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Lemmon, Freeth, & Haines
Robert Wenkam, Courtesy of ahl.
INTRODUCTION

From the humble beginnings in a small converted garage in Waikīkī, Architects Hawaiʻi, Ltd. (ahl) has grown to become one of the largest architecture firms in Hawaiʻi. Early partner and renowned Hawaiʻi architect, Frank Haines, FAIA, said that “learning about the past doesn’t mean living in the past.” Before his death in 2017, Haines had witnessed and overseen more than seven decades of architectural growth in Hawaiʻi. Lemmon, Freeth, Haines, and Jones’ work developed alongside Hawaiʻi’s colossal transformation from an isolated agricultural-based U.S. territory to the nation’s fiftieth state. The firm’s career paralleled Hawaiʻi’s developing prominence as a center of American military power and, with the rise of jet travel, its growing allure as an international destination. On a larger scale, the firm’s work fits within the framework of original and inventive thinking in modern architecture as it developed in tropical and subtropical regions.

Early on, the firm built a business model based on a diversified work portfolio, while focusing on site specific design that took into careful consideration each building’s specific requirements. As with most of Hawaiʻi’s architecture in the early to mid-twentieth century, a building’s relationship with its environment was integral to the design of the structure. “Every building built has something to do with what it’s for and also it had to fit into the environment,” Haines relates. “One very important part of our environment is the fact that we can live indoors and outdoors, so every single building, from a private home to an office building, had to speak and should speak to that.” The early partner had also declared that “nothing is worse than having things forgotten about” with regard to the architectural history of Honolulu. This historic context study seeks to retain some of that history by reviewing the early (mid-century) work of Lemmon, Freeth, Haines, and Jones, during the period of 1948-1962. Many of the firm’s initial structures, now fifty or more years old, are important examples of the legacy of twentieth-century building in the islands. Including buildings such as the Waikīkī-Kapahulu Library (1950), Occidental Life Insurance Building (1951), University of Hawaiʻi’s Sinclair Library (1951), Kūhiō Park Terrace (1958), and Castle Memorial Hospital (1961). The firm also acquired multiple awards during this period, including the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Honor Award for Dole Playground (1962 – Belt, Lemmon, & Lo).

The years 1948-1962 are representative of the firm’s early work that defined and contributed to the architectural character of Hawaiʻi’s modern architecture movement. Additionally, these years established the firm’s varied project typology, which proved to be one of its greatest strengths. From residential and commercial to public, military, educational, and healthcare, these projects served as benchmarks for future buildings and relationships that endure today. In 1948, Lemmon designed the Kenrock Buildings, which became the location where the firm conceived many of Hawaiʻi’s most significant modern buildings, including the Hawaiʻi State Capitol. In 1962, the firm moved from the Kenrock Buildings to the fifteenth floor of the First Hawaiian Bank Building at King and Bishop Streets, which was also designed by the firm. The move from their low-rise, two-story offices to the 18-story tower in downtown Honolulu signified the end of humble beginnings. The move to the First Hawaiian Bank Building, together with the commission for the Hawaiʻi State Capitol, proclaimed the beginning of another era for the firm, one in which they greatly expanded their capabilities and disciplines to allow them to lead some of the largest building projects throughout Hawaiʻi and the Pacific.

HAWAI‘I AT THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY

Prior to the economic and building boom of mid-twentieth century Hawai‘i, World War II had essentially halted all non-military development in the Islands. Most of the territorial architects had either joined the war effort or moved to the United States mainland for work. The combined effects of the Great Depression and World War II, resulted in nearly two decades of architectural dormancy in the 1930s and ‘40s. However, World War II brought Hawai‘i to the forefront of the national picture, and it began to change dramatically in numerous other ways. Most significantly for architecture, the military build-up during World War II brought new advances in construction and engineering, as well as an influx of talented architects and engineers. The sugar industry remained the powerhouse of the economy, but the post-war years saw upheavals in the labor dynamic. The International Longshoremen’s & Warehousemen’s Union (ILWU) organized sugar and pineapple plantation labor and shipping workers beginning in 1944. The union’s success in a 1946 strike against the sugar industry loosened the monopolistic economic grip long held by conservative Republicans directly related to Hawai‘i’s “Big Five” and Dillingham companies.

By 1949, unions became a major force with significant victories improving wages and working conditions. The unions soon put their organizational clout to work in the political arena, challenging the dominant Republican system supported by the plantation owners. During the 1940s, mechanization reduced the number of plantation workers by nearly half, while competition from developing nations decreased the demand for Hawai‘i’s top two agricultural industries – sugar and pineapples. Also at this time, a new middle class of workers and professionals emerged, and the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i saw their first significant advantages in the territorial elections of 1954. These gains ultimately lead to party leader, John A. Burns, being elected as governor following statehood in 1959. By 1962, Democrats controlled both the governorship and the state legislature for the first time in Hawai‘i.

Throughout the 1950s, Hawai‘i’s notoriety as a premier vacation destination for U.S. mainland tourists continued to increase exponentially as the result of several factors. Servicemen returning home began to spread the word about Hawai‘i’s pristine beaches, lush tropical greenery, and benevolent climate. Additionally, the tourist industry established more comforts and amenities as travel time was significantly reduced by jet planes landing in Honolulu following statehood. On August 21, 1959, Hawai‘i was admitted as the fiftieth state, and increases in military and civilian spending followed. These changes called for the creation of a new architectural image for Hawai‘i and sparked a building boom in all areas of construction – residential, commercial, institutional, and infrastructure.

In contrast to the annexation of Hawai‘i in 1898, by the 1950s most Hawaiians were in favor of being admitted as a state. Hawai‘i underwent immediate and radical change, largely in the form of unprecedented economic growth. The islands went from being one of the world’s most isolated land masses to only four-and-a-half hours away from the West Coast of the U.S. Three days after Hawai‘i was admitted to the Union, Pan American became the first airline to provide jet service to the newest state. This convenience changed the face of

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3 Ibid.
Hawaiian tourism entirely. The Los Angeles Times reported that, “The islands, which had been the playground of well-heeled visitors, most of whom traveled by ship, began welcoming middle-class travelers.” During the decade, tourist numbers grew rapidly, the annual visitor census increasing from 42,000 in 1948 to 100,000 in 1956 and then swelling to a quarter-million in 1959.5 The tourism industry outpaced agriculture and Hawaiʻi’s mid-century building boom began. TIME Magazine reported in 1966 that “$350 million worth of hotel construction has gone up in the past five years.” The boom also created new jobs that alleviated unemployment created by the automation of plantations.

Tourism was not Hawaiʻi’s only area of growth during the years following statehood. Hawaiʻi’s population expanded from 422,301 in 1940 to 630,401 in 1960, with 80 percent of the state’s residents living on O‘ahu.6 There was also a rapid expansion in light industry and diversification in agriculture. All of this activity lead to the corresponding boom in development. The new Hawaiʻi State Legislature allocated state and federal money for development of Hawaiʻi’s infrastructure, including new airports on neighbor islands, highways, various harbor dredging projects, and new buildings at the University of Hawaiʻi. In the 1960s, major U.S. mainland interests broke into the islands’ development business, pumping unprecedented amounts of money into the economy of the new state. These giant developers included Hilton Hotels International, Henry J. Kaiser, and Weyerhaeuser. The land sales and development of the 1960s also involved the “Big Five” companies, which owned hundreds of thousands of acres of agricultural land. Amfac (formerly American Factors) developed West Maui as the state’s first destination resort and planned community, opening a new chapter in tourism and development of the neighbor islands.7

Land prices in Honolulu were at a premium, with both the cost of single-family homes and apartment buildings increasing throughout the 1960s.8 The development of both low-rise apartment buildings and high-rise condominiums proliferated along the southern coast of the O‘ahu from Diamond Head to Pearl City, while downtown office buildings kept increasing in quantity and height. Although many of the buildings constructed in Hawai‘i at the mid-century were built in the International Style that was popular on the U.S. mainland, a growing group of local architects endeavored to strike a balance between modernism and regionalism in Hawai‘i. Eventually the introduction of air-condition would affect the “regional” approach to buildings, but for the period of time corresponding with this study, architects in Hawai‘i embraced both modern forms and a sense of place through their use of local materials and flowing indoor-outdoor relationships. Most mid-century architects practicing in Hawai‘i incorporated distinctive regional details within a modern context.

6 Ibid.
By the mid-twentieth century, Hawaiʻi’s urban landscape was positioned to embrace a new architectural identity. The territorial style of architecture associated with colonialism had fallen out of favor and modernism emerged as an influential style. Prior to World War II, both Art Deco and Moderne were well received in Hawaiʻi, as Waikīkī became a center of modernism with its sleek theaters and shops along Kalākaua Avenue. In addition, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) funded parks and playgrounds designed in the Art Deco style. In the post-war years, Honolulu became a focus of a progressive design movement due to the building boom of the 1950s and ’60s. The movement developed as the result of profound social, cultural, and technological changes. The mid-century architecture of Lemmon, Freeth, Haines, and Jones played a key role in moving Hawaiʻi away from the Territorial style and toward the adaptation of modern architecture in Hawaiʻi.

