RES24-176
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 493

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT (EM)

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT (EM) Meeting

Meeting Date: Nov 8, 2024 @ 09:00 AM

Support: 28

Oppose: 1

I wish to comment: 2

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Adam Wong	adam@acwventures.com	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 2, 2024 @ 01:00 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Council Members,

I have been a lifelong East Honolulu resident and currently live in Kaimuki. I am a daily visitor to the central business district of Kaimuki where the Queen Theater is located. Every time I walk or pass by the theater I am saddened that such an iconic and once beautiful building is in such disrepair. As a former music concert promoter and current movie producer, I am also excited about the opportunity for a community performance venue to potentially be added to the Kaimuki Community. The current state of the theater is a blight and dangerous to the district. Instead, a renovated at programmed theater would add to the vibrancy of the community similar to what the Palace Theater has done for downtown Hilo.

As someone with development experience, I believe in private property rights and realize that condemnation is a last resort. However, in this situation I believe it is warranted for 2 reasons. First, the amount of capital investment that will be required to renovate the Theater and continue to use it as a theater, will make it virtually impossible for any investor/developer to make a suitable return on investment. Secondly, a renovated theater for concerts, movies, plays, and other events would be such a significant amenity for the entire East Honolulu community.

For these reasons, I support Resolution

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Breanna Rose	brearosa@gmail.com	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 5, 2024 @ 03:30 PM

Testimony:

Aloha,

As a longtime resident of Ka‘imukī, I am writing in strong support of the measure to acquire and revitalize the Queen Theatre.

For many years, residents like myself have dreamed of seeing the Queen Theatre restored to its former vibrancy as a cultural, artistic, and community gathering space. This historical landmark has remained neglected for far too long. Revitalizing the Queen Theatre would immensely benefit local Ka‘imukī businesses and the economy and enrich the lives of our residents, youth, and broader O‘ahu community.

I respectfully urge you to pass this resolution and help restore this important community asset.

Mahalo to Chair Waters for his leadership on this issue and to the Council for considering this resolution.

Mahalo,

Breanna

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Adrian Kerwin Kusumoto	theatk@gmail.com	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 5, 2024 @ 07:35 PM

Testimony:

I am a Kaimuki resident, born and raised. In all my 36 years, I have never been inside the Queen Theater.

I have been involved in various Kaimuki community groups, including Second Saturdays over a decade ago. Arranging events with people walking past or around the Queen Theater, while artists performed outside the venue rather than inside it - it felt hollow. I can only imagine what those events would have been like had the theater participated, and held local films or had live music or even live theater inside.

I think it is time for the city to step up and do something here. The property owners haven't followed through on any plans to sell or renovate. Rather than a strange, closed building, it's time to make the theater part of the community again.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Raynard Soon	thesoons@yahoo.com	96822
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 6, 2024 @ 04:49 AM

Testimony:

Chair Waters and members of Executive Management;

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of RES24-176. The action that the resolution advocates is long overdue. Kaimuki is one of the true community gems of Oahu, and has seen increasing recent investment in small businesses, creative streetscape, new office buildings and other features that enhance Kaimuki's presence and its importance. Redeveloping the Theatre in such proximity to Kaimuki Community Park, allows the creation of a true "heart", where residents have a reason to gather and to create a vibrant neighborhood like few others on Oahu.

This opportunity has been present for decades. Yet the owner has allowed the property to languish and to deteriorate. Additionally, no private developer has stepped forward to encourage the land owners to clean it up and to redevelop. With the recent redeveloopment of the Goodwill Building a couple of blocks away, it is time to correct the mistakes of the

last 40 years as regards Queen Theatre; it's time to bring it back to life.

I commend the City Council on its wisdom to step up to the challenge and urge passage of this resolution.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Landon Lee	leelando@hawaii.edu	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 7, 2024 @ 12:17 AM

Testimony:

As a resident of Kaimukī, long time thespian, and frequenter of the Wai'alae Business District who wishes to see its continued vibrancy and success, I am writing in support of resolution 176. It’s clear that the Queen Theater holds a special place in the hearts of my neighbors and friends. By allowing the property to deteriorate and become an eyesore rather than the vibrant landmark it deserves to be, and further, showing reluctance to work with the city in past proposals, the owner has clearly demonstrated their ineptitude and refusal to steward a community asset. Resolution 176 is a therefore a rational step forward in preserving an iconic building in the heart of one of Honolulu’s most beloved neighborhoods. It’s time for the Queen Theater to return to public hands, and for it to once again be a community gathering place.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Mahlon Moore	mahlonmoore@gmail.com	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Friends of the Queen Theater	Support	Nov 7, 2024 @ 10:18 AM

Testimony:

Testimony from Mahlon Moore, as a representative of Friends of Queen Theater.

To be submitted to the Honolulu City Council at a special meeting on Friday, November 8, 2024.

I have been a member of the non-profit organization “Friends of Queen Theatre” for more than 15 years. The organization was formed in an effort to persuade the owner to convert the theater into a usable space again, or, to sell the property to a person or organization that will return the theater to its former glory.

Our vision has always been for the Theater to be refurbished and returned to operation as a venue for local performances, films and civic activities.

Our organization conducted a public use assessment and the results were overwhelmingly positive with suggestions ranging from Hawaii Film Festival showings to productions by local hula halau. One of the biggest wishes was for the theater to be available at a reasonable charge for local groups to rent it.

The Friends of Queen Theater maintains a website, friendsofqueentheater.com.

We urge the City to proceed with Resolution 24-176 and, if necessary, begin the process of Eminent Domain to acquire the property. The Queen has been an iconic landmark in Kaimuki for decades and it's our hope that the City can begin the process or restoring the treasured landmark.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Davin Aoyagi	davin.aoyagi@gmail.com	96821
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 7, 2024 @ 11:04 AM

Testimony:
I am writing in support of Resolution 24-176, which seeks to acquire the Queen Theater property for the benefit of our community.

The Queen Theater, once a beloved landmark in Kaimukī, has unfortunately become a stark example of urban neglect. For years, it has sat vacant, exposed to the elements, and has visibly deteriorated to the point of being a safety concern. Its vacancy has led to unsightly conditions, making it a frequent site for loitering and other activities. This in turn, creates public safety concerns for Kaimukī residents.

The Queen Theater's location in the heart of Kaimukī makes it a matter of public concern. Acquiring this property through eminent domain offers the chance to restore the theater and address these urgent issues. With City oversight, it could ensure that the building is rehabilitated to meet safety standards, ultimately transforming it into a safe, vibrant space that reflects the community's values and supports the neighborhood's growth.

Mahalo for consideration of my testimony.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jacob Aki	jacob@jacobaki.com	96818
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 7, 2024 @ 11:23 AM

Testimony:
Aloha kākou,

I am writing in support of Resolution 24-176, CD1, which aims to acquire the historic Queen Theater and restore it as a community-owned multipurpose venue. This iconic building has long been a treasured landmark for the people of Kaimukī and beyond, and it is heartbreaking to see it languish in disrepair. For years, the Queen Theater has been a symbol of Kaimukī's unique history and culture. Revitalizing this space would not only honor our community's heritage but also provide much-needed performance and gathering spaces for residents and visitors alike.

As someone who frequents the Kaimukī area, I am well aware of the potential this project has to revitalize our business

district and enhance the safety and aesthetic of Wai'alae Avenue. By turning this theater into a multipurpose venue, we will be investing in the cultural and economic vitality of Kaimukī. I fully support the Council's plan to negotiate a fair purchase or, if necessary, pursue eminent domain to ensure that this property serves the public good.

Thank you for considering this resolution to transform an underutilized historic property into a vibrant community asset.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ryan Chun	ryan.chun@eliteparking.net	96821
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 7, 2024 @ 11:50 AM

Testimony:

I fully support this measure. This theatre has been an eye sore to the Kaimuki community for decades. How wonderful it would be if it could be renovated and put to positive use.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jon Lee	jkcflee@gmail.com	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 7, 2024 @ 12:04 PM

Testimony:

The Queen Theater is a meaningful, historic structure in Kaimuki. Many family and community memories have been made here. Much aloha is need to restore the Theater to be a meaningful place in our community and it is encouraging to see interest in this resolution.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Calvin Hara	cmhara@comcast.net	95831
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 7, 2024 @ 03:27 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
LORI YAMADA	lorikyamada@gmail.com	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
EnVision Kaimuki	Support	Nov 7, 2024 @ 03:34 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Anderson Le	ale@hiff.org	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Hawaii International Film Festival	Support	Nov 7, 2024 @ 04:17 PM

Testimony:

Testimony in Support of Eminent Domain for Queen Theatre Acquisition

Aloha and Good morning,

My name is Anderson Le, and I am the Artistic Director of the Hawaii International Film Festival (HIFF) which just finished its 44th edition this month. We are still going through the metrics and numbers, but it looks like a record year for the organization and an increase in attendance versus the last few years as there is an excitement in the community to congregate again for cinema-going and also to support a growing number of amazing and talented local filmmakers with feature films, shorts and documentaries that have made up our yearly MADE IN HAWAI'I section (our largest ever in Festival history). For more information about HIFF, go to the official website at www.hiff.org.

Here is some press from the recently concluded 44th annual HIFF:

https://variety.com/2024/film/news/hawaii-film-festival-premium-tv-section-1236132939/

https://www.honolulumagazine.com/hawaii-international-film-festival-2024-awards/

https://deadline.com/2024/10/daniel-dae-kim-makawalu-kanaka-maoli-hawaii-film-festival-1236109752/

I am also a community advocate, supporter of the arts, a former resident of Kaimuki (my family owned a retail store called Toys N Joys on Waialae next to the Queen Theater that closed in 2012) and HIFF has also moved into the neighborhood at 3512 Waialae Ave earlier this year. I'm here today to voice my support for the use of eminent domain to acquire Queen Theatre and to transform it into a cultural and artistic hub that will benefit our entire community.

Throughout history, the arts have held an essential role in building vibrant communities, enriching local economies, and providing a space where residents can come together to connect. The acquisition of Queen is an opportunity to create a landmark institution that can support our local filmmakers, foster creativity in residents of all ages, and offer programming that would bring our community closer. It also reconnects Kaimuki's past with historic theaters like the Kaimuki and Queen in their heyday, when Consolidated Theaters was booking Japanese and other Asian films regularly around the island, a unique success that would continue today because of Hawaii's diverse population, as well as the "crème de la crème" of HIFF's programming.

