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TYPE II HISTORICAL DESIGN REVIEW AND VARIANCE FROM HISTORICAL DESIGN REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION

To: Planning Commission (serving as the Historical Design Review Board per SMC 17.35.055)
From: Andrew Love, AICP, Contract Planner
Date of Report: July 17, 2025
Date of Hearing: July 21, 2025
Project Name: Snoqualmie Ice Cream Historical Design Review and Variance
Project Number: DRB2025-0004

BACKGROUND:

The City of Snoqualmie ("City") received an application for Type II Historical Design Review, including a Variance on approved colors, dated June 19, 2025, that was incomplete. The applicant later submitted additional applications materials on June 25, 2025, as required by Snoqualmie Municipal Code ("SMC") Section 17.35.140, and the City determined the application to be complete on June 30, 2025, pursuant to SMC Section 14.30.050. The project is located at 8102 Railroad Ave SE and is within the Downtown Historic Overlay District ("Overlay District") and the Historic Downtown Commercial Landmark District ("Landmark District").

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

This historical design review permit is for facade improvements to the front of the property ("contributing" *or historic*) building off Railroad Avenue¹ and the reconstruction of the property's rear building ("non-contributing" *or non-historic*) building off Falls Avenue.² The rear building had to be demolished and rebuilt due to fire damage. The addition of transom windows to the front building will bring the historic building closer to its original condition. The applicant proposes a white base color and black trim color for the reconstructed rear building, which is the only part of the proposal needing a variance.

¹ SMC 17.35.040(J) defines "contributing building or site" as a building or site located within a landmark district as defined herein, which is of historical significance and has substantially retained its original appearance, and is identified as such in the landmark designation report.

² SMC 17.35.040(Y) defines "noncontributing building or site" as any building or site not specifically designated as a contributing building or site in a landmark district.

BUILDING HISTORY AND CONTEXT:

The following is taken from the City of Snoqualmie Historic Commercial Landmark District Registration Form, prepared by Cloantha Copass of the King County Landmarks & Heritage Program, dated September 18, 1997 (available upon request).

HRI#: 1351/**1352** (The Fury Block)

Address: **8102**-8112 Railroad Avenue SE (formerly 120-106 RR Avenue N)

Date Built: 1928

Status: Primary

This one-story commercial structure, which contains three separate shop spaces, was built in 1928 by William Fury. This was the most substantial commercial development in the historic district in the late 1920s. The site had previously been occupied by the Fury & Kinsey Livery stable, which was converted to a garage in the 1920s. A battery service station had also been built on the lot, likely in the 1920s. The brick-clad storefronts featured large wood frame shop windows on bulkheads clad with large (roughly 4"x4") tiles. The doors were centered on the shopfronts. A single canopy, with a band of horizontal clerestory windows above, extends over the sidewalk across the facade of the block. The canopy appears to have [been] modified somewhat, mostly in the detailing of the edge profile. Above the canopy, darker bricks are placed to create a frame above each storefront. The stepped parapet wall at the top of the facade was crowned with decorative urns at the building corners and between the [storefronts], and with ornamental metal work scrolls flanking the vertically-projecting section of the parapet above each storefront. Only one urn remains; however, the decorative metal on the parapet cap remains on the southern two storefronts. [Note: At the time of this staff report, none of the urns remain].

At some point, the northern store was segregated into separate ownership. By 1940, the northernmost storefront was occupied by Anderson's Hardware. A large two-story wooden building, attached to the store at the rear and facing River Street, provided warehouse space for building supplies ... [This was the building off Falls Avenue that burnt down and was rebuilt]. By 1966, the upper part of the facade on this store had been covered in vertical metal siding popular in the 1960s. However, the original brick facade is once again exposed. The clerestory windows have been covered with wood shingles, and the original parapet design obscured by infill construction. The shop front has been altered. The wood window framing and doors and the tiled base have been replaced (probably c. 1950) with aluminum windows on a base clad with tiles of a much smaller dimension than the original. A cafe and sweet shop [occupied] this portion of the building [at the time of the landmark district nomination]. The center storefront has undergone similar alterations of the windows and door. The southern storefront has been infilled with vertical wood siding, and the clerestory windows have been covered with wood shingles. The southern two shops have been used as pharmacy for many years, most recently by Sims Drugs. [Note: The southern two shops are now occupied by Falls Compounding Pharmacy and Snoqualmie Trading Company].

