

County of Hawai'i

PLANNING DEPARTMENT CULTURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

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January 14, 2019

Keau Kukui 'Ula Preservation Committee
c/o Mr. Jeff Alexander
75-6095 N. Haku Mele Place
Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740

**SUBJECT: Investigative Subcommittee on SHPD Approved Preservation Plans For
Historic Properties in Hawai'i County
Report on Site Visit to Pualani Estates at Kona Preservation Area
November 9, 2018 (Revised November 21, 2018)**

Members of the Cultural Resources Commission Investigative Subcommittee conducted a site visit of the c. half-acre Pualani Estates preservation area on November 1, 2018, following a letter request from the Subcommittee to the Keau Kukui 'Ula Preservation Committee. Subcommittee members in attendance included Deborah Chang, Nicole Lui and Theresa Donham. Jordan Calpito, Burial Specialist with the State Historic Preservation Division, was also in attendance with volunteer assistant Chris Omerod. Three members of the Keau Kukui 'Ula Preservation Committee were present: Jeff Nohea Alexander, Ric Likeke Bumanglag and Kate Kealani Winter. The site visit was conducted between 9:00 am and 12:30 pm at the preservation area (TMK 3-7-5-041:097).

The preservation area was established as a lot in the Pualani Estates subdivision to preserve and protect the Keau Kukui 'Ula Heiau. A burial reinterment site was subsequently established within the preserve. A preservation plan for the heiau and reinterment area was finalized and approved in 2006 (Maly and Rosendahl 2006). Pursuant to the preservation plan, the Heiau Preservation Committee was formed by the homeowners association in 2015. The purpose of the site visit was to determine whether the historic properties were still present and if they are being preserved as specified in the 2006 preservation plan. Prior to 2015, care and maintenance of the site was the responsibility of the project developer.

The subcommittee found that the Heiau and reinterment sites are present, and that the Preservation Committee has done a very good job of controlling invasive vegetation, watching over the preserve, developing interpretive materials, and bringing the preservation area into compliance with the approved plan, when possible.

A number of non-compliant measures were implemented at the preserve prior to 2015, which the Preservation Committee is now trying to correct. These include the following:

1. A large "viewing area" defined by a metal fence was constructed within the preserve area, in very close proximity to the Heiau.
2. Concrete steps with metal railings were constructed up the hillside between the sidewalk and the Heiau viewing area.
3. The hill on which the preserve area is located was cut on all sides for development of house lots and roads, significantly decreasing the overall area of the preserve as specified in the 2006 preservation plan.
4. An interpretive trail with four signs was proposed in the 2006 preservation plan. Much of the proposed trail location is now gone, due to the cutting described above.
5. A concrete drainage swale is located along the lower west-facing slope of the preserve area, inside the area designated for "no construction" on the subdivision plat map.

Some of the previous modifications to the preserve are irreversible and require that the preservation plan be amended to reflect current conditions. The CRC Subcommittee members discussed options for amending the plan with the Heiau Preservation Committee. Also discussed was appropriate treatment of the kukui trees that are part of the preservation area. The Heiau Preservation Committee is very respectful of these trees and requested guidance in the extent of trimming as well as control of keiki kukui sprouts. The Heiau Preservation Committee requested guidance regarding possible assistance in technical matters, such as site mapping and historic research. The Subcommittee offered to make inquiries at UH Hilo and the UH West Hawai'i campus regarding possible student internships or educational projects.

Commissioners are invited to view photos by Nohea Alexander and read Likeke Bumanglag's summary of the site visit at www.pualaniestatesatkona.com/keaukukuiula/index.html.

The Subcommittee offers the following observations/recommendations for the Commission to consider:

1. We find that the volunteer group identified as the Heiau Preservation Committee is doing an outstanding job of controlling invasive vegetation and initiating an interpretive program at the preserve.
2. Hawaii Administrative Rule §13-277 allows for the preparation of a preservation plan by the landowner or their representative. We believe that the Heiau Preservation Committee can successfully complete an amended preservation plan to guide future caretaking of this important site.

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3. We appreciate that the Heiau Preservation Committee has made efforts to decrease the size and impact of the previously constructed viewing area next to the Heiau, and we concur with their assessment that the metal fence should be removed entirely, and that a stone wall should define a small viewing area. Details of the stone wall would be presented in an amended preservation plan for review by SHPD prior to implementation.
4. We concur with the Heiau Preservation Committee's recommendation that given the decreased size of the preserve, an interpretive trail with four signs is no longer feasible, and that no trail should be constructed within the preserve at this time.
5. We concur with the Heiau Preservation Committee that the concrete stairway along the hillside is intrusive and violated the preservation plan stipulation that no construction would occur within the preserve. Efforts to minimize its visual impact would be preferred over full removal, which would most likely cause more damage to the hillside.
6. The Heiau Preservation Committee has completed an interpretive sign for the site, which we were able to view during the site visit. We agree that the sign could be posted at the base of the hill adjacent to the sidewalk, and be included in the amended preservation plan. We recommend that the text of the sign be reviewed and approved by SHPD prior to installation, pursuant to HAR §13-277-7.
7. We recommend that the Heiau Preservation Committee compile an updated map of the Heiau and surrounding terrain, with revised preserve area boundaries, so that there is an accurate record of the site and conditions going forward. This would be an important element of the amended preservation plan. Overhead photos captured by drone would also be very useful.
8. The Heiau Preservation Committee is urged to continue maintenance of the small kukui grove by trimming the mature trees and limiting additional growth by removal of sprouted seedlings.
9. We recommend that the CRC Subcommittee assist the Heiau Preservation Committee in reaching out to UH regarding possible student projects that could assist in the above actions. The Preservation Committee could also contact local high schools and Kamehameha Schools regarding volunteer assistance.

Respectfully submitted,



Theresa K. Donham, Chairperson
Cultural Resources Commission

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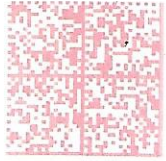
cc: Cultural Resources Commission

References

- Maly, Kepā and Paul H. Rosendahl
2006 Phase II Archaeological Site Preservation Plan – Pualani Residential Community Mitigation Program, Lands of Puapua‘a 1st and 2nd, North Kona District, Island of Hawai‘i (TMK:3-7-5-17:28, 29). Paul H. Rosendahl, Ph.D., Inc., Hilo.



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