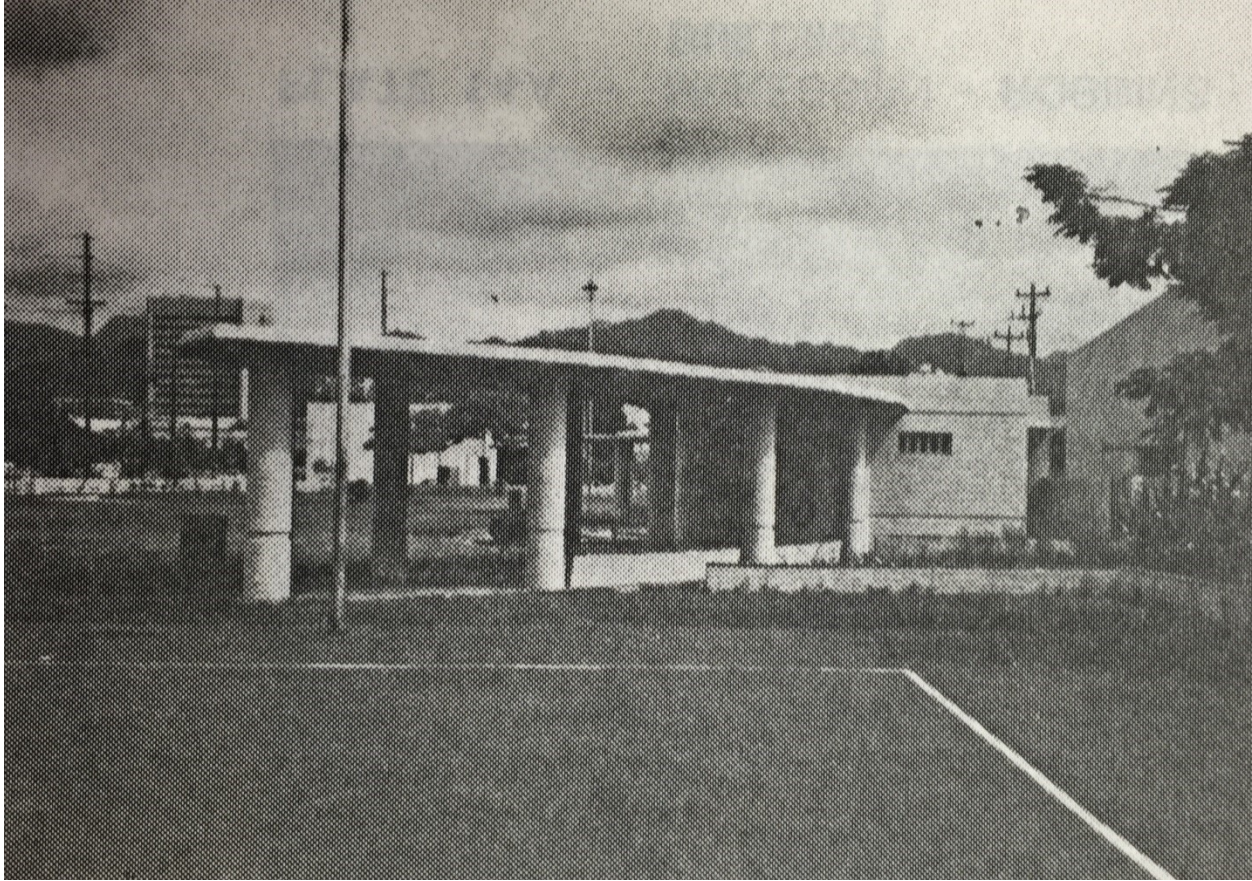


Figure 2.21: View from the senior volleyball court toward the Pohukaina Street end of the comfort station and pergola, ca. 1983. Note the low curb wall and planting spaces, as well as the large warehouse structure behind the comfort station. (Source: HCDA FEIS, Kaka’ako Community Development Plan)

An interment vault for Native Hawaiian remains discovered during various Kaka’ako development projects was constructed near the intersection of Halekauwila and Cooke Streets. An almond-shaped wall surrounded a raised dirt mound over the interment chamber. The brick wall was 18-inch high, topped with an 18-inch-high wrought iron fence. The fence verticals had 12-inch spacing and decorative finials. A small metal plate was fixed to the top of the wall with the word “*kapu*” to indicate the sacred nature of the site. Landscape plans indicate that the mound was planted with lauae fern and red ti.⁸⁵

City plans from 1989 show that “floodlight poles” existed on each side of the junior and senior playground basketball courts as well as a pole on the *mauka* side of one senior volleyball court. By 2000, however, the senior basketball court light poles were no longer extant. It is unknown if other court lighting had been removed by this time as well. Above-ground irrigation features would have included valves, boxes, and sprinkler heads. Utility structures surrounding the park included overhead power lines and at-grade electrical structures, street lights, and drainage systems.

⁸⁵ Engineers Surveyors Hawaii Inc., “Mother Waldron Playground Cooke Street Expansion Project,” Plans (Various). Sheets 1 – 4 (Honolulu: 1994).

Water Feature and Small-scale Features

Various drawings for the playground imply that Bent's designed circular pool was filled and paved over with flagstone to match the adjacent steps by the late 1960s.

There is limited documentation about small-scale features within the site. There were likely some site furnishings such as trash receptacles, irrigation valves and boxes and possibly signage. However, within surrounding rights-of-way, there were traffic signs, small-scale utility features (manhole covers and boxes), and fire hydrants.

The brick edging around the four circular planting spaces within the junior and senior playground pavement was extant until modifications were made in 2014.

A drinking fountain on a concrete pad was installed near playground's Coral Street entry as part of the 2013 improvements.

3.0 Existing Conditions

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter documents the existing conditions in the Mother Waldron Playground CLR study area through narrative descriptions, illustrative maps, and site photographs. Landscape characteristics and features are organized in the following seven categories:

- Natural Features and Responses to Natural Environment
- Spatial Organization and Land Patterns
- Circulation
- Views and Vantage Points
- Vegetation
- Buildings and Structures
- Small-scale Features

The existing conditions plan (Figure 3.1) reflects site conditions based on detailed field work in 2016 and field check in February 2020. The location and size of landscape characteristics and features in the plan were evaluated for accuracy in the field but should be considered representative and approximate. Unless indicated otherwise, all photographs were taken by HHF Planners between September 2015 and June 2016.

3.2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION/ ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The Mother Waldron Playground CLR study area is 1.35 acres within the 3.4-acre site bounded by Halekauwila, Cooke, and Pohukaina Streets and the Coral Street right-of-way (ROW), the latter of which is now considered the City and County of Honolulu Mother Waldron Neighborhood Park. Within an approximately 150-foot-wide central rectangle spanning from Halekauwila Street to Pohukaina Street and defined by low walls and planting spaces, the CLR study area comprises a play structure area, a comfort station flanked by curved pergolas that are fronted by a lawn area, specimen trees, and recreational ball courts. Across the adjacent streets and ROW are low-rise light industrial, commercial, and institutional buildings and low- and mid-rise residential buildings, which are characteristic of the existing Kaka'ako district of Honolulu in which the CLR study area is located.

3.3 LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS AND FEATURES

NATURAL FEATURES AND RESPONSES TO NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The study area is generally flat, with a ground elevation of about 3 feet above sea level and possesses no natural features or apparent responses to the natural environment.

Mother Waldron Playground Cultural Landscape Report
Existing Conditions | Chapter 3



Figure 3.1: Mother Waldron Playground Existing Conditions Pan.

SPATIAL ORGANIZATION AND LAND PATTERNS

The neighborhood park is oriented *mauka-makai* and delineated on four sides by the generally rectilinear grid of Kaka'ako district streets. The park is characterized by three distinct *mauka-makai* linear areas. Closest to Cooke Street is an expansive lawn with shade trees on the periphery. (Figure 3.2). The central area, the CLR study area and the extant lands of the original Mother Waldron Playground, is defined by perimeter sidewalks and planting spaces along Halekauwila, Pohukaina, and former Coral Streets, and enclosed by low walls on four sides. It has four distinct subareas (from

Halekauwila Street to Pohukaina Street): a play structure area, the central comfort station with pergolas and lawn area, a lawn area with benches, and ball courts. The Coral Street ROW is a visually open, non-vehicular corridor with a grove of trees at each end. (Figure 3.3). The makai third of the ROW is a fenced-in dog park.

Since the CLR study area is largely comprised of lawn areas and paving and the walls and comfort station are low, there is a sense of visual openness in all directions and

connection to the surrounding community. However, there is not a strong spatial or functional connection between the historic playground area and the adjacent lands of the larger city park.



Figure 3.2 (top): Panorama of study area from Cooke Street.

