

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

on HR (80-14-9829)

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrow items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name IRWIN MEMORIAL PARK

other names/site number IRWIN PARK TMK: 2-1-13: 7

2. Location

street & number BISHOP ST./ALA MOANA BLVD./FORT ST./NIMITZ HWY. not for publication

city or town HONOLULU vicinity PIER 8, HONOLULU HARBOR

state HAWAII code HI county HONOLULU code 003 zip code 96813

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Post-it Fax Note 7671 # of pages 25 To ANN Y. Co./Dept. H.P. Phone # 1-92-830 Fax # 626-0517

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action entered in the National Register See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National

NPS NRHP Registration Form

Property Name  
County and State

(Page #)

Register

other (explain):

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>      </u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>      </u>	structures
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	objects
	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: LANDSCAPE  
RECREATION AND CULTURE

Sub: PARK  
OUTDOOR RECREATION  
MONUMENT

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: LANDSCAPE  
RECREATION AND CULTURE

Sub: PARK  
OUTDOOR RECREATION  
MONUMENT  
(PARKING LOT)

(SDUNPS NRHP Registration Form

(Property Name)

(County and State)

(Page #)

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**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

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**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

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**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

SEE ATTACHED - CONTINUATION SHEETS 1-2

SDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Property Name)

(County and State)

(Page #)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

**A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

**B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

**C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

**D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

**A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

**B** removed from its original location.

**C** a birthplace or a grave.

**D** a cemetery.

**E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

**F** a commemorative property.

**G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

MARITIME HISTORY

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

SOCIAL HISTORY

**Period of Significance**

1930-1940

**Significant Dates**

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

WILLIAM G. IRWIN

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

ROBERT O. THOMPSON

HARBOR COMMISSION, TERRITORY OF HAWAII

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

(Property Name)

(County and State)

(Page #)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS)**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey  
# \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record  
# \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency (Archives)
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**BERNICE PAUANI BISHOP MUSEUM  
HAWAII STATE LIBRARY, MAIN BRANCH  
HAWAII STATE ARCHIVES  
HAWAII STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
HARBORS DIVISION**

USD/NPS NRHP Registration Form

(Property Name)

(County and State)

(Page #)

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property

UTM References International 1909 spheroid

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	_____	_____	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

SEE ATTACHED CONTINUATION SHEET 1 AND MAPS 2 & 3

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

SEE ATTACHED CONTINUATION SHEET 1 AND MAPS 2 & 3

11. Form Prepared By

name/title MICHELLE SPALDING MATSON  
organization SCENIC HAWAII INC. HISTORIC HAWAII FOUNDATION date OCTOBER 18, 1999  
street & number 1521 PUNAHOU ST.#202 860 IWILEI RD., SUITE 690 TELEPHONE (808) 946-6601  
city or town HONOLULU, HI 96822 HONOLULU, HI 96817 TELEPHONE (808) 523-2900

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name HAWAII STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, HARBORS DIVISION  
street & number 79 SOUTH NIMITZ HWY. telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town HONOLULU state HI zip code 96813

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

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William G. Irwin Memorial Park  
Honolulu County, HI

### Description

Irwin Memorial Park is a two-acre park, encompassing a total of 95,768 square feet. Constructed by the Harbor Commission of the Territory of Hawaii in the early 1930's, the park continues in historic prominence as the significant public open space between the active Honolulu waterfront and the downtown buildings of the Capital District, forming a wide esplanade with large shade trees as the landscaped open-space entrance to Aloha Tower (P-6, P-7, P-8). The park is bounded by Bishop Street, Fort Street, Nimitz Highway and the terminus of Ala Moana Boulevard, which serves to access Irwin Memorial Park and Aloha Tower.

Irwin Memorial Park was set aside specifically for dedicated public park purposes under Governor's Executive Order, and the Hawaii State Statutes mandate that "Irwin Memorial Park shall be retained as a public park" (9.1). As such, this dedicated park open space also serves to protect and preserve important view planes to other historic resources in the surrounding area, including Aloha Tower, the Dillingham Transportation Building, and the historic features of the Walker Park triangle at the foot of Fort Street mall.

