

Iolani Bandstand (Palace Bandstand)
King and Richards Streets
Honolulu
Honolulu County
Hawaii

HABS No. HI-2

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HI,
2-HONLU,
9-

PHOTOGRAPHS

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

WRITTEN ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

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2-HONLU,
9-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

IOLANI BANDSTAND (PALACE BANDSTAND)

HABS No. HI-2

Location: King and Richards Streets (in grounds of Iolani Palace)
Owner: State of Hawaii
Occupant: Used as bandstand by State of Hawaii
Use: Upper area - bandstand for weekly concerts
Lower area - storage for grounds maintenance equipment

ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Iolani Bandstand was erected in front of the Iolani Palace in 1883 as a pavilion for coronation of King Kalakaua. It was later removed to its present site where it has been used since that time as a bandstand.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

What is currently termed the "Bandstand" on the Iolani Palace grounds was built in 1883 as a coronation stand for King Kalakaua. This monarch had recently returned from a trip around the world, and determined that Hawaii's King should also be properly crowned (he had been elected King in 1874), and so on February 12, 1883, the ceremony took place. As there was no other ranking personage to perform the duty, Kalakaua placed the crown on his own head.

For this event there had been built, in front of the main steps to the newly finished Iolani Palace, an amphitheater for the guests, within which was constructed the octagonal coronation pavilion. This structure was some fifty feet from the stairway to the Palace and was connected to it by a platform. The pavilion was approximately twenty-five feet in diameter, and each of the eight sides bore the name of

one of the respective Kings of Hawaii, from Kamehameha I to Kalakaua. The ceiling was decorated with fresco work and the Hawaiian coat-of-arms was painted in the center on a white net-work. On the outside of the pavilion, each of the eight uprights supporting the domed roof was ornamented with shields representing Russia, Netherlands, United States, Hawaii, Germany, Austria, Italy and Holland. (There is no information currently available on why these particular countries were so honored - some are doubly honored by being again represented by plaques on the amphitheatre.) The design of the pavilion and amphitheatre was entrusted to Messrs. Buchman and Rupprecht, two artists who had recently arrived in the Islands. The whole thing was considered the "finest specimen of this kind of work that has ever been produced in Honolulu."

Four days after the coronation, the Advertiser carried the story that the pavilion was to be utilized in the Palace grounds for a bandstand. Another report of the continuing coronation festivities, dated February 22, noted that the pavilion had "been removed to the south eastern corner of Iolani Palace" and the whole space from the Palace verandah to the amphitheatre covered with canvas to provide the "most spacious and elegant ball-room ever seen in Honolulu." Unhappily, as it had done at the coronation, it began to rain; the canvas covering was not waterproof, and the ball was removed to the Throne Room of the Palace.

On February 27, there was a coronation luau, to which were invited a multitude of people. On this occasion the pavilion (presumably still located at the southeastern corner of the Palace itself) was used to provide special seating for Her Majesty the Queen (Kapiolani), other members of the Royal family and Ministers.

Finally, on April 20, 1883, the PCA noted that "the Pavilion in which His Majesty was crowned has been moved to the west side of the Palace, and now stands as a permanent ornament to the grounds." There are no reports of how it was moved, or if it had been specially constructed to be moved.

Three years later, in November 1886, Kalakaua threw another large celebration in honor of his fiftieth birthday, and the Jubilee activities included the usual luau, native dancing, and a grand ball. The Royal Hawaiian Band played from the pavilion. The luau occurred the 23rd on the lawn in front of the Palace (in another "pavilion" set up for the purpose). By December 2, the grounds had been denuded of their decorations and the wood and other materials were offered for sale.

For the next several years, there is no reference to the "Bandstand" as such. Apparently it was maintained out of general funds for building maintenance, and it is likely that the Royal Hawaiian Band continued to use it for concerts in the Palace grounds. In 1898, \$316.16 was spent to repair the "Executive Building Bandstand"; in 1902, another \$34.00 was expended on the "Berger Band Stand." On May 9, 1906, a contract was made with Lucas Bros. to "Reconstruct Band Stand, Capitol Grounds" for \$1,100. This work, unspecified, was completed some time during the summer. THA reports the bandstand on the Executive grounds as practically rebuilt, "its first real repairs since erection for Kalakaua's coronation."

The Report of the Superintendent of Public Works for June 30, 1914, remarked that the bandstand had been badly damaged by "white ants." Nothing was done until 1919, by which time termites and borers had so badly eaten into it that funds were forthcoming from the legislature to construct the bandstand from footings to the plate of reinforced concrete. At this time a basement was added to provide storage and bathroom facilities for the yardmen. The only thing remaining from the original coronation pavilion was the domed roof, carefully repaired and replaced on the new set of supporting pillars, platform and superstructure. Part of the work of 1919 was to repaint the repaired cupola, and to varnish the coats-of-arms of the foreign nations. When these were replaced is not clear; those now gracing the structure are not the same size, shape, number or placement as those shown in the coronation photos.

New electric lights were installed throughout and the bandstand as reconstructed was reported very pleasing in appearance and practically a permanent structure that should require few, if any, repairs for many years to come. In 1922, however, the termites had eaten the basement doors and partitions. These were replaced, and the ceiling and flag shields were again repainted.

There are no records of major repairs since 1920 and it is assumed that minor repairs, as in 1922, have been made as required. The structure is currently used as a bandstand.

NOTES ON THE SHIELDS

1883: Coronation photos show eight large areas in the domed roof

(false roof dormers), each containing one large shield, and a single shield is shown midway on each of the eight supporting columns.

1886: Jubilee photos show nothing in the false dormers, and nothing atop or on the eight columns.

1880's: A photo of Kapiolani near the bandstand shows no shields.

1900: The December issue of *Paradis of the Pacific* shows the bandstand with four small shields in each of the eight false dormers. There are also single shields at the top of each column.

1910: A Baker photo shows four shields in each false dormer, and a single shield atop each column.

1966: There are four shields in each false dormer, and one shield along the plate between the columns. Of the forty shields, many are duplicates, and some are apparently pure fancy, bearing no resemblance to any known national coat-of-arms.

Prepared by
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Sept. 1966

Edited: May 1972

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The octagonal structure was built as coronation pavilion in 1883 and was later moved to a corner of the grounds of the Iolani Palace.

EXTERIOR

Foundations - In 1920, the basement and columns to the roof were reconstructed in reinforced concrete. Floor and walls are of concrete.

First Floor Level - The eight Tuscan columns and the balustrade are cast in concrete.

Roof - The entablature, dormers, roof construction and lantern are constructed of wood.

The roofing is sheet-metal.

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DATE: 6/8/67