The community-based ownership and management of this theater would enable it to function as much more than a movie theater; it could become a center for film, live performances, lectures, workshops, and festivals. Here are a few key ways that acquiring Queen Theatre would benefit our city:

1. Supporting Local Arts and Culture: By owning and operating this space, the city can prioritize programming that showcases local artists, filmmakers, and performers, giving them a place to share their work and grow their audiences. This would help nurture talent within our city, keeping creativity alive and accessible.

2. Economic Growth and Revitalization: Cultural venues can draw people from all walks of life, leading to increased foot traffic that supports nearby businesses, restaurants, and retail shops. A vibrant theater would anchor an already vibrant neighborhood and stimulate growth, creating a space where residents and visitors alike gather and invest in our community.
3. Educational and Community Engagement Opportunities: With a community-driven theater, we could host workshops, lectures, and film screenings that educate and inspire. Imagine school partnerships that bring students to experience classic/repertory films (as well as first-run films), theater productions, or even hands-on filmmaking workshops. It's a unique educational resource that would serve residents of all ages.
4. Preservation of a Historic or Beloved Space: Many of us have fond memories of this theater, whether from watching a beloved movie, attending a community event, or simply being in a beautiful, historic space. Acquiring this theater for community use allows us to preserve a part of our city's history and ensure it remains a place for gathering, joy, and memory-making for generations to come.
5. Filling a Cultural Gap in Our Community: Currently, our community lacks a dedicated space for these kinds of artistic and cultural activities. While some may argue that existing spaces could fill this role, the reality is that dedicated, city-owned cultural centers often foster a level of consistency, accessibility, and inclusivity that private venues cannot match. I've been to many cities around the country where city government and non-profit organizations have partnered to preserve such spaces with great success and would be a cultural focal point for cultural mixed use centered on film exhibition.

Here are some examples of successful non-profit movie theater/event spaces across the country:

The Frida Cinema (Santa Ana, CA): https://thefridacinema.org/our-story/
Gateway Film Center (Columbus, OH): https://gatewayfilmcenter.org/about/
The Prospector (Ridgefield, CT): https://www.prospectortheater.org/home
Enzian Theater (Maitland, FL): https://enzian.org/
Coolidge Corner Theater (Brookline, MA): https://coolidge.org/
Arthouse Cinema & Pub (Billings, MT): https://arthousebillings.com/cinema-and-pub/

In closing, the acquisition of Queen Theatre is an investment in our community's future, economic vitality, and cultural landscape. Using eminent domain in this case would be an appropriate and visionary step by the city government, reflecting a commitment to arts, education, and cultural access. HIFF's goal is to be an integral and active organization in Kaimuki and to have a regular venue to provide year-round programming and events—from film exhibition, to masterclasses, work-in-progress screenings for local artists, artist services and workshops—would be a partnership that HIFF would greatly align with and actively seek donors, grants from major foundations, and corporate sponsorships to assist in a capital campaign and operational budgets.

Let's work together to secure this space, so that Kaimuki can continue to be a neighborhood that values and prioritizes community, creativity, and the shared experiences that enrich us all.

Thank you for your consideration.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
CALVIN HARA	cmhara@comcast.net	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 7, 2024 @ 04:55 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Mahlon Moore	mahlonmoore@gmail.com	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Friends of the Queen Theater	I wish to comment	Nov 7, 2024 @ 04:55 PM

Testimony:

I have been a member of the non-profit organization “Friends of Queen Theatre” for more than 15 years. The organization was formed in an effort to persuade the owner to convert the theater into a usable space again, or, to sell the property to a person or organization that will return the theater to its former glory.

Our vision has always been for the Theater to be refurbished and returned to operation as a venue for local performances, films and civic activities.

Our organization conducted a public use assessment and the results were overwhelmingly positive with suggestions ranging from Hawaii Film Festival showings to productions by local hula halau. One of the biggest wishes was for the theater to be available at a reasonable charge for local groups to rent it.

The Friends of Queen Theater maintains a website, friendsofqueentheater.com.

We urge the City to proceed with Resolution 24-176 and, if necessary, begin the process of Eminent Domain to acquire the property.

The Queen has been an iconic landmark in Kaimuki for decades and it’s our hope that the City can begin the process or restoring the treasured landmark.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Vera Zambonelli	vera@hawaiiwomeninfilmmaking.org	96814
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Hawai‘i Women in Filmmaking	Support	Nov 7, 2024 @ 05:02 PM

Testimony:

I strongly support the acquisition of the Queen Theater because it is poised to become an essential gathering place for our community. This venue will cultivate a sense of belonging and engagement that extends to our filmmaking communities and the broader public. The theater could host a diverse array of community events, including film screenings and educational workshops, making the arts accessible to everyone. It could serve as a critical platform for youth programs, with young people exploring their creativity and developing vital skills. Moreover, the theater can showcase independent films, documentaries, and classic movie nights. Local organizations could utilize this space for educational workshops, lectures, and community gatherings, solidifying the theater’s role as a hub for cultural engagement.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Adoree Yu	yu.adoree@gmail.com	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Nov 7, 2024 @ 08:58 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Gary Chun	gary.chun33@gmail.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 7, 2024 @ 09:32 PM

Testimony:

Aloha, my name is Gary Chun, and I am a programming associate for the Hawai'i International Film Festival (HIFF). I am in support of Resolution 24-176 that requests the City Administration take steps towards acquiring the Queen Theater using eminent domain and to assist in the restoration of the historic Kaimuki landmark after years of abandonment and disrepair. I grew up in the Kaimuki neighborhood and have fond memories of going to the theater - with its iconic art deco facade originally created in 1936 - and watching movies during the late 1960s through the '70s. That experience helped shape my love for cinema, which I carried through my professional career working in local television production and later as a newspaper features reporter. During my years with the Honolulu Star-Bulletin/Star-Advertiser, I developed an association with HIFF which, during my present retirement, has led to seasonal employment with the festival during its recently concluded fall run. I know one of the first things the HIFF staff was asked when festival operations moved to an office in Kaimuki just a couple of blocks down from the Queen Theater was would it help restore and use the now-neglected building. The passing of Resolution 24-176 would certainly help set in motion such an ambition, and I'm sure the festival staff would lend its assistance to plan and realize the theater's restoration and subsequent use as a film and arts hub for the community in partnership with HIFF and other interested organizations. I lend my wholehearted support for such a vision and thereby request that the City Council consider the passage of this resolution. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Phillips Payson	phillips.payson@hilopalace.com	96720
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 7, 2024 @ 09:52 PM

Testimony:

I am writing in support of this resolution in aims of restoring the Kaimuki Queen Theater into a cultural arts venue and performing space.

As the Executive Director of the Historic Palace Theater located in the heart of downtown Hilo, I understand the important roll a theater plays within a community. Historic theaters are disappearing across the country, and Hawaii has the chance to save a landmark. The Queen has the potential to be a source of pride for all of Kaimuki and beyond, while providing a gathering space to stimulate education, showcase culture and inspire the diverse community.

Theaters bring people together from all walks of life to share experiences, which broadens perspectives and enables connections to form.

With the proper guidance and renovation, The Queen is in a position to be an iconic landmark venue that will stimulate not only the cultural scene of Honolulu, but be an economic driving force for the Kaimuki neighborhood. In reference to Palace audience surveys conducted throughout 2024, an average of 60% of ticket holders patronize a neighboring business before or after an event at the theater. With a diverse schedule of programming at the Queen, Kaimuki would stand to gain the business of hundreds of patrons on a regular basis to stimulate the neighboring restaurants, bars, coffee shops and more. Not only will local businesses benefit, The Queen will provide vital community enrichment opportunities such as providing showcase space for organizations such as the Hawaii International Film Festival, local dance companies, schools and education programs. Community partnerships with local organizations will ensure a diverse programming schedule for the theater while generating sustainable revenue for theater operations to grow and support further restoration. Similar to the Queen, the Palace theater sat dormant for nearly two decades, falling into disrepair. It took an immense coordinated effort from individuals, community leaders and non profit organizations to conduct restoration efforts in assessing the space and make the vital repairs to reopen the theater for community use. Since reopening in 1999 under the management of 501c3 nonprofit organization The Friends of the Palace Theater, the Palace has grown into a vibrant keystone organization with an annual revenue stream of over $1million. Revenue brought in from programming, grants and donor contributions enables the ongoing restoration of the theater while providing a grand platform for the community as a whole. In contrast to Hilo which is a rural population, Kaimuki is a diverse urban neighborhood home to many small businesses, a stronger population of the 25-45 year old demographic, accessible to the thriving tourist industry of Waikiki and the diverse nightlight of China town which would enabled a strong slate of diverse programming. Having a medium sized venue in such a prime location would benefit local filmmakers, musicians, stage producers, comedians, dancers, etc while elevating the cultural footprint of Kaimuki.

It will take years of work before the Queen’s doors are safe to be open to the public to host programs, but it is worth the patience. If the Palace Theater can be restored into a thriving venue benefiting the community, then the Queen can surely find a team of the right people to return the light to her iconic facade.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Brian Kang	bak.nb4@gmail.com	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 7, 2024 @ 10:05 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Luella Costales	luella_costales@yahoo.com	96797
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 7, 2024 @ 10:08 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Waters and Members of the Committee,

I strongly support Resolution 24-176, requesting the City Administration to take steps toward acquiring the Queen Theater using eminent domain.

I support the vision that the historic Kaimukī landmark, which has fallen into disrepair and remains unused, is a unique opportunity to envision and create a film and arts hub for our community.

For approximately ten years, I served as part of the Hawaii International Film Festival (HIFF), as the Director of Development & Marketing, a member of the board of directors, and most recently, as a sponsor and donor. I am also actively involved as an advocate for Hawaii filmmakers and elevating the Hawaii film production industry, and I continue to see first-hand, the impact that film and the arts has on connecting our communities and cultures on both local and international levels.

I encourage the adoption of the resolution that will start to provide the strong foundation, respect, and much-needed care for the Queen Theater.