The most significant design feature of the park is the grove of monkeypod trees evenly spaced in a semi-linear growth pattern to provide a generous shade canopy. Also significant as part of the original landscape design are five clusters of coconut palm trees, two clusters at each corner of the park on Ala Moana and three clusters aligned closer to the middle of the park. (P-5 and M-3). In addition, three banyan trees are located along the Ala Moana side of the park from Bishop Street to Fort Street, and one banyan tree stands adjacent to a fountain and reflecting pool (P-5, M-3, M-4).

Following Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the U.S. Army took over Irwin Park as a strategic location for military parking. Although the park was returned to the Territory in 1946, an expanded parking area remains on the park grounds between the trees (9.2). In 1952, the construction of Nimitz Highway incorporated a segment of Halekauwila Street fronting Irwin Memorial Park for westbound traffic lanes, and also a portion of the park's post-war parking area to accommodate eastbound traffic lanes (M-3). However, the design integrity of the park was maintained by retaining the growth pattern of the trees within the interior of the park.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

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William G. Irwin Memorial Park  
Honolulu County, HI

### Description (continued)

Today, the commemorative area of the park is located along the length of Fort Street between Ala Moana and Nimitz. The memorial to William G. Irwin is placed in front of a fountain and reflecting pond surrounded by walkways in front of Aloha Tower. A cluster of coconut palms is also located on the Fort Street and Nimitz corner of the park. In addition to the trees originally planted, perimeter landscaping with wide grass areas remain on the Bishop Street and Ala Moana sides of the park.

Although certain functional intrusions have occurred over time, the park continues to retain its integrity as a significant open space central to the Honolulu Harbor waterfront. Irwin Memorial Park retains integrity of a) location, as the central esplanade along the waterfront created to beautify Honolulu Harbor during the era of ocean travel; b) setting, as a significant open space providing a gathering place and view planes to the waterfront and important surrounding buildings of the era; c) design, with the historic configuration of shade trees and palm trees planned by a noted landscape architect within this wide esplanade central to the waterfront; d) feeling, as a landscaped open space with shade tree canopies fronting Aloha Tower; and e) association, as a commemorative park and monument to an important person directly involved with Hawaii's history of commerce on the Honolulu waterfront.

The Aloha Tower Environmental Impact Statement of 1990 (EIS) states that Irwin Memorial Park is "the only major vegetation" on the Aloha Tower project site along the waterfront. Further, in the EIS the State pledges a commitment to renovate Aloha Tower and restore Irwin Park by relocating the parking elsewhere so "the entire park will be beautified..." and that the historic trees "will be saved to provide a shady canopy for park users... and cultural events for the public's enjoyment" (9.3 and M-5). Thus, Irwin Park is destined to again take its "rightful place as a focal point of Honolulu" within the waterfront (9.4).

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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William G. Irwin Memorial Park  
Honolulu County, HI

### Statement of Significance

Irwin Memorial Park is historically significant because of its pivotal role in the beautification of the Honolulu waterfront as a world-renown passenger cruise ship destination. The Honolulu Waterfront Development Project, introduced by Governor Lucius E. Pinkham and the Board of Harbor Commissioners in 1916, was declared to be the "most important project ever handled in Honolulu Harbor" (9.4). The project began in 1916 with the construction of new docks; it continued in 1924 with the construction of Aloha Tower as a gateway landmark heralding ship arrivals; and it was completed in 1934 with the creation of Irwin Memorial Park, an inviting public park open space shaded by the canopies of monkeypod trees. The development of Irwin Memorial Park was described as "an important step in the purpose to make Honolulu's waterfront a beautiful district" (9.5, P-5, P-6).

The Aloha Tower Environmental Impact Statement dated December, 1990 identifies Honolulu Harbor's importance in the historical development of Honolulu, and lists both Aloha Tower and Irwin Park as historic resources. Aloha Tower was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976 and the State Register of Historic Places in 1981 (9.3 and 9.6).

