

**JOSEPH FERRARO DIRECT TESTIMONY**

**MODIFICATION HEARING**

**Land Block 1, Project 6 (Mahana Ward Village) (KAK 25-045)**

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

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

**Q Please describe your educational background and experience.**

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

I currently serve as a director on a number of boards including the Hawaii Architectural Foundation and the Liljestrand Foundation, and also serve as a member on various advisory committees, including the University of Hawaii's School of Architecture, and Malama Manoa, a local community-based organization. In addition, my work has been published in Hawaii Business, Hawaii Architect, Dwell, Wired, Interiors, Lighting Design, The New York Times Science Section, and Science.

**Q Please describe your firm's experience.**

A Ferraro Choi's mission is to preserve, protect and enhance the natural and built environment through sustainable architecture, interior architecture and research. Since 1988, our firm has provided architectural planning design and interior design services for commercial and institutional projects for private and government clients. I am the architect of record for a number of notable projects including Information Technology Center at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station, and the Albert Crary Laboratory at McMurdo Station. Examples of some of our recent projects in Hawai'i include the Daniel K. Akaka VA Clinic, The Culinary Institute of the Pacific, the Entrepreneurs' Sandbox, and the NOAA Inouye Regional Center on Ford Island.

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

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

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

**Q Please describe the modification requested for this Project.**

A Consistent with the intent of the Mauka Area Plan, the Ward Neighborhood Master Plan (“Ward MP”), and other developments within Ward Village, and as contemplated by the Lot P-3 Purchase and Sale Agreement (“PSA”), Victoria Ward, Ltd. requests a single modification to the 2005 Mauka Area Rules (the “Vested Rules”) for Mahana Ward Village: an increase in the platform height by an additional two feet, six inches (2’ 6”) from the seventy-five foot (75’) height modification previously approved by HCDA in 2023 in connection with the original Mahana Ward Village planned development permit.

The Lot P-3 PSA provided that the amended Mahana Ward Village PDP application would be “inclusive of design adjustments to accommodate the Supplemental Floor Area and/or reasonable podium tolerances[.]” The requested increase of the podium height to seventy-seven feet, six inches (77’-6”) (plus permitted height for accessory use structures) falls squarely within those contemplated design adjustments.

The requested modification reflects both site constraints and the inclusion of approximately 163,000 square feet of supplemental floor area authorized by HCDA in connection with the Lot P-3 PSA.

The design of Mahana is materially constrained by various factors, including State and County right of ways, utility accessways and easements, and surrounding conditions and uses. These include the HART station and guideway easement to the north and northwest; a burial preserve that is part of the adjacent ‘A’ali’i (KAK 16-075) property; and sewer and concrete drain easements that bisect the Mahana Ward Village site and require a 22-foot vertical clearance and a 25-foot horizontal clearance. Collectively, these constraints limit the placement of structural elements, circulation, and building systems, thereby affecting the configuration and vertical organization of the podium.

In addition, the supplemental floor area authorized in connection with the Lot P-3 PSA requires efficient integration of program elements within the podium and at ground level. Despite these added demands, the amended Mahana design continues to provide the key features contemplated by the Ward MP and implemented throughout Ward Village, including:

- Active pedestrian circulation and engagement in and around the development;
- Ground-floor commercial space contributing to streetscape activation;

- Substantial open space within the outdoor plaza; and
- Podium-level residential units that expand housing options.

In short, given this unique site, the amended Mahana design efficiently and effectively incorporates the Supplemental Floor area, and the modest increase in podium height is well within reasonable tolerances from the prior design. The requested modification is the minimum reasonably necessary to accommodate the Supplemental Floor Area while also continuing to maintain key ground floor pedestrian activation elements in a coordinated and functional manner, and while also ensuring that the project remains materially consistent with the overall planning and urban design framework governing Ward Village.

**Q Hawaii Administrative Rules (“HAR”) §15-22-22 provides that modifications are permitted if the applicant can demonstrate that: (1) the modification would provide flexibility and result in a development that is practically and aesthetically superior to that which could be accomplished with the rigid enforcement of this chapter; (2) the modification would not adversely affect adjacent developments or uses; and (3) the resulting development will be consistent with the intent of the Mauka Area Plan.**

**In your professional opinion, does the platform height modification provide flexibility and result in a development that is practically and aesthetically superior to that which could be accomplished with the rigid enforcement of the rules?**

**A** Yes. Particularly in light of the various and material site constraints, the increase in the platform height to seventy-seven feet, six inches (77'-6") provides significantly more flexibility in the amended design of Mahana Ward Village. This modification allows a significant volume of the parking within the platform to be pulled up and away from the perimeter of the development, which provides additional volume for the continued inclusion of street-level retail and mixed-use space, additional ground-floor open space, and residential units in the podium, all of which result in a development that is practically and aesthetically superior to a rigid enforcement of the 45 foot podium height limit.

