Neal S. Blaisdell Center

BLAISDELL CENTER MASTER PLAN

SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

June 2015

WCITARCHITECTURE

AECOM

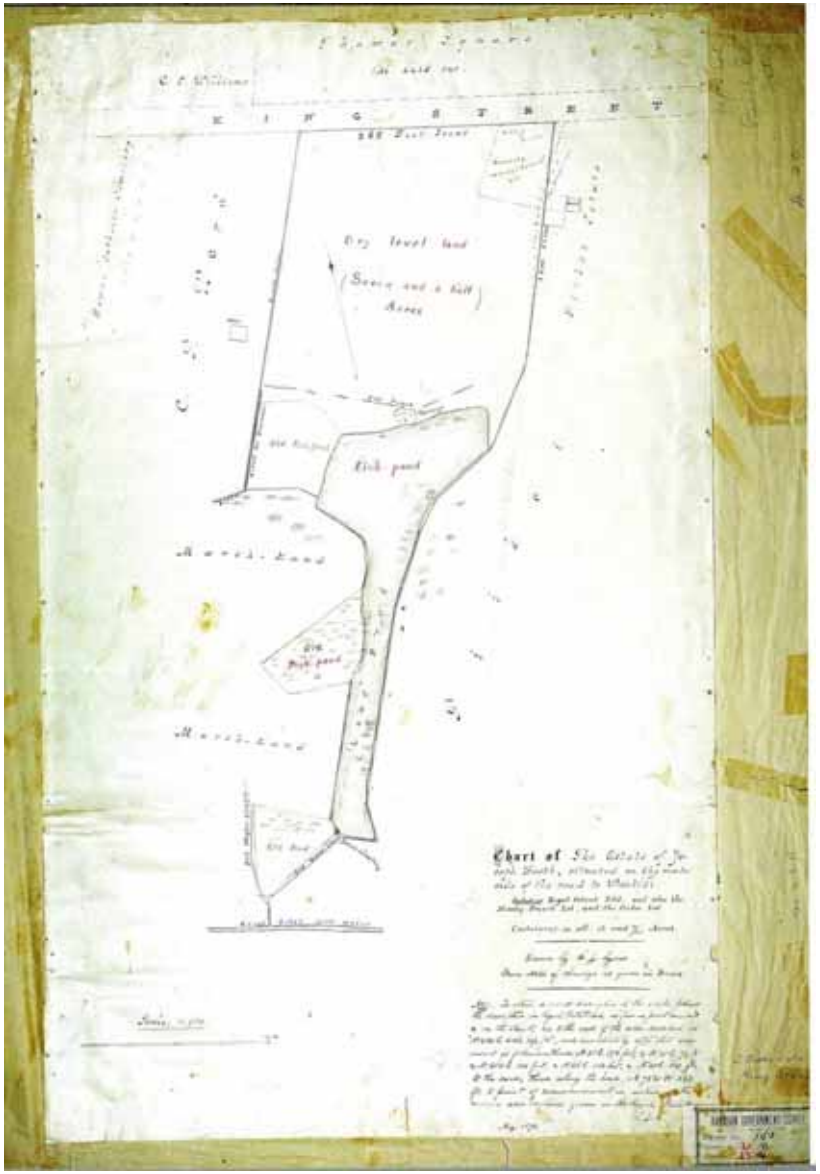
Lincoln Center Global

AUERBACH-POLLOCK-FRIEDLANDER

Performing Arts/Media Facilities Planning and Design

Blaisdell Center: Past

The present day Blaisdell Center was within the Kona *Moku*, Kewalo ("the calling/echo") *Ahupua'a*, which is comprised of Kaka'ako 'Ili on the east and Kukuluae' o 'Ili on the west[1]. Presently it is in the Honolulu *Ahupua'a*. The area of Kewalo connected the two more densely populated centers, Kou to the west, and Waikīkī to the east, with a network of trails through irrigated fields, fishponds, marshes, and grassy plains where *pili* was gathered for thatched houses.



Source: Frank Ward Hustace, III, 2000

On a 1884 map of Honolulu Hawai'i Land Survey Division (Registered Map No. 1090) a sizable fishpond is located at the parcel (Cultural Surveys Hawaii, 2010).

Blaisdell Center: Past

The Ward Estate

- 1865: Curtis Perry (C.P.) and Victoria Ward wed
- 1870: The mauka area of the Ward estate – current site of the Neal S. Blaisdell Center – was purchased by the Wards
- 1875: Additional 77 acres to extend the property to the makai boundary was purchased by the Wards
- 1881: C.P. and Victoria Ward built their home, *Old Plantation,* later referred to as *Ku ʻu Home,* just south of Thomas Square

Six thousand coconut trees, kiawe for firewood, and forage grasses for their horses and cattle were planted. The fishpond and ʻauwai (connecting to the sea) were restored. A well was sunk to provide water to the home and irrigate the property by means of pumps "driven by windmills, there being an inexhaustible supply of water a few feet below the surface of the plains" (Pacific Commercial Advertiser, Sept 4, 1875).