Irwin Memorial Park has provided an important aesthetic dimension to Honolulu's downtown waterfront since its creation as a valuable tree-shaded scenic open space and public gathering place at the entrance to Aloha Tower. Passive recreational uses of Irwin Memorial Park have included lei-making, entertainment and picnics. Today, groups of schoolchildren visiting the waterfront, as well as adults employed in the highrises, are frequently encountered with picnic lunches within the landscaped areas. Thus, the park continues to provide a sociable venue for the downtown area between today's recreational waterfront and the corporate sector, as it did for the waterfront between the passenger ships and the Hawaiian lei-makers, hula dancers and Royal Hawaiian Band welcoming them in the heyday of ocean travel. In recognition of their historic, social and economic value, these gracious traditions are now being revived on the waterfront, just as the once-beautiful park landscaping is directed to be restored around the park's historic grove of monkeypod trees (9.3).

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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William G. Irwin Memorial Park  
Honolulu County, HI

### Statement of Significance (continued):

Just as its historic companion site, Aloha Tower, Irwin Memorial Park merits inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. As an enduring portion of Honolulu's first waterfront development project, this site retains valuable open space in the urban Capital District, and preserves important view planes to two of downtown Honolulu's significant historic buildings, Aloha Tower and the Dillingham Transportation Building. Irwin Memorial Park continues to bear a memorial erected in honor of one of Honolulu's great business leaders and philanthropists, William G. Irwin. In addition, this historic open space continues to proudly feature the monkeypod tree grove as it was originally planned within the esplanade and public gathering place in front of Aloha Tower - the dramatic presence of which is integral to the distinctive feeling of Irwin Memorial Park.

Irwin Memorial Park meets **National Register Criterion A**, contributions to broader patterns of history and culture, in the areas of local maritime history, recreation and entertainment as the landscaped park that first welcomed visiting dignitaries and other passengers arriving in Honolulu by ocean liner before the advent of air travel. As a wide waterfront esplanade and enduring tree-shaded open space, this site is the location where ceremonies, public gatherings, the gracious tradition of lei-giving, picnics and entertainment took place following the opening of Aloha Tower.

In addition, Irwin Memorial Park meets **National Register Criterion B**, the significant individual for which the property is illustrative, as it is a commemorative park and memorial associated with William G. Irwin, an important business leader and philanthropist who largely contributed to the growth and welfare of the Hawaiian Islands between 1874 and 1910. As one of the great leaders in commerce, William G. Irwin conducted his company's shipping activity on the very esplanade on which the park was created that bears his name.

Further, Irwin Memorial Park meets **National Register Criterion C**, community planning and landscape architecture, as a vital component in the development and beautification of the waterfront of Honolulu Harbor as a world-wide passenger cruise ship destination. The park was planned by Robert O. Thompson, a leading Hawaii landscape architect of the time.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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William G. Irwin Memorial Park  
Honolulu County, HI

### Statement of Significance (continued):

#### Historical Background and Significance

#### Role in Community Planning and Development (Criterion C):

The Honolulu waterfront area has been a "focal point of the harbor" from early Polynesian times, when Kamehameha I built a heiau in the vicinity of the present highway (9.4). Following the evolution of Honolulu as "a calling place for infrequent vessels" to its recognition as "the port of call of some of the world's most palatial ocean liners" in the early 1900's, it became apparent that Honolulu was "destined to become one of the really important seaports of the world" (9.7).

In 1916, the Territorial governor, Lucius E. Pinkham, and the Territorial Board of Harbor Commissioners presented a Honolulu waterfront development plan to provide a "permanent waterfront terminal capable of caring for large trans-Pacific vessels and equal to facilities in the largest mainland cities" (9.4). Following construction of the new docks, the construction of Aloha Tower began in 1924 and was completed in 1926. Officials of the Territory of Hawaii delayed the opening of Aloha Tower until debris from the demolition of old customs buildings could be cleared from the square fronting Aloha Tower and Pier 9 to make way for a great celebration.

