

RES24-071
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 185

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Apr 17, 2024 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 1

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 0

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Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Apr 17, 2024 @ 09:51 AM

Opening Statement

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Aloha—my name is Nicole Prascovia Elikolani Scherzinger. It is very important to me to be here tonight with all of you for this Neighborhood board meeting. I came here at the earliest possible opportunity that I could get off from work to share my heart and my intentions.

I appreciate the opportunity to spend time and talk to you, the descendants of Puu Māelieli nourished by the Mololani rain and wind, to open the lines of communication as I hope to be a member of this community. I want to humbly express that **pono**—integrity, to be righteous— is a principle I embrace and continue to hold onto throughout my journey back home to Hawaii.

I was raised in an ohana that places KeAkua and āina as a central aspect of our upbringing. Hawaii is my Kulaiwi, it is where my bones began. As a matter of survival, my mother left Hawaii when she was 22 as many native Hawaiians have in the diaspora. I was raised in Kentucky with my mother, stepdad and sister. We would come back to Hawaii to be with my Tutu, Papa and ohana in the summers and my mother longed to come home one day. After suffering a stroke and double heart valve replacement surgery, it was important to me to bring her back to Hawaii, to be close to family again. In 2008 with Akua's help, I was able to provide my mom and dad with a home here. My sister, Ke'ala, lives and raises her family in Tennessee.

After many years of working afar, the whispers of my heart have been calling me back. Now, I am finally at a place in my life where I have the opportunity to return to Hawai'i and to be with 'ohana. We are a family that works through prayer and I have been praying for the day to have a home here again like I did as a child.

I yearn to reside on this āina bringing with me ohana values passed down from my kūpuna for generations— to mālama āina, to mālama community.

My Intentions in this Process

Opening: My intention is to go through this process embodying pono, to involve my ohana, to continue to meet with cultural practitioners, connect with the community and with experts in order to build this hale responsibly.

These are a few of the steps I have taken to express this intention.

The āina has been blessed by my Papa, Archbishop John Frederick. He and my Anakala who is formally trained in traditional protocol will also respectfully share another blessing. In June 2023, I sought guidance from cultural practitioners in order to gain grounding as we began this process, turning to Kumu Tony Laakapu Lenchanko, Kumu Frank Hewitt, Kaumakaiwa Kanaka'ole.

I hired a firm that specializes in environmental and land use planning services that has reached out to a number of organizations and individuals, including those recommended by the neighborhood board.

I want to build a hale that is respectful of this area and have made sure that the square footage is well below the maximum allowed for the size of this property. The lot coverage is only 22%. That is less than ½ the amount of what is permitted to be built, which is significantly less than roughly 90% of the homes in this neighborhood and on the island. We designed a home to blend in with the existing topography so the home will be hidden from view and the natural trade winds can keep flowing without interference.

I am kanaka and keiki o ka aina (child of the land) so it is important to me to have open undeveloped space on the property so I can be outside, connect and be one with the land as our ancestors have taught us.

Through our research we found that multiple structures were built on this parcel back in the 1940's by the Butler Family. The last recorded image of a structure was taken in 1969. The next recorded image was in 1982, by then the structure had been demolished.

Since 2022, we have been working with a firm who specializes in archaeology, history, ethnography and architectural history to conduct an extensive literature review and background research for the property.

I want to continue to learn about this āina which I know will be a lifelong journey.

I have met with Aunty Rocky, John Reppun and Keone Machado to begin opening the lines of communication with the members of the community to find common ground.

Addressing Community Concerns

Opening: Members of the community have expressed a number of concerns regarding cultural sites. I want to address these concerns. I have included maps, to supports these three points:

First– The ahu puaa boundary marker falls to the south beyond the boundaries of the current parcel.

In the archeological report, Figure 16 highlights the research of *Sites of Oahu* by Sterling & Summers and here it shows that the ahu puaa boundary, “the marker between He’eia Kea and Kahaluu” is south of the current parcel.

