

Amy and Casey Clark
5634 S. Prescott St.
Littleton, CO 80120

August 15, 2025

City of Littleton Planning Department
2255 W. Berry Avenue
Littleton, CO 80120

RE: Variance Application Project Narrative – Partial Flat Roof

Dear City of Littleton Appeals & Adjustment Commission,

We are longtime Littleton residents seeking approval for a zoning variance to allow a **partial flat roof** on our new single-family home at 5770 South Bemis Street. This property is currently commercial, and we propose converting it back to residential — in full compliance with its current zoning — to strengthen the neighborhood's character and continuity.

Our family has deep roots in Littleton. We have lived on Prescott Street for twelve years with our two school-aged daughters; Amy grew up here, attended Littleton Public Schools K–12, and now serves on several district committees. She is a licensed architect, having attended Clemson University for undergrad and obtaining her Master of Architecture degree from Columbia University. She owns a consulting practice and teaches architecture studios at the University of Colorado Denver. Casey volunteers as a Director with the Evans Scholars Foundation, helping send deserving students to college. We are committed to remaining active members of this community for years to come.



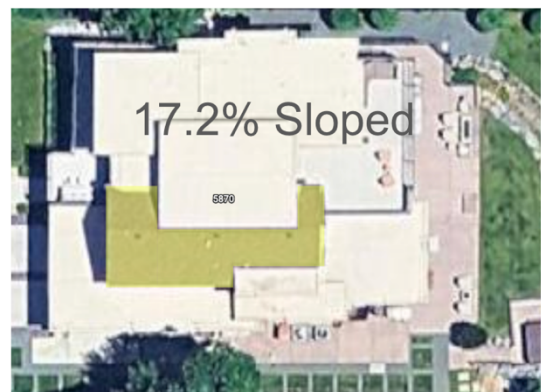
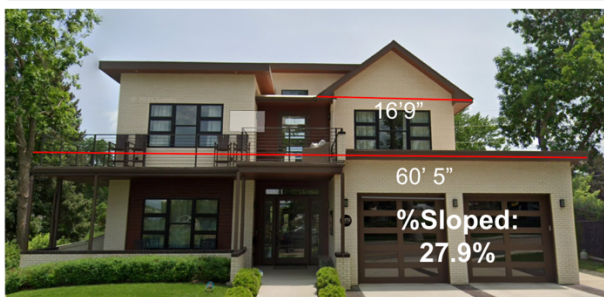
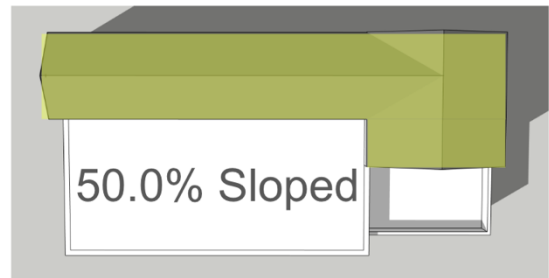
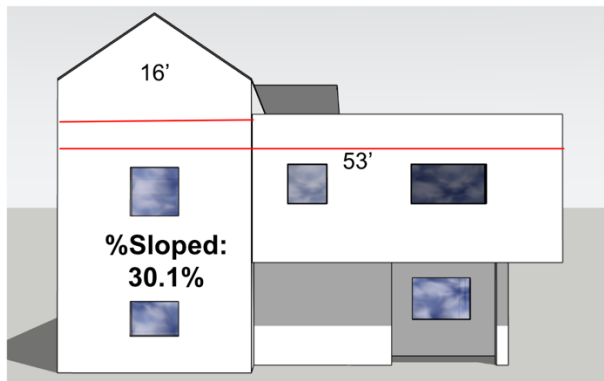
Above: Existing Site Conditions (View From Bemis)



Above: Existing Site Conditions (View from Sterne Park)

Zoning Compliance

In our professional and good-faith reading, the proposed design **already complies** with the code as written. Section 10-4-3.2.C, Item C-7 of the Contextual Development section of Littleton's Unified Land Use Code states: "Roof Forms. Roof style (i.e., hipped roof, gable roof, mansard, etc.) and roof pitch shall be similar to those found on existing structures within the same block." It does not prescribe a percentage of pitched roof or require uniformity across all homes. Our design incorporates a prominent pitched-roof element visible from the street while also including a flat portion. Our nearest neighbor to the south has similar roof forms, with a combination of sloped and pitched roofs.