Source: Frank Ward Hustace, III, 2000

“Old Plantation”

Pua wale mai nō ke aloha
Ka paia puīa i keʻala
I ka wai huʻihuʻi aniani
Koʻiawe ka huila wai
Aia i laila ka ʻiʻini
Ka ʻanoʻi a koʻu puʻuwai

Hui:

Old Plantation nani ʻoe
Home pumehana i ke aloha
I ka ʻolu o ka niu
I ka poli o ke onaona

Nahenahe ke ʻala o nā pua
I ka pe ʻia e ke kehau
Hoʻolaʻi nā manu i laila
Hoʻoipo i ke oho o ka niu
Luhe ʻehu ka palai i ka nuʻa
I ka ʻolu o ka Old Plantation

Often I love to think
Of a corner sweet and dear,
Of water cold as crystal
Drawn softly by the old wind-mill;
‘Tis there I love to ponder—
Where my heart yearns ever to be.

Chorus:

Old Plantation, beautiful art thou,
Home warmed by love,
Dwelling ‘neath the shades of the cocoanuts;
In the heart of fragrance.

Gently permeates the fragrance of flowers
Sent forth by the falling dew;
Happily the birds with their love notes
Make love to the plumes of the cocoanut trees;
Tenderly drop the silvery-leaved ferns on the terrace,
In the shades of the Old Plantation.

Words by Mary Jane Montano, Music by David Nape

Blaisdell Center: Past

Thomas Square

Located directly to the north of Old Plantation. Thomas Square is the site where Admiral Richard Dalton Thomas, a Local Representative of the British Commission (the government of the Provisional Cession), handed the islands back to King Kamehameha III on July 31, 1843. King Kamehameha III thereafter stated the now State motto, “Ua mau ke ea o ka ʻāina i ka pono (“The sovereignty of the land is perpetuated in righteousness”)”. On July 31st of every year, La Hoiʻohoʻi ʻEa (Restoration Day) is celebrated at Thomas Square. The park was added to the State and National Register of Historic Places in 1972.

Thomas Square
Source: Honolulu Museum of Art

Honolulu Museum of Art

Located to the north of Thomas Square along the corridor consisting of the Blaisdell Center and Thomas Square. The museum, formerly known as the Honolulu Academy of Arts founded in 1922 by Anna Rice Cooke, has one of the largest collections of Asian and Pan-Pacific art in the Unites States. Its collections have grown to more than 50,000 works of art. It was added to the State and National Register of Historic Places in 1972.

Honolulu Museum of Art
Source: hawaiimagazine.com

Blaisdell Center: Past

Urbanization began to envelop Old Plantation. In 1923 McKinley High School was constructed to the east of the property.

