



# Restoring A Kingdom:

## Examining the History and Rehabilitation of 'Iolani Palace

*Ua Mau ke Ea o ka 'Āina i ka Pono*

# Introduction

- Americans are going through a cultural revolution and identities are being embraced. With that comes a need to reexamine, evaluate and attempt to preserve our past.
- Landmarks, landscapes and historical sites are given much attention in recent years, especially for communities of color/urban cores.

## Why preservation?

- Transforming the center of cities is the merging field of historic preservation, a truly sustainable land-use ethic.<sup>1</sup>

## Rehabilitation Vs. Reconstruction

- Reconstruction standards establish limited framework for recreating a vanished or non-surviving building with new materials, primarily for interpretive purposes.<sup>2</sup>
- Rehabilitation standards acknowledge the need to alter/add historic building to meet continuing or new uses while retaining the building's historic character.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Virginia O. Benson, Richard Klein, and Stanley Smith, *Historic Preservation for Professionals*, (Kent: The Kent University Press, 2008), 21.

<sup>2</sup> Anne E. Grimmer, "Guidelines for Preserving and Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings," accessed May 1, 2022, <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatment-guidelines-2017.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid



# Hawaii's Palace

## Usage of the Palace

- 'Iolani palace can serve up to 80 guests an hour, 150 guests a day or at least 1,500 guests a week.<sup>1</sup>
- Caters to both locals and tourists alike, 'Iolani Palace can accommodate large parties and able to host weddings, graduations and other events on the grounds (Palace tour is usually included. The Palace is also able to cater).

## Community Spirit and Togetherness

- Every child who attends school in Hawai'i will inevitably tour the Palace on a class field trip. This allows the multi-generational households that are the majority of Hawai'i to connect in another unique way.
- A symbol of Hawaiian heritage for more than 140 years.
- A place for everyone in all walks of life to gather, educate, immerse and understand the history of the Hawaiian people.

<sup>1</sup> Friends of 'Iolani Palace, "History," accessed May 1, 2022, <https://www.iolanipalace.org/>



# Timeline of 'Iolani Palace

Palace Built	Lighting the Palace	The Palace becomes lit	Queen Lili'uokalani's imprisonment	A palace is no longer	Restoration/ Rehabilitation of the Palace
1879-1882	1886	1887-1888	1894-1898	1893-1969	1969-
<p>The Palace was the official residence of the Hawaiian monarchs, where they held official functions, received dignitaries and luminaries from around the world, and entertained often and lavishly.<sup>1</sup></p>	<p>The Silver Jubilee, a two-week celebration and demonstration of a Hawai'i with electricity. The streets were lighted at dusk so the people could enjoy lighted pathways for their celebrations</p>	<p>1887 Exterior lights switch was flipped to illuminate the exterior of the Palace and the grounds in incredible brightness.</p> <p>1888 Interior lights were activated throughout the entire Palace, including washrooms and servants' quarters.</p>	<p>When the Queen attempted to restore power to the monarchy, American businessmen, organized a coup d'état and overthrew the Queen. With the Queen overthrown, the militia was able to seize Hawai'i and it was officially annexed as a territory to the United States in July of 1898.<sup>2</sup></p>	<p>'Iolani Palace was the government headquarters for the Provisional Government (1893-1894), Republic of Hawaii (1894-1898), Territory of Hawaii (1898-1959), and the State of Hawaii. During World War II, it served as the temporary headquarters for the military governor of the islands.<sup>3</sup></p>	<p>Government offices vacated the Palace in 1969 and moved to the current State Capitol building. After nearly 80 years as a government building, the once regal palace was in need renovations to restore it back to its once regal glory.<sup>4</sup></p>

<sup>1</sup> Richard Wisniewski, *Rise and Fall of the Hawaiian Kingdom: A Pictorial History*, (Honolulu, HI: Pacific Basin Enterprises, 1979), 24.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 48.