Respectfully,
Luella Costales

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jeannette Hereniko	jphmovies@gmail.com	96814
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 8, 2024 @ 12:51 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jade Kwan	jade@hiff.org	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Hawai'i International Film Festival	Support	Nov 8, 2024 @ 04:00 AM

Testimony:
Aloha kākou. Aloha kakahiaka.

I am both representing myself as a local Kaimuki/Kahala resident for nearly 30 years and as the Organization: Hawai'i International Film Festival - 2024 being in its 44th year of programming. I also hope to be represented by State House District 19 and State House District 20. In past visits to the State Capitol, their offices were filled with vintage photos of the Queen Theater.

The Queen Theater is historic and iconic. Built and closed before I was born in fact in 1936 and 1980s - back in the early 2000s while I was attending high school - I have visceral memories of the theater's architecture and grandeur always

daydreaming of a day it would come back to life in my lifetime. Silver lining that it was not torn down but in recent years - it's been used more as a community event board and hideout for the houseless.

I see the potential of the Queen Theater! And especially as HIFF moves into town, just a few blocks over with the mentality of #KEEPITKAIMUKI - wouldn't it be nice to celebrate local filmmakers and premiere movies from around the world in this 850+ seater?! I think so.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ciara Kwock	ciarakwock@gmail.com	96789
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 8, 2024 @ 06:37 AM

Testimony:
As an Emmy-nominated filmmaker of 20 years, I know that this type of infrastructure is needed and would do much to help shift the local economy to provide more venues to show local work. Growing our local film community is workforce development. The theater would also support the local economy of Kaimuki, which has a rich restaurant and small business culture that theater goers could patron. And with Hawai'i International Film Festival's move to the Kaimuki neighborhood (two blocks away from the Queen), it would be a truly amazing project to work on in creating a film and arts hub for the community, a home for HIFF to present local, national and international films, provide workshops, masterclasses, and other partnership opportunities with other organizations on a year-round basis. The need for a more community driven theater in on Oahu is huge, given there are very few.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Becky Gardner	policymattersllc@gmail.com	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 8, 2024 @ 07:14 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Zoe Eisenberg	zoeisenberg@gmail.com	96778-7845
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 8, 2024 @ 07:57 AM

Testimony:
To the Honolulu City Council

I'm writing in support of Resolution 24-176, in hopes the Queen Theater might be reacquired, revitalized, and reopened, ideally as a non-profit entity, which would greatly benefit Kaimuki and the greater Honolulu district. As an events producer here in Hawai'i I know first hand the way a community theater can act as a thriving pulse point for surrounding residents and businesses, offering myriad educational, cultural and arts opportunities, and driving the local economy as both residents and tourists are further attracted to a theater's surrounding area. At its best, a community theater can be a gathering space, a place to inspire and be inspired, and a point of pride. At present, the historic landmark theater has

fallen into negligent disrepair, and does not reflect Hawai'i's ongoing commitment to supporting, nurturing and showcasing our arts and culture. Passing this resolution would be the first step in returning the theater to its community.

Thank you for considering

Zoe Eisenberg

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Vilsoni Hereniko	mvhrif@gmail.com	96814
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 8, 2024 @ 08:05 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Anne Misawa	amisawa@hawaii.edu	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 8, 2024 @ 08:32 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Lori Yamada	lorikyamada@gmail.com	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
EnVision Kaimuki	I wish to comment	Nov 8, 2024 @ 08:34 AM

Testimony:

written testimony previously submitted. I have more comments to make.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
LISETTE FLANARY	lflanary@hawaii.edu	96814
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 8, 2024 @ 08:34 AM

Testimony:

As an independent filmmaker with over 25 years of experience in the industry and as an educator who teaches at the School of Cinematic Arts at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, I wish to submit my full support of Resolution 24-176 to request the City Administration take steps toward acquiring the Queen Theater in Kaimuki. This landmark theater space would be an incredible benefit not just to the filmmaking community, but also the community at large in Honolulu. I believe that the Hawai'i International Film Festival, 'Ohina Short Film Showcase, Hawai'i Filmmakers Collective, and Hawai'i Women in Filmmaking would be able to make this project a thriving arts and film hub for the community. I would also like to dream that the student film festival from the School of Cinematic Arts and other ACM system supported programs could bring their film showcase to the community here. Since HIFF recently moved their headquarters to the Kaimuki neighborhood just a couple of blocks away from the Queen, HIFF could also continue their year long programs to present local, national and international films, provide workshops, masterclasses, and other partnership ventures on a year-round

basis. This would be an exciting step in nurturing the growing industry of film and television here in Hawai'i in so many ways. I thank you for your time and hope that this resolution receives your support.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jackson Sayama	repsayama@capitol.hawaii.gov	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 8, 2024 @ 08:59 AM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair and members of the Honolulu City Council,

My name is Jackson Sayama and I express my strong support on RES24-176. Having represented House District 21 for four years, the Queen Theater continues to be a point of strong concern and interest for the community. Decades of inaction by the property owner has left the historic building in disrepair and has invited potentially criminal activity. While there are ongoing efforts by the property owner to find a tenant, there has been little evidence of success and a timeline for restoration.

To protect the property's wellbeing and historic value, I believe the council's efforts to initiate proceedings in eminent domain is sound and reasonable. Thank you for your consideration.

Best wishes,

Jackson D. Sayama

Hawaii State House Representative District 21

Testimony on Resolution RES24-176

REQUESTING THE CITY ADMINISTRATION TO TAKE THE STEPS NECESSARY TO ACQUIRE THE QUEEN THEATER PROPERTY, INCLUDING, IF NECESSARY, THE PREPARATION OF A RESOLUTION FOR THE COUNCIL TO INITIATE PROCEEDINGS IN EMINENT DOMAIN.

Friday, November 8, 2024 at 9:00am

Committee on Executive Management

Special Meeting

Chair Tommy Waters and Members of the Committee:

My name Calvin Hara and I am in STRONG SUPPORT of RES24-176. This resolution will bring forward to the Kaimuki community and beyond the seriousness to address the Queen Theater property.

In any community, we have residents, businesses, churches, parks, non-profit organizations and other community entities. Property owners have a responsibility to keep their property and buildings in sound condition to prevent injury and a social community responsibility to present an acceptable characterization of a community entity.

The current owners have failed in their responsibility. The Queen Theater building is basically “falling apart,” is unsightly, potential a safety hazard and in dire need of government intervention.

The call to action of this resolution will bring community support as the community recognizes the years of deterioration of the Queen Theater.

Thank you.

Calvin Hara
Kaimuki resident
Honolulu, Hawaii

Aloha Chair Waters and members of the City Council,

I am Lori Yamada, Director of EnVision Kaimuki and retired Chair of the Kaimuki Neighborhood Board and served on the board for 28 years. Born and raised in Kaimuki.

I am disappointed that RESOLUTION 24-176 “REQUESTING THE CITY ADMINISTRATION TO TAKE THE STEPS NECESSARY TO ACQUIRE THE QUEEN THEATER PROPERTY, INCLUDING, IF NECESSARY, THE PREPARATION OF A RESOLUTION FOR THE COUNCIL TO INITIATE PROCEEDINGS IN EMINENT DOMAIN” is being acted upon at this time.

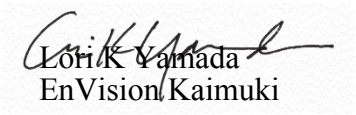
As Chair of the Kaimuki NB in 2022-2023, I had the agenda item Community Updates with Queen Theater - owner Adoree Yu and her leasing manager being listed each month. She would graciously report her status of trying to lease the property and report on the building’s condition and maintenance. I tried my best to send her useful information about grants and historic preservation ideas to help direct her progress, which she did consider.

It has now been 3 years since the Council’s Resolution 21-158 was drafted and the property owner has been notified of the city taking action to acquire the Queen Theater and initiate proceedings in eminent domain. To my knowledge, there have not been any significant reports from the owner recently.

I am now, sadly, in support of Resolution 24-176, CD1. It is mainly for the historic significance in Kaimuki town and for the preservation of the building, which was deemed structurally sound 3 years ago, and before age takes its toll on the integrity of the property permanently.

I sincerely hope that negotiations go well with the city and the Yu family and that they can feel proud that the future community center which they formerly owned will be appreciated in years to come.

Mahalo,



Lori K Yamada
EnVision Kaimuki

Testimony on Resolution RES24-176

REQUESTING THE CITY ADMINISTRATION TO TAKE THE STEPS NECESSARY TO ACQUIRE THE QUEEN THEATER PROPERTY, INCLUDING, IF NECESSARY, THE PREPARATION OF A RESOLUTION FOR THE COUNCIL TO INITIATE PROCEEDINGS IN EMINENT DOMAIN.

Friday, November 8, 2024 at 9:00am

Committee on Executive Management

Special Meeting

Chair Tommy Waters and Members of the Committee:

My name Calvin Hara and I am in STRONG SUPPORT of RES24-176. This resolution will bring forward to the Kaimuki community and beyond the seriousness to address the Queen Theater property.

In any community, we have residents, businesses, churches, parks, non-profit organizations and other community entities. Property owners have a responsibility to keep their property and buildings in sound condition to prevent injury and a social community responsibility to present an acceptable characterization of a community entity.

The current owners have failed in their responsibility. The Queen Theater building is basically “falling apart,” is unsightly, potential a safety hazard and in dire need of government intervention.

The call to action of this resolution will bring community support as the community recognizes the years of deterioration of the Queen Theater.

Thank you.

Calvin Hara
Kaimuki resident
Honolulu, Hawaii

November 8, 2024

Honorable Tommy Waters, Chair
Honorable Calvin K. Y. Say, Vice Chair
Committee on Executive Management
Honolulu City Council
530 S. King Street #202
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Adoree Yu
Queen Mgmt, LLC
4348 Waialae Avenue, #285
Honolulu, Hawaii 96816

RE: TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO RESOLUTION 24-176, ACQUIRING THE QUEEN THEATER PROPERTY

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Say, and Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **in opposition** to Resolution 24-176. My name is Adoree Yu and I am the owner of the Queen Theater property. Although I write in opposition to this resolution as it relates to the proposed condemnation**, I strongly support its intent to restore the property and stand fully committed to revitalize the theater into something the community can benefit from and be proud of**. I am fully committed to restoring the beauty of the theater and create a space that the community can enjoy once again.

