

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

**1. Name of Property**Historic name: Coco Palms Resort

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing:

NA

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**2. Location**Street & number: 4-241 Kuhio HighwayCity or town: Kapaa State: Hawaii County: Kauai Zip Code: 96746Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

   national    statewide    local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

   A    B    C    D

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Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

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State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property    meets    does not meet the National Register criteria.

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Signature of commenting official:

Date

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Title :

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State or Federal agency/bureau  
or Tribal Government

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

☐ entered in the National Register

☐ determined eligible for the National Register

☐ determined not eligible for the National Register

☐ removed from the National Register

☐ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

☒

Public – Local

☐

Public – State

☒

Public – Federal

☐

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**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

☐

District

☒

Site

☐

Structure

☐

Object

☐

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

25

buildings

2

sites

12

structures

approx. 50\*

objects

39

Total

\*Objects not included in total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

Weuweu-Kawai-iki Fishpond

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/HOTEL

Resort

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

WORK IN PROGRESS

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

Tiki/Polynesian

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Concrete/Wood/Thatch

## Narrative Description

### Summary Paragraph

The Coco Palms site is located in the town of Wailua, just outside of Kapaa, in southeastern Kaua'i on approximately 32 acres. Although relatively built up along the highway, the surrounding area is mostly rural. The Coco Palms grounds are located mauka (inland and west) of Kuhio Highway. A small section of discontinuous land across the highway (makai) fronting the beach contains the Seashell Restaurant. The resort's buildings are arranged in two rows, roughly parallel to Kuhio Highway, and separated by the hotel's lagoon, which runs north to south through the property.

Along the west side of the lagoon are smaller buildings that include the House in the Palms restaurant, Queen's Audience Hall, and the King's, Queen's and Prince's Cottages. To the west beyond the smaller buildings is the large coconut grove. On the east side of the lagoon, closest to Kuhio Highway, are the property's larger buildings, including four three-story hotel room buildings, and a two-story former bar and dining room (the Flame Room Bar and Lagoon Dining Room). The resort's entry road connects to Kuamo'o Road and runs between the highway and the larger hotel buildings.

Walking paths line either side of the lagoon and branch off to the buildings; coconut palms grow along the paths. Several buildings are located just within the coconut grove, including a chapel on the east edge of the grove, several small shelters that once made up the property's zoo, and at the far western edge of the property, a former tennis pro shop next to tennis courts that are now overgrown.

The resort has been shuttered since 1992 when Hurricane Iniki inflicted severe damage on the buildings and property. Although the buildings and structures have become abandoned, severely deteriorated, and some are mere shells due to previous necessary demolition in advance of restoration, Coco Palms retains integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association. It is the intent of the renovation project to restore/recreate the integrity of design, materials, workmanship.



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## Narrative Description

The Coco Palms Resort is a multi-resource tropical resort located in the town of Wailua, just outside of Kapaa, in southeastern Kauai. The resort is within the *ahupua'a* of Wailua, in the *moku* of Puna.<sup>1</sup>

The Coco Palms resort encompasses approximately 32 acres of land. Of this, approximately 12 acres are privately owned, and approximately 20 acres are under State lease/license. The eastern boundary is the Kūhiō Highway that runs directly along Wailua Beach. Most of the northern, southern and western boundaries of the site is the coconut grove. A drainage canal along the western property edge marks the end of the coconut grove. The northeast corner of the property originally held back-of-the-house operations for the resort.

The property was entered via four primary routes. The Kūhiō Highway entrance is at the northern end of the property, near the junction of Ali'i Kai I [2] and Ali'i Kai II [2]. There were three drives off Kuamoo Road along the southern property boundary. The primary Kuamo'o entrance skirts Kūhiō Highway and runs along the eastern side of the multi-story hotel buildings (the Shell Building [1], and Ali'i Kai I and II) and behind the retail Shopping and Travel Center [11]. It terminates at the entry to the Ali'i Kai II parking garage drive. At one time the entry to this drive was flanked by large battered stone plinths, one of which held the iconic Coco Palms sign and each featured a sculptural metal Hawaiian sail on top. The walls and the Coco Palms sign remain but the artwork has been removed. The second Kuamo'o entrance is a narrow paved road leading through the coconut grove behind the King's Cottages. The third Kuamo'o entrance leads to the 1970s-era tennis center.

The district that encompasses the resort complex includes buildings, structures, objects, and sites. The table and numbered site plan (Additional Documentation, page 41-42) locate and summarize the resources whose descriptions follow.

### Coconut Grove [A]

The historic coconut grove is approximately 15 acres in size and occupies the entire western area of the site and is both the largest and oldest coconut grove in Hawaii. Now overgrown, during the hotel's operation the coconut grove had a well-manicured lawn with rambling footpaths and scattered thatch-covered structures. Landscape maintenance would restore the coconut grove to its period of significance appearance.

First planted in 1896, a program of ceremonial coconut tree plantings over the lifetime of the resort, has allowed the coconut grove to remain densely planted. As part of the ceremonial tree plantings, plaques were placed at the base of the trees commemorating the date, the dignitary or celebrity who planted the tree and their claim to fame. Each plaque was titled "Kumu He Inoa (The Name Tree)." Since the closing of the resort, the plaques have been mapped and secured from theft for future replacement.

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<sup>1</sup> *Moku* and *ahupua'a* are Hawaiian terms that refer to land divisions. An *ahupua'a* is a portion of land that is typically somewhat pie-shaped, and runs from the mountains to the ocean, and a *moku* is a larger district consisting of multiple *ahupua'a*. OHA - KIPUKA Database. (n.d.). Retrieved January 9, 2020, from <http://kipukadatabase.com/kipuka/TMK.html?ObjectID=75001&b=2#view1>

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Lagoon [B]

The lagoon forms the spine of the Coco Palms Resort and is its centerpiece and the focal point of many of the rituals/entertainments for which the resort is known. It is also individually listed on the Hawai'i State Register of Historic Places as *Weuweu-Kaua'i-iki Fishpond* (SIHP 50-30-80-680). The lagoon is approximately 1,140 feet long with an approximate 100-foot square offset bulb at the southern end and a slightly larger rectangular termination at the northern end. The width of the lagoon is approximately 50 feet, significantly narrower than it was measured in 1920 when it was surveyed by John Lydgate.<sup>2</sup> In the 1930s it was measured at 7 feet deep; the current depth is unknown and varies with rainfall and the Wailua River level.

The lagoon was traditionally comprised of two historic fishponds, with a break between them occurring near current Bridge #3. It is believed they remained two distinct ponds until the 1930s when extensive modifications were made, and the fishponds were restocked with fish. The drainage ditch, called the "Wailua Coconut Grove Drainage Ditch," that runs alongside the lagoon before joining it near the northern termination, may be original to the fishpond as an overflow mechanism, or may have been dredged as early as the 1880s to irrigate crops.<sup>3</sup>

When Island Holidays took over the Coco Palms under the direction of Grace Buscher in 1953, the lagoon became an integral part of the guest experience at the resort. Daily torch lighting ceremonies and other commemorative and/or entertainment spectacles featured the lagoon and Hawaiian canoes traversing it. Changes to the lagoon during the Coco Palm Resort tenure have included the addition of rock and concrete reinforced walls at locations along its length, a metal sluice gate and pumps at the southern end to control water levels, and the addition of bridges and small grass inlets used as stages for performances. Regular maintenance of the lagoon, which can be quickly overrun by vegetation, was undertaken by hotel staff. The staff would also regularly round-up the children of guests from their rooms to have them fish for their breakfast in the lagoon.

Bridges [C]

The lagoon is crossed via four (4) bridges. The construction date of these bridges is unknown. Bridge #1 is a low footpath that crosses the lagoon at the Lobby. It is an extension of the concrete walkway and appears to be constructed of reinforced concrete with bluestone veneer sidewalls flush with the top of the bridge walkway. The bridge has no built-up sides but instead has low reinforced concrete rails made to look like coconut palm trunks that sit on stone and concrete plinths and span the waterway. Currently only one side rail is extant.

Wooden Bridge #2 crossed the lagoon at the Lobby and near the junction of Ali'i Kai I and II but is no longer extant. Bridge #3 spans between the Queen's Audience Hall and the Ali'i Kai guest rooms. This slatted wooden bridge had built-in wooden benches around a widened area at its center that was covered with a thatched roof. Prior to the construction of the Ali'i building in the 1970s, this bridge did not span the lagoon but ended at the seating area. Bridge #4 is located between the Queen's Audience Hall and the Garden Lagoon guest room building. This wood bridge was the longest of the four bridges and spanned north-to-south over the widest portion of the lagoon, at its northern end. Both wooden bridges remain in place, but their

<sup>2</sup> Weuweu-Kaua'i-iki Fishpond Hawai'i State Register Nomination (SIHP 50-30-80-680), 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

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wooden slats are damaged, rotting, and missing in places. The wood railings are badly deteriorated and missing in sections as well.

Pools [D]

The earliest site map found for the Coco Palms Resort shows two pools; the kidney shaped King's Pool located mauka of the lagoon near the King's Cottages, and the keystone-shaped Palace Pool, also mauka of the lagoon, located at the Coconut Palace (now Queen's Audience Hall). But for most of the life of the Coco Palms Resort there have been four (4) pools on the property: The King's Pool [D1], the Queen's Pool [D2], the Palace Pool [D3], and the former King's kidney shaped pool [D4]. The three more recent pools are all still located makai of the lagoon and appear to be in good condition. The King's pool is adjacent to the Shell Building and the Flame Room. The Queen's Pool and the Palace Pool are located near Ali'i Kai I and Ali'i Kai II, respectively. The original Palace Pool appears to have been removed in the 1970s when the Queen's Audience Hall was built. The three 1970s pools are irregular-shaped polygons and feature waterfalls, cascading greenery, decorative tiles, and cowrie shells hand-placed into the concrete deck that surrounds the pools. The King's Pool had an exceptionally large killer clam shell fountain feature that was just recently stolen. The Queen's and Palace Pools feature the decorative totems that were originally outside the Seashell Restaurant located across the street at the beach. Between the Queen's and Palace Pools was a freestanding covered structure known as the Queen's Pool Cocktail Lānai, which is no longer extant.

The kidney shaped pool (former King's Pool) is the most famous, having been featured in ads, postcards, and, most notably, the Elvis Presley movie Blue Hawai'i. This pool is extant but has been dramatically altered. The House in the Palms, designed by Wimberly Whisenand Allison and Tong in 1976, incorporated this pool into its design, keeping its shape and lava rock edging but decreasing its size significantly and turning it into a reflecting pool with a relatively large plinth in the center that held flags of the world. Part of the reconstruction of pool included making it only a few inches deep and the new bottom was retiled with red, white, and blue mosaics that feature an abstraction of the Hawaiian flag and quotes of the Hawaiian phrases Grace (Buscher) Guslander used in her nightly presentations.

Zoo [E]

The Coco Palms Zoo is located in the coconut grove along a walkway that skirts the northern boundary of the property, between the main grounds of the hotel and the tennis facility. The zoo consists of chain-link enclosures that have shake roofs, chain-link tops, or no top/roof, depending on the type of animal that was sheltered in the enclosure. It is not known when the zoo was first established but a 1979 article said that in the Coco Palms Zoo there were "11 species, 45 animals, and 1081 people per year gawking at them over a year's time." Species included gibbons, wood ducks, Kona nightingales, pigeons, peacocks, goats, donkeys, and a water buffalo. The zoo enclosures are extant despite being overtaken by the jungle overgrowth.

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Walkways [F]

The Coco Palms extensive system of walkways are integral to the resort. The walkways provided access to the various amenities of the resort, as well as picturesque perambulation. They were also necessary for the functional operation of the resort (they accommodated golf carts for staff (and manager Grace Guslander was always on a golf cart)) as well. The walkways are generally four to six feet in width, depending on location, and composed of either concrete or asphalt. Some were edged in concrete tree trunks, like those found on the bridge and as columns in the Lagoon Lounge and Flame Bar buildings. Most of the walkways remain in good condition, although some of the less-travelled asphalt ones have plant encroachments.

Thatch Structures [G]

Throughout the coconut grove there were scattered, thatch-covered seating areas and picnic spots. Roofed shelters were also employed as artifact enclosures. Examples include the drum that was used in the nightly torch ceremony was suspended from columns topped by a thatched roof, and an enclosure built to properly and respectfully inter bones unearthed on the Coco Palms site. Many of the thatch structures remain in various conditions but the extent of extant resources was unable to be determined due to the dense overgrowth in the coconut grove.

Tennis Facility [H]

The Tennis Facility is located at the northwest corner of the coconut grove, just past the Zoo. The wood-framed pro-shop building and the nine (9) tennis courts and three (3) hitting courts were built in 1974 and were the only clay tennis courts in the state of Hawai'i. The tennis courts were state of the art with lighting, chain-link fencing, and spectator seating. They were the location of numerous professional and amateur tennis tournaments and the Coco Palms was considered a 5-star tennis resort. The pro-shop is extant but abandoned and the tennis courts have been overrun by the jungle.

Shell Building [I]

The Shell Building is located near the southeast corner of the site and is the first building encountered when entering through the Kuamo'o Street main entry. It was designed by Bauer, Mori & Lum Architects and was built in 1970. The building is three stories tall with subterranean parking level beneath. Its footprint has a slight (approximately 10') offset along its length at the center stairwell. The foundation and structure are of reinforced concrete. The building has a flat concrete roof that originally also had a false mansard parapet finished with wood shake tiles.

An attached covered entry patio with stone columns and a flat shake-edged roof sat at the southeast corner adjacent to the south stairwell that is connected to the building at each level via an open concrete walkway. A second matching exterior stairwell is located on the north side of the building. The stairwell walls that face Kūhiō Highway are sheathed in rock veneer while the other sides are painted concrete. The end wall of the stairwells (facing south and towards the entry drive and, on the opposite side, facing north towards the Lobby) have vertical wood slats behind which are plexiglass panels. A northside elevated walkway at the second floor once connected this building with the lobby.

The end walls are solid, scored concrete panels on the south; the upper two stories on the north side are also scored concrete but the ground level wall is sheathed in stone since this was originally a primary walkway adjacent to the Lobby. The long side walls, which face the ocean

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and the lagoon, are concrete frames that once held windows and wood panel fill. There is an entry at the center of the building on the makai (east) side that is mirrored on the west side by a third, interior, stairwell. The makai entrance features a stone-sheathed fin or sail extending from the front of the building and above the roof. Additional stone detail flanks the entry at the first floor. The exterior wall at each landing of the interior stairwell also features vertical wood slats with plexiglass panels at the interior like those at the exterior stairs, except for the third floor, which has double casement windows.

All the stairwells exited to the interior at a hallway that ran along the center of the building, with guest rooms on each side. The hall doors of the rooms were flush wood with shells affixed denoting the room numbers. The room interiors were divided into two sections by folding fixed louver paneled doors. There were also folding shutters at the interior of the windows.

The interior of this building has been demolished down to the concrete structure, with only the stairways remaining. The mansard roof is also missing, and the basement parking was flooded.

Lagoon Dining Room, Lagoon Terrace Lounge, Flame Room Bar,  
Lagoon Lānai Guest Suites [2]

The Lagoon Dining Room, Lagoon Terrace Lounge, Flame Room Bar, and Lagoon Lānai Guest Suites are in a single building located near the center of resort, behind (mauka of) the Lobby and overlooking the lagoon on its makai side. All these spaces have been demolished down to their structural components, individual extant features are noted to follow.

The building was designed by Design Associates Architects and built in 1968.<sup>4</sup> The two-story building consisted of two restaurants, a kitchen, entertainment area, and bar on the lower level and second story guest suites above that ran along the entire building length. The building was

bisected by a wide central foyer with a tall convex gable roofline echoing the Lobby roof and serving as a pass through from the Lobby to the main bridge (Bridge #1) crossing the Lagoon. The roof, supported by large exposed glulam beams, pierced and extended past the perpendicular roof of the Guest Suites creating a wide overhang. This dramatic roof, which once supported a 15-foot-tall, 500-pound plexiglass lighted trident shell,<sup>5</sup> was destroyed in the 2014 fire that also destroyed the Lobby. Tucked behind the Flame Room, along the central foyer is a small attached structure with low rock walls and its own shake roof supported by rock columns. This small structure was the "Huli Pit" where the resort chefs roasted various meats on an outdoor rotating spit and served at the restaurants. This extant structure was featured in the background of a scene from the movie Blue Hawai'i.

The buildings have a concrete foundation and their structure is a combination of reinforced concrete, steel, wood, and concrete masonry. Only the Flame building, at southern half, has an extant second floor, although not accessible. This portion of the building has a flat concrete roof with a false mansard parapet finished with wood shake tiles. The northern second-floor guest

<sup>4</sup> Designer/Architects were L. Harold Whitaker and Ted Crane.

<sup>5</sup> The trident shell was designed and constructed by Vince Buono, a long-time collaborator of Grace Guslander on a myriad of creative project for the Coco Palms Resort.

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suites were destroyed in the 2014 fire. It is believed they had the same construction, including the mansard roof, but currently the northern section of the building has only a single floor topped with a flat concrete slab. The structural columns in the open rooms of the first floor are steel clad with concrete made to resemble the trunk of a coconut palm. They support metal beams with a metal deck and concrete ceiling. There were no windows enclosing the first floor, only a low concrete wall with stone veneer that allowed the interior spaces to be open to the breezes and views of the lagoon.

The Lagoon Dining Room restaurant, occupying the northern half of the first floor is a large, open, rectangular space with openings on the west (lagoon) side and a rock wall at the east. The space featured a frond ceiling, lauhala walls and the "coconut trunk" columns supported decorated beams. On the makai end the low rock wall separating the restaurant from the central foyer were large louvered panels that featured a carved tapa motif on one side and lauhala matting on the other.<sup>6</sup> At the center of the east wall was a slightly raised stage area. The curving rock-sheathed back wall of the stage acted as a screen, behind which was a bus area and access to the kitchen beyond. Beyond the kitchen was the below-grade portion of the Main Lobby that held offices, employee dining and break areas and other operational functions.

The Lagoon Terrace Lounge and the Flame Room Bar occupied the southern half of the first level. This too was an open rectangular space constructed of concrete and steel with rock accents and featured the coconut trunk columns. The east wall of Lagoon Terrace space featured a long bar, behind which was a tile mural depicting the volcanic "The Birth of Hawaii." At the opposite end of the east wall, in the Flame Room Bar, is a recessed second bar or food service area with the Hawaiian phrase "Ho'okahi Ohana Iloko Ke Akua" etched into a large suspended wood beam that spans the opening. This phrase translates to "One Family Under God." Flanking the opening are two smaller murals depicting a variety of lovely women and titled "The Races of Hawai'i" and "From the Advent of the Missionaries" <sup>7</sup> Both of these art pieces and the inscribed beam are extant.

The Lagoon Lānai Guest Suites are believed to have a concrete frame structure infilled with wood framed walls. The exterior walls are wide board and batten lower walls topped by sliding windows with interior shutters. The exterior walls remain but the windows have been removed. There were 25 second floor guest rooms. The two located at each end, were "spacious suites" and all the rooms featured air conditioning and were decorated in shades of red and purple for a Hawaiian royalty theme.<sup>8</sup> At the center of the second floor, within the tall arching Polynesian roofed area was guest lounge and circulation area. Stairs to the second floor were wood and located at the exterior at each end with a third stairway accessed via the central foyer. Only the southern stair remains, the other two having been lost in the fire.

<sup>6</sup> These pivoting door-sized shutters are extant but have been removed from the site for safekeeping.

<sup>7</sup> Birth of Hawai'i Artist: Sheraton Stanton. Races and Missionary Artist: Millard Sheets.

<sup>8</sup> *No Ordinary Dedication at Coco Palms, Another Grace Buscher Spectacular.* Honolulu Advertiser, May 27, 1968. p10.

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Lobby [3]

The iconic Coco Palms Lobby was once a large building partially modeled after the traditional Hawaiian walled house with a convex gable thatched roof. It had a soaring open interior with exposed beams, palm-like chandeliers, carved woodwork and exposed blue stone structural sidewalls. The Lobby was located near the midpoint of the main entry drive and sat between, and connected to, the Shopping and Travel Center building, the Shell Building, Ali'i Kai I, and the Lagoon Restaurant. The Lobby was badly damaged by fire in July 2014 and the structure was subsequently demolished. Still extant are portions of the lava rock end walls and the concrete basement of the Lobby which served as support spaces and contained a portion of the

kitchen for the Lagoon Dining Room and Flame Bar. The partially underground concrete structure contained offices, general restaurant storage, employee locker rooms and an employee dining room. Also extant are the connector bridges from the Shopping and Travel Center building, the Shell Building, and the Ali'i Kai I Guest Rooms, although they no longer connect to anything.

Built in 1964 and designed by Wimberly Whisenand Allison and Tong Architects, the space was referred to not as a lobby but as "the reception building" by the resort staff. The towering A-frame building had gable ends oriented north and south, with its main entry through the makai (east) wall. Large, exposed glulam beams supported the structure and the interior walls of the roof were wood shiplap with a natural stain finish. The gable ends contained a Mondrian-style arrangement of clear and stained glass containing both fixed and operable windows. In front of the windows was a screen of large carved wood "kahuna beads," a motif that was also replicated on the retail building railings.

Upon arrival guests could pull up under the elevated walkway between the retail building and the Lobby to twin valet stations. These small structures feature large stone columns flanking built-in desks for the valet. Behind each desk is a curving rock wall that served to enclose the desk area, hold bags, and display hotel informational signage. The valet structures also serve as column supports for the overhead walkway. Past the valet stations was a small paved courtyard, to the south of which stood an abstract representation of a traditional Hawaiian oracle tower.<sup>9</sup> The tower was believed by Grace to be "the first one of its size built since the arrival of the missionaries in 1820."<sup>10</sup>

Beyond the courtyard was a short but grand stairway flanked by "stone images of Hawaiian akuas, or family gods, of the turtle and the eel."<sup>11</sup> Centered on this stairway, on the mauka wall of the Lobby, was the reception desk. The reception desk featured in most available photographs is actually the second one in that space. The first was a curved and canted desk

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<sup>9</sup> Known as *lana-nuu-mamao* in Hawaiian, oracle towers were found at all *heiau* and were used in sacred ceremonies and as repositories for offerings. They were essentially scaffolds made of lashed vertical poles and platforms, with each platform having its own sacred significance, the highest of which was reserved only for the king.

<sup>10</sup> *2-Day Ceremony Begins 12<sup>th</sup> Year For Coco Palms*. Honolulu Advertiser, January 27, 1965. pC12.

<sup>11</sup> *400 Help Celebrate Hotel's 12<sup>th</sup> Year*. Honolulu Advertiser, January 26, 1965. pB1.

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with front panels that appeared to feature Hawaiian voyaging canoes. This desk was replaced (date unknown) by a straight version that featured spaced “drums” to delineate the workstations. Along the northern end of the lobby was a raised lounge area with railings that featured carved wood “turtle shells,” with varying patterns set onto an ‘X’ patterned background. To the south of the lobby there was originally a long curving sofa, but this replaced ca. 1974 when the current Shopping and Travel Center was built and the elevated bridge between the two spaces was added. The large meandering stairway provided access to the bridge through the sidewall roof. The stair featured solid railings with a turtle shell motif that matched those of the retail building.

The interior décor originally featured colors that represent each of Hawai‘i’s eight islands. In the 1980s (post-Grace) the colors were toned down and much of the interior woodwork painted white, much to the chagrin of longtime patrons. One of the outstanding interior features was the solid coral floor, the only one in world. Manager Grace Buscher said the floor was “like walking on water,” while owner Gus Guslander said the somewhat uneven floor was “not very satisfactory but it sure is expensive.”<sup>12</sup> Within each rock side wall were lava rock niches that held a constant flame to represent the “ancient fires of Hawai‘i and “the Islands’ volcanic origin.”<sup>13</sup>

Originally the lighting that hung from the soaring ceiling resembled traditional fish nets, later the lighting was changed to fixtures that mimicked a flower and ferns. At least one of these later light fixtures was placed in storage prior to the devastating fire in 2014.

Shopping and Travel Center [4]

The retail Shopping and Travel Center is located at the makai side of the site, adjacent to Kūhiō Highway and makai of the entry drive and all other site resources except for the Seashell Restaurant located on the beach. As such, it is one of the few buildings on the property that is not located off the lagoon. Its current iteration was designed by Wimberly Whisenand Allison and Tong Architects and built in 1974.<sup>14</sup>

The building is two stories tall and has a footprint of approximately 210 feet long by nearly 30 feet wide. The shops opened on the mauka side to an exterior walkway on both floors. There is an exterior covered stairwell at each end and a third stairway at the center of the building. The foundation is a concrete slab and structure is of wood framing with a double-pitched Dutch gable roof sheathed in wood shake tiles. The second floor has a balcony along its mauka length that is supported by wood posts with concrete plinths at the ground level. At the center of the second floor a bridge spans over the entry drive into what was the upper level of the Lobby.