OTHER PERMITS REQUIRED:

In addition to this Historical Design Review approval, the work to the facade requires a building permit and a street (right-of-way) use permit, since exterior work will likely necessitate at least a partial closure of the sidewalk. If any new signs are proposed in the future, the applicant will need to submit materials for Historical Design Review again and obtain a Sign Permit. The work for repair, remodeling, and/or maintenance activities is exempt from SEPA in accordance with Washington Administrative Code ("WAC") Subsection 197-11-800(3)).

SCOPE OF AUTHORITY:

The Overlay District and the Landmark District are two separate (but overlapping) districts established in Chapter 17.35 SMC – Historic Overlay Zones and Landmarks. SMC 17.35.150(B) and (C) require review by the Historical Design Review Board for Type II projects, in addition to Historical Design Review Variances per SMC 17.35.150(C). SMC 17.35.055 authorizes the Planning Commission to serve as the Historical Design Review Board.

Since the Historical Design Review involves a Variance, it is considered a Category IV permit under Title 14 SMC, with the Planning Commission holding an open record hearing and providing a decision.

The front building is a contributing structure according to the Snoqualmie Historic Commercial Landmark District map, which accompanied the original submittal for Landmark District designation. Figure 1 below illustrates the contributing structure in red, the non-contributing structure in magenta, and the portion of the contributing structure that does not have any proposed changes in blue.