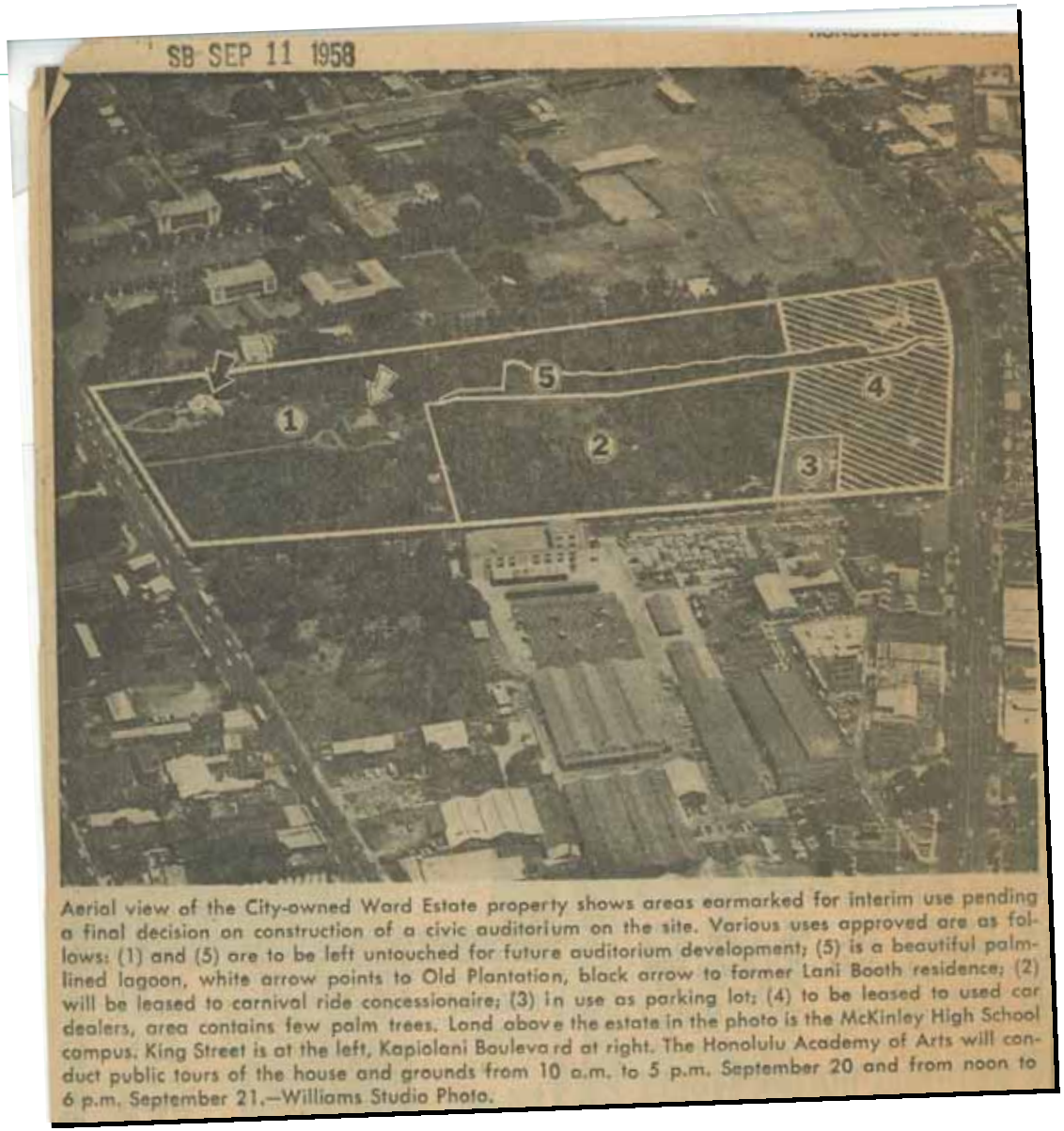
Victoria Ward Limited was founded in 1930, five years before the passing of Victoria Ward, to manage the estate among Ward's seven daughters. The company owned and managed 66 acres which was called Kukuluae'o and covered the makai lands purchased by Curtis Perry and Victoria Ward. With advancing age, the three unmarried Ward sisters quietly retired within Old Plantation and were rarely seen.

Future site of McKinley High School
Source: Frank Ward Hustace, III, 2000

Daughters of C.P. and Victoria Ward
Source: Frank Ward Hustace, III, 2000

Blaisdell Center: Past

The City and County of Honolulu, long interested in Old Plantation as a site for a concert hall and sports arena, purchased the property in 1957. Thousands of people toured the estate during the Honolulu Academy of Arts open house following the City's purchase. Soon thereafter, the City commenced construction for the Honolulu International Center, now known as the Neal S. Blaisdell Center.



Proposed site of Honolulu's new civic auditorium
Source: Honolulu Star Bulletin, 1958

Blaisdell Center: Past

A 1952 aerial photo shows the Ward Estate adjacent to McKinley High School.

A 1976 aerial photo shows the Blaisdell Center, with the arena, exhibition hall, and the concert hall. A parking garage along the Diamond Head side between McKinley High School was added later.

Headline News on the Proposed Municipal Facility (1959-1961)

Ward Estate Plans Will Preserve Beau

only for all too short a time.
RUTH WHITFORD TANFIELD

'OLD PLANTATION' — NEW LOOK

This picture was snapped just as the steeple atop the second floor of the Old Plantation caved in under the bulldozer's ramming.—Star-Bulletin Photo by Warren Roll.

Bulldozer Levels Honolulu Landmark--Old Plantation

PRO BASKETBALL

Honolulu Gets AFL Franchise

Sports Facilities Planned For Municipal Auditorium

The new War Memorial Municipal Auditorium will have fully-upholstered seats and room for wrestling, basketball, track and ice hockey, the Finance Committee was told yesterday.

103 Women Sign Petition Asking for Concert Hall

A petition containing the names of 103 women urging the construction of a concert hall has been received at City Hall.

Among the signatures was that of Mrs. George Barati, wife of the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra conductor.

The women urged "positive action toward the erection of a cultural hall on immense value to the community, as a place where we may enjoy theatrical productions, concerts — both jazz and symphonic, cultural programs by the various chambers of commerce and others too numerous to mention," said the petition.