Figure 3.3 (bottom): Panorama of study area from Coral Street ROW.

CIRCULATION

Pedestrian

A perimeter pedestrian circuit is formed by 6-foot-wide concrete sidewalks along Halekauwila and Pohukaina Streets and a 6-foot-wide walkway along the edge of the Coral Street ROW that connects with the Halekauwila and Pohukaina Streets sidewalks. (Figure 3.4). The grassy area of the *makai*-third of the ROW was enclosed by chain link fencing in early 2020 for use as a dog park.

The Coral Street ROW sidewalk along the playground is mostly asphalt and is bordered by a 6-inch-high concrete curb remaining from Coral Street (with a curb cut near the playground entry) and a single row of end-to-end mortared red clay bricks on the playground side, which transitions to a concrete edge near the playground entry. (Figure 3.5).

The perimeter sidewalk circuit links with internal pedestrian circulation in four locations: at the Halekauwila Street-Coral Street ROW intersection, on both sides of the ball courts along Pohukaina Street, and halfway along the Coral Street ROW. The first three links comprise 10-foot-wide curved concrete walkways that are edged with single rows of end-to-end mortared red clay bricks. The walkways ramp up to almond shaped mortared red clay brick landings, except at the Pohukaina Street entry closest to Cooke Street, where the almond shape is a 7-inch-high step with an additional two rows of stack bond clay bricks on the street side of the step. (Figure 3.6).

From the entry at Halekauwila Street/Coral Street ROW intersection, a broad asphalt paved area abuts the inside of the playground walls and provides access to the play structure and the comfort station. (Figure 3.7). A 6-inch-wide concrete curb is level with and borders the inside edge of the asphalt paving. The entries on Pohukaina Street provide access to two adjoining asphalt-paved basketball courts.

Midpoint along the Coral Street ROW, the walkway links to a playground entry highlighted by a lens shape of flagstone pavers with light-colored mortar joints that stretches across the opening in the perimeter walls. (Figure 3.8). On the playground side of the flagstone pavers, an asphalt walkway provides access to the playground's central lawn area.



Figure 3.4 (top left): Pohukaina Street perimeter sidewalk (right) links with a playground entry (center) and Coral Street ROW sidewalk (left). **Figure 3.5 (top right):** Coral Street ROW sidewalk looking toward Halekauwila Street. **Figure 3.6 (middle left):** Pohukaina Street playground entry closest to Cooke Street with an almond-shaped brick step. **Figure 3.7 (middle right):** Asphalt paving near play structure. **Figure 3.8 (bottom):** Coral Street ROW playground entry looking toward the ROW.

Mother Waldron Playground Cultural Landscape Report Existing Conditions | Chapter 3

Below the central comfort station pergolas are walkways of coral flagstone paving with light-colored mortar joints (Figure 3.9) that provide access to the men's and women's toilets. The flagstone extends 9-11 inches beyond the pergola columns and wraps around the Pohukaina Street end of the comfort station to a storeroom doorway. (Figure 3.10). A broad band of the same flagstone material in front of the comfort station connects to the pergola walkways. (Figure 3.11). At the center of the curved band is a two-tier circular platform. The top tier has a distinctive circular paving joint that is 2.5 feet from the edge of the tier. (Figure 3.12). Herbaceous plants, including turf, are growing in the joints and growing in and extending over the pavers. Missing pavers have been replaced with concrete.

The asphalt paving for the recreational courts on Pohukaina Street does not connect with the covered walkway since the asphalt was removed from between the present-day basketball courts and the brick edge of the central lawn circa 2014.



Figure 3.9 (top left): Flagstone paving beneath the pergola on the Halekauwila Street side of the comfort station. **Figure 3.10 (top right):** Flagstone paving for access to storeroom door. **Figure 3.11 (left):** Looking toward Pohukaina Street at the curved band of flagstone paving that connects the pergola walkways. **Figure 3.12 (right):** Distinctive circular paving joint on top of the circular platform at the center of the comfort station.

Vehicular

Two streets border the CLR study area. Halekauwila and Pohukaina Streets are 50-foot wide, two-way asphalt arterials with 6-inch high concrete curbs and on-street meter parking on both sides. A wide curb cut on Cooke Street provides access for park maintenance vehicles, such as lawn mowers. Other vehicles are deterred from entering the park by a stanchion and chain assembly in the lawn adjacent to the curb cut. (Figure 3.13). The Coral Street ROW is closed to vehicular traffic. On both the Halekauwila Street and Pohukaina Street ends of the ROW, a sidewalk and concrete curb have been constructed and groves of trees has been planted. The remainder of the ROW is mostly lawn, except for asphalt paving in the central area, which aligns with the playground entry and a double gateway in the property line chain link fence. (Figure 3.14).



Figure 3.13 (left): Curb cut on Cooke Street for park maintenance vehicle access. **Figure 3.14 (right):** View of Coral Street ROW looking *mauka* toward central asphalt paving at gates in property line fence to the left.

IEWS AND VANTAGE POINTS

Mother Waldron Neighborhood Park is visually prominent from adjacent roadways. The low walls and deciduous tree canopies allow views into the historic playground. The visual impact of the comfort station's mass and scale is diminished by its central location in the larger park, and by the two mature monkeypod trees flanking it when viewed from the west. There is a sightline between the central pedestrian entry along the Coral Street promenade to the center of the comfort station.

VEGETATION

The CLR study area is vegetated primarily with turf ground cover, which is a mixture of Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*), St. Augustine grass (*Stenotaphrum secundatum*), and a sedge known as McCoy grass (*Cyperus gracilis*). (Figure 3.15). The coverage is complete and healthy, with few signs of wear from foot traffic. Masses of *akia* (*Wikstroemia uva-ursi*) ground cover, a native Hawaiian species, are planted in three locations: along the Coral Street ROW between the zigzag wall and a concrete curb; along Pohukaina Street between the playground walls and the sidewalk; along Halekauwila Street between the playground walls and the sidewalk; and in the planting spaces on the Cooke Street side of both pergolas.

Mother Waldron Playground Cultural Landscape Report

Existing Conditions | Chapter 3

The following tree species are planted in the CLR study area and the park lands adjoining it:

- Monkeypod (*Albizia saman*, formerly known as *Samanea saman*): A total of 7 monkeypod trees are located in the study area, with 2 in the central playground lawn area fronting the comfort station, 2 at the corner of Halekauwila Street and Cooke Street, and 3 along Pohukaina Street.
- Royal Poinciana (*Delonix regia*): Of 17 royal poinciana trees in the playground, 13 (20-30 feet high) are planted in an informal row along Cooke Street, a row of 3 is located along the Diamond Head wall of the *mauka* play area, and 1 is located outside of the playground wall near the basketball courts.
- Rainbow Shower (*Cassia x nealiae*): Ten rainbow shower trees are in the alcove planting spaces formed by the zigzag perimeter walls. The shower trees range in height from between 15-25 feet. (Figure 3.16).
- Kou (*Cordia subcordata*): At each end of the Coral Street ROW is an arrangement of 3 rows of 3 kou trees.



Figure 3.15 (left): Brick edging separates the original central lawn from the grass that replaced part of the asphalt courts in 2014. **Figure 3.16 (right):** Rainbow shower trees are planted in alcoves of the zig-zag wall.

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

Comfort Station and Pergolas

A single-story rectangular comfort station flanked by curved pergolas is located approximately in the center of the playground. (Figures 3.17 and 3.18). The concrete brick building walls and the pergola columns are painted dark brown from finish grade up to and including a recessed course of brick. The upper portion of the walls, columns, and roof parapet are painted beige, including a second recessed course of bricks. At the center of the comfort station wall facing the Coral Street ROW is a semicircular pilaster-like alcove comprised of alternating stacks of recessed bricks. On each side of the semicircle are two matching horizontal niches with five vertical opening, which ventilate the men's and women's toilet areas. Facing Cooke Street, the comfort station's storeroom extends 5.5 feet beyond the toilet areas and possesses a vertical rectangular louvered opening for ventilation. In the toilet area walls, on either side of the storeroom, are pairs of horizontal recesses matching the recesses in the wall facing the Coral Street ROW. Above the storeroom door is a quarter-circle concrete hood at the same height as the building wall's upper course of recessed brick. Extending beyond the storeroom toward Pohukaina Street is a 5-foot-high wall; it does not have a recessed course of bricks but does have concrete coping that matches other walls in the playground.

Entries to the men's and women's rest rooms are located on the Halekauwila Street and Pohukaina Street ends of the comfort station and are screened by brick walls that extend to the height of the cover.

