

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: Wood Tenement Buildings behind Tong Fat Co.

Other names/site number: (1) 1- 5-007:003

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 425 N. King Street

City or town: Honolulu State: HI County: Honolulu 003

Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐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

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☒
- Public – Local ☐
- Public – State ☐
- Public – Federal ☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☒
- District ☐
- Site ☐
- Structure ☐
- Object ☐

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(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Wood Tenement Buildings behind Tong Fat Co. are located off of King Street just north of Chinatown in Honolulu, within the Honolulu *ahupua'a* in the Kona district of O'ahu. They are sited behind a two-story mixed retail and apartment building that extends along King Street. To the south and west of the buildings is the former OR&L Co. railroad property, including the former terminal building to the south, and the former rail yard (now developed) to the west. North of the property, the neighboring lot has been redeveloped and is now a bank. Three of the four buildings are two-story four-plexes, and one is a single-story duplex. For the purposes of this nomination, they are designated Buildings A through D. The building to the northwest corner of the property is A, with B and C sequentially south of this building, and D to the south and east. The one story building is C. They are simple buildings of single-wall wooden construction with gable-on-hip roofs (although the one-story building's roof is now a gable). These are built of vertical tongue and groove boards on post and beam foundations. The wall boards generally extend from the first-floor floor plate to the second-floor roof plate. Additionally, the buildings' first floor front stairs have lava-rock cheekwalls. The buildings are mostly surrounded by asphalt parking, with some small areas of grass and plantings to the rear of the buildings located at the north and west sides of the lot. The buildings maintain integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, and association. Integrity of setting and feeling have been somewhat compromised, with replacement of the original driveway and courtyard material (likely natural grass and soil) with asphalt paving, as well as the change in use of most of the buildings' surrounding properties. Additionally, the property originally contained seven apartment buildings, but only four of them remain.

Narrative Description

This property is comprised of three two-story buildings, A, B and D, and one single-story building C. All of these residential wood buildings are simple in appearance, with few decorative elements. Buildings A and D face south, while Buildings B and C face east. The following description is based on exterior characteristics only, since access to the property and the interior of the buildings was not granted.

The three four-plex buildings (A, B and D) exteriors are identical in design. These two-story structures have gable-on-hip roofs, and front porches that are stacked one above the other. The roofs are clad with corrugated metal panels with wide, projecting eaves. Wood staircases lead to the second floor front entries and first floor rear entries. Concrete stairs with lava rock cheekwalls access the first floor front entrances. Walls are vertical tongue-and-groove wood planks, which extend from the first floor plate to the eaves, with horizontal girts on some side walls where the first floor meets the second. Some portions of the tongue-and-groove walls have been repaired or replaced with assorted types of wood or pressed wood panels. This has

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mainly been done at the rear of Building A. On the rear exterior walls, plumbing lines extend vertically from the first to second floor. The fenestration pattern indicates that apartments next to one another within the same building have mirror image floor plans, and the apartments above and below one another have identical floor plans, with the exception of additional rear entry doors at each of the ground floor apartments.

Each apartment has a front entrance with a porch area accessed by a flight of stairs, with the front doors located one above the other. The downstairs apartments have additional rear doors, located between two small windows on the rear façade. All of the entries have flush wooden doors that do not appear to be historic.

The fenestration pattern is the same at Buildings A, B, and D, although the glazing varies, with both historic two-over-two double hung windows and replacement glass jalousies. Window surrounds and aprons are constructed of narrow wood trim pieces. The front of the apartments have two large windows at each level (one at each apartment). At the rear of Buildings A, B, and D, the top and bottom floors have identical sets of window openings. In addition, the windows of the two halves of each building mirror one another, with a larger window closest to the outer edges of the walls, and four smaller windows between them, giving each floor six rear windows, with one large and two small at each apartment. At each level of both sides, are two large windows that are evenly spaced along the wall.

Buildings A, B, and D do not appear to have any significant alterations or additions. The only notable change has been to the windows, where glass jalousies have replaced most of the original two-over-two windows.

Building C has a gable roof and concrete stairs with wood railings at the entries. It was apparently altered by removing the second floor, and adding a new gable roof. Its fenestration pattern is the same as the first floor of the two-story buildings, and like them, its original windows have been replaced with jalousies.

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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

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Social History
Community Planning and Development
Architecture

Period of Significance

1915 - 1961

Significant Dates

1915

1961

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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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 Wood Tenement Buildings behind Tong Fat Co. are locally significant under Criterion A for their association with the development of the A'ala neighborhood, and under Criterion C as a rare surviving example of an early twentieth century tenement cluster. They are a very rare surviving example of an early-20th-century, high-density, wood-framed, residential cluster, typical in the A'ala area and Chinatown before massive urban renewal of the 1960s replaced most of the wooden buildings and narrow lanes with public housing. The period of significance begins when the houses were constructed in 1915, and ends in 1961 when the neighborhood changed drastically due to urban renewal efforts. (The 1961 A'ala triangle project planned for the demolition of the heart of the neighborhood, the triangle-shaped block bordered by the junction of Beretania and King Streets, and A'ala Street between Beretania and King. The demolition was undertaken to accommodate the extension of A'ala Park.)

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

Social History and Community Planning and Development

The Wood Tenement Buildings behind Tong Fat Co. are locally significant for their association with the physical development of the A'ala neighborhood, and the social history and development of the Japanese and Chinese communities in Honolulu.

The A'ala neighborhood developed initially as an extension of Chinatown. It was a small district at the confluence of several areas, including Chinatown, Liliha, Iwilei, and Kapālama.

Nuuanu Stream and River Street was the unofficial demarcation. Chinatown was to the east or "Diamond Head." The other side was Aala. Aala Rengo and the Aala Market defined the makai border. Aala Street with its mom and pop stores and shops, theaters and taxi stands was the ill-defined ewa border, although some would argue that the tip of the triangle where King and Beretania Streets come together should be it.¹

From the late 1800s, wooden two-story buildings filled the A'ala and neighboring areas, between Nuuanu Avenue and Pua Lane, Kukui Street to Honolulu Harbor. The Iwilei area included a prison and submerged areas before Benjamin Franklin Dillingham acquired much of them in 1889 to begin his railroad endeavor, O'ahu Railway and Land (OR&L Co.), and began to fill the submerged area and build structures and tracks. His efforts spurred the development of Iwilei into a primarily industrial area. Redevelopment efforts after the Chinatown fire of 1900, resulted in changes to the Chinatown and A'ala areas. Many former residents of Chinatown moved elsewhere; new, fireproof construction was expensive, and therefore took some time to accomplish, leaving Chinatown more sparsely populated. A'ala began to grow, with existing buildings across the river from Chinatown, such as the A'ala Rengo and A'ala Market, which

¹ Okihiro, Michael M. and Friends of A'ala; *A'ala: the story of a Japanese community in Hawai'i*, 2003, p 10.