During this time, architect Vladimir Ossipoff came to the forefront of the post-war period with a design staff that at one time included Ed Sullam, Tom Wells, Sid Snyder, and John Tatom. George Wimberly, who came to Hawaiʻi in 1940 to work for Pacific Naval Airbases Contractors, opened a partnership in 1946 with Howard Cook, whom he had met at Pearl Harbor during the war.¹ Wimberly eventually headed one of the largest hospitality and leisure oriented architectural firms in the world, Wimberly, Allison, Tong, & Goo (WATG). In addition, a number of Hawaiʻi-born architects and engineers started offices during the 1950s, including Clifford Young, Takashi Anbe, Shizuo Oka, Robert Katsuyoshi, Don Chapman, Ed Aotani, Alfred Yee, and Howard Wong. They joined Ray Akagi, Bill Merrill, George Hogan, Kenji Onodera, and Ernie Hara, all of whom had worked within the modern movement in Hawaiʻi.

George “Pete” Wimberly and Roy Kelley were among the earliest modern architects to specialize in hospitality design in Honolulu. Frank Haines said of Wimberly & Cook, “they were doing fantastic work all over the world in the 1950s. Wimberly had the reputation for being a resort architect, before anyone else was doing it. We were never able to compete with them in hospitality until much later.” As a result, Frank Haines and associate Alex Weinstein strategized to diversify their firm’s portfolio. Haines noted that due to the fluctuating nature of hospitality work, their early planning helped the firm to keep work flowing.² During the same time, Edwin Bauer had designed iconic mid-century hotels such as Breakers Hotel (1952), Hawaiiana Hotel (1955), Kaiser’s Hawaiian Village (1955), and White Sands Hotel (1958/60). Vladimir Ossipoff designed a wide range of mid-century buildings in Hawaiʻi, including the University of Hawaiʻi’s Bachman Hall (1949), Liberty Bank (1952), Kaʻiulani Shops (1955), Outrigger Club (1963), and the IBM Building (1962).³ During a “talk-story” event at Docomomo Hawaiʻi, Haines said that “Val Ossipoff was a superb architect. One of the things that helped was his background. He was born in Russia and grew up in Japan before coming to Hawaiʻi. Influences from both these cultures allowed him to do fabulous design work from private residences to the IBM Building, which is a superb building.” Other notable architects of the period were Alfred Preis who designed the First Methodist Church (1954), the Honolulu Zoo Entry (1962), and the USS Arizona Memorial (1962), while Law & Wilson conceived the Holy Nativity Church (1954), and the Waikīkī Shell (1956).⁴

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⁴ Ibid.
Hawai‘i’s unique environment and cultural influences, along with the high cost of importing materials, lead local architects to forego glass and steel in favor of wood, concrete, and stone. Concrete was used both structurally and decoratively, with many modern architects using textured and cast concrete to express regional influences. "Lava rock, sandstone, and coral veneers grounded buildings to the land, and a variety of contrasting elements differentiated the façade, providing a high level of visual delectation." Hospitality, commercial, civic, and religious buildings all maintained a strong regional character in general. Architects also experimented with concrete breeze block, patterned or staggered concrete masonry units (CMU), and new architectural products such as “Shadowal” decorative concrete block. Many of Hawai‘i’s new International Style buildings of the 1950s and ’60s incorporated these distinctive "local" features, which also included ceramic art tiles and murals in a variety of mediums. The Boysen Paint Building designed by Cyril Lemmon in 1949, along with both the Kenrock Buildings (1949-1960) and Occidental Life Insurance Building (1951) all incorporate Arizona sandstone into their facades. The Waikīkī-Kapahulu Library (1950) was the first building in Honolulu to use Wai‘anae sandstone in its façade. The award winning building also features cast-stone panels depicting Hawaiian outrigger canoes and wave patterns. Sinclair Library at the University of Hawai‘i, designed by Cyril Lemmon in 1951, also utilized the Wai‘anae sandstone at its entrance and incorporates many locally-influenced details such as green-stained concrete floors and koa wood accents.

High-profile professional and popular publications in Europe and North America began to feature houses and other buildings by Hawai‘i architects. The Hawai‘i Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) released several publications during the 1950s and ’60s that helped develop and publicize Hawai‘i’s modern architecture. Two AIA publications were released asserting the advantages of a regionally specific design. The first publication, a pamphlet issued in conjunction with an exhibition of Hawaiian Residential Architecture held at Bishop Museum in 1954, called for the integration of environment and home. The show and booklet featured twelve post-war residential projects by local architects (all under the age of fifty) that illustrated this concept. Included were houses by Fisk, Ossipoff, Preis, Seckel, Lemmon, Freeth, and Haines, Johnson and Perkins, and Wimberly and Cook. In all of the examples the living spaces were integrated with the outdoors in inspiring, yet practical ways. The second AIA publication, A Guide to Architecture in Honolulu, was published in 1957. It presented sixty-five projects of all types organized geographically. The guide illustrates how buildings from this period were designed to integrate with the local landscape, climate, and lifestyle.

Lastly, the Hawai‘i architectural achievements of the 1960s were celebrated in an AIA pictorial publication, A Decade of Design; the exhibition of the same name was organized by the Hawai‘i Chapter of AIA with the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts, a new government-funded department that Alfred Preis was instrumental in founding. "A Decade of Design affirmed Hawai‘i’s modern architecture as the vanguard expression of the young democratic state, and featured an array of building types." The Hawai‘i State Capitol, designed by John Carl Warnecke and Belt, Lemmon, & Lo, is the culmination of the modern movement at the end of the Hawai‘i’s progressive mid-century era. Never before had architecture of such large scale or advanced aesthetic and cultural significance been built in the Hawaiian Islands.

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Kenrock Building No. 1 (ca. 1960)
Lemmon, Freeth, & Haines
Robert Wenkam, Courtesy of ahl.
As early as January 1948, Paradise of the Pacific referred to Kapi‘olani Boulevard as Honolulu’s "Miracle Mile," because of its similarities to the highly successful two-mile stretch of Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles, for which the name was originally coined during the late 1920s and early 1930s. Although Kapi‘olani Boulevard was completed in 1931, it was not until the conclusion of World War II, when many of the wetlands bordering the road between Atkinson Drive and Sheridan Street were filled and curbs and sidewalks installed, that Kapi‘olani Boulevard truly developed as a commercial corridor. Prior to completion, the only access to Waikīkī was via Ala Moana Boulevard. The new, ultramodern post-war buildings that were built along Kapi‘olani Boulevard contributed significantly to its distinction as a glamorous commercial corridor. Modern retail and commercial buildings like the Kenrock Buildings and the Boysen Paint Company with their clean lines and appealing features, such as convenient parking and eye-catching graphic signage, catered to both driving patrons and pedestrian traffic.

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, architects Vladimir Ossipoff, Alfred Preis, Wimberly & Cook, Lemmon & Freeth, and Johnson & Perkins, designed almost a dozen modern style buildings along Kapi‘olani Boulevard. However, with the exception of Ossipoff’s Hawaiian Life Building (1951) and Lemmon, Freeth, & Haines’ Boysen Paint Store (1949) and Kenrock Building (1949-1960), not many of these modern buildings remain. These extant buildings are joined by a handful of low-rise, mid-century buildings that are scattered and intermixed with more recent high-rise and commercial structures. The once cohesive mid-century corridor is now fragmented along the two-mile stretch of Kapi‘olani Boulevard between King Street and Kalākaua Avenue. Most of these post-World War II low-rise commercial or office buildings have concrete masonry (CMU) construction with architectural features that include flat roofs, cantilevered concrete canopies, simple cubic forms, and projecting vertical elements. Exterior walls were often smooth concrete, painted concrete block, or clad with veneers such as lava rock, sandstone or thin slabs of Arizona sandstone. A number of these buildings, although still recognizable as mid-century modern in style, have lost their integrity due to extensive alterations. The Kapi‘olani corridor remained a destination shopping and business area through the 1950s, until it was surpassed by the new "miracle mile", a section of Kalākaua Avenue in Waikīkī.

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FIRM HISTORY
(LEMMON, FREETH, HAINES, & JONES)

Architects Hawaii, Ltd. (ahl) began in 1946 when Cyril Lemmon opened his Honolulu office in a converted garage in the rear of his house in Waikīkī. It was a favorable time to open the business, following the lull in private construction during World War II. The firm was established with Lemmon as the principal architect and his wife, Bobbie Lemmon, as secretary and bookkeeper. Due to a lack of services during this period, it was months before a telephone could be installed. According to Frank Haines, “Cy had cut openings into the garage for windows and there was no glass, just screens. So the drawings would curl up with the humidity.” Upon opening, the firm’s first project was the overall planning and design of Coconut Island (Moku o Loʻe) in Kaneohe Bay. That same year, a group of five Los Angeles businessmen, including Edwin W. Pauley, purchased the island from the estate of Chris Holmes II with the intention of converting the small island into the exclusive “Coconut Island Club International.” The group of wealthy businessmen hired U.S. mainland architects Paul Williams and A. Quincy Jones, along with Cyril Lemmon as the local architect, to develop the island into a membership-only resort. The design, which was never completely realized, included a community of cottages, tennis courts, a yacht club, and other recreational facilities. Plans also incorporated the remodeling of Holmes’ former mansion and military barracks that were extant on the island from World War II. By 1947, the young firm’s next project was the Comstock Apartments, a four-story building of 24-units. Then in 1948, came the three-story Delgado Apartment Building along Ala Wai Boulevard in Waikīkī.