The flat pergola roofs are supported by eight free-standing columns and two engaged columns in the comfort station walls. The pergola roofs extend approximately two feet beyond the edges of the walkways below. Between the engaged columns of each pergola and adjacent to the toilet entry is a drinking fountain inside an elliptical alcove in the wall.

Perimeter Walls

The historic Mother Waldron Playground is almost completely enclosed by walls. Along the Coral Street ROW, a 3-foot-high, 9-inch-thick wall of beige-painted running bond concrete bricks zigzags on a centerline parallel with the ROW; in some locations, two courses of brick are inset from the others on the outside of the wall. Each 9-foot-long angled wall segment has an alternating central pattern of vertical and horizontal openings and a cap of poured concrete with a regularly spaced zigzag pattern. At the ends and intersections of wall segments are 2-foot diameter piers topped by poured concrete caps with zigzag edges. At the playground's Coral Street ROW entry, the ends of the walls have double piers. (Figures 3.19, 3.20, 3.21, 3.22).

The walls along Halekauwila Street and Pohukaina Street are rectilinear, except for the curved wall segments at the playground entries. They are constructed similarly to the Coral Street ROW wall. Both walls zigzag around brick and terracotta benches and, at the ends closest to Cooke Street, curve around and extend beyond the corner piers (Figures 3.24 and 3.25).

Mother Waldron Playground Cultural Landscape Report

Existing Conditions | Chapter 3

Connecting to the Cooke Street end of the Halekauwila Street wall is an 18-inch-high rectilinear wall that extends to the pergola on the Halekauwila Street side of the comfort station. The wall is constructed of running bond brick painted beige and is capped with square terracotta tiles with mortar joints. A similar wall extends from the pergola on the Pohukaina Street side of the comfort station and ends with a curved segment at the basketball courts. (Figure 3.23).



Figure 3.17 (top): Front façade of the comfort station and *mauka* pergola. **Figure 3.18 (bottom):** Comfort station and pergolas as seen from Cooke Street.



Figure 3.19 (top left): Zigzag wall along Coral Street ROW from Halekauwila Street playground entry. **Figure 3.20 (top right):** Double pier at Coral Street ROW playground entry. **Figure 3.21 (middle left):** Wall along Pohukaina Street looking toward Halekauwila Street. **Figure 3.22 (middle center):** Brick and terracotta wall from Halekauwila Street. **Figure 3.23 (middle right):** Brick and terracotta wall from Pohukaina Street. **Figure 3.24 (bottom left):** Pohukaina Street wall wrapping around pier at corner of basketball court. **Figure 3.25 (bottom right):** Wall along Halekauwila Street looking toward Pohukaina Street.

Benches

Within the original playground, there are three types of benches, all constructed of beige-painted concrete bricks capped by red clay mortared tiles. Six curved benches are in the triangular-shaped alcoves created by the zigzag perimeter wall along the Coral Street ROW. (Figure 3.26). Long rectilinear benches are in several locations: one each is in the lawn areas adjacent to the play structure area and the basketball courts; two each are in alcoves created by the Halekauwila and Pohukaina Street perimeter walls; and two are in niches created by the configuration of the Cooke Street wall. (Figures 3.27, 3.28, and 3.29). A third bench type is located beneath the pergolas and duplicates their curve in plan. (Figure 3.30). The lengthwise faces of all benches taper inward from top to bottom.



Figure 3.26 (top left): Curved bench inside the zigzag wall along the Coral Street ROW.

Figure 3.27 (top center): Rectilinear bench in the lawn area adjacent to the basketball courts.

Figure 3.28 (top right): Rectilinear bench inside an alcove of the Halekauwila Street perimeter wall.

Figure 3.29 (bottom left): Bench inside the alcove of the low wall paralleling Cooke Street.

Figure 3.30 (bottom right): Curved benches below the *makai* comfort station pergola.

Play Structure

A prefabricated play structure mounted on a rubber surface is located near the Coral Street ROW/Halekauwila Street park entry. (Figure 3.32).

Basketball Courts Hoops

Each of the two basketball courts on the Pohukaina Street side of the study area has two metal hoop structures anchored at each end of the court. (Figure 3.33).

Utility Structures

Two single luminaire street light poles are located in both Halekauwila and Pohukaina Street rights-of way and two large metal electrical boxes are in the planting space along the zigzag wall. Two fire hydrants are on the 6-foot-wide asphalt pedestrian sidewalk along the Coral Street ROW and one is along Pohukaina Street near the basketball courts. There are two large backflow prevention devices within the park, one along Coral Street ROW and one in the lawn near Cooke Street.

Interment Vault

Outside of the CLR area, at the corner of Halekauwila and Cooke Sstreets, two 3-foot-high red clay brick walls laid in a running bond pattern with mortar joints define an almond shape, which secures an interment vault. Wrought iron fencing is anchored in the top of the walls, and inside the walls are planting soil, green ti plants, a lava rock boulder, and lava rock cinders over black weed fabric. A small bronze plaque at the top of the wall adjacent to the sidewalk says, "KAPU." (Figure 3.31).



Figure 3.31 (top left): Interment vault looking toward Halekauwila Street.
Figure 3.32 (top right): Play structure looking from Halekauwila Street.
Figure 3.33 (left): Basketball courts with hoops viewed from Pohukaina

SMALL-SCALE FEATURES

Picnic Tables and Park Bench

Two plastic picnic tables with attached benches are situated under trees in the central lawn in front of the comfort station. (Figure 3.34). In the grove of kou trees on the Halekauwila Street end of the Coral Street ROW, a plastic bench is anchored on a concrete slab and a small brass plaque is affixed to the back of the bench (see Plaques and Signs section). (Figure 3.35).



Figure 3.34 (left): Moveable picnic table in central lawn area looking toward comfort station.

Figure 3.35 (right): Park bench facing Halekauwila Street.

Drinking Fountain

A 3-foot high drinking fountain is mounted on a 9-foot by 5-foot poured concrete pad inside the playground entry from the Coral Street ROW. (Figure 3.36).



Figure 3.36 (top): Small scale features include the drinking fountain mounted on a poured concrete pad.

Plaques and Signs

A blue, metal City and County sign is mounted on the front wall of the comfort station to the left of the central alcove, identifying the site as Mother Waldron Neighborhood Park. On the right-hand side of the alcove is a bronze plaque memorializing Margaret “Mother” Waldron. Another small memorial plaque to Mother Waldron is attached to the bench in the Coral Street ROW on behalf of her daughters.



Figure 3.37 (bottom): Photos of the sign and plaques in the park.

Utility Features

Small-scale utility elements are located throughout the site, including sprinkler heads, valve boxes, and utility-related manhole/hand hole covers.

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4.0 Analysis and Evaluation

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides analyses of the historical significance of the Mother Waldron Playground cultural landscape and an evaluation of the historical significance and integrity of the physical character of the landscape. The analysis for this study is based on criteria established by the Secretary of Interior and implemented by the National Park Service for listing properties significant to our country's history and prehistory on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Included here is a review of the current National Register status for the CLR study area and a discussion of the property's significance based on NRHP and CLR guidance documents. An examination of the extant physical character of the landscape compares the site's historic and present condition and identifies landscape characteristics and features that contribute to and detract from the site's historical significance. The chapter concludes with an evaluation of the property's integrity in accordance with NRHP criteria. An awareness of the site's contributing features and analysis of its historic integrity facilitates future development of the landscape treatment plan (Chapter 5.0).

4.2 HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The historic significance of a property is determined through a process of identification and evaluation established by the NRHP. The NRHP is the federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects significant to American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture. Properties eligible for listing or listed on the NRHP are significant to the prehistory or history of a community, state or nation.

A property may be eligible for listing on the NRHP if it possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, or association and meets at least one of the following NRHP criteria:

- A. Association with historic events or activities that contribute to the broad patterns of our history, or
- B. Association with the lives of persons significant in our past, or
- C. Embodies the distinctive design or physical characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represents the work of a master, or that possesses high artistic values, or that represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose component may lack individual distinction, or
- D. Has yielded or may likely yield important information in prehistory or history.

NATIONAL REGISTER STATUS

Mother Waldron Playground was listed on the Hawai'i Register of Historic Places on June 9, 1988, as one of multiple properties in the thematic group "City & County of Honolulu, Art Deco Parks." The Hawai'i State Historic Preservation Site #80-14-1388 includes Mother Waldron Playground, Ala Moana Park, Ala Wai Park Clubhouse, Haleiwa Beach Park, and Kawanakoa Playground. The thematic group is significant under Criterion A for its associations with the parks and playground movement, both

Mother Waldron Playground Cultural Landscape Report Analysis and Evaluation | Chapter 4

nationally and locally in Honolulu during the 1930s, under Criterion C for its architectural and landscape design reflecting the work of Harry Sims Bent, and as examples of Bent's designs incorporating Art Deco/Art Moderne styles.⁸⁶ Similarly, the 1988 NRHP form for Mother Waldron Playground determined it significant under Criterion A and C, and also B for its associations with the earlier work of Mother Waldron in Kaka'ako. It identified a period of significance of 1937, the year the playground was opened to the public.