<sup>12</sup> 400 Help Celebrate Hotel's 12th Year,” *Honolulu Advertiser*, Jan. 26, 1965. p. B-1.

<sup>13</sup> *New Building Dedicated at Coco Palms Hotel*. Honolulu Star Bulletin, January 26, 1965. pC5.

<sup>14</sup> An undated early resort site map shows that prior to this building there were a series of seven (7) stand-alone shop buildings in this location and two additional shops located more to the north. Although no photos were located, the map shows these buildings each had a double-pitched Dutch gable roof and seven were labeled “Shop.” The center building was labeled “Travel Center” and one of the northern buildings was the beauty shop.



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The bridge is supported by battered stone columns at the building and currently ends in mid-air on the opposite end, supported by the valet stations below. The roof is a convex gable atop a lower pitch gable roof with wood shingle cladding and wide overhanging eaves with decorative rafter tails.

The building is sheathed in vertical tongue and groove wood with full-height rock wall accents at the north and south ends. The end stairs are wood with semi-solid railings in a stepped square pattern. The center stair begins at the ground level as a single stair with a splayed bottom and splits at the landing into two flanking runs. The railings at this stair match the other two. The railing of the second-floor balcony also features a square pattern. The solid tongue and groove wood railing has decorative outset frames in which were carved wood "turtle shells," with

varying patterns. Along the top of the railing was a decorative carved wood "kahuna beads" that repeated the carved large wooden beads that hung in front of the large Lobby windows. The interior of the Shopping and Travel Center has been demolished to the wood framing. This building survived the fire in 2014 that destroyed the adjacent Lobby with relatively little damage.

Ali'i Kai I and Ali'i Kai II [5-6]

Ali'i Kai I and Ali'i Kai II are sited along the makai side of the lagoon, between the lagoon and entry drive/parking lot at the northern end of the resort. The buildings were designed by Edward Carson Beall & Associates, and built four years apart, in 1972 and 1976.<sup>15</sup> The buildings are three stories tall with subterranean parking beneath. In plan they are each two connected offset rectangles that are mirror images of one another. The buildings are connected by a concrete bridge at their second levels. A large lobby area with an open octagonal wood staircase is located at the offset point of both buildings.

The exterior of the Ali'i Kai buildings consisted of exposed concrete beams with floor-to-floor infill decorative wood panels flanking windows. The buildings have a flat concrete roof with a wide perforated concrete overhang. The first and second floors have an overhanging concrete eyebrow with the same perforations but extending slightly less than the roof overhang, thus changing the proportion of the openings. The overhangs are supported by rounded concrete brackets at each corner and at each building column. Originally each opening in the concrete frame contained a slatted wood decorative insert for shading.

The end walls of the buildings are solid concrete with single openings at each level and, except for the south wall of Ali'i Kai II, have a stairwell and storage bump-out that occupies most of the length of the walls. The bump-outs also provide for additional overhang articulation at the building corners. In addition to the second floor bridge between the two Ali'i Kai buildings, the second floor of Ali'i Kai I has a concrete bridge to the former Lobby on its southern end that

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<sup>15</sup> The Ali'i Kai Buildings and their pools were built on the site of the two former King's Lagoon Buildings, built in 1962 and 1969, the Blue Hawai'i Building whose dates are unknown, and the Wailua Kai I and Wailua Kai II Buildings, also unknown. The Blue Hawai'i Building sat along the lagoon and next to the Lagoon Dining Room and the two Wailua Buildings were sited behind the Blue Hawai'i Building, adjacent to the Lobby (See 1960s site map in Additional Documentation).

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terminates through one of the few remaining walls of the Lobby and originally would have provided an up-close view of the arched glass end wall of the Lobby. The only elevator on the property is located in the north bump-out of Ali'i Kai II.

The primary entryway of each building is located on the makai side at the center offset. The offset allows for a long stone-covered entry ramp leading from the front drive. The entry itself protrudes in a bay shape with windows behind decorative wood slats that extended the entire height of the building and frame the first-floor building opening, which had no door.

At the interior, there was a large circulation area which spanned the width of the building. On the first floor the lobby area terminates on the makai side at a stone stair that leads to the pools and lagoon. On the upper floors is a floor-to-ceiling bay window overlooking the pools and lagoon. This window consists of horizontal and angled fixed wooden louvers that mimicked the design at the overhangs and entries. The center of these circulation spaces contains a central circular wooden staircase and offset hallways leading to the guest rooms. The hallways that ran the length of the buildings had guest rooms on both sides. Red lotus-shaped pendant lights hung down the center of the stairs, one of which is extant and in storage for safekeeping.

The Alii Kai I and II buildings had about 90 rooms each on their three floors. Their walls and ceilings were painted or wallpapered, and the floors were carpeted. The bathroom walls and showers had tiles painted with underwater scenes. Windows were a combination of fixed pane and sliding, with two fixed panes between two sliding panes. Inside the windows were folding shutters.

The interiors of both buildings have been demolished down to the concrete structure, with only the stairways remaining, including the interior octagonal stairs. The concrete overhangs and eyebrows at the three floors are extant but have lost all of their original decorative wood infill. The decorative wood slats at the entries and lobby bay windows remain, although damaged in many areas.

Kings Lagoon and Garden Lagoon Buildings [7,8]

These buildings were located at the extreme northeastern end of the resort and were built in the early 1960s, predating the other existing larger guest rooms on the property. It is not known who designed the buildings or exactly what they looked like because no photographs or plans were found.<sup>16</sup> The Kings Lagoon Building was three stories and the Garden Lagoon building was two; both were of wood construction. Both were heavily damaged in the 1992 hurricane, with the third floor of the Kings Lagoon Building being ripped almost completely off. They have been demolished save for the foundations and two perpendicular concrete masonry and rock walls. As can be seen on vintage resort maps, they were sited at the north end of the lagoon with views along its length. The buildings were demolished in 2016 and 2017.

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<sup>16</sup> A single undated photo presumably taken from Bridge #2 shows Bridge #3 with the Garden Lagoon Building in the distance, mostly obscured by coconut palms. The building appears to be 2-story with a hipped roof, overhangs at both levels, and paired windows.

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Cottages [9-11]

The King's and Queen's, have been a part of the Coco Palms Resort since its inception in the 1950s; the Prince's Cottages were a later addition. Located all along the mauka side of the lagoon they have been the enduring and iconic view across the lagoon from the main area of the hotel. The three cottage groupings have consistently been comprised of five (5) duplex King's Cottages, four (4) duplex Queen's Cottages, and two (2) duplex Prince's Cottages.

The cottages were single story wood-framed buildings with concrete slab foundations. A double-pitched roof with a steep side-gable sits at the center atop a surrounding low-slope side-gable. The roofs were thatched with dried sugar cane leaves.<sup>17</sup> The thatch was applied on top of battens attached to corrugated roofing. A wood louvered vent was located at the top of the small gable portion of the roof that was finished with lattice.

The cottages were very similar in their layout with separate seating and bedroom areas, a bathroom, and outdoor shower and tub. A 1978 newspaper article described the recently renovated cottages as having wall-to-wall carpeting, indoor and outdoor showers, and a jacuzzi "for the couple who want to make waves."<sup>18</sup> The interior featured low perimeter walls of lava rock topped by wide vertical operable wood louvers; at the interior the lava rock was painted white. The ceilings were wallpapered in a bamboo print and the floors were carpeted. The baths featured the iconic killer clamshell sinks surrounded by gold mosaic tiles. The outdoor shower had conical rock walls and the outdoor tubs were sunken and surrounded by rock walls and greenery.

None of the cottages are extant. The concrete slabs and low rock walls remain at most locations; most retain their stone outdoor showers and tubs. The vertical louvers from King's Cottage #56 have been retained, this being the cottage in which Elvis Presley stayed on his many visits to Coco Palms.

Queen's Audience Hall [12]

The Queen's Audience Hall building also includes the former Library/Museum, the Coconut Palace Suite, the Coconut Palace Meeting Rooms, and their associated kitchen and housekeeping facilities. This amalgam of buildings is located at the northern end of the lagoon, on its mauka side. The Queen's Audience Hall was designed by Wimberly Whisenand Allison and Tong Architects in 1977. Some portions of the structure are remnants of the older Coconut Palace building which was originally built in 1955. The buildings are one story tall but vary greatly in overall height and have varying roof forms. The foundation of all the buildings is a concrete slab.

Located at the southern end of the overall building is a structurally separate building that once contained the Museum and Library. The Library/Museum construction date is unknown but is present in the older site maps and photographs. The Library and Museum spaces occupy the

<sup>17</sup> *Coco Palms Lodge Enlarged*. Honolulu Advertiser, April 12, 1955. pB4.

<sup>18</sup> *The romantic hideaways of Hawaii*. Honolulu Advertiser, June 4, 1978. p.D1.

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western side of the building. The two-bedroom Coconut Palace Suite guestroom is also part of this building and faces the lagoon. It is believed this suite is an addition and part of the Wimberley design renovation. The building is wood-framed with a double-pitched roofline sheathed in wood shake tiles, but historic photos show the roof thatched. The building had wood casement windows and sliding windows over a lower wall of wood louvers, none of which remain.

The Library and Museum have a slab on grade foundation whereas the suite sits on a raised concrete foundation. The Museum had a tall open ceiling with thatching and hanging banners, while the Library had wood floors, wood tongue and groove ceiling, built-in wood and glass display cases, and a fireplace.

The two-bedroom Coconut Palace Suite was considered the "honeymoon suite. It had a sitting room, two bedrooms, two baths, a bar, an outdoor bath, and private patio. Referred to as "Golden Luxury," the suite featured mirrored and lauhala covered walls, shell chandeliers, a bath with shell sink surrounded by gilt green glass mosaic tiles, and an outdoor shower, tub, and shell fountain within a rock wall and fern filled enclosure.

The Queen's Audience Hall, Coconut Palace dining and terrace meeting rooms, and the associated kitchen and housekeeping spaces were combined into one building during the 1977 renovation. The "L" shaped roofline over the Coconut Palace, which fronts the lagoon on two sides, is a steeply pitched double hip. The roofline over the Queen's Audience Hall is a soaring convex gable roof, as form often seen in Tiki Architecture. The roofs are clad with wood shingles but based on historic photos, both were originally thatch. The terrace area, which the two rooms share, has a flat roof as does the back of house areas.

The Coconut Palace dining and meeting rooms are located at the northeastern corner of the building where two sides of the building front the lagoon. The Lagoon sides of the Coconut Palace had full walls of aluminum sliding windows with wood louvers below; the louvers and window frames remain but the windows are no longer in place. The interior volumes of the rooms reflect the height of the tall rooflines and originally had exposed decoratively painted beams with a lauhala mat ceiling, a performer's platform and a wooden dance floor. The walls were accented with gold painted lauhala panels. The dining tables were screened by beaded curtains of kukui nuts, plastic beads, and gilt baby coconuts.<sup>19</sup> On the north side a rock-lined stairway leads down to the long wooden Bridge #4 that lead over the water in front of the Prince's Cottages and to the King's Lagoon and Garden Lagoon Buildings, all of which are no longer extant. The south side was open to the terrace.

The Queen's Audience Hall has a soaring ceiling that was covered in flat woven thatch and natural lauhala banners which hung from the ceiling, along with several large scale decorative ipu and gourds. The walls were covered in lauhala panels and the floors were covered first in lauhala mats and later in floral carpeting. The south focal wall featured a koa wainscot above

<sup>19</sup> Bowman, Pierre. "Hotel blossoms into legend with style and Grace." *The Honolulu Advertiser*, Oct. 22, 1982, p.C1.

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which was a painting depicting a Hawaiian scene at the ancient Weu-Weu fishponds (now the lagoon) and being watched over by Queen Deborah, the last queen of Kauai. This massive painting appears to be a mural but it was an actual canvas artwork adhered to the concrete and plaster wall.

Between the Queen's Audience Hall and the Coconut Palace is an open tiled terrace that overlooks the lagoon. A bar was located on its southern end. Behind the bar was a custom glass mural by artist Joseph Feher<sup>20</sup> depicting a Hawaiian scene with a warriors' fighting canoe. From the terrace a wide staircase leads down to the lagoon and to Bridge #3. Historic photos show that at one time the widened seating area at this bridge was covered with a thatch roof.

The interiors of Queen's Audience Hall building (Queen's Audience Hall, Library/Museum, the Coconut Palace Suite, and the Coconut Palace) have been demolished to their structure. In the associated kitchen and housekeeping facilities all equipment has been removed but the white tile walls and quarry tile floors remain.

House in the Palms and Palms Lanai [13, 14]

The House in the Palms and Palms Lānai were located in the southwest quadrant of the resort area of the district at the location of the original kidney shaped King's Pool. House in the Palms was designed by Wimberly Whisenand Allison and Tong Architects and was built in 1976. It was fashioned after the ca. 1955 Palms Lānai. The buildings are no longer extant but were covered, open-air bar, restaurant, and entertainment spaces. The House in the Palms also encapsulated the original King's Pool (See Pools [D] for a description of this pool's former and current configurations.)

The large hipped roof structure had an open center over the pool and was supported by wood beams with decorative ends and wood columns wrapped in bamboo. The ceiling was covered in lauhala trimmed with bamboo. The space was enclosed by walls only around the kitchen area, which was located on the south side of the building, behind the large bar. The bar sat facing north and was covered in a carved stone art piece by Vince Buono depicting Hawaiian motifs.<sup>21</sup> A large, open covered dining and entertainment area stretched to the north from the bar; located on its makai side was the former King's Pool. On the opposite (east) side of the pool and overlooking the lagoon was an additional seating area that was bounded by a low rock wall with a stone trough planter built onto the top. The roof of the House in the Palms collapsed but the rock walls, bar, pool, and floors remain. The Palms Lānai, which was also just a covered gathering area with a bar has also collapsed.

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<sup>20</sup> Joseph Feher (1908-1987) was a Hungarian-born painter and printmaker specializing in depictions of Polynesian myths. He worked at Bishop Museum as a historian and editor and as an instructor at the Honolulu Academy of Art. He designed and edited the book: *Hawai'i: A Pictorial History*.

<sup>21</sup> The date of the art front-piece is unknown. The motifs included tikis, which manager Grace Guslander frowned upon because the resort was built on sacred ground, but these are said to be the likenesses of posts from the Old Kaua'i House (unknown structure) that were found discarded in Kaua'i dump according to "Bob and Leroy," longtime friends of both Guslander and Buono.

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Chapel in the Palms [15]

The Chapel in the Palms is located along the northeastern edge of the coconut grove, adjacent to the Museum and Library. The small chapel building was designed and built by Universal/Columbia Pictures Studio in 1953 for their production of the movie *Miss Sadie Thompson*. The single-room, wood-framed building sits on a post and pier foundation and has exposed framing at the interior. The steep gable roof has been alternately sheathed in wood and most recently, thatch as evidenced by the corrugated metal roofing topped with battens – no thatch remains. A small steeple with a pyramid hip roof sits atop the main roof near the east end and holds a metal bell. The windows along the sides of the building are simple framed openings covered by lattice. A shed roof extends above the entry door, also on the east end of the building. The bay-shaped altar area is slightly raised and extends past the rear wall of the chapel and is flanked by doorways. A two-part stained-glass window is located above the altar, high in the wall.

Seashell Restaurant [16]

The Seashell Restaurant is located across Kūhiō Highway from the main Coco Palms Resort and is sited overlooking Wailua Beach and the Pacific Ocean. This dramatic round building with its steeply pitched roof and convex beams that extend through the roof was designed by Wimberly Whisenand Allison and Tong Architects and built in 1964.

The restaurant is one story tall and round in plan with irregularly shaped projections along the north side that hold the kitchen and the restrooms. A stone retaining wall extends around the southwest side of the building and is incorporated as a side wall of the northwest projection of the building. This southwest wall directly abuts Kūhiō Highway. A covered curving lanai extends along nearly half of the circular building on the southern side.

The circular portion of the roof has large, built-up rafter tails and at the opposite end the eight rafters extend from the top of the roof, curving outward in a circle. Nestled in the center of the rafters on top of the roof is a large metal hooded vent. The steeply pitched, slightly convex, conical roof has metal shingles and its lower-sloped portion is of built-up roofing, as are the flat restroom and kitchen extension roofs.

The lanai building extension curves around the original roof. The lower pitched lanai roof extension is clad in corrugated metal and is supported by wood beams, forming an open lanai to the west, south and east sides of the core of the restaurant. Within the lanai is a curving blue stone wall that originally delineated two separate outdoor dining areas. The interior of the open lanai has a concrete floor and open beam ceiling with open walls.

The curved walls of the core part of the restaurant are partial height wood panels with built-up wood posts at the south side, and CMU at the north. The main door to the restaurant, at the east side of the building, is a wood four panel double screen door. Doors at the west side and the irregular projections were not accessible. The building originally had fixed louver folding windows atop the exterior wall, some of which remain. The interior of the round building was completely open with no dividing partitions. A semi-circular raised bar area sits against the north wall and the full height walls behind it are clad in circular shaped wood shingle design.

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The ceiling is open beam, with the large, curving rafters prominently visible and with narrow plank roof decking above. The rafters each have a metal band along their length connected with visible bolts at approximately six inches on center. The beams are also decoratively painted. Between the roof and the top of the exterior walls, and between the rafters, there is a screened clerestory. Several sections at the south, east, and west sides of the clerestory have been filled with solid wood panels.

Freestanding umbrella shaped shelters with integrated tables were located on a paved patio area to the east of the restaurant and were part of the original design. Only one remains mostly intact, with four others that only have the wooden center post remaining.

The building is much the same as it was originally designed but shows a fair amount of deterioration, including some visible holes in the roof and foliage growing in, on, and around the building. The original Seashell Restaurant sign, although slightly damaged, has been retained and removed from the site for safekeeping.

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### **Integrity**

Location. The Coco Palms Resort retains a high level of integrity of location in that it has not been moved and all the historic elements either remain in their original location or their foundations provide exact locational and scale information. Also, the location of buildings within the district has remained consistent over the lifetime of the resort. The site maps show that over time, when a newer structure was built, its footprint usually coincided very closely to its predecessor.

Setting. The Coco Palms Resort retains a high level of integrity of setting in that the relationship between features, and the overall layout, has remained essentially the same over the entire life of the resort. The environment in which the resort is situated has been maintained as an exceptional combination of historic elements, both natural and made-made, that provide both a backdrop and an immersive experience.

Materials/Design/Workmanship. The integrity of materials, design, and workmanship have been compromised by hurricanes, climate, time, and fire. The Resort retains a moderate level of integrity of materials. The materials of the natural environment, of the wayfaring elements of the site, and the accessory buildings and structures is quite high. The finish materials and hence the evidence of workmanship at the larger buildings have been substantially removed due to the ravages of climate and time, but these are elements that have been well-documented and are able to be restored or replicated. Many original architectural elements have been salvaged and stored for future reuse or replication. Most of the structural materials of the historic resort buildings are intact. Like the materials, the design is well-documented, and the structural components remain to be built upon. In addition, the Kaua'i Planning Commission has set forward conditions for the issuance of development permits that, among many other requirements, requires the "form and character of the development shall reflect the prior history of the resort and the brand standards of the hotel operator including the usage of similar looking roof and façade material, color, and landscaping."<sup>22</sup>

Feeling and Association. The aspects of feeling and association remain exceptionally high. Despite being overgrown and in a sad state of disrepair, the palpable feeling of history remains. The sense that the property has an ancient and sacred past pervades the experience of the site. The property's development and use as a hotel, and later a resort, with its embodiment of the exuberance of Hawai'i's mid-century Polynesian and Tiki experience is surprisingly tangible. Grace Guslander was able to combine educating the resort's guests about ancient traditions while providing them with a Polynesian tiki-culture vacation. This was not only unforgettable for the guests who were lucky enough to vacation there during its heyday, but this iconic experience has endured and captured the imagination of countless people from around the world via film, photographs, stories, and ongoing tours. From anecdotal evidence gleaned from the myriad of newspaper articles, friends' groups, and websites dedicated to the Coco Palms, and from the continued popularity of the weekly tours through the property, there is without a doubt an enduring connection to the place and the experience that was the Coco Palms Resort, even for those not fortunate enough to have been a guest.

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<sup>22</sup> Dahling, Michael, Planning Commission County of Kaua'i, State of Hawai'i. Letter to Coco Palms Hui, LLC. Undated. TS. (See Additional D for letter in its entirety.)



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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☒

A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☒

B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒

C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐

D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

☐

A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes

☐

B. Removed from its original location

☐

C. A birthplace or grave

☐

D. A cemetery

☐

E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure

☐

F. A commemorative property

☐

G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

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**Period of Significance**

1953-1985

**Significant Dates**

NA

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Grace and Lyle Guslander

Elvis Presley

**Cultural Affiliation**

Hawaiian\*

\*For the Weuweu-Kawai-iki Fishpond (previously listed but a contributing component of the Coco Palms Resort Historic District)

**Architect/Builder**

Wimberley & Cook

Edward Carson Beall & Associates

Bauer, Mori & Lum Architects

Design Associates

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Coco Palms Resort District is significant at the state level under Criteria A, B, and C and under Criterion Consideration E and G. The Lagoon was individually listed on the Hawai'i Register of Historic Places in 2005 and is significant on its own under Criteria B and D as a traditional Hawaiian fishpond. The Coco Palms period of significance spans from 1953, when the property was purchased by Lyle Guslander, to 1985, when Grace Guslander retired as manager, with the most influential years being the 1950s and 1960s. In 1992 it was shuttered after being damaged by Hurricane Iniki.

Coco Palms meets NRHP Criterion A for its association with the development of resorts on Kauai and in Hawaii, and specifically, its role as a Polynesian-style destination resort. The resort meets Criterion B for its association with first owner Lyle (Gus) Guslander and his wife and long-time resort manager, Grace (Buscher) Guslander. The resort is also eligible under Criterion B for Elvis Presley, whose 1961 movie *Blue Hawaii* was filmed there. Despite currently being in derelict condition, Coco Palms meets NRHP Criterion C, as one of the only surviving resorts of its type and period in Hawaii. The hotel buildings are considered contributing resources to the district under Criterion Consideration E and G.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

### CRITERION A

Coco Palms meets NRHP Criterion A for its association with the development of resorts on Kauai and in Hawaii, and specifically, for its role as a Polynesian-style destination resort. Coco Palms Resort grew from a small residential hotel in the early 1950s, to one of Hawaii's earliest and Kauai's only, true resort where visitors were encouraged to remain on the grounds for their entire vacation. Its innovative approach to the entire guest experience and the concerted effort to bring *Hawaiiana* into that experience were surprisingly innovative and unique at the time.

In 1946, shortly after the close of World War II, Inter-island Navigation Steamship Company bought the Lihue Hotel, the only "proper" hotel on Kauai, renaming it the Kaua'i Inn. At that time there was no established tourist travel to Kaua'i and no airport on the island. But Kaua'i, being closer to O'ahu than any of the other outer islands and possessing an incredible wealth of beautiful beaches and scenery, was seen as a prime location for tourists. Gus Guslander, then a manager with the Moana Hotel in Waikiki, recognized its potential.

When the Coconut Palm Lodge was sold to Gus Guslander's new venture, Island Holidays, in 1953 it was a former residence that had been converted into an eight-room lodge. A former military barracks was moved from nearby and provided an additional 16 rooms. When Grace Buscher arrived from O'ahu to manage the property shortly after the purchase, there were "five employees, two hotel guests, no cook and a pesky Lihue Sugar Plantation train that drew constant complaints because of its 3 a.m. wake-up call, when it made its way past the hotel from the plantation to the mill with an overflowing load of sugarcane."<sup>23</sup> At the time the Coco Palms and the Lihue Inn were the only two notable hotels on the entire island of Kaua'i.<sup>24</sup> Coco Palms quickly eclipsed all the other early hotels.

While Guslander busied himself with expanding his outer-island hotel empire, Buscher began a program of upgrades and expansions to the resort that would continue throughout her over 30-year tenure as manager. Six months after she began, the hotel opened to guests under the same Coco Palms Lodge name. It retained the lodge moniker until 1956 when it became the Coco Palms Resort in their advertising and marketing materials. By 1956 there were 82 units with 14 more units planned, 150 guest per night and 75 employees. Coco Palms was pronounced "the largest hotel on any Neighbor island."<sup>25</sup> By 1971 there were 315 rooms and in 1972 a 5-star tennis facility was opened at the far northwest corner of the coconut grove. At some point prior, Grace had also opened the zoo. In 1981 there were 416 rooms with plans to replace 60 of the rooms and add 84 more at north end of resort.<sup>26</sup> By this point Coco Palms had gained the distinction of being one of Hawai'i's oldest hotels. In 1992 there were 390 rooms and 140 employees.<sup>27, 28</sup>

<sup>23</sup> "The rise and fall of the legendary Coco Palms hotel." *Hawai'i Magazine*, June 24, 2016. Accessed online at <https://www.hawaiimagazine.com/content/rise-and-fall-legendary-coco-palms-hotel>, January 2020.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Coll, Ray. "Hotel to Add 14 Units: \$125,000 Expansion Set for Kauai Coco Palms." *The Honolulu Advertiser*, Oct. 15, 1956, p.C4, c1.