*Top Diagrams: Proposed roofs for our project at 5770 S Bemis
Bottom Diagrams: Our nearest neighbor to the south at 5870 S Bemis*

Hardship Created by the Site

We understand, however, that code language can be interpreted in different ways, and we want to demonstrate the hardship our site presents.

This lot lies within a regulated floodplain, which significantly reduces the buildable footprint and **prohibits a basement** — eliminating an entire level of living space typical for new residences in this area. All living area must therefore be accommodated above grade, creating added pressure on height, massing, and roof form.

We have intentionally designed a two-story 4,044 SF home — smaller than many comparable new homes, which are often closer to 5,000 SF and three-stories tall — to ensure the scale fits the neighborhood. Due to floodplain restrictions, the prohibition of a basement and the area sacrificed on the upper floor due to the pitched roof, this design loses a total of 1,944 SF that would otherwise be part of the project. The floodplain constraints make roof form especially important to keeping the building within allowable height.

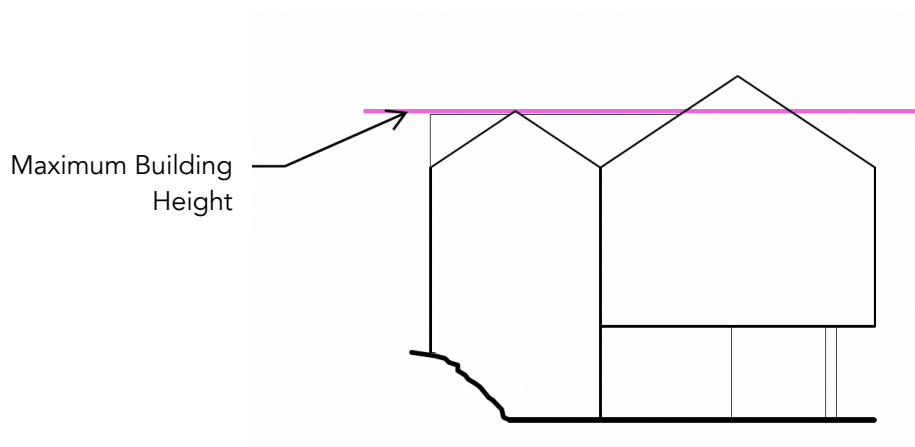
Why a Flat Roof Is Necessary

A fully pitched roof on this constrained site would exceed the maximum allowable height and require a separate height variance — something we have deliberately chosen to avoid out of respect for zoning regulations and neighborhood views.

Instead, our design uses a **partial flat roof paired with a pitched element** facing the street. This approach:

- Keeps the building under the maximum height allowed by code.
- Produces a lower, **less visually obtrusive** profile than a taller pitched form.
- Maintains the zoning code's intent for pitched-roof visibility.
- Aligns with established neighborhood precedent.

This solution also supports our Passive House performance goals, reduces unnecessary exterior surface area, improves the building envelope's efficiency, and allows for a **green roof** that will reduce stormwater runoff, improve air quality, moderate the urban heat island effect, and sequester carbon.



Benefits of Granting the Variance

- Enables a sustainable, energy-efficient design meeting Passive House standards.
- Avoids the need for a height variance while preserving neighborhood views.
- Maintains scale and massing consistent with surrounding homes.

- Replaces an incompatible commercial structure with a high-quality residence.
- Strengthens the architectural character of the neighborhood.