For purposes of the Honolulu High Capacity Transit Corridor Project, an updated draft of the NRHP form was prepared for Mother Waldron Playground by HART in 2013, and the boundary is being revised at the request of the Hawai'i Historic Places Review Board.⁸⁷ The revised boundary follows the edges of the extant historic playground. The draft update form identified a period of significance from 1937 to 1945, when the playground opened to the ending of supervised play and the formation of Honolulu's Board of Parks and Recreation after World War II. It identified in the areas of social history, entertainment/recreation, architecture, and landscape architecture. It supported NRHP eligibility under Criterion A for its association with the national playground movement and the development of playgrounds in urban areas throughout the United States, as well as Criterion C for its architectural and landscape design by Harry Sims Bent. It found the playground not eligible under Criterion B because, "although the park is named in honor of Margaret 'Mother' Waldron, the property is not associated with her productive life or lasting contributions to the Kaka'ako community."⁸⁸ The form states that the Hawai'i State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) concurred with this finding.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The following is a "preliminary" statement of significance for the Mother Waldron Playground CLR study area, and while it utilizes the National Register format as suggested by the National Park Service guidelines for CLRs, it is not a determination of eligibility for the National Register. Rather, it is prepared and used solely for this CLR as an important step in developing appropriate treatment strategies.

This preliminary significance evaluation was undertaken using data gleaned from a range of historic contexts for this report including various historical studies and documents, archival information (articles, maps, photographs, etc.), and NRHP registration forms. Research and analysis undertaken for this CLR supports a period of significance that extends from the year of the playground's construction and completion, 1937, to 1945, after WWII "when the playground movement that supported supervised play largely ceased and the Honolulu Board of Parks and Recreation was formed to rehabilitate O'ahu's parks."⁸⁹

The cultural landscape of this urban park is significant under **Criterion A** for its association with the national organized play and playground movement at the turn of the early twentieth century. The social missions of the movement were initially adopted and implemented in Honolulu through the works of the privately funded Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Association, followed by the city

⁸⁶ Don Hibbard, Draft National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for Mother Waldron Playground (Honolulu, 1988).

⁸⁷ G. Blanchard, *Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for Mother Waldron Playground*. Unpublished NRHP Nomination Form (Honolulu: 2013).

⁸⁸ Ibid., 20

⁸⁹ Ibid., 21

government’s Recreation Commission and Honolulu Park Board in the 1920s and 1930s. Mother Waldron Playground was one of many parks established in Honolulu in response to concerns about the physical and social welfare of underprivileged children who resided in congested urban areas and the desire to provide them with safe, organized and supervised recreation. The park retains its historic function, providing recreational space within the redeveloped residential district of Kaka’ako in the 2010s. (Figure 4.1).

The Mother Waldron Playground historic designed landscape is also significant under **Criterion C** for its architectural and landscape design by Harry Sims Bent. The original playground area continues to display Bent’s modern approach and desire to create a functional yet pleasing environment for park users. The prominent Bent-designed features reflect the Art Deco style with Art Moderne influences.

Changes made to the playground after 1945 are not significant under the established NRHP criteria for association with an event or for design.

This cultural landscape is not significant under **Criterion B** for association with the life of Mother Waldron. As discussed in Chapter 2, Mother Waldron was most certainly a significant figure in Hawai’i’s history, and particularly in Kaka’ako. However, the playground post-dates Mother Waldron’s significant accomplishments and the park itself is not an illustration of her important achievements, but rather a commemoration of her legacy. Therefore, it does not qualify as significant under Criterion B.



Figure 4.1: Photographs of basketball being played on the senior playground in 1938 (left) and 2016 (right).

4.3 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

This section compares the landscape characteristics and features present during the period of significance (1937-1945) with current conditions. “Contributing” characteristics or features are those that were present during the period of significance, contribute to the site’s overall historic significance, and retain sufficient integrity to represent their historic appearance and function at that time.

“Noncontributing” features are those landscape elements that became part of the landscape after the period of significance or are features surviving from the period of significance that no longer possess integrity. There are several important features on the site that have been reconstructed to closely resemble the original features that were removed due to road realignment and widening. These include

Mother Waldron Playground Cultural Landscape Report Analysis and Evaluation | Chapter 4

some walls, piers, benches, and brick entries. While these are not contributing features, they were reconstructed in keeping with the historic design and are historically appropriate within the cultural landscape. A summary list of contributing features is contained in Table 4.1 and the features are shown on Figure 4.2. The analysis is also supported by comparative photographs that depict historic and contemporary conditions from similar vantage points. The photographs are included in the text.

NATURAL FEATURES AND RESPONSE TO NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The historic playground site as well as the comprehensive neighborhood park site retain the flat landform that dates to fill projects in Kaka’ako at the turn of the nineteenth century that were implemented to improve drainage and facilitate development of the road system.

SPATIAL ORGANIZATION AND LAND PATTERNS

Mother Waldron Neighborhood Park includes the original linear Mother Waldron Playground site designed by Bent located between two 1990s land acquisitions—the sizeable parcel along Cooke Street and the Coral Street pedestrian corridor. Collectively, the neighborhood park encompasses a large, nearly square-shaped, open land area, which differs considerably from the historic long, narrow, rectangular playground site oriented *mauka-makai* along Coral Street. The park expansion and changes to perimeter roadways have also impacted the overall spatial and land use patterns historically associated with the playground. Dense residential structures once formed a physical and visual edge where there is now an expansive open lawn extending to Cooke Street. A primary roadway (Coral Street) once provided vehicular and pedestrian access to the playground and a direct link to the elementary school campus across the street. Today this corridor is a landscaped pedestrian promenade between the playground and mixed-use developments.

In contrast, an assessment limited to the original playground site (CLR study area) reveals that it retains a considerable degree of integrity in terms of spatial organization and land patterns. Although shortened by road realignments, the playground maintains its narrow, rectangular shape, physically defined by low perimeter walls and the linear pattern of canopy trees along Coral Street. (Figure 4.3). Bent’s symmetrical playground layout is still evident, although compromised by the conversion of some playground pavement to grass, which now blends with the formerly distinct central lawn. Fortunately, the red brick edging of the oval lawn remains. The historic symmetry is also diminished by the loss of paired tree plantings at the corner entries, along the former Lana Lane boundary and edges of the central lawn, and next to the central benches. The playground’s orientation toward Coral Street is still apparent, although lessened by the missing vehicular road as well as the missing wall and development along the “rear” boundary. The retained expansiveness of the site also contributes to its historic character.

CIRCULATION

Vehicular

While there was never vehicular traffic within Mother Waldron Playground, it was historically bound on three sides by roads. Today's combined playground/park is bordered by four road rights-of-way, however all four arterials have been modified since the playground's period of significance and have lost their former associations with the playground. Halekauwila Street encroached through the playground's perimeter wall and into the junior playground with asphalt traffic and parking lanes as well as concrete curbs and sidewalks. Likewise, the Pohukaina Street widening demolished the historic walls and benches along it, replacing them with a parking lane and new concrete curbs and sidewalks.

Coral Street, toward which the playground was designed and oriented, is no longer a vehicular route. While the right-of-way alignment and width remain, it is barely recognizable as a former road given its new function as a pedestrian promenade and dog park comprised of two large lawn segments and clusters of canopy trees, bordered by a new asphalt sidewalk in place of the historic concrete walk. Extant materials include a considerable length of the street's concrete curb along the existing sidewalk and a patch of asphalt from the road in the center-third of the block. The 1990s realignment of Cooke Street (not historically associated with the playground, but is the current eastern boundary of the park) deviates from the historic *mauka-makai* alignment that was integral to the initial Kaka'ako street grid.

Pedestrian

Historically, paved pedestrian features of the playground were limited to the concrete sidewalks with red clay brick edges along the three adjacent roads and curved connections to the corner entries, elliptical brick steps and landings at each entry (corners and main entrance on Coral Street), coral flagstone paving under the pergolas, and narrow steps around the water pool. Pedestrians walked across the central lawn to reach the asphalt playgrounds from the main entry. Of these features, only the original flagstone near the comfort station/pergolas (not the expanded flagstone paving) and possibly the brick landings along Pohukaina Street remain. The brick landing at the main entry has been replaced with flagstone, the Halekauwila/Coral Street pedestrian entry features have been rebuilt to approximate the original design, and the Halekauwila/Lana Lane pedestrian entry has been lost.

