



June 13, 2023

Historic and Cultural Preservation Committee
Planning Commission

Re: Joint Workshop for Weaver Hotel, June 13

Commissioners and Committee members,

Let me start by saying that the Weaver Hotel project is worth doing. There is more to like about it than not. I am also compelled to write after seeing the abundance of letters to the negative from those who simply do not want any change. Let me try to summarize my stance:

We need a good hotel downtown where the guests can enjoy all that downtown has to offer without getting into their cars. We also need density downtown. We need density to make public transit work, to concentrate the infrastructure so that it can be sustainable. We need density to make good projects viable. I am not opposed to the building height. The exterior walls at the property line are within the context of other downtown buildings we love. The FAR is a function of density and necessary. The lot coverage, being a zero-lot line, is typical of many of our historic properties.

I am not completely happy with the façade treatment, though I do like the color palette and the materials. The attempt to rationalize the window treatment as “regular” and vertical and reflecting historic treatment seems forced to me, especially with the balconies creating big horizontal bands across the Boulevard façade. It appears as a jumble of vertical and horizontal lines. The exterior treatment could also try harder to capture our regional vernacular. But not more metal siding, please! It has that trendy, wine-country look that is so common in Napa and Healdsburg. I also hope that the roof level is a space for everyone to enjoy, not just hotel guests. If not, the public art does not belong there.

The overlay zoning is confusing. I wonder why a “zoning exemption” cannot be granted for this project rather than change the regs for all Mixed Use zoning. Do we want all Mixed Use zones to be potentially as dense as a hotel?

Change will occur whether we want it or not. I am happy to see good development that keeps our downtown active and engaged and vibrant.

Sincerely,