<sup>26</sup> "Kaua'i's Coco Palms Planning to Expand," *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, August 26, 1981. p. D-18.

<sup>27</sup> Job market dismal but Tourism's picking up," *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, September 10, 1992. p. E-3.

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On September 11, 1992 Hurricane Iniki hit Kauai. As a result of the Category 4 hurricane with winds hitting 145 miles per hour, the resort suffered significant damage - but not so much so that they weren't able to help the wider community. In the spirit of community and aloha that the Guslander's were known for, rooms were provided for Kaua'i residents who had been displaced by the storm. Rooms were also occupied by construction workers from the other islands who had been brought in to begin repairs around the island. There was no electricity but at least there was shelter within the larger, mostly concrete structures of the resort. Although the resort had weathered multiple storms, floods, and a previous hurricane, it did not bounce back from Iniki due to problems with the insurance, revised building codes, and cultural backlash.

The innovations that Grace instituted were not limited to the aforementioned programs of expansion. The now-famous torch ceremony was first conducted in 1954, just months after the purchase of the resort by Island Holidays. It was one of the first of many innovations that Grace Guslander implemented in order "to develop added Hawaiian atmosphere for the Lodge." Shortly after sunset the lagoon restaurants and lounges were plunged into darkness. On the mauka side of the lagoon, drums would begin to sound, and conch shells were blown. Over a loudspeaker Grace would begin: "Out of the legendary past, Hawai'i calls." As she continued her nightly recitation, hotel employees dressed in malo (traditional Hawaiian loincloth) would run through the resort lighting torches by swinging a torch on a long chain in circles as they ran. This nightly ceremony was the traditional call to dinner and continued throughout the life of the resort. Once a year the Coco Palms staged a much more elaborate version of the nightly torch ceremony which was a re-creation of a traditional Hawaiian ceremony performed to celebrate Queen Debora's birthday.

Another long-standing tradition was the ceremonial planting of coconut trees in the historic coconut grove. Grace believed in the Hawaiian practice of "akua, "which means replenishment and used this practice to sustain the coconut grove. She personally chose who would get to plant a tree and have a plaque placed in their name beneath it. She chose "only those who have contributed to the betterment of Hawai'i," and included world dignitaries such as Frank Sinatra, the Shah of Iran, the VonTrapp Family Singers, Dr. Howard Meeks (founder of Cornell University School of Hotel Management) and the . Local dignitaries included Duke Kahanamoku, Gaylord Wilcox, Patsy Mink, Abraham Akaka, and Hiram Fong.<sup>29</sup>

The resort offered numerous dining, entertainment, and activity options. In addition to the multiple pools, guests could play shuffleboard, croquet, or volleyball. They could take classes in hula, weaving, lei-making, or shell crafts. Across the street from the resort was the beautiful Wailua Beach as well as the 1964 Seashell Restaurant. In the 1980s (and possibly before and/or beyond) they had their own newspaper called the "Coco Palms Gazette." All this was done in a deliberate effort to keep guests returning year after year and staying for weeks at time.

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<sup>28</sup> The reduction in room count from 1991 is likely due to the "gentle facelift" that was underway at the time of the 1992 hurricane.

<sup>29</sup> Grace said that only two people planted a tree that didn't deserve one, and both the trees died. [Penhallow, p.207]

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The Coco Palms has been the scene for many movies over the years. The first movie filmed there was Pagan Love Song in 1950 starring Ester Williams. The Chapel in the Palms was a set-piece built in 1953 for the movie *Miss Sadie Thompson*. Upon completion of the filming Buscher asked that they leave the structure. The building was then used for resort church services – and that was also the beginning of a longstanding Coco Palms wedding tradition, something that at the time was unique to the resort. The chapel was said to be built on the site

of the 1838 church established by Queen Debora, but this might be Grace-fabricated lore like the legend of the frogs invented to quell guests' complaints about the pervasive croaking noises on the property. After the 'legend' was published on the Lagoon Restaurant's menu and a song was written about the legend by Larry Rivera<sup>30</sup>, the cottages with the most frogs then actually began to command a premium rate. Grace had a wide-ranging knowledge of Hawaiian history but was not afraid to embellish the details if it made for a more compelling story for her guests.

Other movies filmed at the Coco Palms include Bird of Paradise (1951), Voodoo Island (1957) with Vincent Price, Naked Paradise (1957), Pirates of the Caribbean IV with Johnny Depp. And even Dinocroc Vs. Supergator (2009). Television shows included Gilligan's Island and Fantasy Island. But it was the 1961 Elvis movie, Blue Hawai'i, that changed everything, both for the Coco Palms and for what tourists to Hawai'i viewed as an authentic Hawai'i experience and a wedding experience that was recreated literally thousands of times. (See Elvis Presley under Criterion B)

A testament to the fact that people responded to the efforts made to make the Coco Palms a truly memorable and unique experience was the fact that the Coco Palms Resort consistently had the highest occupancy rate and the highest visitor return rate in the all the islands. As Grace Guslander was often quoted as saying: "Within these grounds forever shall remain old Hawai'i." A 1971 newspaper article is quoted as saying about the resort:

Grace Buscher has given to Island visitors the Hawaii they came looking for: palm trees, flower-strewn lagoons, thatched cottages, a peaceful beach. Her Coco Palms resort with its quiet surroundings is a blissful contrast to the high-rise blight of Waikiki. Grace Buscher's Hawai'i is created of the romantic verse pictures of a Harry Owens melody.<sup>31</sup>

## CRITERION B

The resort also meets NRHP Criterion B for its association with Lyle (Gus) Guslander and his wife and long-time resort manager, Grace (Buscher) Guslander. Gus Guslander is considered the founder and king of the neighbor island hotel industry. Grace Guslander, who did not become his wife until nearly 15 years into their professional association and after he sold the property, is credited not only with the resort's success but also every unique and innovative aspect of its design and operation. The resort is also eligible under Criterion B for Elvis Presley, the "King of Rock and Roll," whose 1961 movie *Blue Hawaii* was filmed there. Presley's continued patronage throughout the years brought the resort much early exposure and fame.

<sup>30</sup> Larry Rivera (1930- ) was a long-time employee of Coco Palms who regularly performed there and went on to success as a singer, songwriter, and performer. He also continued the tradition of the Coco Palms wedding after the resort was closed in 1992.

<sup>31</sup> Coco Palms is like a Harry Owens Melody," *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, June 27, 1971. p. 25.

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Lyle (Gus) Guslander (1915-1984).

Lyle L. 'Gus' Guslander (1914-1984) is credited with the early vision for the Coco Palms resort, and the development of the Island Holiday empire. Raised in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Guslander started as a bellhop in the hotel industry and worked his way up. After studying at the Cornell University hotel school, he became assistant manager at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco. Guslander moved to Hawaii in 1947 where he served as assistant manager of the Niumalu Hotel, and then manager at the Moana Hotel. While acting as manager of the Moana Hotel he also took on the job of saving the Aloha Week festivities that were floundering at the time, a celebration and famous parade which continues to today, with much credit given to Guslander's early efforts.

While still manager of the Moana, in 1953 Guslander borrowed money to first lease and later purchase the Coco Palm Lodge under the auspices of his new company Island Holidays. His name does not appear on any of the early documents for Island Holidays because he didn't want to jeopardize his position at the Moana for his "intuitive feeling that the "outer islands" would soon play a greater role in the Hawaiian visitor industry."<sup>32</sup> He immediately lured Grace Buscher to Kaua'i to manage the new venture. Grace was also a vice-president of Island Holidays.<sup>33</sup> It was a bold decision on his part. Women in the 1950s generally were not selected for executive roles – and, she had little hotel experience. Together the two began curating the experience of their small, 24-room hotel into what would become the biggest resort complex and hotel chain (with over 400 rooms) in the Neighbor Islands, called "Island Holidays".<sup>34</sup> By August of 1953, the same year Coco Palms was purchased by Island Holidays, the newly formed company announced their second hotel which was to be built on the island of Maui. Island Holidays eventually owned eleven hotels on four islands and operated a very successful tour operation.

Guslander sold the chain to Amfac Inc. for \$20 million in 1969 and became Amfac's vice president for its Hawaii-Pacific resorts. He retired in 1978 but was not able to rest in retirement or stay away from the hotel business. In 1983, he bought the Holiday Isle Hotel in Waikiki back from Amfac. Just a year later he fell ill and underwent multiple heart surgeries, but he did not fully recover. Guslander is credited with not only having the foresight that a vast number of visitors would be coming to Hawaii's shores, but the imagination to envision a resort unlike any other and developing that resort concept into a successful hotel chain and travel company that became one of the largest in the state.

Grace Buscher Guslander (1911-2000)

It was the vision and imagination of Grace Buscher that made Coco Palms Resort the famous destination that it was and her vision that helped shape Hawai'i tourism. She is considered a Hawai'i tourism pioneer and is "credited with establishing the Hawai'i archetype of a Polynesian resort."<sup>35</sup> She integrated Hawaiian and Polynesian culture into the hospitality industry and is

<sup>32</sup> Penhallow, David P. *The Story of the Coco Palms Hotel: The Grace Buscher Guslander Years, 1953-1985*. Lihue: Rice Street Press, 2007, p.15.

<sup>33</sup> *Island Holidays Ltd. To Operate Lodge*, Honolulu Star Bulletin, January 29, 1953, p.C-2.

<sup>34</sup> Reyes, Donna. "Gus' Guslander dies at 69." Honolulu Advertiser, April 22, 1984, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> *Grace Guslander, visionary hotelier, dies, She put magic into Marketing*. Honolulu Advertiser, April 6, 2000. p.B1, B4.

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quoted as saying "Coco Palms is fashioned from materials that are the islands: beauty, warmth, friendliness, music....the things from which all good legends are made." Grace worked hard to provide jobs for native Hawaiians and employees said that, although a perfectionist and taskmaster, she helped them learn to appreciate their own culture.

In 1953, at the age of 43, Buscher arrived on Kaua'i to take the reins of the Coco Palm Lodge, not really knowing what she was getting herself into. Armed with some managerial experience from a hotel in her home state of Pennsylvania, bookkeeping skills, and a love for Hawaiian history, Buscher set out to mold a successful and unique hotel. She decided on a commitment to cleanliness, entertainment, and to serving the best food on the island. Her first duties then, were to find a chef, thoroughly clean the place, and begin to market the hotel with emphasis on the lagoon and coconut grove rather than the beach across the highway, which might seem the more obvious way to go. Her aim was to differentiate Hawai'i from other "sun and fun" destinations by emphasizing the history and culture of Hawai'i.

For Grace for showmanship was also important. Shortly after taking over the management of the hotel she instituted the nightly torch lighting ceremony, which at the time was completely unique and has since become a ubiquitous event at Hawai'i venues. As a prelude to the torch lighting, she hosted nightly cocktail parties to which she would invite up to 150 hotel guests and local Kaua'i residents. Then later in the evening she would dine with a small group of select hotel guests, regaling them with hotel stories and Hawaiian lore. Grace knew her guests by name and kept in contact with many of them, which no doubt contributed to the Coco Palms having the highest percentage of return guests of any hotel in the state.

In 1965 Grace won the world title of Hotel Manager of the Year from the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA) for "bringing acclaim to Hawaii by keeping alive the traditions of Hawai'i that are its greatest visitor attraction and finest asset."<sup>36</sup> She was also the first woman to ever win the International Hotel, Motel, and Restaurant Association "Man of the Year" award in 1979, to which she said thank you – but that they might want to considering renaming the award.

In October of 2010, a large group of friends, guests, and former employees of Grace gathered on Kaua'i to honor the "grande dame of Hawaiian hospitality" to celebrate what would have been her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday to reminisce about her and their time at the Coco Palms Resort.

The atmosphere she created was reputed to be the most authentic Hawaiian hotel in Hawai'i, from the hotel's Hawaiian-influenced furnishings to the ceremonies on the grounds honoring Hawaiian traditions. In a 1982 newspaper article, shortly before her retirement, Grace said that "Coco Palms isn't really a hotel. It's sort of an outpost to spell Hawai'i. You can't explain it. There's no word. It's a mystique. People come back because it calls them. It isn't people. It's the place."<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Penhallow, David P. *The Story of the Coco Palms Hotel: The Grace Buscher Guslander Years, 1953-1985*. Lihue: Rice Street Press, 2007, p.250.

<sup>37</sup> Bowman, Pierre. "Hotel blossoms into legend with style and Grace." *The Honolulu Advertiser*, Oct. 22, 1982, p.C1.

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Elvis Presley (1935-1977). Elvis Presley crooning the Hawaiian Wedding Song while standing atop a flower-laden double canoe floating down the Coco Palms lagoon is a cinematic moment that has gone on to define the romantic Hawaii experience in popular culture. This scene, more than any other, represents the fantasy that Hawai'i is to the world and has likely done as much for Hawai'i tourism as any other singular image.

Approximately twenty minutes of the 1961 movie *Blue Hawaii*, which starred Elvis, was filmed on the grounds of the hotel, including the climactic and now iconic wedding scene in which Elvis's character marries his sweetheart played by actress Joan Blackman. Also featured in the film were the cottages (both interior and exterior, including a shot of Elvis washing up at a shell sink), the walkways along the lagoon and through the coconut grove, the entry drive and valet station, the Huli Pit, Chapel in the Palms, and the original King's Pool (now part of the Palace in the Palms), among others. Elvis, along with the cast and crew of the film, stayed at the resort while filming. Elvis returned to the Coco Palms on numerous occasions, and also visited with his wife, Priscilla and their daughter Lisa Marie, typically staying in the King's Cottage (number 56 at the time) which has become known as the Elvis Cottage.<sup>38</sup>

**CRITERION C**

Despite currently being in derelict condition, Coco Palms meets NRHP Criterion C, as one of the only surviving resorts of its type and period in Hawaii. Its distinctive Polynesian fantasyland architecture included relatively small-scale buildings with highly exaggerated decorative elements that were designed to take advantage of the outdoor lifestyle allowed by the Hawaiian climate and whose low-rise forms were designed to convey the popularized Hawaiian experience and a feeling of Polynesia. But these experiences and feelings would not have felt as authentic and enduring without the site onto which these buildings were constructed. The site's private and rural character, the expansive historic coconut grove, the historic lagoon, the tropical landscaping, and the Pacific Ocean within sight – all these elements combine to give the overall property a singular Hawaiian sense of place and provided an immersive experience for guests that represents a “significant and distinguishable entity.”

**Lagoon**

**CRITERIA B and D**

The lagoon is individually listed on the Hawai'i Register of Historic Places and is significant on its own under Criteria B and D as a traditional Hawaiian fishpond. It was owned by a member of the ali'i in at least the nineteenth century and possibly pre-dating this time period back before Western Contact. In the mid-nineteenth century, it was awarded to Debora Kapule, the queen of Kaua'i. She was present during many of the important events that occurred in the Hawaiian Islands after the first contact with Western explorers. She was also one of the first of the ali'i to convert to Christianity and was instrumental in establishing missions at Waimea and a short-lived mission near her lands in Wailua. On her lands in Wailua were the two fishponds, Weuweu and Kawai-iki, which were stocked with fish and played an important role in the subsistence strategies of native Hawaiians.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> An interesting side note: During his stay in Hawai'i for the filming of *Blue Hawaii*, Elvis performed a charity concert on O'ahu to help fund the construction of the Albert Preis designed Arizona Memorial.

<sup>39</sup> Excerpted from Hal Hammatt, Hawai'i Register of Historic Places Nomination for Weuweu-Kawa'i-iki Fishpond, 2005.



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### CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS E and G.

National Park Service application of the Criterion Considerations states that “components of eligible historic districts do not have to meet the special criteria considerations unless they make up the majority of the district or are the focal point of the district.” The buildings at Coco Palms do make up the majority of discrete district components but it can be argued that they are not the primary focal point, that it is the site features that envelope the buildings that is the primary and enduring centerpiece. Despite the “exemption,” Coco Palms still meets eligibility under both these criteria.

When the Coco Palms buildings, in their current dilapidated or demolished condition, are viewed in conjunction with the Kaua'i County approved restoration/redevelopment plan, the hotel buildings are considered contributing resources to the district under Criterion Consideration E. Criterion E says reconstructed properties will qualify if: 1) they are integral parts of districts that do meet the criteria, or 2) are reconstructed buildings that, when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, or 3) when no other building or structure with the same association has survived. The buildings at Coco Palms meet all these criteria: they are integral to the Coco Palms Resort District. They will be accurately reconstructed within the existing historic buildings' structural framework or rebuilt on the existing foundation with some historic walls and extant features to remain.<sup>40</sup> The buildings are well-documented and individual original finish components have been retained for reuse and replication.

Criterion G states that a property that is less than 50 years old is eligible for the National Register if it is of exceptional importance. The period of significance for the Coco Palms Resort is from its inception in 1953 to 1985 when Grace Guslander retired. The era of Grace Buscher Guslander, spanning 32 years, defined not only this property but the Hawai'i hospitality industry. She was an early innovator and influenced the Hawai'i tourism industry and the visitor experience for her entire tenure at the resort, which meets the criterion for a property that continues to achieve significance into a period less than fifty years.

A few of the buildings at the resort were constructed within the last fifty years, with the newest of those built in the mid-1970s, making them just short of the 50-year mark. The criterion also states that districts do not need to meet the Criterion G if only a few of the properties are newer than 50 years. And it is noteworthy that the nearly every contributing building and structure has been in its current location and footprint since the very early days of the resort, as evidenced by the site maps spanning the entire period of significance.

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<sup>40</sup> Under the redevelopment plan, the Cottages are the only buildings that are designed to appear significantly different from the original. Due to new county codes, the cottages must be built on stilts because the entire site is within both the tsunami flood zone and the Wailua River flood zone. The new cottages will again be duplexes and will replicate the historic floor plans. (The multi-story buildings will employ a system of moveable grade-level flood gates since their habitable spaces are already raised.)

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## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### **The Architects of Coco Palms**

The built environment at Coco Palms is the vision of Gus and Grace Guslander. The architecture itself cannot be attributed to a single architect but represents a who's-who of prominent mid-century Hawai'i architecture firms.

#### **Wimberley & Cook (Wimberley Allison Tong & Goo)**

George J. "Pete" Wimberley (1914-1995), who's firm Wimberley & Cook, then Wimberly, Whisenand, Allison and Tong, and later Wimberly, Whisenand, Allison, Tong & Goo, has been identified as a global leader in hospitality design was very influential at Coco Palms. His work is known for its use of local materials such as coral stone, lava rock, wood beams, thatch, bamboo, and glass. He liked to employ vernacular design which expressed itself in ways such as flowing indoor/outdoor open spaces. Large dramatic roofs with wide eaves; and the use traditional patterns and motifs derived from the cultures of the Pacific. Although not all the buildings at Coco Palms were designed by Wimberley's now iconic firm, the resort's collection of buildings, structures, and landscapes work together to form a cohesive whole "Polynesian-style" resort with Wimberley's contributions guiding its design.

#### **Edward Carson Beall & Associates**

A Palos Verdes, CA architecture firm known for their apartments, hotel and restaurant design and were also responsible for Whaler's Village and museum in Lahaina, Maui.

#### **Bauer, Mori & Lum Architects**

Bauer, Lum, and Mori worked on the plans for the development of Hawaii Kai, and in 1966 designed the Rainbow Tower and Rainbow Bazaar at the Hawaiian Village, which Conrad Hilton in 1961 purchased from Henry J Kaiser. Architects Benjamin Lum and Art Mori also worked with Bauer on Henry J. Kaiser's residential estate in Portlock.

#### **Design Associates**

Design Associates, Ltd. was formed in 1958 by L. Harold Whitaker, Richard Dennis, and Frank Slavsky. This award-winning firm, with offices in the International Marketplace by 1961, designed custom residences, a low-rise dormitory at UH East West Center, residential models for Haiku Plantations in Kaneohe, and Niu Estates in East Oahu, an apartment complex in Waikiki, Waikiki International Terminal, the Puu Ali'i townhouse complex (with Allen Kajioka & Associates, Ltd) in the late 1970s, and Haiku Knolls in the early 1980s. Their modern designs were often suited to the Hawaii climate and celebrated the transition from the outdoors into the interior.

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### Coco Palms Chain of Ownership

The area surrounding and including the district was the religious and political center of Kaua'i during pre-contact and early post-contact times and it contained more heiau<sup>41</sup> than any other location on Kaua'i. There are still four heiau within walking distance of the Coco Palms Resort.

The early Hawaiians did not adhere to western land ownership and instead used a land division system where an ali'i (or chieftain) was given management of swaths of land that extended from the mountains to the sea meant to provide all the natural requirements of the inhabitants. In the mid-nineteenth century the Great Māhele divided the land between the king, the government, the island chieftains, and the tenants of the land. During this time and following a redistribution of Kaua'i lands following a thwarted Kaua'i Rebellion in 1824, the lands belonged to and/or fell under the management of Queen Debora Ha'akulou Kapule, the favorite wife of King Kaumuali'i of Kaua'i. Records show that she had her house on the land at or near the Wailua fishponds in the early 1840s. Queen Debora (1798-1853) helped the first missionaries to the island of Kaua'i become establish and was an early convert to Christianity. She founded a Christian church near the mouth of the Wailua River, some say on the same spot as the Coco Palms Chapel in the Palms, but that has not been verified. Her personal residence was also said to be on the property and that she operated an inn for travelers, but this too could not be verified.

In 1890 the land mauka of the fishponds was leased to Ernst Lindeman, a German immigrant who, by 1896 had planted a 2000 tree coconut grove with coconuts from Samoa in order to produce copra (dried coconut meat) used to make coconut oil. Lindeman hoped to operate a vast copra empire, as part of a fledgling coconut oil boom on Kaua'i, but he was unaware of how long the trees took to mature and the plantation was a failure. Today, this part of Kaua'i is often referred to as the Coconut Coast because of the vast coconut groves along the coastline, with many of the trees outliving their expected lifespan.<sup>42</sup> Lindeman then turned to olive trees, one of which remains on the site near the Chapel in the Palms. This venture too failed because the Hawaiian climate was too warm for the crop.

Alfred D. Hills, proprietor of Lihue Ice and Electric Co., owned the property in the early twentieth century. He started an inn with a "family residence converted into a lodge with eight rooms and a kitchen."<sup>43</sup> This expanded into the Garden Island Hotel, a modest "24-room roadside lodge" that had its grand opening in December 1946.<sup>44</sup> The name was later changed to the Coco Palms Lodge. In 1952, his then widow, Vida Hills, first leased the property for \$25,000 and then later sold it for \$150,000 to Lyle Guslander of Island Holiday, Ltd.<sup>45</sup> Coco Palms was managed from

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<sup>41</sup> Ancient Hawaiian temples or sacred sites usually consisting of rock platforms and structures, with or without additional less permanent structures built upon them. They were used for a variety of Hawaiian ceremonial, religious, cultural, and healing or health purposes.

<sup>42</sup> Coconut palms produce their first fruit in six to ten years, with peak production reached after 15 to 20 years. Coconut palms continue fruiting throughout their lifespan, up to 80 years.

<sup>43</sup> "400 Help Celebrate Hotel's 12th Year," *Honolulu Advertiser*, Jan. 26, 1965. p. B-1.

<sup>44</sup> "Formal Opening Garden Island Hotel" (advert). *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, December 6, 1946. p 19.

<sup>45</sup> Guslander was much later quoted as saying "the Korean War was going on and nobody wanted the place."

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the beginning by Grace Buscher, later Grace Guslander. The Coco Palms Lodge opened under her management on January 25, 1953.

In 1969 Guslander sold Island Holidays, including the Coco Palms to Amfac, Inc. By this time Island Holidays consisted of a portfolio of seven hotels on four islands with a total of 1,115 rooms.<sup>46</sup>  
<sup>47</sup> Guslander subsequently became a vice-president at Amfac, Grace and Gus married, and Grace stayed on as manager of the Coco Palms.

In 1985 the property was sold to Wailua Associates, a California company, and then it immediately changed hands again, this time to Park Lane Hotels International, a Chinese company, who undertook a "gentle facelift." Then in 1992 Hurricane Iniki struck. Disputes with the insurance company prevented Coco Palms from reopening. The insurance dispute lasted until 2003 when the owner and the insurance company finally reached an agreement. By this time the owner was not interested in repairing and reopening the resort and placed Coco Palms up for sale. It was bought by Prudential Insurance in 2006. By 2007 there were plans to totally redevelop the resort portion of the property while retaining the lagoon and the coconut grove. Sales were brisk for the one, two, and three-bedroom condominium units starting at over \$1million, but ultimately the numbers didn't work, and the project was cancelled and the purchasers were refunded their deposits.

