

HISTORIC HAWAI'I FOUNDATION

October 19, 2015

Dr. William R. Chapman
Chair, Hawai'i Historic Places Review Board
c/o State Historic Preservation Division
Department of Land and Natural Resources
State of Hawai'i
Kākuhihewa Building
601 Kamokila Blvd. Ste. 555
Kapolei, HI 96707

RE: Comments on Nominations to the Hawai'i and National Registers of Historic Places for the Makalapa and Little Makalapa Housing Districts, Pearl Harbor Naval Station, O'ahu, Hawai'i

Dear Dr. Chapman and Members of the Historic Places Review Board:

On behalf of Historic Hawai'i Foundation, I am submitting comments on the nominations to the Hawai'i and National Registers of Historic Places for the Makalapa and Little Makalapa Housing Districts, located at Pearl Harbor Naval Station on O'ahu, Hawai'i.

These nominations are scheduled for public hearing on the Historic Places Review Board agenda for November 13, 2015. Two separate nominations were submitted by the City & County of Honolulu's transit authority (Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation [HART]) to the Hawai'i State Historic Preservation Officer, who then scheduled the State Review Board hearing. Ultimately, the nominations are expected to be submitted to the U.S. Department of the Navy (NAVY) and to the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places at the National Park Service (NPS).

Historic Hawai'i Foundation (HHF) is a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to encouraging the preservation of sites, districts, buildings and objects that are significant to the history of the Hawaiian Islands. HHF is also a consulting party to federal and state agencies under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and works closely with NAVY, NPS and HART on undertakings that have the potential to affect historic properties.

HHF previously provided review comments on drafts of the Makalapa and Little Makalapa district nominations to HART, SHPO, NAVY and NPS. The core issue that has not yet been resolved relates to the setting, contributing features, and the boundary determination between the two neighborhoods and proposed districts. Therefore, Historic Hawai'i Foundation would like to offer these comments on those aspects of the nominations for your consideration.

SIGNIFICANCE

Both areas meet National Register significance criterion A as part of the build-up of defenses in Hawai'i and the related need for housing in the early 1940s. As is customary in military installations, the housing layout represents a hierarchy of types and location based on rank.

Both areas meet National Register significance criterion C, related to distinctive military and community planning following some of the design principles of the Garden City concept. "These planning concepts tried to combine the best of urban and rural living by providing housing near work, yet in spacious, beautiful and healthful surroundings. Certainly, the Makalapa neighborhood, where most of the residents can walk to nearby buildings for work, and enjoy the landscaping, views ... and cooling tradewinds, provides such an ideal," according to the nomination.

The housing district was designed as a single entity by Samuel R. Damon, and the homes were all designed by Charles W. Dickey, one of Hawaii's most notable architects, who was instrumental in defining the Hawaiian regional style of architecture. Both neighborhoods are eligible under National Register significance criterion C related to the work of a master.

The project was constructed under one construction contract by Contractors Pacific Naval Air Bases (CPNAB), under a 1940 contract. No other CPNAB residential buildings remain except for the Makalapa project. The method of construction was innovative and based on the need for rapid completion in the build-up to the United States entry to World War II. The contractors developed a process resembling an assembly line for building the houses. Prefabricated units of walls, floors and roofs were built off site and then assembled on site, joined by driving spikes due to wartime shortage of bolts. This was also one of the earliest uses of plywood for components other than doors, and presaged the trend toward manufactured buildings. Both neighborhoods are eligible under National Register criterion C for innovative construction methods and unique building materials.

The officers' housing area is also significant under National Register criterion B for association with Admiral Chester M. Nimitz, commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet from Dec. 1941 through the end of World War II. The Nimitz House is located within the Officers neighborhood in the Makalapa Housing District.

SETTING

The issue of setting, and whether or not the setting is a contributing feature to the district, has been the underlying issue for the boundary determination and specifically whether the housing district should be divided into two separate nominations, or whether it should be considered as one historic district that includes the landscape features.

The project is located on the sloping sides and rim of the extinct Makalapa Crater. It is the only Navy housing project (both neighborhoods) located on sloping ground, which encouraged its curving streets and layout. The neighborhoods were separated by a natural low streambed and marsh area. That was the location of the road connecting the two neighborhoods, which was later modified to become Radford Drive.

The Navy Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan (ICRMP, 2008) states, "Use of a cultural landscape approach for preservation planning within Navy Region Hawai'i provides a framework for understanding the entire land use history of the Region...and is used to integrate and identify linkages between historic periods, geographic areas, and resource types."