My parents are long-time residents of Kaimuki and I was born and raised in the area as well. My family has fond memories of the theater as a gathering place in the neighborhood. In or around 2021, we had discussions about the redevelopment of the theater as a gathering place for Kaimuki residents. Although we intended to restore the property then, we did not have the necessary resources to do so. 2021 also posed significant challenges for my family as my parents were both diagnosed with serious medical illnesses that required our full and long-term attention.

Today, however, I am ready, willing, and able to execute the plan to restore the theater. I now live full-time in Honolulu, have full authority to make decisions relating to the theater's redevelopment, and importantly, have a financial plan in place to pay for the restoration work.

The plan comprises a multi-phased approach.

- Phase I – Exterior restoration and enhancement. I have engaged with contractors and are ready to execute contracts to restore the Queen Theater marquee and sign, new paint, and other exterior work to restore the beauty of theater. I will also be implementing security measures to deter illicit activity and restrict access. The projected completion date for Phase I is April 30, 2025 (to account for permit processing).
- Phase II – Interior renovations. Plans include renovating the lobby and second floor of the theater to prepare it for potential tenants. The projected completion date for Phase II is December 31, 2025.

- Phase III – Auditorium restoration. I understand the Queen Theater was beloved as a community gathering space. Therefore, my intent is to restore the auditorium so that it may be used for community events and gathering. The projected completion date is December 31, 2026.

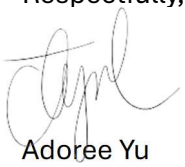
My plans are also flexible to the extent that I am committed to a continuing partnership with the community to ensure the restoration work addresses the needs and concerns of the community.

Lastly, while I understand that community safety was negatively impacted by unauthorized and illicit activities in and around the theater in the past, I addressed many of those concerns in 2021 and remain fully committed to ensure that the property does not contribute to similar problems in the future. The Phase I work intends to mitigate and deter such activity and I intend to make the safety of the property a priority.

Having attended multiple neighborhood boards and meetings with area legislators over the years, I understand the importance of the Queen Theater to the Kaimuki community and the calls for the property to be restored. Therefore, I respectfully ask the Committee to defer this Resolution so that I can execute the aforementioned plan to restore the Theater into a gathering space that the community deserves.

Thank for you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to Resolution 24-176. I look forward to working with you in the future on this important community project.

Respectfully,



Adoree Yu
Owner

November 7, 2024

Honorable Tommy Waters
Council Chair
Chair, Committee on Executive Management

Honorable Calvin Say
Vice Chair, Committee on Executive Management

Re: Resolution 24-176 (Acquiring the Queen Theater Property)
Committee on Executive Management
Friday, November 8, 2024, 9:00 a.m.

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Say, and Members:

My name is Brian Kang, and I am the current chairperson of Kaimukī Neighborhood Board No. 4; however, I am submitting this testimony in support of Resolution No. 24-176 in my personal capacity, as the Board has not had the opportunity to take a formal position on Resolution No. 24-176 to date.

As indicated in Resolution No. 24-176, the Queen Theater is a prominent historic landmark on Waialae Avenue in Kaimukī, and its current state and possible restoration has been the subject of very significant interest and discussions within our community for many years, including at numerous meetings of the Kaimukī Neighborhood Board. Enclosed for your information, for example, is a resolution that the Board passed in 2021 urging the City and County of Honolulu to address various issues relating to the theater and to explore how its restoration and preservation may be used for public purposes.

The current owner of the theater has provided updates to the Board over the past several years on the possible leasing and renovation of the theater, and I personally have appreciated her outreach to update the Board on the status of the theater, as well as her efforts to address a number of pressing issues relating to health, safety, and sanitation on the theater property (many of which were described in the Board's resolution).

Unfortunately, however, since the theater remains in its dilapidated state after so many years (with the Board periodically continuing to receive complaints relating to conditions on the theater property), and given the Kaimukī community's long-standing and significant interest in improving the Queen Theater, I urge the Committee to adopt Resolution 24-176, Proposed CD1 so that efforts may begin to plan for the City's acquisition of the Queen Theater property for public use within our community and for the residents of the City and County of Honolulu.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Aloha,
Brian Kang

Enclosure

KAIMUKI NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD NO. 4
c/o NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION ◆ 925 DILLINGHAM BOULEVARD SUITE 160 ◆ HONOLULU, HAWAII, 96817
TEL: (808) 768-3710◆FAX (808) 768-3711◆ EMAIL: nco@honolulu.gov◆ INTERNET: www.honolulu.gov/nco

RESOLUTION URGING THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU TO TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION ON QUEENS THEATER TO: (1) ADDRESS SAFETY AND SANITARY CONCERNS; (2) OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZE ITS HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL VALUE; AND (3) EXPLORE HOW ITS RESTORATION AND PRESERVATION CAN BE PUT TO USE FOR A PUBLIC PURPOSE BY RECREATING FEATURES OF OLD HISTORIC KAIMUKI TOWN THAT BOOST MORALE AND STIMULATES THE ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION OF OUR SMALL LOCAL BUSINESS DISTRICT AND RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY;

WHEREAS, the Kaimuki Neighborhood Board No. 4 is committed to improving safety, supporting the local economy, enhancing, and preserving the lifestyle, character, and beauty of our historic small town neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, many of the local businesses near and around Queen Theater have shut-down due to the pandemic, making the revitalization of Kaimuki's business district and boost to our community morale necessary; and

WHEREAS, the surroundings of Queen Theater has a high degree of foot and vehicular traffic by Kaimuki residents and patrons because it is at the corner of Center Street and Waialae Avenue – an important intersection in the center of Kaimuki's small business district, adjacent to two public parking lots, two prominent banks, and a few meters away from the homes of Kaimuki residents; and

WHEREAS, the owner has not maintained the property for over 40 years, letting it deteriorate into very poor, hazardous conditions; and

WHEREAS, this neglect has resulted in unsanitary and unsafe conditions, prompting community concern about illicit and illegal activity, vagrancy, sanitation, fire hazards, and the building's structural and environmental integrity; and

WHEREAS, government officials representing the Kaimuki community have, for years, in public meetings, actively sought the opinion and input of this Board on the present condition and their future vision of Queen Theater, indicating their interest and support in addressing these concerns; and

WHEREAS, the topic of Queen Theater has been on the Kaimuki Neighborhood Board agenda for three consecutive meetings – January, February, and March 2021, and to date, the owner, nor any of his agents, has failed to

attend Board meetings or otherwise share his perspective on these complaints and concerns; and

WHEREAS, widespread and persistent concerns and complaints have been directed to Envision Kaimuki, (a local non-profit organization dedicated to supporting Kaimuki residents and businesses to ensure Kaimuki's growth evolves with a sense of community and a commitment to promote the unique charm and character of "Old Historic Kaimuki Town"), which issued a public survey in February 2021 to ascertain further community input on Queen Theater – which was widely distributed by the Kaimuki Neighborhood Board and public officials for two months – eliciting over 100 responses from individuals with strong connections to Kaimuki; and

WHEREAS, the results of Envision Kaimuki's survey indicate 67.7% of those responding have seen or are concerned about illegal activities around Queen Theater, with only 46.5% saying they felt safe there at night, and just 68.7% feeling safe during evening hours; and

WHEREAS, accounts given by women before this Board indicate that they do not feel particularly safe in the vicinity of Queen's Theater, where they have also been subjected to sexual harassment; and

WHEREAS, as indicated through the Envision Kaimuki Survey and verbal accounts given to this Board, there have been persistent incidences of unsanitary conditions; loud shouting; storage of personal belongings; vagrancy; and people entering the facility illegally – for example, as recently as March 7, 2021 – human excrement was observed next to Center Street doors to the theater for 5 days before it was cleaned up; and

WHEREAS, the Queen Theater was built in the 1930s and opened on June 29, 1936 – during the heyday of its Art Deco design and style; and

WHEREAS, nostalgic accounts of the theater in its early days - from articles, websites, and surveys recount 10 and 15-cent tickets for admission, unique live shows including a special kids' club and Saturday matinee shows; and

WHEREAS, the Queen Theater stopped operating as a theater over 36 years ago, and since 1985, has been sitting vacant and unused for its intended purpose for the majority of that time; and

WHEREAS, the Queen Theater has a history of being used for illegal, underground, illicit, and/or unsavory activities, such as in its use in 1970s to show adult films, as a performance venue for rock concerts where structural damage to the building was

and encouraged, and a history of squatters – all activity requiring police raids and interventions by the fire department over the years; and

WHEREAS, no known legitimate business activity is currently taking place within the theater, which would otherwise require government regulation and oversight; and

WHEREAS, the Kaimuki community and this Board considers Queen Theater a community treasure and iconic historical landmark – with 79.8% of those responding to Envision Kaimuki's survey considering it a "historical building"; and

WHEREAS, numerous magazine articles and even the Historic Hawaii Foundation features Queen Theater on its website as a historical building and describes it as "endangered;" and

WHEREAS, movie theaters built during the 1920s and 1930s have significant historical and architectural value, with some in Hawaii having been accepted to the National Register of Historical Places – namely the Hawaii Theatre on Bethel street in Downtown Honolulu, Iao Theater in Wailuku, and Palace Theater in Hilo; and

WHEREAS, the Queen Theater's historical significance makes it also a strong candidate for inclusion on the National and/or Hawaii Register of Historical Places - which recognizes a property's historical, architectural, engineering, cultural or archaeological significance and can include buildings, sites, objects, structures and districts if it is at least 50 years old, retains historic integrity, and meets established criteria; and

WHEREAS, designation in the National Register of Historic Places, which is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, and part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources, presents a significant opportunities for grants and economic revitalization programs; and

WHEREAS, there has been strong, persistent interest over many years from members of the community in revitalizing Queen Theater as a community performance space to accommodate the wide range of Kaimuki organizations promoting arts and culture – with perhaps the most coordinated efforts coming from the local non-profit "Friends of the Queen Theater," which explained on its website over 10 years ago that "an operating theater in Kaimuki would enliven and bring more business to the community, just as the Hawaii Theatre has done in downtown Honolulu. As a historic structure, tax credits and other incentives are available for its rehabilitation"; and

WHEREAS, prolonged delay in preserving the structural and architectural integrity undermines the Queen's Theater eligibility for historic designation in the Hawaii and National Registers of Historical Places – thus necessitating prompt action; and

WHEREAS, with so many local businesses lost to the pandemic, the restoration of Queen Theater, and the boost to community morale and economic stimulation it engenders will revitalize Kaimuki's economy, character and charm; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Kaimuki Neighborhood Board No. 4 urges the City and County of Honolulu to take immediate action to address the safety and sanitary concerns surrounding Queens Theater, officially recognize its historical and cultural value, and explore how its restoration and preservation can be used for a public purpose in stimulating the economy and boosting the morale of Kaimuki businesses and residents; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the chairperson transmitted to the chairperson and all members of the Honolulu City Council, and the Mayor.