"It could also be used to serve gatherings of up to 5,000 with a convention

Mayor Ready to Battle for Auditorium

Businessmen Question City's Ability To Support Huge Convention Hall

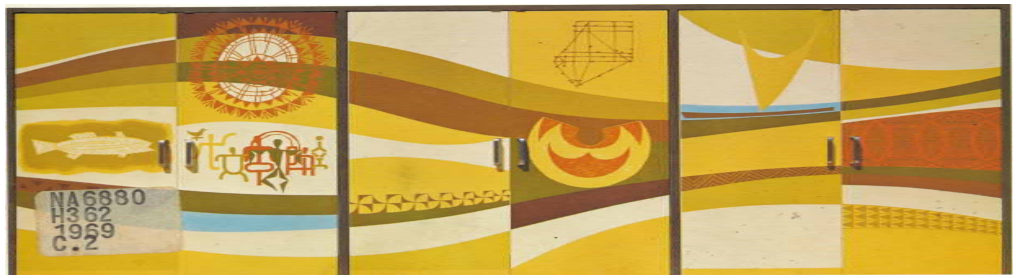
Blaisdell Center: Past

The City Council named the auditorium the Honolulu International Center or HIC in 1963. HIC was later renamed as the Neal S. Blaisdell Center after the mayor who oversaw construction.

In 1964, the HIC was completed at a cost of $14.4 million (1964 dollars) and dedicated as a living memorial to all of Hawai‘i’s war heroes at the opening ceremony.

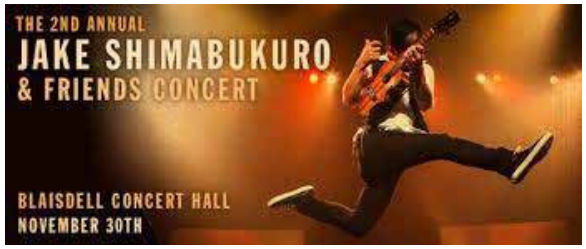
October 1963 - arena construction 80% complete

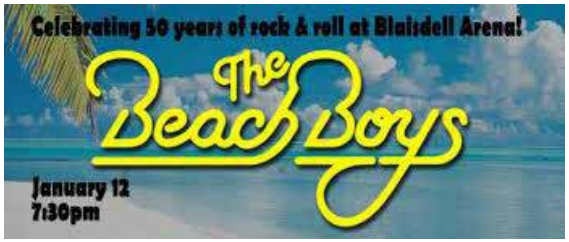
Dec. 1962, beginning construction of the $4.5M arena