Following the new landmark's grand opening, where the Royal Hawaiian Band played and there was dancing on the new piers, officials sought means to expand the small square in front of Aloha Tower to provide a centerpiece park as "an attractive entry to Honolulu from the new docks nearby" (9.4, 9.8, 9.9). With the advent of the harbor waterfront's new development, it was hoped that Honolulu "might stand out as distinctly different from most seaport cities with their usually ugly approaches and distasteful port surroundings" as "a port so attractive in its bordering landscape effects as to leave an indelibly favorable impression of Honolulu in the minds of visitors, and its prompt identification as the most beautiful port under the Stars and Stripes" (9.7). In addition to Aloha Tower, the Dillingham Transportation Building had just opened, and the Davies, Castle & Cooke, Alexander & Baldwin, Bishop Trust and Bishop

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William G. Irwin Memorial Park  
Honolulu County, HI

### Statement of Significance (continued):

Bank buildings had all been constructed within the previous few years. What was deemed necessary was a wide, tropical park to beautify the waterfront and complete the new "pathway of which Honolulu was proud" (9.9). Thus evolved the role of Irwin Memorial Park as a vital component of the development of the Honolulu waterfront.

Developing the park was not a simple task, because the land that was planned for the park included the plant inspection division of the Board of Agriculture and Forestry, some customs buildings, and abutting property that the Honolulu Construction & Draying Company had purchased from the Damon estate in 1926 for the construction of a new warehouse. In addition, this area was bisected by Kekuaaoa Street, a short street between Allen Street, now the terminus of Ala Moana Boulevard, and an original segment of Halekauwila Street, which is now the segment of Nimitz Highway between Bishop Street and Fort Street. Moreover, "several unsuccessful attempts (had) been made" to encourage the territorial legislature to purchase the lots owned by Honolulu Construction & Draying Company "so that the esplanade landscape plan may be carried out" (9.7. M-2).

Walter F. Dillingham was instrumental in persuading Helene Irwin Fagan, the daughter of the late Honolulu businessman and philanthropist William G. Irwin, to consider purchasing Honolulu Construction & Draying Company's valuable parcel and contributing it to complete the waterfront esplanade park. She agreed to provide the needed parcel as a gift to the Territory in memory of her father with the condition that the parcel and-contiguous lands would be used specifically as a park for beautification of the waterfront. At the time, the gift was called "a valuable piece of ground on the waterfront which is to be converted into a beautiful park as a memorial... a magnificent gift... one of the richest gifts the Territory has ever received" (9.10. M-2).

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William G. Irwin Memorial Park  
Honolulu County, HI

### Statement of Significance (continued):

The parcel was purchased from Honolulu Construction & Draying Company by Mrs. Fagan on September 3, 1930 (9.11). Two months later, on November 7, she deeded the parcel to the Territory to be combined with adjacent property purchased by the Territory for the purpose of the public park. The terms and conditions of the indenture donating the property stipulated that the Territory would convert the land into a public park within three years, that the park would be known forever as Irwin Memorial Park, that it would be suitably maintained and cared for as a public park in perpetuity, and that an appropriate memorial to William G. Irwin would be erected and perpetually maintained on the site (9.12). In a supplemental agreement dated June 22, 1939, Mrs. Fagan additionally agreed to allow the Territory of Hawaii to establish parking fees on the portion of the park then set aside for vehicular parking (9.13).

On March 13, 1931, the consolidated lands comprising the planned park were set aside by Governor's Executive Order No. 472 signed by Governor Lawrence M. Judd. The Executive Order proclaims that the "public land be and the same is hereby set aside for public purposes, to-wit, for park purposes, which shall henceforth be known as 'Irwin Memorial Park', to be under the control and management of the Board of Harbor Commissioners of the Territory of Hawaii." In addition, the Executive Order was subject to the reservations and conditions of the deed of 1930 (9.14).

On September 5, 1930, the Honolulu Advertiser reported:

"An important step in the purpose to make Honolulu's waterfront a beautiful district was taken with Mrs. Helene Irwin Fagan with her donation of a valuable tract of land lying mauka of the Ala Moana directly across the thoroughfare from Pier 8. Mrs. Fagan's gift to the Territory makes it possible to develop a wide park area clear from Fort Street to Bishop Street... Governor Judd is responsible for the statement that... the whole will be improved in such a way to make it comparable with or more typically beautiful than parks at the entrance of any of the cities of the world.