Around this time the Friends of Coco Palms was formed to create a community-focused redevelopment. They received a \$250,000 grant from the Hawai'i legislature in 2008 to develop a plan to for the proposal. Shortly thereafter the property was again purchased, and the Friends group returned their grant money and disbanded.

The current owner is Coco Palms Hui whose parent company has a portfolio of completed preservation and adaptive-reuse work with a focus on "green" developments. They have plans to renovate and restore the property employing Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits.

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<sup>46</sup> Four hotels on Kaua'i, and one each on Maui, O'ahu, and the Big Island.

<sup>47</sup> "\$20 Million Stock Deal." *Honolulu Advertiser*, January 18, 1969, p1.

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Krauss, Bob. *400 Help Celebrate Hotel's 12<sup>th</sup> Year*. Jan. 26, 1965. pB1.

*Hurricane: Kaua'i getting back on its feet*. September 16, 1992, p.1.

*No Ordinary Dedication at Coco Palms, Another Grace Buscher Spectacular*. May 27, 1968. p10.

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Reyes, Donna. *'Local boy' hotel magnate 'Gus' Guslander dies at 69*, April 22, 1984, p.1.  
TenBruggencate, Jan. *History complicates Coco Palms plan*. February 7, 2000, page B-1.  
TenBruggencate, Jan. *Grace Guslander, visionary hotelier, dies*. April 6, 2000, p.B1.  
  
TenBruggencate, Jan. *Sale of Coco Palms Hotel still on track*. October 30, 2001.  
  
Turner, Charles. *Amfac Buys Guslander Hotels*. January 18, 1969, p.1.

### **Honolulu Star Advertiser**

*Guslander to Manage Isle Hotel Chain*. October 16, 1953, p.11.  
Schaefers, Allison, *Past is present at decaying hotel*, December 12, 2010, p. D1.

### **Honolulu Star Bulletin**

Adams, Helene. *Along the Miracle Mile*. March 28, 1959, p.2.  
Black, Cobey. *A Wing and a Prayer And a Good Time by All*. April 27, 1957, p.2.  
Ching, Harold. *Father Mac is Back – "No Place Like Hawai'i."* July 14, 1953, p. A6.  
*Coco Palms to host clay court contest*. June 8, 1986, p.D4.  
Formal Opening Garden Island Hotel (advertisement). December 6, 1946. p 19.  
Hulse, Jerry, *Coco Palms is like a Harry Owens Melody*, June 27, 1971. p. 25.  
*Island Holidays Ltd. To Operate Lodge*, January 29, 1953, p.C2.  
*Kaua'i's Coco Palms Planning to Expand*. August 26, 1981, p.B16.  
Taylor, Clarice. *Little Tales all about Hawai'i: Ready Made Church*. March 18, 1949.  
*New Building Dedicated at Coco Palms Hotel*. January 26, 1965. pC5.  
Waters, Mark. *New Building Dedicated at Coco Palms Hotel*, Jan. 26, 1965.

### **Los Angeles Times**

Hulse, Jerry. *The House of Happy Talk: Coconut Paradise*. March 8, 1964, p.1, Travel Section.

### **Orange County Register**

Warner, Gary A. *Goodbye, and maybe hello, to the famed Hawaiian hotel*. October 8, 2000, from Coco-Palms.com website.

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***Pacific Business News***

Kamhis, Jacob. *Coco Palms to be razed; Rebuild hinges on insurance*. July 4, 1994.

Architectural Drawings:

Digital copies of the drawings referenced for this report were in large part illegible due to excessive reproduction. The following information is what was gleaned from the various drawing sets used.

Architects Hawaii

Demolition Site Plan – drawing dated 2006.

Arthur Y. Mori & Associates

Admin/Top of Palms – drawings dated 1983?

Bauer – Mori Architects

Queens Pool Bar & Grill – drawing date illegible.

Bauer, Mori and Lum Architects

Shell Drawings – drawings dated 1967? and 1975?

Ali'i Kai II – drawings dated 1969?

Design Associates, Ltd. (Designer L. Harold Whitaker. Architects Ted Crane and Don C.W. Dumlao

Flame Room, Lagoon Terrace – drawings dated 1967?

Edward Carson Beall and Associates

Ali'i Kai I – drawings dated 1972.

Ali'i Kai II – drawings dated 1975.

Thomas Lum & Associates

Shell (revised foundation) – drawing date illegible.

Wimberly, Whisenand, Allison & Tong.

Seashell Restaurant ("Coco Palms Colony Beach Club") – drawings dated 1965?

Lobby ("New Administration Building for Coco Palms") – drawings dated 1963?

Flame Room/Pool Bar - date illegible.

Wimberly, Whisenand, Allison, Tong and Goo.

House in the Palms – drawings dated 1976.

Queens Audience Hall – drawings dated 1976.



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**Historic Photos and Other Graphic Images:**

Photograph of Elvis Presley, inside one of the King's Cottages: <http://www.elvis-collectors.com/candid-central/lennon68.html>, accessed on January 15, 2020.

Hotel map showing the grounds of Coco Palms: <http://sometimes-interesting.com/2014/01/19/forgotten-kaui-jewel-the-coco-palms/>, accessed on January 16, 2020.

Photograph of interior of Lobby: <http://i0.wp.com/sometimes-interesting.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/coco-25-lobby-inside.jpg>, accessed on January 15, 2020.

Photograph of view outside the Lagoon Dining Room:  
<http://www.tikiroom.com/tikicentral/bb/viewtopic.php?topic=29331&forum=2&vpost=652496>,  
accessed on January 15, 2020.

Photograph of Lagoon Dining Room: Penhallow, David P. *The Story of the Coco Palms Hotel: The Grace Buscher Guslander Years. 1953-1985*. Lihue: Rice Street Press. 2007. P. 43.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested  
☒ previously listed in the National Register (fishpond/lagoon only)  
☒ previously determined eligible by the National Register  
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark  
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

☒ State Historic Preservation Office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency  
☐ Local government  
☐ University  
☐ Other  
Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 32

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 22.049836 Longitude: -159.335843

2. Latitude: Longitude:

3. Latitude: Longitude:

4. Latitude: Longitude:

Or

### UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone: Easting: Northing:

2. Zone: Easting: Northing:

3. Zone: Easting: Northing:

4. Zone: Easting: Northing:

### Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundaries correspond to TMKs (4) 1-003:007, (4) 1-003:004, (4) 1-003:005, (4) 1-003:017, and (4) 1-003:044 a roughly polygonal collection of parcels lot on the west side of Kūhiō Highway, Kapaa, County of Kauai, State of Hawai'i. The Coco Palms Resort is bounded by Haleilio Road to the north, Kuamo'o Road and the Wailua River to the south, Kūhiō Highway and Wailua Beach to the east, and the Wailua Drainage Canal and conservation land to the west. A single discontinuous resource, the Seashell Restaurant, is located beachside, across Kūhiō Highway from the northern end of the Resort on approximately .2 acres comprising TMKs (4) 1-005:014 and (4) 1-005:017.

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**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary was selected because it represents the legal boundary of the property and encompasses the grounds of the historic resort which encompass the district.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Angie Westfall, Architectural Historian

organization: Mason Architects, Inc.

street & number: 119 Merchant Street

city or town: Honolulu state: Hawaii zip code: 96813

e-mail aw@masonarch.com

telephone: 808.536.0556

date: January, 2020

COCO PALMS RESORT

Name of Property

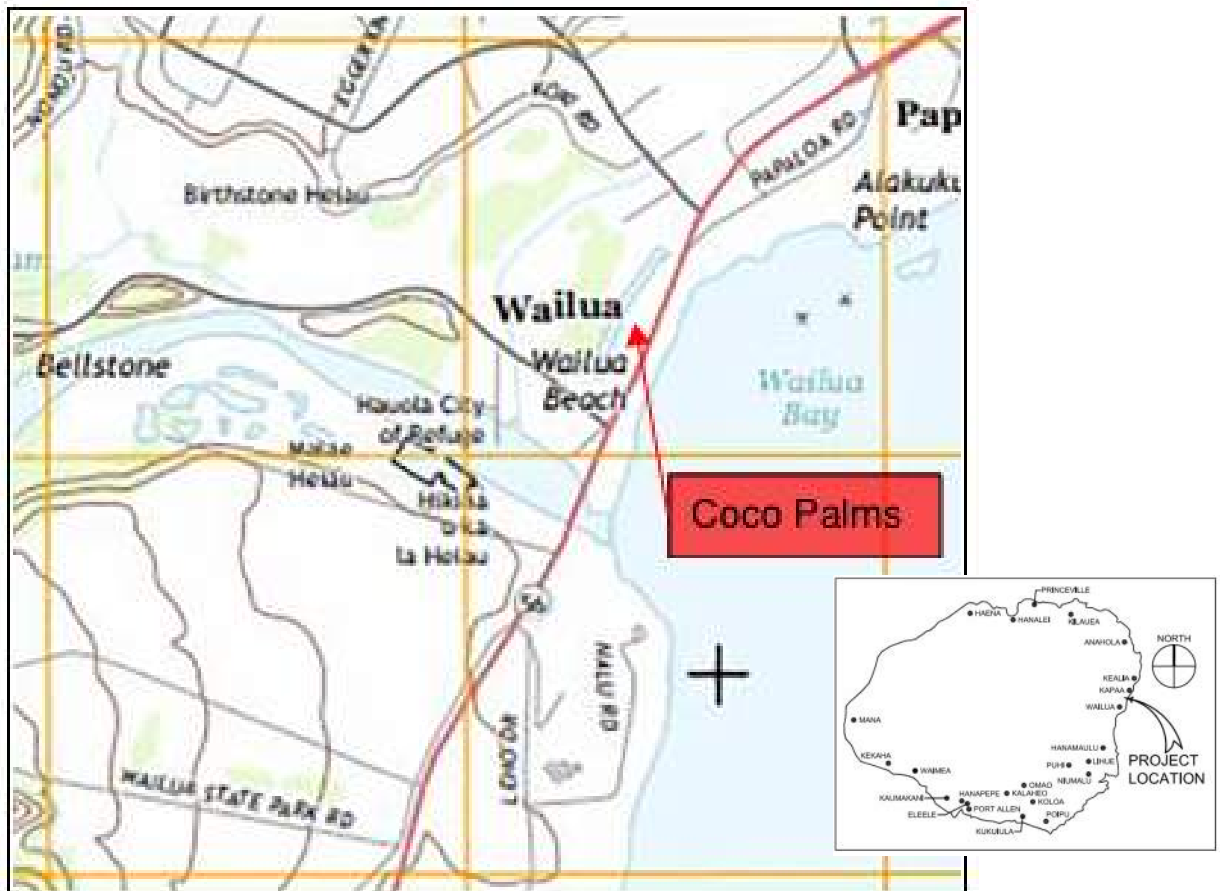
**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

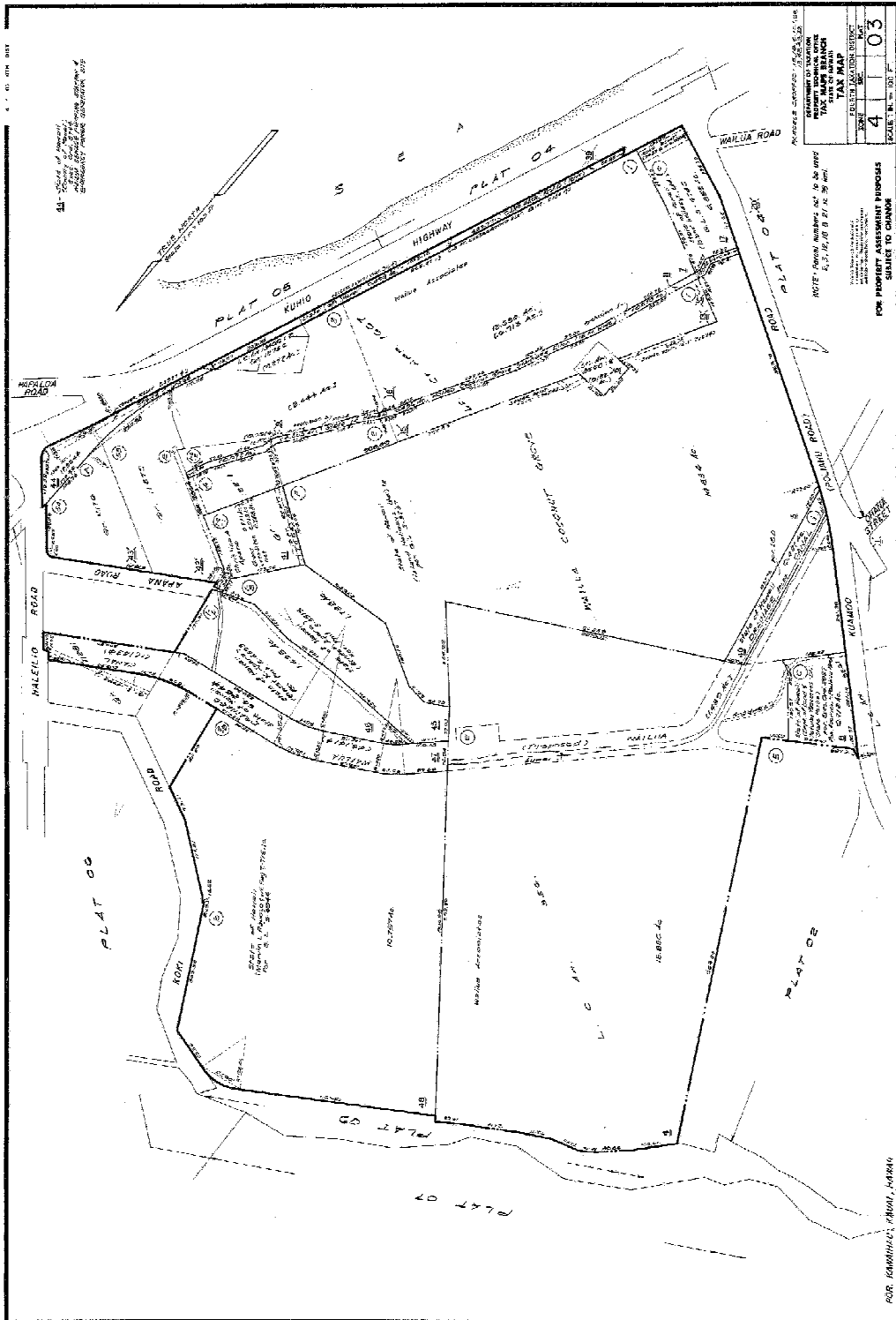
- **Maps.**



USGS Kauai Quadrangle, 7.5 Minute Series, 2013. (Location added)

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Plat Map for Coco Palms Resort

**COCO PALMS RESORT**

Name of Property

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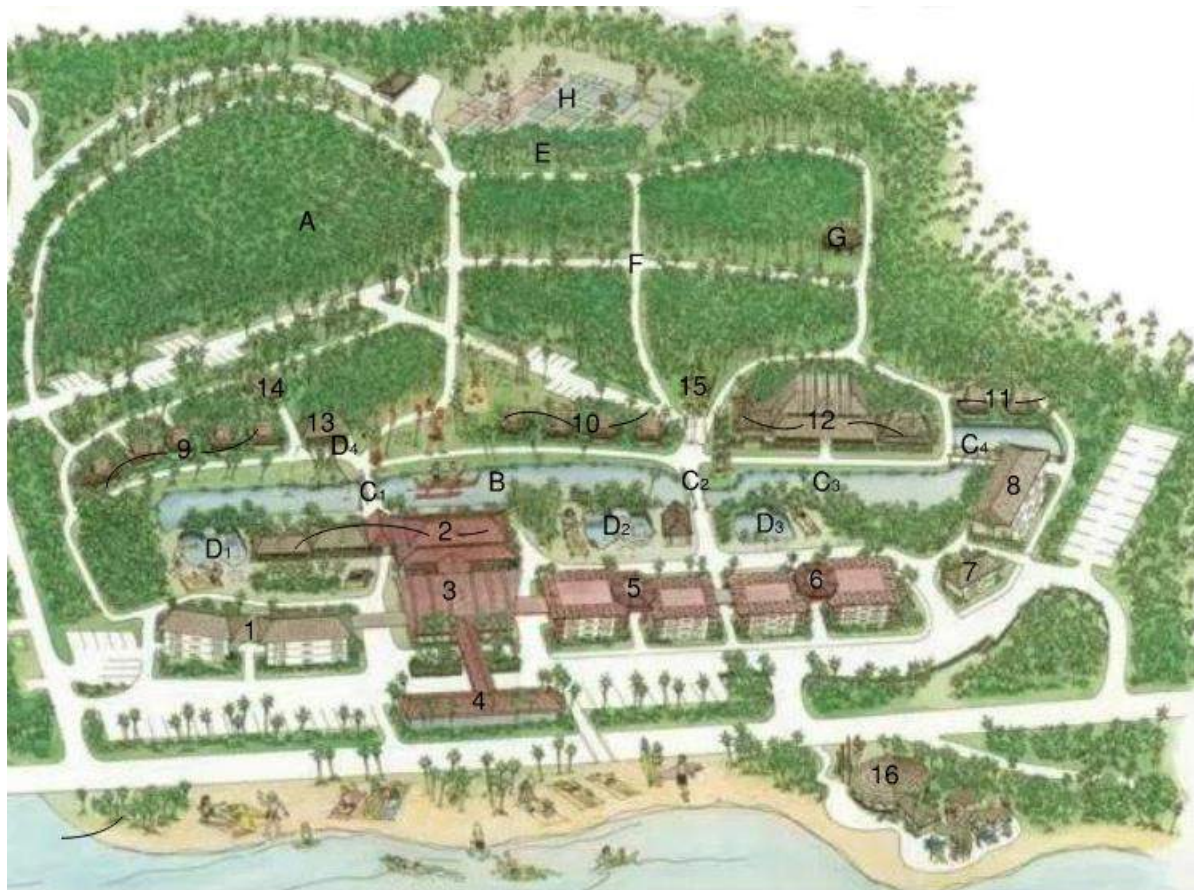
County and State

• **District Resources.**

**Coco Palms Resort  
Historic District Resources List**

[Letters = Sites, Structures, Objects | Numbers = Buildings]

Building Name	Map Key #	Year Built	Architect	Description	Current Condition	Contributing
COCONUT GROVE	A	1896	NA	Predates resort and contributes to historic setting	Good - but overgrown	YES
LAGOON (former fishpond)	B	Unknown	NA	Predates resort and contributes to historic setting	Good	YES
BRIDGES	C	Unknown	NA	1 concrete bridge and 3 wood bridges across the lagoon	Bridge 1: Good, Bridges 2-4: Poor	YES
POOLS (4)	D		Unknown	3 swimming pools and 1 reflecting pool	Fair	YES
ZOO	E	1955	Unknown	Chain-link cages	Fair - but overgrown	YES
WALKWAYS	F	1955	Unknown	Asphalt and concrete	Fair	YES
COCONUT GROVE THATCH SHELTERS	G	1954 -	Unknown	Various shelters, enclosures	Fair to Poor	YES
TENNIS FACILITY	H	1974	Unknown	9 tennis courts and pro shop	Overgrown	YES



Historic map of Coco Palms property (c.1980s) with key added.

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Building Name	Map Key #	Year Built	Architect	Description	Current Condition	Contributing
SHELL BLDG	1	1970	Bauer, Mori & Lum Architects	3-story guest room building	Structural frame only	YES
LAGOON TERRACE AND DINING ROOM	2	1968	Wimberly Whisenand Allison and Tong	Dining, bar, and kitchens	1st floor fair 2nd floor partially demolished	YES
MAIN LOBBY	3	1964	Wimberly Whisenand Allison and Tong	Lobby	Destroyed by Fire in 2014	YES
SHOPPING & TRAVEL CENTER	4	1955/1974	Unknown/Wimberly Whisenand Allison and Tong	Retail Building	Interior: finishes removed Exterior: Fair	YES
ALI'I KAI I BLDG	5	1972	Edward Carson Beall & Associates	3-story guest room building	Structural frame only	YES
ALI'I KAI II BLDG	6	1976	Edward Carson Beall & Associates	3-story guest room building	Structural frame only	YES
KING'S LAGOON BLDG	7	1962 / 1969	Unknown	2-story guest room building	Foundation and low walls only	YES
GARDEN LAGOON BLDG	8	1964	Unknown	2-story guest room building	Foundation and low walls only	YES
KING'S COTTAGES (5)	9	1955	Unknown	Duplex guest rooms	Foundation and low walls only	YES
QUEEN'S COTTAGES (4)	10	1954	Unknown	Duplex guest rooms	Foundation and low walls only	YES
PRINCE COTTAGES (2)	11	1977	Unknown	Duplex guest rooms	Foundation and low walls only	YES
QUEEN'S AUDIENCE HALL	12	1955/1977	Unknown/Wimberly Whisenand Allison and Tong	Dining, bar, and kitchens	Interior: finishes removed Exterior: Fair	YES
LIBRARY/MUSEUM		1955/1964	Unknown/Wimberly Whisenand Allison and Tong	Library and Museum	Interior: finishes removed Exterior: Fair	YES
COCONUT PALACE SUITE		1955	Unknown/Wimberly Whisenand Allison and Tong	2-bedroom honeymoon suite	Interior: finishes removed Exterior: Fair	YES
COCONUT PALACE MEETING ROOMS		1955	Unknown/Wimberly Whisenand Allison and Tong	Dining, bar, and kitchens	Interior: finishes removed Exterior: Fair	YES
HOUSEKEEPING BLDG		1954	Unknown/Wimberly Whisenand Allison and Tong	Back of house	Interior: finishes removed Exterior: Fair	YES
HOUSE IN THE PALMS (Luau Hut)	13	1955/1976	Unknown/Wimberly Whisenand Allison and Tong	Open air dining, bar, and kitchens	Foundation, pool, and bar only	YES
PALMS LANAI (Game Room)	14	1955	Unknown	Open air dining and bar	Foundation only	YES
CHAPEL IN PALMS	15	c. 1955	Universal/Columbia Picture Studios	Wood-framed church	Fair	YES
SEASHELL RESTAURANT	16	1965	Unknown/Wimberly Whisenand Allison and Tong	Round restaurant	Fair	YES

