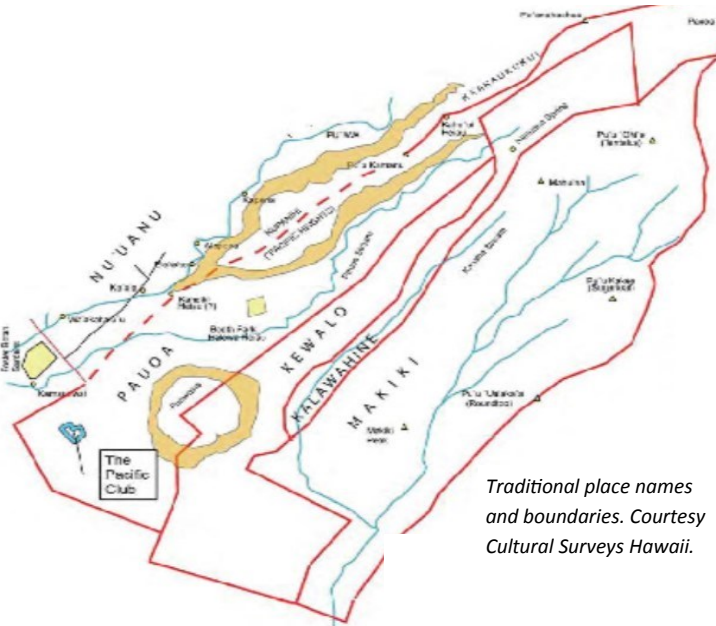


Nu'uuanu Valley, 1853. Photo by Dr. Hugo Stangenwald. Courtesy Cultural Surveys Hawaii

Location: QEG lies within the present boundaries of Honolulu Ahupua'a. Prior to Western Contact, Honolulu (Kou) was a small village, and ahupua'a boundaries were different. In pre-Contact and early-Contact periods, the area was within the ahupua'a of Pauoa, a small valley along Pauoa Stream between Nu'uuanu and Makiki Valleys (see Cultural Surveys Hawaii).



Traditional place names and boundaries. Courtesy Cultural Surveys Hawaii.

Namesake: Queen Emma Kalanikaumakaamano Naea (1836-1885) married Alexander Liholiho, who became King Kamehameha IV, in 1856, shortly after his accession to the throne. She campaigned for election to the throne in 1874, but lost to David Kalākaua in a heated contest. She devoted her life to charitable works, including the Queen's Hospital, St. Andrew's Priory and 'Iolani School, now beneficiaries of the Queen's estate. QEG is located on lands associated with the Queen. Her image is the basis of the logo for Queen Emma Gardens (see Bishop Museum).



Honolulu Redevelopment Authority: The HRA was formed in 1950 by the City and County of Honolulu to remedy slum and blight. However, it did not have significant impact until after 1958 when federal Housing and Urban Development moneys were infused into the program. Under the HRA the City and Federal governments partnered to purchase and clear substandard areas and relocate the residents, with the federal government providing approximately 66% of the funds. The blighted areas were then resold to private developers who were required to build according to land use plans prescribed by the HRA. HRA's first major project, Queen Emma Gardens, met with substantial public opposition because of an anticipated low quality of design. Sensitive to public outcry, the HRA seemed to make a conscious effort to have higher design standards, including the decision to hire a known and well-regarded design team (see Hibbard).

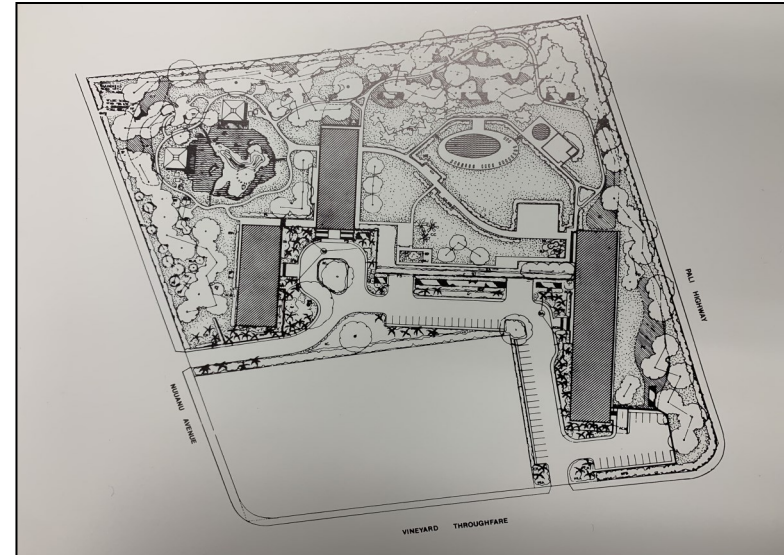


1906 area map showing mix of residential and commercial uses on small parcels. These were consolidated and condemned by HRA. Courtesy QEG.