Second–archaeological studies show that there is no heiau on the property. The heiau that is of concern, is mauka and outside the boundaries of the current parcel.

Recorded cultural sites are mauka of Kamehameha Highway. In figure 17 in the Archeological Report, it covers 10 studies conducted in the area from 1933 to 2017 which have not identified a heiau, ahu puaa boundary marker or any other cite on the parcel.

This report was done in an effort to provide a comprehensive analysis and to assess the potential for encountering significant archaeological/cultural resources.

Third– I agree with the community to protect Puu Māelieli and to keep the zoning of that parcel as preservation/conservation.

The zoning of said residential property is completely different from conservation/preservation and requires different processes for development and community outreach. I would ask that the community be informed that these two parcels are unrelated and that they be referred to and dealt with as separate agenda

items.

I ask you...How can I be a part of the vision and mission of what the community needs? I want to stand with the community here in Kahaluu as I have stood for important causes throughout Hawaii, And the World. I want to be a part of the protection and preservation of sacred and cultural spaces. Let's have conversations on how to continue to preserve Māelieli and sites such as this in Kahaluu and throughout Hawaii.

Closing Thoughts:

It would be a privilege to mālama and care for this wahi. We as a family have a strong faith, we care deeply for each other and others, we love to share our gifts and talents, and I want to bring that intention to my hale. During the pandemic, God, 'ohana and time, were emphasized for me. The pandemic taught me many things, one of them is stillness—and another is what is most important in life, ohana! As I said earlier, pule is central to my life, and I believe that prayer will guide us forward.

I don't have all the answers but I am willing to be open in the process and learn. I put my trust in God and I strive to be a vessel whom God can trust.

I am Kanaka and I would love to return home. Let us kuikahi, join, unite together to break down the barriers and to continue to build up the community. Ive dreamt for so long of creating a space for ohana to gather, a home for me and my family and generations to come. Aloha nō!

May 1, 2023

Literature Review and Background Research for 47-083 Kamehameha Hwy

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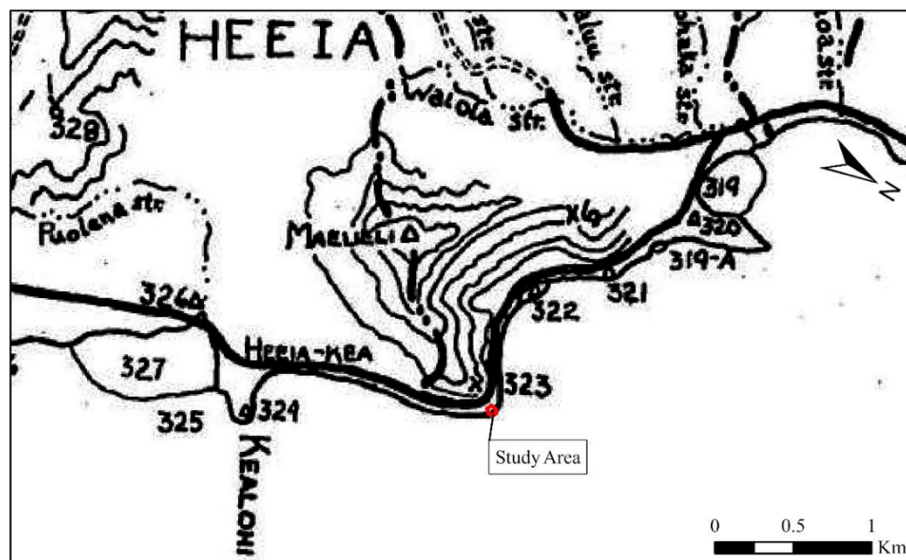


Figure 16. Portion of Sterling & Summers *Sites of Oahu* Ko'olaupoko Site Map showing McAllister (1933) sites 319-327 in relation to study area.