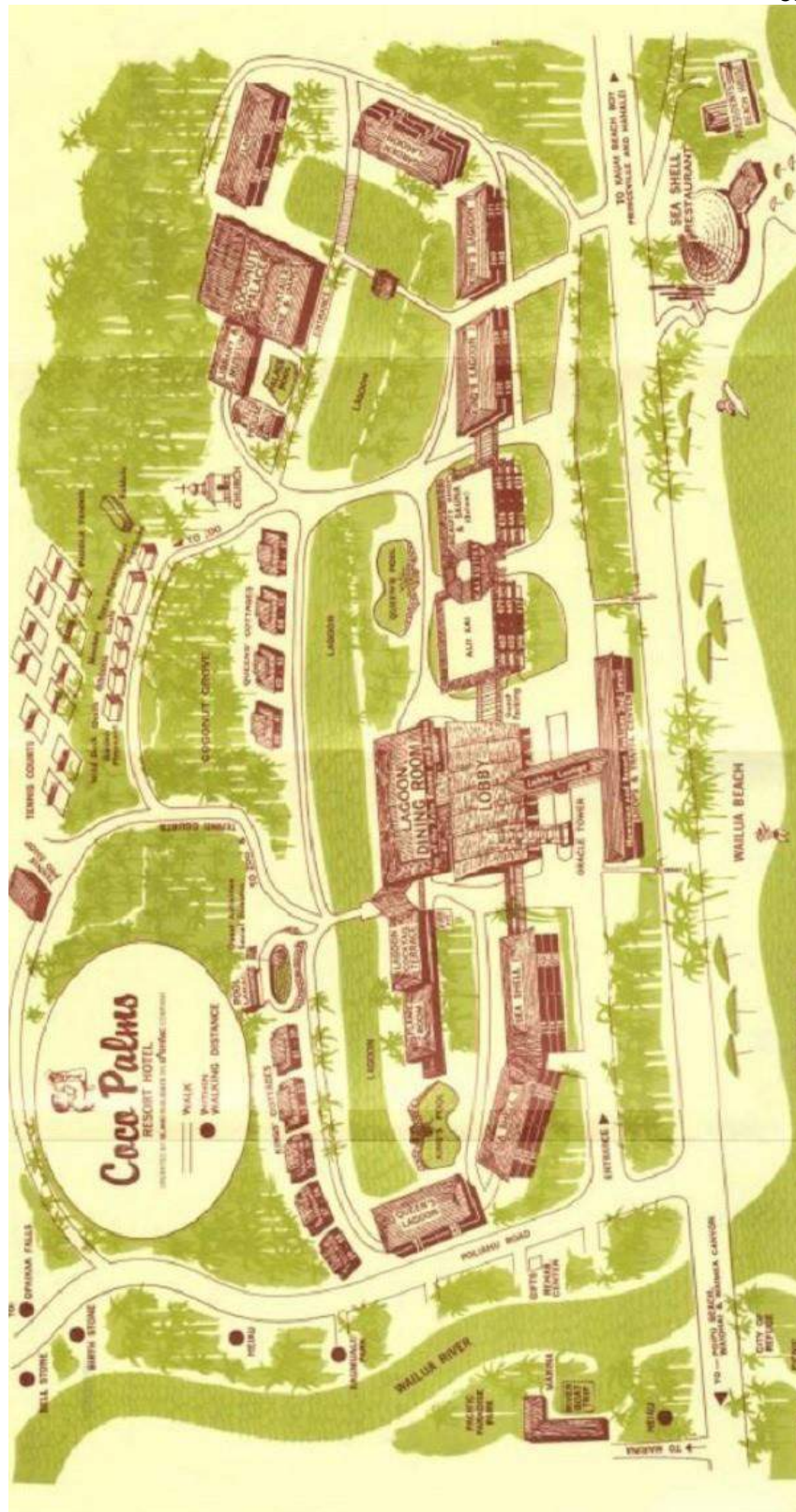


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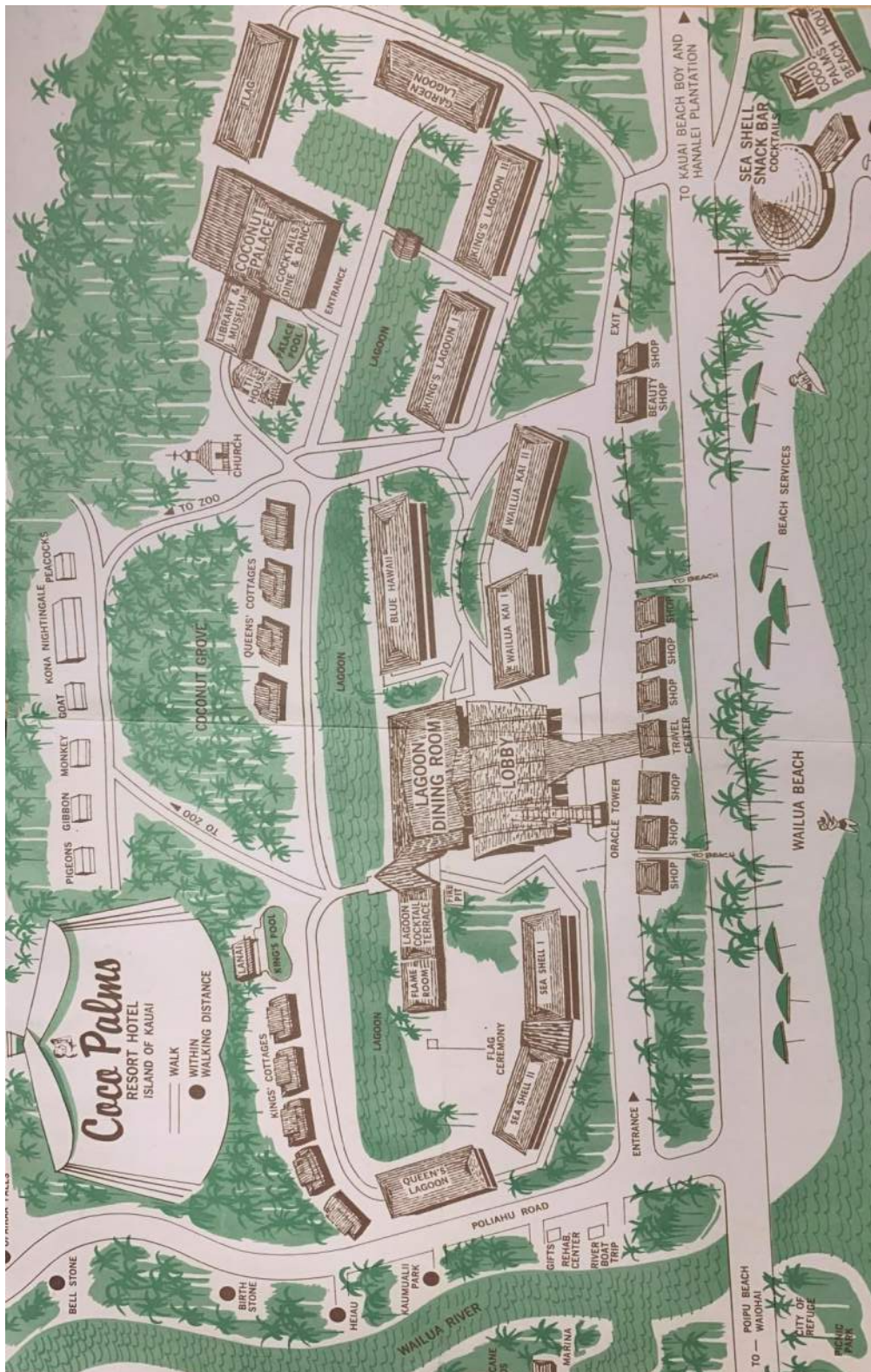


Historic map of Coco Palms property (c.1970s)



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Historic map of Coco Palms property (c.1965)

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• **Kaua'i County Coco Palms Improvement Conditions.**

Sean Mahoney  
Chair

H. Kanoe Ahuna  
Roy Ho

Wayne Katayama  
Kimo M. Keawe

Glenda Nogami-Streufert  
Members



Michael A. Dahilig  
Clerk of the Commission

**PLANNING COMMISSION**  
County of Kaua'i, State of Hawai'i  
4444 Rice Street  
Kapule Building, Suite A-473  
Lihue, Hawai'i 96766-1326  
TEL (808) 241-4050 FAX (808) 241-6699

Coco Palms Hui LLC  
1050 Bishop Street, Suite 303  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Attn: Mr. Tyler Greene  
Mr. Chad Waters

RE: Class IV Zoning Permit Z-IV-2015-8, Project Development Use Permit PDU-2015-7, Variance Permit V-2015-1 and Special Management Area Use Permit SMA(U)-2015-6 at Tax Map Keys 4-1-003: 004 (por.), 005, 007, 011, and 017 and 4-1-005: 014 and 017. Coco Palms Hui, LLC, Applicant  
Kauai Planning Commission Action September 26, 2015

Dear Sirs,

This letter memorializes the action taken by the Kaua'i Planning Commission effective September 27, 2016 concerning dismissal of the enforcement-related order to show cause and acceptance of stipulated amendments to the above subject permits. The conditions below reflect the permit in its entirety.

Notwithstanding those improvements and/or alterations required under the subject permits' additional conditions of approval, the resort facility and associated structures and uses shall be generally constructed and operated as represented. Any changes to the subject building and/or operations shall be reviewed by the Department to determine whether Planning Commission review and action is required. The conditions of approval are as follows:

1. The applicant shall contribute \$50,000.00 to the County of Kauai to assist the Planning Department's historic preservation mission via its efforts to perpetuate the cultural and historic significance of the Wailua/Waipouli region consistent with the Department's historic preservation program, including the creation of educational programs and signage. This contribution was paid to, and received by, the County of Kauai on October 17, 2015.
2. The applicant shall contribute \$50,000.00 to the County of Kauai to assist the County with its current placemaking efforts, including moku and ahupuaa signage

EXHIBIT "A"

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of the Wailua area. This contribution was paid to, and received by, the County of Kauai on October 17, 2015.

3. Prior to building permit approval, the applicant shall meet the requirements and standards of the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD). The applicant is further advised that should any archaeological or historical resources be discovered during ground disturbing/construction work, all work in the area of the archaeological/historical findings shall immediately cease and the applicant shall contact the State Department of Land and Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division and the Planning Department to determine mitigation measures. The Planning Department has reviewed the comments of the State Historic Preservation Division, and under its independent Chapter 6E and related Hawaii Constitutional obligations and duties, requires the following historic preservation measures be fulfilled by the applicant.
  - a. A revised SOW for the project, including any proposed work with potential to affect the historic lagoon, including staging areas, construction of new bridges, dredging, or filling in of areas near the lagoon;
  - b. Information regarding any potential federal funding or federal permits that may be required, especially relative to the historic lagoons;
  - c. An Intensive-Level Survey (ILS) that identifies and assesses all remaining architectural historic properties and their potential eligibility for the Hawaii and National Registers;
  - d. A Burial Treatment Plan (BTP) that meets HAR §13-300-34(b), and following a determination by the KIBC regarding burial treatment, a Burial Site Component of a Data Recovery Plan (BSCDRP) that meets HAR §13-300-34(b)(3)(B); and
  - e. A Revised Archaeological Monitoring Plan (AMP) that includes provisions for addressing architectural monitoring concerns and meets HAR §13-279-4, including ongoing monitoring during construction and 90 days after completion of construction.

As of June 2016, the Applicant has received approval from SHPD with respect to their HRS 6E-42 review and required mitigation actions. However, Applicant is also advised that should any human remains be discovered as a consequence of digging activities, WORK MUST IMMEDIATELY STOP IN THE VICINITY OF THE FIND AND SHPD AND THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT MUST BE NOTIFIED.

4. Applicant shall submit a Construction and Demolition Debris Management Plan, and have the plan reviewed and concurred with by the Department of Public Works, Solid Waste Management Division. Applicant is encouraged to employ broad diversion efforts in its waste management plan. This condition 4 is satisfied.

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5. Applicant is aware that any final construction plans involving the former Seashell Restaurant site that deviates substantially from the conceptual plans presented to the State Department of Land and Natural Resources may trigger compliance with the statutes and regulations under the jurisdiction of the Office of Coastal and Conservation Lands, Hawaii State Department of Land and Natural Resources if final development is proposed within the shoreline area. Applicant is on notice that, if any such final plans proposes development within the shoreline area, this permit action may be deemed invalid and require modification and re-approval only after compliance with Chapter 343, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is attained.
6. In order to minimize adverse impacts on the Federally Listed Threatened Species, Newell's Shearwater and other seabirds, all external lighting shall be only of the following types: shielded lights, cut-off luminaries, indirect lighting or other types permissible under applicable Federal Law or otherwise approved by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. Spotlights aimed upward or spotlighting of structures, landscaping, or the ocean shall be prohibited unless otherwise permissible under Federal Law or approved by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.
7. To the extent possible within the confines of union requirements and applicable legal prohibitions against discrimination in employment, the applicant shall seek to hire Kauai contractors as long as they are qualified and reasonably competitive with other contractors, and shall seek to employ residents of Kauai in temporary construction and permanent jobs. It is recognized that the applicant may have to employ non- Kauai residents for particular skilled jobs where no qualified Kauai resident possesses such skills. For the purposes of this condition, the Commission shall relieve the applicant of this requirement if the applicant is subjected to anti-competitive restraints on trade or other monopolistic practices.
8. The applicant shall implement to the extent possible sustainable building techniques and operational methods for the project, such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (L.E.E.D.) standards or another comparable state-approved, nationally recognized, and consensus-based guideline, standard, or system, and strategies, which may include but is not limited to recycling, natural lighting, extensive landscaping, solar panels, low-energy fixtures, low energy lighting and other similar methods and techniques. All such proposals shall be reflected on the plans submitted for building permit review.
9. As part of the building permit application, the applicant shall comply with the building code requirements applicable to the construction plans submitted for the vertical improvements for the project. Any revisions shall be identified accordingly on the final site development plan and vertical building construction plans for building permit review and processing in accordance with applicable building code requirements.



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10. The Applicant shall contribute \$10,000.00 to the County of Kauai Transportation Agency to assist with the construction of a new bus stop along Kuhio Highway in the Wailua area. This contribution has been paid to, and received by, the County of Kauai Transportation Agency on October 17, 2015.
11. Applicant shall coordinate project plans with the Department of Public Works Wastewater Management Division to ensure that connection to a public sewer system is accomplished properly. Applicant shall also submit a current wastewater preliminary engineering report, as per County Sewer Standards, identifying details of sewer connections. Prior to building permit approval for vertical construction, applicant shall submit construction plans for any necessary sewer improvements and if applicable, pay any required wastewater sewer system fees.
12. Applicant shall submit a detailed water demand (both domestic and irrigation) calculations along with the proposed water meter size. Water demand calculations submitted by your engineer or architect should also include fixture count and water meter sizing worksheets. The Department of Water may require the payment fees specified in the existing County of Kauai ordinances as a consequence of the approved water demand calculations that are in addition to the existing water allocated to the property.
13. Applicant shall prepare and receive the Department of Water's approval of construction drawings for the necessary water system facilities and construct said facilities. These facilities shall include but not be limited to: a) the interior plumbing with the appropriate backflow prevention device; b) the domestic service connection, if applicable; c) the fire service connection, if applicable. Requests for additional water meters or increase in water meter size beyond water meters already allocated to the property will be dependent on the adequacy of the source, storage and transmission facilities existing at the time.
14. Applicant acknowledges affordable housing requirements apply to this proposal, and in compliance with Chapter 7A, Kauai County Code (1987), Applicant has entered into, and will perform its obligations under, that certain Housing Agreement (for Coco Palms) dated December 4, 2015, directly with the Kauai County Housing Agency, which has been fully executed and recorded on February 9, 2016.
15. Applicant shall submit for all remaining building permits for construction of vertical improvements on the project site by August 31, 2017. Further, pursuant to PDU requirements in the CZO, construction shall commence within one year after the date of full approval of s such building permits. Also, Applicant shall pull all such building permits within six months of final building permit.

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16. Screening of the construction site during construction along Kuhio Highway and Kuamoo Road to be aesthetically consistent with current construction standards on Kauai while maintaining compatibility with the nature of the site sitting at a coastal gateway for the area. Screening shall be properly maintained in a manner acceptable to the Director until such time as the Applicant has completed all vertical improvements. Further, the Applicant shall work with the State Department of Transportation to provide landscaping along the strip of land fronting the property fronting Kuhio Highway and properly maintain this landscaping in perpetuity.
17. Applicant shall substantially complete the demolition work described in the existing demolition permits issued for the property by March 31, 2017 subject to extension caused by the occurrence of force majeure events.  
  
Applicant agrees that, if the concrete structures that remain on the property after the demolition work is completed is not incorporated into the construction of the vertical improvements by June 30, 2021, the Applicant shall, at its sole cost and expense, secure such concrete structures in full compliance with all health and safety requirements set forth in all applicable laws and ordinances.
18. Applicant shall provide 20 public parking spaces at the North end of the project site with signage identifying their use by beachgoers and those using public transit when the operator opens to the public the building of the project that is closest to the parking lot containing such public parking spaces. Further, the applicant shall provide 20 stalls for parking with signage identifying their use by public beachgoers along the south end of the project. These stalls shall be clearly marked for public beachgoers use only. Also, the applicant at its own expense shall work with the county to site, design, construct, and maintain in perpetuity, a comfort station consisting of restrooms and showers for beachgoers. This comfort station shall be located adjacent or approximate to this public beachgoers parking area.
19. All parking for guests, customers, and employees shall be accommodated on site. No parking on Kuamoo, Haleilio or Apana roads shall be allowed. No use of parking lots on adjacent property shall be allowed as well.
20. Given outstanding evaluation of the Traffic Impact Analysis Report (TIAR) by both the Department of Public Works and State Department of Transportation, in the interim, the Applicant shall provide the following to mitigate traffic impacts created by the development:
  - a. Provide, at the Applicant's expense, a shuttle for eighteen (18) months beginning when the hotel operator opens the main lobby, at least 277 guest rooms and the food and beverage facilities and services of the project to the public as a pilot program to facilitate transit to and from the Lihue Airport and the development;

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- b. Provide, at the Applicant's expense, a circulator shuttle for eighteen (18) months beginning when the hotel operator opens the main lobby, at least 277 guest rooms and the food and beverage facilities and services of the project to the public to move patrons from the hotel to Lydgate and Wailua Beach Park, the Seashell Restaurant Site, the Coconut Marketplace and other destinations within the main Kapaa transit corridor that shall be determined by the County of Kauai Executive on Transportation at least 90 days before such shuttle service is scheduled to begin.
- c. Provide, at the Applicant's expense, a bike share program operated by Applicant or a vendor selected by Applicant for patrons of the resort to allow guests to ride bikes into Kapaa Town and other destinations without driving;
- d. The applicant shall work with the State Department of Transportation and Department of Public Works to resolve pedestrian crossing, sidewalks and vehicular traffic demands created by the development, and bear implementation costs proportional to the impact that arises, including the installation of a continuous public sidewalk on the Kuhio Highway frontage between Kaumoo and Haleilio; and
- e. Provide the Planning Department, Department of Public Works and State Department of Transportation an update to the TIAR one (1) year after receiving the last certificate of occupancy for the project evaluating traffic impacts created by the resort and analyze the need for additional bus stops.
- f. Provide the Department with a report on the Applicant's efforts to work with the Department of Land and Natural Resources to obtain permission to use the lands held by lease for a mauka access, either vehicular, or bike/pedestrian, to allow movement of residents between Kuamoo road and Haleilio Road.

Should the updated TIAR, as accepted by the three agencies, determine a significant adverse change in the traffic conditions resulting solely from project beyond the traffic conditions anticipated in the original TIAR, Applicant is aware that this permit is subject to reasonable modification by the Planning Commission that Applicant may be responsible for the proportionate costs for any impacts of such significant adverse change for which a nexus to the additional anticipated traffic conditions may be identified.

- 21. Applicant shall work with the county and bear the costs of the following improvements:
  - a. Design and complete construction of continuous public sidewalks along Apana Road to Haleilio Road and along Haleilio Road to Kūhiō Highway fronting the Applicant's property. Sidewalks must be a minimum of 5 feet wide and shall be dedicated to the County to the extent owned by Applicant.
  - b. Provide an in lieu payment of \$93,750 to the County of Kauai by June 30, 2017 for the cost of a dedicated right turn lane on Haleilio Road, from Apana Road to Kūhiō Highway in addition to an existing through lane. The portions of said right turn lane owned by Applicant shall be dedicated to the County at its request.

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- c. Design and complete construction of widening Apana Road to be wide enough for two-way vehicle travel from the project entry on Apana Road to Haleilio Road. The Applicant will work with the County of Kaua'i Department of Public Works on the width, length, and other design details for this improvement, which shall be dedicated to the County of Kauai to the extent owned by Applicant.
- d. Design and complete construction of "Do Not Block" markings along the eastbound lanes of Haleilio Road at the intersection with Apana Road, similar to the striping at Kuamo'o Road and Wailua Road.

The Applicant shall retain a surveyor to survey the portions of the Applicant's land over which the right turn lane right-of-way and sidewalks to be constructed pursuant to subparagraphs a-c above that will be dedicated to the County, then prepare and record the necessary title documents. The County, Planning Department and Department of Public Works will cooperate fully to process all necessary subdivision and dedication approvals on an expedited basis.

22. If requested by the Transportation Agency due to increased ridership demand caused by the development, applicant shall provide proportional support for one (1) additional bus stop and shelter for the Kauai bus.
23. Form and character of the development shall reflect the prior history of the resort and the brand standards of the hotel operator including the usage of similar looking roof and façade material, color and landscaping. Further, non-reflective materials are necessary to promote the seashore area aesthetics. Prior to building permit application for reconstruction or new construction of buildings and landscaping, the Applicant shall submit renderings and plans for departmental design review.
24. Applicant shall encourage employees to utilize the County's Transportation Agency transit services to mitigate commuter trips to and from the development. The Applicant shall work with the Transportation Agency on promotional events encouraging usage of the transit system at Coco Palms, including selling bus passes on behalf of the agency, signage, etc.
25. The applicant is advised that in connection with the issuance of building permits for the vertical improvements of the project, additional conditions from the reviewing government agencies may be imposed. It shall be the applicant's responsibility to resolve those conditions with the respective agency(ies).
26. The Planning Commission reserves the right to add or delete conditions of approval in order to address or mitigate unforeseen impacts that any subsequent changes to this project as proposed by Applicant may create, or revoke the permits through the proper procedures should conditions of approval be violated.



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27. During September 15 through December 15, construction shall only occur during daylight hours. Where possible as to not compromise safety of seabirds identified to be protected under Federal Law, exterior facility lights should be positioned low to the ground, be motion-triggered, and be shielded and/or full cut-off. Effective light shields should be completely opaque, sufficiently large, and positioned so that the bulb is only visible from below. Staff at the development shall be educated, and shall educate visitors with information regarding such endangered or protected seabird fallout and response protocols for staff to recover downed birds. Design elements shall also minimize collision by such protected seabirds with objects that protrude above the vegetation layer, such as utility lines, guide wires and communication towers. Should development yield conditions leading to any take of protected species, Applicant is on notice that an incidental take permit is required.
28. Applicant shall seek guidance from the Fish and Wildlife Service for the Applicant to develop and implement measures (e.g. monitoring, etc.), in order to avoid and minimize impacts to Hawaiian waterbirds during construction and operation of the development.
29. On or before June 30th of each year until all conditions have been satisfied, the Applicant shall submit an annual report to the Planning Commission of the status of and progress on, each unsatisfied condition, particularly conditions with workforce housing requirements and transportation requirements. These conditions shall be modified by the Planning Commission to reflect the satisfaction of any condition.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at the information above.