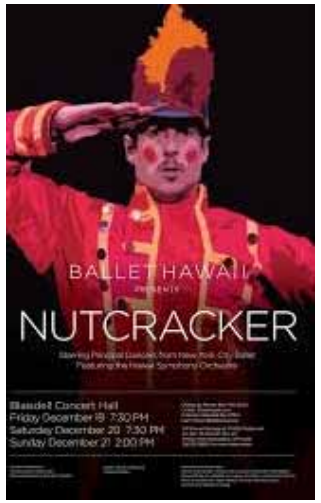


Original arena doors

Memorable Shows at Blaisdell Center

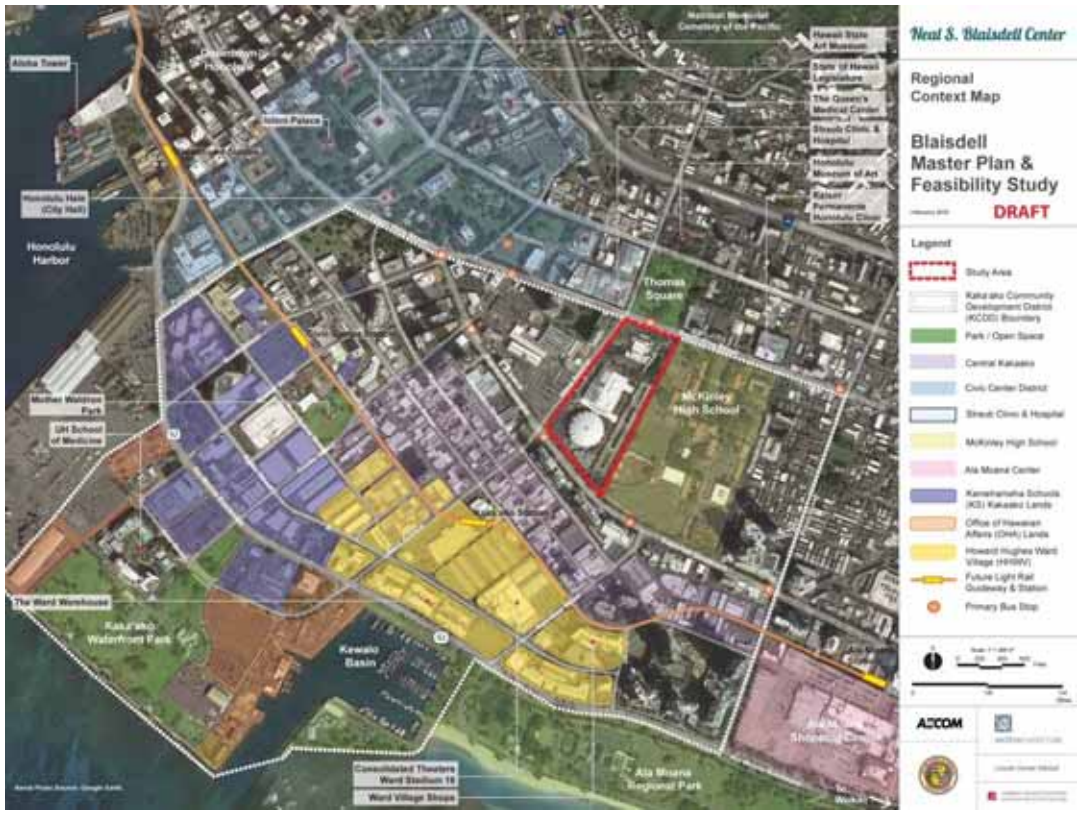






Blaisdell Center: Regional Context

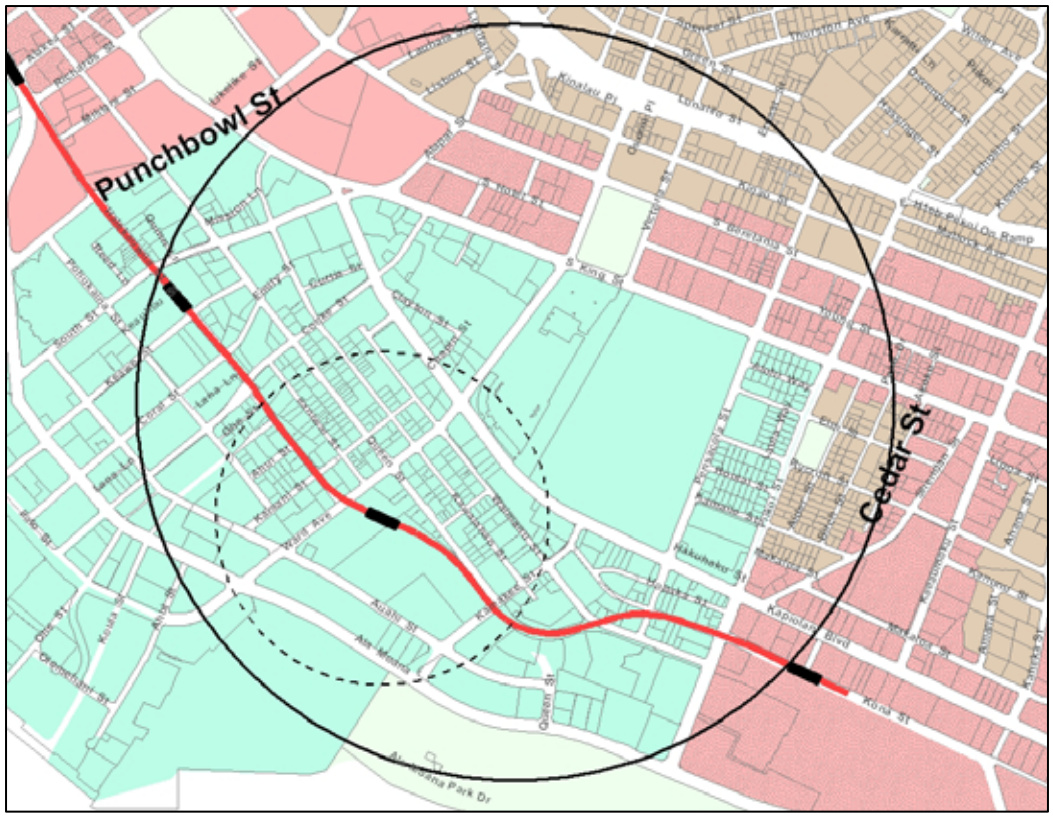
- Located in Kaka‘ako Mauka under the jurisdiction of the Hawai‘i Community Development Authority
- Centrally located between the Capital District / downtown Honolulu, Kaka‘ako, Makiki.
- Surrounded by some of Honolulu’s important cultural and educational institutions, including: McKinley High School, Honolulu Museum of Art, and Thomas Square. In recognition of the historic and aesthetic importance of this area, the Thomas Square/Honolulu Academy of Arts Special District was created.
- Recent urban renewal and redevelopment in the surrounding area, including high-rise mixed-use development in Kaka‘ako by major national and local landowners: Kamehameha Schools, Howard Hughes, and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.
- High-density transit-oriented development planned at four nearby rail stations, from Downtown to Ala Moana Center.



- Major renovation at Ala Moana Center.
- Protected bike lane (*King Street Cycle Track)* installed on King Street.
- Planned Complete Street implementation on Ward Avenue
- Thomas Square Master Plan and Ala Moana Regional Park Master Plan currently underway.

Blaisdell Center: Neighborhood Context

One square mile around Blaisdell Center



Dashed circle represents ¼-mile radius from the Kaka'ako rail station.

Colors represent zoning: aqua is HCDA jurisdiction; pink is business mixed-use (BMX-3); and brown is apartment medium density (A-2); white is preservation/park use.