Snoqualmie Historic Commercial District

REVISED
SITE PLAN

NOTE: Map from digitized base, City of Snoqualmie

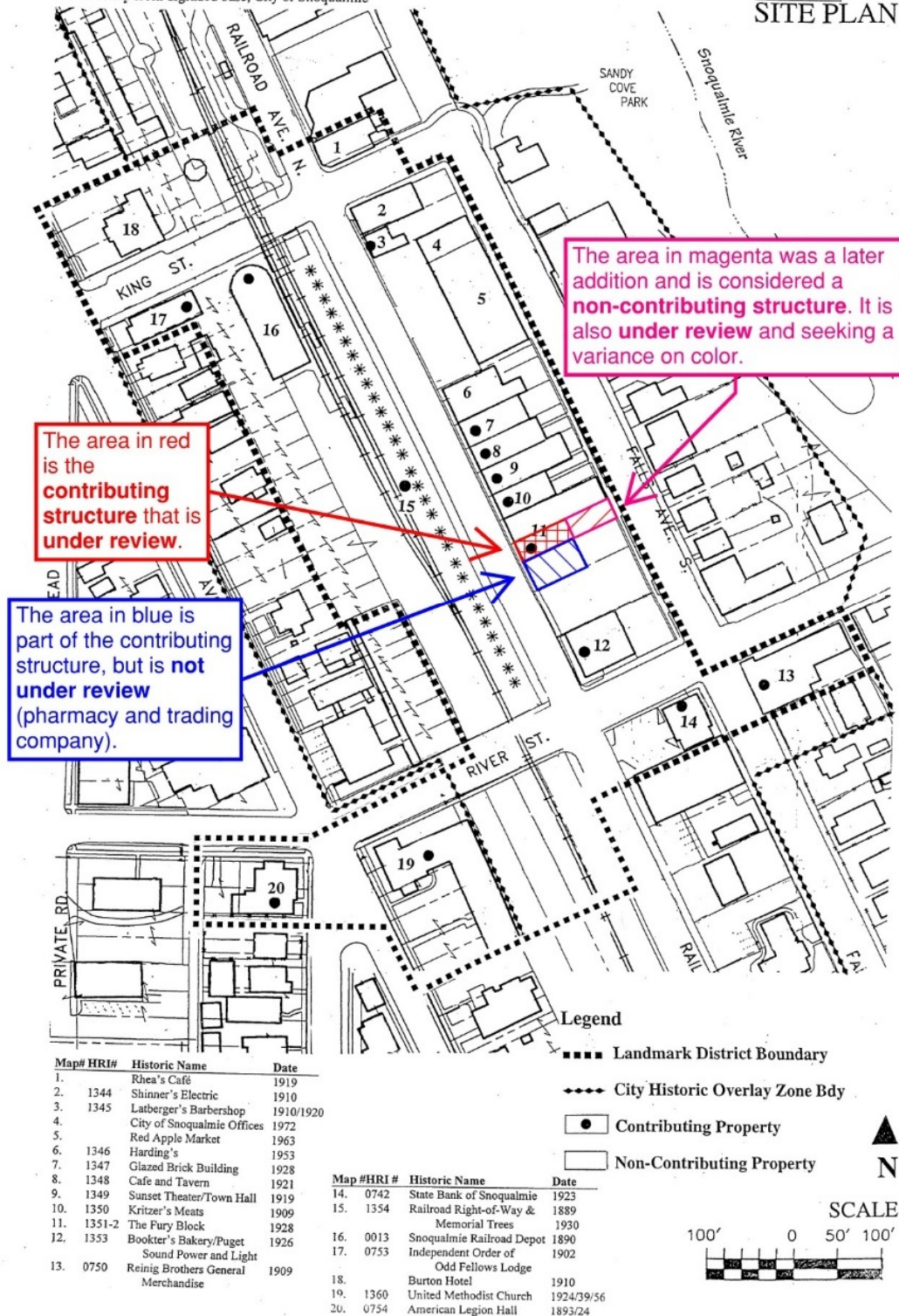


Figure 1: Map of the Snoqualmie Historic Downtown Commercial Landmark District

PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES:

The purpose of Chapter 17.35 SMC is defined in SMC 17.35.020, as follows:

- A. Designate, preserve, protect, enhance, and perpetuate those sites, buildings, districts, structures and objects which reflect significant elements of the city's, county's, state's and nation's cultural, aesthetic, social, economic, political, architectural, ethnic, archaeological, engineering, historic and other heritage;
- B. Foster civic pride in the beauty and accomplishments of the past;
- C. Stabilize and improve the economic values and vitality of landmarks;
- D. Protect and enhance the Snoqualmie tourist industry by promoting heritage-related tourism;
- E. Promote the continued use, exhibition and interpretation of significant sites, districts, buildings, structures, and objects for the education, inspiration and welfare of the people of Snoqualmie;
- F. Promote and continue incentives for ownership and utilization of landmarks;
- G. Assist, encourage and provide incentives to public and private owners for preservation, restoration, rehabilitation and use of landmark buildings, sites, districts, structures and objects;
- H. Work cooperatively with other jurisdictions to identify, evaluate, and protect historic resources in furtherance of the purposes of this chapter;
- I. Provide for the most efficient process for review of all construction, alteration, or demolition of buildings and structures with the historic districts and the downtown landmark district to achieve the foregoing purposes.

REVIEW CRITERIA – HISTORICAL DESIGN REVIEW:

Type II Historical Design Review for this proposal is considered relative to conformance with the following sections of the Snoqualmie Municipal Code: SMC 17.35.180 – Objectives and Principles of Historic Design Review, SMC 17.35.190 – Standards of General Applicability, and SMC 17.35.210 – Architectural Design Standards. Discussion follows each subsection below relating the proposal to those applicable criteria.

SMC 17.35.180 Objectives and Principles of Historic Design Review

The Historic Preservation Officer and the Historical Design Review Board shall be guided by the following objectives and principles in applying the specific standards set forth herein.

