



## Community Development Department

City of Snoqualmie  
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### TYPE I HISTORICAL DESIGN REVIEW AND VARIANCE FROM HISTORICAL DESIGN REVIEW STAFF RECOMMENDATION

To: Planning Commission (serving as the Historical Design Review Board per SMC 17.35.055)  
From: Ashley Orre, Planning & Permit Technician  
Date of Report: March 31, 2026  
Project Name: Retro Alley Arcade Historical Design Review  
Project Number: DRB2026-0005, VAR2026-0001  
Project Location: 8036 Falls Ave SE, Snoqualmie, WA 98065

#### BACKGROUND:

The City of Snoqualmie (“City”) received an application for Type I Historical Design Review, dated March 20, 2026. The City determined the application to be complete on March 30, 2026, pursuant to SMC Section 14.30.050. The project is located at 8036 Falls Ave SE and is within the Downtown Historic Overlay District (“Historic District”). The project’s location is shown in Figure 1, Page 3.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The applicant is requesting a historical design review permit for signage associated with the new business, Retro Alley Arcade. The proposal includes a wood-composite sign featuring the business name, “Retro Alley Arcade,” painted in the approved color palette shade, Extra White. An additional arcade-themed accent piece, constructed from the same materials and painted in Classical Yellow, is also proposed and in compliance with the approved color palette.

The applicant is seeking a variance from SMC 17.75.020(I) to allow signage larger than what is permitted, citing the building’s significant setback from Falls Avenue and the need for improved visibility. SMC 17.75.020(I) permits one sign located flat against the building, provided the sign does not exceed 20 square feet. The proposed sign is 43 square feet.

#### OTHER PERMITS REQUIRED:

In addition to this Historical Design Review approval, the applicant must obtain a Sign Permit. A Building Permit will also be required to ensure the signage is securely attached to the building.

## **SCOPE OF AUTHORITY:**

Permanent signage within the Historic District is classified as a Type I project under SMC 17.35.120(A). Type I projects are reviewed by the Historic Preservation Officer, unless they are referred to the Historic Design Review Board, as outlined in SMC 17.35.150. Due to the requested variance, this project has been referred to the Historic Design Review Board for review and approval. Under 17.35.150.,

Should an applicant for a Type I project request a variance from the strict application of the standards of this chapter, the board shall review and make a decision on the project and the variance. The board shall take the following factors into consideration with respect to decisions on variances:

1. The extent to which the project would adversely affect the character of the building or the overall historic district;
2. The reasonableness of the proposed project in light of other alternatives available to achieve the objectives of the owner and the applicant; and
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 RECOMMENDATION:**

The application is consistent with the standards outlined in SMC 17.35.230 *Sign Standards*, and 17.75 *Signs*, except for the size requirements. SMC 17.75.020(I) states that signs in commercial zones must not exceed 20 square feet. The proposed signage is 43 square feet. Staff recommends that, because the building is setback from Falls Ave, a variance is justified for business visibility. Staff finds that the proposed signage, as shown in the rendering provided by the applicant (Attachment 1), does not adversely affect the character of the building or the overall historic district.

Staff recommends **APPROVAL** for Historic Design Review and Variance permit application number DRB2026-0005 and VAR2026-0001, **with the following conditions:**

1. The applicant shall obtain a Sign Permit to install the signage.
2. The applicant shall obtain a Building Permit to install the signage.

Attachment 1: Applicant Sign Rendering



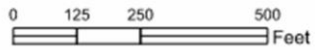
**Legend**

Districts and Overlays

- Landmark District
- Downtown Overlay
- Meadowbrook Overlay
- Parcels

Zoning

- Business General
- Business Office
- Business Retail 1
- Business Retail 2
- Constrained Residential
- Form-Based Mixed-Use
- Open Space 1
- Open Space 2
- Open Space 3
- R-2



Created by Andrew Love  
7/16/2025

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