- Population: 18,000/sq mi

  Increased 40% from 2000 to 2010
  Roughly the same as West Hollywood.
  NYC is 28,000/sq mi

- Assessed Property Value:

  Land: $5.6B
  Improvements: $4.4B
  I/L Ratio: 1.29 (O'ahu: 0.66)

- Jobs: 39,000

  6.1% of O'ahu total
  11,000 jobs are public jobs

Blaisdell Center: Existing Conditions

- Present day Blaisdell Center is on a 22-acre site located in the heart of Honolulu. The campus includes: the Arena, Exhibition Hall, Pikake Room, meeting rooms, Concert Hall, Box Office, Trades/Warehouse Building, parking structure, and parking lots.
- Over 800,000 visitors come to the Blaisdell Center every year.
- Roughly 450 building permits have been filed over time for physical changes to the campus.
- Constructed in 1994: Administration Offices, Galleria, Meeting Rooms, and Box Office.
- Renovated in 2014: Arena dressing rooms.
- Parking:
  - Important revenue source
  - Overflow parking at McKinley High School
  - Valet parking available for some events but sells out quickly
  - Long lines and wait times for events
- Water feature (ponds) surround the arena facility providing a security buffer and attraction for visitors.

Blaisdell Center: Arena

- Multi-purpose indoor arena
- Circular performance facility (190 feet diameter with unobstructed sightlines) largely used for concerts, sporting events, large meetings, conventions, consumer shows, graduations, family shows and other specialty events
- Seating: 8,000 for stage shows with seating in the round; 7,700 for courtside events

Blaisdell Center: Arena Competition

VENUE	CAPACITY (seats)
Aloha Stadium	50,000
Hawai‘i Convention Center	Tiered seating available in two theaters
Stan Sheriff Center	10,300

Aloha Stadium

Hawai‘i Convention Center

Stan Sheriff Center

Blaisdell Center: Arena Issues

- Limited wheelchair access (no upper level access)
- Insufficient family and women's restrooms
- More floor space and production infrastructure is needed (e.g., loading docks, staging, preparation rooms, etc.)
  - Insufficient loading area outside and capacity inside
  - Insufficient support rooms for catering service, wardrobe, TV production
  - Insufficient storage (concourse/public spaces used for storage)
  - Dressing rooms located near an outside trash compactor
- Water feature and concourse configuration restrict service points causing congestion and overlap between patrons and back of house
- Inadequate house sound system (requires long extension cords and minimally works as a PA system), house lighting, HID lights, rigging points, ceiling obstructs, etc.
- Arena is antiquated and difficult for many performances
  - Designed as a sports venue but used mostly for performances
  - Acoustics in the circular arena are particularly challenging (oval would be better)
- Power distribution
- Safety concerns
  - Railings at balcony stairs
  - Stairs to upper level and concourse are outside – slippery when raining
  - No fall protection
  - Ceiling obstructs rigging points
  - House lighting
- Parking
  - Insufficient parking capacity for patrons
  - Conflict between loading zone and parking lot
- Concessions:
  - Limited in diversity and quality, difficult to serve, and isolated around concourse
  - Outdoor concourse also problematic when it rains—concessions, novelties, sponsors, general circulation, and waiting area
  - Supplying food from kitchen in exhibition hall is difficult and intrudes on other shows
  - Concessions only on ground level
- Seating:
  - No vertical circulation from floor to upper fixed seating in arena
  - Retractable seating units are stored outside arena
  - Retractable seating requires manual labor to open
  - Seating in balcony need refurbishment
- Water Damage:
  - Roof leaks in a couple locations that are difficult to access
  - Downspouts and roof gutter system corroded
  - Water laterals corroded
- Maintenance issues:
  - Concrete walkways difficult to maintain
  - Doors require constant maintenance and are beyond their useful life
  - Difficult to maintain lighting/electrical systems (cannot fit a boom truck)
  - Wiring is approaching end of usable life
  - Few as built drawings exist
  - Lighting/dimmer system is outdated

Blaisdell Center: Concert Hall

- Capacity of 2,174 seats
- Home of the Honolulu Symphony, Hawai‘i Opera Theatre, and Ballet Hawai‘i
- Hosts Broadway and local productions
- Features: Live acoustics, large stage, large wings, large sliding off-loading doors, lanai areas, grand lawns

Blaisdell Center: Concert Hall Competition

VENUE	CAPACITY (seats)
1. Arts at Mark's	75
2. Atherton Studio	75
3. Hawai'i Pacific University-Kailua	99
4. Kumu Kahua Theatre	100
5. Mānoa Valley Theatre	165
6. Chaminade Theatre (Ching Conference Room)	275
7. Okinawan Center-Waipi'o	300
8. Palikū Theatre	300
9. Diamond Head Theatre	500
10. Kroc Center-Kapolei (Jack Lord Worship & Performing Arts Center)	500
11. Mamiya Theatre at St. Louis Campus	500
12. Kennedy Theatre	600
13. Leeward Community College Theatre	600
14. Castle High School (auditorium)	670
15. Kaimukī High School (auditorium)	675
16. Pearl City Performing Arts Theatre	700
17. McKinley High School (auditorium)	1000
18. Hawai'i Theatre	1400