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supplied general merchandise including clothing and shoes, and produce and meats, respectively.

Fewer wood buildings of this type remained in Chinatown, but a relatively large number still stood in areas not affected by the fire. Multi-family apartments came into common usage as Honolulu grew and attracted former plantation laborers into urban areas after the turn of the twentieth century, but after the Chinatown fire, were more typically constructed of masonry because of its fire-resistant properties.

By the early twentieth century, Chinatown's demographic makeup had shifted to include a large Japanese population, in large part also due to the 1900 Chinatown fire, after which many Chinese residents of the area moved to other neighborhoods. Primarily inhabited by Japanese families, residences and businesses were located across Nuuanu Stream from Chinatown in the A'ala area. This neighborhood, sometimes called "Japantown" by the 1920s and 30s,² was occupied mainly by workers, and the buildings reflected this, mainly constructed of wood, generally no taller than two stories, and adorned with few simple details. By this time, Iwilei had developed into a primarily industrial district, with the Tenement Buildings behind Tong Fat Co. isolated from other residential buildings in Iwilei by rail lines and structures, from Liliha and Kapālama by King, Beretania and Liliha Streets. The closest residential neighborhood to the Tenements was A'ala, and it is most accurately considered a part of that neighborhood.

The A'ala area thrived, with transportation and places of employment located in close proximity to the neighborhood, and shops and entertainment located amongst the densely built, mostly wooden multi-family dwellings. This remained the case until the urban renewal movement of the 1950s and 60s called for the demolition of Honolulu neighborhoods that were considered substandard, or slums. The Four Houses behind Tong Fat Co. survived the sweeping changes to the surrounding neighborhoods because they are located across the street from the more strongly residential area of the A'ala triangle, in the more industrial and retail area that was left out of the plans for renewal.

The Wood Tenements behind Tong Fat Co. were constructed as modest, inexpensive rental apartments. They generally meet the tenement classification criteria defined in Cyril M. Harris' Dictionary of Architecture and Construction, which states that a tenement is:

[a] building having multiple housing units for rent; often, ill-maintained, overcrowded units that may barely meet minimum code requirements for safety and sanitation; usually built many years earlier and found in poorer sections of a city.³

Tenements were common in the 19th century in large cities, such as New York, which had high populations resulting from a significant influx of immigrants. Substandard multi-story apartment dwellings proliferated. Although there may be similarities between the original residents of Honolulu's Wood Tenement Buildings and New York's tenements, such as the likely income level and immigrant background of tenants, New York tenement buildings were typically larger, with more apartments per floor and were constructed of different materials. Both cities had a

² Michael M. Okihiro and Friends of A'ala. *A'ala: the story of a Japanese community in Hawaii*. Honolulu: Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii, 2003. p. 10.

³ Harris, Cyril M. *Dictionary of Architecture and Construction*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2006 p. 985.

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need for low-cost housing for people who had recently moved to the city for work, or recently emigrated from overseas.

Though much of Hawaii's low-cost housing was initially constructed on sugar and pineapple plantations with health concerns in mind, housing was subsequently constructed in urban areas for those either moving off the plantations, or who had come to the islands for other reasons. Urban housing generally had few guidelines until the Territorial Board of Health published *Hawaii: Tenements and Lodging Houses. Location, Construction, and Sanitary Regulations* in 1915. These regulations required a minimum amount of air space per person, various sanitation requirements, proper ventilation, and regular upkeep and building maintenance.⁴

Honolulu's newspaper articles in the 1910s, depicted the city's "congested" or "tenement district" as centered around the A'ala and Chinatown neighborhoods. A 1918 map published in the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* showed the district bounded by Vineyard Boulevard between Liliha and Fort Streets, and by King Street between Liliha and Maunakea Streets. The King Street border turned east along Pauahi Street to Nuuanu Street where it extended south, and then turned east again on Beretania to reach Fort Street, where it turned east again to reach Vineyard Boulevard. Photographs published in various Honolulu newspapers showed one- and two-story buildings crowded closely together with dirt paths between buildings and construction that appears to be haphazard. Sanborn maps of approximately the same period (1914) specify "tenements" as distinct from "dwellings." Most of the identified tenements are also one- or two-story buildings typically having separate, if any, kitchen facilities, and often include eight or more dwelling units. The 1913 article lauds the efforts of the Palama Settlement (with a location just north of the future location of the Tenement Buildings behind Tong Fat Co.) in efforts to clean up the tenement district, as well as in constructing alternate, more "sanitary" living quarters for residents of the area. The settlement's dwellings are illustrated as one-story cottages with wider spaces between the buildings, allowing fresh air to access all dwellings within the development, in contrast with the older tenements. Nonetheless, a February 1918 special insurance edition of the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* called attention to the condition of buildings within the district, calling it the "tenement triangle," and their potential to create a firestorm across the city, if a fire were to start. The dwellings were still described, and pictured, as closely spaced ramshackle buildings with many of the tasks of day-to-day living (such as laundry and cooking) performed in the minimal spaces between the buildings. Despite the 1915 regulation, conditions themselves had not changed appreciably by this time.