APPROVED (7-1-1) at the March 17, 2021 Kaimukī Neighborhood Board Meting

Sharon Schneider

Respectfully submitted by Sharon Schneider , Chair, Neighborhood Board #4

Written and Oral Testimony

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee.
My name is Jeannette Paulson Hereniko and I live in Honolulu, Ala Moana district. I am testifying today in support of Resolution 24-176 – Acquiring the Queen Theatre Property.
I am the Founder and first director from 1981 to 1996 of the Hawai'i International Film Festival (HIFF).
In recognition of the Queen Theatre's past history as a movie theatre and recognizing its potential as a perfect site and location for Festival screenings, we tried to negotiate with the owner of the Queen Theatre to acquire it, starting in the early 1980s . Ever since HIFF began when I started attending other established film festivals, I felt it was essential for Hawai'i's Festival to own its own movie theatre instead of remaining dependent on the good will of one of Honolulu's two commercial theatre chains whose corporation headquarters were on the Continent. However, inspite of our repeated attempts, once even with a generous offer from a HIFF Donor at the time to purchase the Queen Theatre on our behalf, our attempts were ignored.
Since then I've attended film festivals throughout the world where municipalities purchased or built movie theatres for their film festivals to become a hub for independent and community cinema, a major tourist destination, an economic driver and a driver of community revitalization and pride – Toronto, Berlin, Busan, Manila and of course Cannes – to name but a few. In addition, I learned about USA cities as small as 11,000 and as large as a million who purchased or built movie theatres for their festivals and independent community cinema groups. This includes The Roxy Theater - Missoula, Montana; The Rivoli Theatre in Cedarburg, Wisconsin; The Varsity Theatre in **Des Moines, Iowa**; The Historic Lansdowne Theater, **Lansdowne, Pennsylvania.**
It's November 8, 2024. HIFF just finished its' 43rd year and has broken all attendance records as it continues to receive international praise from film gatekeepers and worldwide media. The HIFF offices recently moved to Kaimuki. Now the Festival is perfectly positioned to achieve the zenith of its potential - if it could only have its own theatre to showcase international and local independent films and filmmakers. After more than four decades of trying to realize its dream to show films for the public at the Queens Theatre, the time to do so is now. This is why I urge you to please vote to pass Resolution 24-276 regarding acquiring the Queen Theatre property.
Thank you for the chance to present my Testimony.
With aloha,
Jeannette Paulson Hereniko
96814

November 7, 2024

Honolulu City Council
530 King Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Testimony for Honolulu City Council – Committee on Executive Management
Friday, November 9, 2024 at 9:00am

Re: Resolution 24-176 - ACQUIRING THE QUEEN THEATER PROPERTY

Dear Chair Waters and Members of the Committee on Executive Management:

Thank you for hearing this important Resolution, which promises to address significant community concerns over health and safety in the Kaimuki area.

My name is Becky Gardner; Owner of Policy Matters LLC; however, I have not received any compensation for my advocacy on this matter. I am submitting this testimony because the dilapidated state of the Queen Theater is a concern of my small business – located in Kaimuki; as well as myself and my family – residents of Kaimuki.

I have also been an active member of the Kaimuki Neighborhood Board since 2017 – and during my near 100% attendance and participation in the Neighborhood Board over the last 8 years, I have witnessed, time and time again, community members bringing to us their safety concerns over the Queen Theater and its negative impact on community morale, business, and property values.

Based on my long experience hearing and understanding the public's perspective and distress over the deteriorating state of the theater – I encourage this Committee to take favorable action on this Resolution, as this would allow more members of the public to come forward with their stories and experiences with the theater – as well as their hopes and dreams of restoring it to its former glory.

As this resolution moves forward, I hope to provide more in-depth descriptions and evidence of my personal observations living on Center Street, the corner of which Queen Theater is located. Briefly – I would like to share that I, along with my two young girls (at

the time) went out of our way to avoid walking in front and around the corner of the theater as it was consistently frequented by vagabonds using illicit substances. (This may have been exacerbated by the head-shop tenant in the adjacent building; which is now accompanied by a vape shop.). This is particularly concerning to me, as a mother – which I share with many parents who bring their children to various family-oriented activities and businesses - such as dance, yoga, martial arts, restaurants, etc.

I have also personally witnessed people climbing up and on top of the theater, throwing bicycles, bags, and other belongings in nooks and crevices on the back side of the theater. (A video of which I have saved.). Perhaps the most unpleasant experience I had was walking by the theater and seeing human feces (with toilet paper next to it).

A few years ago, I was also active in a community organization called Envision Kaimuki – led by then Neighborhood Board Chair, Sharon Schneider. She worked hard to conduct a survey, results/feedback of which are attached; along with the Neighborhood Board Resolution that we passed (unanimously, I believe) as a result. That Resolution is also attached.

Thank you for allowing me to provide this testimony and your continued action to improve the health, safety, and welfare of Kaimuki residents.

With Aloha,



Becky Gardner, Esq.
Owner-Founder
Policy Matters LLC

KAIMUKI NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD NO. 4
c/o NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION ◆ 925 DILLINGHAM BOULEVARD SUITE 160 ◆ HONOLULU, HAWAII, 96817
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RESOLUTION URGING THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU TO TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION ON QUEENS THEATER TO: (1) ADDRESS SAFETY AND SANITARY CONCERNS; (2) OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZE ITS HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL VALUE; AND (3) EXPLORE HOW ITS RESTORATION AND PRESERVATION CAN BE PUT TO USE FOR A PUBLIC PURPOSE BY RECREATING FEATURES OF OLD HISTORIC KAIMUKI TOWN THAT BOOST MORALE AND STIMULATES THE ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION OF OUR SMALL LOCAL BUSINESS DISTRICT AND RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY;

WHEREAS, the Kaimuki Neighborhood Board No. 4 is committed to improving safety, supporting the local economy, enhancing, and preserving the lifestyle, character, and beauty of our historic small town neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, many of the local businesses near and around Queen Theater have shut-down due to the pandemic, making the revitalization of Kaimuki's business district and boost to our community morale necessary; and

WHEREAS, the surroundings of Queen Theater has a high degree of foot and vehicular traffic by Kaimuki residents and patrons because it is at the corner of Center Street and Waialae Avenue – an important intersection in the center of Kaimuki's small business district, adjacent to two public parking lots, two prominent banks, and a few meters away from the homes of Kaimuki residents; and

WHEREAS, the owner has not maintained the property for over 40 years, letting it deteriorate into very poor, hazardous conditions; and

WHEREAS, this neglect has resulted in unsanitary and unsafe conditions, prompting community concern about illicit and illegal activity, vagrancy, sanitation, fire hazards, and the building's structural and environmental integrity; and

WHEREAS, government officials representing the Kaimuki community have, for years, in public meetings, actively sought the opinion and input of this Board on the present condition and their future vision of Queen Theater, indicating their interest and support in addressing these concerns; and

WHEREAS, the topic of Queen Theater has been on the Kaimuki Neighborhood Board agenda for three consecutive meetings – January, February, and March 2021, and to date, the owner, nor any of his agents, has failed to

attend Board meetings or otherwise share his perspective on these complaints and concerns; and

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WHEREAS, the results of Envision Kaimuki's survey indicate 67.7% of those responding have seen or are concerned about illegal activities around Queen Theater, with only 46.5% saying they felt safe there at night, and just 68.7% feeling safe during evening hours; and

WHEREAS, accounts given by women before this Board indicate that they do not feel particularly safe in the vicinity of Queen's Theater, where they have also been subjected to sexual harassment; and

WHEREAS, as indicated through the Envision Kaimuki Survey and verbal accounts given to this Board, there have been persistent incidences of unsanitary conditions; loud shouting; storage of personal belongings; vagrancy; and people entering the facility illegally – for example, as recently as March 7, 2021 – human excrement was observed next to Center Street doors to the theater for 5 days before it was cleaned up; and

WHEREAS, the Queen Theater was built in the 1930s and opened on June 29, 1936 – during the heyday of its Art Deco design and style; and

WHEREAS, nostalgic accounts of the theater in its early days - from articles, websites, and surveys recount 10 and 15-cent tickets for admission, unique live shows including a special kids' club and Saturday matinee shows; and

WHEREAS, the Queen Theater stopped operating as a theater over 36 years ago, and since 1985, has been sitting vacant and unused for its intended purpose for the majority of that time; and

WHEREAS, the Queen Theater has a history of being used for illegal, underground, illicit, and/or unsavory activities, such as in its use in 1970s to show adult films, as a performance venue for rock concerts where structural damage to the building was

and encouraged, and a history of squatters – all activity requiring police raids and interventions by the fire department over the years; and

WHEREAS, no known legitimate business activity is currently taking place within the theater, which would otherwise require government regulation and oversight; and

WHEREAS, the Kaimuki community and this Board considers Queen Theater a community treasure and iconic historical landmark – with 79.8% of those responding to Envision Kaimuki's survey considering it a "historical building"; and

WHEREAS, numerous magazine articles and even the Historic Hawaii Foundation features Queen Theater on its website as a historical building and describes it as "endangered;" and

WHEREAS, movie theaters built during the 1920s and 1930s have significant historical and architectural value, with some in Hawaii having been accepted to the National Register of Historical Places – namely the Hawaii Theatre on Bethel street in Downtown Honolulu, Iao Theater in Wailuku, and Palace Theater in Hilo; and

WHEREAS, the Queen Theater's historical significance makes it also a strong candidate for inclusion on the National and/or Hawaii Register of Historical Places - which recognizes a property's historical, architectural, engineering, cultural or archaeological significance and can include buildings, sites, objects, structures and districts if it is at least 50 years old, retains historic integrity, and meets established criteria; and

WHEREAS, designation in the National Register of Historic Places, which is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, and part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources, presents a significant opportunities for grants and economic revitalization programs; and

WHEREAS, there has been strong, persistent interest over many years from members of the community in revitalizing Queen Theater as a community performance space to accommodate the wide range of Kaimuki organizations promoting arts and culture – with perhaps the most coordinated efforts coming from the local non-profit "Friends of the Queen Theater," which explained on its website over 10 years ago that "an operating theater in Kaimuki would enliven and bring more business to the community, just as the Hawaii Theatre has done in downtown Honolulu. As a historic structure, tax credits and other incentives are available for its rehabilitation"; and

WHEREAS, prolonged delay in preserving the structural and architectural integrity undermines the Queen's Theater eligibility for historic designation in the Hawaii and National Registers of Historical Places – thus necessitating prompt action; and

WHEREAS, with so many local businesses lost to the pandemic, the restoration of Queen Theater, and the boost to community morale and economic stimulation it engenders will revitalize Kaimuki's economy, character and charm; now, therefore,

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BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the chairperson transmitted to the chairperson and all members of the Honolulu City Council, and the Mayor.