Blaisdell Center: Concert Hall Issues

- Difficulty scheduling all user groups due to popularity of size
- Continental seating is awkward for access, can be difficult and inflexible for scaling the house
- Some of the roof will require refurbishment in the future
- Proscenium opening low for opera
- Lanai terrace invites skateboarders
- Dining options limited
- Safety issues
  - Lack of lighting on stairs and walkways in seating areas causes falls
  - No fall protection
  - Loading galleria
- Acoustics
  - Rain is audible in the auditorium during productions
  - Acoustics need to be deadened for amplified events; currently draperies are hung at the side walls but are labor intensive to install and remove
- Maintenance challenges:
  - Lighting in balcony
  - Maintenance and repair of A/C
  - Replacement for decorative glass in lobby walls is not available
- Inadequate infrastructure (e.g., storage, production repair and staging rooms, loading docks, rigging points, etc.).
  - Single loading entrance insufficient with loading dock being one door at grade level, not elevated
  - Sufficient lighting circuits in the front of house, not enough on stage
  - Lighting for lawn events needed
  - Needs front of the house rigging points
  - No elevator to balcony
  - No green room
  - No rehearsal hall and no “black box” (Chorus warms up in the loading area)
  - No VIP/reception/autograph meeting places (outside lawn currently used)
  - Limited concession spaces – outside spaces only
  - Lobby is not air conditioned. The audience chamber gets too cold, and the lobby gets too hot. Air conditioning controls are not useful.
- ADA issues
  - Accessible seating limited to ends of aisles
  - Temporary ramps used for wheelchairs; no wheel chair access to balcony, control positions, orchestra pit, platforms must be installed to accommodate disabled patrons.

Blaisdell Center: Exhibition Hall

- 65,000 ft^2 of exhibit space that can expand to 85,000 ft^2
- One of the main exhibition venues in Honolulu
- Hosts community trade shows, consumer shows, large parties and fundraising events
- Average of 45 commercial exhibit shows/expos per year
- Easy loading/unloading
- Galleria: Entrance from Ward Avenue, 2nd floor lobby, 12 individual rooms with flexible design, small theater, meeting rooms
- New $300K sound system installed recently
- 30’ x 30’ column grid, every other column has connection for electric distribution box

Blaisdell Center: Exhibition Hall Competition

VENUE	CAPACITY
Convention Center	304,249 ft^2
Hilton Hawaiian Village	150,312 ft^2
Sheraton Waikīkī	46,000 ft^2
Other Hotels	Varies

Hawaii Convention Center

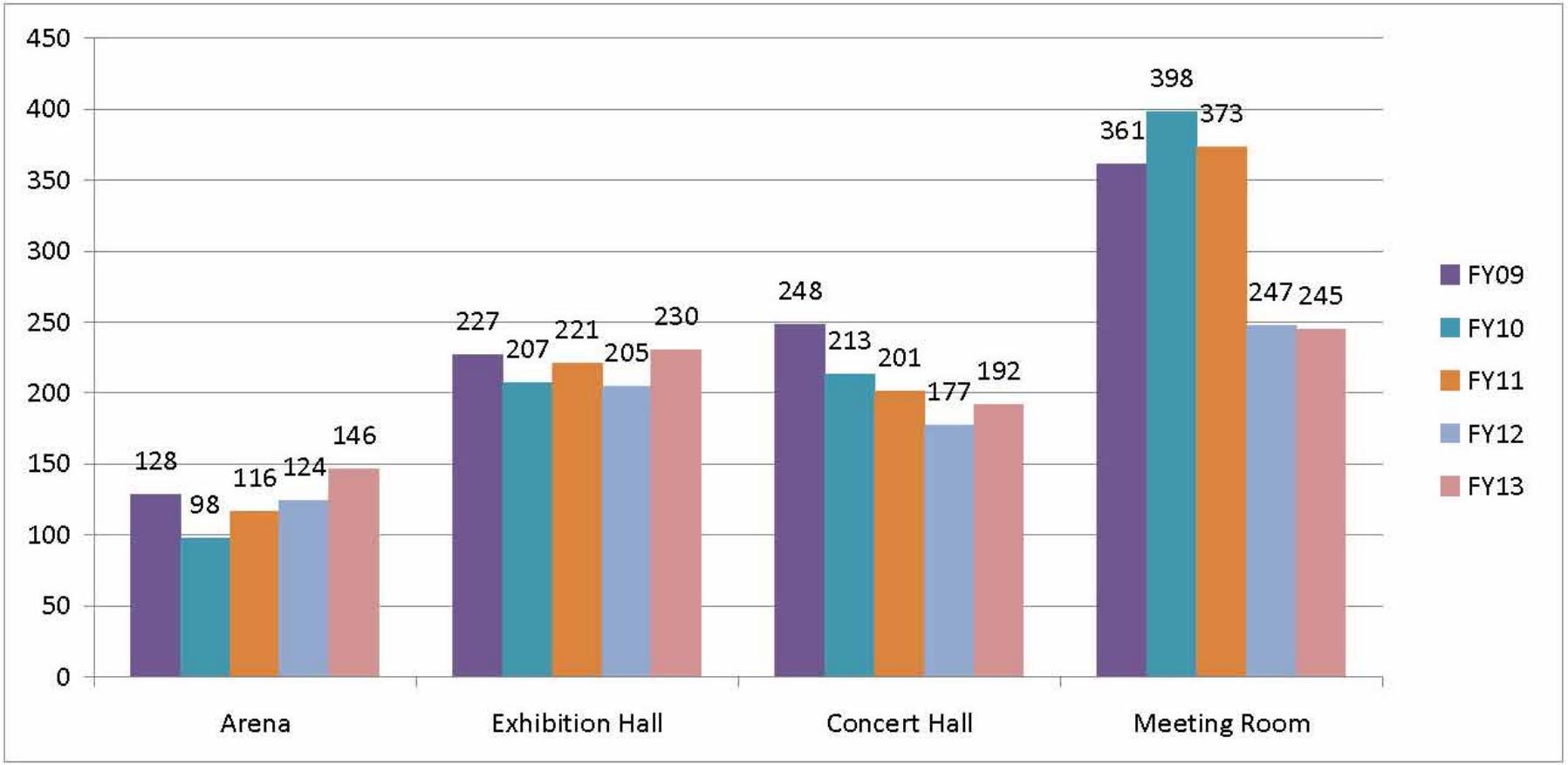
Blaisdell Center: Exhibition Hall Issues