Although their construction date was concurrent with the 1915 regulation, the cluster of Wood Tenement Buildings behind Tong Fat Co. exhibit a density in building arrangement that was common to buildings that were considered tenements, and prevalent at this time in the urban A'ala area. Sanborn maps and aerial photos of the area prior to the 1960s show very high-density layouts, with buildings filling the rear yard spaces that were typically left open in other, less densely populated areas. The lots that might be sized for one or two single-family houses in a less dense part of Honolulu were, in the A'ala area, more typically characterized by several small single- or multi-family dwellings organized around central walkways and grassy areas. These arrangements were common in numerous sections of Honolulu, especially in areas along public transportation lines. The Wood Tenement Buildings behind Tong Fat Co. are essentially a variation on this arrangement, with several two-story buildings in place of single-story buildings. Specifically, the space was maximized with seven buildings (when the buildings were

⁴ Hawaii: Tenements and Lodging Houses. Location, Construction, and Sanitary Regulations. (Reg. Bd. of H., Feb. 11, 1915) *Public Health Reports (1896-1970)* Vol. 30, No. 24 (Jun. 11, 1915) , pp. 1789-1790

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constructed in 1915), each with four apartments. Four of the buildings were paired, with the fronts of the buildings facing one another. Another two buildings faced the sides of the paired buildings, and the seventh building faced the side of the northernmost of the buildings facing the pairs. A newspaper notice filed in 1918 stated that the tenements at 393 (now 450) North King Street had been "put in good condition" as part of a campaign to "eliminate the Oriental tenement house in the congested parts of the city."⁵

A 1927 Sanborn maps shows that in just in the blocks bordered by North King Street, Robello Lane, Liliha Street and the railyard, there were nine of these type of housing groups, ranging from single family dwellings to eight unit apartment complexes, the vast majority of which were single-story.⁶ One set of apartments off King Street appear to have been very similar to the buildings behind Tong Fat; they were two-stories, with four apartments each, and had porches in the same configuration as the buildings behind Tong Fat. As shown on Sanborn fire insurance maps, a number of one-story courtyard houses and apartments still stood as late as 1975, though many had been replaced by apartment buildings that were more modern.⁷ Among those that were replaced with new buildings, were the group of two-story apartments off King Street, leaving the Four Houses behind Tong Fat Co. the only surviving apartments of their type in the A'ala/Chinatown area.

Much of the A'ala area was altered in the 1960s and 1970s through urban redevelopment efforts by the city. Urban renewal was an ongoing effort across the United States to remove housing and buildings considered substandard, and to clean up cities through wholesale demolition and redevelopment with strict zoning enforced. Such programs and policies are now viewed as controversial and linked with gentrification. Proponents tout the revitalizations for the tax base and jobs brought to an area, while opponents believe that local low-income businesses and residential tenants are at risk for displacement or being priced out of the new market.

The new zoning restrictions and building regulations around A'ala meant that residential areas would be separate from business and retail areas.⁸ Many areas on O'ahu that were considered slums were demolished and replaced with public housing, including the area north of Liliha Street and east of King Street, now Mayor Wright Housing; and the blocks east of Beretania and south of Liliha Street, called "Hell's Half Acre" at the time, which became the Kukui Gardens low income housing project.⁹ Both of these areas were within the larger A'ala/Chinatown district. A key area of A'ala that was lost to redevelopment was the triangle shaped block bordered by the junction of Beretania and King Streets, and A'ala Street between Beretania and King. During the urban redevelopment period, all of the buildings in this block, the heart of the A'ala neighborhood, were demolished, and the block of A'ala Street was removed to extend A'ala park.

A fire in October 1963 destroyed one and damaged several of the seven buildings, and likely resulted in the removal of the second floor of the current one-story building. The Honolulu

⁵ Crusade Shows Many Tenements Abolished, Pacific Commercial Advertiser; November 21, 1918; sec 2 p 2.

⁶ Hawaii: Tenements and Lodging Houses. Location, Construction, and Sanitary Regulations. (Reg. Bd. of H., Feb. 11, 1915) *Public Health Reports (1896-1970)* Vol. 30, No. 24 (Jun. 11, 1915), pp. 1789-1790. 1927.

⁷ Ibid. 1975.

⁸ Jane Jacobs, *The death and life of great American cities*. New York, Modern Library. 2011

⁹ Albert Onishi "War years in Hell's Half Acre," *Honolulu Advertiser*. September 23, 2001 T:
<http://the.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/2001/Sep/23/il/i115ahawaiiways.html>

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Advertiser reported that the fire burned for approximately four hours, expanding from the first floor of one building, then jumping to the roof of a second, and scorching a third. One building was destroyed by fire, while the second had fire damage at the upper floor, and water damage to the first floor, and the third was damaged by exterior scorching and water used to extinguish the fire. Approximately 100 people were displaced by the fire. Sanborn fire insurance map produced that year shows the southernmost three of the original seven buildings damaged by fire.¹⁰ Honolulu City & County tax office information shows that one of the buildings on the property was a one story duplex as of 1964. An updated 1975 version of the Sanborn map shows the southernmost building no longer standing at that time, and that the southwesternmost building had been converted to a one-story duplex by that date as well; this is the extant one-story building.¹¹ A second fire in 1986 destroyed 22 apartments in the six remaining buildings (whose addresses were all listed as 425 North King Street), with two buildings destroyed altogether. It was at this time that the number of buildings was reduced to the current four. Again, approximately 100 residents were displaced. The residents were described as "mostly Chinese immigrants" at this time.¹²

The earlier residents of the buildings can be ascertained via available census records, for 1920 and 1940. These indicate that the majority of tenants at those times were Japanese, as was the rest of the A'ala area. In 1920, only seven households were listed in the census with addresses correlating to the property. It is possible that households were mislabeled, or addresses changed between 1920 and 1940. These households included families or individuals with Japanese names, many of whom had been born in Japan. By 1940, a larger number of apartments were linked to the property in the census. It appears that all seven of the property's wood buildings were included in the 425 address, as they were in the 1986 newspaper article. In 1940, there was more diversity in the ethnic background of the residents, and more appear to have been born in Hawai'i. Of the twenty-four households enumerated at the address, nine were Japanese, Seven Filipino, six Chinese, and two of mixed ethnic backgrounds. The overwhelming majority of those employed worked at blue-collar jobs, including cannery employees, longshoremen, store clerks and mechanics.

Architecture

The Wood Tenement Buildings behind Tong Fat Co. are locally significant as a rare surviving example of an early twentieth century tenement cluster, specifically early use of tongue and groove in a two-story, single-wall, multi-family housing constructed in the A'ala and Chinatown area. Although the buildings can loosely be termed tenements, they share some architectural characteristics with sugar and pineapple plantation-style houses, including in addition to their single wall structure. The buildings have post and pier foundations, wide eaves with open rafters, corrugated metal (sometimes called *totan* from the Japanese term for metal roof) roofs,

¹⁰ Sanborn Map Company. "Insurance Maps of Honolulu, Island of Oahu, Territory of Hawaii." New York: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Co. 1963.