Delgado Apartments
Source: Honolulu Star-Bulletin Saturday, July 24, 1948
Cyril "Cy" Lemmon

Born in Rochester, Kent, England on October 27, 1901, Lemmon grew up in Canada and began his architectural career in California working for Gordon Kaufman in Los Angeles. He came to Hawai‘i to work with architect C.W. Dickey on a six-month contract in 1928 during a leave of absence from Kaufman's office. He returned to Honolulu in 1930 to work with Louis Davis on residential and entertainment projects until the effects of the Great Depression reached Hawai‘i. Due to the rapid decline in construction projects, Lemmon decided to travel back to Europe to paint for six months in Paris. Frank Haines said of Lemmon, “he was a great artist,” becoming a prolific painter after his retirement in 1969. Lemmon completed his architecture examinations at the Royal Institute of Architects in 1931, just after his return from Paris. After teaching for several years at the University of Liverpool - School of Architecture, he worked as an architect in India for ten years. During World War II, he was a British Lieutenant Colonel in the Royal Engineers in charge of camouflage and eventually designed temporary buildings for the military. Following the war, Lemmon returned to Hawai‘i and founded the firm in 1946. When Lemmon first came to Hawai‘i in 1928, he brought his mother “Ma Lemmon” with him. When he left the Islands during the World War II, his mother stayed in Honolulu and purchased various small lots around Waikīkī, at a time when most people were apprehensive about investing in Hawai‘i. One of these properties became the location of Lemmon’s office and residence at 225 Saratoga Road.

Lemmon’s first commercial building commission was the Kapi’olani Furniture and Appliance Building at the corner of Kapi’olani Boulevard and Ke‘eauumoku Street. As work increased, he worked nearly round-the-clock to get the drawings out. In January of 1948, Lemmon persuaded friend Douglas Freeth to leave his job with the Federal Housing Association (FHA) to join the little-known firm. Lemmon and Freeth had worked together as draftsmen in the office of C.W. Dickey in the late 1920s. Due to his extensive experience with working drawings at Dickey’s office, Freeth was well qualified to manage all the drawings and specifications. Frank Haines, with a newly acquired Master of Architecture degree from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), was recruited by Lemmon to join the firm in November 1948. That year the firm consisted of the following staff members: Cyril Lemmon, architect (design, promotion, & administration), Douglas Freeth, associate (working drawings, specifications, & construction supervision); Frank Haines, associate (draftsman); Peggie Haines (rendering); Bobbie Lemmon (secretary & bookkeeping). Frank Haines said in an interview, “It was just a three-person (architect) office, Mrs. Lemmon was there and she did the answering of the telephones and typed the specifications. Then my wife Peggie was an artist that did the renderings. She did some of them at home.” They became Lemmon & Freeth Architects, Ltd. in 1951, and then Lemmon, Freeth, & Haines Architects, Ltd. in 1953 after Haines received his architecture license. The new firm stayed at the Waikiki location for about a year before moving to the Kenrock Building No. 1, shortly after its completion in 1949. Their first commercial office started in a small space on the first floor and eventually took over all three future Kenrock Buildings by the time they were designing the Hawai’i State Capitol Building with John Carl Warnecke’s team in the early 1960s.


DOUGLAS FREETH

Born on January 29, 1906 in San Francisco, Freeth was a graduate of St. Mary’s College and first visited Hawaii in 1921. He returned as a resident in 1925, becoming the draftsman for C.W. Dickey soon after. He was a past president and director of the Hawai’i chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). Freeth was from a local O’ahu family, and his wife Evelyn was originally from Hālawa Valley on the island of Moloka’i. Haines said of Freeth, “Doug was the detail person, he was the one that managed all the working drawings and wrote the specs.” Haines also said that Freeth understood better than anyone how buildings were constructed.

Offices of Lemmon & Freeth (ca. 1950)
Kenrock Building No. 1
Robert Wenkam, courtesy of ahl.

Douglas Freeth
FRANK HAINES

Born on April 7, 1921 in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and raised in Stanford, Connecticut, Haines studied architecture at Princeton University before receiving his Master of Architecture from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.) in 1948. He became interested in architecture when he would accompany his friend’s father, who was an architect, into New York City to visit his office and admire the buildings. Haines recalls his fascination with a set of drawings for the Empire State Building, which inevitably determined his course. The friend’s father mentored Haines in architecture throughout his high school years. Between Princeton and M.I.T, he served as a Naval Reserve Lieutenant, gunnery officer and executive officer on a destroyer escort in the South Pacific during World War II. After the war, Haines was a draftsman and designer at several mainland firms before coming to Hawai‘i to join Lemmon and Freeth. He met his future wife upon joining the firm, where she was working as a rendering artist. He reflected in an interview with Leslie Wilcox during an episode of Long Story Short, that at the time he joined Lemmon and Freeth, modern architecture was not well received in many parts of the United States. He said that many modern architects survived and ultimately flourished during this period because they were willing to relocate or build outside of areas where modern architecture wasn’t widely accepted. “He was really one of the strong founders of modern architecture in Hawai‘i,” said college friend and former Architects Hawaii, Ltd. principal Alex Weinstein. “He had a tremendous impact,” said Joe Farrell, also a former principal of the firm. Farrell also noted that “Frank stood for good design.” Although Haines can be credited with a long list of design projects, he predominately focused on managing large education and healthcare projects such as Wai‘anae High School, Campbell High School, Kalani High School, Castle Memorial Hospital, and later the Kaiser medical facilities. Haines took the administration reigns and grew the company into a power as president from 1968-1986. He served as chairman from 1998-2009 and remained a board member until his death. “He really did set up a business model that worked and lasted,” added Glenn Mason, a veteran architect with Mason Architects, Inc. Haines taught at the University of Hawai‘i School of Architecture from 1963-1991.

BOYSEN PAINTS BUILDING (1949)

In 1949, the firm built its first major commercial building on Kapiʻolani Boulevard. The building’s tall pylon, finished in Arizona sandstone, created a striking vertical element that became a significant landmark along O‘ahu’s “Miracle Mile.” The designs for Boysen Paint Building and the first Kenrock Building were both commissioned in 1948. The original design drawings are dated March 8, 1948 with Lemmon as architect and Freeth as associate. Frank Haines recalled that Lemmon procured many of the recognizable façade materials for their early buildings. In a company presentation at ahl, Haines said, “Lemmon located the Arizona sandstone for our early projects (Boysen, Kenrock, and Occidental). He liked the roughness of the surface with the horizontal cut of the stone and the overall effect it created. The building has a concrete slab-on-grade foundation, concrete structural framing and masonry unit (CMU) walls that are finished with a mix of painted plaster and the Arizona sandstone veneer.” The one-story façade was designed with full-height aluminum windows that were divided into wide portions by vertical elements clad in sandstone. The flat concrete roof overhangs the entire structure. Neon signage reading “Boysen Paints” was located at the top of the sandstone pylon that visually dominated the building. Haines remembered that the interior floor was “were beautiful pieces of slate about eight inches thick in different shapes, which were all fitted together on the main floor. I don’t know where Cy found it. The ceiling was designed like a paint palette, I quite enjoyed the ceiling feature.”

“Store Building for Walter N. Boysen Co.” March 8, 1948
Exterior elevations, Courtesy of ahl.
Kenrock Building No. 3 (top, ca. 1960)
Kenrock Building No. 1 (bottom, ca. 1960)
Robert Wenkam, Courtesy of ahl.
On April 1 1950, the firm moved to Kenrock Building No. 1 on Kapiʻolani Boulevard, occupying approximately 900 square feet on the ground floor. The layout included a small reception area, conference room, and drafting area accommodating six stations. In 1949, a major dock strike blocked the import of construction materials to Hawai‘i. Following the strike, construction steadily increased and the years 1950-1951 became significant regarding the firm’s first major commissions.¹ The following projects were either conceived or constructed: the Waikiki-Kapahulu Library, Kenrock Building No. 2, St. Mark’s Episcopal Church on Kapahulu Avenue, the Occidental Life Insurance Building, and the Gregg M. Sinclair Library at the University of Hawai‘i. The firm was so busy that Lemmon noted in the company journal that they had to move to their new offices at Kenrock Building No. 2 on a Sunday, using Frank Haines’ convertible to load drafting tables and furniture. Hawai‘i law changed to allow for the incorporation of architectural firms and the firm incorporated in 1951 as Lemmon and Freeth Architects, Ltd. In addition to the partners, the firm also included Frank Haines, draftsman Masa Tateishi, and accountant Robert Cisco.²

KENROCK BUILDINGS (1949-1960)

The Kenrock Buildings are located centrally on Kapi‘olani Boulevard. The building complex consists of three separate, but connected buildings (A, B, and C), which were planned to be built in different phases. The first building constructed was “Building C” in 1949, then “Building A” in 1950, and lastly “Building B” in 1960. Although the buildings have different construction dates, they are all designed in a similar manner to be one cohesive building, with the exception of the 1955 additions at the rear of Building A. The combined commercial building has an E-shaped footprint and was designed to incorporate off-street parking, providing a paved parking lot with approximately sixty marked parking stalls, of which more than half are covered. Kenrock Building No. 1, now known as Building C, was built in 1949 and is a two-story commercial building that