Above: Proposed View from Bemis

Project Goals and Timing

Our goal is to construct a thoughtfully scaled primary residence that responds directly to the site's environmental limitations while contributing positively to the surrounding streetscape. By working with — rather than against — the floodplain boundary, we are minimizing environmental disturbance and ensuring long-term site stability and safety.

We plan to begin construction within a few months of obtaining a building permit and expect completion within 18 months, allowing for timely neighborhood improvement while adhering to all city and environmental regulations.

Aesthetics, Scope, and Scale

The proposed home will be a three-bedroom residence inspired by a Scandinavian design aesthetic — clean, minimal, and understated. The narrower effective lot width will be respected to ensure the home does not overwhelm adjacent properties.

To meet Passive House standards, the form is intentionally simple, minimizing thermal bridging and maximizing energy efficiency. The material palette will likely consist of masonry, wood, and stucco, with emphasis on quality craftsmanship and contextually appropriate detailing. Landscaping will enhance the street presence, ensuring the new home blends harmoniously into the neighborhood.

Alignment with Comprehensive Plan Guiding Principles

- **Anchored:** The design responds to the natural floodplain, anchoring the home within the environmental context without drastic alteration of the landscape.
- **Authentic:** The architecture reflects both site constraints and neighborhood precedent, ensuring a genuine connection to Littleton's established character.
- **Connected:** Converting the property from commercial to residential use strengthens its ties to the community.
- **Active:** The lot's infill nature and proximity to downtown make it a lively addition to the neighborhood fabric.
- **Engaged:** This project demonstrates a collaborative and transparent approach, seeking solutions that enhance the neighborhood while respecting city standards.



Above: Proposed Project Massing

We believe our design already meets the intent of the zoning code. However, if the Commission determines a variance is needed, we have shown that site-specific hardships justify approval. This proposal balances neighborhood character, environmental responsibility, and practical adaptation to the site's constraints — replacing an out-of-place commercial building with a sustainable, appropriately scaled home that will serve our family and the community for decades.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to discussing the proposal further and providing any information the Commission may need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amy Clark', with a stylized, cursive script.

Amy Clark

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Casey Clark', with a stylized, cursive script.

Casey Clark

5770 South Bemis Street - Variance Request

Response to Decision Criteria

Applicant: Amy and Casey Clark

Date: August 15, 2025

Subject: Partial Flat-Roof Variance

Variance Application Decision Criteria – Partial Flat Roof

The applicant respectfully requests approval of a variance related to roof form requirements for the property at 5770 S Bemis. In our professional interpretation, the proposed design already meets the *intent* of the zoning code by incorporating a prominent pitched roof element visible from the street and aligning with neighborhood precedent.

However, should the Commission determine that a variance is required, we submit the following responses to the criteria outlined in the Code. These responses demonstrate that unique site-specific conditions — particularly the property's location in a regulated floodplain — create a legitimate hardship that justifies a minimal, targeted variance while ensuring the project remains fully consistent with neighborhood character and city goals.

The following responses address each of the six decision criteria set forth by the ULUC for the granting of a variance.

- a. **Strict application of the provisions of this Code would impose an undue hardship on the applicant, and deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other residents of the district in which the property is located;**

The property's location within a regulated floodplain prohibits a basement and reduces the buildable footprint, eliminating a full floor of living space typical in comparable neighborhood homes, and also decreasing the usable space on the upper level due to the pitched roof. A fully pitched roof would push the building over the allowable height, requiring a separate height variance. This would deprive the applicant of a home of comparable size and livability to other residences in the district while complying with floodplain restrictions.

- b. **The hardship is based on or results from the particular physical surroundings, shape, or topographical conditions of the subject property;**

The hardship arises directly from the site's physical conditions: regulated floodplain boundaries, required elevated construction, and height limitations. These constraints compress the buildable area vertically and horizontally, making a partial flat roof essential to avoid exceeding height limits while still providing adequate above-grade living space.

