

Hawaii News

Event to highlight hunger for open spaces

By Mindy Pennybacker Posted April 07, 2016 April 7, 2016



COURTESY IAN CLAGSTONE

Mother Waldron Playground was built with private money and donated to the city.

The changing profile of Kakaako, as high-rise condominiums fill the historic district, underscores the need for public open spaces, said Kiersten Faulkner, executive director of Historic Hawai'i Foundation.

On Saturday, the nonprofit will co-host a discussion about Honolulu's historic parks

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and how their stories can inform urban planning today. The free event will be held 9 to 11 a.m. in the community room at Halekauwila Place Apartments, 665 Halekauwila St., adjacent to Mother Waldron Playground in Kakaako.

"There is a series of art deco parks and playgrounds that were designed in the 1930s and listed on the Hawaii register of historic places in the 1970s, and Mother Waldron Playground is one of them," Faulkner said. They were inspired by the public playground movement at the turn of the 20th century.

"There was a lot of urbanization taking place across the country, and there were private efforts to establish breathing room and organized play for children, getting them out of the tenements, into fresh air, teaching them civic skills and teamwork," Faulkner said.

Mother Waldron Playground and others, she added, were built with private money and later donated to the city.

The event — co-sponsored by Stanford Carr Development LLC, the Hawaiian Islands Land Trust and Kaka'ako: Our Kuleana (a free urban planning academy organized by the University of Hawaii at Manoa's Department of Urban and Regional Planning) — will feature presentations by planners and historians, followed by a talk-story session.

"We'll be trying to get a better understanding of what the community's needs are — what places throughout Oahu are important to people, where our land trust can assist in protecting," said Tina Aiu, Oahu island director of Hawaiian Islands Land Trust.

Aiu said the land trust aims to serve as a resource for landowners and developers as well as community members who are interested in learning techniques for preserving open space.

In Kakaako, the Hawaii Community Development Authority requires that open space and recreation space (either of which can be public or private), as well as a public facility dedication in the form of a fee or land, be provided by developers of residential buildings, said Susan Tamura, program specialist at HCDA.

While developers often elect to pay a fee, the grassy area that extends from the Mother Waldron Playground restrooms to Cooke Street was added in the 1980s through the dedication of a former warehouse site by Kamehameha Schools, Tamura said. "That's one instance where, as part of the public facility dedication, we were able to get more park space."

Annie Koh, a graduate student at UH, said that participants in a Kaka'ako: Our Kuleana lecture series last fall expressed a strong community need for green open space, and Saturday's event will look at practical ways to fulfill this need.

For more information, call 523-2900 or email outreach@historichawaii.org.

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