

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

ALAN A. SMITH
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

ROBERT MASUDA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

May 22, 2007

Mr. Douglas A. Lentz, Superintendent
USS Arizona Memorial
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Attn: Visitor Center Environmental Assessment
1 Arizona Memorial Place
Honolulu, Hawaii 96818

LOG NO: 2007.0824
DOC NO: 0704ST10
Architecture
Archaeology

Dear Mr. Lentz:

**SUBJECT: Section 106 (NHPA) Review
USS Arizona Memorial - Hawaii
Environmental Assessment for the Project to Replace the Failing Visitor Center at
the USS Arizona Memorial
Pearl Harbor, Honolulu, Hawaii
TMK: (1) 9-3**

Thank you for the submittal received March 7, 2007. The proposed project is for the replacement of the existing visitor center and construction of a new shore side Visitor Center for the USS Arizona Memorial located within the Pearl Harbor U.S. Naval Reservation boundary in Honolulu on the Island of Oahu.

Proposed Project

The 11-acre existing Visitor Center facilities and 6.4 acres of additional land are included in the project area. A Pearl Harbor Historic Partners Site Master Plan will include the USS Bowfin, USS Missouri, USS Utah, USS Oklahoma, and the Pacific Aviation Museum as part of an integrated, coordinated, shared, and complementary visitor program. Centralized parking and access, and shared ticketing and shuttle service are being considered. The Pearl Harbor Historic Trail will originate near the USS Arizona Memorial Visitor Center and follow an old railroad alignment along the north side of the Naval Station. The Honolulu High Capacity Transit Plan may include the Visitor Center on its transit line and the King Kamehameha Highway Beautification Project will affect the park entry area. Three alternatives proposed are as follows:

Alternative A is the no-action alternative - Existing Situation

The existing Visitor Center was built in 1978. The Center has three, single-story buildings surrounding a common courtyard containing fountains and imported exotic plants that extend around the buildings, parking lots, and walkways. The footing has sunken, resulting in a structural

system that no longer functions, environmental conditions are worsening the deterioration and the existing Visitor Center was built to accommodate 750,000 annually people but currently has over 1.5 million visitors per year. Furthermore, objects from the displayed collection are inadequately protected from the elements and efforts are needed to improve the interpretation of the existing museum collection to ensure Pearl Harbor survivors' stories are continued to be told.

Alternative B, The Preferred Alternative - Visitor Center Building Concept

For Alternative B, the proposed new structures will be located adjacent to the existing facility to the east and north in a linear, campus-based arrangement with a ceremonial lawn. A two-story structure will be consistent with the existing view shed and building height requirements. The existing theaters will be renovated and retained. The existing boat launch will be moved 100 feet west from where it currently is located. Since the Center is not within a controlled perimeter, Antiterrorism Criteria compliance will be addressed by Standoff Distance (roadways and parking areas), keeping the buildings as far as possible from the blast source. The structural systems will use tensile structures with membrane covers supported by reinforced concrete foundations and sidewalls, and driven steel piles connected to grade beams.

Alternative C – Campus Style with Relocated Boat Launch

This alternative involves moving the Visitor Center structures to the north of their current location, closer to the USS Bowfin Submarine and Museum. A cluster arrangement will be used for the exhibits, theaters, and shared arrival plaza structures. The concessions, administrative offices, restrooms, and vending areas will be located in a linear north-south trending configuration, there will be a two-story structure consistent with the existing view shed and building height requirements, and a larger Ceremonial Lawn will be where the existing Visitor Center is. The existing theater will be demolished. The boat dock will be moved to the western shore, located by a new theater facility. Structural systems similar to Alternative B involve driven steel piles connected to grade beams, light-weight construction materials, structural steel framing materials, and tensile structures with membrane covers.

Historic Resources

A cultural landscape approach was used by the U.S. Navy for preservation planning of the Pearl Harbor National Historic Landmark District (1966) (and National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), (1/29/64)). The Landmark District is defined as a historic vernacular landscape that has evolved through activities and occupancies, that links geographic areas, historic periods, and types of resources, and that establishes historic interpretive themes (military and non-military). Character-defining elements that contribute to the District's significance are the views, topography, circulation, vegetation, buildings, and structures: for example, views of the Harbor, the Memorial, the USS Missouri, and the USS Bowfin; and the topography of Makalapa Crater, the adjacent bluffs, and the natural shoreline. Significant vegetation recognized by the U.S. Navy are the red mangrove groves, kiawe, and tree groves in residential areas. Contributing landscape features include land-based naval buildings and structures, the docked National Historic Landmark (NHL)* ships, and naval vessels visible in their current daily operations.