Me Ke Aloha Pumehana,



MICHAEL A. DAHILIG

Clerk

Kaua'i Planning Commission

cc: Jon Pang, Esq., Case Lombardi

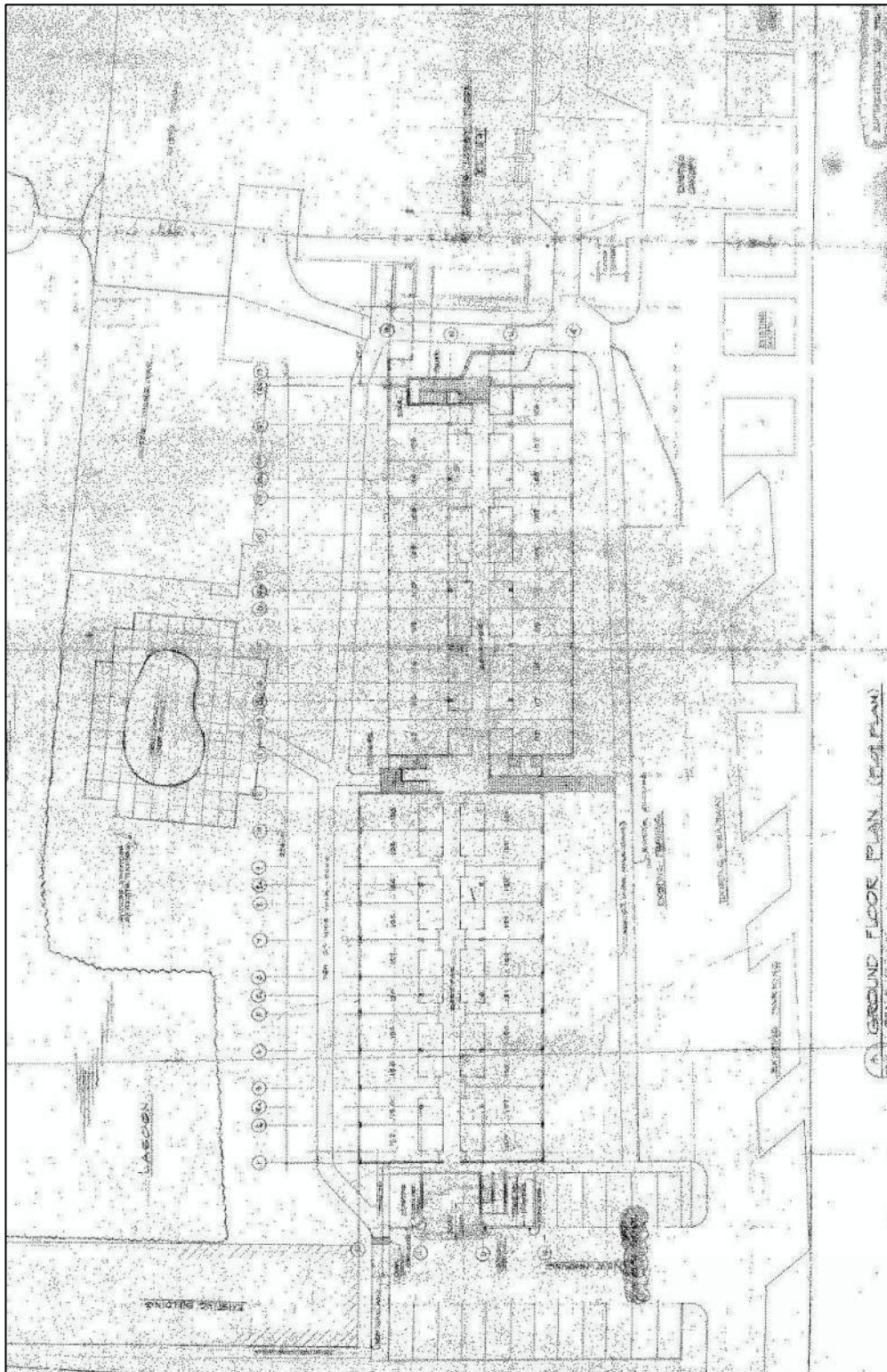
COCO PALMS RESORT

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**Original Drawing Sections.**

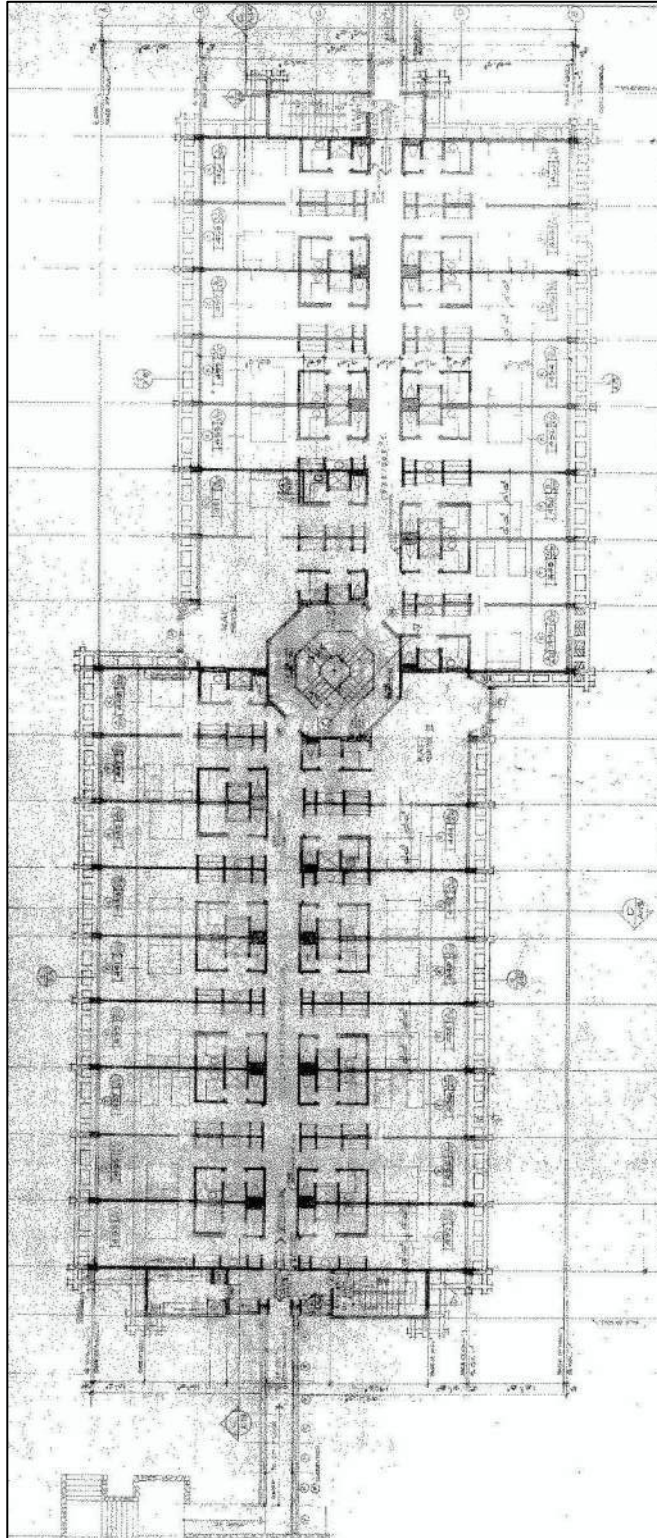


Shell Building Design Drawing. (Ground Floor)



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Name of Property

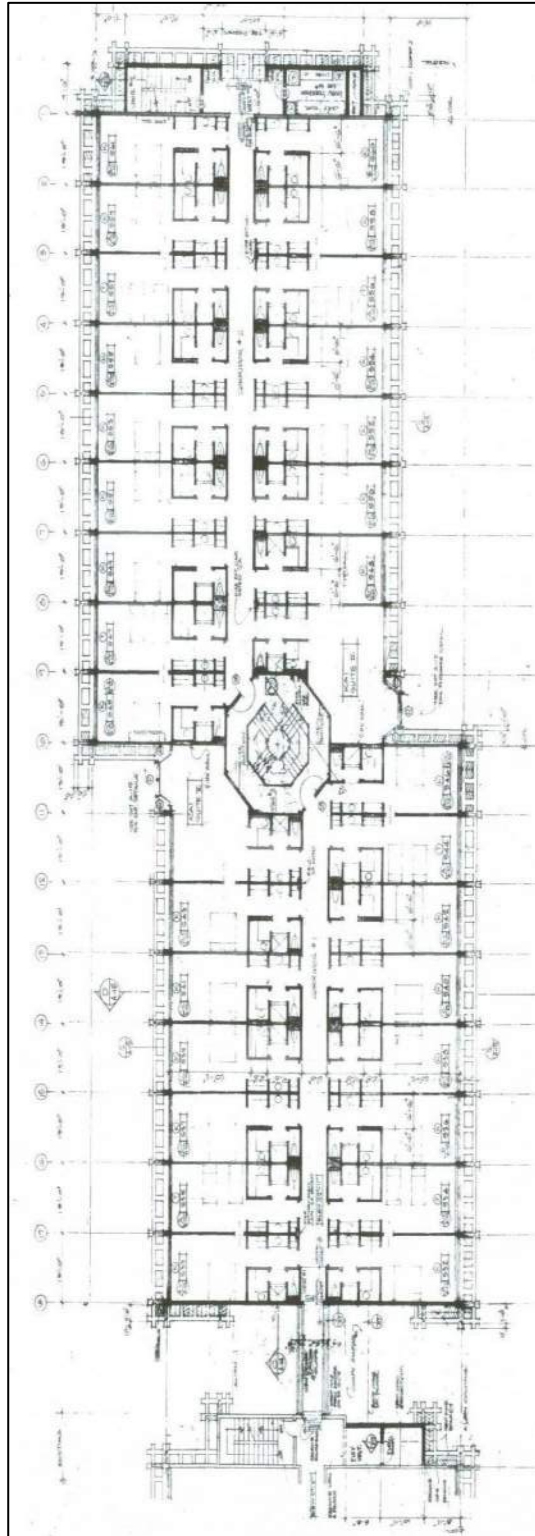
KAUAI, HAWAII  
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Ali'i Kai I Design Drawing (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)

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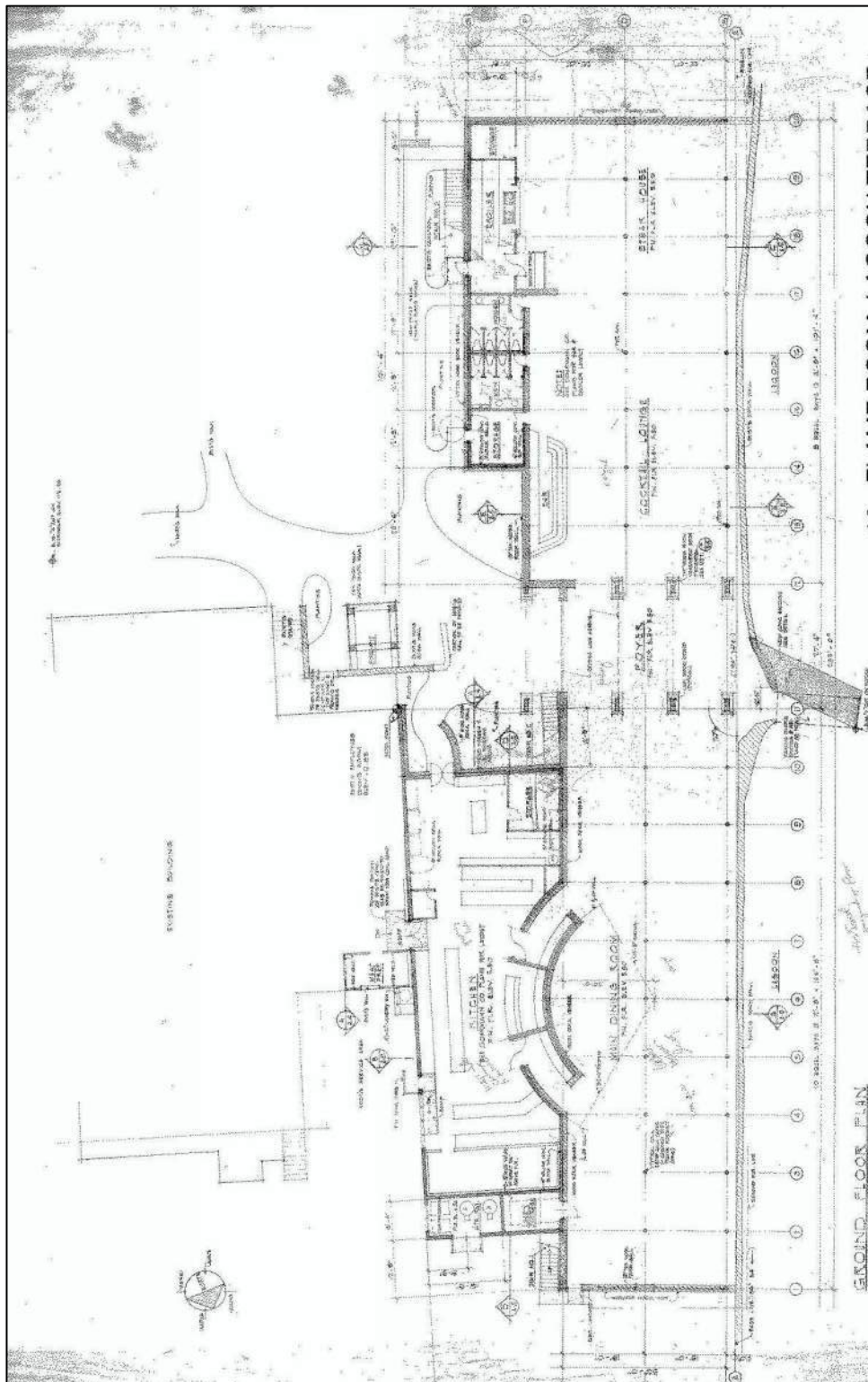
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Alii Kai II Design Drawing (2nd Floor)

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Flame Room/Lagoon Terrace Dining Design Drawing (1<sup>st</sup> Floor)

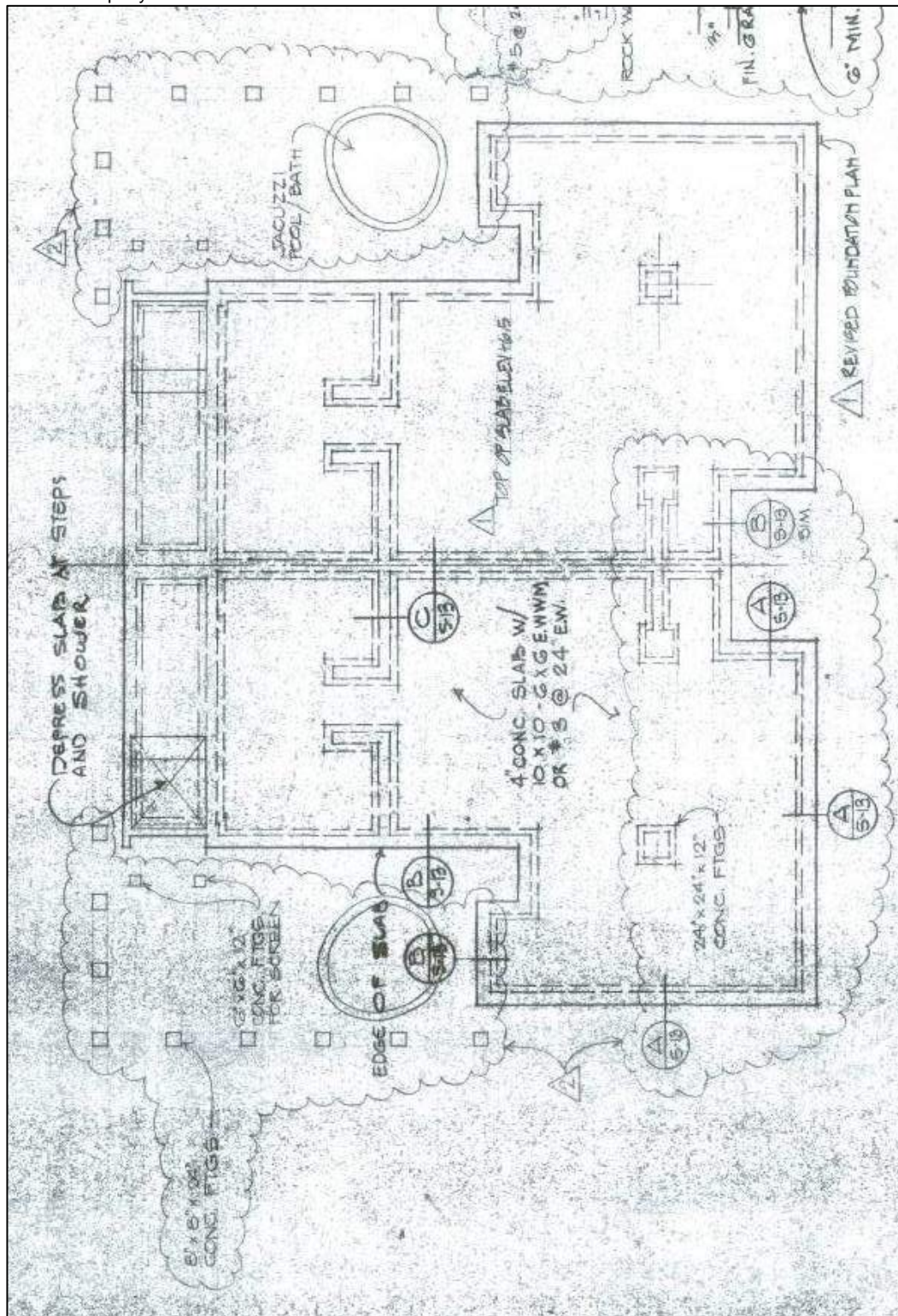


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Prince's Cottages Design Drawing



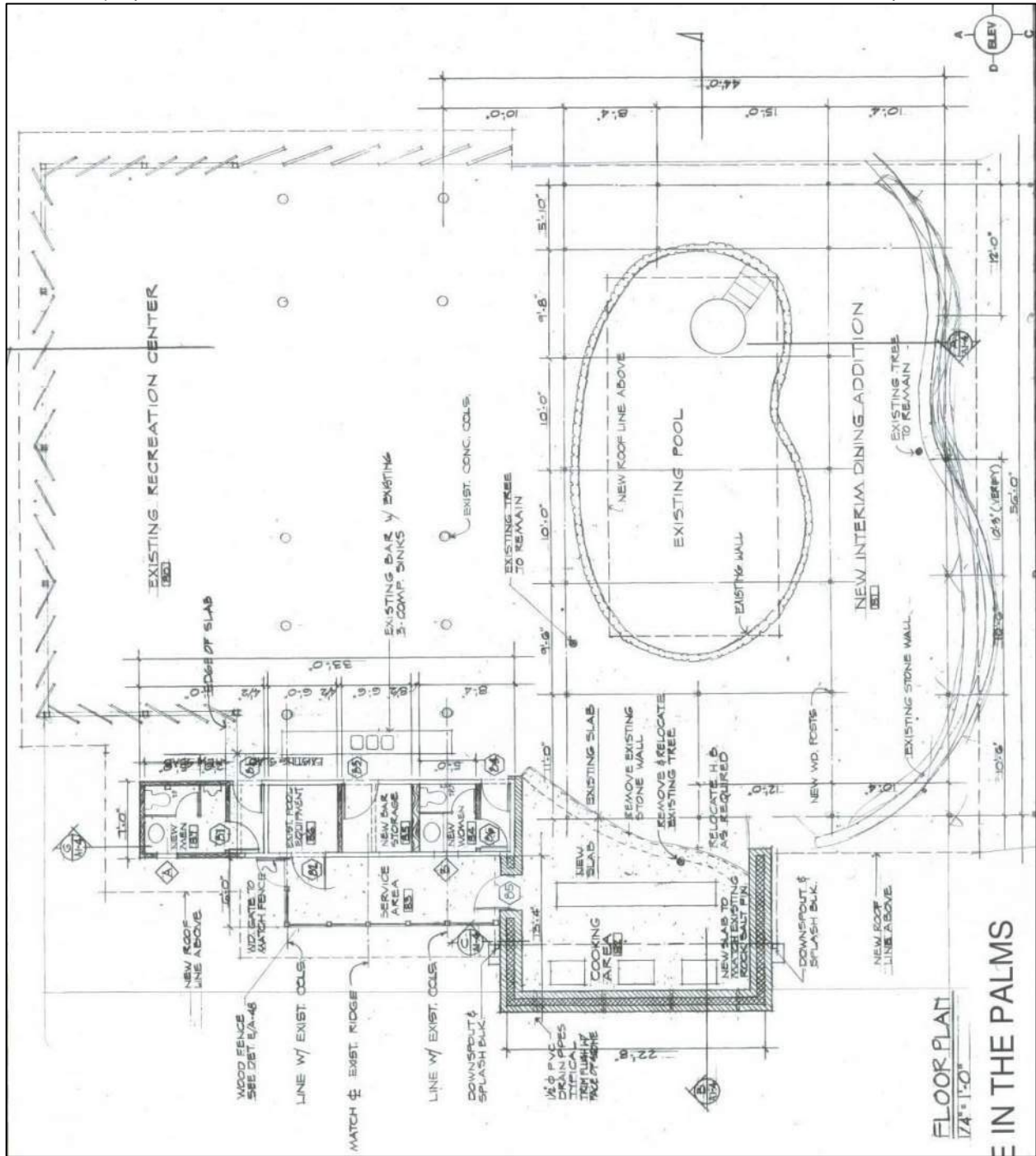


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House in the Palms Design Drawing

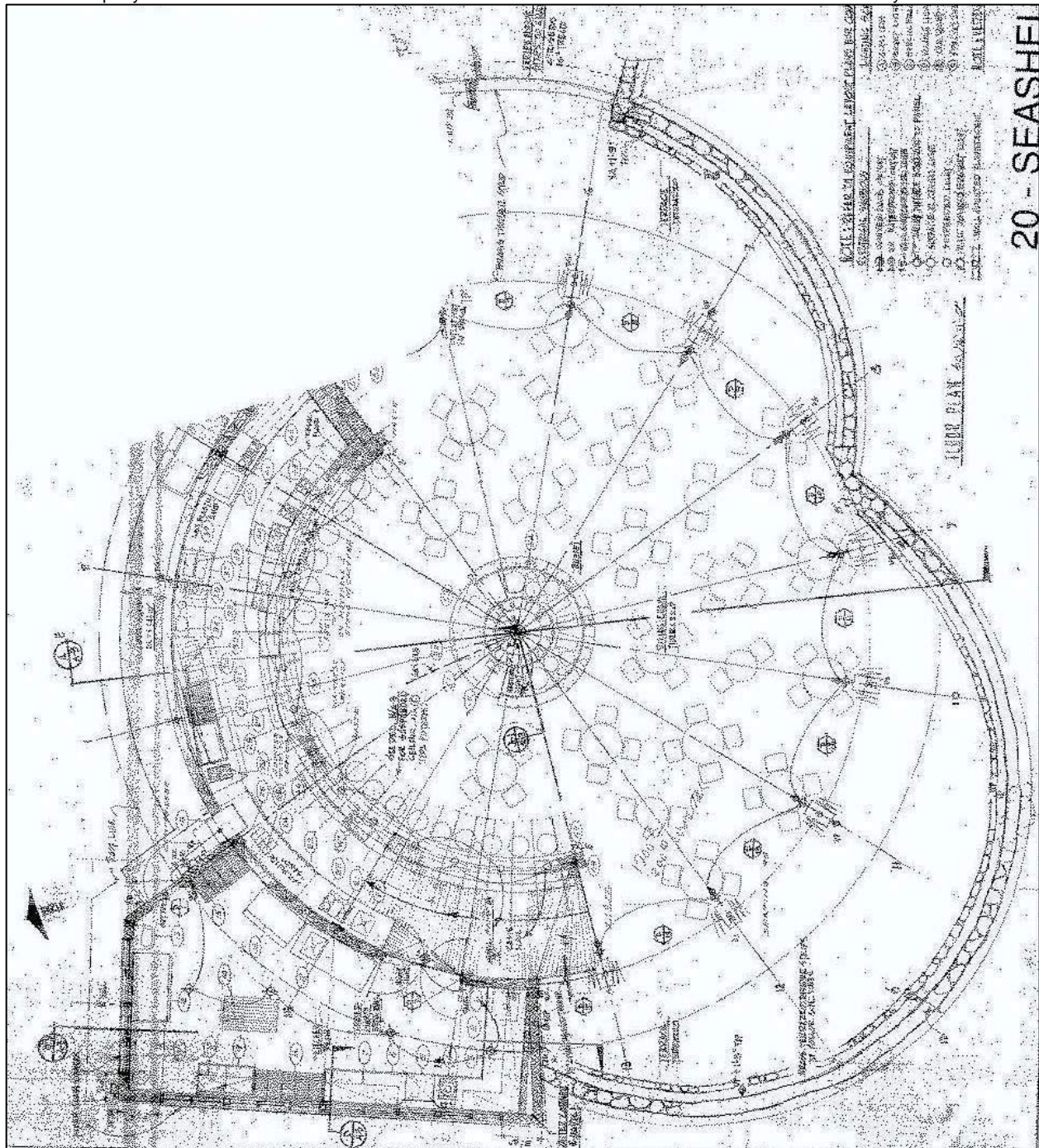


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Seashell Restaurant Design Drawing



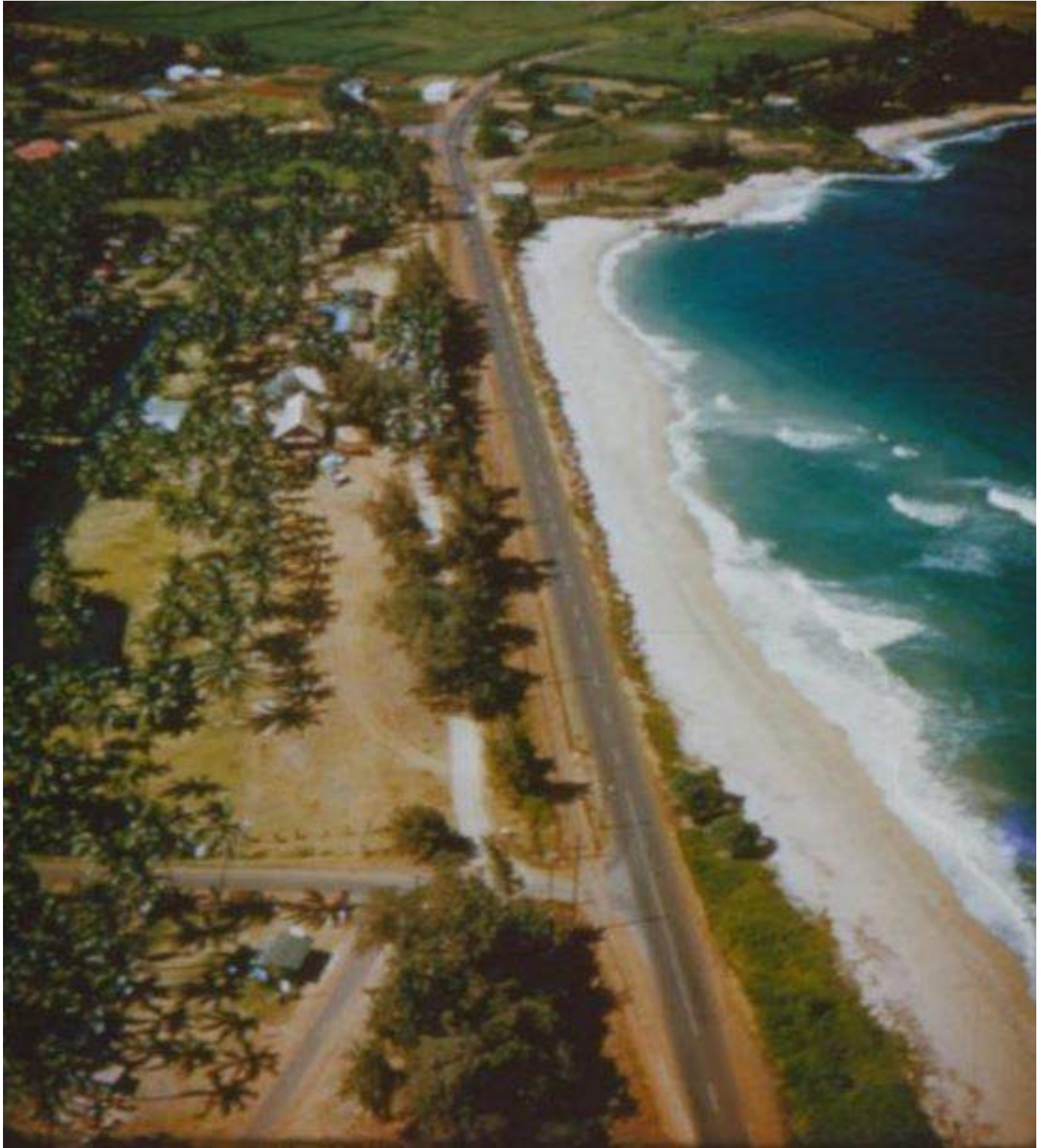
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- **Early Images**