- A. The overall objective is to preserve historic buildings and the unique sense of place that make Snoqualmie distinctive and attractive.*
- B. The key method of achieving the overall objective is to maintain the historic details and materials of each contributing building. Design standards for contributing buildings are intended to be more stringent for contributing buildings.*
- C. Changes to non-contributing buildings or structures or the construction of new buildings or structures should enhance the overall character by using forms, details, colors and materials similar to those of contributing buildings or structures.*
- D. The standards and guidelines contained herein are based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, which may be consulted for assistance in understanding the intent hereof.*

SMC 17.35.190 Standards of General Applicability

The following standards apply to all regulated improvements:

- A. Retain and preserve the historic character of contributing buildings. Avoid removal of historic materials or alteration of the features that characterize the property.*

Applicant Response: Railroad Ave facing facade of the building was originally built in the 20's with windows above the awning. At some point they were covered over with cedar shakes, the intended change is to uncover and restore the window appearance above the awning to the original design. With regard to the main level windows that need to be replaced from the fire, the intention is to replace the silver framed windows with black framed windows to maintain some continuity with 8112 Railroad Ave Suite A and B (next door), which currently are black framed and are share the same facade design above the awning.

Staff Response: As noted in the Landmark District Registration Form, this building has seen several alterations through the years, and many of the historic elements have been replaced or altered. The proposed improvements essential rebuild the non-historic building off of Falls Avenue like-for-like due to the fire insurance payout. The building in the front will replace the glass that was added circa 1950, in addition to adding back the transom windows that were characteristic of the original design.

- B. Make changes to any building or structure constructed prior to 1940 as authentic as possible, based upon that building's own history and materials. Preserve pre-1940 era changes to an original building if such changes have historic significance of themselves or are good examples of that era. For buildings constructed prior to 1940, changes should reflect the building's earlier appearance as shown in pre-1940 photographs. Materials, style and detailing should reflect this period as much as possible.*

Applicant Response: The windows proposed above the awning are intended to match the original design of the building, as evidenced by both the exterior photos showing the conjoining design buildings next door at 8112 Railroad Ave, Ste A and B, as well as the interior photo that shows there were originally windows above the awning that were damaged at some point in the past and covered over. Our intention is to restore those windows to match the original style.

Staff Response: As noted in the Landmark District Registration Form, this part of the building originally had transom windows mirroring the two storefronts to the south. They were covered with wood shingles since at least 1997, and their removal and the replacement of the transom windows will bring the building closer to its original design.

- C. Any changes to post-1940 building shall reflect to the extent possible the features and character of the surrounding structures and overall historic overlay zone in which it is located. This shall be accomplished through size, massing and setback, roof configuration, window and door type and placement, materials and color.*

Applicant Response: The 8103 Falls Ave side of the building was built in the 1970s. Due to its north facing views, the interior is very dark, therefore it is proposed to widen the side windows overlooking the pharmacy parking lot, and add one window to the first floor east side, also facing the pharmacy parking lot. There is no change to the street facing facade of the building, only to the side windows. There is no change to building size, massing, setback or roof configuration.

Additionally, the white color choice for this building, versus the original army green, is intended to brighten the street. White is a historical color, and supports brightening of a commercial/mixed use street, which has consistently been identified as having inadequate lighting by local businesses working to revive that side of the business district. The lighter paint color helps to offset that concern, while also falling within historically accurate paint color choice.

Staff Response: The building off Falls Avenue was rebuilt without proper historic design review, but there was no change to building size, massing, setback, roof configuration, or door placement. Since the structure is already rebuilt using a fire insurance payout, there is little room for major changes in design without demolition.

The Snoqualmie City Council passed Resolution No. 1721 on July 14, 2025 to update the approved color palette, which currently dictates approved colors for individual landmarks, the Landmark District, and the Overlay Zones. While the application is vested to the previously approved color palette, the request to use colors from the updated color palette is within reason.

A condition has been added to ensure that any future additions or alterations are done only after receiving the proper permit or permits.

- D. Prior to maintenance or repair work, each building's historic features shall be identified and a plan developed to retain, maintain and repair such historic features. The identification of historic features shall be based upon the use of photographs from different periods, if possible, to understand the historic development of the building, its style and features and its uses.*

Applicant Response: I do not have historic photos from the early period of the building, however the photos of the neighboring buildings at 8112 Railroad Ave Suite A and B, along with the interior photo that I provided showing the hidden windows above the awning should piece together a historically accurate view.