Both “Buildings A and C” have concrete foundations and pilings with concrete framing and slab construction.¹ “Building B” uses concrete pan joist construction for the second-story floor and ceiling instead of the concrete slab construction used in “C and A.”² The exterior walls are a mix of reinforced concrete and concrete hollow tile and are either finished with painted plaster or clad with Arizona sandstone veneer. Some portions of “Building C” have unfinished hollow tile or corridors that are clad with concrete brick veneer. All three buildings have cantilevered concrete balconies with metal strap railings that provide access to offices on the second floor. These second floor balconies overhang the walkways to the first floor offices below. The flat concrete roofs overhang the second floor balconies and slope slightly to roof drains that lead to planter boxes below. Cast concrete stairways with curved stringers and metal strap railings lead to the second floor balconies that face the paved parking area. On each building, the second floor offices facing Kapi‘olani Boulevard have their window wall set back from the front plane, creating a lanai space within a pronounced concrete frame. This box effect is emphasized because the second floor at each front (south) end is slightly cantilevered beyond the plane of the first floor. The thin lines of the metal railings and metal strap lattices contrast with the thick concrete frame that define each lanai. The fenestration and building details were designed to match each existing building. The offices have mostly full-height fixed windows that are divided by wood mullions. Single wood doors are inset with glazing and fitted with brass hardware and mail slots. Rear facades have multi-light metal sash awning windows with wire glass. Some appear to be operable and some are filled with plywood or fitted with glass jalousies. Alterations to the original design indicate minor alterations include additions and changes to the fenestration, however these do not affect the design integrity of the building.

The first building permit was issued in August 1948 with a valuation of $75,000.³ Original drawings for Kenrock Building No. 1 are dated July 23, 1948. According to a Honolulu Star-Bulletin article dated September 22, 1948, the contractor was Pacific Construction Company.⁴ The engineers were listed as Lo & Katavolos. In addition to Lemmon, Freeth, & Haines’ architecture office, various business tenants subleased the office spaces. One of the first tenants was Brainard & Black, Ltd., an insurance company that occupied offices on the first and second floors. A Honolulu Advertiser article dated April 3, 1949, promoted the building as air conditioned and listed Miss Claire Bentley of San Francisco as the interior decorator for the offices of Brainard & Black, Ltd. A Honolulu Star-Bulletin article dated April 4, 1950 announced that construction of a new Kenrock Building had begun.⁵ A building permit was issued just before the construction and valued at $62,000 for the Kenrock Building No. 2, located at the far eastern side of the property. The original drawings are dated January 25, 1950 by Lemmon, Freeth, & Haines Architects. Hawaiian Dredging constructed the second building, under the direct supervision of architect Cyril Lemmon. Lemmon was concerned that the contractor would not drive the foundation piles as deep

3 County of Honolulu Department of Budget and Fiscal Services. “Owner and Parcel Information.” (TMK [(1)-2-3-016:004]) Honolulu Real Property Assessment Division: http://www.qpublic.net/hi/honolulu/.
as specified on the plans. So when Lemmon heard the pile driver pause, he sent Haines out to measure the depth of the pile. When the building was finished, the firm once again moved their offices, this time to occupy suites on the second floor of Kenrock Building No. 2. A *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* article dated April 5, 1950, listed the contractor for the building as E.F. Fitzsimmons and promoted five offices on each floor with a retail space at the front. In October 1950, *Architectural Forum* listed the Kenrock Buildings as "one of the most beautiful buildings in Hawai‘i." A third phase of construction involved a one-story addition located at the northeast corner of the lot behind Kenrock No. 2. The one-story building started as a carport, but a portion of it was converted to office space. Kenrock Building No. 3 was not built until 1960, but maintains the same design features as the 1949 and 1950 buildings. Original drawings are dated April 4, 1960 and a building permit was issued in May of that year with an amount of $216,000. A *Honolulu Advertiser* article dated December 28, 1960, announced the completion of the building. The article also stated that two retail stores were moving into the building, along with fifteen office spaces that were already rented. A portion of the article thanks all of the subcontractors that worked on the building and wishes them a Happy Holiday and New Year. It lists the general contractor as Edward M. Kawaguchi Contracting Co. Ltd. and subcontractors include: George Morishige (electrical), Walter K. Harada (painting), O‘ahu Plumbing Co., Pacific Welding Co., Honolulu Roofing, Wery Plastering, Honolulu Sash and Door, Honolulu Tile, Heide & Cook, Lewers & Cooke, W.P Fuller Co. (glass), Hawaiian Bitumules Co., Pacific Concrete & Rock, Co. Sato Steel Inc., and Walter H. Boysen Co. Ltd. (paint).

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Kenrock Building No. 1 (top and bottom, ca. 1960)
Robert Wenkam, Courtesy of ahl.
Kenrock Building No. 1 Exterior Elevations (top, ca. July 23, 1948)
Kenrock Building No. 2 Exterior Elevations (middle, ca. April 25, 1950)
Kenrock Building No. 3 Exterior Elevations (bottom, ca. April 4, 1960)
The Kenrock Buildings and the Occidental Life Insurance Building at the corner of Piʻikoi and Beretania Streets are similar in many ways. The initial two-story building, which had its formal opening on February 1, 1951, shared similar massing and its signature Arizona sandstone façade. The material was inexpensive and readily available at the time, and Lemmon remarked that he liked the horizontal effect it produced. Similar to the Kenrock Buildings, the Occidental Life Insurance Building is sited toward the back and side edges of the lot. At the time of completion, the building had a one-story wing extending to Piʻikoi Street and a two-story wing extending to Beretania Street, and was designed to have another story added later to each of the two wings. These two wings form an L-shaped footprint that frames the corner parking lot along the southwest sides. The building was constructed in much the same way as the Kenrock Buildings with a concrete foundation and pilings, concrete framing, and CMU walls that are finished with painted plaster and sandstone cladding. The smooth concrete railings along the lanai, cast stone columns, and wrought iron stair rails were also typical of the firm’s early design work. The landscaping was designed and installed by Thompson and Thompson.1 The Occidental Life Insurance Building was the firm’s first major office building commission. The building gained a large amount of public attention due to its prominent location and positive feedback from employees and local newspapers.2

The Security Insurance Agency, Ltd. was the local general agent for the Occidental Life Insurance Company of California. The agency began their operations eighteen years earlier on February 1, 1933 in the Dillingham Transportation Building, before moving to their new building in 1951. A Honolulu Star Bulletin article dated January 30, 1951, announced that the vice chairman of the board of the Occidental Life Insurance Company of California, Vernon H. Jenkins, congratulated the firm on a job well done. The newspaper reported that Jenkins declared, “The building is unlike any other structure of its type here and is likely to serve as a model for office buildings for some time.” The newspaper also reported that the result was “efficient without coldness, comfortable yet stimulating. The emphasis placed on comfort and convenience of the ‘man in the field’ is another distinguishing feature of the building. Careful attention has been given to providing unusually fine facilities for the sales force. The luxurious ‘living lounge’ and informal patio are more or less exclusively for agents’ use. The agency’s offices include several large private offices, a series of office cubicles, three large sound-proofed conference rooms, a room where agents may receive instruction from any one of four permanent instructors, a reference library, the agents ‘living lounge’ and informal patio, a tropical garden and fish pond, storerooms and lounges.”3 The interior finishing such as veneers and wallpapers, were also specially designed and made to order. Many of the furnishings were custom-made and ordered from the U.S. mainland.

Already a very modern looking building for 1951, the Occidental Life Insurance Building underwent some design-forward alterations in 1967 that added a cantilevered office space to the top of the existing elevator shaft. The resulting form now defines the building’s distinctive profile. The idea for the cantilevered office suite came from the chairman of the board and CEO of Occidental Underwriters, Lawrence Takeo Kagawa, who established the Occidental Hawaiʻi branch in 1933.4 He would come to occupy the “eagle nest” office when completed. Frank Haines discussed that future partner Paul Jones, who had come to the firm in 1956 after working at Wimberly & Cook, executed the design work for the 1967 modification. Haines said, “Cy designed the original building. Initially it was two stories and Paul Jones designed the wild looking cantilevered office at the request of the client, Kagawa. It cost lots of money of course, and Don Lo was the structural consultant.” To accomplish the dramatic addition, the elevator pylon was increased in girth to accommodate a second elevator shaft.

3 “$300,000 Occidental Life Building on Beretania to Open on Wednesday.” Honolulu Star Bulletin, January 30, 1951.
then almost doubled in height. The private office was designed to be serviced by a new elevator and boasted amenities such as, a private bath, reception, and kitchen areas. Kagawa’s office also featured walnut paneling, light wells, and a band of vertical pivot windows. A revision of the plans in October 1967 increased the space for the CEO’s office and decreased space for the reception area by relocating an interior wall. A third floor containing offices was also added to the two-story building wing that extends to Beretania Street. Sometime before these 1967 alterations, a second floor was also added to the shorter, one-story building wing that extends to Pi‘ikoi Street. In his book Buildings of Hawai‘i, Don Hibbard wrote “This dramatically cantilevered “island in the sky” immediately conveys a jet-age image of modernity. The smooth concrete and glass, 868-square foot executive office is cantilevered over from a three-story pylon. It adds a gravity defying tension to the building’s already dynamic interplay of horizontal and vertical elements.”

