ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRESERVATION
AND
THE MOANA HOTEL RESTORATION PROJECT
1987-1989

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The subject of this study has been the sequence of Preservation Events leading up to, and following, archaeological monitoring of the Moana Hotel Restoration Project in Waikiki, which took place from 1987 through 1989.

Placed on the State Register in 1971, and the National Register in 1972, the Moana was eligible as a recipient of Tax Act benefits for a National Register Historic Structure conducting a restoration. In applying for these Federal funds, the Hotel automatically became subject to the requirements of several legislative actions, especially Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the permit requirements of the 1906 Antiquities Act.

Originally, a State Historic Preservation Office Archaeologist drew up the 'permit-granting' contract for the site under a mistaken belief that little of archaeological significance would be discovered during the Restoration due to several documented episodes of modification to the parcel of land including: a former private family home---the Peacock House (which sat where the Hotel lobby is now), original Hotel construction, the dining room, pier, wings, and landscaping...plus the later renovation efforts.

Before the initial heavy-destruction phase of the project began, the SHPO Archaeologist position for the island of O'ahu had just been filled, which led to what the new archaeologist called an "unusual situation" (Dr. Joyce Bath, pers. comm.). She recognized in the contract the erroneous assumption that nothing would be found undisturbed. Subsequently, she fought to amend the contract to get an archaeological monitor on the grounds during the restoration work.
Partial success was achieved. The final contract was to be between Kashi Incorporated (Management Consultants to the Moana owner; Kyo-Ya Company Limited, for the restoration), the State Historic Preservation Office, and the Public Archaeology Section of the Applied Research Group of Bishop Museum (who had successfully bid for the project). This called for an archaeological monitor to be on-site during certain portions of construction excavation of the basement and rear (Banyan) courtyard areas of the Hotel, and for subsurface testing to be conducted during removal and replacement of Palm trees in the courtyard (Simons, 1988 Preliminary Report). Approximately 1,489 square meters of the basement and Banyan courtyard were monitored during the construction, with 24 square meters requiring mitigation excavations (Simons, 1988).

The contract had stipulated the areas to be monitored by an archaeologist and Kashi, Inc. was on its honor to contact the Museum archaeologist when work was to be done in those areas. Other areas which originally appeared very disturbed were to be watched by construction crew foremen who were to stop work immediately and call the archaeologist if anything was found. Problems arose for various reasons; the construction teams, through no fault of their own, were unfamiliar with cultural deposits, and often their supervisors were not around if they came across anything, including human bone. In addition, some work was conducted in the SHPO-designated areas without the archaeologist being contacted at all.

These difficulties resulted in a suspected loss of a great deal of in situ information which is supported by the fact that most of the artifacts, as well as 15 of the 24 sets of human remains were screened from "backdirt" piles in the basement and Banyan courtyard areas, or were recovered from slumped wall profiles after backhoe excavations. The artifact assemblage
included prehistoric and historic type artifacts; basalt and shell adzes, hammerstones, flakes, volcanic glass flakes, historic glass, ceramics, and metal, to name a few. Shell midden was also recovered, as were faunal remains of dog, pig, fish, small bird, and cat (a historic period burial of 2 cats under the Banyan tree).

Despite the problems, the archaeologist did find some in situ evidence of intact prehistoric and historic features including postholes, cooking and planting pits, 9 pre-Contact type Hawaiian burials, and a very dark organic cultural layer. The general depositional sequence found at the Moana is as follows: the top layer is fill or "overburden" under which lie the historic features such as planting pits, these, in turn, lie over pre-Contact features: at least some of the burials, and finally the sterile beach sand (Simons, 1988). Davis (1989), alludes to a Waikiki deposition similarity with the Moana report including the following three recent excavations in Waikiki:

1- The Fort deRussy Project conducted in 1989 by International Archaeological Research Institute, Incorporated.

2- The Pacific Beach Hotel Project, conducted in 1985 by the same company.

3- The Halekulani Hotel Project, conducted in 1981 by Bishop Museum.

Radiocarbon dating done on a charcoal lens from the Banyan court area yielded a date of ca. 1405-1665 A.D. (analysis by Beta Analytic, Inc., Coral Gables, FLA). It is interesting, though, that a burial pit is intrusive to the lens, having been dug through it---implying that the burial is later than the lens, though it is of traditional Hawaiian style and the individual was determined to be of Hawaiian ancestry, according to Physical Anthropologist Dr. Diane Trembly who did the human osteological
analysis of the Moana Hotel burials for the Museum.

Though it may seem that many individuals were interred on the site, the archaeologist does not speculate from available data that the site was a specified burial ground or cemetery, as was the Kapalua site on Maui, recently in the news.

The archaeological contract also called for reburial of any human remains found on the site. Kashi, Inc. agreed to allow the remains to be reburied *on the site*, and they prepared a cement cyst just on the makai side of the Banyan court sea wall. After osteological analysis, the remains were reburied with a ceremony conducted by Reverend Dean Fujii of Kawaihao Church. Reverend Fujii had also graciously performed a blessing ceremony for the site after initial discovery of human bone fragments.

I believe the treatment of the remains to be an important step forward for Preservation: not only were the remains allowed to be reburied, they were reinterred on the original site. This is quite a change from the early days of archaeology and of development in Hawai‘i, though it may not yet be the rule of thumb. However it does appear that developer and archaeologist sensitivity to Hawaiian culture and belief is increasing.

Kyo-Ya Inc., the Hotel Owner, decided to donate most of the artifact assemblage to the Bishop Museum's Research Collection, possibly feeling that it was not "exciting" enough to catch tourist interest. A few plaster ornaments and a wooden frame for making moldings were recovered by the archaeologist which were retained by Virginia Murison, Restoration Architect for the project, to be used in interior and exterior detail reconstruction.

To summarize results of the archaeological data recovery: the archaeologist was able to make some interpretation of the site from the
intact stratigraphic and cultural record, which appears to be consistent with information from other sites in Waikiki (a little over 20 of which are now recorded, including above-ground sites such as Papaenaena Heiau at the base of Diamond Head). Land use appears to continue over a long period from traditional Hawaiian occupation until now, with Hawaiian occupation of Waikiki continuing through early post-Contact time (Nakamura, University of Hawai'i Masters Thesis, History). With the building of the Moana Hotel, though, the beginning of a "new age" for Waikiki had begun.

Finally, I wish to affirm that Historic Preservation is not always the preservation of structures or sites, but also of information. Careful alteration versus obliteration of a site or structure may yield very valuable information to add to sometimes substantial historic records which through time shall prove to be the "wealth" of a site or an area. So, although to some, permit processes may be irritating and costly delays now, future generations will benefit from our holistic Preservation efforts made together.
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