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May 22, 2023

Chair Luks and Planning Commissioners
City of Healdsburg c/o Sr. Planner Ellen McDowell
401 Grove St., Healdsburg, via email.

RE: DR 2019-02, 400, 412, & 418 Healdsburg Ave.

Commissioners,

I wanted to convey my support for the referenced project design. I attended the Planning Commission Workshop back in Jan of 2022 and based on my review of the submittal the applicant has responded to all of the concerns and comments expressed by the Commission and many that came from residents.

I find the project design sophisticated, attractive, and articulated with high quality materials used throughout. The building and its related activity will continue the City's long-term efforts to expand the pedestrian zone beyond the plaza. The private parking lot (and former gas station) on this site has been a 'dead zone' in our downtown for many years. Filling the site with an active building/ streetscape will pull pedestrians along Healdsburg Ave. and North St. both helping surrounding businesses.

The massing is broken up with essentially two different but compatible buildings on the single site with each building having articulated elevations both in spatial planes as well as material usage.

Probably the biggest concern at the workshop was the building height on the corner. The fourth floor has been set back with a cantilevered trellis that puts a great 'cap' on the building, turning the entire fourth floor into what might be considered a large cornice. A modern interpretation of the classic form. The composition of the exterior elevations on the southern portion remind me a bit of a Mondrian painting with its variety of window sizes. The balconies add elevated people spaces and erode the mass.

One of the comments I recall from the workshop was several community members asking for more street level retail space which was a concern I shared. The applicant has increased the retail frontage.

A commitment to environmental sustainability has been a hallmark of previous Hotel Healdsburg projects. They have been on the cutting edge and this project is no exception with their efforts on water recycling. Their track record on their prior projects should give the Planning Commission a high level of confidence that they will deliver what they have presented and manage the facility well.

I recommend the Commission approve the Design Review Application DR 2019-02 as recommended by your planning staff.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan B. Cohen, Architect