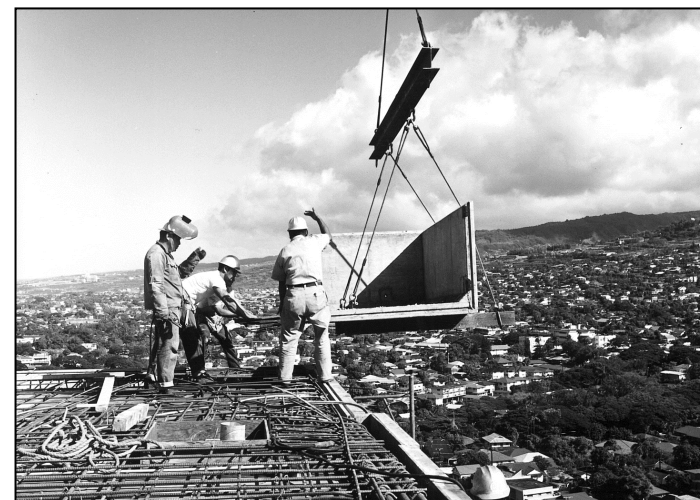


Structural engineer Alfred Yee, architect Minoru Yamasaki, developer EE Black on top of King Tower, with construction on Queen Tower in background. Photo by Alfred Yee Precast Design. Courtesy QEG.

Minoru Yamasaki, Design Architect: Yamasaki (1912-1986) was born in Seattle. He received his bachelor of architecture from the University of Washington in 1934, followed by a master of architecture from New York University and a doctorate of fine arts from Bates College in 1964. One of the most prominent American architects of the 20th century, Yamasaki is known for combinations of Expressionism and New Formalism, grafted on a basic core of International Style architecture, including Queen Emma Garden (see Hawaii Modernism Context Study).



Alfred A. Yee, Structural Engineer: Yee (1925-2017) was born in Hawaii. He obtained his bachelor's degree in structural engineering at Rose Polytechnic Institute in Indiana and his master's from Yale in 1949. He worked for a year in the bridge design section of the Territorial Department of Public Works and then for two years at Pearl Harbor before opening an engineering office. In 1955 he went into partnership with Kwon Doo Park and the pair established the first precast, pre-stressed concrete business in Hawaii. By the mid-1960s, pre-stressed concrete was a popular building material in Hawaii that was used in such large projects as the Kahala Hilton (1964) and Ilikai (1964) hotels. The "Hawaiian I" beams, "column trees," and a domino system of construction were pre-stressed concrete technologies patented by Yee (see Hawaii Modernism Context Study).



Precast member lifted into place at QEG. Photo by Alfred Yee Precast Design. Courtesy QEG.

George Walters, Landscape Architect: Walters was born in Hawaii, attended Roosevelt High School, and served in the Army during World War II. He graduated from the University of California at Berkeley with a BA in architecture and a Masters in landscape architecture. After working for several years in San Francisco, he returned to Hawaii and opened his own office in 1958. Walters's work followed the new vocabulary of the "California Style," relying on clean architectural forms and distinctive "hardscape" features (see Hawaii Modernism Context Study).



Interior Design featured floor-to-ceiling windows with fixed, sliding and awning styles; mahogany doors and cabinets, and traditional shoji doors to divide the kitchen and living areas.