- Spill over from other convention locations
- Shared concourse with arena
- Columns:
  - Lack of HVAC supply between column bays, return at end of buildings
  - Columns every 30’ – need pillar-free space
- Hawai‘i Suites HVAC difficult to maintain
- Aging mobile walls need to be updated
- Ceiling height varies with pyramid roof shape and is too short
- Better acoustics with less reverberation
- Better lighting control
- Better F&B space – reception area (currently only one side)
  - Too small for prepare for and serve guests
- Storage space is limited (needed for banquets & Building Services)
- Need business center or lobby area
- Need ability to subdivide space to host more than one event

Blaisdell Center: Parking

- Managed by Diamond Parking through a concession contract
- Major source of revenue
- 1,521 total parking stalls
  - 1,198 parking stalls in the structure
  - 323 on-grade stalls

Blaisdell Center: Facility Usage in Rental Days



Blaisdell Center Existing Conditions: Summary of Challenges

Overall Blaisdell Center Challenges

- Financial:
  - Expenses are greater than revenues generated
- Operational:
  - Outdated operations model
  - Outdated technology
  - Certain facilities are underutilized
  - Security measures outdated
- Physical:
  - Aging facilities
  - Lack of digital infrastructure, support and service areas
- Global Location
  - Isolation in the middle of the Pacific makes it challenging to attract major performances
- Local Location
  - Traffic congestion & lack of parking for big or concurrent events

Building Services Challenges

- Laws / Codes / Compliance / Regulatory Issues
- Unique Facilities
- Aging Facilities / Systems / Equipment
- Complexity of Systems – Specialized Technical Knowledge

Blaisdell Center Existing Conditions: Summary of Opportunities

Overall Blaisdell Center Opportunities

- Physical space:
  - Activate space outside of ticketed areas
  - More concession—dining options, amenities
  - Improved amenities for the venue users: rehearsal rooms, appropriate acoustics, better storage & support area solutions
  - Enhance access and parking
  - Enhance resources (ponds, paths, art)
- Programming:
  - Attract more performances—big and small, local and national
  - Residential tenants
  - Neighborhood integration
  - Integrating development with ongoing activities—TOD, Complete Streets, mixed use, high-density developments, surrounding condos, restaurants, and shopping, etc.
  - Tie in to educational and cultural institutions (McKinley HS, Thomas Square, Museum of Art)
  - Integrate hotel rental for clients

Blaisdell Center Existing Conditions: Summary of Opportunities

Building Services Opportunities

- Update outdated furnishing, fixtures and equipment and facilities (e.g., acoustics, loading area, freight movement within the building, etc.)
- Design more flexible spaces to accommodate varying size facilities
- Enhance visitor arrival experience:
  - Welcoming
  - ADA compliant
  - Connected paths
  - Add wayfinding within the Blaisdell Center campus and outside of the facilities (i.e., on Kapiolani Blvd. and King St.)
  - Create more efficient logistics—back of house operations
  - Reduce risk and liability from failing systems and facilities
  - Increase energy efficiencies and reduce costs through technologies