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William G. Irwin Memorial Park  
Honolulu County, HI

### Statement of Significance (continued):

"Honolulu is entered through this gateway. Mrs. Fagan, by this gift has... inaugurated a movement which must prove of inestimable benefit to this city. Her generous action will inspire people with the idea of making the entire port area a garden of loveliness. The reputation of being the most beautiful chain of islands in the world, already accredited to Hawaii, will be still more thoroughly established when the ships coming into the harbor arrive and are welcomed in a park of such perfection and dimensions as will surely grow from Mrs Fagan's thoughtfulness and generosity" (S.S. P.5).

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William G. Irwin Memorial Park  
Honolulu County, HI

### Statement of Significance (continued):

#### Historic Landscape (Criterion C):

Prior to her return to San Francisco on September 5, 1930, Mrs. Fagan met with Territorial officials to finalize arrangements for the new park. Robert O. Thompson, a leading landscape architect of the time, was to "proceed immediately with laying out plans for the new park which fits in a general esplanade scheme for Honolulu's waterfront." The plans were "prepared in cooperation with Governor Judd and collaboration with Mrs. Fagan on the coast" (9.10).

Irwin Memorial park is an example of the early work of Mr. Thompson, who was born in 1895, studied in Europe and Harvard University, and began his Honolulu practice in 1928. He was associated with many phases of land development and beautification, and was noted for landscape designs that included the Hawaii's Governors' residence, Washington Place; the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl crater; Tripler Hospital, and many local estates. Typical to his work was the integration of stately shade trees and sweeping lawns. He was consultant to the Parks Boards in Honolulu and Hilo. In 1952, he was elected Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects for his contributions in promoting the profession (9.15).

Construction of the park began in 1931 with the closing of Kekuanaoa Street and expansion of the open space to include all lands between Bishop and ~~Front Streets up to Halekauwila Street~~. A grove of monkeypod trees was planted to provide large shade canopies as an inviting entrance to Aloha Tower that was destined to beckon residents and visitors, together with park users and lei makers on Boat Days in celebration with the Royal Hawaiian Band. Clusters of palm trees and shrubbery framing lawn areas completed beautification of the park landscape (P-5 and P-6). The park open space also provided a valuable ceremonial venue for welcoming visiting dignitaries, and soon became a public gathering place benefitting the people of Honolulu as well as visitors arriving and departing on the ocean liners.

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William G. Irwin Memorial Park  
Honolulu County, HI

### Statement of Significance (continued):

#### Association with a Significant Person (Criterion B):

The association of this waterfront park open space with an important person in Honolulu's maritime commerce history was requested by his daughter, Helene Irwin Fagan, prior to contributing a valuable portion of the acreage to the Territory. Today, Irwin Memorial Park is the only remaining property in Hawaii directly associated with William G. Irwin.

The Honolulu Advertiser offered this description in announcing the contribution on September 5, 1930:

"The park is to be called William G. Irwin Park in honor of Mrs. Fagan's father, who was one of Hawaii's most worthy and influential pioneers... Mrs. Fagan, by this gift has... paid tribute to the memory of her father in a beautiful way... A living memorial such as this is most fitting for a man who had so much to do with the best life of Hawaii for so many years. Mrs. Fagan's father was identified with the sugar and banking interests here to a large extent and while those interests do not bear his name the spirit of activity which animated him and which he bequeathed to them is still dominant. A memorial park bearing his name which has been made certain by the action of his daughter will symbolize his character better far than any monument of stone or brass that might be erected in his honor" (9.5, P-1).

Indeed, William "Billy" G. Irwin was a man of sound character, business spirit, and respect for the Hawaiian people. He was a close friend of King Kalakaua, and largely contributed to the economic growth and welfare of the Hawaiian Islands between 1874 and 1910. He was described to have "always had the best interests of the country at heart" and to have taken "an active part in all matters conducive to the general welfare" (9.16). Upon the news of his death at seventy-one years of age in 1914, the majority of the leading Honolulu business houses closed for the day. Archival accountings describe him at the time as one of the "few remaining links between the Honolulu of the monarchy days", and "a famous figure in the world of business" with interests centered on banking, transportation and extensive Hawaiian plantation holdings (9.17).