*Individually recognized historic ships are: the USS Arizona and the USS Utah ((NHL), (5/5/89)); the adjacent USS Bowfin Submarine (State (7/30/1982) and National (11/16/1982) Registers of Historic Places, and NHL (1/14/1986)); and the USS Missouri Battleship located at Ford Island across the Harbor (State (6/24/06) and National (5/14/1971) Registers of Historic Places). The USS Oklahoma memorial is in current development on Ford Island.

Pearl Harbor's pre-military historic significance that should be noted is its use as a central circulation element for its waterways, channel system, and piers from the sugar cane plantation days. The adjacent Kamehameha Highway and the Oahu Railway and Land (O R & L) Company's railway corridor that ran through the area are significant as transportation linkages for sugar cane plantations utilizing the docks. These corridors were used later for wartime transportation of military traffic. (The O R & L's Right-of-Way is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (12/1/1975) but does not include the Pearl Harbor area, where the railroad lines have been replaced with bicycle paths. However, the O R & L transportation corridor should also be noted as an element of the Pearl Harbor cultural landscape.) Pre-military remnants are some fishpond walls, indications of taro and rice fields, and some stone structures.

Architecture Concerns

The existing Visitor Center was built in 1978, less than 50 years ago and is not a contributing element of the Pearl Harbor National Historic Landmark District. For both Alternatives B & C, the scale, massing, and use of materials and colors for the proposed alternative designs will be chosen to be compatible with the cultural landscape and historic district. Slight changes in elevation will affect the topography, new buildings will be on elevated fill material, and the proposed two-story structure will change the area's built profile. However, the existing Ceremonial Lawn and Remembrance Circle are being retained as part of the site's spatial and circulation arrangements to afford better views of Pearl Harbor and the USS Arizona Memorial, to maintain the same general physical area, and to be compatible with the overall landmark cultural landscape.

Removed vegetation will be replanted, native plants will be used when possible, and any non-native plants used will be typical of Oahu in 1941. Pile-driving vibrations caused by the proposed construction activities should not affect historic structures because of Pearl Harbor's soft soil composition; previous construction projects in the area have not shown any adverse effects.

Alternative C involves relocation of the boat launch to an area that had the same historic use. This would be in keeping with the intent of the U.S. Navy's Integrated Cultural Resource Master Plan (ICRMP) to locate similar current activity near to its historic counterpart, here the historic pier and landing remnants, thereby including them in the interpretation of the area's history. Furthermore, this Alternative affords visitors two views of the Memorial whereas Alternative B gives viewers one view.

Both Alternatives appear to provide designs that are sensitive to the historic cultural landscape of the Pearl Harbor National Historic Landmark District. Therefore, we do not have any comments at this time. We look forward to submittal of further project developments for our review.

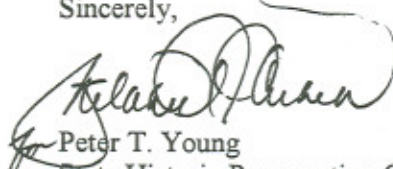
Mr. Douglas A. Lentz, Superintendent
Page 4

Archaeology Concerns

According to your document (p. 17), "...the entire project area is comprised of fill added during the war-time construction of Pearl Harbor and only fill would be disturbed under the action alternatives considered in this plan/environmental assessment..." For these reasons, you state that "...there would be no effect to archaeological resources under any of the alternatives considered." You also state (p. 18) that there will be no effect on any historic structures, including the sunken hull of the USS Arizona, which previous studies have shown will not be affected by pile-driving vibrations. Provided these are accurate statements, we concur with your determination of "no effect" to historic properties for the proposed undertaking.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Should there be any questions regarding architecture concerns, please call Susan Tasaki at (808) 692-8015.

Sincerely,



Peter T. Young
State Historic Preservation Officer

ST:jen