Aerial prior to Hotel expansion

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Hotel room with canoe bed, possibly Shell Building



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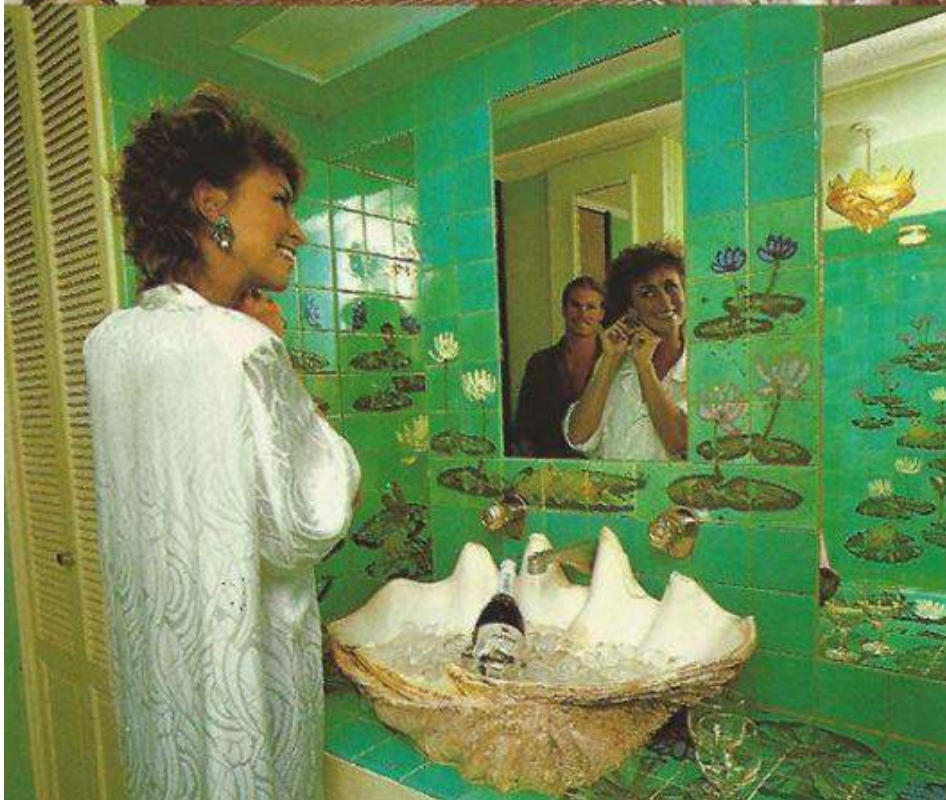
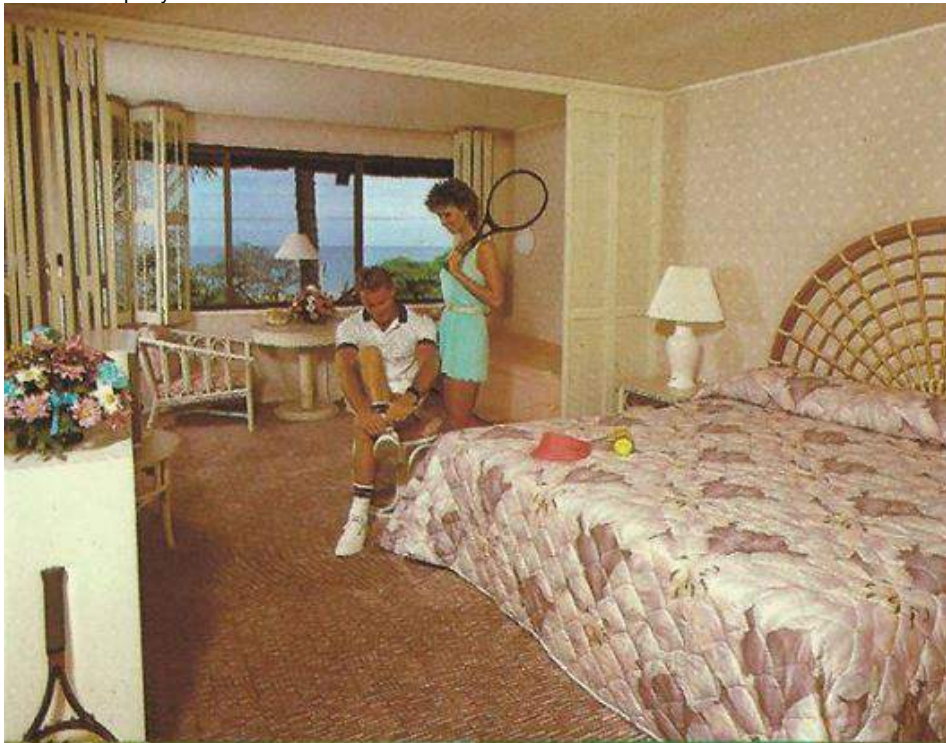
Light fixture at Ali'i Kai stairway.

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Rooms in Ali'i Kai



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Lagoon Dining Room (Coco Palms Book)

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King's Cottage (Note Elvis at sink)



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Queen's Cottages - Sam Mia and Grace pose in front of the cottages.

Queen's Cottage

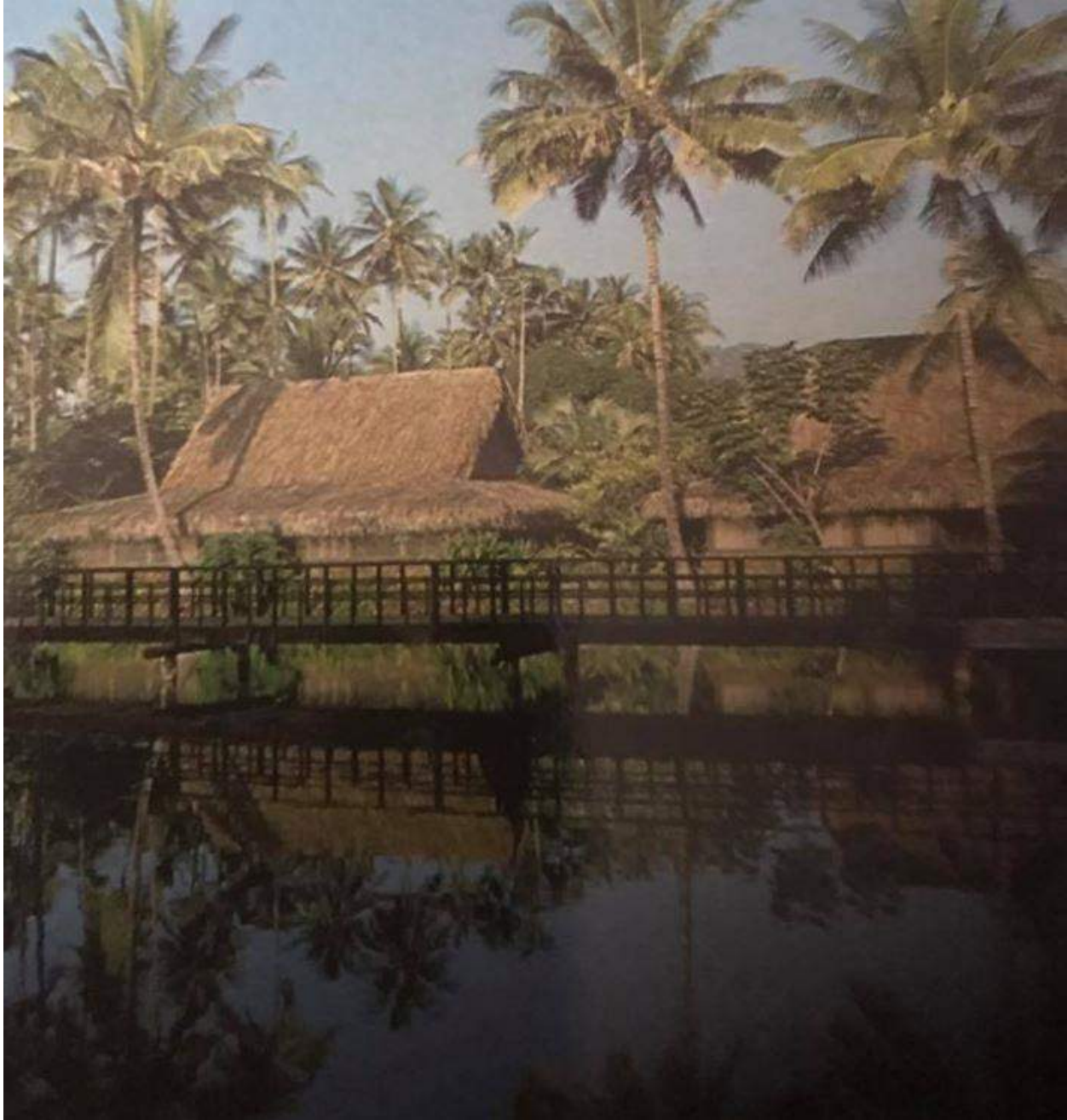


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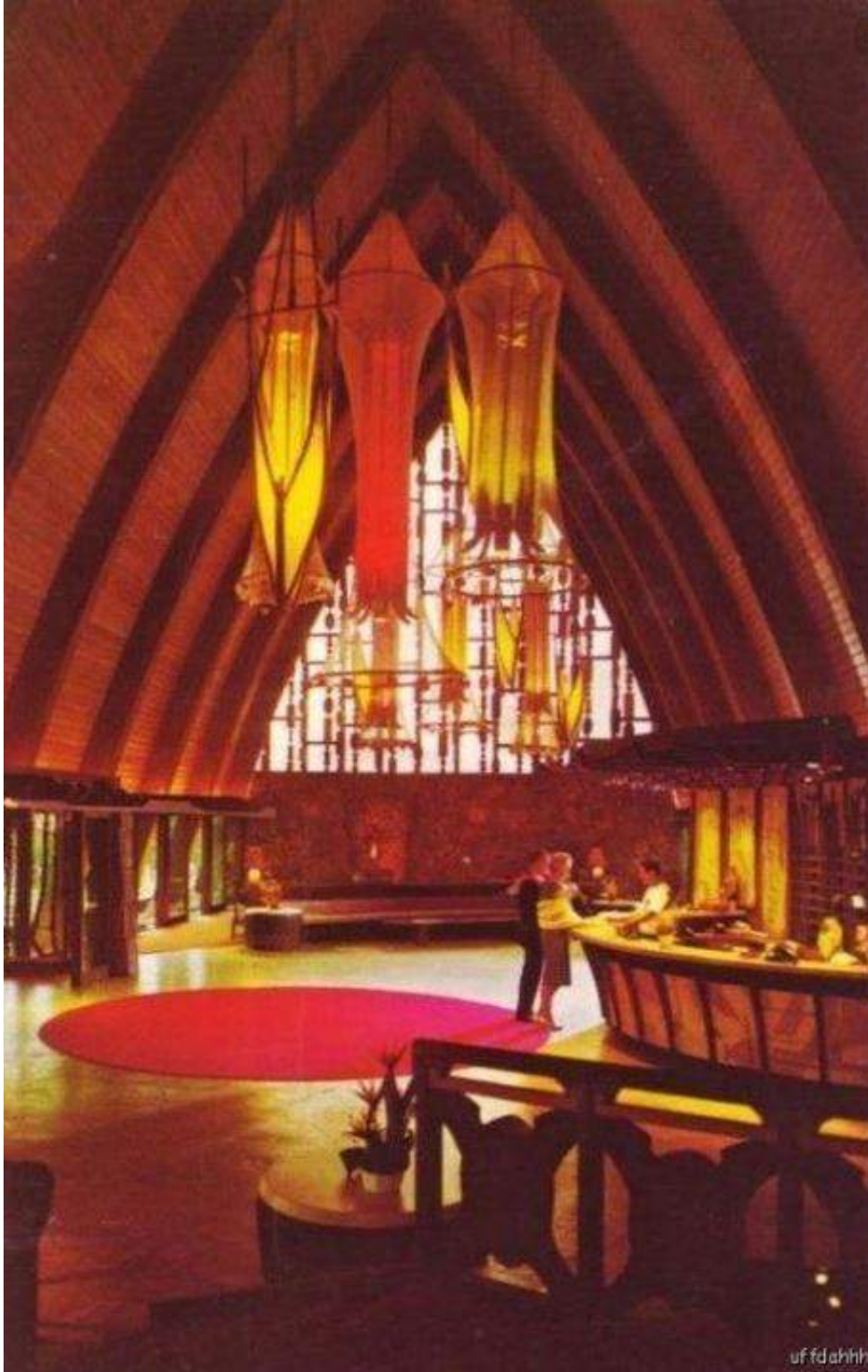
Prince's Cottages (view from across lagoon)

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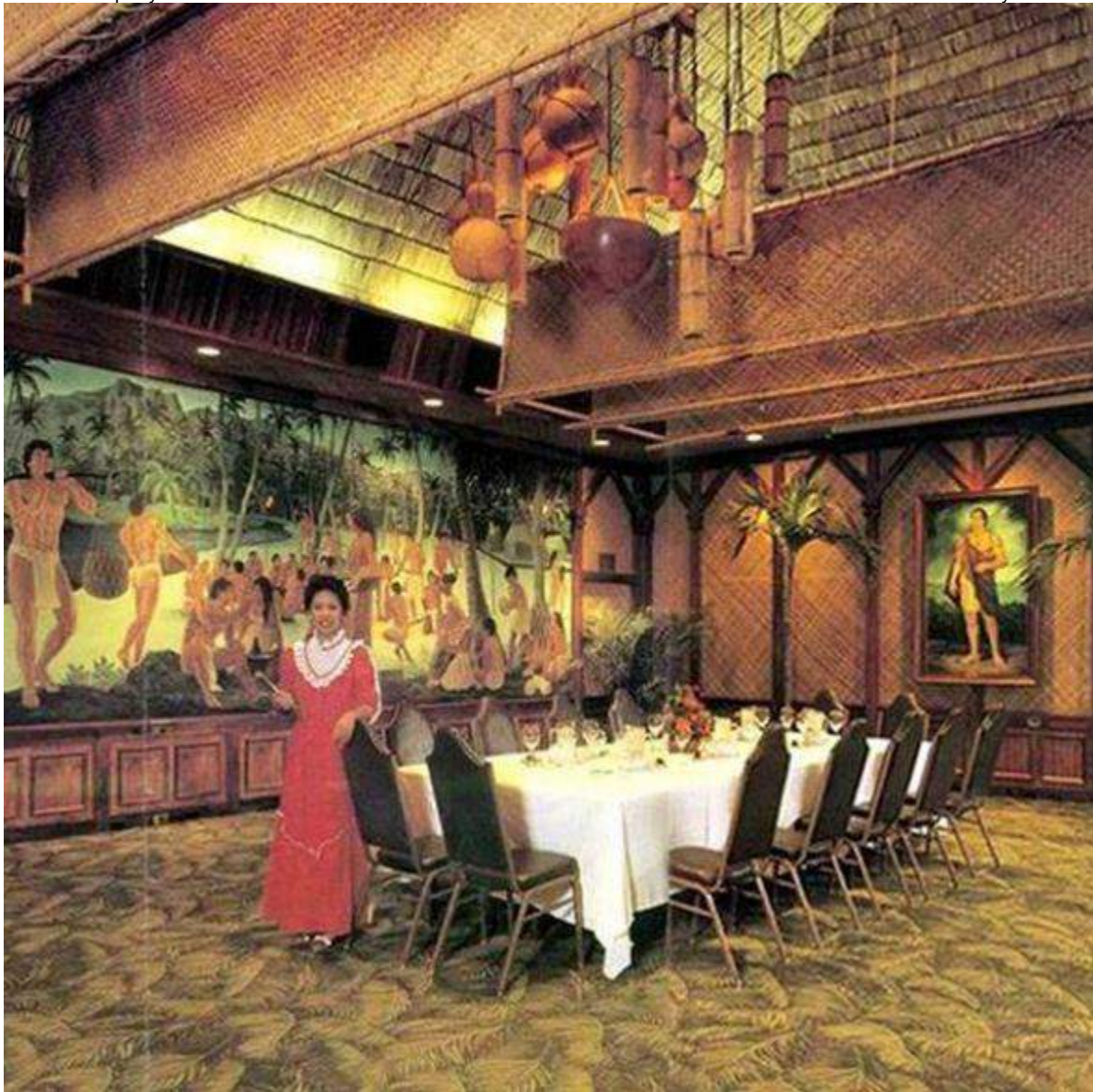


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Queen's Audience Hall (prior to Hurricane Iniki)

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Promotional image of Coconut palace Honeymoon suite



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*Interior of Coconut Palace Dining Room. Music by Ernie Palmeira and his musicians. Grace seated to the right with Mr. Kim standing behind her.*



Coconut Palace

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House in the Palms lanai and pool.

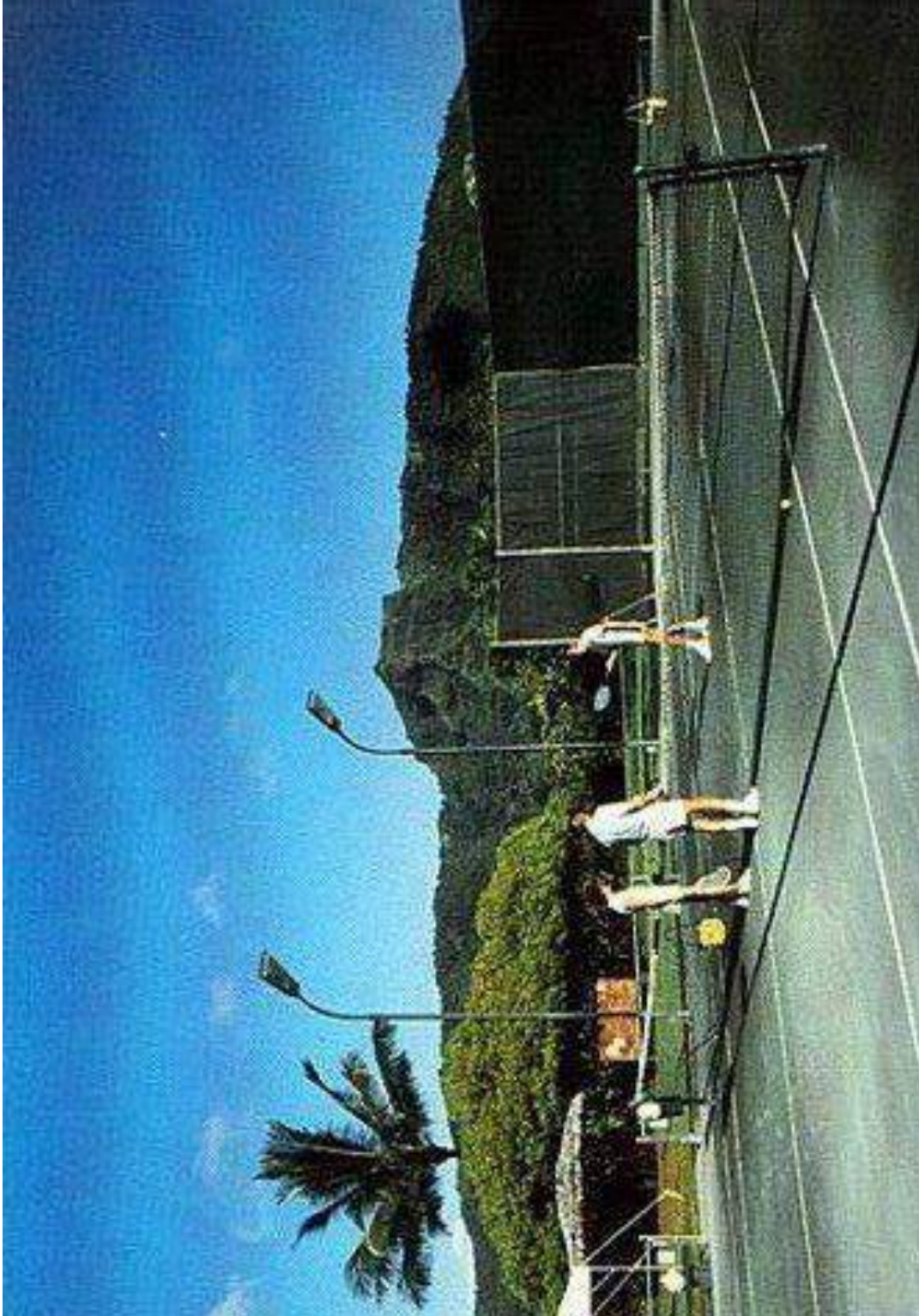


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Tennis Facilities

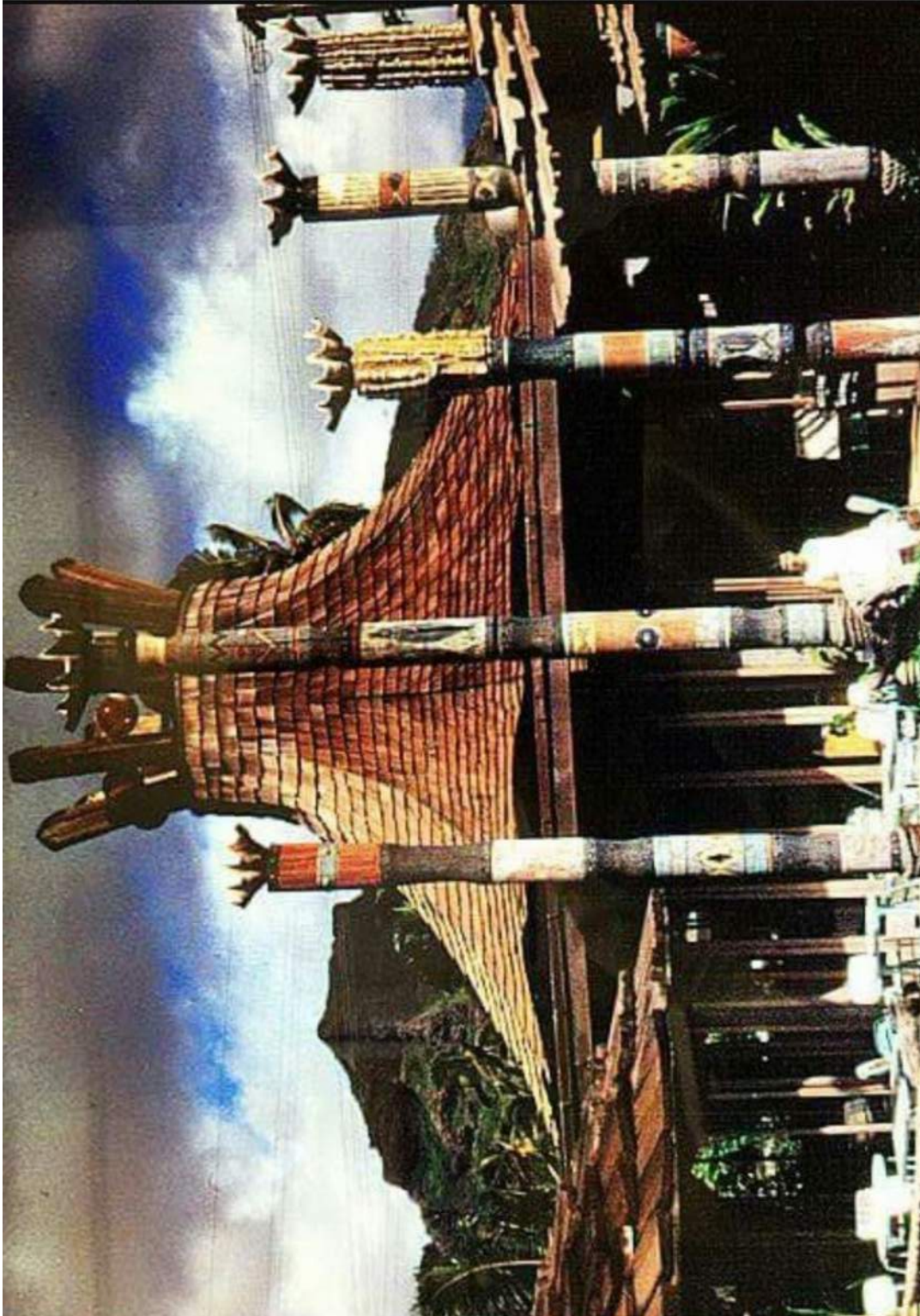


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Seashell Restaurant



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Chapel as seen in the movie Blue Hawaii