APPROVED (7-1-1) at the March 17, 2021 Kaimukī Neighborhood Board Meting

Sharon Schneider

Respectfully submitted by Sharon Schneider , Chair, Neighborhood Board #4

ENVISION KAIMUKI SURVEY ON THE QUEEN THEATER

(Highlighting comments on its Historical Value)

eyesore now

It depends on the benefits and restriction of the designation. I am very much in favor of preserving the theater while converting it to active use. If a historic building designation help, great, if it will pose undue restriction on needed renovations and change, then no.

It has become a historic landmark of disrepair. Although it would be great to retain some of its facade in a redevelopment, I would be opposed to any attempt to reduce its taxes by historic designation ... this simply rewards an owner for doing nothing with this prime piece of real estate for decades.

It's historic for its functionality and use.

Depending on cost(s) to restore, historic value may be of no value.

It is just an eyesore now and should have been reinvented years ago
It's one of the most iconic buildings in Kaimuki and a significant part of its history. I have many memories of the theater during my childhood and with the loss of the old Kaimuki theater, would love to see it preserved.

The Queen Theatre is one of a handful of places on our island that exists with an artful and rich presence based on an important time for all island residents. It was given its royal name based on a time of renaissance, and it's esteem needs to be restored accordingly.

Part of our legacy for years. We are 3 generation Kaimuki family.
iconic Kaimuki Landmark at the tip top of the Hill. Ideally saved and repurposed to fit our 21st Century lives. However owner is not cooperative and that is major problem

The Queen Theatre represents such history and was the home of numerous visits and enjoyment by many a Hawaii resident and the viewing of so many nostalgic movies. Ensuring that it can remain standing in its glorious nature but with a tasteful restoration holding to its original character, will continuously bring great memories and blissful flashback of the experiences we all had there. It could even possibly be used as an event Center for live theater, jazz or music performances or a facility to rent out by interested parties and companies. (ie Medici's in Manoa Marketplace as an example)

Kaimuki is an urban village. To the extent we foster that sense of a village, of a distinct urban community, we help foster community spirit and pride and start a virtuous cycle of boosting local businesses, foot traffic, safety, infrastructure and aesthetic improvements. One significant way to foster that sense of place is to have iconic structures. The Queens Theater is one of the most iconic structures in the community. It harks back to our history. It is an attractive building. It ought

to be restored as a community asset. The owner has allowed it to deteriorate and become an eyesore. It ought to be condemned and turned over to a foundation to run it as a community arts center or something similar.

It's not historic from a Hawaiian definition, but, there are no more classic old movie houses like it.

First time I saw it was about 25 years ago, obviously even then no longer a theatre. I'm a film buff and my first thought was it should be part of the revitalization of Kaimuki mainstreet. Maybe a movie house again for HIFF or Indie films, etc. I know Covid limits that idea but assume that won't last forever.

As a lover of movies for 50 years on Oahu The Queen Theater was a very important venue for me, especially during the years they were showing the American Film Theater movies.
The Queen‘s Theatre is a 30‘s era landmark building of Kaimuki‘s rich history. It should be designated as a historic landmark. An initiative should be undertaken to assist the current owner to secure funding to help restore the theatre, which is obviously in disrepair and to do so before it is too late. Or, the property should be repossessed, or taken over by an appropriate agency that can pursue the appropriate title, funding, etc. to restore the Queen‘s Theatre for use that will benefit the community.

Because it was a first theater in Honolulu and the sign is legendary for Art Deco fans.

would love to see it renovated into a mixed use venue- restaurant, gallery, music and theater
Its part of Kaimuki very pleasant ambience/architecture. Its feel is definitely not californicated like Mililani and Kapolei.

It's a landmark building with so much potential for restoration, and can probably qualify as an historic building, but would categorizing it as such complicate the whole restoration effort?

The image of the marquee immediately identifies any photo or other representation as being the heart of Kaimuki Town.

When I was growing up in Honolulu, it was always exciting to go to the movies at all of the main theatres in Honolulu. (Including quite a few Japanese movie theatres.) I think it would be a nice balance to Hawaii Theatre to offer a counterpoint in Kaimuki that could focus more on "art" movies like what the Varsity used to show, as well as possibly serving the Kaimuki, Palolo, Kahala areas for community events and possibly public school plays or productions. Parts of the existing theater structure could also be remodeled to provide outreach and sites for the art community in Honolulu and the state, as art venues in Kaka‘ako seem to be slowly diminishing.

If possible it would be good to rehab to a neighborhood theater or community center.
I remember it from the 80s- watching surf movies. It is Art Deco. It has added to the entertainment of the community.

It’s an iconic landmark on the top of the hill and the last remaining theater in Kaimuki
Queen Theatre is THE Kaimuki landmark. Lots of people have fond memories that took place within its walls.

I know being bone fide "historic" places restrictions on what can be done in terms of renovation. I would like to see the building alive and promoting arts and culture in Kaimuki. So I wouldn't necessarily favor having it officially be labeled "historic."

My dad is 90 yrs old. He spent a year there watching movies instead of going to school

I am in support of historic buildings that contribute to the character of a place. The queen's theatre is a perfect example of this. I hope it can be restored, possibly serving as a multi-use space for the community...? my hope is that it can contribute to a vibrant kaimuki while maintaining its presence on kaimuki's cityscape.

thank you for offering this survey for community input! mahalo ~

Yes, one of the few remaining theaters in Honolulu that has survived

I was born and raised in Kaimuki and the Queen Theater is one of the most recognizable landmarks in the neighborhood. My mother has fond memories of attending events at the theater as a child. If the theater were open, up and running for the public, I think it would be a fantastic addition to the community that bolster's Kaimuki as a thriving food, art, bohemian, and hip part of the Honolulu landscape.

The Marquee is historical and should be preserved.

It may be designated aa a historic site but it is beyond restorability. It would / should probably be condemned by the health dept.

Historic because of how long it's been there and how well it's known. Not truly historical by definition but more as well known.

It's a shameful dump, apparently the owners have no interest in it or money for renovation, but it's historic b/c it's over 50 years old. It BELONGS to the owners and their property interest supercedes that of the public, as long as the structure itself does not collapse. Human activities in the area are the province and responsibility of HPD, end of story.

Yes, and if renovated, could be a cultural center for theater, dance, live music, storytelling and art movies among other things. There is no venue like that anywhere around here. Something live and interactive that gets people out of their seats, away from their TV's and interacting with new people. I think, after the solitaty effects of Covid, people will be hungry for that.

In terms of historic landmarks, I like to go to the kapuna and ask questions. I've listened to testimony and have read several articles on the theater. I've also heard stories from local residents about the theater and some if its infamy as well as it's value to the community. It is certainly a piece of Kaimuki's history.

I hope it can be preserved for its mid century features

It appears as a landmark building because of its architectural design and because it's been surviving even though not available to the public.

Its one of the last remaining landmarks of kaimuki from the last many years. Its most likely one of the last remaining theatres in the state as well.

The Dept. of Permitting & Planning has a very specific definition for a historic building. If the Queen Theater matches the DPP's definition, then yes, I agree, but if not, I don't agree.

Identifiable Landmark that best exemplifies the commercial neighborhood of Kaimuki
it is historical in my life in Kaimuki

Attended the movies at the theater when I was a kid. I am now 75 years old.
You can still see stylish features (signage, entryway) that hold history.

Should be preserved for concert venue

It has been a part of Kaimuki for decades. Perhaps the City should purchase it and develop it into an arts and music center for not only Kaimuki, but East Honolulu.

Iconic in Kaimuki

Not sure whether it meets the legal definition, but I don't think its importance to the community is a function of its history.

It provides a bridge to the past plantation days of Kaimuki, a great reminder of Kaimuki's sense of place.

As a performing arts enthusiast, I support restoring and maintaining these types of venues.

That Art Deco style. And it hails from the era of the the neighborhood theatre prior to megaplexes, such as the Kaimuki Theatre on Wilhelmina Rise.

It is an iconic landmark on the Kaimuki skyline. The historic building contributes to the overall funky retro look and feel of the Kaimuki downtown area. In my opinion, the entire downtown Kaimuki area should be considered as a historic district. The Queen has a rich history that is unique to the people who visited the theatre. So few examples of historic theatres in Hawaii remain. It is a tragedy that it has been neglected for so long. Its location at the top of the hill would make it the perfect cornerstone for entertainment and nightlife in the district.

Heard stories from my father and aunts and uncles about seeing movies. I wish it were a theater again.

It's one of the only styles of that genre left in the area. Turn the lights on!!

It has been awhile since I have been to a movie there ('70s?). I don't recall that it is as historic as Kaimuki theater.

The facade is important and historic, but I am concerned about denoting it as an historic building that could not be altered

landmark of waialae

Queen Theater was a thriving entertainment/community center when it was first established. While its doors have long since closed, the building continues to be a central icon in the Kaimuki community.