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William G. Irwin Memorial Park  
Honolulu County, HI

### Statement of Significance (continued):

William G. Irwin was brought to Honolulu from England at six years of age. He graduated from Oahu (Punahou) College, and grew to become one of the most important men in the Hawaiian Islands. He was known as "the right man in the right place", a trustworthy and self-contained "Honolulu businessman who was all business", a "strong but fair open competitor", and "a man of extraordinary managerial ability" (9.16 and 9.17). William G. Irwin & Co., a large mercantile, shipping, insurance and plantation agency, had offices on Fort Street and later merged with Brewer and Company in 1910. In addition, in 1880 he co-founded a bank with Claus Spreckels that later became the Bank of Honolulu, Ltd., Bishop First National Bank and what is now First Hawaiian Bank (9.9).

In 1882, William G. Irwin requested and received permission from the Hawaii Minister of the Interior to occupy "space for coal storage of steamers of the Oceanic Steamship Company... on the Esplanade" (9.18, M-1, P-4). In 1883, the Oceanic Line's round-trip steamer service commenced between San Francisco and Honolulu, and confirmation was received from the Hawaii Minister of the Interior that "a suitable shed will be erected on the wharf in front of the lot leased to William G. Irwin & Co. for warehouse purposes" where new steamer warehouses were to be built for the Oceanic Steamship Company and William G. Irwin & Co., Ltd. (9.18, 9.19, P-2). The same year, William G. Irwin sought and was granted permission from the Hawaii Minister of the Interior for the first "grading and running track on the wharf of Honolulu Harbor in front of the Oceanic Building" located on Fort Street, across from what is now Irwin Park. (9.19 and P-4). In 1884, he received the contract for transporting U.S. Mails between the kingdom of Hawaii and the United States (9.20). Thus it was that William G. Irwin actively conducted his maritime commerce business, and made improvements to sustain such commerce, on the harbor Esplanade on which the esplanade park was later placed that was to bear his name. (M-1, P-2, P-3, P-5, P-6, P-7).

In 1885, in recognition of what he had accomplished for the country, William G. Irwin was decorated as Knight Commander of the Royal Order of Kalakaua, and in 1886, as Knight Commander of the Royal Order of Kapiolani. Although he "held aloof from political connections" and preferred to keep out of politics to "devote all his attention to the conduct of his business", he consented to enter the Privy Council of State in 1887, and served as advisor to both King Kalakaua and Queen Liliuokalani (9.9, 9.16, 9.21). In 1888, as a preservationist

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William G. Irwin Memorial Park  
Honolulu County, HI

### Statement of Significance (continued):

together with King Kalakaua, William G. Irwin, as facilitator, raised money through the leasing of resort lots surrounding Kapiolani Park to purchase the title to the slopes and crater of Diamond Head from the William Charles Lunalilo estate in order to preserve these lands known to be sacred, and protect them from encroaching cattle farming (9.22).

William G. Irwin served on the board of trustees for Queen's Hospital for three consecutive terms from 1889 through 1901. In addition, he was made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor of France in 1901 in recognition of his services as Hawaii's representative to the Paris Exposition of 1900 (9.17, 9.23, 9.24).

Following the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893 and the annexation of Hawaii as a U.S. Territory in 1898, William G. Irwin divided his business activities between Honolulu and San Francisco. By 1901, William G. Irwin & Co. was the shipping agent at Honolulu Harbor for seven Oceanic Line steamships owned by J.D. Spreckels & Co. of San Francisco. The state-of-the-art steamships, known as "greyhounds of the Pacific fulfilling new century requirements", carried the royal mail for Great Britain and passengers in comfort between Honolulu, San Francisco, Tahiti and Australia (9.25). By 1905, William G. Irwin had residences in both San Francisco and Honolulu, and was subsequently elected president of Mercantile Trust in San Francisco, which was to later become Wells Fargo Bank. In Hawaii, his Maunawili Ranch, Lanai interests, and eight plantations from Hilo, Hawaii to Kilauea, Kauai were overseen by trusted representatives (9.17, and 9.26).