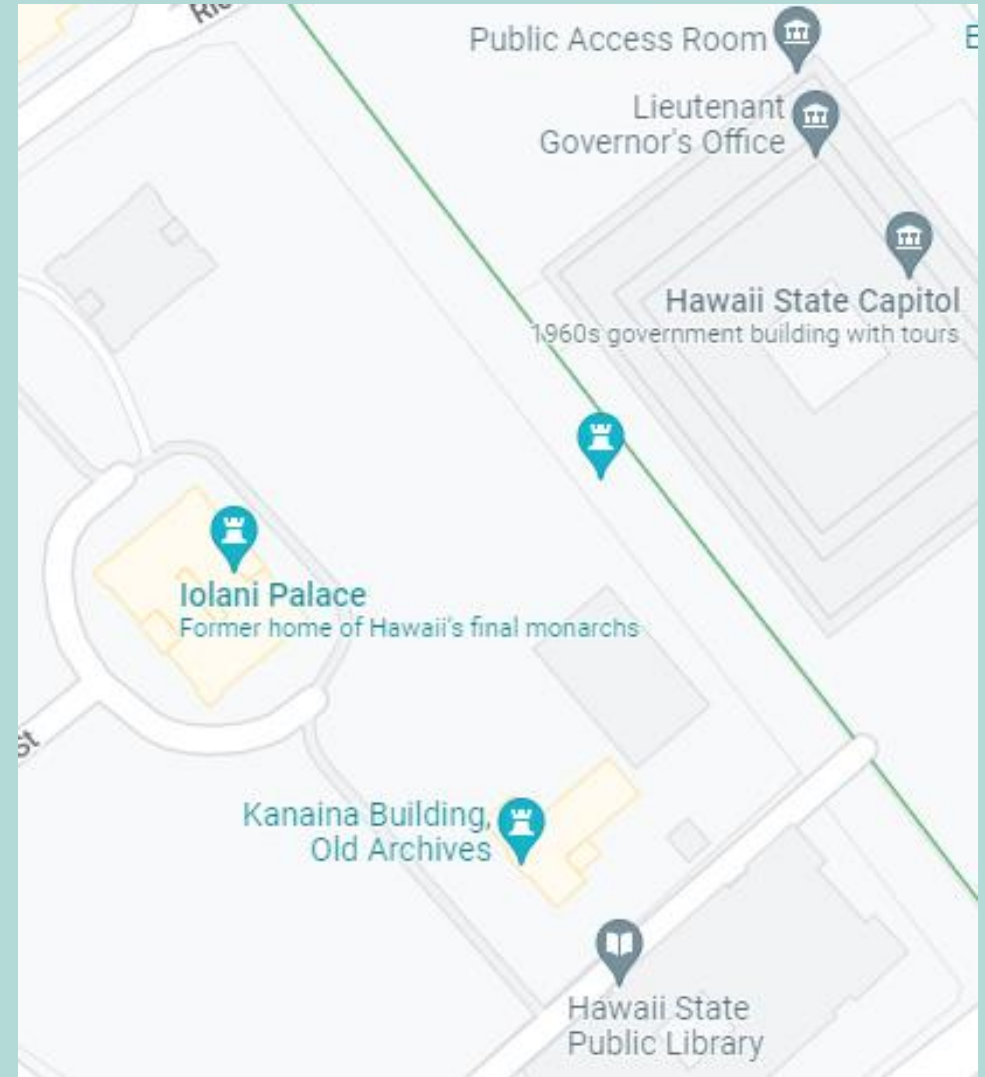
<sup>3</sup> Friends of 'Iolani Palace, "History," accessed May 1, 2022, <https://www.iolanipalace.org/>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

# Location of 'Iolani Palace

## Both a symbol and anchor of the urban core of Hawai'i:

- 364 South King St. Honolulu, HI 96813.
- Downtown Honolulu – Honolulu's Capitol District; near the business district.
- Palace lands include: 3 story building, workers' building (converted into guest services and a gift shop) gardens and park.
- Surrounding buildings/landmarks: Hawai'i State Archives, State Capitol, Hawai'i State Art Museum, Hawai'i State Library Post Office Main Branch, Governors' Mansion.
- Surrounding municipal buildings: Hawai'i Department of Health and Vital Records Department, Queens Hospital, Hawai'i Board of Water Supply, Hawaiian Electric and Honolulu City Hall.
- 'Iolani Palace is the heart that beats in urban core of Honolulu, reminding all who reside here its beauty and strength.



# King David Kalakaua

1874-1891

- King David La'amea Kalakaua, was known as the "Merrie Monarch". The yearly Merrie Monarch festival in Hawai'i, is commenced in his honor as he is seen as a patron for innovation and the arts, especially dance and music. Kalakaua was elected king of the Hawaiian Nation in 1874 and reigned until his passing in 1891.<sup>1</sup>
- He advocated for a renewed sense of pride in all things Hawaiian such as the arts, medicine, music, and hula. 'Iolani Palace, constructed during Kalakaua's reign as a symbol of Hawaiian ingenuity and sovereignty and of grandeur of his rule as well, was built with every modern convenience imaginable.<sup>2</sup>
- To this day, King Kalakaua is seen as one of the most influential rulers of the Hawaiian Monarchy. He is mentioned in several local books and plays and one cannot leave the island without hearing his name at least once.

