

TO: Linda Ruffington, Healdsburg Planning Commission

DATE: February 27, 2023

RE: Planning Commission Hearing - Feb 28, 2023 - North Village Project [DA 2021-01.04, CUP 2019-04.02, DR 2021-07.01, CUP 2021-04.01, TM 2022-07]

SUMMARY: Affordable housing is truly needed in the North Village, as well as Healdsburg in general, and we believe that the original design drawings and plans approved in May 2021 are more likely to create a thriving village than the modifications proposed for today's hearing. Moving the affordable income housing into parcel 4 from parcel 2 is less likely to generate a new neighborhood that is an "interconnected community"—which was the first guiding principle of the 2019 NEAP.

Based on input from Healdsburg residents, the 2019 NEAP recommended there be focal gathering places for those who live on this site and nearby. The accepted 2021 proposal had "sitewide master planning" to create a "cohesive overall North Village plan," with the retail promenade serving as such a space for the surrounding communities, including Enso Village and Parkland Farms residents.

Please use this opportunity to consider what will actually provide a structure in which people of all ages and income levels live and interact together. Consider integrating all levels of income into both parcels 2 and 4, rather than separating the affordable housing residents from the middle income residents.

Please do not simply accept the new proposed amendments as written but instead ensure that any change in plans maintains the open, welcoming design for the entry area, with its use of the promenade as a gathering place, with tables, food shops or carts, etc., so that the amount of outdoor public gathering space is not reduced by this or any changes, but instead is valued and sustained.

Reasoning and background:

As soon-to-be residents of Enso Village, I and my neighbors have a clear interest in our neighborhood. Having carefully read both the NEAP, adopted by the Healdsburg City Council, May 20, 2019 and the North Village Major Design Review Package approved May 25, 2021, I believe that what was a major attractor in the design of the North Village is altered significantly by the proposed changes in use of parcels 2 and 4.

I speak both as a future resident and as a professional public and clinical sociologist who has devoted my career to creating healthy organizations and communities.

In the 2019 NEAP, Healdsburg expressed a clear commitment to integrated planning for this new part of the city, describing the importance of a

"central focal point area that will serve as a community gathering space. These spaces should be well designed and comfortable, with sun exposure in the winter and shade in summer months. They should be adjacent to commercial activity from cafes, restaurants, and entertainment venues and well connected to the primary street, parking areas, and internal pathway/trail system." (P. 41, NEAP)

This was carried out in the very thorough original submission, which described and showed illustrations of how the proposed residential/retail area (referred to as parcel 4) and the hotel were well-integrated to fulfill the city and its residents' expressed wishes. The approved document explicitly describes the relationship of the hotel and parcel 4 as "an interconnected community" (p. G-0.4) that creates a "new neighborhood" with "design inspired by the agrarian and rural characteristics of the region."

"Residential scale building massings are organized and clustered around courtyards and open spaces, reinforcing the village-like characteristics. The courtyards form the "outdoor rooms" for activities and connections to nature."

"The promenade provides a variety of gathering spaces and activities to engage shoppers, travelers, local artisans, and residents alike. It is connected to the rest of North Village through pedestrian pathways forming the main focal point for the community." (G-0.5) [See statements and illustrations from the approved plans in appendices to this letter.]

Therefore, I and others were disturbed to discover that the developers are asking to switch the uses of parcels 2 and 4, which raises challenges in fulfilling the integrated nature of the original design that emphasized the importance of the retail promenade. It appears in the new plans that the promenade has changed its purpose, becoming more of a courtyard for the residents of residential buildings with considerably denser occupancy.

This promenade is specifically referred to over and over again in the plans adopted May 2021 as a focal point for the community, as the city's NEAP had requested. Repeatedly within the 2019 NEAP, on page after page, we read references to how important it is to have focal community gathering spaces, with small shops, cafes, and restaurants. The proposed changes seem to eliminate this as main area intended for residents of the North Village and Parklands Farms to stroll, sit, and talk together. (For example, see pages 19, 21, 22, 24, 41, 75, NEAP.)

Will the types of retail shown in the drawings be a fit for affordable housing designed for 75% occupancy by very low and low income residents? Will this proposal in reality be conducive to harmonious and lively interaction among those living in the different components of this "village", or might it lead to more compartmentalization? We wonder whether integrating the various levels of income *across parcels 2 and 4* might not be more conducive to creating a village atmosphere in which level of income does not determine where you live. And if such a blend of types of housing is not possible, then we question the wisdom of placing high-end retail within the affordable living component.

The proposed changes also affect the appearance of the entry area from Healdsburg Avenue, as the new design for the facades of this area does not have the large windows and balconies asked for in the NEAP (which the original design offered), does not appear to divide the surface parking lot with as many landscaping buffers for stormwater treatment, and will have a much higher occupancy (pp. 41, 49, NEAP).

Future residents of Enso Village come from a broad range of income and asset levels, are deeply committed to living in community, and the Enso planners intermixed a range of apartment sizes and cost across the whole village. We made plans to move permanently to Healdsburg based on the original integrated, welcoming design of the North Village. We welcome the presence of the affordable housing component within the North Village. However, we question the nature of this proposal that in any way lessens the integrated quality of the plan for this new village, as we value its welcoming, open entrance area and public spaces AND affordable housing.

