

Design Guidelines: Awnings & Canopies

AC1 Historically significant awnings and canopies should be preserved and maintained.

AC2 Awnings and canopies should complement the façade, not overwhelm it.

AC3 Awnings and canopies should not cover important architectural features.

AC4 Awnings should be installed so that the valance is seven to eight feet off the sidewalk and the awning projects four to seven feet from the building. An awning or canopy that overhangs the public right-of-way may require the approval of the Board of Public Works and Safety.

AC5 The shape of the awning or canopy should be matched to the shape of the opening where it is mounted.

AC6 Awnings and canopies should reinforce the vertical or horizontal proportions of the building.

AC7 Awning materials should be durable yet traditional, such as canvas or vinyl-coated canvas. Cedar shake, concrete, fiberglass, plastic, aluminum and other non-traditional materials are generally not appropriate.

AC8 Backlit awnings are not appropriate.

AC9 Awnings should be attached between the window display area and the signboard or second-floor window sills. Awnings should be attached below the transom if the transom glass is historically or architecturally significant.

AC10 Theme designs such as ‘wild west’ or ‘Swiss chalet’ are inappropriate for use in the historic district.

AC11 Awnings should be installed in a way that does not damage the building. Hardware installation should be the minimum required for safety and stability, and should be into mortar joints rather than the brick. If original mounting hardware remains, avoid removing it if possible.



This standard shape awning is appropriately mounted within the original storefront columns, highlighting rather than obscuring this important architectural detail.

AC12 Several shapes of awnings were used historically, and may be appropriate for use in the historic district. These shapes include standard, dome, convex, concave, bullnose and marquee. The choice of an awning shape should be guided by the shape of the opening and any physical or photographic evidence of what might have been used in the past.

AC13 When deciding on a pattern, simple and restrained patterned awnings are preferred. Colors should complement the color of the building.

AC14 Signs can be sewn or painted directly onto an awning or canopy. Lettering should be no more than twenty-four inches high and cover no more than 1/3 of the awning or canopy area. Consider locating signage on the valance of an awning.



Somewhat modern in design, this metal canopy adds architectural interest to the building as well as providing protection from the elements to patrons.



Awnings can serve as a great location for signage, in addition to adding visual interest to a building.



These old awnings on the former UEB Church are inconsistent with the guidelines both because of their material and because they obscure the distinctive shape of the windows.