1 Tiffany Ing, *Reclaiming Kalakaua: Nineteenth Century Perspective on a Hawaiian Sovereign*, (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2019), 16.

2 Douglas, Askman, and Zita Choy, *Iolani Palace- Portraits*, (Honolulu, HI: Friends of Iolani Palace, 2018). 13.

Kalakaua



Oil on canvas, William Cogswell, 1891. Loan, State of Hawaii Collection.

# Queen Lili'uokalani

## First and Last Queen of Hawai'i

- Serving as the official residence of the Hawaiian monarch until the overthrow of the Kingdom, 'Iolani palace was the residence of the last ruling Hawaiian monarch, Queen Lili'uokalani.<sup>1</sup>
- Queen Lili'uokalani, like Kalakaua, loved and supported the arts and fought for the advancement of Hawaiian music, dance and language. She was an accomplished singer, song-writer, composer and wrote one of Hawaii's four national anthems at the request of King Kamehameha the V, called "He Mele Lāhui Hawai'i."<sup>2</sup>
- While kept under house arrest, Lili'uokalani, wrote the popular song "Aloha O'e". Still a popular song today, it's a reminder to the people of Hawai'i that they have not faded, but have come back stronger than ever.
- Follow the link below for your listening pleasure:
  - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ONFMei\\_PpNQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ONFMei_PpNQ)

<sup>1</sup> National Park Service, "Iolani Palace, Honolulu, Hawaii," accessed May 1, 2022, <https://www.nps.gov/places/iolanipalace.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> Hawaiian Historical Society, "About," accessed May, 1, 2022, <https://www.hawaiianhistory.org/about/>

<sup>3</sup> Douglas, Askman, and Zita Choy, *Iolani Palace- Portraits*, (Honolulu, HI: Friends of Iolani Palace, 2018). 14.

## Liliuokalani



Oil on canvas, William Capwell, 1891. Loan, State of Hawaii Collection.

# Rehabilitation for a Modern Age

## Modern amenities & historical integrity:

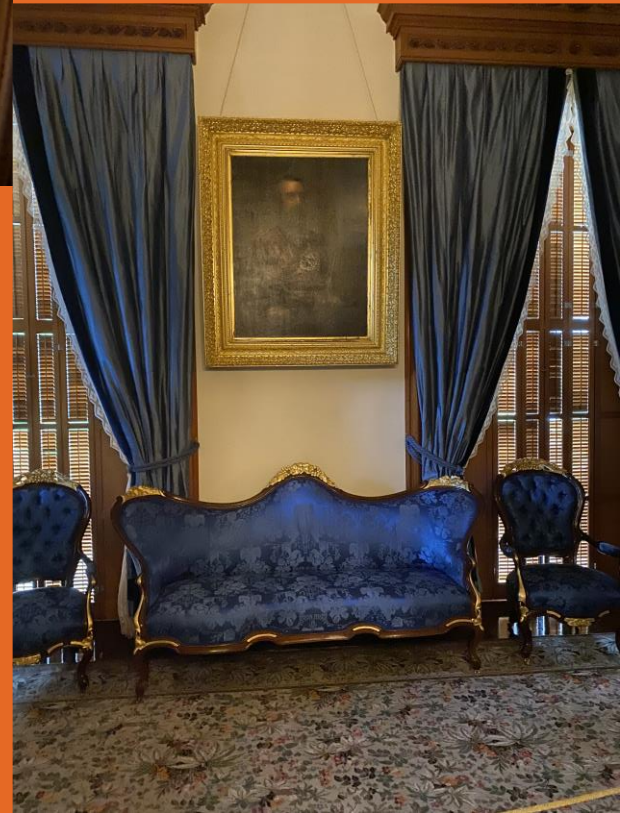
- The Imprisonment Room is the only room that has not undergone any rehabilitation out of respect for the mana (lingering essence) of Queen Lili'uokalani that many Native Hawaiians believe inhabit the room.<sup>1</sup> Since this room received no rehabilitation it is not open to the public, however, it is left open to observe the queen's spirit.
- The Blue Room is a completed renovated project by the Friends of 'Iolani Palace. This was the unfinished project of King Kalakaua before his untimely death that the people decided to honor.

## Special Accessibility:

- All public areas of 'Iolani Palace and 'Iolani Barracks are wheelchair accessible.
- American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter can be arranged for Deaf individuals or groups. Additionally, a printed version of the audio tour script can be requested on-site.<sup>2</sup>
- Special touch tours can be arranged for blind and partially sighted individuals or groups.

