



# NAPA COUNTY LANDMARKS

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NAPA CO. CONSERVATION  
DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING DEPT.

Napa County Planning Commissioners  
C/o John McDowell  
Deputy Planning Director  
115 Third Street, Suite 210  
Napa CA 94559

September 3, 2009

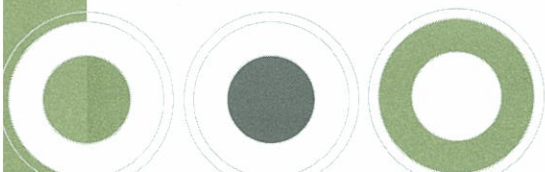
Members of the Planning Commission:

We are writing in support of the proposed zoning text amendment to the Historic Winery Definition Ordinance that would permit the Franco-Swiss Winery restoration project at 1291 Conn Valley Road to go forward.

Since Landmarks learned of the plans of owners Richard and Leslie Mansfield for their Conn Valley property several years ago, we have felt this important historic resource should be preserved, if at all possible. In 2008, this winery led Napa Landmarks' list of Ten Threatened Treasures.

Since the winery parcel does not meet the five-acre minimum required in the Historic Winery Definition Ordinance, the zoning amendment would be required for this project. We support such an amendment for the following reasons:

- This was one of the earliest wineries in the County (1876), and, in its day, one of the most important.
- The County's new General Plan contains language permitting designated landmarks to resume historic uses if they meet certain conditions. While the Franco-Swiss has not been officially designated a landmark, Architectural Resources Group has declared it eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
- Architectural historian Meg Scantlebury believes the research survey she did for the County supports the idea that Franco-Swiss is likely the sole remaining unrestored winery building on less than 2 acres in the County, so there seems little danger of setting an unwelcome precedent.
- If restoration is not undertaken soon, the building will deteriorate beyond repair. Every year we wait takes its toll on the existing building.
- The winery, which consists of two buildings built several years apart that are interconnected, were also built by two very different sets of builders and illustrates two construction approaches to the building of our early wineries. Interesting decorative features, such as the old sundial on the side of the building, still remain.



- All the close neighbors support the project.
- And, of importance to us, the plan proposed by the owners and their architect, calls for a sensitive restoration in keeping with Secretary of the Interior Standards.

The fact that a sensational murder took place here in the 19th century only adds to the winery's historical cachet.

In short, Napa County Landmarks feels that the Franco-Swiss Winery is a "poster child" for the kinds of preservation projects that the County should encourage.

Thank you for your consideration of this project.

Sincerely,

The block contains two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature, on the left, is 'Mary Ellen Boyet' written in a cursive script. The second signature, on the right, is 'Stephen R. Cuddy' followed by 'AIA' in a similar cursive script.

Mary Ellen Boyet

Stephen R. Cuddy, AIA

Co-Chairs, Preservation Action Committee

Napa County Landmarks