- c. **The hardship under which the variance is sought was not created by the owner, occupant, or agent of the owner of the property in question;**

The applicant did not create the floodplain designation, height restrictions, or zoning requirements. These are existing environmental and regulatory conditions inherent to the property. The design has been developed specifically to work within these limitations, not to circumvent them.

- d. **The variance requested is the minimum necessary that will make possible a permitted use of the land, building, or structure;**

The proposed partial flat roof is the smallest departure from the strictest interpretation of the roof form requirement that allows the project to proceed without exceeding height limits. A full pitched roof would necessitate a separate height variance, whereas this solution keeps the project compliant in all other respects.

- e. **A variance will not confer on the applicant any special privilege that is denied to other lands or structures in the same district; and**

Mixed roof forms already exist in the neighborhood, including the adjacent home to the south. The variance would allow the applicant to use an approach consistent with neighborhood precedent, not to gain an advantage unavailable to others.

- f. **A variance will not adversely affect the public health, safety, and welfare.**

The proposed design will replace an outdated commercial structure with a sustainable, energy-efficient residence that meets Passive House standards, improves stormwater management with a green roof, preserves neighborhood views, and enhances the streetscape. The project aligns with environmental and safety considerations, particularly by respecting floodplain boundaries and minimizing site disturbance.

This proposal represents a thoughtful balance between environmental responsibility, architectural compatibility, and zoning compliance. The variance sought is the smallest adjustment necessary to allow the property to be used in a manner consistent with other homes in the area while addressing unique physical constraints beyond the applicant's control.

Approval will replace an incompatible commercial building with a sustainable, passive house residence. We look forward to working collaboratively with the City to realize a project that benefits both the community and the environment.

IMPROVEMENT SURVEY PLAT

LOT 21 TOGETHER WITH THOSE PORTIONS OF LOTS 22 TO 25, COMSTOCK ADDITION TO LITTLETON,
LOCATED IN THE SOUTHWEST ONE-QUARTER OF SECTION 16, TOWNSHIP 5 SOUTH, RANGE 68 WEST OF THE 6TH PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN,
CITY OF LITTLETON, COUNTY OF ARAPAHOE, STATE OF COLORADO