ST. MARK’S EPISCOPAL CHURCH (1951)

St. Mark’s Episcopal Church was the first of many religious commissions for the firm. During a presentation at the offices of ahl, Haines shared that Lemmon had sent him to the church to discuss the new design requirements with the priest. He said that as they were walking the length of the sanctuary, the priest repeatedly got down on his knees and Haines wasn’t sure if he should follow suit as proper etiquette. When asked if he complied, Haines said, “yes of course, I didn’t want to risk losing the project.”

WAIKĪKĪ-KAPAHULU LIBRARY (1951)

Ground was broken July 27, 1951 for the new Waikīkī-Kapahulu Library on Kapahulu Avenue and Ala Wai Boulevard. About the same time that the library was being designed, Cyril Lemmon served as president of the American Institute of Architects Hawai‘i chapter. The original design drawings are dated January 17, 1951 with Lemmon as architect and Freeth as associate. Frank Haines noted that he believed that the library had been “one of the most significant buildings the firm had designed in the early days.” It was their first public building and one of the first uses of Wa‘ianae sandstone as a building material. Lemmon designed the library to be as residential in character as possible.¹ The designs were drafted by Haines and Freeth wrote the specifications. The one-story library has a concrete slab-on-grade foundation, concrete structural framing, and CMU walls that are finished with a mix of plaster textured with sand and Wa‘ianae sandstone. The building features low-slope intersecting gable roofs with tall, fixed windows that rise to the gables at each end. At the Kapahulu Avenue side, sandstone piers frame a large multi-light window that almost fills the entire gable wall. At the opposite end of the building, facing the Ala Wai Canal, the fixed wood windows are narrow, separated by rectangular columns of sandstone, again filling a large part of the gable end. Originally, there were seven of these narrow windows. A later addition to the building covered two of them, and now five remain. The rough sandstone facing is used again at the entrance lanai as narrow piers that support the eaves and flank the door. When the library was built, its intersecting gable roofs were covered in hand-split cedar shakes. The extant roof is now covered with wood shingles.²

The library also features cast-stone decorations that were designed by Lemmon and fabricated by artist Mario Valdastri. Valdastri had been casting stone in Honolulu since 1926. He arrived from California to work on panels at the Honolulu Academy of Arts. Much of the cast-stone works in Honolulu were produced by Valdastri over several decades. Near the main library entrance, he executed a large cast-stone screen depicting a Hawaiian canoe flanked by wave motifs. Along the front walkway, Valdastri executed a cast stone sign set into a sandstone pier that reads, “Library of Hawai‘i Waikīkī-Kapahulu Branch.” This signage has been removed and replaced with a cast metal sign. The original entrance to the lobby featured a sliding wrought-iron grille door made from diagonal bars forming a diamond pattern with circles at the bar intersections. This wrought iron door has also been replaced. Another unique element is the outdoor reading room, which is extant today. The interior features sandstone walls, polished concrete floors, and solid wood bookcases. The Waikīkī-Kapahulu Library initially opened its doors on July 11, 1952.³ A staff of five, led by

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² Ibid.
³ “Waikīkī-Kapahulu Area Branch Library to Open.” Honolulu Advertiser, June 29, 1952.
St. Mark’s Episcopal Church (top and bottom, ca. 1951)
Robert Wenkam, Courtesy of ahl.
Elisabeth Carey, served the approximately 50,000 people in the library’s service area. The new building included a large 200-seat auditorium and stage for community events.4 Previously, the only library in the area was a small cottage that provided books to school children. In his book Buildings of Hawai‘i, Don Hibbard wrote “The Waikīkī-Kapahulu Library is a quintessential 1950s Hawaiian-style modern building. Modern in its lines, but Hawaiian in heart, the single-story L-shaped library bears a residential quality, with its gently pitched, gabled roof and grand expanse of windows. The intimate walled garden space, the cast-stone masonry screen’s depictions of outrigger canoes and ocean motifs, and the extension of the mauka roofline to shelter an independent walkway in a lanai-like manner, further contribute to a delightful celebration of Hawai‘i’s culture and lifestyle.”

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Waikīkī-Kapahulu Library Signage (top, ca. 1952)
Waikīkī-Kapahulu Library Screens (bottom, ca. 1952)
Robert Wenkam, Courtesy of ahl.

Waikīkī-Kapahulu Library Iron Screens (top, ca. 1952)
Waikīkī-Kapahulu Library Interior (bottom, ca. 1952)
Robert Wenkam, Courtesy of ahl.
The Gregg M. Sinclair Library was the firm’s first University/Educational commission. In Frank Haines’ words, “This was the first significant building built at the University after World War II.” There was no lack of planning for the new library, the process began in 1951 with the appointment of architects Lemmon, Freeth & Haines to prepare the plans. Haines claimed that Lemmon designed the library and that he only worked on the drawings. A Honolulu Star Bulletin article from December 6, 1951 announced the start of the planning process for the new library. Lemmon and University Librarian, Dr. Carl G. Stroven, traveled to the U.S. mainland to research various libraries in preparation for the new design. They spent considerable time studying libraries for both student and public use. Lemmon also worked closely with the members of the library staff, library committee, and administrative staff. Even though more than enough time was afforded to the planning process, several issues arose. The $1.4 million dollars allocated to the construction budget by 1953 Hawai’i State Legislature wasn’t enough for the approved design. As a result, the top floor was removed from the design and the two main volumes of the building were shortened. Not surprisingly, the library has always suffered from a lack of space. At the same time, the State of Hawai’i wouldn’t allow for air conditioning because it was determined that it would be too expensive to maintain. These mounting cost engineering decisions presented large design challenges for the architect. One of those challenges was to design a large institutional building in the tropics that was comfortable without air conditioning. Wide expanses of glass jalousies accomplished this for the human inhabitants, but the open environment also resulted in pest control issues and the inevitable deterioration of the library’s resources.

During the planning phase, the Honolulu Advertiser called the library “One of America’s Finest” in an article from October 18, 1953. The newspaper reported that “the building, which will equal any such on the mainland, should be ready for occupancy in the fall of 1955.” The groundbreaking for Sinclair Library was on July 6, 1954. According to Lemmon, four basic principals were adhered to in the design of the library. He said that “It must be made as comfortable for readers as possible without air conditioning, arranged for efficient operation, flexible enough to be readily adapted to changing needs and conceptions of service, and to make books and other library materials as accessible and convenient for use as possible.” In addition to three levels of stacks, the library featured an audio-visual center, reading rooms, reserve rooms, administrative offices, and a Teachers College Library on the main floor. The original design drawings are dated December 1, 1953. The library massing has two, large rectangular volumes that intersect on a perpendicular axis. Multiple smaller volumes overlap both horizontally and vertically at each façade. The building has a concrete foundation, reinforced concrete structural framing, and concrete walls that are finished with a mix of painted plaster, Wai’anae sandstone, and Roman brick veneer. The brick has mortar joints that are scored to flare out at the bottom edge, a detail called a “weathered” joint, which is designed to shed water. Both the east and west elevations have two expressed vertical design elements of cast concrete with scored grid lines. The main library entrance is sheltered by a wide overhanging canopy that provides a sculptural feature to the building in contrast to the overall cubic massing. The entrance area is finished with sandstone rubble masonry. Horizontal bands of aluminum jalousies continue across most of the façade at the second and third floors facing Campus Road. Facing Bachman Hall on the opposite side, wide balconies with overhangs extend across the second and third floors. These balconies feature floors that have scored, green-stained concrete. The original design drawings show details that were later removed, such as panels of figured walnut with book-matched joints at the main desk area and figured koa accents. The cast-stone facing on columns, the exposed interior brick walls, and the ceilings of acoustic plaster that were originally specified, remain in the main lobby. Sinclair Library now houses primarily bound periodicals, a computer lab, and an air-conditioned audiovisual center.

1 “One of America’s Finest: Bids Will Be Called in February for New $1,400,000 Library at University.” Honolulu Advertiser, October 18, 1953.


Sinclair Library Cast Concrete Feature (top, ca. 1957)
Sinclair Library Interior (bottom, ca. 1957)
Robert Wenkam, Courtesy of ahl.
Lemmon, Freeth, and Haines designed over 25 new single-family residential projects, as well as a large number of residential additions and alterations between the years 1948-1951. They were commissioned for residential work all over the islands.¹ The mid-century residential architecture of Lemmon, Freeth, and Haines achieved the integration of local landscape, climate, and lifestyle. The architects approached design challenges by addressing climate – heat, humidity, air flow, passive temperature control, and also by addressing the specific lifestyle needs of their clients. Much of the firm's residential work aimed to incorporate flexible floor plans, sliding doors that allowed for the closure or opening not just of various rooms, but of the entire home. Kitchens were designed to be as efficient as possible and often space was divided with built-in features to provide more functionality. All the project photography recorded during this period was executed by Bob Wenkman. Frank Haines noted that Wenkman had been educated as an architect and was the "go-to photographer" for most of the Island's architectural photography at the time.

