



MOUNTAIN ARCHITECTURE
DESIGN GROUP

719.B.2.b Narrative for Variance, Major Variance

5) Variance Request: CDC 444 Commercial Oak (CK) Design Standards

August 25, 2025

Property Information:

Owners: Oak Street Partners, LLC
PO Box 775457, Steamboat Springs, CO
135 11th Street
Development Unit River House Condominium
Steamboat Springs, Routt County, Colorado
PIN: 286700004
Zone District: CK-2

Project Description / Request:

The Development Plan application is for the relocation of a historic structure to the subject site. The proposed use of the structure is a restaurant / tavern on the main level, and a cigar lounge on the basement level. The request to vary the Commercial Oak Design Standards directly relates to the historic preservation of an existing resource on the site. Variance criteria response by the applicant to Community Development Code criteria below. **Note: CDC Section 435.C Exemptions states that "Development approved by the Historic Preservation Commission in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior Standards shall be exempt from the Community Design Standards in this Division"**. The relocation and preservation of the historic Marshall House to the subject site is intended to follow Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, and listing on local historic registers.

719.D Criteria for Approval

1. *The Variance will not injure or adversely impact legal conforming uses of adjacent property, or the applicant has accurately assessed the impacts of the proposed Variance and has agreed to mitigate those impacts.*

444.C.1.a: Building Placement; shall be oriented parallel to the lot lines.

The requested variance to allow the historic structure to be sited at a slight angle will not adversely impact legal conforming uses of adjacent properties. The angled placement mirrors the building's original orientation and is necessary to fit the structure on the site while avoiding wetlands and the Soda Creek floodplain.

2. *The Variance is compatible with the preferred direction and policies outlined in the Community Plan and other applicable adopted plans.*

Chapter 11 of the Community Plan addresses the community's Historic Preservation vision and notes success of preservation due to voluntary, incentive-based approach to preservation and partnerships among the public and private sectors to preserve our strong sense of history and character, specifically in Old Town. This is precisely the case in preserving the Marshall House which would otherwise be demolished and remembered solely through a few photographs.

Goal HP-2: The Marshall House is planned to be available for historic tours outside of evening business hours to promote education, awareness, and outreach.

Goal HP-4: The subject site is located within the identified Area of Commercial Historic Interest and a prime candidate for furthering the efforts of the Community Plan's Historic Preservation goals.

Section 112.A.1 & 112.A.2 of the Community Development Code address the purpose of Steamboat Springs Register of Historic Places. The relocation of this historic resource to the subject site promotes this purpose to '1. Preserve, protect, enhance, and perpetuate the exteriors of historic buildings, structures, ... that reflect outstanding elements of the City's cultural, artistic, social, economic, political, architectural, historic, or other heritage'; and '2. Stabilize or improve aesthetic and economic vitality and values of Historic Resources....'.

Historic preservation is a core value in our community, reflecting a deep commitment to honoring Steamboat Springs' Western heritage and architectural legacy. Preserving historic structures maintains the unique character and identity of the town, fosters cultural continuity, and connects residents and visitors to the area's rich past. These efforts not only protect irreplaceable resources but also support sustainable development and reinforce Steamboat's distinct sense of place.

3. *The Variance application meets either the criteria for unnecessary hardship or practical difficulty, as applicable, or the criteria for an acceptable alternative:*
 - a. ~~*Unnecessary Hardship or Practical Difficulty*~~
 - i. ~~*Major Variance The special circumstances of the subject property make the strict application of the standard an unnecessary hardship to the applicant, and the special circumstances are not the result of actions of the property owner or applicant.*~~
 - b. *Acceptable Alternative*

The proposed development provides at least one of the following acceptable alternatives to the standard:

 - i. *The alternative achieves a result that is equal to or better than the code standard to which a variance is being sought; or*

444.C.1.a: Building Placement; shall be oriented parallel to the lot lines. The angled orientation of the historic structure achieves a result equal to or better than strict compliance with the Oak Street Design Standards by prioritizing the preservation of an important historic resource. Maintaining the building's original siting at a slight angle preserves its architectural integrity and cultural significance, which are vital community values.

This approach not only protects the unique character and craftsmanship of the historic structure but also supports the city's broader goals for heritage conservation. The variance allows for sensitive integration of the building into the streetscape, enhancing the pedestrian experience and visual interest along Oak Street while avoiding detrimental alterations that a strict parallel alignment would result in demolition of the historic resource.

By valuing historic preservation, the project meets and exceeds the intent of the design standards through thoughtful, context-sensitive design.

~~ii. The purpose and intent of the code standard will not be achieved by strict application of the standard in the particular circumstance; or~~

~~iii. The application of other code standards, purposes, or intents will be improved by varying the standard.~~

End of narrative.