

**CALISTOGA PLANNING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**

To: Calistoga Planning Commission
From: Zach Tusinger, Planning & Building Director
Meeting Date: January 13, 2021
Subject: **Indian Springs Food & Beverage Expansion (UP 2020-12 and DR 2020-10)**

1 **ITEM**

2 Consideration of design review and use permit applications to permit the addition of a
3 new food & beverage establishment with outdoor dining near Lincoln Avenue on the
4 lawn of the Resort at Indian Springs at 1712 Lincoln Avenue (APN 011-340-027). This
5 proposed action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under
6 Section 15303 of the CEQA Guidelines.

7 **KEY ISSUES**

- 8 • Food and beverage expansion at the Indian Springs Resort
- 9 • Use Permit & Design Review
- 10 • Determination that this is a fixed place of business

11 **BACKGROUND**

12 Project Setting: The project site is located on the grounds of the historic Resort at Indian
13 Springs (1712 Lincoln Avenue) within the CC: Community Commercial Zoning District
14 along the resort's Lincoln Avenue frontage near the downtown area. The area of the
15 resort where this is planned is known as 'the lawn', and is adjacent to recently
16 constructed accessible restrooms.

17 History:

18 Indian Springs was originally developed as a resort between 1912 and 1920 and has
19 been in operation for over 100 years. It was built on the site of Sam Brannan's Calistoga
20 Hot Springs, which is credited with ushering in the resort era to Calistoga in the 1860s.
21 In 1988, the resort was purchased by the Merchant family.

22 In 2002, the Planning Commission approved Use Permit U 2002-01, which formally
23 recognized and authorized use of the property as a resort and spa. In 2005, the
24 Merchants purchased the adjoining Nance's Hot Springs hotel and spa after it had been
25 significantly damaged by fire. The Commission approved Use Permit U 2005-05 and
26 Design Review DR 2005-06 to renovate Nance's (now known as "The Lodge at Indian
27 Springs") and incorporate it as part of the Indian Springs Resort and Spa operation.

28 The City granted approval for a further resort expansion involving 75 additional guest
29 rooms, a restaurant, event building, gym, yoga studio and hotel registration building in
30 2012/2013 through Use Permit UP 2011-11, Design Review DR 2011-09 and

31 Development Agreement DA 2011-01. In 2020, the Planning Commission approved
32 land use entitlements for a significant resort expansion in the form of the Veranda
33 Project to be located on the site of the former Gliderport. At the end of 2020, the City
34 Council approved a Development Agreement for that project.

35 **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

36 The current use permit and design review applications request approval to allow the
37 addition of a new food and beverage establishment named the "Terrace Lounge" to be



Airstream concept & logo

38 open for coffee, breakfast, lunch, dinner, drinks, outdoor seating in the existing lawn,
39 and occasional live entertainment. During the pandemic, Indian Springs operated a
40 pilot-project in this location with a temporary outdoor food & beverage venue. Due to its
41 popularity, the increasing long-term demand for outdoor food & beverage options, and
42 the possibility of further activating an underused component of the historic property in a
43 way that is minimally impactful to the resort and neighborhood at large, the applicant
44 wishes to make a more refined version of the venue permanent.

45 The newly proposed food & beverage facility is intended to be a 16' Airstream outfitted
46 with a prep kitchen located on a permanent concrete pad and connected permanently to
47 underground utilities. The food & beverage facility would have limited visibility from
48 Lincoln Avenue being set back from the street, being of a limited height, and screened
49 by existing landscaping. As in the original entitlements from last year, the food &
50 beverage use is aimed primarily toward resort guests but would be open to the general
51 public and would be easily accessible by foot or bicycle from the downtown.

52 The project description provided by the applicant provides additional information and
53 details of the proposal (see Attachment 3).

54 **DISCUSSION**

55 **A. General Plan Consistency**

56 This project conforms to the existing Community Commercial land use designation as
57 identified in the General Plan.

58 The General Plan designates the project site as being within the Land Use Element's
59 Resort Character Area. Overall, development in the Resort Character Area must reflect
60 a low intensity pattern with generously landscaped setbacks. Relevant land use
61 considerations include:

- 62 • *Renovation and/or redevelopment of existing resorts should feature Calistoga's*
63 *unique attributes and be developed to the highest current standards of the*
64 *industry*
- 65 • *Visitor accommodations may include related visitor services such as restaurants,*
66 *recreational amenities, wine retail sales and storage, spa and retail shops that do*
67 *not compete with downtown commercial enterprises, provided that they are*
68 *clearly secondary to the visitor accommodation use.*
- 69 • *Development shall be designed to minimize impacts on adjacent land uses,*
70 *including appropriate siting of noise generators, lighting, and building location,*
71 *height and style.*
- 72 • *Design should be imaginative and of high quality, built upon the region's heritage*
73 *and avoiding details of a generic nature.*

74 The planned improvements to the resort are in accordance with the above
75 considerations pertaining to the Resort Character Area. They are also consistent with
76 applicable Community Identity Element and Urban Design Plan policies by providing a
77 non-formula food & beverage component, while maintaining existing high quality design
78 and landscaping amenities.

79 **B. Zoning Compliance**

80 Chapter 17.22 of the Zoning Ordinance describes the development standards and the
81 uses permitted in the CC Zoning District where the project site is located. Restaurants
82 (with or without seating), alcohol sales, live entertainment, and walkaway businesses
83 are conditionally permitted in the CC District.

84 The minimum setback required at this location is 10 feet, while the project provides at
85 least a 15-foot setback. Section 17.22.060.G requires that all retail sales and service
86 establishments in Calistoga are to be conducted from a fixed place of business (this is
87 known as Calistoga's prohibition on food trucks operating in a transient manner from
88 parking lots and on public streets). While the airstream design that is the centerpiece of
89 this project is clearly mobile in nature, as stated above the Resort does not intend for it
90 to be moved around and is only intended to be used in this one fixed place of business.
91 Key features include a permanent pad that the Airstream will rest upon, connections to
92 permanent underground utility hookups, lighting, fixed signage, and ADA pathways to

93 provide access to the rest of the resort, parking, restrooms, and the city sidewalk
94 network.

95 **FINDINGS**

96 To reduce repetition, all necessary findings to approve the two applications are
97 contained in the attached resolution.

98 **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

99 As of the writing of this report, staff has not received any written correspondence
100 regarding the current requests.

101 **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

102 Staff has determined that the proposed project is Categorically Exempt from the
103 requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section
104 15303 of the CEQA Guidelines. No significant traffic impacts are expected from the
105 project, and the property can be adequately served by city utilities.

106 **RECOMMENDATION**

107 Consider approving the use permit and design review applications with conditions.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Resolution and Conditions of Approval
2. Vicinity Map
3. Project Description
4. Proposed Preliminary Site Plan