CROCKETT RESIDENCE (1951)

One of the first private residential projects was the Crockett residence, which is representative of their residential work during the 1950s. A Honolulu Advertiser article titled, "House on Oceanfront Enjoys Fine Sea Vista," features the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Robert S. Crockett at their oceanfront lot on Wailupe Place. The article, dated August 31, 1952, reports that the couple wanted the firm to design the house for indoor/outdoor living, so that the couple could always "enjoy the sea, surf, and sky, as well as have adequate facilities to entertain." The residence was placed at the front of the lot, with the living room, dining room, lanai, and kitchen overlooking Mr. Crockett’s boat anchorage and the sea. Sliding glass doors were provided between kitchen and dining room so that those in the kitchen still remain a part of the family group. On more formal occasions the glass doors can be closed.

ERRETT RESIDENCE (1953)

Lemmon designed the private residence of Mr. and Mrs. John Peter Errett on Kailua Bay. The home is L-shaped with the bedroom wing protecting the large open central terrace from the ocean winds, and a masonry wall at the opposite side of the house passively insulates from the heat of the sun. The home was customized to meet the couple’s requirements and lifestyle. Sliding doors and convertible rooms allowed more functionality to inhabiting the home. The lines between indoor and outdoor are blurred by large window walls and sliding doors that open the house to the terrace. Both full-height and clerestory windows accent the slant of the roof and allow light to enter the room, while maintaining privacy. The living room wall is extended to make the room appear larger and protect the lanai. Due to the small footprint, the bedrooms were designed to be converted to one larger room after the children were grown. A Honolulu Advertiser article dated December 26, 1953 describes how the Errett residence was designed to expand and evolve as their needs continued to change. “The family is thus able to enjoy the compact home fully, with no fear about having to move if their future needs were not met by the design.”

Wahl Residence (top, ca. 1955)
Beatty Residence (bottom, ca. 1955)
Robert Wenkam, Courtesy of ahl.
Duvel Residence (top, ca. 1955)
Botts Residence (bottom, ca. 1955)
Robert Wenkam, Courtesy of ahl.
BISHOP NATIONAL BANK KAIMUKI
FIRST HAWAIIAN BANK (1953)

In 1953, the firm received their first bank commission, completing the design for the Kaimuki branch of Bishop National Bank, later to become First Hawaiian Bank. Haines said the project was the beginning of a long-standing relationship with the bank, which yielded many more branch projects throughout the years. Also in 1953, the Korean War generated an increase in military expenditures in Hawai‘i, which resulted in the firm’s first two military commissions, the U.S. Navy Fire Station and Helemano Barracks. Larger military commissions continued throughout the 1950s and ’60s. In 1954, the firm moved across the parking lot to the second floor of the new completed Kenrock Building No. 2, which nearly double their previous office space. Soon after, the firm was commissioned to design their first medical building, the Nu‘uanu Clinic on Nu‘uanu Avenue for doctors Pang and Lee. Frank Haines recalled that after completion of the clinic, the firm designed several major housing projects at Schofield Barracks. He said “we did a lot military work in those days, however much of it was secretive and we weren’t even allowed to go look at the buildings after they were finished.” Residential work continued as well, with designs for tract houses for Wendell Brooks and Lewers and Cooke in 1954. After the mid-1950s, the firm continued to design an average of five-to-ten custom-designed residences per year.

BELT, LEMMON, & LO

In 1955, the firm organized the joint venture Belt, Lemmon, & Lo, in order to provide complete architectural and engineering services in close competition with large U.S. mainland firms. Lemmon, Freeth, and Haines joined with Collins (civil engineering and land planning), Donald Lo (structural engineering), Wynn Nakamura (electrical engineering), and Herbert Rook (mechanical engineering). The fee was split between all offices involved. The group was also ethnically and politically diversified with multidisciplinary capabilities, which gave them an advantage in various large projects. In Haines’ words, “we received the commission for the State Capitol (1962) on that basis, and the Federal Building (1963) as well.” The group’s first commissions focused on large military and education projects. The Capehart housing project for the Navy was the first of many major military housing projects completed by Belt, Lemmon, & Lo. The first school commission came in 1955 with the design of Waianae High School, also the first of several complete school campus designs.
In the 1950s and early 1960s, the firm participated in the extensive Hawai‘i school construction program, designing Wai‘anae High School, Kalani High, Campbell High, and Wai‘anae Intermediate. A Honolulu Advertiser article dated October 7, 1955, announced that City and County Building Superintendent Yoshio Kunimoto requested that the mayor release the funding for six major school projects, including Wai‘anae High School. To address the expanding need for educational facilities in the Wai‘anae area, the City and County asked the firm to develop a master plan which included elementary, intermediate, and high schools; athletic fields; parks and recreation areas; and a location for future faculty housing.

Given Wai‘anae’s frequently dry, hot climate, orientation of all buildings needed to take full advantage of the northeast trade winds. The overall campus design has multiple low-rise concrete buildings that have elongated, rectangular massing. Wide overhanging eaves and continuous bands of louvered windows were designed to keep the buildings cool. Despite the restrictive design guidelines, the firm was able to design an aesthetically pleasing building that incorporated residential elements like wood louvers into the concrete structure, along with an internal drainage system, which had not been integrated into a school building in Hawai‘i before.

In 1956, the firm began actively to recruit additional staff for the firm, including new potential partners. Frank Haines traveled to the West Coast to Seattle, San Francisco, and Los Angeles to recruit architects for the firm. Several of the architects scouted during this trip included Sydney Snyder and John Tatom, future architectural leaders in Hawai‘i’s architectural community. That same year, Paul Jones joined the firm and became a partner the following year. The firm changed its name to Lemmon, Freeth, Haines, and Jones Architects, Ltd. in 1957. Jones was responsible for leading many of the firm’s religious projects. He brought with him close association with many religious groups and designed projects for the Methodist, Lutheran, United Church of Christ, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian denominations. The projects were often required to be budget conscious and had to consider the specific design requirements and sensitivities of each denomination. Frank Haines said, “Paul was always deeply involved the congregation in developing the design and spent a lot of time interviewing and meeting with church officials in all different denominations. It was important to Jones to work in the specific requirements of each denomination and as a result most of the buildings are still extant and continue to serve the requirements of the congregations well.”
Wai'anae High School and Intermediate (top, ca.1966)
Wai'anae High School Oblique View (bottom, ca.1966)
Wai'anae High School Oblique View (left, ca.1966)
KAILUA METHODIST CHURCH (1956)

The Kailua Methodist Church on Kailua Road was designed by Paul Jones in 1956, with construction bids going out in November of 1957. The $300,000 church was designed with four-hundred seats in the sanctuary, which needed to include room for a forty-member choir, two chambers for the large pipe organ, a business office, library, and pastor's study.1 The first phase of construction also included an educational building with twenty classrooms. The education building needed to adhere to the Department of Public Instruction specifications, and include a social center, kitchen, storage space, and director's office. A Honolulu Star Bulletin article, dated November 16, 1957, announced the plans for the new community church. The newspaper reported that the sanctuary "will be visible off Kailua Road, and will have a large cross with a light background flanked by lava rock walls. The makai side of the church has four panels decorated with ceramic symbols of the four gospels, and the three sided carillon tower will be surmounted by a cross against the sky." The groundbreaking ceremonies were held on January 18, 1958.2

PAUL JONES

Born on August 3, 1921 in Powell, Wyoming, Jones received architecture degrees at both the Universities of Wyoming and Washington. Between degrees, Jones spent three-and-a-half years in the Navy, where he progressed to Lieutenant. He became a registered architect in Washington State and worked with John Graham & Co. in Seattle. Coming to Hawai'i in 1950, he first joined Wimberly & Cook and was an associate of that office for six years before joining Lemmon, Freeth, & Haines in 1956, becoming a partner a year later.3 In addition to the Wesley Foundation Student Center at the University of Hawai'i, Jones was responsible for producing most of the firm's religious work.

1 "Methodists Build on Kailua Road." Honolulu Advertiser, November 17, 1957.
Kailua Methodist Church Oblique View (ca.1966)
Courtesy of ahl.
WESLEY FOUNDATION STUDENT CENTER AND CHAPEL
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAIʻI (1957)

Wesley Foundation Student Center Entry Foyer (ca. 1959)
Robert Wenkam, Courtesy of ahl.
Wesley Methodist Chapel Renderings (top and bottom, ca. 1956)

Courtesy of ahl.
Kalani High School Overview (top, ca. 1958)
Kalani High School Entry Drive (bottom, ca. 1958)
Robert Wenkam, Courtesy of ahl.

