



May 24, 2021

City of Pasadena Design Commission  
Attn: Michi Takeda  
Hale Building  
175 N. Garfield Ave., 2nd Floor  
Pasadena, CA 91101

RE: 491-577 S. Arroyo Pkwy.

Dear Members of the Design Commission:

Pasadena Heritage would like to offer the following brief comments on this project, and we look forward to hearing the Design Commission's thoughts. This project came to our Advocacy Committee prior to PPR review. Our Committee members gave suggestions some of which have been addressed in this version. Pasadena Heritage staff also met with Mr. Kutzer on a second occasion via Zoom, where we reviewed the project as you see it today. We find changes made in the evolution of this project to be improvements from the earlier concept, and we truly appreciate that the developer took time to meet and discuss the project with us.

Because this is such a large project at an important intersection, it should be studied carefully. We believe the uses proposed are acceptable at this location, and feel that attention to the street frontages along Arroyo Parkway, and further definition of the building volumes can be key to the project fitting in to its overall context.

Our first focus was the historic buildings, and we applaud that they will be preserved. We believe they should be integrated into the overall project in some ways, but also buffered from new construction appropriately. We agree with staff's recommendation that detailed rehabilitation plans need to be prepared as the project progresses. As we understand it, the height variance is in exchange for the preservation of the low-rise buildings, but the massing can still be studied and massaged further. We support staff's comments on further study of transitional massing – perhaps the density can be spread more effectively to reduce the height differences between the different volumes. However, while new low-rise construction could be done along Arroyo Parkway (one of staff's recommendations), we worry that it could detract from the historic buildings. We found that the open space in the middle of the project provided a pleasant break or breathing space. We're also concerned that attaching new construction to the back or west of the historic buildings could destroy historic fabric that adds character to the interior of the site.

Two additional issues for us are the vehicular drop-off areas, which appear to dominate the pedestrian realm, and the trellis on the northeastern portion of the site, which looms over

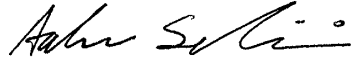
Arroyo Parkway. Resolving the drop-off areas will also improve the buffer space between the historic and new buildings. These are issues that the Design Commission has successfully mitigated on other recent projects in Pasadena and so we ask for your input here.

We thank you for hearing our thoughts and concerns.

Sincerely yours,



Susan N. Mossman  
Executive Director



Andrew Salimian  
Preservation Director