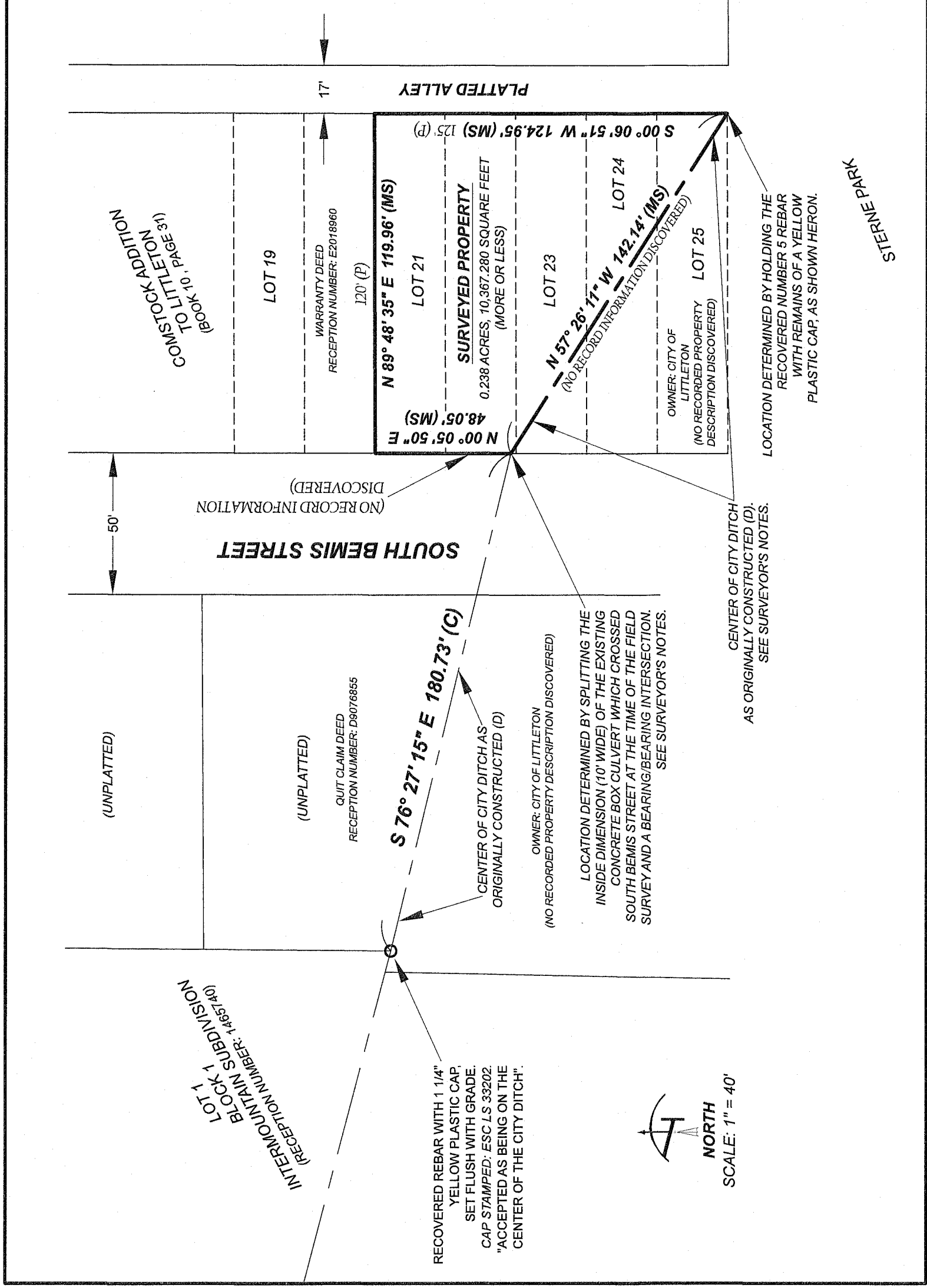
PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

(AS DESCRIBED IN SPECIAL WARRANTY DEED RECORDED AT RECEPTION NUMBER E3044402)
LOT 21 AND THAT PART OF LOTS 22 TO 25, INCLUSIVE, LYING NORTHEASTERLY OF THE
CENTERLINE OF THE CITY DITCH, FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE PLATTE WATER COMPANY
DITCH AS ORIGINALLY CONSTRUCTED, COMSTOCKS ADDITION TO LITTLETON, WHICH SAID
REAL PROPERTY IS ALSO DESCRIBED AS LOT 21 AND THAT PART OF LOTS 22, 23, 24 AND 25,
LYING NORTH OF THE PLATTE WATER COMPANY'S DITCH, AS SHOWN ON THE PLAT OF
COMSTOCK ADDITION TO LITTLETON, ALL IN COMSTOCKS ADDITION TO LITTLETON, COUNTY
OF ARAPAHOE, STATE OF COLORADO.