Kalani High School Oblique View (top, ca. 1958)
Kalani High School Entry Lanai (bottom, ca. 1958)
Robert Wenkam, Courtesy of ahl.
KALANI HIGH SCHOOL (1957)

In 1957, the firm designed its first master plan for the complete campus of Kalani High School on Kalanianaʻole Highway near Waiʻalae Iki. Similar to Waiʻanae High School, the school was oriented to take advantage of trade winds. The elongated, low-rise concrete buildings also have wide overhanging eaves and horizontal bands of aluminum windows and glass jalousies for ventilation. The concrete framing is expressed at the façade as a design element and portions of the concrete façade are scored in a grid pattern, similar to Sinclair Library. Following the Kalani High School project, Frank Haines said that the firm became disenchanted with the way that the Hawaiʻi Department of Education (DOE) was standardizing the design of schools. He said that, “the DOE had a series of conditions that they imposed everywhere.” Haines pointed out that each location, especially in the extremely varied environments on Oʻahu, should each have different types of design. He also believed that the head master, educators, and staff should have input regarding the requirements of the building. Haines said that after their experiences with Waiʻanae High School, Kalani High, Campbell High, and Waiʻanae Intermediate, that the firm gave up. Haines said that the DOE just wanted a standard design, “typical Hawaiʻi bureaucracy.”

"DIAMOND HEAD" APARTMENT BUILDINGS (1958-1961)

In 1958, Lemmon, Freeth, Haines, and Jones began a number of large-scale residential projects which included Diamond Head Surf and Kūhiō Park Terrace. The firm would continue to design residential projects throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Diamond Head Surf was designed with four other low-rise apartment buildings on Pualei Circle, just below Diamond Head. The developer was Finance Investment Company, Ltd., and all of these apartment projects were awarded honor awards by the American Institute of Architects Hawaiʻi in later years. The apartment buildings have concrete structural framing and slab construction with CMU walls and incorporate such design elements as wide concrete overhangs, cantilevered lanais, and decorative end walls that exemplify Hawaiʻi modern design.

Diamond Head Gardens is a two-story walk-up apartment building located on Leahi Avenue at the base of Diamond Head. The ten-acre tract where the apartments are located was developed by Finance Investment Company, Ltd. The development included other apartment buildings designed by the firm, including Diamond Head Surf, Lelani, Manor, Lanai, and Aliʻi, all located off Leahi Avenue. The “Diamond Head” apartment buildings were all similar in construction with reinforced concrete framing, slab construction, and CMU walls. Each building had its own unique features. Diamond Head Gardens used a new product called “Shadowal”, decorative concrete block that was used as a design feature. Shadowal was designed to be used in various combinations to form interesting patterns. Diamond Head Gardens had a U-shaped footprint with parking for 40 cars and a swimming pool as well as landscaped grounds in the center. The building provided twenty-four two-bedroom units, eight one-bedroom units, and eight studio apartments. The contract for the construction of the units was awarded to United Construction Co.

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2 Ibid. 
Diamond Head Surf (top, ca. 1958)
Diamond Head Manor (bottom, ca. 1961)
Robert Wenkam, Courtesy of ahl.

Diamond Head Surf (top, ca. 1958)
Diamond Head Lanai (bottom, ca. 1961)
Robert Wenkam, Courtesy of ahl.
Diamond Head Gardens (top, ca. 1961)
Diamond Head Aliʻi (bottom, ca. 1961)
Robert Wenkam, Courtesy of ahl.

Diamond Head Gardens (top, ca. 1961)
Diamond Head Lelani (bottom, ca. 1961)
Robert Wenkam, Courtesy of ahl.
KŪHIŌ PARK TERRACE (1958-1965)

The design for the firm’s first public housing project, Kūhiō Park Terrace, began nearly seven years before its completion on March 1, 1965. The large complex is located on approximately twenty-six acres along Kalihi Stream. The surrounding area featured predominately low-rise residential and commercial properties. Frank Haines reflected that although the project received several awards, including the 1966 Honor Award for Design Excellence (Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington D.C.), that ultimately the housing project was flawed. The low-income residents, often of various Polynesian cultures, were not accustomed to living in high-rise towers or participating in the lifestyle that the residential complex was designed to support. Early in the development of the design program, the firm determined that fewer buildings and more open recreational space was more important for greater quality of life. The design had to incorporate housing for 614 dwelling units, and it became apparent that designing low-rise buildings would not allow for any open spaces for recreational purposes. Hence, the architects were able to demonstrate to local authorities and the Public Housing Associate that a high-rise solution could set aside seven acres of open-park and recreational land for tenant use. The design for the three-wing high-rise buildings resulted from an attempt to break down the large number of inhabitant families into smaller, more cohesive groups. The towers were constructed with concrete load-bearing walls, slab roofs and floors, CMU interior partitions, and built-up roofing systems. Doors are aluminum sliding doors and windows are aluminum with glass jalousies. The building design also provided more efficient management control with a vertical transportation system.

Recreational areas were developed to accommodate the activities of a wide range of age groups. Amenities like a baseball diamond, paved basketball courts, volleyball nets, and a swimming pool were added to serve the needs of active children and adults. A community meeting hall was flexibly designed to accommodate everything from teenage dances to community association meetings. The landscape architect designed play sculptures to provide interesting forms along points of visual interest, and Kalihi Stream bank was developed for picnic areas for family groups. The architects were striving to provide a well-thought out and sensitive design program. But ultimately, the needs, customs, and behavior of the residents were not well understood.

Kūhiō Park Terrace Overview (top, ca. 1965)
Kūhiō Park Terrace Concrete Play Sculpture (top, ca. 1965)
Robert Wenkam, Courtesy of ahl.
First National Bank (1959)

In 1959, the firm designed its first commercial tower in downtown Honolulu. The eighteen-story First National Bank (First Hawaiian) Building at Bishop and King Streets, remained the tallest building in downtown for the ten years following its completion in 1962. That year the firm moved their offices from their offices at the low-rise Kenrock Buildings on Kapi'olani Boulevard to the fifteenth-floor of the financial tower.¹ The bank branch was designed with planter boxes to encourage crawling vines to give shade and greenery at the ground floor and roof levels, with wood trellises at the intermediate level. Ten teller’s stations, officer’s platform, vault, safe deposit facilities and night depository were included in the planning, as well as provisions for a future drive-in teller location.

KILOHANA METHODIST CHURCH (1959)

The Kilohana Methodist Church, located in Nui Valley, was designed by Paul Jones and completed in 1960. The Methodist Church purchased two-and-a-half acres of land from the Charles W. Lucas Trust. The land had been part of the Dairymen Waʻalae Ranch, adjacent to the Nui Valley subdivision. The groundbreaking ceremonies were held in March 1960, with construction starting the following month.

CALVARY EPISCOPAL (1959)

Calvary Episcopal Church is located on Kaneohe Bay Drive and Aumoku Street. The sanctuary was designed by Paul Jones and constructed for $83,000. The schematic design drawings are dated January 19, 1956 and the final renderings are dated December 27, 1957. The church was organized in Hawaiʻi in 1952, as a mission of St. Christopher’s Episcopal Church. The church had initially been organized in a classroom of Benjamin Parker School in Kaneohe. Services later moved to the cafeteria of Castle High School before the 1959 sanctuary was built. The church opened for its first dedication service on Sunday, February 15, 1959.

BORTHWICK MORTUARY (1959)

Borthwick Mortuary moved to the location at Nuʻuanu and School Streets in 1925 when there was a need for a larger facility, which prompted the move across the street to its current location. In 1958, William Mendel Borthwick Jr. succeeded his father as the manager of Borthwick Mortuary. The firm designed multiple locations for Borthwick Mortuary, with this location on Nuʻuanu being the first.
Kilohana Methodist Church (top, ca. 1960)
Kilohana Methodist Church Exterior Elevations (bottom, October 17, 1960)
Courtesy of ahl.
Calvary Episcopal Church (top, ca. 1960)
Calvary Episcopal Church Rendering (bottom, 1960)
Courtesy of ahl.
Borthwick Mortuary Nu‘uanu (top, ca. 1960)
Borthwick Mortuary Nu‘uanut (bottom, ca. 1960)
Courtesy of ahl.
ATKINSON TOWERS (1959)

By the early 1960s, the firm had designed multiple residential towers and apartment buildings on O‘ahu. At the time of completion, Atkinson Towers was one of the tallest towers in Waikīkī. Frank Haines recalled that local newspapers had touted the building as the “end of Waikīkī.” The building was also the first high-rise co-operative in Honolulu. Construction on the fourteen-story building began on September 2, 1959. The developer was Atkinson Building Incorporated and the contractor was Pacific Construction Company. The building was designed to have 104, two-bedroom apartments, each with its own parking stall. The units ranged in price from $18,900 to $33,900. The residents had control over the management of the property through voting power and were stock holders in the co-operative corporation. The units run mauka to makai for maximum cross ventilation and view. A Honolulu Star Bulletin article dated July 18, 1959, publicized the first open house for a fully decorated typical unit. Interior furnishings in the display model were selected by C.S. Wo and Sons. The article advertised that “units are designed to provide owners with the contemporary conveniences and aspects of gracious living.” Each unit had a private view lanai with bulk storage facilities. Kitchens are situated adjacent to the lanai, which originally incorporated aluminum sliding screens to address the glare of the afternoon sun. The article noted that each unit came equipped with a pastel colored General Electric kitchen center that included an automatic dishwasher, garbage disposal, and stainless steel sinks. A buffet-divider and table were built into the dining room, and bedrooms and bathrooms had built-in drawers and dressing tables. Sliding fusuma doors at both sides of the family room allowed for the conversion to a guest room when needed. There were also sliding doors between the lanai and the living room, so that the entire unit could be opened up when desired. In addition to a swimming pool with changing facilities, a boat landing was provided on the Ala Wai Canal for the use of residents.