New asphalt walkways with flush concrete curbs and the expanded flagstone pavement in front of the comfort station are non-contributing additions that negatively impact the original design and spatial character of the central lawn. (Figure 4.3). The historic expanse of asphalt pavement in the two playgrounds has been considerably reduced. About half of the senior playground and the majority of what remains of the junior playground are now grassed. Although the asphalt on the edge of the junior playground remains from the earlier playground, it no longer retains integrity as a pedestrian surface for active recreation. In contrast, the asphalt basketball courts of the senior playground do retain some integrity.

Mother Waldron Playground Cultural Landscape Report
 Analysis and Evaluation | Chapter 4

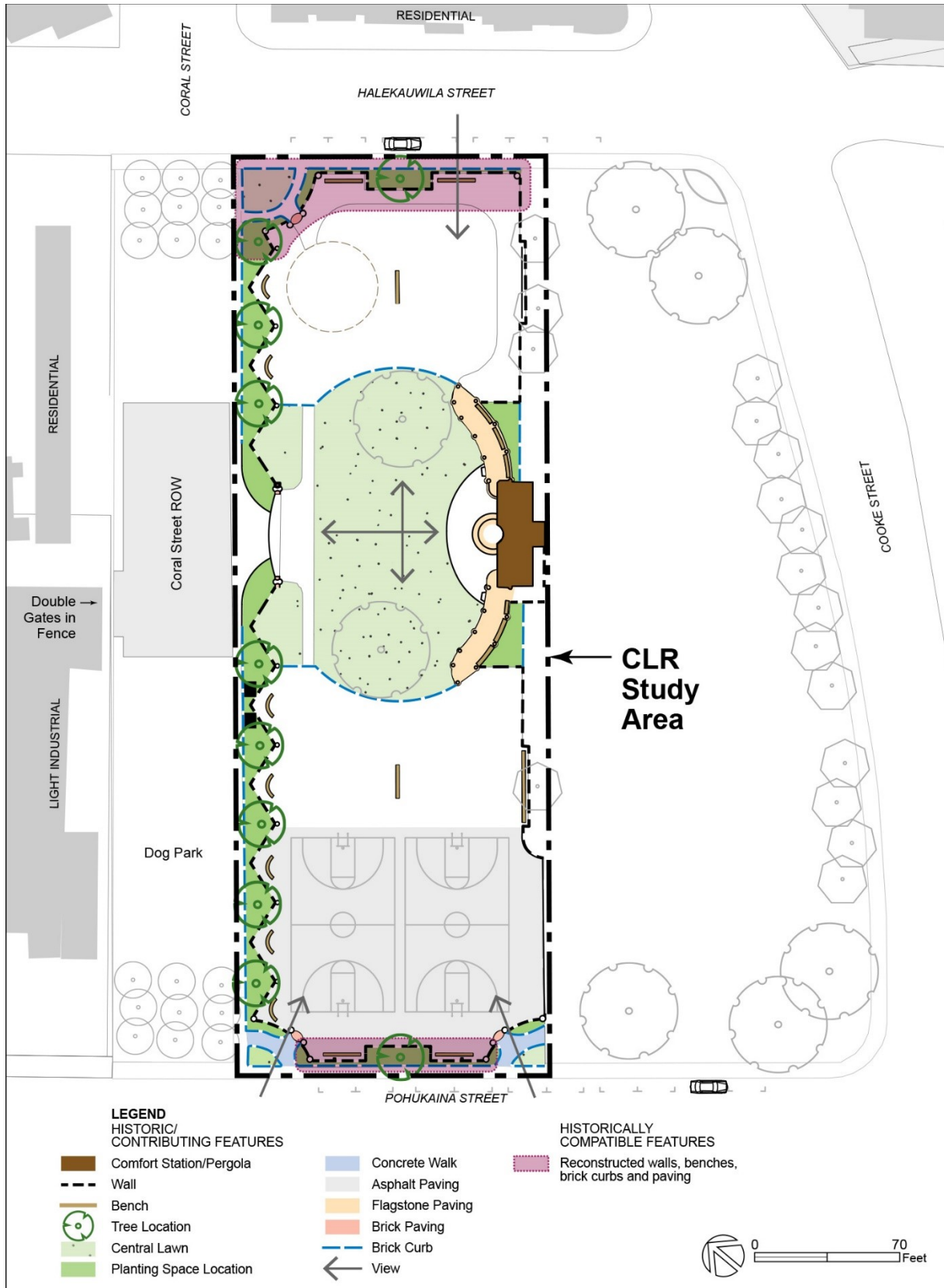


Figure 4.2: Contributing Features

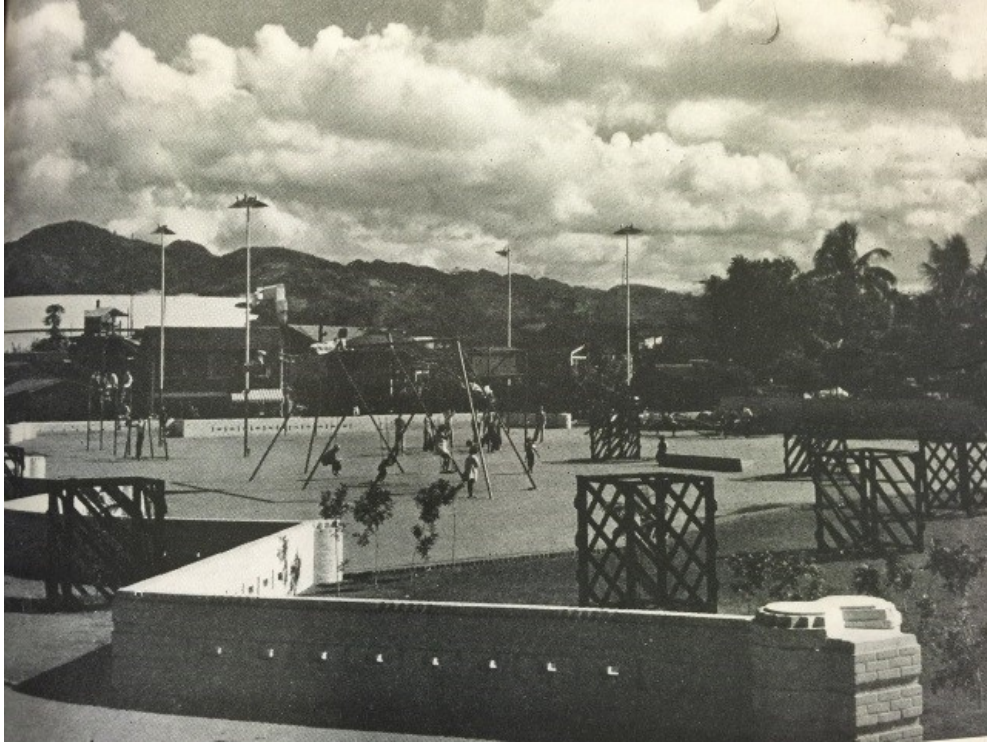


Figure 4.3: Comparative views looking east across the junior playground from the main entry along the Coral Street right-of-way; ca. 1938 (top) and 2016 (bottom).

VIEWS AND VANTAGE POINTS

The original designed sight line from the Coral Street pedestrian entrance toward the comfort station retains its integrity; however, former views from the playground to the original Pohukaina School site and road are no longer extant. Internally, the playground site retains its historic visual openness when looking *mauka-makai* across the paved and lawn areas. However, the once-prominent views to the Ko'olau Mountains from within the playground are now blocked by modern development.

VEGETATION

Bent's designed pattern of canopy street trees planted within the alcoves of the perimeter playground walls has been retained along the Coral, Halekauwila, and Pohukaina Street edges of the playground. The tree species was changed from the original royal poinciana to rainbow shower trees in 2014. No other trees from the period of significance exist, either species type or location, which compromises the symmetry and functionality that Bent intended the tree plantings to provide. Many of the brick-edged planting spaces from Bent's design generally retain their location, size and shape, including the wall alcoves, corner entries, and behind the pergolas. The specific historic vegetation within the planting spaces is unknown but photos indicate many contained grass. Today, most of the spaces are planted with grass or akia groundcover. (Figure 4.4).

The playground's original oval lawn area (still defined by the red brick edging) is a contributing feature of the site, however the lawn's historically distinctive shape in the center of the site has been diminished by the expanded flagstone pavement, the linear asphalt sidewalk, and conversion of adjacent playground pavement to grass. Beyond the CLR boundary, the large lawn areas and canopy trees within the Coral Street right-of-way and along Cooke Street are recent additions that do not resemble former conditions.



