

PH069 2239

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUN 21 1976

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC BAI RA IRRAI

AND/OR COMMON AIRAI BAI (Men's Meeting House)

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Airai Municipality

CITY, TOWN Babelthuap Island NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, 96950 VICINITY OF Palau District

CODE COUNTY CODE

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: meeting house

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Public Land, Municipality of Airai - in trust to Ngara Irrai Council,
Chief Ngiraked.

STREET & NUMBER Airai Municipality

CITY, TOWN Babelthuap Island STATE
VICINITY OF Palau Islands, TTPI 96950

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Palau District Land Management Office

STREET & NUMBER % District Administrator

CITY, TOWN Koror, Palau District, TTPI 96950 STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE none known.

DATE FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Built approximately 1890, a typical and very good example of a traditional Palauan men's meeting house, and one of the largest ones standing. The Airai Bai was renovated during the past two years by the people of Airai as a community project. Every effort was made to conform to the original style. The result is an impressive, traditional building with depictions of Palauan legends on the facade and interior cross beams. This bai is located in the center of Airai Village on a stone platform that once was the site of two ancient bais. The main village stone walkways intersect before the facade. Villagers were assigned housing space by quadrant according to their caste rank. Rarely was there possibility for upward movement through the quadrants-- though downward assignment was possible.

The building is 68 feet long, 20 feet wide and 40 feet high at the apex. The surrounding area is kept scrupulously clean and orderly.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) traditional authority representation.
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES unknown BUILDER/ARCHITECT people of Airai Village

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Dates regarding this structure and those others similar to it in Palau vary tremendously. Of the original bai on this site a few usable parts remain and those parts are at least 180 as documented by living elders in Palau at this time. This fact of course adds to general interest and respect for this structure, and partially accounts for the conscientiousness in maintenance.

Deterioration, especially in the humid, tropical climate of Palau, is rapid. Unaffected, however, are the stones forming the platform -- hundreds of basaltic stone boulders which were once carried there by the villagers. There are also a number of upright stones used as back supports for those sitting on the platform in front of the bai. These special places were used as back supports for the elders and chiefs. Each stone was named for the individual council member--and these names and designations are still known today.

The bai was the physical and spiritual core of the community. The elders meeting here controlled all matters relating to the people of this area from religion to economy to politics and behavior. It is no accident that the physical formation of this area--the bai, the intersection of main pathways forming the four quadrants in front of the bai--matched the cultural structure for the people of Airai.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Ergebnisse de Sudsee Expedition, 1908-1910, by A. Kramer
- Daniel Simeon of Airai Village, official informant, interviewed 1975.
- Civic Affairs Handbook, West Caroline Islands, U.S. Navy Dep't. - 1944
- Micronesian Parks, Russell A. Anole, U.S. Nat'l Park Service, - 1972

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2

UTM REFERENCES

A	5 3	4 5 2 ³⁴ 2 6 0	8 1 3 3 4 0 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N/A			
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Simeon Skilang, Land Resources Specialist & Tech. Advisor,

Palau District
Historic Preservation
Committee.

ORGANIZATION

Land Commission Office

DATE

May 5, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

Koror, Palau District

TELEPHONE

332

CITY OR TOWN

Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, 96940

STATE

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE TPTI

LOCAL Palau District

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE Neil K. Chase

Neil K. Chase

TITLE Chief, Branch of Resources & Land Use; Div. Lands/Surveys

DATE May 28, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

SIGNATURE

James R. [Signature]

DATE

9/30/76

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST

DATE

9/30/76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