SURVEYOR'S NOTES

AT THE TIME OF SURVEY THERE WAS NO VISIBLE SURFACE EVIDENCE THAT INDICATED THE LOCATION OF THE CITY DITCH AS ORIGINALLY CONSTRUCTED. WITHIN
THE AREA OF THE SOUTH BEMIS STREET SURVEYED PROPERTY, A DILIGENT RECORD SEARCH WAS PERFORMED OVER THE COURSE OF SEVERAL MONTHS IN
ATTEMPT TO DISCOVER INFORMATION, THOUGH SOME MAPS AND OTHER WRITTEN SUMMARIES WERE FOUND. NO RECORD INFORMATION WAS FOUND TO AID IN
THE PHYSICAL / MATHEMATICAL RETRACEMENT OF THE CITY DITCH. THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES WERE USED IN ATTEMPT TO FIND INFORMATION: ARAPAHOE
COUNTY CLERK/REORDER ARCHIVES, CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER CLERK/REORDER ARCHIVES AS SPLIT FROM ARAPAHOE COUNTY, ARAPAHOE COUNTY
ASSESSOR OFFICE, TITLE COMPANY, CITY OF LITTLETON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, CITY OF LITTLETON BEMIS PUBLIC LIBRARY, NATIONAL ARCHIVES DENVER AND
WASHINGTON, STATE ENGINEER WATER BOARD, CONVERSATIONS WITH LARRY BORGHER, PUBLISHED ARTICLE WRITER THE HISTORIC CITY DITCH AUGUST, 2021,
CITY OF LITTLETON RECORDS DEPARTMENT, RECORDS REQUESTOR, RECORDS REQUESTOR, RECORDS REQUESTOR, RECORDS REQUESTOR, RECORDS REQUESTOR, RECORDS REQUESTOR,
FINDINGS: THIS SURVEY USED THE BEST AVAILABLE EVIDENCE AT THE TIME OF SURVEY TO RETRACE THE LOCATION OF THE CITY DITCH. THE CITY DITCH WAS
OPINION OF ARROW POINT SURVEYING, LTD. THE CENTER OF THE CITY DITCH AS ORIGINALLY CONSTRUCTED IS SHOWN HEREON TO THE BEST OF OUR
KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF. SHOULD INFORMATION ARISE WHICH ALLOWS FOR A RETRACEMENT OF THE CITY DITCH TO BE PLACED ON THE GROUND BY ARROW
POINT SURVEYING, LTD. OR ANOTHER PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYOR, THE LOCATION OF THE CITY DITCH AS SHOWN HEREON MAY BE IMPACTED.