Figure 4.4: Comparative views of the pedestrian entry and the junior playground beyond from Halekauwila Street looking south near Coral Street. Note the grassy planting spaces ca. 1960-70s (post period of significance, at left) and the present-day lawn and akia plantings (right).

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

The Mother Waldron Playground comfort station and attached pergolas retain their integrity in terms of external architectural elements, patterns, and materials that visually and spatially contribute to the cultural landscape. (The 2013 draft NRHP form provides information on both the internal and external architectural character-defining features). The current two-color paint scheme differs from the original solid white color, but is a reversible condition. The replacement of the original screen block openings in the two restrooms (ca. 1969) is the primary external modification. (Figures 4.5 and 4.6).

The original concrete brick perimeter wall and curved brick benches along the Coral Street edge of the playground are largely intact and contribute to the landscape. The walls and benches along the Halekauwila and Pohukaina Street edges closely resemble Bent's original design. However the features themselves are reconstructions and are non-contributing elements, although they are historically compatible. The extant low, concrete brick wall and brick benches near the Diamond Head edge of the playground are contributing, but the former 5-foot boundary wall is missing, except for a small segment near the storage room of the comfort station. Beneath the pergolas, the six original benches are intact.

The physical structures in the junior and senior playground areas (pre-fabricated play structure and basketball hoops) are recent additions. (Figures 4.1 and 4.3). Only the two tile-capped brick benches remain from the period of significance and contribute to the landscape, however they are now surrounded by lawn rather than the original asphalt playground paving. There are no longer night lighting structures in the playground.

SMALL-SCALE FEATURES

There are no known contributing small-scale features within the historic playground site except for the drinking fountains that are built into the comfort station alcoves at the end of each pergola. A free-standing drinking fountain, various electrical and utility features, plaques/signage, and site furnishings are modern additions to the playground.

Mother Waldron Playground Cultural Landscape Report
Analysis and Evaluation | Chapter 4

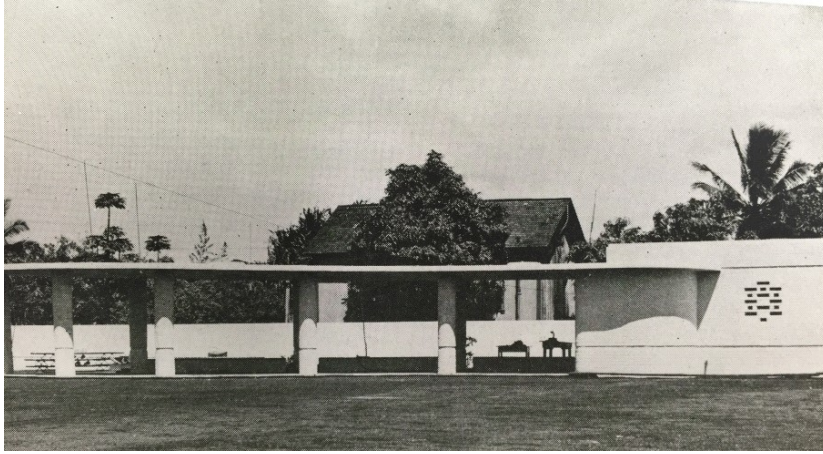


Figure 4.5: Comparative views of the comfort station and *mauka* pergola in 1937 (top) and 2016 (bottom). Note the modified block openings in the restroom wall and the two-color paint scheme.

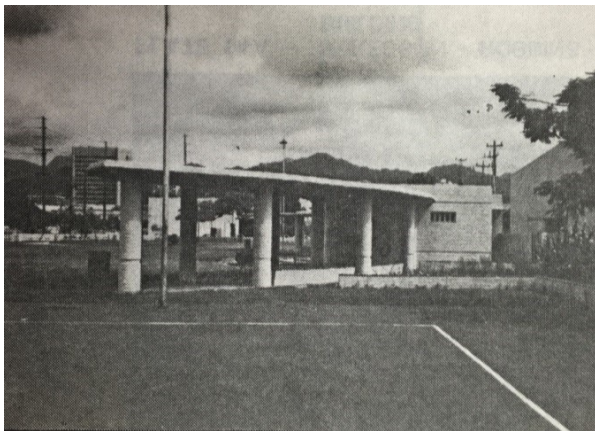


Figure 4.6: Comparative views of the *makai* pergola, looking *mauka*, ca 1980 (above) and 2016 (below). The comfort station, pergola, benches, wall behind storage room (far right) and low walls (front right) have changed very little. However, note the loss of mountain views in the distance, and note the lawn in the foreground where the asphalt senior playground used to be. (Source: “Final EIS for the Kakaako Community Development District Plan,” State of Hawai‘i HCDA & US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, June 1983; Plate 15⁹⁰)

90 State of Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i Community Development Authority and US Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Final EIS for the Kaka‘ako Community Development District Plan* (Honolulu, 1983), Plate 15.

Table 4.1: Summary of Contributing Landscape Characteristics and Features

CONTRIBUTING CHARACTERISTIC/FEATURE
Natural Features
Flat, level landform
Spatial Organization and Land Pattern
Narrow, rectangular-shaped playground space
Symmetrical playground layout, oriented to Coral Street right-of-way
Openness of playgrounds and central lawn
Physical enclosure by low perimeter walls
Pattern of trees in relation to walls/alcoves
Circulation
Coral flagstone walks under pergolas
Coral flagstone steps in front of comfort station alcove
Red brick steps/landings at Pohukaina Street corner entryways
Red brick edging (central lawn, walkways and planting spaces)
Asphalt surface of senior playground
Curved concrete walks at Pohukaina Street corner entries
Views and Vantage Points
Sightline between Coral Street pedestrian entry and comfort station
Views across playground (<i>mauka/makai</i>)
Vegetation
Central, oval-shaped lawn, defined by brick edging
Canopy tree locations (not species) in alcoves of perimeter walls
Various planting spaces (location, size, shape; but not plant species)
Buildings and Structures
Comfort station, pergolas and built-in drinking fountains
Original concrete brick perimeter walls
Original concrete brick benches

4.4 EVALUATION OF INTEGRITY

The National Park Service defines “integrity” as the ability of a historic property to convey its significance. This is generally evidenced by the survival of physical features and characteristics that existed during the landscape’s period of significance. Evaluation of integrity relies on comparisons between the known characteristics and features of a property during a historic period with existing conditions. Evaluation of authenticity is grounded in an understanding of a property’s physical features and how they relate to significance.

The seven qualities of historic integrity defined by the National Register Program are *location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association*. Retention of these qualities is essential for a property to convey significance, though all seven qualities of integrity need not be present to convey a sense of a past time and place.

In this section, historical integrity is evaluated to determine the extent to which the general character of the designed, historic landscape at the Mother Waldron Playground/Park is evident and continues to convey the landscape’s historical significance. Each aspect of integrity is described below as it pertains to the integrity of the Mother Waldron Playground cultural landscape.

LOCATION

The location of the original Mother Waldron Playground and its position within the heart of Kaka’ako have remained unchanged. However, its original size and relationships to adjacent lands have changed due to road realignments and extensions in the 1990s. The *mauka* portion of the original playground is no longer part of the site. The CLR study area has moderate to high integrity of location.

DESIGN

The historic playground site continues to convey the original landscape design intent established in the early 1930s by Harry Sims Bent for the supervised playground. This is evidenced by the perimeter walls around the rectangular-shaped, symmetrical playground layout with a central, oval lawn area that separates playgrounds meant for different age groups. The extant built components in the playground exhibit the design elements of the Art Moderne and Art Deco styles as intended by Bent’s design, particularly for the comfort station, pergolas, walls and piers.

Although modifications to Halekauwila and Pohukaina Streets and other physical changes have compromised the historic playground’s design by removing land area and original features, and introducing other features, the initial design is still largely intact. Mother Waldron Playground/Park retains a moderate level of integrity for its 1930s playground design. The site continues to serve as an active recreation area for people of all ages in this urban district.

SETTING

Mother Waldron Playground exhibits low integrity of setting due to considerable changes in the condition and character of the physical environment within and surrounding the historic property. Within the extant playground (CLR study area), the historic setting has been diminished by the loss of land and physical features due to Halekauwila and Pohukaina road modifications. Nevertheless, some integrity of spatial character and playground functionality has been retained within the original playground site.

The setting has also been compromised by actions that have changed the site's relationship to its surrounding environment: the conversion of Coral Street from a functional vehicular route adjacent to the playground to a pedestrian corridor; the removal of the playground's "rear" boundary wall and demolition of former low-rise developments between the playground and Cooke Street; and transition of adjacent lands from the historic dense, low-rise residential/commercial and industrial structures to increasingly mid- and high-rise residential/mixed use development.