Sincerely yours,

Kathryn Goldman Schuyler

Appendix A: Guiding Principles of the North Village accepted plans (From North Village Major Design Review Package, May 25, 2021, p. G-0.4)

Those most relevant to the proposed changes are **bolded and highlighted**.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES The design respects and meets the specific guiding principles of the NEAP in the following ways:

1. **NEW NEIGHBORHOOD** – The hotel and the mixed-use retail and residential development provides new lodging, housing, and retail opportunities in an interconnected community in North Village.
2. **BUILDING AND LANDSCAPE** – The design is inspired by the agrarian and rural characteristics of the region. Residential scale building massings are organized and clustered around courtyards and open spaces, reinforcing the village-like characteristics. The courtyards form the “outdoor rooms” for activities and connections to nature and help bring natural light into the buildings.
3. **BUILDING SITING AND ORIENTATION** – Buildings are carefully sited and organized to help reinforce the street edge along the primary Boxheart Drive and the secondary Dovetail Lane. **Retail storefronts are oriented towards and along Boxheart Lane with generous sidewalks and pockets of outdoor sitting areas, creating a vibrant, friendly and pedestrian-oriented neighborhood retail street environment.** The Hotel arrival court is centrally located at the north end of Boxheart Drive, which is highly visible from the public spaces. The entry porch provides a strong public connection and forms a welcoming appearance. **The Grange is located along Dovetail Lane directly across from the retail promenade and allows for a seamless connection to the public gathering spaces.** Majority of the guestrooms and residential units are oriented to take advantage of view opportunities to the North and to the East .
4. **BUILDING MASSING** – The proposed project reduces the apparent size of the overall massing by breaking down the larger buildings into smaller footprints and volumes. **The lower 1 & 2-story massings are located on the East along Healdsburg Avenue and steps up to 3-story massings further to the West.**
5. **CONTEXTUAL DESIGN** – The design is contextual through the use of simple building forms, barn-like shape, low pitched gable roof, and the use of traditional natural material such as standing seam metal roof, board and batten siding, and natural stone.
6. **PARKING** – Parking is located on the outer edge to the east and along Boxheart Drive and Dovetail Lane. **Parking surfaces are broken up into smaller pods with tree planters and landscaping carefully integrated to provide visual screening at appropriate locations.**
7. **HEALDSBURG AVENUE BUILDING ORIENTATION** – The design places lower 1 to 2-story buildings on the hotel site and 2 to 3-story buildings on the mixed-use site oriented along Healdsburg Avenue.
8. **BUILDING HEIGHTS** – The buildings step down in height from West to East. The buildings are 1 & 2-story tall along Healdsburg Avenue to the East and transition to 3-story buildings along Boxheart Drive further West .
9. **VIEWS FROM THE SITE** – The hotel public spaces, such as, the restaurant, roof top bar, guestrooms, and housing units with terraces and balconies, are carefully oriented to take advantage of the striking views of the rolling hills to the north and to the east. Beautifully landscaped outdoor courtyards will provide additional view opportunities and focal points within the site.

10. **VIEWS TO THE SITE** - The grouping of smaller residential scale buildings coupled with variations in building heights reinforces the village-like character along Healdsburg Avenue. The 2-story guestroom cluster located to the West are further setback from Hwy 101 and have minimal visibility when viewed from the Highway. Roofs are broken up and articulated to create visual interest. Trees and landscape elements compliment the buildings and provide visual screening around the perimeter.
11. **LAND USE** – The hotel is consistent with the preferred land uses identified in the NEAP. The hotel coupled with the mixed-use retail and residential uses create a community-oriented, comfortable, active, and walkable neighborhood that will be enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.
12. **GATEWAY** – The hotel and the mixed-use retail and residential development within North Village helps create an elegant gateway to Healdsburg.
13. **CENTRAL FOCAL POINT** – The outdoor retail promenade is the main focal point of the community. This is a multi-functional outdoor space and a gathering place for hosting festive events and where locals can come to dine, shop, and relax with friends and families. The promenade is directly connected to the adjacent Barn-like Grange and function lawn which can be made available for public events and activities. These spaces are connected to the pedestrian paths and are easily accessible for residents and visitors in North Village.
14. **LANDSCAPING ALONG HEALDSBURG AVENUE** – The wide easement area will be planted with trees and plants native to the region to provide a lush landscape buffer.
15. **MULTIMODEL OPTION** – The hotel and the mixed-use retail and residential development encourage the use of alternative forms of transportation including biking, walking and sustainable transit such as electric vehicles and provides support facilities for each of these.
16. **CONNECTIVITY** – A network of pedestrian paths connect the hotel and the mixed-use retail and residential development within North Village. The pedestrian path is also connected to the Foss Creek path and the perimeter trail in North Village.
17. **EMERGENCY ACCESS** – North Village will establish a new secondary emergency vehicle access point as approved in the MCUP site plan.
18. **SITEWIDE MASTER PLANNING** – The hotel and the mixed-use retail and residential development is a critical piece of the Sitewide Master Conditional Use Permit submittal and is a crucial portion of this cohesive overall North Village plan.

Appendix B – Illustrations from Approved North Village Plans, May 2021



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NORTH VILLAGE
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A-1.14
VIEW FROM MAIN STREET LOOKING NORTH (WITHOUT TREES)
08/15/2021



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NORTH VILLAGE
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A-1.16
VIEW FROM PROMENADE LOOKING TOWARDS THE GRANGE (WITHOUT TREES)
08/15/2021



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A-1.16.2
VIEW FROM GRANGE LOOKING SOUTH TOWARDS THE PROMENADE (WITHOUT TREES)
08/15/2021



Retail Streetscape and Promenade

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NORTH VILLAGE
Healdsburg, California

L-1.22
 Character Imagery - Retail Streetscape
 May 25, 2021