¹¹ Sanborn Map Company. "Insurance Maps of Honolulu, Island of Oahu, Territory of Hawaii." New York: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Co. 1975.

¹² Lucy Young, "Chinese Immigrants Facing Serious Problems After Fire," ¹³ Box construction is another term used in studies of single-wall structural systems on the mainland United States, but is not widely used in Hawaii. The definition of box construction, in Cyril Harris' *Dictionary of Architecture and*

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double-hung windows, and external plumbing lines. The buildings are most appropriately identified as single-wall construction.

The Wood Tenement Buildings behind Tong Fat Co. and the type of tenement buildings found in larger cities at the turn of the twentieth century were architecturally dissimilar. For example, tenement buildings built in the Lower East Side of New York City were typically larger, with more apartment units per floor, and were constructed of masonry.

The Wood Tenement Buildings behind Tong Fat Co., which are small, two-story structures, with only two units per floor, were constructed using Honolulu's least expensive construction material and method: single-wall construction. Single-wall¹³ was the most affordable type of construction available in Hawaii through the late nineteenth and most of the early twentieth century, and many buildings, mostly houses, were built using this method, including some of Honolulu's tenements and apartments.

The impetus for single-wall systems originally came from Hawaii's sugar industry and the Hawaii Sugar Plantation Association (HSPA), through the housing they constructed for their employees. Much of the early, nineteenth-century plantation-provided shelter in Hawaii was in bunkhouses (also called barracks), when most workers were single men and few had families.

By 1885, the [sugar] plantations began to provide small rectangular houses of white-washed 1 x 12 board-and-batten construction with minimal structural framing and featuring side-gabled roofs with small eaves. The facilities for kitchen, toilet, bath and laundry were located in outbuildings of similar construction.¹⁴

To increase the stability and productivity of the plantation work force, plantation owners came to prefer hiring "men with families rather than single men, [so] they began [to provide] cottages for families."¹⁵ Into the 1920s, plantation managers sought to make agricultural life more attractive in order to retain workers. Housing, once tied to the work site, became clustered in "camps" in order to provide more amenities.

Urban areas often followed the rural example of housing organized along a central driveway within the developed property. These developments were still referred to as "camps" (often identified by the landowner's name) or as "courts." Plantation trained carpenters, once their contracts expired, moved to the city and, after often organizing their own companies, continued to construct the kinds of buildings with which they were familiar. They also used the same components.

¹³ Box construction is another term used in studies of single-wall structural systems on the mainland United States, but is not widely used in Hawaii. The definition of box construction, in Cyril Harris' *Dictionary of Architecture and Construction*, is:

a relatively simple, economical wall construction once used in the United States for small houses and dependencies; has an exterior appearance similar to that of board-and-batten construction. The walls are constructed of closely spaced, wide, upright board, approximately 1 inch thick; the cracks between boards are covered with vertical battens only on the exterior surface of the boards. The sillplates are secured on a foundation consisting of flat stones.

¹⁴ Barbara Shideler, *Hawaii's Plantation Village: History, Interpretation and Design of an Outdoor History Museum* (Submitted to the Faculty of the Department of American Studies In Partial Fulfillment of The Requirements For The Graduate Certificate in Historic Preservation) 1993. p. 25.

¹⁵ Ronald Takaki, *Pau Hana, Plantation Life and Labor in Hawaii, 1835-1920* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press) 1983. p. 96.

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Around the 1920s, tongue-and-groove boards became more commonly available as a building material, so structures with tongue-and-groove walls were constructed more frequently for plantation families. These four buildings were slightly earlier, making them an early example of the use of this material.

Two reasons for constructing single-wall houses were health concerns, and economy. Donald Bowman, the first director of the Industrial Services Bureau of HSPA, and former member of the Territorial Board of Health in Hilo wrote in 1920 that "buildings should be so constructed as to make the handling of an epidemic of contagious or infectious disease easy. . . . [N]o double walls or other rat harbors should be permitted, thereby preventing to a large extent plague infection."¹⁶ Single-wall construction, a structurally sophisticated system that also was appropriate for the climate, was an economical option for building. In its purest form, this system eliminates most or all of the vertical posts in typical structural framing for wood buildings, and relies on a bearing-wall of thin boards. This use of the minimal amount of material with which a building might be constructed reflected the high cost of components being shipped in from the continental United States. To help reduce costs, standardized components were used in Plantation-style, single-wall construction. This type of construction is a:

[S]tudy in economy of material and labor. The construction system utilize[s] a single thickness of vertical board siding (usually $\frac{3}{4}$ " to 1-1/4" thick) for bearing the roof and dead loads, thus eliminating the need for an internal structural frame. The wall is tied at the top and bottom plates, with . . . girt[s] at mid-span to prevent buckling. A hipped or gable roof caps the assembly, providing additional lateral stability.¹⁷

The popularity of this economical structural system "provided impetus for its diffusion, initially under the auspices of American sugar companies, to the Hawaiian Islands for the construction of sugar and pineapple plantation camp dwellings."¹⁸ However, most of the pure single-wall "examples appear to have not survived in their original form. . . . A majority of the buildings which were erected in Hawaii using this [single-wall construction system] . . . included corner posts and vertical studs to frame doors and windows."¹⁹

Single-wall construction is not unique to Hawaii, although it was a commonplace structural system here in the early twentieth century and used as late as the 1970s. Comparisons have been made between Hawaii's single-wall construction and analogous structures in other areas, including Japan's rural buildings and plank-framed houses on the United States mainland. Although a few inventory surveys and other reports have been written, a comprehensive history of single-wall construction in Hawaii, covering its many antecedents as well as the details of its development, has not been published. There are many variations of single-wall buildings in Hawaii; this is also true in other locations where milled lumber was expensive, builders had limited financial resources, and permanence of construction was not a primary goal.²⁰

The designs of single-wall houses in Hawaii's cities and towns were influenced by the worker housing built on the plantations, and generally used similar materials. Urban dwellings typically

¹⁶ Riznik, "From Barracks," 1999. pp. 136–9.

¹⁷ Shideler, *Hawaii's Plantation Village* 1993. p. 27.

¹⁸ Solamillo, Comments on Dillingham Boulevard Residences, May 31, 2013.