MATERIALS AND WORKMANSHIP

Within the expanded boundaries of Mother Waldron Neighborhood Park, most of the physical elements of the landscape are concentrated within the historic playground site. The quality, condition and placement of the historic and contributing features of the playground retain integrity of materials and workmanship from the period of significance. These include the concrete brick comfort station and pergolas; original concrete brick walls and benches with precast concrete or terracotta tile caps; coral flagstone, red clay brick, and concrete pedestrian features, and central lawn.

However, changes to the park over time introduced rebuilt walls and benches, and new pavement, plantings, site furnishings and other landscape features that do not reflect construction material selections made by Bent in the 1930s. Further, considerable original materials have been removed, such as long segments of original brick walls, brick benches, the water pool, asphalt playground pavement, all original play apparatus and structures, concrete and brick pedestrian features, and vegetation.

Overall, the original playground area retains a moderate level of integrity in terms of materials and workmanship because it retains many original physical features that demonstrate the mix of construction material selection made by Bent and the material availability and workmanship common for Depression-era park projects in Honolulu.

FEELING

The integrity aspect of feeling results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the property's historic character. The original playground area contains the prominent features from 1937-45, namely the open lawn, distinctive Art Moderne/Art Deco style buildings and structures, playground areas, perimeter walls and pedestrian entry features, designed planting patterns and spaces, and paving materials and edges. Reconstructed walls and benches – where the originals were lost – help unify the site and express the historic feeling.

Mother Waldron Playground Cultural Landscape Report

Analysis and Evaluation | Chapter 4

Collectively, non-historic introductions, the loss of playground features and pavement, the loss of canopy trees, and the creation of open lawn areas on two sides of the original playground diminish the historic feeling of the site. However, the park continues to express the feeling of a 1930s-era Art Moderne/Art Deco-designed playground in Honolulu, and continues to function as a designed recreational landscape/park for Kaka'ako residents.

ASSOCIATION

Mother Waldron Playground expresses a moderate to high integrity of association because it is the site established as a playground due to its location in the heart of Kaka'ako, however portions of the original site are no longer part of the park and new land has been added. Many of the initial buildings, structures, and landscape features are intact, in their original positions, and continue to exhibit the original design intent. They also retain their original relationships to each other and to the former Coral Street right-of-way (now a pedestrian corridor). Mother Waldron Playground retains its association with the national playground movement of the early twentieth century.

INTEGRITY OF THE PROPERTY AS A WHOLE

The cultural landscape of Mother Waldron Playground retains a moderate degree of integrity for the aspects of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The landscape features and character within the original playground site continue to convey a sense of the site's historic identity as one of Honolulu's Art Deco parks designed and constructed during the 1930s. It remains a good example of architect Harry Sims Bent's Art Deco designs that incorporate elements of the Art Moderne style. Despite the compromising alterations affecting aspects of integrity, the cultural landscape of Mother Waldron Playground continues to express the site's historic significance associated with the planning, design and development of an urban recreation space for the children and adults of the Kaka'ako neighborhood as promoted by the parks and playground movement.

5.0 Cultural Landscape Treatment

5.1 LANDSCAPE TREATMENT APPROACH

“Treatment” is the long-term strategy for the management of a cultural landscape based on its significance, existing conditions and use. The treatment goal for Mother Waldron Playground is to maintain and enhance the historic character of the landscape. The treatment plan is grounded in information developed as part of the historic documentation, existing conditions documentation, and landscape analysis.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, this Cultural Landscape Report for Mother Waldron Playground was prepared as part of the Honolulu Rail Transit Project (H RTP). HART desired its H RTP CLR s to be useful documents that would have positive impacts on the important historic landscapes they document. HART, as well as the H RTP consulting parties, recognized that one of the most critical components of a CLR is a willing property owner or landscape steward that would embrace a CLR as a useful planning and management tool. There is no mandate for owners of the H RTP CLR properties to implement the treatment recommendations. However, HART purposefully selected Mother Waldron Playground as a CLR site because it is government owned and may be eligible for park improvement funds as part of the H RTP Programmatic Agreement. These factors may increase the likelihood for appropriate improvements to this important historic Honolulu park.

The historic landscape of Mother Waldron Playground is within the broader boundaries of Mother Waldron Neighborhood Park, which is managed and maintained by the City and County of Honolulu Dept. of Parks & Recreation. (Figure 1.2). The landscape preservation treatment strategies and design measures that follow may influence future landscape decisions for the playground site. The treatment plan recommends concepts for managing the historic landscape, with a focus on protecting landscape features identified as contributing to the historic significance of the site. These landscape treatment measures provide specific, near-term recommendations, as well as a comprehensive vision for the cultural landscape that may serve as a guide for long-term management. All landscape treatment measures were developed in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* in order to minimize adverse impacts to Mother Waldron Playground.⁹¹

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards outline four potential treatment options for cultural landscapes: Preservation, Restoration, Reconstruction, and Rehabilitation. Preservation is one component of the Mother Waldron Playground treatment approach because many landscape features are in good condition and through maintenance and stabilization can remain that way. Restoration and Reconstruction are not considered viable options for the overall landscape because they require removing non-historic features or rebuilding lost historic features. Since Mother Waldron Playground has been irreversibly modified by road realignments and has undergone major modifications within and

91. Charles Birnbaum and C. Peters, *The Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1996).

Mother Waldron Playground Cultural Landscape Report

Cultural Landscape Treatment | Chapter 5

around the historic playground, no attempt will be made to freeze the landscape to a specific date or restore features to represent a past era. However, Preservation, Restoration and/or Reconstruction treatment standards may be applied to individual contributing features within the landscape.

Rehabilitation as a management and treatment goal involves preserving the contributing character-defining features of the cultural landscape (historic features, qualities, and materials) while allowing some level of repair and compatible alterations or additions for new or contemporary use. Therefore, Rehabilitation is the Primary Treatment approach recommended for resource management of the Mother Waldron Playground landscape. This approach balances the implementation of necessary functional site and facility improvements with the maintenance of the site's historical legacy. Rehabilitation will also allow the property owner(s) to pursue resource management initiatives that promote sustainability. Treatment efforts must remain sensitive to the qualities and resources that render the site significant, and any new design within the historic landscape must be based on a thorough understanding of the historic integrity of the site so as not to further detract from it. Owners and managers should undertake analysis of any new development's potential impacts on the cultural landscape prior to the implementation of any rehabilitation projects.

The Secretary's Standards for the Rehabilitation of a Cultural Landscape are:

- Retain distinctive materials, features, spaces and relationships;
- Avoid the removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property;
- Avoid changes that create a false sense of historical development;
- Preserve distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques;
- Avoid treatments that cause damage to historic materials and resources - including trees;
- Differentiate all new work from old and ensure that it is compatible with materials, size, scale, and proportion of the old; and
- Undertake new construction in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

5.2 TREATMENT STRATEGIES AND DESIGN MEASURES

Careful planning prior to undertaking work can help prevent irrevocable damage to a cultural landscape. The following treatment measures are intended to provide an overall framework to ensure that actions taken within and around Mother Waldron Playground are sensitive to the site's historic character and features. These measures seek to promote the highest standards in planning and design, while allowing for creativity and flexibility.

DESIGNED LANDSCAPE INTENTIONS

The cultural landscape of Mother Waldron Playground reflects the design intentions manifested by architect Harry Sims Bent in the 1930s for the development of an urban playground which provided safe, organized, and supervised play for all ages of residents in Kaka'ako. It reflects Bent's modern design approach featuring Art Moderne and Art Deco elements to create a pleasing as well as functional park environment.

The original design intentions from Bent's 1936 plans, summarized below, should be carefully considered, as they are important in determining the treatment of the landscape and individual features within it.

- Fulfill the objectives of the national organized play and playground movement
- Narrow, rectangular site in response to original configuration of the city stables site (previous use) and Kaka'ako street network
- Visually open, yet physically defined by low perimeter walls along front and side boundaries
- Strong visual and spatial orientation toward the former Coral Street right-of-way and away from the former Lana Lane edge
- Symmetrical and spacious layout of central comfort station and open lawn between two active/paved playground areas, which were designed for different age groups
- Central, oval-shaped lawn, accentuated by curved pergola wings of the comfort station and tree plantings
- Integration of street tree plantings with alcoves created by the perimeter walls and at corner pedestrian entries
- Art Deco and Art Moderne design characteristics applied to all built elements

TREATMENT MEASURES BY CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURE

Guidelines for treatment describe how to protect and stabilize the cultural landscape as well as accomplish needed changes in the landscape without compromising the historic character of the site. The treatment measures outlined below are organized by general measures applicable to the overall landscape and by landscape characteristic.