Staff Response: As evidenced in a photo dated circa 1922, available from the Snoqualmie Valley Museum³, the original facade featured windows and a recessed entrance mirroring the two storefronts to the south. The applicant is planning to restore the transom windows to a similar look as the original, although the windows will have modern framing unlike the original wood frame windows. It is important to note that the wood frame windows were already removed by the time the Landmark District was nominated in 1997. The applicant or property owner are encouraged to pursue a Landmarks Capital grant available through 4Culture⁴ in the future if they wish to do further historic restoration activities.

- E. Repair rather than remove or replace deteriorated historic features. If replacement is necessary, use a new feature that matches the old feature in design, texture, color and other visual qualities, and where possible, matches the original materials.*

Applicant Response: The windows both above and below the awning have been deemed deteriorated/damaged to the point of needing to be replaced by construction professionals. The

³ <https://snoqualmievalleymuseum.pastperfectonline.com/Photo/A4BC630F-9FA4-43B8-A81A-631124947980>

⁴ <https://www.4culture.org/grants/landmarks-capital/>

replacements are intended to improve the visual quality of the building facade to better match the historical facade.

Staff Response: The wood frame windows were removed long before the current tenant (applicant) moved in. The replaced transom windows will be similar to the old feature's design and other visual qualities. As mentioned above, the applicant or property owner are encouraged to apply for a Landmarks Capital grant available through 4Culture if they wish to do further restoration.

- F. Avoid changes that create a false sense of history, such as the addition of architectural features from another era. Respect the physical record of each building's own time, place and past uses. If a feature is missing, replace it only if there is physical or historical evidence demonstrating the original appearance.*

Applicant Response: With the exception of adding a window on the Falls Ave east parking lot side, there are no architectural changes that did not already exist. The Railroad Ave lower windows would be new with black frame to better align with the businesses at 8112 Railroad Ave Suite A and B, who share the same upper facade; and the upper windows above the awning would be replaced in keeping with the look of what was originally built, but covered over many years ago when they became damaged.

Staff Response: The rear building off Falls Avenue is not considered a historic structure. The historic building off Railroad Avenue will incorporate transom windows similar to its original condition. Thus, the improvements will overall have a net benefit to the community.

- G. Preserve distinctive features, finishes or examples of craftsmanship or construction techniques that are characteristics of the property.*

Applicant Response: Our intention with uncovering the upper windows above the awning is preservation activity. The windows were built as part of the original building and covered over at a later date when they became damaged. We are restoring back to the original look. The lower facade below the awning will remain as is with the only change being new glass with black framing to better align with the businesses that share a facade at 8112 Railroad Ave Suite A and B.

Staff Response: As noted in the Landmark District Registration Form

- H. Use the gentlest means possible to clean all surfaces. Avoid irreversible damage by improper cleaning of historic materials, such as sandblasting of brick.*

Not applicable.

- I. Preserve a building's character even if its interior use changes. If property is no longer used for its historic use, adopt methods to ensure that the new use minimizes changes to the building's defining characteristics and surroundings.*

Applicant Response: Use of the building remains business retail as it was prior to the April 2024 fire.

Staff Response: This criterion is met.

- J. Design new additions and exterior alterations to preserve historic materials. New work shall be designed so that it is differentiated from the old and is compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features of the old sections.*

Applicant Response: The changes proposed for the Railroad Ave side of the building (new windows) do not allow for preservation of original materials as they have been deemed damaged to the point of requiring replacement by construction professionals. The replacement windows however will better match to the look of the adjacent building 8112 Railroad Ave Suite A and B which shares a roof line facade and awning, and will restore the upper windows to the original design of the building when it was built.

Staff Response: This criterion is met.

- K. Design new additions or alterations such that, if they were to be removed in the future, the essential form and historic integrity of the property would be unimpaired.*

Applicant Response: There will be no impact to the historic integrity of the property with any of the changes proposed.

Staff Response: This criterion is met.