It's an iconic landmark that has been a fixture in the neighborhood for many years and has been through many changes over the years.

Kaimuki has been bulldozed and rebuilt since I grew up there in the 1950s. Queen Theater and the fire station are the only buildings left that I consider historic. Kaimuki Theater and Lili'uokalani Elementary School have been razed and all the other buildings in town are ordinary.

Well it's been a Kaimuki landmark for decades. But if it can't be restored into a theatre again by its current owners, perhaps it should be sold.

One of the last theatres that had a stage, fly tower, dressing rooms. Built in 1936 during the golden age of cinema. It should be renovated and saved for it's past history and architecture.

I was raised in Kaimuki. At one time, the Queen was the anchor visually and in the community. Some of my fondest memories were watching Elvis Presley's Blue Hawaii there with my grandparents. The funniest memory was watching all of the movie goers with their backs to Waialae Avenue waiting to enter the theater to watch Deep Throat.

One of the few remaining landmarks

It's a landmark and nearly 100 years old. If that doesn't make it historic, I don't know what does.

Its been there since my Mom worked there as a teenager decades ago. Grandma worked at Kaimuki Inn across the street.

It has been around as long as I remember. Many fond memories of attending movie screenings...

There were many theatres in Honolulu that were demolished and I remember them Kaimuki, King, Palace, Cinerama, Waikiki, Princess, Kapahulu, Pawaa...etc but it has no use to keep any old building for the community to revitalize Kaimuki.

I know it's been around since the 1930s and has great bones, but has fallen into disrepair. I would love to see it open and functioning again as a theater.

I don't know much about it, but I always thought it could be a cool community hub while honoring the history of the theater.

It's a beautiful landmark for Kaimuki! I grew up on Kilauea Ave until I moved away for college and I believe it should remain and be used as a historical monument!

The Queen Theater is a landmark, its been there forever.

COMMENTS on SAFTEY:

sketch at night. strange people sometimes come out of building.

I go past it frequently in the daytime but almost never at night.

Don't feel safe in evening hours at any venue.

There seem to be some sketchy people in the building
We have lived in Kaimuki for years and years only a couple years ago moving to the Hawaii Kai area. I have always felt a wonderful sense of nostalgia for a time gone by when walking by the Queen . . . even just driving by it or seeing a photograph of the theatre with its iconic marquee. Not too long ago, I heard glorious music coming from the upper floor of the Queen. I had parked behind the theatre and gone to the Bank of Hawaii. I came out and stopped in my tracks and just stood and listened to the flawless musicians who had found their way into the Queen bringing life to her once again. More and more is needed in a way that celebrates the history of this theatre for all the right and glorious reasons.
Much activity on Waialae daytime. No reason to go at night, plus darkness would make me feel insecure around there.

? Odd question
Feel safe in any part of Kaimuki business center. Do not go to Kaimuki in late night. No reason to.
The new Queen Theater could even possibly be used as an event Center for live theater, jazz or music performances or a facility to rent out by interested parties and companies. (ie Medici's in Manoa Marketplace as an example)

I've never felt unsafe in Kaimuki

Never felt fear in Kaimuki.

In general, I am not comfortable walking around the Queen's Theatre or surround areas in the evening or at night.

There is nothing intimidating about being near the theatre

Yes, safe, but I stay aware of surroundings and people in it.

I would also check "Night" but it would depend on what time of night.

I do not feel safe at any time. Mysterious sounds and music come out at odd hours. The graffiti is worrisome as a sign of neglect. The posts also reflect lack of care. It seems like the kind of place homeless hang out at.

Kaimuki is a pretty safe place
There's plenty of activity in the area in the daytime when the surrounding businesses are open, especially since the parking lots behind the theatre are in operation.

Main street

Suspicious activity at the theater at night
It is pretty sketchy, but so is all of Honolulu. At least that area is well lit. I feel more unsafe walking by the park and further down Waiʻalae closer to McDonalds.

I feel safe in Kaimuki!

When I am with my husband I fell safe during our evening walks.
I used to feel safe at all times of the day or night. I wasn't usually out after 9 or 10pm but in more recent years, there seems to be more crime. I mostly steer clear of Waialae Ave later at night. I also got 20 years older since I first moved to Center St and this neighborhood so its not so easy to be agile.

As nothing really happens there as it's closed up.
I'm six foot six, 285 lbs. and I'm gonna severely mess up whomever hassles me.
I don't think the building itself in its present condition is a danger.
It's a relative question, I suppose I feel less safe there than at other locations around Kaimuki but I don't feel unsafe in our community in general.

Yes I feel Kaimuki is safe

I don't go around there much .

It has not been taken care of and looks pretty sketchy simply because we do not know what happens inside.

Sketchy people seem to be loiter near buildings that are unused, especially at night, which makes it difficult to feel relaxed enough to walk near the Queen Theater (e.g., after having dinner at a nearby restaurant).

People spend more time on the other side of WAaialae Ave because more parking and businesses available there.

It is safe, and it is decaying. It gets paint but not major upgrades I can see.

Actually do not hang out in Kaimuki, but if the theater was open would have more reason to

It feels safe having a lot of people around, though graffiti, etc., make you feel the need to be cautious.

I never go out late at night

Actually, it doesn't really feel safe at any time of day. Homeless people are around 24/7

Never really down there at night so can't say

I have a lot of concerns and misgivings about the situation with the theatre, but most of them have to do with foregone opportunities and appearance, and not with safety.

I don't feel like it will fall on me

We walk throughout Palolo and along Waialae ave without worry for our safety, typically during the day but we will also walk in the evening to restaurants.

The entire Kaimuki business district gets a little sketchier at night...

Not aware of any threatening issues in that area

Kaimuki is a walking neighborhood, the few on this island that has a sense of place. As such, it doesn't feel dangerous, with no areas that need to be avoided.

I generally feel safe in the Kaimuki neighborhood.

I feel safe and have never felt unsafe walking around kaimuki

It's a safe community. No one is gonna other you. There are tons of other places that have outdoor seating that are doing fine.

I occasionally see strange individuals yelling and loitering in front of the building in the night.

It's pretty sketchy looking these days, so one had to wonder who or what is lurking within.

Although I moved away in 1991 and have not been home since 2014, I still felt safe walking along Waialae Avenue while I was there.

It looks abandoned and neglected. Therefore, I would go near there at night. There a lot more houseless individuals here and they could be squatting there.

I feel safe in the part of Kaimuki

I still feel safe walking around. Being on Waialae, all activity is visible to a lot of people.

At night notice some activity by there either by the house less or another not ideal activity

I've eaten at some restaurants during all hours and I feel safe where it's very bright.

There's sketchy people that hang out in the alcoves and doorways. Lots of trash too

I work across center street from the parking lot (Franklin building). It's well lit and clean. Occasionally there is a homeless person, but where isn't there homelessness? The parking lot is well lit enough that they don't want to sleep there.

Its safe, but it should be a functioning theater again. With the restaurants across thew street, it would make Kaimuki an amazing small town space.

Night time is a darker now since the energy saving streetlights...

I feel safe walking around the Kaimuki area

Right now, it looks condemned and I don’t know if anyone’s checking on who goes in and out of there.

There are horseless people around Kaimuki

Kaimuki isn’t dangerous.

I feel safe in Kaimuki in general

I heard the seating area is packed with junk - possibly a fire hazard.

It is an old building, and all kinds of asbestos and lead might be lurking inside. I have no specific knowledge of any issues.

Not sure

based on the age of the structure, anything may be possible.

It looks very decrepit and unsafe, a hazard to anyone in or around it.

Of course I have concerns about the Queen. This building needs to be cared for by the current owner or turned over (sold to) someone who cares enough about the integrity and the history of the Queen Theatre and the Kaimuki area to bring vibrancy back to this unrivaled building in beauty and history. If it's up for sale, we are up for purchasing.

Not concerned because I've never been in there. I wouldn't go in either. Confine restoration to the shell. Interior space should be redesigned to meet community needs. If the owner can't/won't do anything to fix the deterioration, start it's condemnation and demolition. It may be "historical," but its history is not now as important to me as it is an eyesore and hazard.

Obviously dilapidated

All buildings age. It is obvious that this building has not been maintained optimally.

I fear the building will be allowed to deteriorate to the point where it can no longer be saved and an ionic piece e of Kaimuki will be lost. The landlord is effectively sabotaging a key block of our community. The community should intervene. A local hero should start a foundation to preserve the building as a community arts center or something similar.

It could be beautified and used as a community center

It's been there so long that if any serious structure problem would have been torn down by now.

I'm no expert in this area. Are there concerns?

I am concerned about the age of the facility, how well it has/has not been maintained and therefore question its environmental and structural safety.

It seems to be falling apart but I do not worry that walking under it pieces of the theatre will fall on me

Needs to be checked out

Just a general recognition that there has not been any significant improvements or maintenance of the building for ages.

From personal knowledge from over 25 years ago, the marquee then had holes and weak spots on its top. Don't know if this has been remedied.

Not major concerns, but studies would have to be done. Large sums of money would need to be raised! Parking for events should also be a consideration.

The lack of care visible on the exterior suggests a lack of maintenance so the integrity is failing.

The marquee is rotting and pieces have fallen down plus a building next door has caught on fire.

I would be worried about rusting that is apparent on the exterior of the building that would logically also affect its structural bones.

is there asbestos or other products in the building that need abatement?

Tell me

The building needs some love, and I'm sure that there are members of the philanthropic community that would support revitalizing the building.

the markee looks like it could fall anytime; it is an eye sore! The art work is definitely not my favorite.
For the answer below, I thought it was privately owned and that is why no community pressure has had an impact. I'm not sure we can tell someone what to do with their property as long as zoning laws and health dept. laws are followed. Not that that seems to have been the case over these last years. I do not particularly care for the architecture of most of Waialae Ave; it would be nice to have an asthetically pleasing structure at that location that fits more with vintage than modern. The street lights should be accentuated. Vetting ideas that will be interesting on an ongoing basis would be desirable, not something that is faddish and be abandoned in 5-10 years.

If there's nothing going on, there's no environmental safety issues. Asbestos? Lead-containing paint? Neither will jump out and bite and I'm trained to deal with both of those. I have no identifiable structural concerns, but if such exist, condemn the building, tear it down, invoice the owners. We have public nuisance laws, don't we, or does DPP lack the cojones to proceed?