¹⁹ Solamillo, Comments on Dillingham Boulevard, May 31, 2013.

²⁰ Peter Schultz and Andrea Sue Morrison, "Architecture as Material Culture: A Survey of Residential and Commercial Structures in a Western Ghost Town," *Society for California Archaeology Proceedings*, 13. 2000. pp. 105 & 106.

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had more amenities and more square footage than plantation houses. Also, they were generally more diverse, not having been built all at the same time or from the same set of drawings. However, as the Wood Tenement Buildings behind Tong Fat Co. are apartments, they are simple, with compact floor plans, and are presumed to all follow the same design as one another.

In urban areas, two-story single-wall buildings with shops at the first floor and dwellings on the second were common, though residential buildings were typically only a single story. Two-story, single-wall apartment buildings were relatively rare in Honolulu even when single-wall was the most common construction method used. The Wood Tenement Buildings behind Tong Fat Co. are an extremely rare surviving example of a cluster of Honolulu's two-story, single-wall apartment buildings.

The Tenement Buildings behind Tong Fat Co. were constructed during the time that Percy James Hayselden owned the property. Hayselden was the son of James G Hayselden, who had become successful as an architect and builder in the late nineteenth century. He was responsible for projects including roads and bridges, as well as the original pedestal for the statue of King Kamehameha I in Kohala, for which he received accolades from King Kalākaua. Some of his road and bridge projects included Bridges at Waikāne, Kāne'ohe, Punalu'u, Waiawa, and Waimalu on O'ahu; Wailuanui on Maui; and Nāwiliwili, Hanalei, Anahola, Opeula, Wailua and Waimea on Kaua'i.²¹

James G. amassed a considerable estate, including the property upon which the tenement buildings were constructed. It is unclear exactly when Hayselden acquired the property, however it was certainly prior to his death sometime in the early 1890s. During this time, the property would have been marginal, a piece of dry land located directly adjacent to Kuwili pond on the outskirts of Honolulu proper. Its value would have been more recognizable once Benjamin Franklin Dillingham had acquired the neighboring parcel from the Kingdom in 1889 to use for his O'ahu Railway and Land Company's terminal, after which he filled the pond.²² Iwilei was then able to become a larger industrial area, and the area around the terminal was a bustling location, ideally situated for workers' residences.

After James G Hayselden's death, sometime between 1890 and 1895, his estate was managed by a trustee, with proceeds going to first his widow, and later his children.²³ In 1912, the trust petitioned Hawai'i's land court system to confirm its ownership of the title to the subject property. This was settled in December of that year in the trust's favor, with the additional provision that Percy James Hayselden was entitled to the tenement property, subject to encumbrances for a variety of rights-of-way.²⁴ The tenement buildings were constructed only a few years later, in 1915. Hayselden remained the owner of the property until 1920, when he sold it to Tong Fat Co. Ltd. for \$57,000.²⁵

Tong Fat Co. had been in existence since at least 1896, and by 1908 were involved in wholesale sales of liquor in Honolulu. In 1910, the company issued a mortgage for property in Hawi, to J. Alfred Magoon, and in 1915 applied for a license to sell liquor at a saloon in Hāwī as well. After

²¹ *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, January 3, 1883 p 1., *Hawaiian Gazette*, January 28, 1890, p 2.

²² Mason Architects, Inc., *Draft O'ahu Railway and Land Co. Terminal Property*, National Register Nomination, January, 2020.

²³ *Honolulu Evening Bulletin*, July 22, 1897, p 1.

²⁴ *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, January 17, 1913, p 11.

²⁵ "Big Figure Is Reached By Hawaiian Trust In Turnover For Past Week," *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, December 22, 1920, p 7.

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the construction of their building on North King Street, Tong Fat constructed a second store building on King Street, renovated the North King Street building, constructed eight new two-story apartment buildings, as well as converted the tenement buildings to apartments, all in 1922. The conversion of the tenements to apartments cost \$6000, only four years after the tenements had been "put in good condition" by Lee Lup, a managing director of the Tong Fat Co., indicating that there was some sort of involvement in the property prior to its purchase by the company in 1920. Lee Lup was also the proprietor of a hardware store located in the Tong Fat Co. Ltd. Building after its construction, as well as a planning mill nearby on Queen Street. Other officers of the Tong Fat Co. Ltd as of 1924 included Hee Kwong, president; Chung Sing, vice president; T.K. Lam, treasurer; Leong Hoon, assistant treasurer; Chang Nee Sun, secretary; Leong Wah Hin, auditor; W.G. Lit, managing director and Wong Lum, managing director. In 1926, Lee Lup had become vice president, and Lum Yip Kee had been added as a managing director.²⁶

Many of the officers of Tong Fat Co. Ltd. served as officers of other Chinese-owned businesses. These included Liberty Bank, United Chinese Trust Company (later the United Investment Co.), Lum Yip Kee, and City Mill, and others, as well as several Chinese benevolent societies. T.K. Lam served as an officer for both Tong Fat and Liberty Bank in 1923. Lum Yip Kee was president of the bank in 1923, while he was treasurer for A'ala Market, Ltd., and before he became an officer of Tong Fat Co. Hee Kwong was also a founder of the bank. In addition, these two, Hee Kwong, and Lee Lup were involved with the creation of United Chinese Trust Company, Ltd. with officers of Liberty Bank, and assorted Chinese-owned businesses. Lin Look Lau also served president of Tong Fat Co. Ltd. and United Investment Company, in addition to holding various positions within Liberty Bank. Yin Tai Lum, son of Lum Yip Kee filled multiple roles within Tong Fat Co. Ltd., Liberty Bank, and Lum Yip Kee, Ltd. in addition to his work as a well-known appraiser, real estate professional and author. Chang Nee Sun, owner of Wing Sing Wo Co., became a director of the Chinese-American Bank in 1931, a director of City Mill Co. Ltd, and was a member of the Honolulu Chamber of Commerce by 1946. He later became a vice president of City Mill, as well as vice president of American Security Bank, and vice president and treasurer of Wo Fat

It appears that Tong Fat Co. Ltd. was forced to abandon its building during World War II for unspecified reasons, and regained possession at the end of the war, petitioning the government to make it whole on losses in use and rent of approximately \$15,000. The property remained in the possession of Tong Fat Co. Ltd. until it was sold to T.F. Investment Company in 1973. Tong Fat Co. Ltd. dissolved as a corporation the following year. T.F. Investment sold the property to Franklin K.L. Pang, a CPA, and owner of Tabulating, Inc., a data processing service in Honolulu in 1983. Pang and his wife Jane owned the property until 2005 when it was sold to Cupboard LLC.