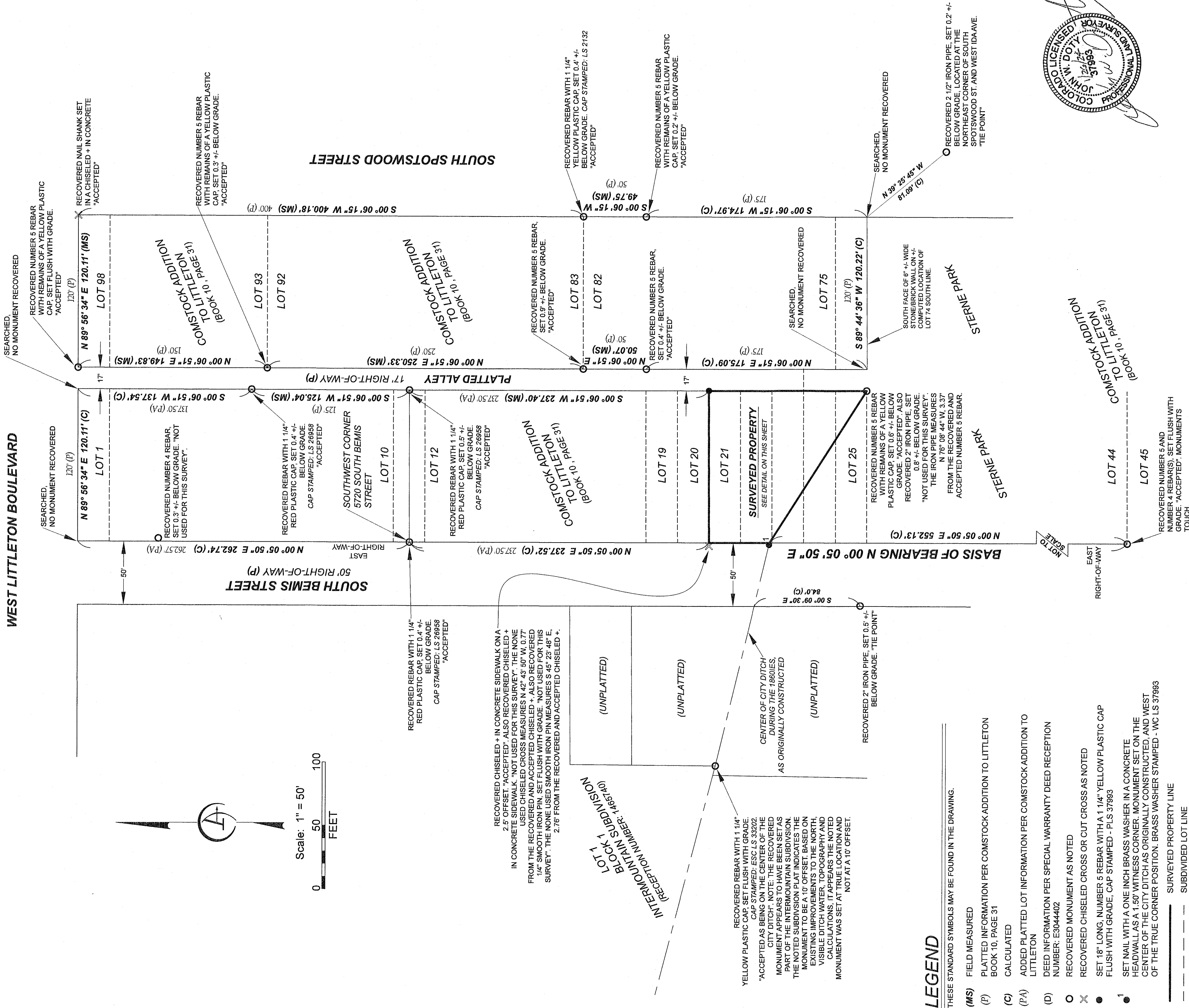
DETAIL



SURVEYOR'S CERTIFICATE

I, JOHN W. DOTY, BEING A PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYOR IN THE STATE OF COLORADO, DO HEREBY STATE TO:
CASEY CLARK AND AMY CLARK THAT A SURVEY OF THE HEREON DESCRIBED PROPERTY WAS MADE BY ME OR
UNDER MY RESPONSIBLE CHARGE. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE APPLICABLE STANDARD OF PRACTICE AS SET
FORTH DURING THE TIME OF THIS BOUNDARY SURVEY, BEING THE MONTH OF JANUARY, 2024, AND THAT THE
MONUMENTS SHOWN HEREON DO EXIST AND THAT THIS SURVEY REPRESENTS THE RESULT OF SAID BOUNDARY
SURVEY TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF. THIS CERTIFICATION DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A GUARANTEE
OR WARRANTY, EITHER EXPRESSED OR IMPLIED.

JOHN W. DOTY, COLORADO PLS NO. 37983
FOR & ON BEHALF OF ARROW POINT SURVEYING, LTD.



LEGEND

THESE STANDARD SYMBOLS MAY BE FOUND IN THE DRAWING.

- (MS) FIELD MEASURED
- (P) PLATTED INFORMATION PER COMSTOCK ADDITION TO LITTLETON
BOOK 10, PAGE 31
- (C) CALCULATED
- (PA) ADDED PLATTED LOT INFORMATION PER COMSTOCK ADDITION TO
LITTLETON
- (D) DEED INFORMATION PER SPECIAL WARRANTY DEED RECEPTION
NUMBER: E3044402
- RECOVERED MONUMENT AS NOTED
- × RECOVERED CHISELED CROSS OR OUT CROSS AS NOTED
- SET 18" LONG, NUMBER 6 REBAR WITH A 1 1/4" YELLOW PLASTIC CAP
FLUSH WITH GRADE, CAP STAMPED - PLS 37983
- SET NAIL WITH A ONE INCH BRASS WASHER IN A CONCRETE
HEADWALL AS A 1.50" WITNESS CORNER. MONUMENT SET ON THE
CENTER OF THE CITY DITCH AS ORIGINALLY CONSTRUCTED AND WEST
OF THE TRUE CORNER POSITION. BRASS WASHER STAMPED - WC LS 37983
- SURVEYED PROPERTY LINE
- - - SUBDIVIDED LOT LINE



Sheet Number:

1

