



August 22, 2022

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

Re: 86 S. Fair Oaks Ave.

Dear Members of the Design Commission,

Pasadena Heritage supports this project, and we hope you will move it forward with additional conditions and design recommendations. This is a good project in many ways: it redevelops an underutilized surface parking lot; locates housing near transit, Old Pasadena and Central Park; and honors the architectural context of Old Pasadena. Pasadena Heritage has held a preservation easement on Castle Green for decades and is dedicated to its preservation. We find the mitigation measures as adopted in the SCEA document to be sufficient to ensure its continued protection. While we had serious reservations about the last version of this project that was being considered several years ago, we are glad to see it significantly improved as it has come back greatly revised.

A testament to Pasadena's planning process and planning staff is that good examples of infill development have been built locally. Pasadena should continue to provide an example to other cities of how contextual, pedestrian-scaled infill can be encouraged. Along these lines, we concur with staff's recommended Conditions #1, #2 and #3, which will all positively refine the design.

Condition #2 speaks to the metal arched arcades above the live-work units. This design element was discussed when Pasadena Heritage's Advocacy Committee met with ARG and Goldrich Kest many months ago. We find the metal arches have an uneasy relationship to the precast concrete arches at the base. Now that other elements of the design have been simplified and refined, the decorative metal arches seem even more out of character. We recommend the use of a more traditional wooden pergola supported either by a square wooden post or a square masonry pillar. Two nearby projects, Del Mar Station and the Pasadena Humane Society annex, both use wooden pergolas in limited capacity. The use here would relate to these other projects also provide a more natural appearance to the Central Park-facing façade.

Condition #3 addresses what we see as the most glaring unresolved issue, the two eastern stair towers that we find do not integrate in any meaningful way with the façade. We still believe that the best design option would be to push them further west into the building mass, though some bedroom reconfiguration would be needed to accommodate this. We find that the hipped, clay tile roof is not appropriate on such a small footprint, and recommend the architects study different expressions of the top of these towers. A more open, tapered top



with a flat roof might be more fitting. This eastern façade of the building will be visible from the Castle Green, Central Park and Dayton Street, so we ask these stair towers are resolved thoughtfully.

We look forward to hearing the Design Commission's suggestions, thank the architectural team and client for asking for our input throughout the process, and thank Staff for their hard work on this project.

Sincerely,

Susan N. Mossman
Executive Director

Andrew Salimian
Preservation Director