<sup>1</sup> Friends of 'Iolani Palace, "Restoration of Palace," accessed May 1, 2022, <https://www.iolanipalace.org/>

<sup>2</sup> Friends of 'Iolani Palace, "Accessibility," accessed May 1, 2022, <https://www.iolanipalace.org/>



# Innovations & Green Designs

## **Palace Innovations:**

- Kalakaua installed a telephone that worked in five rooms within the palace. Having a love of modern amenities, Kalakaua was intrigued with the idea of his home being complete with interior and exterior lighting. He had electrical wiring throughout the Palace even before the White House.<sup>1</sup>
- Any one with internet connection can now experience the palace from a new perspective: digital resources including a virtual reality tour of the Palace and video series of the Royal Portraits.<sup>2</sup>

## **Green Designs and Practices:**

- To ease the wear and tear of the palace floors, docents provide guests with one-time-use biodegradable booties. The non-profit that runs the Palace is looking into booties that can be reused, instead of used once then thrown away.
- Foregoing the uses of pamphlets and maps as guides for the palace, they have implemented an audio recording self lead tour which also has a screen for viewing pictures and diagrams. Books, maps and other reading materials can still be bought from the gift shop, but it isn't necessary to engage in the audio tour.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Tiffany Ing. *Reclaiming Kalakaua: Nineteenth Century Perspective on a Hawaiian Sovereign*, (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2019), 55.

<sup>2</sup> Friends of "Iolani Palace, "Virtual Experiences and Res," accessed May 1, 2022, <https://www.iolanipalace.org/>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

# National Register of Historic Places and Hawai'i Historical Society

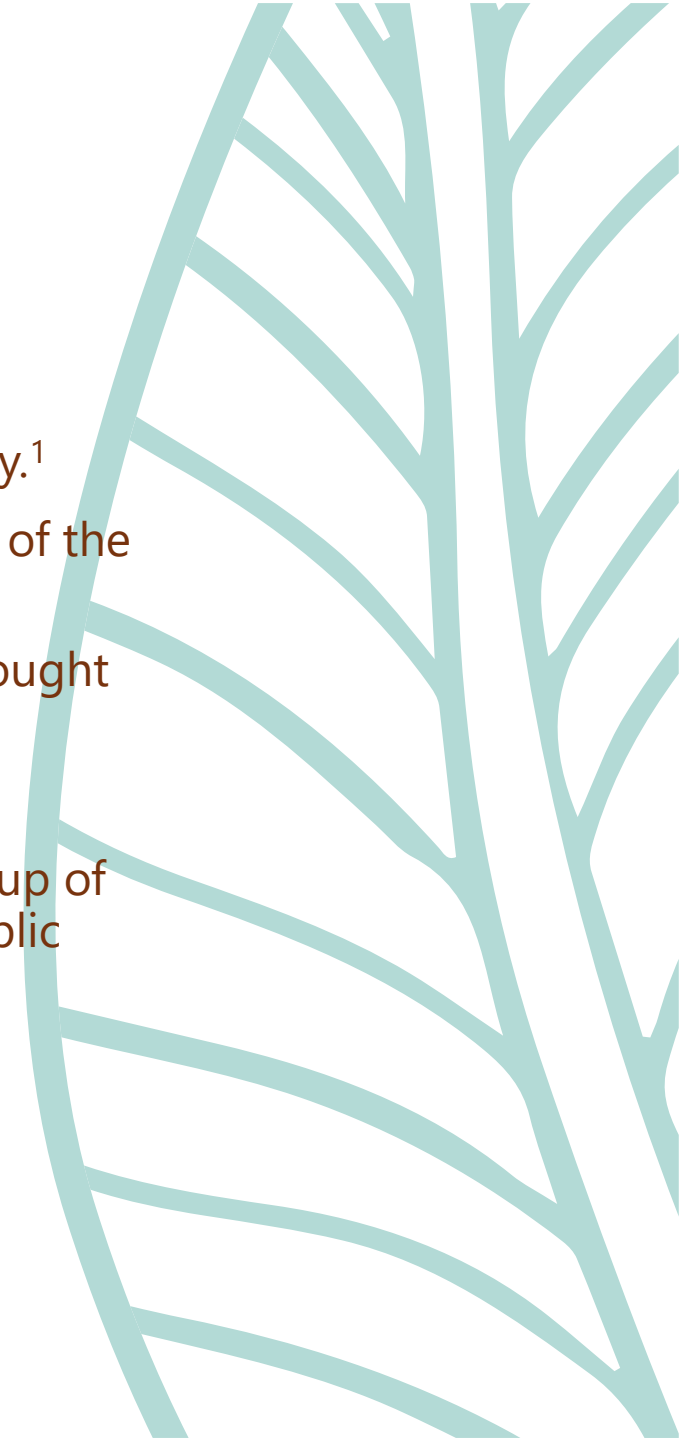
## 'Iolani Palace as a Historical landmark