Co-operative Apartments
At the time they were in constructed in the 1950s, co-operative apartments dramatically changed the lives and living habits of people on O‘ahu, perhaps more than any other single building development. In the Honolulu Star Bulletin article dated July 30th, 1959, various types of owners were interviewed on their opinions regarding this new lifestyle. The article is titled, “Co-Ops Fine for Some, But Rules Irk Others”. In the article, retired couples describe the time saved with freedom from yard work and house maintenance. Young professionals and newlyweds focused on their active lives, and were relieved from paying utility, garbage, and other bills. However, some owners expressed their objections to the rules pertaining to laundry, noise while entertaining, and privacy needs. Co-operative apartments became big business during this period, as investors bought individual apartments and hired managers to also rent them out to tourists as hotel facilities. The city of Honolulu Rent Control Commission stated in 1960 that “O‘ahu needed almost 6,400 middle income family housing units within the next two years”. Population increase, slum clearance, and housing demolition programs all contributed to the housing shortage in the early 1960s. Despite the construction boom, there still existed a growing gap between available housing units and the expanding population.

1 “History of Architects Hawai‘i.” Honolulu: Architects Hawai‘i, Ltd. July 18, 1984
The first version of Castle Memorial Hospital, which was designed to accommodate thirty-two beds, was completed in 1962. It was the firm’s first hospital project and designed in association with Luckman & Associates of Los Angeles, California, a firm that specialized in hospital design. The initial phase was designed to allow for future expansion on the ten-acre property. Frank Haines said that plans for the hospital were a response to an increasing need due to “enormous population growth” on the Windward side. The hospital is located on Kalanianaʻole Highway at Waimanalo junction. A Honolulu Star Bulletin article dated February 17, 1961, announced that the architect’s preliminary plans were submitted to the hospital board and it was announced that bids for the $1.5 million project were expected to open on July 1, 1961. The plans, which were designed predominantly by Frank Haines and associate Alex Weinstein, were reviewed by the doctors of Windward O’ahu, the hospital committee of Windward O’ahu Community Association, Seventh-day Adventist Church officials, and representatives of the U.S. Public Health Service for recommendations. The hospital was in the planning stage for about three years. Hawaiian Dredging and Construction Company won the contract with the low bid of $1,520,394.00. A spokesperson from Lemmon, Freeth, Haines, and Jones pointed out that bids were considerably less than the original estimate of $1.6 for the hospital construction. Other bidders included; E.E. Black, United Construction Company, Walker Moody Construction Company, Nordic Construction Company, and Town Construction Company. Hawaiian Dredging and Construction Company signed contract papers for the construction of Castle Memorial Hospital on October 2, 1961. The groundbreaking ceremony took place on October 15, 1961 and the hospital opened in December, 1962.

By the late 1960s, the hospital was operating at an average of seventy-eight percent capacity and not only served patients from Windward O’ahu, but also Honolulu, Moloka‘i, Maui, Hawai‘i, Tokyo, Tahiti, Bangkok, Guam, and Australia. As a result, plans to expand the hospital’s capacity began in October, 1967. A Honolulu Star Bulletin article announced that the groundbreaking ceremony took place on October 18, 1970. The $2.8 million expansion nearly doubled the in-patient capacity. Top City and State officials along with members of the public attended the groundbreaking ceremony. The hospital expansion featured a new three-story, 70-bed wing that incorporated some of the "latest innovations and planning concepts found in the United States.” The expansion was designed by Frank Haines and associate, Alex Weinstein. The design reflected the trend toward single-bed hospital rooms, complete with bathroom and air conditioning. A new wing also featured emergency facilities and surgical rooms on the first floor. The Honolulu Star Bulletin proclaimed that, “the ingenious design enables doctors and nurses to do a better job.” The expansion also added a helicopter pad for emergency care. Further expansions and additions came in later years. The long range, twenty-year plans included extended care facilities and nursing home operations, eventually bringing the total number of beds to 500. By the late 1960s, the firm had designed Shriners’ Hospital, which won an AIA Honolulu Chapter Honor Award, Lanai Island Hospital, and Wahiawa General Hospital.


1 “History of Architects Hawai‘i.” Honolulu: Architects Hawai‘i, Ltd. July 18, 1984
2 “Board Gets Castle Hospital Plans; Bids Expected to Open July 1.” Honolulu Star Bulletin, February 17, 1961.
4 “Architects Present First Plans for Castle Memorial Hospital.” Honolulu Advertiser, February 17, 1961.
Castle Memorial Hospital Expansion (top, ca.1970)
Castle Memorial Hospital Front Elevation (bottom, ca.1962)
Robert Wenkam, Courtesy of ahl.
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (1962)

First Presbyterian Church at Ke'eaumoku and Nehoa Streets, was constructed in 1962 as the first phase of a large master plan. In addition to the sanctuary, the entire project included a Fellowship Hall and Education Building and was estimated to cost approximately $700,000. The second phase of the project was scheduled for several years later. All three buildings were designed to be arranged in a horseshoe shape around a large central court with underground parking for sixty cars. The air-conditioned sanctuary, seating 600, was designed with a unique ceiling of interlacing steel frames and the extensive use of lava rock at both sides of the church. The lava rock provided a sound barrier from Nehoa Street. Along Ke'eaumoku Street, between the porch and interior of the building, a 20' by 30' space was allocated on the façade for a future stained glass window. One side of the sanctuary has full-height windows that provide a view to an enclosed garden. The chancel is flanked on both sides by choir spaces in an abbreviated transept, the upper portions of which are designed as chambers for a large pipe organ. The 70' tall campanile, with provisions for electronic carillon bells, was also planned for a later construction date. Construction of the sanctuary was scheduled to begin in the spring of 1960 and estimated to take approximately a year to finish.

1 "History of Architects Hawai'i." Honolulu: Architects Hawai'i, Ltd. July 18, 1984
3 Ibid.
HAWAI‘I STATE CAPITOL  (1962-1969)

The Hawai‘i State Capitol Building reflects the height of the modern movement in Hawai‘i during the Statehood Period. The building embodies the character of Hawai‘i. The commission for the Hawai‘i State Capitol was awarded in 1961 to the Belt, Lemmon, & Lo, supporting architect John Carl Warnecke of San Francisco. The result of their efforts is one of America’s most unique state capitol buildings, which are typically rendered in Federalist or Georgian or Classical Revival designs. As the newest state and the nation’s only island-state, the design symbolizes Hawai‘i’s culture and its values. The sixty-foot tall coconut palms that surround the capitol, the volcanic conical shaped legislature chambers, and the open, sky-blue tiled rotunda ceiling are all reflections of the island state, which are continued with the koa trim and detailing, and glass mosaic tile floor installation, Aquarius, executed by Tadashi Sato. According to Don Hibbard in Buildings of Hawai‘i, “The building embodies the spirit of Hawai‘i. Its transparent openness not only celebrates Hawai‘i’s mild climate, but also its casual, open society.” Governor John Burns proclaimed in 1969, “The open sea, the open sky, the open doorway, open arms and open hearts – these are the symbols of our Hawaiian heritage. It is by means of the striking architecture of this new structure that Hawai‘i cries out to the nations of the Pacific and the world, this message: We are a free people, we are an open society, and we welcome all visitors to our island home.” Frank Haines was the project manager overseeing the construction of the Capitol. In Frank Haines’ words, “what happened was that various architects were interviewed by the governor and big wheels in Hawai‘i before they selected the architect. They suggested that local architects associate with a major architecture firm on the mainland. So we aligned ourselves with Carl Warnecke. We made presentations and were selected to do the commission. That was one of the most prestigious projects the firm has ever done. The night we found out we got the commission, we opened the cabinet with all the booze it. We had to bring that out.” Cyril Lemmon was the lead local architect and the design drawings were produced by John Carl Warnecke & Associates. Hawai‘i State Capitol received an American Institute of Architects (AIA) Honor Award in 1970 (Belt, Lemmon, & Lo).

In June 1962, the firm moved to the First Hawaiian Bank Building on King and Bishop Streets. The entire 8,440 sq. ft. fifteenth floor was leased, with fifty percent rented to other tenants initially, but taken over gradually as the office workload and the staff expanded. The nineteen-story bank building, the tallest building downtown for a number of years, had been designed by the firm. Joe Farrell joined the firm in 1961 after receiving his degree from the University of Florida. Known as the most designed-oriented partner, he became a partner in 1970. According to Haines, Farrell brought a high-level of design focus to the firm, and was known to work through the night to get the design “just right.” In Frank Haines’ words, “Joe became the design guru of the firm. He was not interested in management; he was only interested in design. His design focus lead to the firm evolving into a major design firm.”

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2 “History of Architects Hawai‘i.” Honolulu: Architects Hawai‘i, Ltd. July 18, 1984

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4 “History of Architects Hawai‘i.” Honolulu: Architects Hawai‘i, Ltd. July 18, 1984
L - R: Joe Farrell (Partner), Douglas Freeth (Partner), Alex Weinstein (Associate), Frank Haines (Partner), Rich Lowe (Associate), Fred White (Partner), Cyril Lemmon (Founding Partner), George Woo (Associate), Paul Jones (Partner).