The Pearl Harbor Navy Complex is divided into 12 geographic management zones, one of which is the Makalapa Management Zone, including both the Officer Housing and Civilian Housing/Little Makalapa neighborhoods. According to the ICRMP, the criteria for determining a zone is the presence of a grouping of resources that typically exhibits most or all of the following characteristics: contribution to convey the history or ‘story’ of the respective zone, historic integrity, locational/physical proximity, common use or function, high ratio of contributing elements, similar materials or design attributes, and common construction periods.

The ICRMP describes the Makalapa boundary as “encompass[ing] the historic limits of the entire Makalapa neighborhood, including the existing open spaces and topology, which are integral features of the neighborhood. The zone has a very high ratio of eligible facilities and character-defining features.”

The ICRMP (Figure 3 “Character-Defining Features and Zone Boundary for Makalapa Housing Zone”) includes historic facilities, street layout, mature trees, crater land form, views, historically significant open space, and rock retaining walls. One of the character-defining views is from Kamehameha Highway looking east (*mauka* or towards the mountains) across the open space that is excluded from the two nominations.

The Navy’s Pearl Harbor Naval Complex Cultural Landscape Report (CLR, 2011) divides the Makalapa Landscape Zone into three “character areas”: administration, crater floor and housing. The housing area is scored at the highest level for concentration of historic features and visual intactness to its original appearance. As with the ICRMP, the Makalapa Character Area Boundary encompasses the original housing development, including both Officer (Makalapa) and Civilian (Little Makalapa) housing areas, and the associated open spaces. (Figure 4.5.3-55 “Character Defining Features Makalapa Administration, Makalapa Crater Floor, Makalapa Housing”).

BOUNDARY DETERMINATION

As shown in the ICRMP and CLR, previous analysis defined Makalapa as a single historic site with associated landscape features. It was constructed as a single contract, planned as a single housing area, and designed by one notable architect. The natural boundary that separated the Little Makalapa area from the Officer housing area was originally a low streambed and then a road, which was later enlarged, but the topography has not changed.

The proposed separate district nominations define the boundaries tight to the housing layout, not including the associated open spaces and landscape features, despite the fact that the landscape features had previously been identified as contributing. Such a narrow boundary makes the two districts seem artificially distinct and unrelated.

Therefore, Historic Hawai‘i Foundation feels that there is overwhelming existing documentation to define the Makalapa Housing Area as a single Historic Housing District, and to retain the boundaries and contributing features as defined in the ICRMP, to include the setting and landscaping.

HHF RECOMMENDATION

In summary, Historic Hawaii Foundation supports listing the Makalapa Housing District to the National Register of Historic Places. HHF believes that the property displays both historic significance and integrity. HHF asks that the Review Board look carefully at the proposed boundary, as we believe the currently nominated areas are too small and artificially separated. The two nominations should be combined into a

single district encompasses by a single boundary, and the landscape elements included as contributing features.

Thank you for your consideration of these issues and for the opportunity to comment.

Very truly yours,



Kiersten Faulkner, AICP
Executive Director

Attachments:

1. 1951 Plan Map of Makalapa, showing location of historic stream bed
2. Pearl Harbor Naval Station Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan, Figure 3 “Character-Defining Features and Zone Boundary for Makalapa Housing Zone”
3. Pearl Harbor Naval Complex Cultural Landscape Report, Figure 4.5.3-55 “Character Defining Features Makalapa Administration, Makalapa Crater Floor, Makalapa Housing”