²⁶ *Pacific Commercial Advertiser, Honolulu Advertiser, Honolulu Star Bulletin, The Hilo Tribune*, various dates.

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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
___ 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

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Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 50-80-14-08863

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .4500

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ AD 1927 or ☒ NAD 1983

1. Zone: 4 Easting: 617745 Northing: 2357615

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

The boundary of the property is defined by the limits of the cluster of buildings, and their associated parking areas; see Map on Section 10, page 18. It does not include the Tong Fat Co. Building that occupies a portion of the overall parcel.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary described includes the historic buildings and associated open spaces. The Tong Fat Ltd building and the driveway to its south are a part of this TMK (1-5-007-003), but are not included within the boundary for this nomination. Although the Tong Fat Co. Building has been evaluated as potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, it is not associated with the development of the Tenements themselves.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Lesleigh Jones

organization: Mason Architects

street & number: 119 Merchant Street Suite 501

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

e-mail: lj@masonarch.com

telephone: (808) 536-0556

date: February 18, 2019

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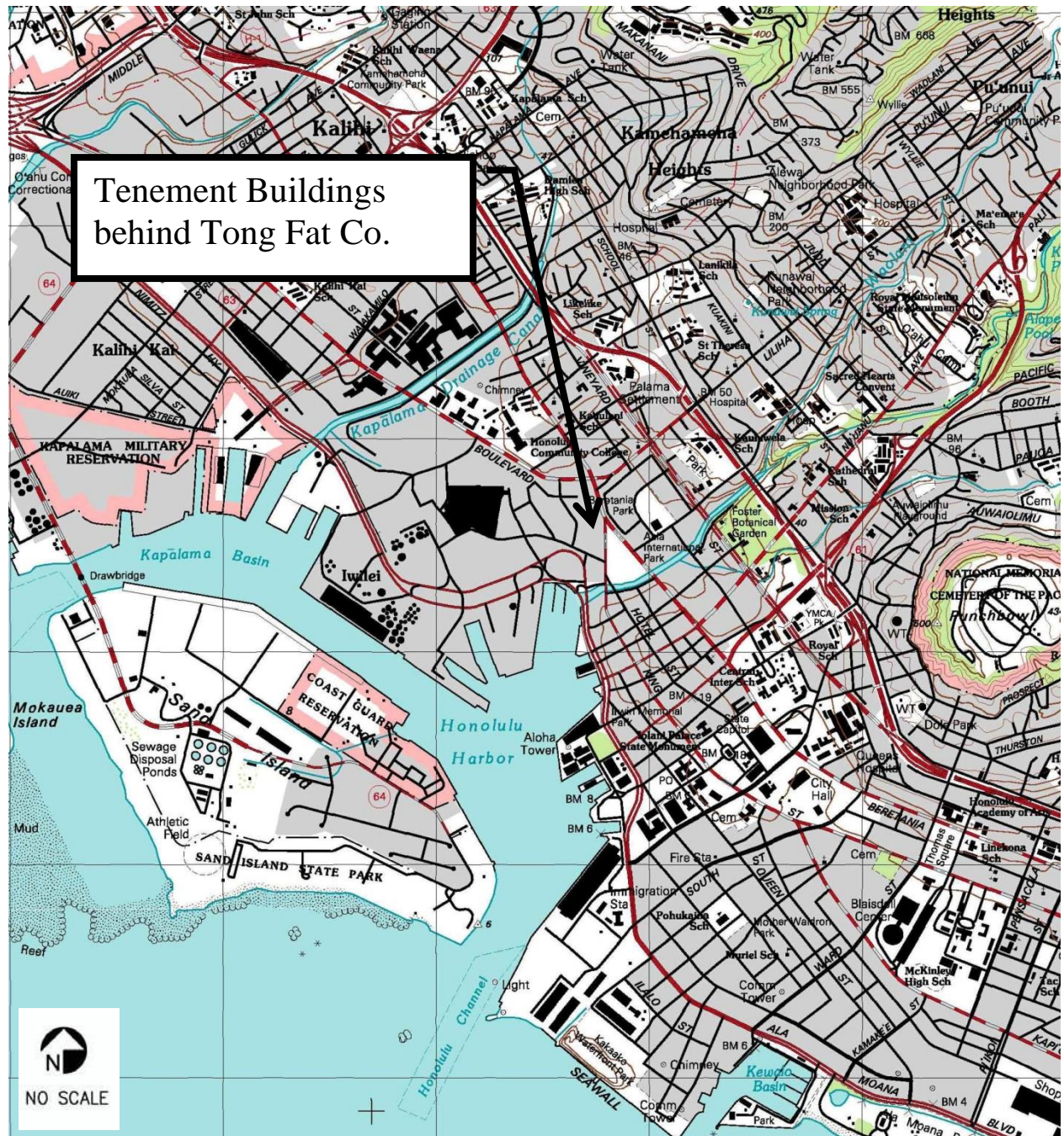
Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