General Measures

- Undertake all work in compliance with the *Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*.
- Retain the character of the historic designed landscape by protecting individual elements as well as the overall landscape.
- Retain the historic name "Mother Waldron Playground."
- Ensure the compatibility of proposed elements by appropriately responding to the historic designed character and scale of the site.
- Base all treatment on historic documentation.
- Construct only those new features necessary and critical to support the functionality, use and enjoyment of Mother Waldron Playground. It is preferable to adaptively reuse existing serviceable historic features to avoid loss of existing historic fabric.
- Repair rather than replace deteriorated historic features.
- When adding new features, carefully consider the potential impact on the patterns of spatial organization of the cultural landscape, natural features that define the cultural landscape, health of the environment, and the historic character of Mother Waldron Playground.
- New work shall be differentiated from the old; use historically compatible materials.
- Develop restoration and reconstruction plans if architectural features must be removed or relocated.

Mother Waldron Playground Cultural Landscape Report

Cultural Landscape Treatment | Chapter 5

- Undertake all treatment projects and cultural resource management efforts under the direction of experienced preservation specialists.
- Document, through drawings, photographs, and notes, all cultural landscape changes and treatments. Maintain records of treatments and preserve documentation according to professional archival standards.

Natural Features and Response to Natural Environment

- Maintain the existing, level landform and avoid any significant landform changes. Avoid installation of features/plants that detract from or interrupt open flat areas throughout the site.

Spatial Organization and Land Patterns

- Protect and maintain features that define the historic spatial patterns and reflect the historic design; i.e., relationships among building/structures, open lawn and playgrounds, plantings, and sightlines.
- Preserve character-defining open space of the central oval lawn area and open playground spaces.
- Limit new construction or additions, particularly within the central lawn area.
- Avoid road widening that would encroach further into the historic playground.
- Plant only low groundcovers/low shrubs in historic planting spaces to retain original design intent and visual openness into and throughout site.
- Retain and, to the extent practical, restore the historic pattern of canopy trees within the playground.
- Restore features that help recover original symmetrical alignments and formal design where possible.

Vegetation

Guidelines for Vegetation Replacement and New Plantings

- Base landscape improvements on historic records. If no records are available, utilize suitable species that convey the historic appearance and design intent.
- Any plans for the removal of trees or the introduction of new trees within the historic playground site should be developed in consultation with a SOI Qualified historic landscape architect.
- Consider preparation of a tree assessment report by a SOI Qualified arborist.
- Protect and retain existing canopy trees in historic tree locations (depicted on Figure 4.1). Removal of existing trees in historic locations require replacement with historically appropriate species.
- Replace diseased, deteriorating or dying mature trees with the same species if it is part of a historic planting pattern (such as the shower trees in wall alcoves). Replace vegetation with mature stock whenever feasible to maintain uniformity with neighboring trees and/or uniformity with other replacement trees of same species.
- Retain and enhance the historic open space function of the site. No new trees should be added except as one-to-one replacements for missing historic trees.

- Consider planting royal poinciana trees (or appropriate alternative) in historic tree locations along the former Lana Lane boundary to help restore some definition to this historic edge of the playground.
- Replace inappropriate existing vegetation (i.e. invasive species,⁹² roots, safety hazard) with suitable plant material that replicates the design intent and function of the historic vegetation.

Maintenance Guidelines for Vegetation

- Consider plant growth habits and scale when pruning and shaping. Do not allow vegetation to grow beyond its intended design scale to the extent that it alters the character of the landscape. Do not prune excessively or without regard to health or shape, particularly when trimming to retain or secure a view.
- Consider selective pruning, removal, or relocation of vegetation that is detrimental to historic resources or view planes. Such action must first be evaluated relative to other factors such as environmental issues.
- Repair or replace irrigation system as needed. Irrigate all new plants and rehabilitated landscape areas by an automatic irrigation system that is designed to conserve water.
- Utilize non-destructive landscape maintenance and horticultural practices for vegetation and materials.
- Develop a long-range vegetation management plan that reflects historic patterns/styles/plant palettes, but that supports contemporary use.

Canopy Trees

- Preserve all mature trees and protect their trunks, canopies and root systems from any above grade or underground disturbance during future construction, repair, or maintenance activities.
- Utilize a tree planting palette compatible with historic plant palette for new and replacement trees. If no records are available, utilize suitable species that convey the historic appearance and design intent.
- Replant missing royal poinciana (or appropriate alternative species) along the former Lana Lane boundary using the original spacing/location determined from the Bent plan (Figure 2.13).
- The monkeypod trees within the central lawn are noncontributing features and are not suitable for relocation due to size and age. When trees are at end of their natural lives, they should be replaced with trees in historic locations per Bent's plan along the curved edge of central lawn.

Lawn Areas and Planting Spaces

- Retain all contributing lawn areas and enhance by new and infill planting, as necessary, with sun/shade/drought tolerant grass species.
- Retain and enhance the historic open space function of the lawn. No new trees should be added except as one-to-one replacements for missing historic trees. Existing trees in lawn

92 Hawai'i State Alien Species Coordinator, Department of Land & Natural Resources, "Division of Forestry & Wildlife," www.state.hi.us/DLNR/DOFAW/hortweeds/specieslist.htm.

Mother Waldron Playground Cultural Landscape Report

Cultural Landscape Treatment | Chapter 5

- may be replaced only if the tree is in structurally poor condition. Do not introduce shrubs into the lawn areas.
- Retain vegetation in historic and historically compatible planting spaces. Low growing ground cover (6-8 inches) is preferred to retain resemblance to the original plantings (to the extent known) and to retain visibility of the historic and historically compatible walls.
 - Protect and retain brick edging along the central lawn and around planting spaces. Replace missing or broken bricks with bricks that were salvaged during the 2014 playground renovation project. Do not allow grass to over-grow the brick edging.

Circulation

- Avoid realigning or blocking circulation along Halekauwila and Pohukaina Streets.
- Preserve historic names of streets.
- Avoid the addition of vehicular paving within the playground site.
- Do not add/extend pedestrian walks (any pavement) within historic oval lawn area. Consider removing the asphalt paving inside main playground entrance along the Coral Street promenade and the non-contributing flagstone paving fronting the comfort station. Replant areas with grass to restore the size and shape of the central oval lawn.
- Restore missing coral flagstone paving and brick walkway edges at historic walks and curbs.
- If additional paved surfaces are needed to support recreational courts or play areas, install new pavement in locations consistent with Bent's initial design for the junior and senior playgrounds. Remove lawn areas that were added on each side of the central oval lawn and extend pavement to the lawn's brick edging.

Views and Vantage Points

- Retain the unobstructed sightline between the center of the comfort station and the playground entrance along the Coral Street promenade.
- Preserve internal views (within the playground site) and carefully evaluate the visual impact of all changes or additions (structures, circulation elements, commemorative objects, security and utility elements, etc.) prior to design and construction.
- Retain and enhance the visual character of views of the playground from Halekauwila and Pohukaina Streets by limiting the placement of structures, objects, or additional landscaping that would exceed vegetation in historic locations.

Buildings and Structures

- Avoid constructing buildings and structures within the Mother Waldron Playground site and Coral Street right-of-way.
- If a new recreational structure is required, its location within the historic playground area (not central lawn) should reflect the age of the intended user and the historic location of recreational structures in the playground areas.
- Free-standing structures or trash enclosures are not appropriate additions to the landscape.
- Consider restoring night lighting for the basketball courts to support the historic evening use of the courts by nearby residents.

- Owners and maintenance personnel should critically review any proposed landscape or walkway lighting for functional necessity (such as safety, security) and historic compatibility prior to approval. Consult SOI Qualified preservation specialist for guidance.

Small-scale Features

- Remove any abandoned/non-functional above-ground utility structures, such as electrical or irrigation equipment.
- New memorials, interpretive markers/displays, site furnishings, picnic tables, and other miscellaneous elements should not be located within the historic lawn area. Any plans to add such elements should be developed in consultation with SOI Qualified historic landscape architect.
- New manhole covers and utility box covers in the lawn area should be flush with the ground. Utility boxes should be buried whenever possible. If above ground utility equipment is required, locate in visually discrete locations, optimally not in open lawn areas.

TREATMENT MEASURES THROUGH PROCEDURES, EDUCATION, AND INTERPRETATION

- If one exists, property owner should review and update Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for maintenance personnel for consistency with treatment recommendations, including a decision-making framework for contacting a historical landscape architect or arborist. If no SOP document exists, one should be developed.
- Incorporate treatment measures into ongoing maintenance work plan and schedule.
- Explore opportunities to interpret the history of the Mother Waldron Playground and its role in the history and evolution of Kaka'ako in consultation with preservation professionals. Any plans to add such elements into the cultural landscape should be developed in consultation with SOI Qualified historic landscape architect.

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