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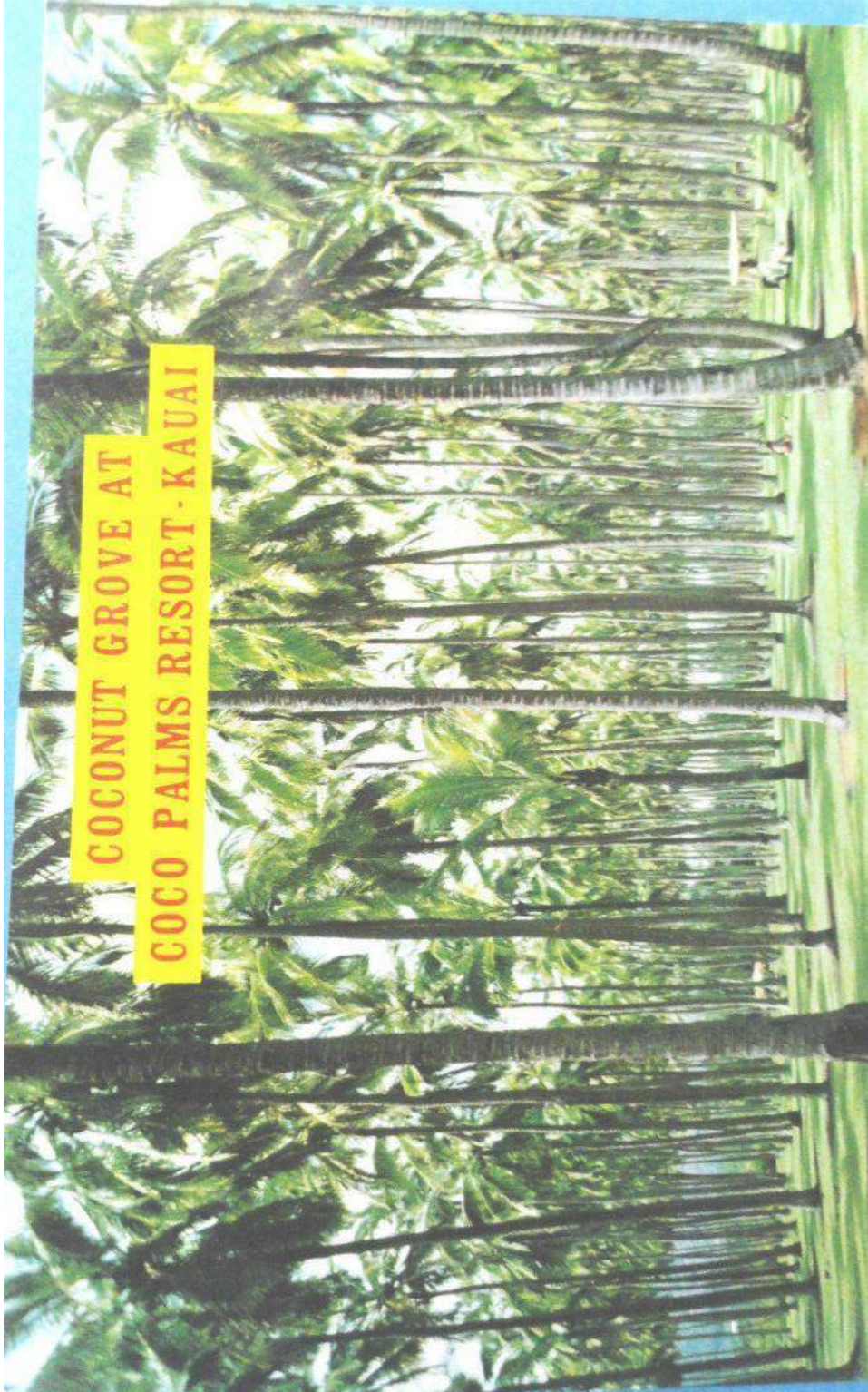
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Coconut Grove postcard

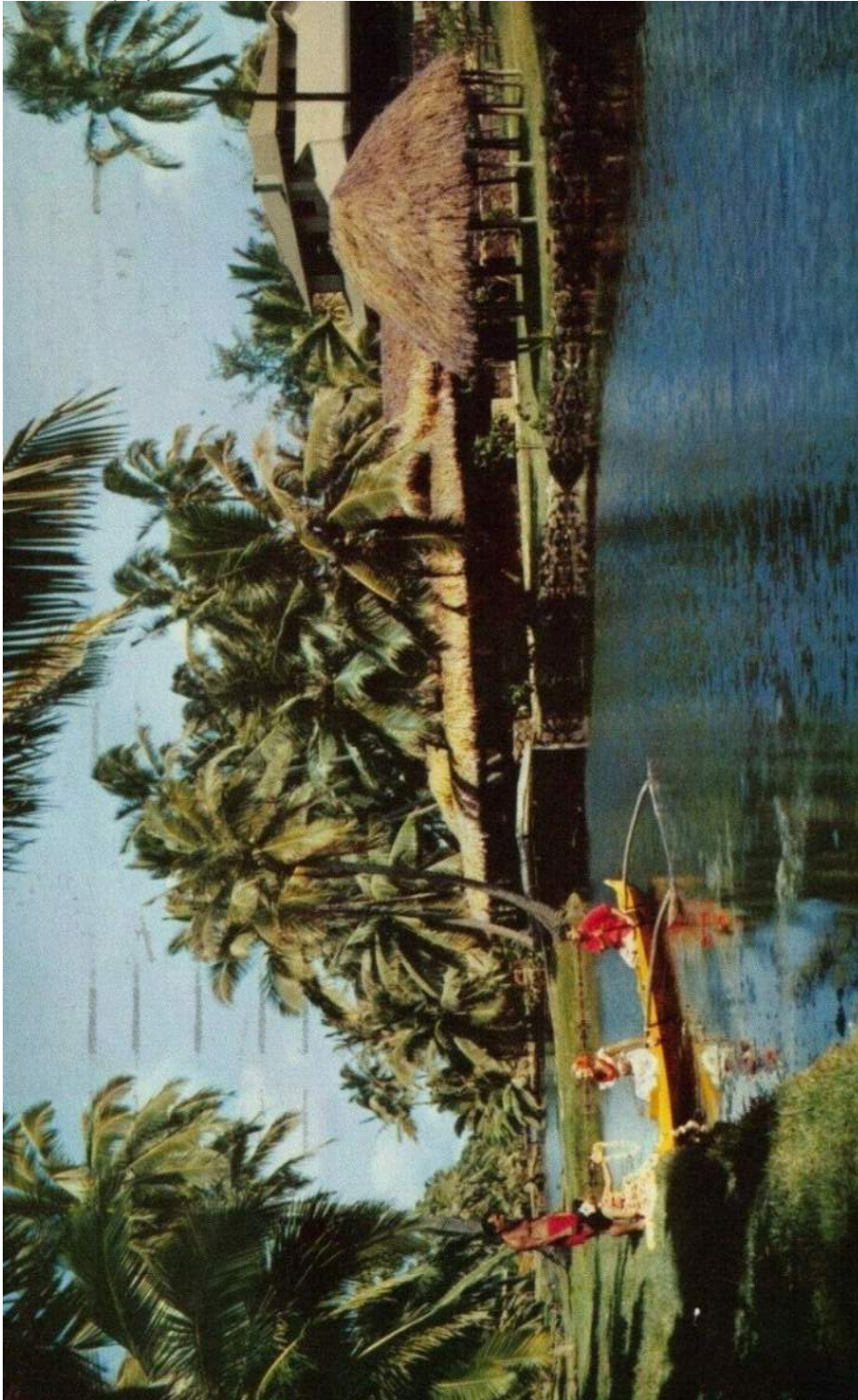


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Lagoon with outrigger canoe

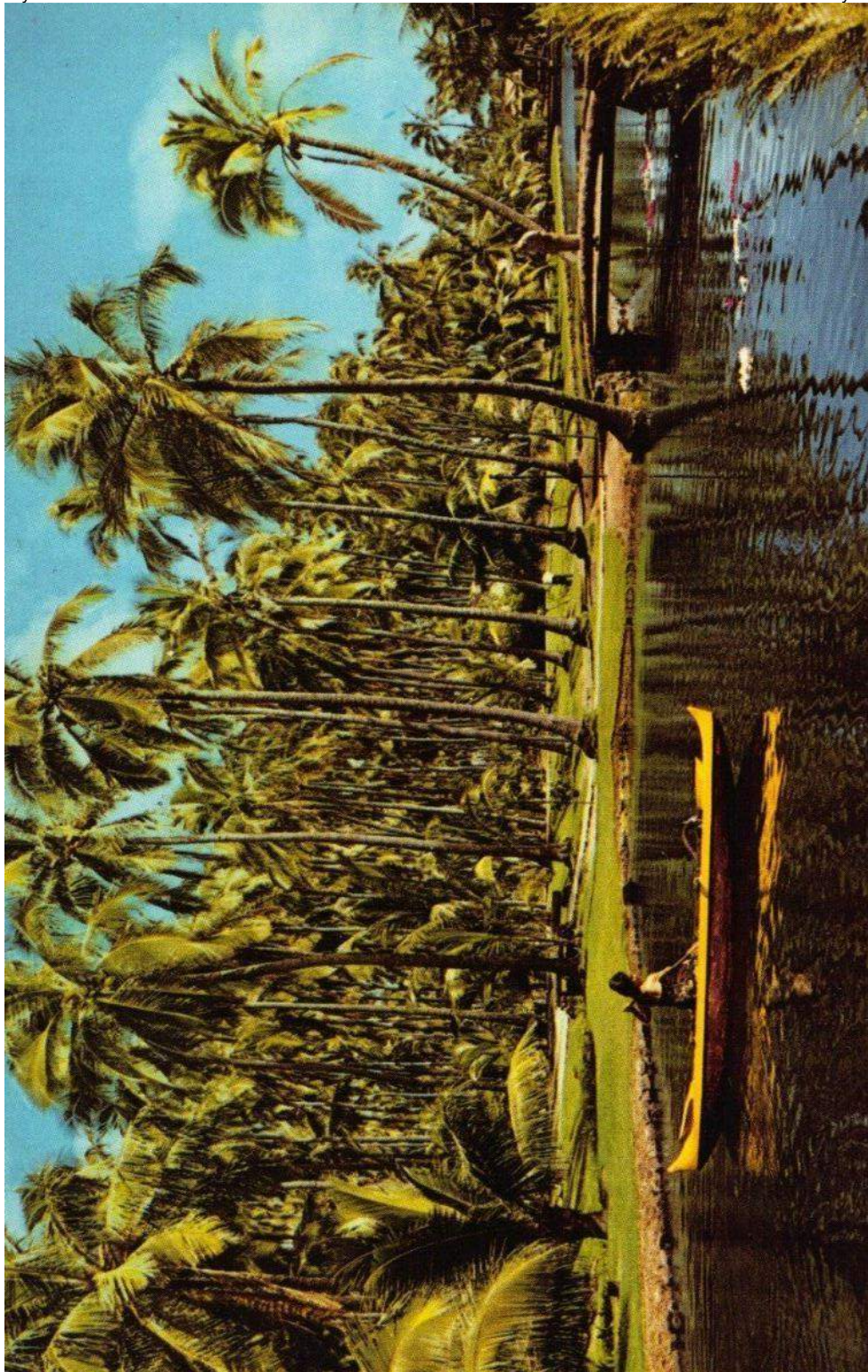


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Concrete bridge across lagoon with concrete coconut tree trunk rails



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Wood bridge across lagoon

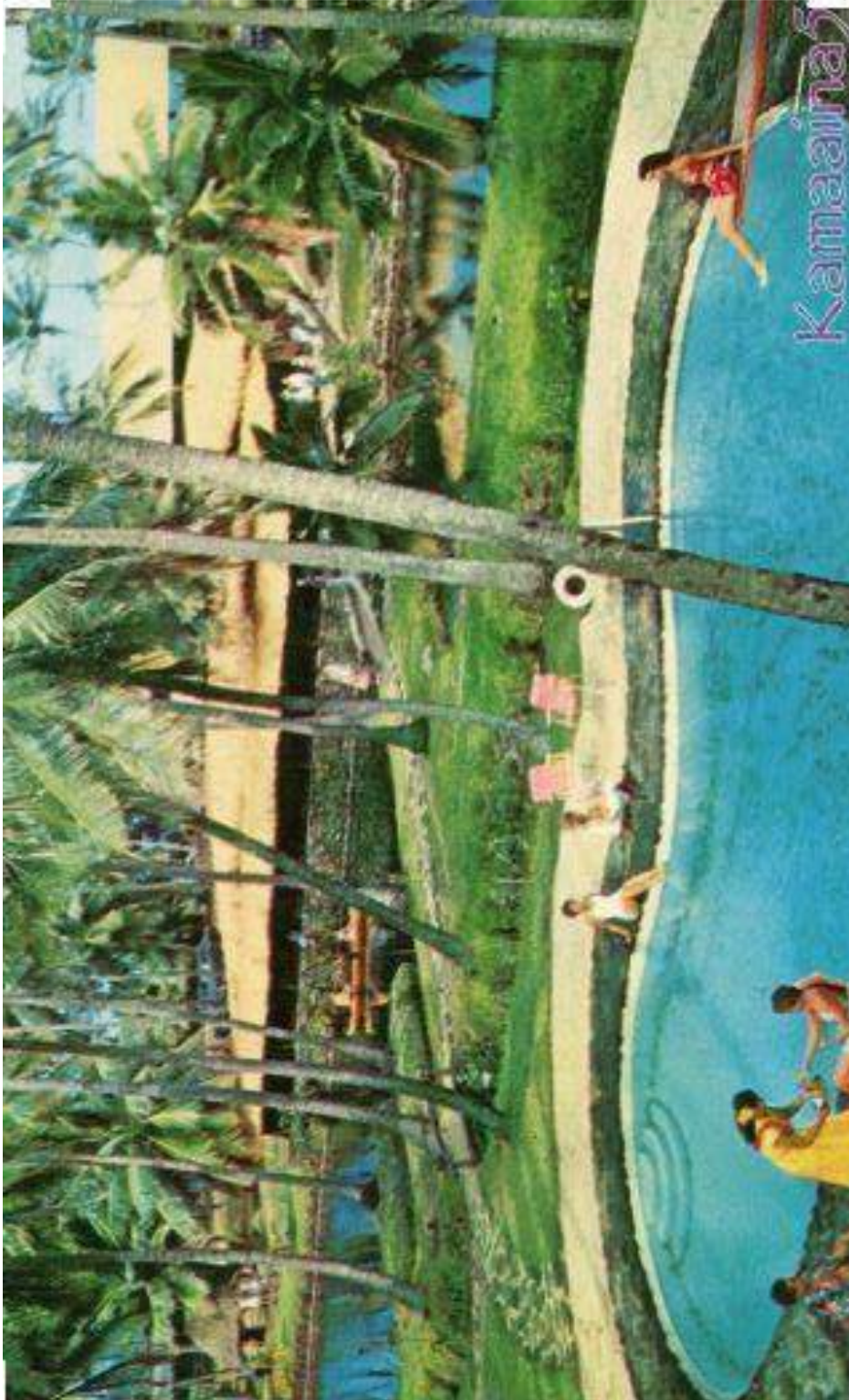


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Queens Pool

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Pool at current House in the Palms

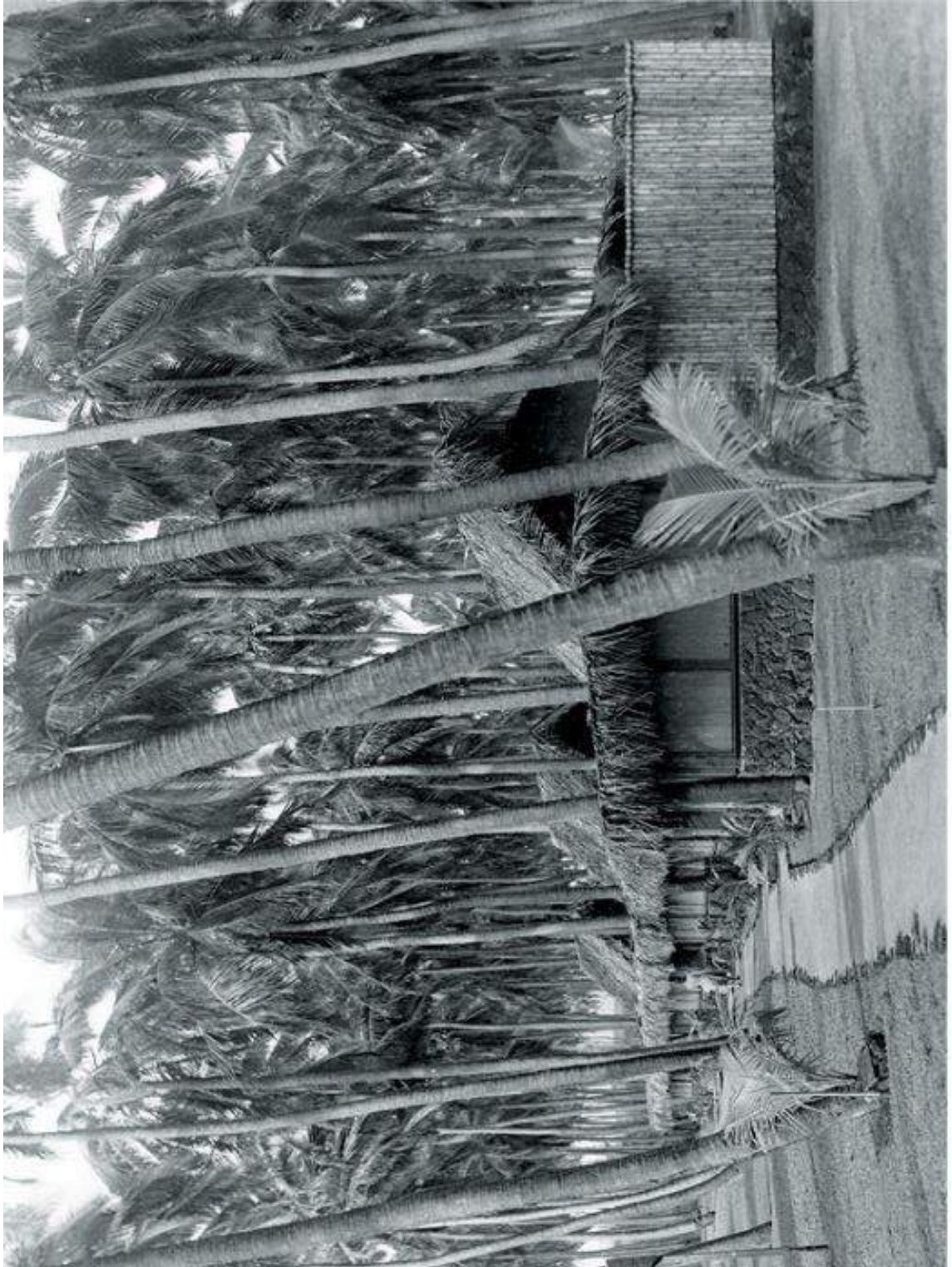


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Walkway between lagoon and cottages

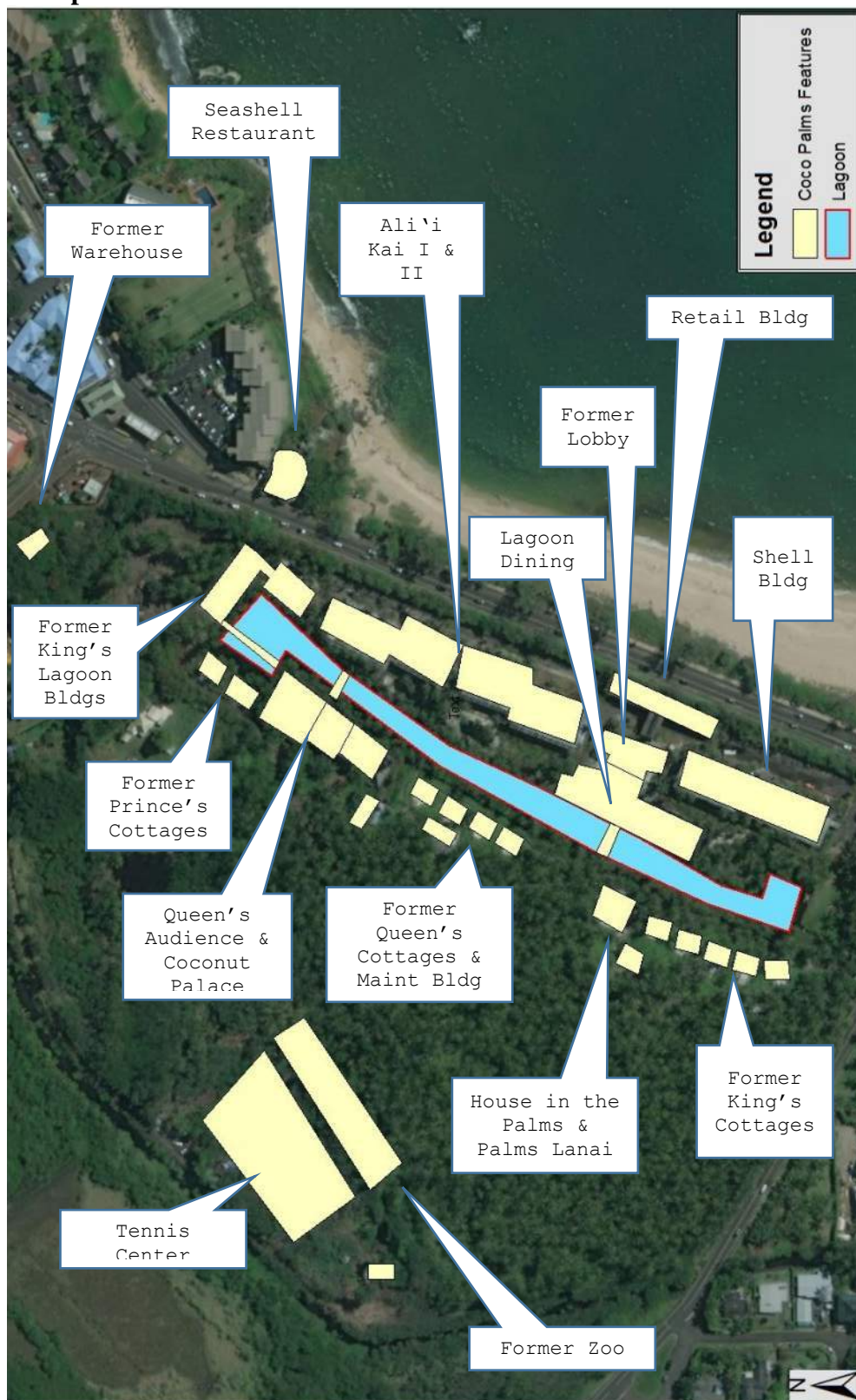
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• **Site Map**



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### **Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### **Photo Log**

Name of Property: Coco Palms

City or Vicinity: Wailua

County: Kauai

State: Hawaii

Photographer: Angie Westfall

Date Photographed: January 2020 (



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HI\_Kauai\_Coco\_Palms\_0001. Site. Camera facing northwest.



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HI\_Kauai\_Coco\_Palm\_0001. Shell Building. Camera facing Northwest.



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HI\_Kauai\_Coco\_Palm\_0003. Ali'i Kai I Building. Camera facing Northwest.



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HI\_Kauai\_Coco\_Palms\_0004. Ali'i Kai II Building. Camera facing southwest.



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HI\_Kauai\_Coco\_Palms\_0005. Lagoon Dining Room. Camera facing northeast.



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HI\_Kauai\_Coco\_Palms\_0006. Kings/Queen's Cottage Walls. Camera facing northeast.



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HI\_Kauai\_Coco\_Palms\_0007. Prince's Cottages Bath. Camera facing southeast.



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HI\_Kauai\_Coco\_Palms\_0008. Lobby First Floor. Camera facing northeast.



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HI\_Kauai\_Coco\_Palms\_0009. Retail Building. Camera facing northeast.

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HI\_Kauai\_Coco\_Palms\_0010. Queens Lāna'i/Coconut Palace Interior. Camera facing west.



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HI\_Kauai\_Coco\_Palms\_0011. Chapel. Camera facing west.

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HI\_Kauai\_Coco\_Palms\_0012. Lagoon. Camera facing south.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.