The conceptual renderings of the platform and streetscape shown in Exhibits 26 - 29 of the Application illustrate that the commercial areas and related space will significantly increase pedestrian access and activation in and around the platform, including through the plaza area facing Ward Avenue, a unique, open, double-height colonnade (which allows for open sightlines, ample sunlight and cooling breezes, while also providing rain protection and shade for pedestrian access and seating for food and beverage options), and the podium residential units facing Halekauwila and Victoria Ward Park.

In addition to the residential units, the platform will also include architecturally-interesting elements, including green walls, a series of vertical panels, and landscaping to screen the parking garage and create a three-dimensional effect along the portion of

the façade most visible to pedestrians. In short, the modification results in a building form that is aesthetically superior to a structure without the modification.

Notably, both the platform and the residential tower are set back further from Ward Avenue than required under the Vested Rules, thus materially preserving, protecting and framing both the Ward Avenue and Victoria Ward Park view corridors through Ward Village.

In my opinion, Mahana Ward Village’s platform design thoughtfully, efficiently, and effectively implements the concepts originally proposed by VWL’s Ward MP, which HCDA determined, among other findings, would “provide flexibility for different uses and various design strategies noted in the Master Plan, including concealed parking structures and pedestrian-friendly facades, which will result in a development that is practically and aesthetically superior to one which could be accomplished without such modifications.”

**Q In your professional opinion, does the modification adversely affect adjacent developments or uses?**

A No. The platform height modification is consistent with the Ward Master Plan, and significantly, is also materially consistent with other developments approved and/or constructed (or under construction) within Ward Village, including The Park Ward Village across Halekauwila, as well as Anaha, A’eo, Waiea, Ke Kilohana, ‘A’ali’i, Kō’ula, Ulana, The Launiu, Ilima, and Melia. In my professional opinion, granting this modification will not adversely affect adjacent developments or uses, but instead will ensure that Mahana Ward Village is materially consistent and compatible with the design and architectural character of other developments within Ward Village and the Mauka Area. This facilitates a more cohesive, aesthetically pleasing experience for the residents and visitors of the Ward Village community and the greater Kakaako area.

On a practical level, the inclusion of residential homes on floors 2 through 7 of the platform (overlooking Victoria Ward Park and Halekauwila), in addition to providing a diversity of housing options, will also foster a greater sense of community, and enhance neighborhood / street-level awareness within Ward Village.

In addition, consistent with the prior design, the modest increase in the podium height also does not adversely affect other elements of adjacent uses and developments. The modification will not materially impact Mauka-Makai view corridors, and will alleviate the need for (and potential impacts caused by) subsurface excavation for parking. The modification will also not result in adverse shadow effects on the neighboring uses.

**Q In your professional opinion, do these modifications result in a development that is consistent with the intent of the Mauka Area Plan?**

A Yes. The Mauka Area Plan envisions the development of mixed-uses, pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, preservation of major view corridors, open space, and recreational space.

As contemplated in the Ward MP, and as recognized in HCDA's Decision and Order approving the Ward MP, the modification to the platform height is consistent with these design objectives. The modification will result in a platform that will significantly increase street-level pedestrian interaction, activation, and access; provide additional open space in and around the building; provide approximately 13,600 square feet of ground floor commercial space; facilitate a more aesthetically-pleasing and activated streetscape; and materially preserve the Victoria Ward Park and Ward Avenue view corridors. The modification will advance the Mauka Area Plan's (and the Ward MP's) vision for an active, pedestrian-oriented mixed use urban community with compatible design characteristics at this mauka gateway to Ward Village.

**Q In your professional opinion, are these modifications necessary to implement the live, work, play vision of the Mauka Area Rules and the Ward MP?**

A Yes. As demonstrated through other developments in Ward Village and the Mauka Area, the proposed modification for Mahana Ward Village is integral to creating a neighborhood where residential, commercial, and retail uses are incorporated to be mutually beneficial to each other.

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