- Application/Nomination for the National Register of Historical Places Inventory.<sup>1</sup>
- Form was filled out by Ben Levy a historian at the NRHP, National Park Service of the Department of the Interior.<sup>2</sup>
- Kanaka Ma'oli (Hawaiian ethnically) and the Kama'aina (residents of Hawai'i) sought restitution via cultural rehabilitation which included 'Iolani Palace.
- Listed on the website of the Hawai'i Historical Society.
- Established in 1892, HHS, is a private non-profit organization created by a group of prominent citizens dedicated to preserving historical materials, presenting public lectures, and publishing scholarly research on the history of Hawai'i. Queen Lili'uokalani was an early patron of the society.<sup>3</sup>

1 National Register of Historical Places Inventory, "Nomination Form," accessed May 1, 2022, [https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/NHLS/66000293\\_text](https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/NHLS/66000293_text)

2 Ibid

3 Hawaiian Historical Society, "History," accessed May 1, 2022, <https://www.hawaiianhistory.org/about/>



# Secretary of the Interior Standards

## Meeting National Standards

- Preservation may be appropriate if distinctive materials, features, and spaces are essentially intact and convey the building's historical significance.<sup>1</sup>
- Many historic buildings can be adapted for a new use or updated for a continuing use without seriously impacting their historic character.
- The Palace was always on the cutting edge of technology, advancing to modern amenities wasn't arduous. By simply removing a pulley lift system installed for swifter and easier service when the Palace was built, an elevator was able to fit in its place to accommodate patrons with disabilities.
- The ultimate use of the building determines what requirements will have to be met.<sup>2</sup>

## Overall philosophy

- Rehabilitation was and still is the best way to preserve 'Iolani Palace.
- Rehabilitation is defined as the process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values.<sup>3</sup>

1 Anne E. Grimmer, "Guidelines for Preserving and Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings," accessed May 1, 2022, <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatment-guidelines-2017>.

2 Ibid

3 Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, "Introduction to the Standards," accessed May 1, 2022, <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation/rehab/stand.htm>.

# Conclusions

Despite its tumultuous history with the United States, Hawaii is the fiftieth state. The debates that surround that status remains. And while generational curses can make mending bridges difficult, preservationists, archivists and historians in general needs to have empathy, patience and a humble understanding of history, especially how history has affected communities of color, lower income, urban and indigenous communities. If preservationists, those healing record keepers of the past, are willing to learn from and work with these communities, then those hard to build bridges can begin its growth. 'Iolani Palace is an example of how empathy and understanding of the past through others' perspective can create a space where the past can be healed and restored between all who live there. 'Iolani Palace is a symbol of Hawaii that tells a tragic story, woven and sung with melodic harmony and ethereal hope.



# Bibliography:

- Askman, Douglas, and Choy, Zita. 'Iolani Palace- Portraits. Honolulu, HI: Friends of 'Iolani Palace, 2018.
- Benson, Virginia, and Klein, Richard. Historic Preservation for Professionals. Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 2008. Accessed May 1, 2022. ProQuest Ebook Central.
- Friends of "Iolani Palace. "History." Accessed May 1, 2022. <https://www.iolanipalace.org/>
- Grimmer, Anne. "Guidelines for Preserving and Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings." Accessed May 1, 2022. <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatment-guidelines-2017.pdf>
- Hawaiian Historical Society. "About." Accessed May 1, 2022. <https://www.hawaiianhistory.org/about/>
- Ing, Tiffany. Reclaiming Kalakaua: Nineteenth Century Perspective on a Hawaiian Sovereign. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2019.
- National Park Service. "Iolani Palace, Honolulu, Hawaii." Accessed May 1, 2022. <https://www.nps.gov/places/iolanipalace.htm>
- National Register of Historical Places Inventory. "Nomination Form,." Accessed May 1, 2022. [https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/NHLS/66000293\\_text](https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/NHLS/66000293_text)
- Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. "Introduction to the Standards." Accessed May 1, 2022. <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation/rehab/stand.htm>
- Wisniewski, Richard. Rise and Fall of the Hawaiian Kingdom: A Pictorial History. Honolulu, HI: Pacific Basin Enterprises, 1979.