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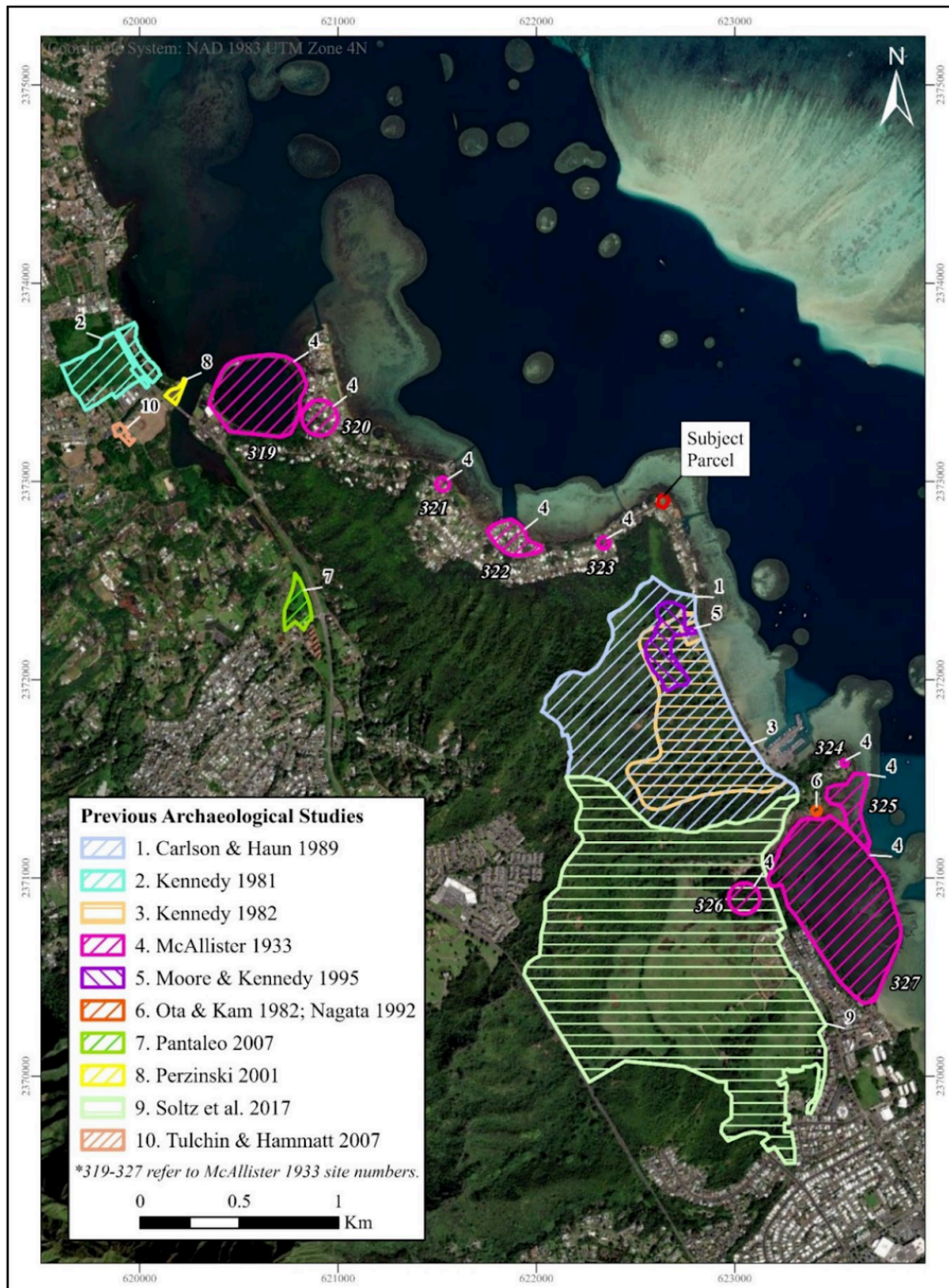


Figure 17. Previous archaeological studies conducted within the vicinity of the current project.