In 1909, William G. Irwin sold his interest comprising the island of Lanai for \$325,000 (9.27). A year later, this man of "many liberal charities... too well known to need mention", donated several house lots at the east end of Kapiolani Park to be incorporated into the Kapiolani Park Trust as park land in perpetuity (9.16). In the year preceding his death in 1914, he consolidated his Hawaii properties that included the Irwin Villa at Waikiki (now the site of the War Memorial and Natatorium and Waikiki Aquarium in Kapiolani Park), the Hawaiian Opera House (where he had taken his daughter, nieces and nephews to see "The Nutcracker Suite" each Christmas), and the Irwin Block on Nuuanu Street south of King Street, and incorporated these and other holdings under the William G. Irwin Estate Company. His nephew, Edward Irwin Spalding, was named treasurer and local representative of the corporation (9.17, 9.28).

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### **Statement of Significance (continued):**

In 1926, sugar corporation and other Hawaiian industry shares of the William G. Irwin estate were valued at \$10 million (9.29). Today, the William G. Irwin Charity Foundation of San Francisco is listed as having assets of \$95 million. With his great-grandson presiding, this worthy charitable foundation provides grants to non-profit organizations in Hawaii and elsewhere for publicly beneficial and humanitarian purposes. Today also, the world-renown promontory of Diamond Head's crater and slopes, a maritime beacon from ancient times, remain in a preserved state as valuable protected open space within the dense urban area of Honolulu.

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William G. Irwin Memorial Park  
Honolulu County, HI

### Statement of Significance (continued):

#### Recreation and Entertainment (Criterion A):

Subsequent to the arrival of the Matson ship SS Malolo a few months after the grand opening of Aloha Tower in 1926, the SS Lurline arrived every eleven days following the opening of the Royal Hawaiian Hotel in 1927. The Aloha Tower Statement of Significance for the National Register of Historic Places states, "Aloha Tower is a reminder to all people of the hospitable nature of the fiftieth State, and it is a symbol of the day when travel was more than going from one point to another, but an adventure in grace and comfort" (9.6).

Irwin Memorial Park is no less, having provided valuable open space for the gracious traditions of lei-making and giving, public gatherings and picnics, ceremonies and entertainment with the presence of the Royal Hawaiian Band and hula halau on Boat Days. Preservation of Irwin Memorial Park as a prominent urban open space with enduring shade trees, and as an inviting commemorative park fronting Aloha Tower on the waterfront (P-5 P-6, P-7), signals preservation of certain aspects of both the maritime history and cultural heritage of Hawaii.

The park extended "Hawaii's traditional welcome of hospitality and friendliness to all incoming passengers on the many modern steamships arriving from every port of the seven seas." Ocean liners and freighters of national and international steamship lines made Honolulu Harbor a port of call. Visiting dignitaries included royalty, presidents, and consuls. Rockefellers, Fords, Firestones, and movie stars arrived. "Boat Days" became regular events that also included the festive arrivals and departures of the SS Haleakala, an inter-island steamship (9.4).

From the 1930's to the 1960's, the "sweetest-smelling place in Honolulu is Irwin Park on Boat Day". Giving flower leis was the "visible evidence" of the preservation of the aloha spirit, and Irwin Park was known as the best place to learn about this "happy Hawaiian custom" and "the only place to meet the 'old time kine' lei sellers". Even as skyscrapers rose in the 1950's and air travel became commonplace, Irwin Park was a peaceful haven of shaded open space where people would come and go, and sit on the grass under the tree canopies to talk to the "lei ladies" (9.30 and P-9).

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Honolulu County, HI

### Statement of Significance (continued):

Lei sellers would tell of their days collecting flowers in the country, stringing the leis late into the night, and packing the leis in a basket early the next morning to travel to Irwin Park and get there in time for the seven-o'clock tug boat. Then they would wait in Irwin Park for the ship to come in. The lei sellers would stay at Irwin Park all day, rapidly stringing left-over flowers with long needles, playing cards, or just sitting and "talking story." Every tourist arriving by ship would wear a lei, "the loveliest welcome in the world." Sometimes leis would sell at the high price of a dollar. Some days, two and three ships would arrive at a time. But the goal of the "lei ladies" was not to make a big profit. They came from all over the island to see their friends and have a "big day" - and for some, Boat Day was their only social contact (P.30).

Thus, Irwin Park has held a special place in Honolulu waterfront history. It was the place where old friends met while sharing the friendly Hawaiian custom of making flower leis, and new friends were made through the giving of leis and gathering in celebration of Boat Days on the waterfront (P.10).

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