SMC 17.35.210 Architectural Design Standards

The following architectural design standards are established in order to ensure that remodeling, new construction and other alterations enhance the district's pre-World War II building fabric and sense of place:

- A. Construct new or replacement structures to be similar to but not mimic other existing contributing structures in the district. Use architectural styles and materials representative of the pre-World War II era.*

Applicant Response: In our case, because the building next door (8112 Railroad Ave Suite A and B) shares the same roof line facade, awning and above awning window style with our building, it would be historically accurate for us to mirror those design elements as much as possible.

Staff Response: The building off Falls Avenue was rebuilt without proper historic design review, but there was no change to building size, massing, setback, roof configuration, or door placement. Since the structure is already rebuilt using a fire insurance payout, there is little room for major changes in design without demolition.

- B. Continue the pattern of massing, height, bulk and setbacks established by the existing pre-World War II structures. All new commercial or industrial structures shall relate specifically in style, massing, materials and fenestration to at least one contributing structure, preferably to one in close proximity to the new structure.*

Not applicable.

- C. Building height shall be governed by applicable zoning standards in SMC 17.20.040.*

Not applicable. There are no proposed changes to the building height on Railroad Avenue, and the replacement building on Falls Avenue was built using the same footprint.

- D. *Organize commercial building facades with the three-part horizontal division and vertical columns typically found in Snoqualmie's pre-World War II structures. Primary facades should have a clear base, middle and top. Box-like designs should be avoided.*

Applicant Response: The design of the building itself has not been changed, the only changes are to the windows as discussed above and the Falls Ave side color choice.

Staff Response: The design of the facade is not changing, aside from the reintroduction of transom windows.

- E. *Emphasize primary building entrances with a recessed entry and transom windows.*

Applicant Response: Building entry points have not been altered, entries remain recessed as they were previous to the April 2024 fire.

Staff Response: There is no change to the front building's footprint, so it is not appropriate to require a different type of recessed entry (like the original design – see the two storefronts to the south as examples). However, the applicant is proposing transom windows above the storefront, which is closer to the building's original style. It is also typical of other buildings on Railroad Avenue. The building in the rear was rebuilt without prior design approval, but it is in the same design as the one that burned down (like-for-like). Should the applicant or property owner be interested in restoring the Railroad Avenue facade to be more in-line with the original condition, there are Landmarks Capital grants available through 4Culture.

- F. *Break up street-facing walls more than 30 feet wide with recesses, columns, bays or entryways. Avoid long uninterrupted walls.*

Applicant Response: Building walls were built back as they were prior to the April 2024 fire and already meet these requirements.

Staff Response: This criterion is met.

- G. *Design and maintain rooflines to reflect traditional commercial roof configurations and pitches found in contributing buildings. These configurations include gabled, flat and shed-roof styles, usually with a decorative parapet wall.*

Applicant Response: The roof of the building is built back as it was prior to the fire in April 2024.

Staff Response: This criterion is met. There are no proposed changes to the Railroad Avenue roofline. Again, Landmarks Capital grants may be available through 4Culture should the applicant or property owner ever be interested in restoring the original roofline and parapet.

- H. *Accent the roofline with a dominant parapet wall in one of the styles commonly found in Snoqualmie. The most common styles include pediment, cornice molding, cresting and stepped front.*

Applicant Response: The actual roofline look remains as it was prior to the fire in April 2024.

Staff Response: There are no proposed changes to the roofline of the Railroad Avenue building. The building in the rear off Falls Avenue was rebuilt without prior design approval, but it is in the same design as the one that burned down.

- I. Make details on each building appropriate to its style. Most buildings are simple in style with minimal detailing.*

Applicant Response: All proposed changes are simple and straightforward and are reflective of the existing style of the building.

Staff Response: This criterion is met.

- J. Use traditional finish materials found in the Snoqualmie historic area, including brick, stucco, and horizontal or vertical wood siding. Modern materials and synthetic substitutes are to be avoided where they are easily visible from the street.*

Applicant Response: Siding used to restore the Falls Ave side of the building is vertical wood siding as it was prior to the April 2024 fire.