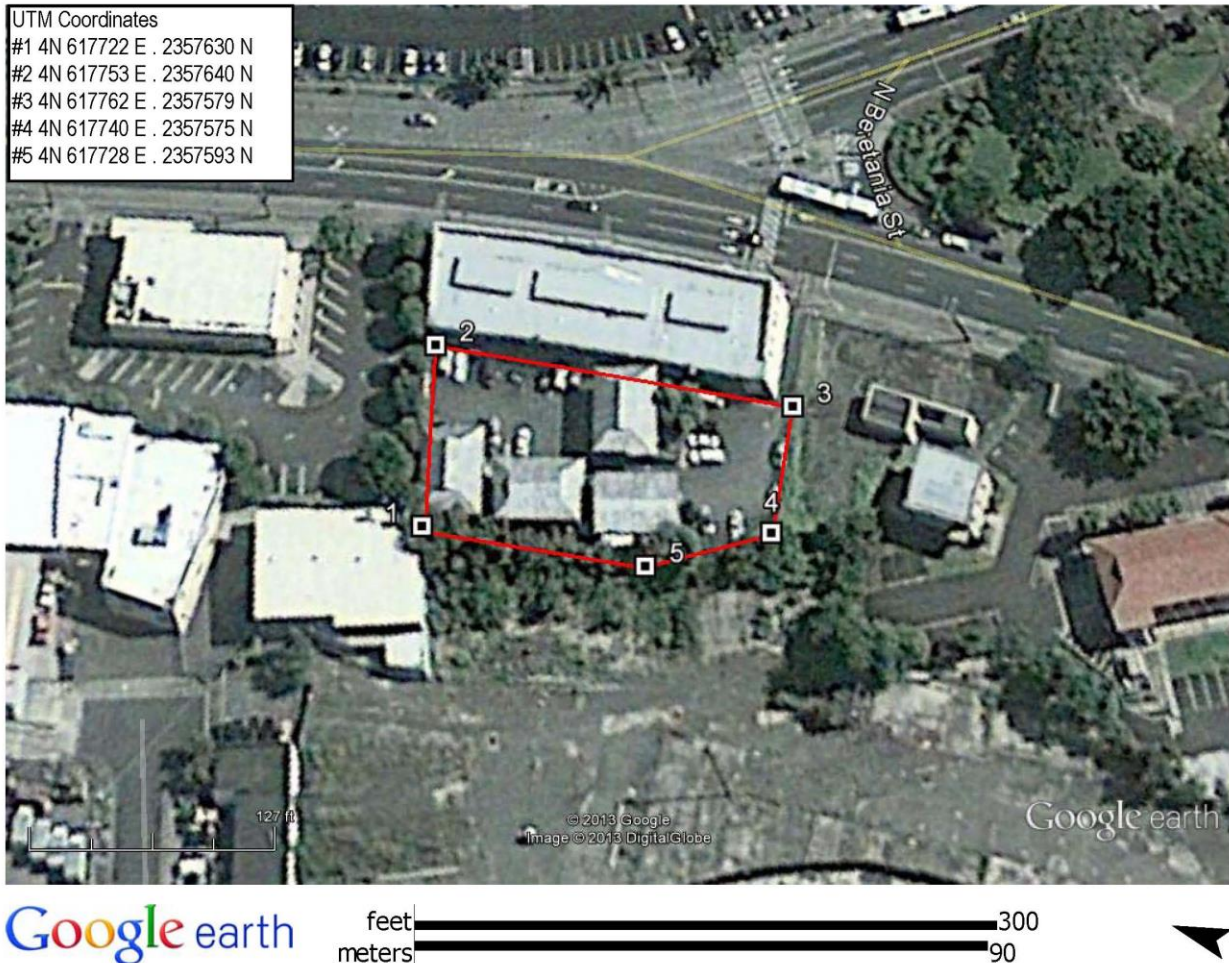
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1906 Dakin Map of the area showing the rail property to the south of the site where the Tenements would be constructed (Property indicated by dashed line).



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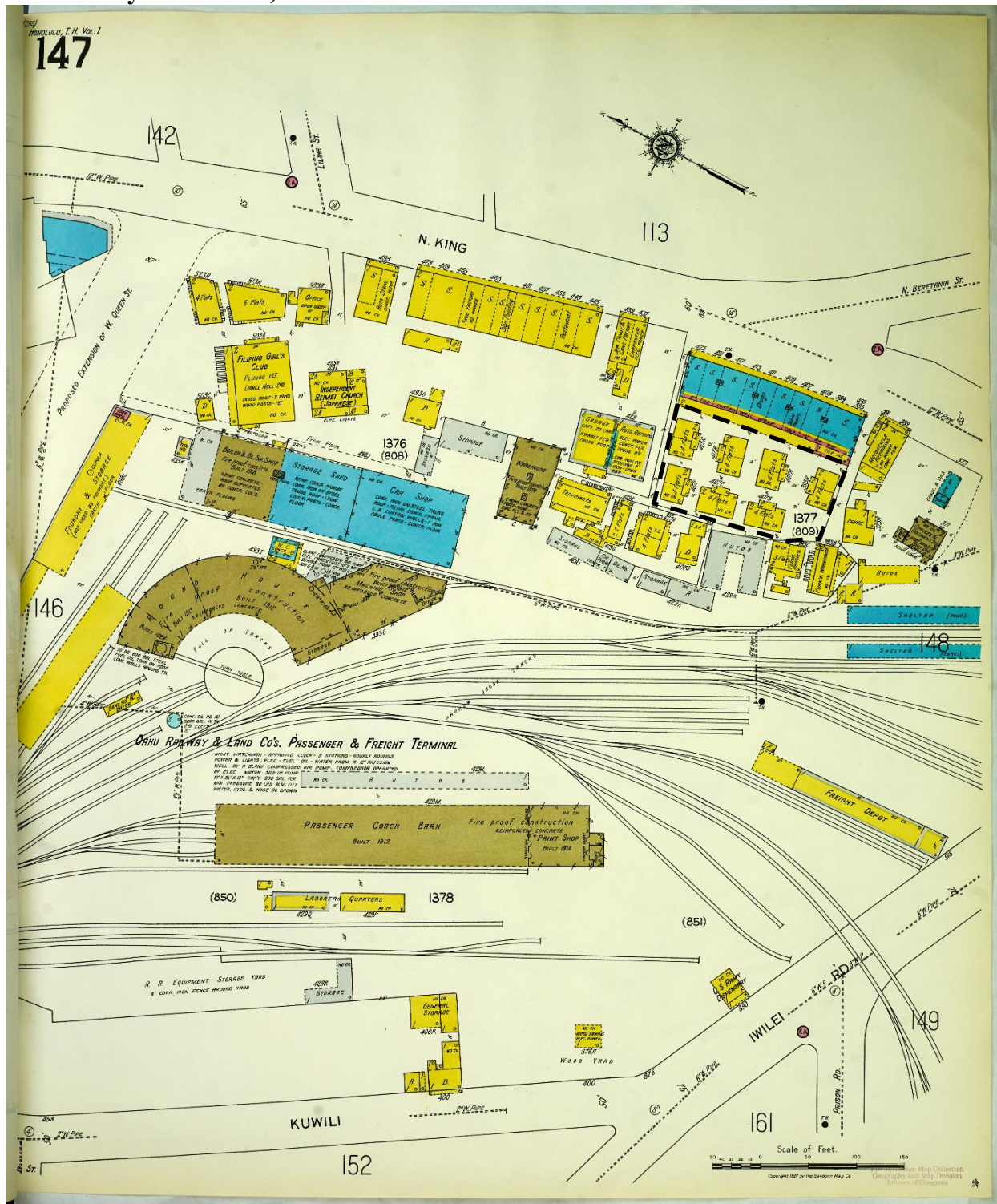
**1914 Sanborn Map showing proximity of Tenement buildings location to OR&L Depot
(Property indicated by dashed line)**



