



NHL Executive Summary

Name of Property:	Pu‘ukoholā Heiau NHL (Additional Documentation and Boundary Update)
City, State:	Kawaihae, Hawai‘i
Period of Significance:	AD 1790–1835
NHL Criteria:	Criteria 1, 2, 4, and 6
NHL Themes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">I. Peopling Places<ul style="list-style-type: none">1. family and the life cycle3. community and neighborhood5. ethnic homelands6. encounters, conflicts, and colonizationIII. Expressing Cultural Values<ul style="list-style-type: none">5. architecture, landscape architecture, and urban designIV. Shaping the Political Landscape<ul style="list-style-type: none">2. governmental institutions3. military institutions and activitiesVIII. Changing Role of the United States in the World Community<ul style="list-style-type: none">1. international relations2. commerce



3. expansionism and imperialism
4. immigration and emigration policies

Previous Recognition: 1962 National Historic Landmark
1966 National Register of Historic Places
1972 National Register of Historic Places

National Historic Context: *Finding a Path Forward: Asian American Pacific Islander National Historic Landmarks Theme Study* (Odo 2017)

NHL Significance:

- Pu‘ukoholā Heiau NHL represents a unique convergence of historic figures and events that shaped the post-Contact political, social, and religious landscape of Hawai‘i, leading to the founding of the Hawaiian Kingdom, events that transformed the kingdom in the nineteenth century, and ultimately the annexation of Hawai‘i by the United States. As such, it is the location of pivotal religious and political events during the formative years of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i.
- Pu‘ukoholā Heiau NHL has a strong association with the lives of three paramount figures in Hawaiian history: Kamehameha I; John Young; and Liholiho (Kamehameha II). Kamehameha I was the first *ali‘i nui* (paramount chief) to unify the independent polities of the Hawaiian Islands into a single kingdom. John Young was an expatriate advisor to the king and key cross-cultural liaison between Hawaiian and foreign entities. Liholiho, Kamehameha’s successor, was a key figure in ending the traditional Hawaiian religious system.
- Pu‘ukoholā Heiau NHL contains pre-Contact and early historic structures that outstandingly represent traditional Hawaiian and early Western building styles and techniques, including the monumental Pu‘ukoholā and Mailekini Heiau, which are among the few and best-preserved *luakini heiau* (large sacrificial temples) remaining in the Hawaiian Islands. The adjacent John Young Homestead contains the remains of traditional residences as well as the first Western-style buildings constructed in Hawai‘i.
- Pu‘ukoholā Heiau NHL has yielded, and will likely continue to yield, archeological information of major scientific importance about Hawaiian patterns of life during the critical transition period from pre-Contact to the historic eras, particularly at the royal residence called Pelekane or Kikiako‘i.

Integrity:

- Many of the Pu‘ukoholā Heiau NHL’s contributing resources exhibit high integrity, particularly the massive Pu‘ukoholā and Mailekini Heiau, but also the Hale-o-Kapuni Heiau site. The stone heiau in the waters offshore of Pelekane was reputedly used to feed human sacrifices to sharks. Meanwhile, the Stone Leaning Post was purportedly used by the *ali‘i* (including Kamehameha) as a “seat” to oversee nearby activities. Pelekane (Kikiako‘i), the area of stone walls, features, and archeological sites along the Kawaihae shoreline below the two heiau, represent other remains of the major royal center. The upper portion of the John Young Homestead (Pahukanilua) in Kawaihae consists of the remains of several stone buildings and structures.



- The massive coral flat that is part of the large Kawaihae Harbor to the north, and Spencer Beach Park to the south of Pu‘ukoholā Heiau NHL, affect views from the beach to the north and from the park to the south, respectively. These features likely obscure some elements of the expansive Pelekane/Kikiako‘i community. Likewise, the two-lane Highway 270 (‘Akoni Pule Highway) bisects the site, separating the John Young Homestead from the rest of the NHL. A thick line of introduced *kiawe* trees (*Prosopis sp.*) affect the views to Pu‘ukoholā Heiau from the John Young Homestead and only partly obscure the highway views and deaden road noise. Some World War II gun emplacements and foxholes, a tank road, and other more recent features are non-contributing.
- While some of the structures were damaged during a major earthquake in 2006, architects, architectural conservators, archeologists, master tradesmen, cultural practitioners, and over six hundred native Hawaiian and other volunteers came together to stabilize and restore the damaged structures at Pu‘ukoholā Heiau, Mailekini Heiau, and the John Young Homestead over a four-year period.

Owner of Property: National Park Service, State of Hawai‘i

Acreeage of Property: 42.46 acres

Origins of Nomination: The NPS Preservation Partnerships Program in the legacy Pacific West Regional Office (Interior Regions 8, 9, 10, & 12), working in cooperation with Pu‘ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site, sought to prepare an updated nomination for Pu‘ukoholā Heiau NHL to reflect changes to the NHL since designation, incorporate more recent research (national historic contexts, cultural landscape studies, and newly recorded and expanded archaeological sites), and update the boundary.

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: This update to the NHL nomination revises the boundary to address newly discovered archeological sites and reflect current conditions. The documentation provides an updated interpretation of Pu‘ukoholā Heiau NHL through new scholarship, expanding on how the NHL is tied to transcendent individuals and events of the founding of the Hawaiian Kingdom during the critical transition period from pre-Contact to historic eras. This nomination update supports and respects continuing activities by cultural groups to express the cultural significance of the place and interpret living Hawaiian culture.

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None known.

Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of December 19, 2023): n/a

Landmarks Committee Comments:

- Review reference to “emergent colonial contexts,” as this may be an overstatement.
- Regarding material culture changes, suggest this is no longer a subject of debate, but rather a widespread approach.
- Investigate if more recent scholarship should be cited in discussion of interrelationship of colonizing and Indigenous cultures.

Landmarks Committee Recommendation: The Committee recommends that the National Park System Advisory Board recommend to the Secretary of the Interior the acceptance of the NHL updated documentation



for the Pu‘ukoholā Heiau National Historic Landmark in Kawaihae, Hawai‘i, with any additions and corrections as noted by the Committee being made prior to the nomination being forwarded to the Secretary of the Interior for action.

Advisory Board Recommendation: The National Park System Advisory Board recommends to the Secretary of the Interior the acceptance of the updated documentation for the Pu‘ukoholā Heiau National Historic Landmark located in Kawaihae, Hawai‘i.