

Attachment B:

Appeal Letter

To: City of Angels Planning Commission
Attn: Amy Augustine, AICP – City Planner
Re: Opposition to Conditional Use Permit for Calaveras Presbyterian Church –
1250 South Main Street (Formerly Cascabel's)
Date: 10/17/2025

Dear Chair Broeder and Members of the Planning Commission,

We, the undersigned Downtown Angels Camp business owners and operators, respectfully submit this letter in opposition to the proposed Conditional Use Permit (Resolution 25-15) allowing the conversion of the former Cascabel's restaurant at 1250 South Main Street into pastoral offices and a church education center.

Our concern is not with the mission or values of the church, but with the incompatibility of this land use within the Historic Commercial (HC) district, the heart of our downtown business corridor. The proposed use conflicts with the intent of the HC zoning district and with multiple stated goals of the City's General Plan related to economic vitality, tourism, and downtown vibrancy.

Below we outline specific points of concern and factual reasons the project should be reconsidered.

1. Inconsistent with the Intent of the Historic Commercial Zone

While the proposed use meets architectural conformity standards, architectural appearance alone does not ensure compatibility with downtown's commercial intent.

The Historical Commercial zone exists to preserve both the character and economic vitality of Angels Camp's Main Street. The adaptive reuse of a prime, street-level commercial storefront for a private, non-retail, tax-exempt institutional use runs counter to that purpose.

Downtown storefronts should remain accessible to the public, contributing to pedestrian traffic and active commerce. Converting one into a private education facility effectively removes a retail-facing space from the commercial inventory and diminishes overall downtown activity. There is already a struggle with the large amount of vacant or "dark" buildings and this does not go by unnoticed by our visitors. When visitors come to a historic district that is largely comprised of empty or office or administrative type buildings, they are less likely to return, thus impacting a local economy that is greatly dependent on tourism.

2. Contradiction of the City's General Plan Economic Goals

The staff report cites Goal 10A of the City's General Plan — "Maintain and enhance the city's economic vitality while conserving its social, cultural, environmental, and aesthetic resources." This project does the opposite:

It removes a sales-tax-generating use (restaurant) and replaces it with a non-commercial use that contributes no economic output or fiscal benefit.

It reduces tourism-supportive diversity of uses (Policy 10.A.1) by introducing a use that neither attracts visitors nor invites public interaction.

It sets a precedent for further conversion of commercial storefronts to institutional or private uses, undermining the downtown revitalization goals the City has invested in.

3. Negative Impact on Downtown Foot Traffic and Tourism

Restaurants and retail shops draw consistent pedestrian activity throughout the day and evening, directly supporting neighboring businesses.

By contrast, a church education center would:

Operate primarily during limited weekday hours, leaving the storefront inactive for large portions of the week.

Attract users (students and staff) who are not visiting other downtown shops or restaurants, thus removing vital circulation and cross-spending.

Create a “dark window” in the downtown core, visually signaling reduced business vitality to visitors.

Vibrant, open, and publicly engaging storefronts are critical to sustaining tourism along the City’s Main Street corridor. A private institutional use diminishes that dynamic.

4. Parking and Circulation Concerns

The staff report states that no additional parking is required because the building footprint is unchanged. However, this assumption overlooks a key functional difference:

Restaurants generate short-term, high-turnover parking, whereas school and office uses create long-term, static parking demand.

Downtown Angels Camp already faces constrained parking availability.

Staff and students occupying spaces for extended hours will reduce turnover for paying customers, directly affecting nearby retail and dining establishments.

The finding that the use “will not overburden municipal facilities” does not consider the operational strain on limited shared parking resources that downtown businesses rely upon.

5. Economic and Fiscal Impacts

This conversion eliminates one of downtown’s few remaining restaurant-ready spaces, which are essential for tourism and community gathering.

Additionally:

As a tax-exempt entity, the church will not contribute property tax revenue.

The loss of sales and transient visitor spending will reduce the overall economic circulation that supports local jobs and small businesses.

The cumulative effect of institutional uses occupying commercial spaces is a less sustainable downtown economy.

6. Precedent and Long-Term Planning Implications

Approving this Conditional Use Permit would set a precedent encouraging other non-commercial, low-activity uses within the core business district.

Once converted, it is unlikely such spaces would easily transition back into commercial use, particularly after kitchen and restaurant infrastructure have been removed. This undermines years of coordinated effort by the City and business community to revitalize Main Street as a retail and dining destination.

7. Conclusion and Request

For these reasons, we respectfully request that the Planning Commission deny the Conditional Use Permit for 1250 South Main Street or, alternatively, require relocation to a more appropriate zoning district outside the core retail corridor. This would allow the property to remain available for a use that supports the economic health, tourism identity, and long-term goals of Angels Camp's historic downtown.

We thank the Commission and City staff for considering the perspective of the local business community, whose livelihoods depend on maintaining a strong and active downtown district.

Respectfully submitted,

Downtown Angels Camp Business Community

(Collective signature page attached)

*Additional Notes:

For the week of October 13-17, 2025 it has been observed by several nearby downtown businesses that school has been in session and students were seen loitering and shouting in front of the proposed site, with loud music coming from the building.

[illegible]

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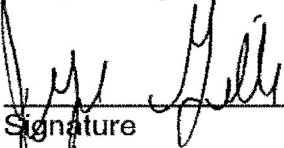
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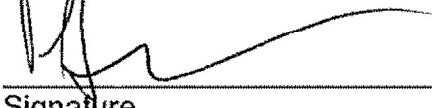
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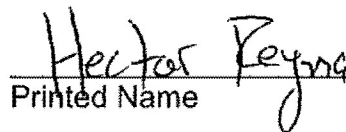
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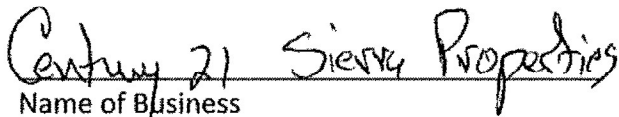
Printed Name



Signature



Printed Name



Name of Business



Date Signed