Staff Response: This criterion is met.

- K. If synthetic siding is used where it is not easily visible, it shall conform to the existing siding in dimension, profile and relationship to corner boards, window trim and other architectural details. Trim or details shall not be permanently removed.*

Applicant Response: No trim or detailing is being removed from the building. The uncovering and replacement of the upper windows above the awning will improve the historical look of the building (as evidenced by the neighboring building at 8112 Railroad Ave Suite A and B).

Staff Response: This criterion is met.

- L. On Railroad Avenue, include an awning or other sidewalk covering suitable to the style of the building, consistent with the awning and canopy standards set forth in the next section.*

Applicant Response: The awning is not being altered. It is shared with 8112 Railroad Ave Suite A and B and remains intact as it was prior to the April 2024 fire.

Staff Response: The existing awning is a flat canopy style, and there are no proposed changes.

- M. Choose paint and material colors appropriate to the style and setting of the building. Colors should coordinate with the entire facade and not conflict with adjacent buildings. Color schemes should be simple, in keeping with the community's history. The historic design review board shall establish an approved color palette, which shall be maintained by the historic preservation officer and be available for public inspection and use.*

Applicant Response: The 8102 Railroad Ave side of the building is brick and will remain so, the alteration is the window frames will be black on the replacement windows going into the front of the building to align with the color palette of the 8112 Railroad Ave Suite A and B parts of the building that share an awning (see photos for reference). The Falls Ave side of the building is

proposed as a simple white and black. The Falls Ave side of the block, while a mixed use commercial area that has been actively trying to improve foot traffic has difficulty doing so due to how dark that street is. Lighting is inadequate to commercial use on that side of the block, so a lighter colored building helps to reflect the natural light that is present later into the evening. White and black are a historically accurate, simple color scheme appropriate to the era.

Staff Response: The historic building off Railroad Avenue is not seeking any changes and will maintain its natural brown and yellow brick colors while the window frame will be black, matching the neighboring storefronts to the south. While the application is vested to the previously approved color palette, the request to use colors from the updated color palette is within reason.

N. Assure that rooftop mechanical equipment is not visible from the street.

Applicant Response: Mechanical equipment is not visible from the street on either side of the building.

Staff Response: This criterion is met.

O. Retain original window and door openings, keeping the original placement, size and spacing. Whenever possible, repair and re-use original openings and trim, including glass, sash, lintels and sills, steps, doors and hardware.

Applicant Response: Building design retains the original window and door opening design and placement, with the exception of the addition of one new window overlooking the east parking lot on the Falls Ave side of the building and increasing the size of two others to improve natural lighting. Repair and reuse existing materials is not possible due to the building fire in April 2024, therefore replacement is consistent with pre-fire materials and placement.

Staff Response: Regarding the non-historic structure off Falls Avenue, the door and window openings are in a similar placement as the prior structure that burnt down, with the addition of one window on the southern side of the building. Regarding the historic structure off Railroad Avenue, the replaced transom windows will be in the same position as the original transom windows which were covered up.

P. Retain original types and styles of windows, such as doublehung, casement or large commercial. Avoid modern window styles.

Applicant Response: Windows retain style of what was present prior to the April 2024 fire. No double hung, casement or modern-forward styling is being used.

Staff Response: The current windows are in disrepair (or completely new due to fire) and are being replaced like-for-like. The proposed design does add transom windows, which will significantly improve the facade of the historic structure off Railroad Avenue and compliment the other buildings in the Landmark District.

Q. Provide generous amounts of clear glass for the ground floor of buildings facing sidewalks to allow passersby to see into the building. Include windows on the second floors of street-facing

facades. Alignment, proportions and groupings of windows should relate to the first floor building elements. Windows should have detailing suitable to the building's style and materials.

Applicant Response: Street facing windows on the first floor are being replaced at the size they were prior to the April 2024 fire, as viewed from the samples and photos the front facades of the building have very generously sized windows.