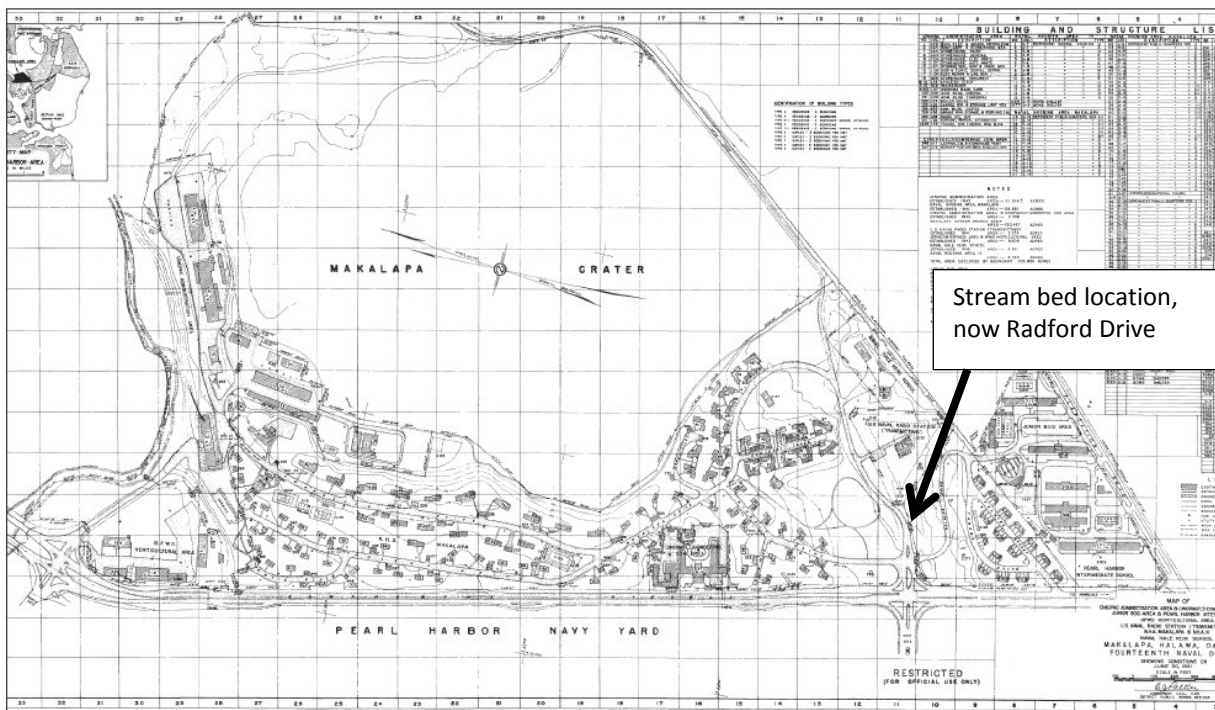


Figure 1 : 1951 plan of Makalapa housing.

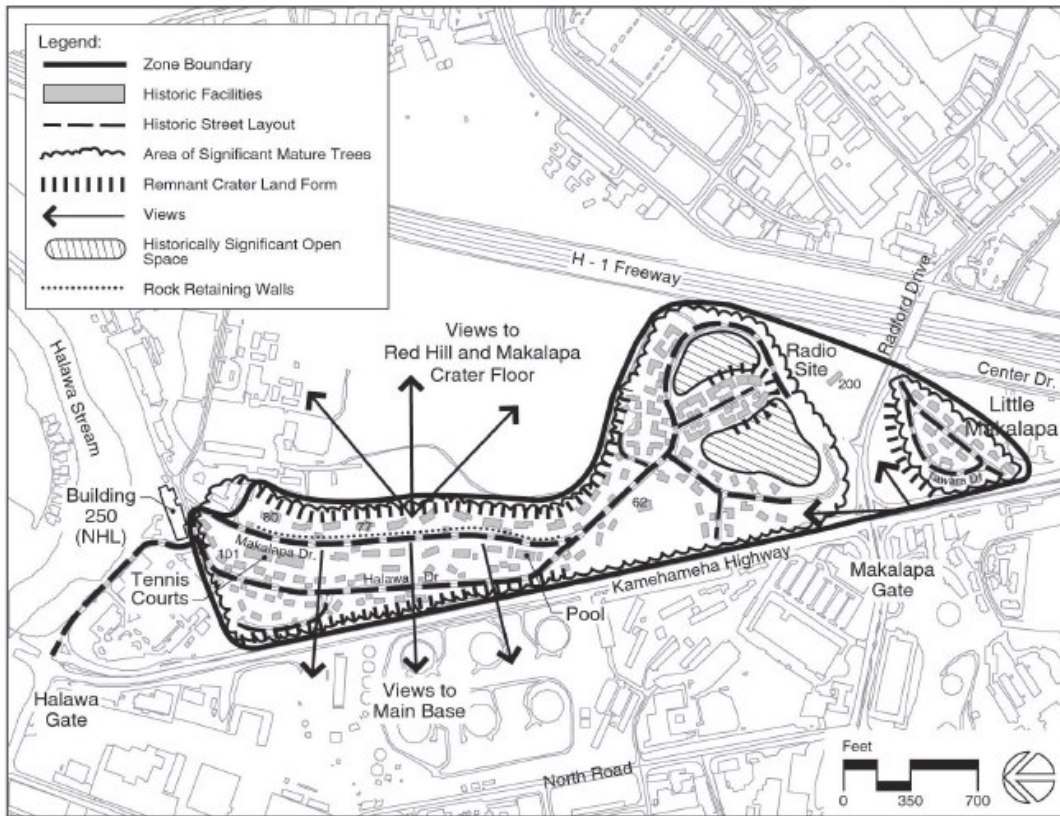


Figure 3
Character-Defining Features and Zone Boundary
for Makalapa Housing Zone

5.1.3.11 Makalapa Housing Zone



PEARL HARBOR NAVAL COMPLEX CLR

Pearl Harbor, O'ahu, Hawai'i
TEC Inc. Joint Venture

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Figure 4.5.3-55

Character Defining Features
Makalapa Administration (MK-01), Makalapa Crater Floor (MK-02)
Makalapa Housing (MK-03)