I am not informed on the actual condition of the building but from the outside it seems sound.

The building clearly needs some TLC and maintenance.

I think there are structural issues with the facade, it would need to be rebuilt and I know the inside has been demolished, so what would we want to do with it that would be relevant for our time including our covid time? We would need a group to decide that had a mandate, permission from the owner and a budget or fundraising plan.

Don't know. It has been vacant for such a long time. I imagine there are structural integrity issues. But cannot say for certain.

It is an old building which has not been taken care of.

I don't know, but the structure has been there for a long time without anyone checking on these sorts of things.

There does not seem to be any ongoing maintenance or improvements to the structure. I feel that it is in danger of collapsing or catching fire. There is a HEALTH & SAFETY ISSUE here.

The awning outside is beat up, the 2nd floor offices and railings are decaying.

It is indeed an eyesore. However, if it could be restored I feel that it would increase business in Kaimuki Town. I envision the theater a draw for the community and in turn the restaurants and other business would prosper.

Very old bldg will have problems

I’m not an engineer, but it doesn’t look sound

Old building falling in to disrepair, may not be up to current code?

It looks pretty run down.

It appears to be poorly maintained and falling into disrepair.

It's a low rise building that could use some fortification, but it appears to be very well in tact structurally from what we can see from the outside.

Needs to be inspected and cleaned up (repainted, etc) get rid of grafitti

It's clearly fallen into disrepair. Also it's probably full of asbestos, lead paint, etc.

Unknown - have no information regarding this subject

With such neglect by the owner over the years, a thorough inspection may reveal problems, maybe water or termite.

I fear that decades of neglect may have compromised the buildings structural integrity. I hope that it can be retrofitted and restored so that it can fulfill its potential as the arts and culture mecca of Honolulu. It will likely need substantial improvements to bring it to code. It will need to be tested for termites, mold, lead, asbestos and other hazardous materials.

Would be good to get that approved tho

I assume the owners are legally required to maintain a minimum level of structural integrity so as the building does not pose a danger to its surrounding area. Is most of the income for that property coming from the parking lot and the small businesses next to the theater?

heard it’s filled w asbestos

When I had visited the interior of the building there was an area of the theater roof that suffered water damage. While there is significant renovations required within the theater, surprisingly, I found the structural integrity of the theater to be fairly sound.

It’s a very old building that doesn’t look like it’s well maintained.

From the outside, there does not seem to have been any upkeep since I left in 1991.

Something should be done before some is injured. The building has been neglected for so long.

I would like to see The Queen restored and structural damage addressed as soon as possible.

Probably needs to be updated to code to fit certain current laws or capacity.

It doesn't look like the marquee is stable. And those glass doors in the front look like they've taken a beating.

It's hasn't be refurbished since before the 80's. I'm sure there's asbestos and lead paint.

Have it restored and used as a theater again.

A little. The building is beautiful, but without any maintenance...

It's an old structure and it may have been with material that is hazardous or contaminated.
The theatre need to be inspected structurally to determine if it is unsafe. The roof could cave in, but at this time we don't know.

It looks like pieces of its exterior are going to fall off, which makes me think that the interior must be in similar condition.

No but a restoration of the Queen would be great

Please Elaborate

vagrancy

Based on surrounding businesses and types of people patronizing them, activities maybe in question.

I've heard rumors of illicit activity there but don't know anything specific.

What is this survey really about? The questions seem skewed. Who is complaining about the Queen Theatre? What are residents afraid of? Homeless individuals? Squatters? We have lived in Kaimuki for years lamenting about how the "owner" of the Queen should pass her over to someone who cares enough to reestablish her significance for Kaimuki and for the island of Oahu. "Illegal activities" take place everywhere. The Queen isn't the culprit.

I have not seen, but I would be concerned if there were.

seems like something sketchy is going on. Gambling?

?

Have not seen anything. But have heard of illegal activities... people entering that building at night. Purpose unknown.

I've never witnessed illegal activity, but the deteriorating condition of the building is a magnet for such activity

Never saw any.

Am concerned about but have not personally witnessed such illegal activities

being vacant and run down it lends itself to illegal usage

I'm sure such goes on every where

Haven't personally seen anything, but have concerns about possibility of illegal activity whenever a building is not cared for.

I have not witnessed illegal activity, but its lack of care suggests illegal activity is happening.

I've walked by there at night and have heard, seen, and heard about questionable activity and characters in and outside the building, including loud music and drug activity. The property owner needs to be held accountable if he is allowing illegal activity to continue here.

Cleaning the place up and bringing people to events would certainly alleviate problems, if they do exist, regarding illegal activities around the building and in the immediate area.

Tell me

Drug dealing apparent in the past

There are clearly private parties going on upstairs and I assume drugs, but don‘t know for sure.

I am only aware of the homeless.

I lived on Center St. for 20 years (till just 6 months ago). I'm more concerned about someone getting hurt in or near the structure. There is actually nice music that comes out of the second floor occasionally but I would be concerned someone would fall through the floor. The manager / owner of the building is quite unfriendly in my experience.There is illegal drug activity higher up the hill at one of the houses. I don't think they have any relationship to the theater. There is a lot of crime on Waialae Ave. I am more concerned about that as opposed to any one location.

Hassle me at your own risk. If someone's dealing, that's an HPD responsibility, not mine. Further, I don't go anywhere near the building, I have no reason to do so - day or night.

I haven't.

There's clearly an alternative underground associated with the current building. Although I have not personally seen an illegal transaction, the sense that they are happening is apparent.

I think if it was well maintained there wouldn’t be an issue

I have not heard of anything.

I can't verify that illegal things are occurring, but I've heard residents of Center Street expressing deep concerns about this. Many are unwilling to walk down the street at night, as the result.

Again, do not hang out in Kaimuki. Only go to some restaurants. Yes, concerned about illegal and shady activities in this community.

Graffiti, and some broken windows (at least at some point, upstairs?) make me wonder what's going on. Looks abandoned & that usually draws illegal activities.

Because I don't feel safe, I try to avoid the area and walk across the street instead

Graffiti, drug use

I may just not be aware of things.

I haven't seen anything

It seems when businesses don't operate in the evening hours it invites criminal activity to do business in that location.

Can't comment - have not been in that area for years.

I've never seen any illegal activities occur along Waialae Ave, in all my years living here.

I am not aware of any illegal activities around the Theatre.

Setting aside the police raid several decades ago, the abandoned building has attracted individuals looking to graffiti the building and surrounding businesses. I'm also concerned of individuals illegally residing in the abandoned building.

I haven’t witnessed anything, but as I mentioned above one has to wonder what might be going on there given it’s current state.

Saw a homeless person come out of there

Just concerned. I would like to see the space receive someTLC so that the community can benefit from it.

Have no seen any illegal activities

I have not seen illegal activity around the theater. I am sad if there is.

None when i was in the area.

I've seen a couple of individuals engaging in what looked like a drug deal.

No- haven't heard about too many illegal activities around the Queen Theater area

If the place is condemned, then no one is allowed in there. I'm concerned for the safety of anyone who enters the building, given its dilapidated condition. I'm also concerned about potential illicit activity in the building.

Useful links:

- State register of historical places. https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/shpd/home/state-register/
- Restoring historic theaters:
  - https://www.traditionalbuilding.com/features/the-shows-go-on
  - https://savingplaces.org/stories/10-tuesday-10-steps-restoring-historic-theaters#.YE8pJmRufFo
  - https://www.dvrpc.org/HistoricPreservation/Success/HistoricTheaters.htm
  - https://hnldoc.ehawaii.gov/hnldoc/document-download?id=5876

Specifics about Queen Theater:

- Friends of Queen Theater non-profit: http://friendsofqueentheater.com/index.html#
- 9/12/14 Article in Hawaii Business about Queen Theater: https://www.hawaiibusiness.com/good-locations-lots-of-space-but-unused-for-years-and-years/ *"Yu did not respond to multiple requests for comment, but Hawaii Business did talk to Michael Kratzke, Yu's associate and the self-described property manager for the Queen. In an initial interview in May, Kratzke said Yu had plans underway for the property and told our writer to call back in a month for details. His response when we called again in June? "If you could call me in one month, that would be great." Multiple calls in August were not returned."*

Info about Other Historical Theaters in Hawaii.

https://historichawaii.org/?s=theater

- Palace Theater in Hilo: http://hilopalace.com/about/
- Iao Theater in Maui: https://historichawaii.org/2014/03/03/iao-theater/
- Honokaa People's Theater: http://honokaapeople.com/history.html

The owner pays nearly $40,000 a year in property tax on the Queens Theater.

http://friendsofqueentheater.com/photos.html

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee,

My name is Vilsoni Hereniko. I am a professor and filmmaker at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa. I live in Honolulu, Ala Moana district, and I am testifying today in support of RESOLUTION 24-176 – ACQUIRING THE QUEEN THEATER PROPERTY.

This September I was a jury member for the Toronto International Film Festival, one of the top five film festivals in the world, where I watched films from Asia, the Pacific and around the world. These films were shown in theatres purchased by the city, for the purpose of community screenings.

In addition, two of my films have screened at the Busan International Film Festival in South Korea where the city donated the equivalent of $ US 20 million to build theatres for this City’s Festival. I witnessed the many ways that communities and visitors in Toronto and Pusan benefit from their city's purchase of cinema houses.

I urge Honolulu's City Council members to acquire the Queen Theatre property for public film screenings by many of our film organizations, including the Hawai‘i International Film Festival which has been in existence for more than four decades without a theater of its own. This means that every year it has to find a theater that is willing to show the festival’s films.

Please vote YES on RESOLUTION 24-176

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Vilsoni Hereniko

Vilsoni Hereniko
Professor, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Hawai‘i.

To: Whom it may concern—

From: Anne Misawa

Re: Queen Theatre, Resolution 24-176

11/8/24

To Whom It May Concern—

As a filmmaker and an educator, I strongly support the City administration to take over the Queen Theatre so that the community may be able to use it as a screening facility in Kaimuki. It could be a terrific companion for the Hawaii International Film Festival to host screenings, events, and community events to foster the local film industry. Thank you for the consideration.

With best regards and aloha, Anne Misawa