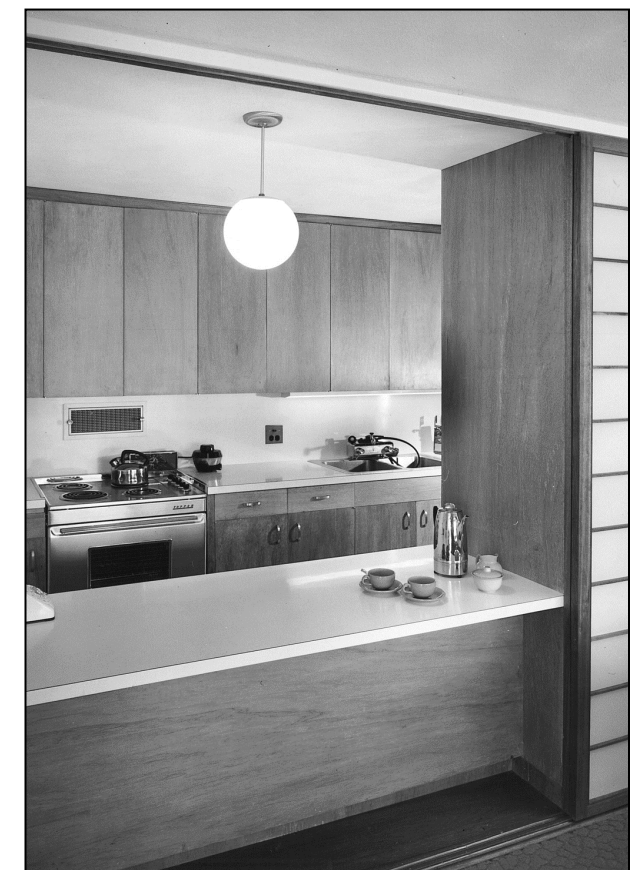
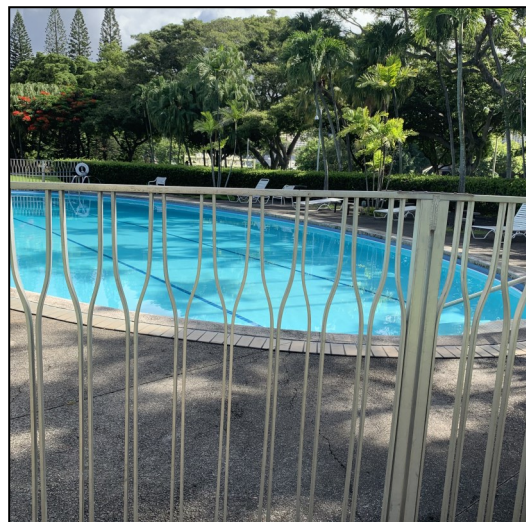


Photo by Alfred Yee Precast Design. Courtesy QEG.

The gardens include a Japanese-style garden with koi ponds and teahouses, as well as children's play areas, two swimming pools and barbecue stands on the garden deck over the structured parking, and lush landscaping throughout the property.



The repetitive design motif used in fences and railings throughout the project presaged a similar design Yamasaki used at the New York World Trade Centers a decade later.



In 1966, AIA selected Queen Emma Gardens as one of the nine Honolulu buildings "representative of good contemporary architecture" and praised the modern lines and appropriate manner in which it fulfills its function. With concerns over high rises changing Honolulu's character, Yamasaki's Queen Emma Gardens and Ossipoff's IBM Building were set forth as examples of tall buildings that addressed the needs of Hawaii.

In 2011, the "Hawaii Modernism Context Study" concluded that while many of the high rise condominium projects constructed in the first ten years following the passage of the condominium law were built in a modern style, the design of many of them did not transcend their popular characterization as concrete boxes. Some, however, excel as outstanding examples of the Tropical Modern style, including QEG. This and a few others are considered "high preservation value."



Landscape architect George Walters was a staunch defender of coconut palms and often utilized modular forms and Asian themes in his designs.

Queen Emma Gardens

The Honolulu Redevelopment Authority developed Queen Emma Gardens as an urban renewal project. In 1959, the Authority commissioned Minoru Yamasaki as the architect and E.E. Black as the developer. George S. Walters was the landscape architect. The structural design by Alfred A. Yee utilized a pre-cast-concrete design with an efficient erection system.

The project was completed in 1964 and cost \$11 per square foot. Originally available only for moderate income residents, the rental apartments were converted to market rate condominiums in 1996 by developer Peter Savio. Tenants were given first opportunity to purchase.

The 8.28-acre site is located within walking distance of Downtown Honolulu, the Chinatown historic district and Foster Botanical Gardens, also listed on the National Register of Historic Places. QEG is located near Pūowaina (aka Punchbowl) Crater and its National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific.

The complex is situated to be cooled by the tradewinds that travel from the Pali through Nu'uauu valley.

A total of 587 apartments, mostly one- and two-bedroom units, are divided among three towers, the 12-story Prince and 23-story Queen and King buildings. A two-level covered parking garage holds 800 spaces. The roof of the garage is a garden level with private access. The grounds are lushly landscaped with mature trees and foliage.

Recreation amenities on the garden level include a traditional Japanese-style garden with koi pond and two tea houses.

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Photos by Historic Hawai'i Foundation 2019 unless otherwise noted

Queen Emma Gardens



1511, 1515, 1519 Nu'uauu Avenue

Honolulu, Hawaii

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