

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Hawaii	
COUNTY: Honolulu	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Merchant Street Historical District (80-14-9905)

AND OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
individual addresses for buildings are shown on the attached

CITY OR TOWN:
map of the area.
Honolulu

STATE: Hawaii CODE: 15 COUNTY: Honolulu CODE: 03

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Multiple Ownership

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Bureau of Conveyances

STREET AND NUMBER:
Tax Office Annex
P.O. Box 2867

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:
Honolulu Hawaii 15

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Most of the buildings appear in the survey done by the Historic Buildings Task Force and are mentioned in their publication, Old Honolulu.

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Archives of Hawaii

STREET AND NUMBER:
Iolani Palace Grounds

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:
Honolulu Hawaii 15

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Merchant Street Historical District, occupying four square blocks in downtown Honolulu, contains a variety of interesting old buildings. The area is what remains of "old" Honolulu. Merchant Street, once the main street of the financial and governmental part of the city, bisects the district and is lined with low-rise, well maintained buildings of character and distinction (see attached map).

Beginning at Fort Street and heading down Merchant toward Nuuanu, on the left is the old Bishop Estate building, constructed in 1896. This small two story building, with its fortress-like appearance creates an illusion of being larger than it is. It is constructed of dark grey lava stone taken from the quarries found on Bishop Estate land. Next to this building is the old Bishop Bank building, built in 1878 to house the Bank of Bishop. Of brick construction, it has been stuccoed over and some of the first floor windows have been covered over to add wall space on the interior. Sensitive treatment would easily restore it to its original character. Across Merchant Street from these two buildings is a large empty space which up until June 1972 was occupied by the Hawaiian Gazette building. This empty space is also the site of the original Honolulu Hale (Honolulu City Hall). Next to this empty space, still heading toward Nuuanu Avenue, is the Kamehameha V Post Office. This building was previously nominated to and placed on the National Register. Across Merchant Street from Kamehameha V Post Office is the Melchers Building, now the home of the Honolulu Prosecuting Attorney's offices. This is the oldest commercial building still standing in Honolulu, having been constructed in 1854. It is constructed of coral blocks, but the texture has been lost under layers of stucco and paint. It is a very simple two story structure, reflecting the simplicity and pragmatism of construction in mid-nineteenth century Hawaii.

Across Bethel Street from the Melchers Building is the Old Honolulu Police Station. While not as old as the other buildings in the District, its low-rise Mediterranean style is harmonious with the rest of the buildings. Across Merchant Street from the Old Police Station is the Yokohama Specie Bank building. This building, built in 1909, is a major contributor to the character of Merchant Street. It is a two-story, eclectic style building with an elaborate corner entry way. The building is further embellished by an ornate freize with portals decorated by classic wreath and floral carvings above the second floor. Heading up Bethel Street from Merchant Street are two other valuable buildings, the Friend building and the McCandless building. Both of these buildings contribute to the over all scale and character of the District.

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7.

Returning to Merchant Street and again continuing toward Nuuanu Avenue, the Waterhouse building and the Old Royal Saloon occupy the right side of the street. The Waterhouse building is a simple two story building with a peeling stucco over brick facade. The Old Royal Saloon, the last reminder of Honolulu's once thriving waterfront community, has been successfully turned into a restaurant and has been rennovated in a harmonious eclectic style. It occupies the corner of Merchant Street and Nuuanu Avenue.

Across Nuuanu Avenue from the Old Royal Saloon is the T.R. Foster building. This building, now known as Alfie's Pub to much of the downtown community, was the first building in the Merchant Street area to be recognized for its potential economic value because of age, style and character. The stucco exterior was removed to reveal one of the finest examples of brick artistry and craftsmanship existing in Honolulu. The T. R. Foster building and the small brick warehouse behind it (now also a small restaurant) were built in 1891. While actually geographically situated within the area designated as the Chinatown Historical District, in character and in style, both of these buildings belong with the Merchant Street buildings.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

The buildings along Merchant Street between Nuuanu and Bishop Streets provide a unique opportunity to preserve a significant aspect of Honolulu's architectural heritage. Dating from 1854, these buildings portray tangible evidence of the growth and development of Honolulu's professional and business community. A great deal of the economic and political history of Hawaii was created and written by the previous occupants of these buildings. Ranging from banks to bars and post office to newspapers, they have paid silent witness to the creation of present day Hawaii.

Individually, the buildings along Merchant Street are of great architectural and historical value. The oldest existing commercial building in Honolulu, (Melchers Building, 1854) first use of precast concrete block construction, (Kamehameha V Post Office, 1871), the "romantic" old Honolulu Police Station.

As a group, they represent an incalculable asset as an historic record of Honolulu's past. The variety of architectural styles depict the changing attitudes and living patterns during the emergence of Honolulu as a major city. The loss of even the simplest of these buildings would lead to the destruction of the harmony and continuity created by their combined existence.

The variety of styles, forms and materials create an unplanned character of great value, unified by the common element of human scale. Being adjacent to the vertical growth area of Bishop Street, the need to preserve this small scale human environment becomes all the more apparent.

The recent interest and restoration of many of these buildings gives evidence to the growing concern and reappraisal being directed towards Honolulu's architectural heritage. The need to establish a sense of identity and permanency in the downtown area is becoming increasingly evident as in recent years many of the finest historic buildings have been needlessly lost.

It is fortunate to have such a valuable group of buildings in sound condition that require no great effort than recognition.

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8a.

Merchant Street allows Honolulu the opportunity to create an Historic District that would provide a permanent area for future generations to participate in a living element of Hawaii's heritage. The outer limits of this historical district are: Nuuanu Avenue, King Street, Fort Street, and Queen Street (extended in a straight line to intersect with Nuuanu Avenue).

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Merchant Street Notes" by Richard Greer in Hawaii Historical Review, Honolulu, 1969, pp.183-199.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	21 ° 18 ' 49 "	157 ° 52 ' 00 "				
NE	21 ° 18 ' 50 "	157 ° 51 ' 56 "				
SE	21 ° 18 ' 45 "	157 ° 51 ' 53 "				
SW	21 ° 18 ' 43 "	157 ° 51 ' 58 "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES:

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Robert M. Fox, Architect

ORGANIZATION: State of Hawaii DATE: Sept. 22, 1972
Hawaii Register of Historic Places

STREET AND NUMBER:
P.O. Box 621

CITY OR TOWN: Honolulu STATE: Hawaii CODE: 15

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



LAT. 21° 18' 49"
LONG. 157° 52' 00"
Honolulu
LAT. 21° 18' 43"
LONG. 157° 51' 58"

9905

LAT. 21° 18' 50"
LONG. 157° 51' 56"
LAT. 21° 18' 45"
LONG. 157° 51' 53"

Lat 21° 17' 30"
Long. 157° 51' 50"