Staff Response: This criterion is met. There are generous amounts of glass into the ground floor. The historic structure off Railroad Avenue is only single-story. The non-historic building off Falls Avenue has second floor with windows facing the street. The detailing of the windows appears to be in line with the conditions of the building before the fire.

- R. Avoid the use of vinyl or other synthetic materials, or anodized aluminum, on window or door frames on the principal facade.*

Applicant Response: The existing facade that needs to be replaced on the principal facade is already aluminum as evidenced by the reference photos. Our desire to switch to a black frame is to improve the historical look of the space to better align with the look of the neighboring spaces at 8112 Railroad Ave Suite A and B that share an awning and roof line design.

Staff Response: The original design of the structure included wood frame windows; however, these were replaced circa 1950. The current replacement is in keeping with the design since then. If the windows or doors of the historic building need replaced in the future, the applicant or property owner are encouraged to apply for a Landmarks Capital grant available through 4Culture.

- S. Use replacement glass when needed of similar size, color and reflective quality as the original.*

Applicant Response: Replacement glass is clear commercial glass at standard reflective quality. No changes to this.

Staff Response: This criterion is met. The building's original glass was replaced long ago circa 1950.

- T. Design exterior lighting to enhance the building design, with fixtures of a design and size suitable to the building's style. Excessively bright or colored lighting is prohibited, except for temporary holiday decorations.*

Applicant Response: Exterior lighting on the building is to be same placement and style as prior to the building fire in April 2024. There have been and will not be any colored or overly bright lights on the building.

Staff Response: This criterion has been met. Any additional changes to lighting (including lighting for signs) are to go through additional Historical Design Review Permits.

REVIEW CRITERIA – HISTORICAL DESIGN REVIEW VARIANCE:

The Historical Design Review Board may consider Variances from the strict application of the standards of this chapter if the application demonstrates the need for such a variance. The board shall take the following factors into consideration with respect to decisions on Variances in accordance with SMC

17.35.150(C). Discussion follows each subsection below relating the proposal to those applicable criteria.

1. *The extent to which the project would adversely affect the character of the building or the overall historic district.*

Staff Response: While the rear building off Falls Avenue was reconstructed like-for-like without the benefit of having obtained Historical Design Review approval, it was built like-for-like and the improvements to the front building off Railroad Avenue will provide a net gain for the overall character of the Landmark District.

As previously mentioned above in responses to Historical Design Review criteria, the requested black and white color palette is in line with the recently updated color palette (July 14, 2025). While the application is vested to the older color palette, staff finds that the request to use colors from the new palette are within reason. Further, requiring an extensive redesign of the non-historic structure off Falls Avenue could potentially be considered as unfair due to the limitations of the fire insurance, rather than improvements funded by the property owner and/or applicant.

2. *The reasonableness of the proposed project in light of other alternatives available to achieve the objectives of the owner and the applicant.*

Staff Response: The other alternative to paint color would be to use one of the four options in the older color palette; however, the requested colors are in line with the recently updated color palette.

3. *The extent to which the proposed variance may be necessary to meet the requirements of a law or regulation, such as the building code, including the Washington State Barrier Free regulations, the Model Toxic Control Act, or the Flood Hazard regulations.*

Staff Response: Not applicable. The building was built like-for-like and a Building Permit was already obtained for the building off Falls Avenue.

DECISION:

Based on the consistency analysis above, staff finds that the application is substantially consistent with the design guidelines for construction within the Overlay District and Landmark District described by SMC 17.35. The application for Historic Design Review DRB2025-0004 for the proposed commercial improvements is **APPROVED with the following conditions:**

1. The applicant shall obtain a building permit prior to construction of the proposed improvements.
2. The applicant shall obtain a street use permit (also known as right-of-way permit) prior to any work in the public right-of-way (including the sidewalk).
3. If any additional work to the front or rear structures is proposed, for example new signs, the applicant shall apply for the necessary permits prior to any work being completed.

Andrew Love

Andrew Love, AICP
Contract Planner

July 17, 2025

Date

cc: Mona Davis, Community and Economic Development Director
John Cooper, Building Official