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1927 Sanborn Map showing Tenements and their proximity to the OR&L lines (south and west) and the recently constructed Tong Fat Co. Building (east). (Tenement buildings indicated by dashed line)



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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: Wood Tenement Buildings behind Tong Fat

City or Vicinity: Honolulu

County: Honolulu

State: Hawaii

Photographer: Lesleigh Jones

Date Photographed: March 2, 2013

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Photo Key:



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Photo #1 (HI_HonoluluCounty_FourHousesBehindTongFatCo_0001)

Overview of parking area and Building D. Camera facing southeast.

Photo #2 (HI_HonoluluCounty_FourHousesBehindTongFatCo_0002)

Overview of Buildings A, B, and C. Camera facing southwest.

Photo #3 (HI_HonoluluCounty_FourHousesBehindTongFatCo_0003)

Oblique of Building A, camera facing southwest.

Photo #4 (HI_HonoluluCounty_FourHousesBehindTongFatCo_0004)

Overview of Four Buildings Behind Tong Fat Co.. Camera facing northeast.

Photo #5 (HI_HonoluluCounty_FourHousesBehindTongFatCo_0005)

Partial elevation detail of Building A showing remaining original window. Camera facing southwest.

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HI_Honolulu County_FourHousesBehindTongFat_0001

1 of 5. Overview of parking area and Building D. Camera facing southeast.



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HI_Honolulu County_FourHousesBehindTongFat_0002
2 of 5. Overview of Buildings A, B, and C. Camera facing southwest.



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HI_Honolulu County_FourHousesBehindTongFat_0003
3 of 5. Oblique of Building A, camera facing southwest.



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HI_Honolulu County_FourHousesBehindTongFat_0004

4 of 5. Overview of Four Buildings Behind Tong Fat Co.. Camera facing northeast.

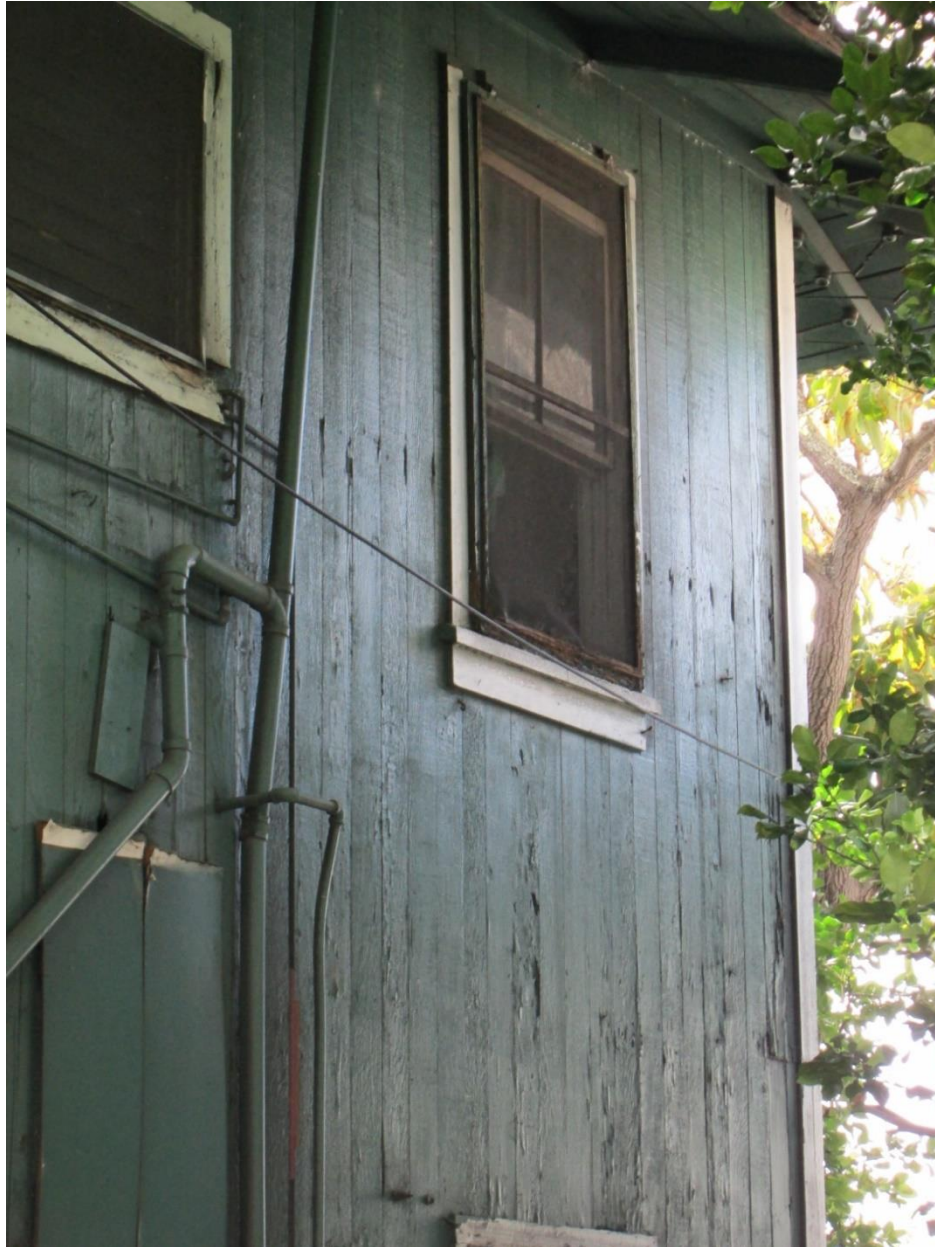


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HI_Honolulu County_FourHousesBehindTongFat_0005

5 of 5. Partial elevation detail of Building A showing remaining original window. Camera facing southwest.



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.