

Awning and Canopy Guidelines

Fabric windows awnings and fabric canopies may be approved by the commission for use on both commercial and residential properties when such an installation does not detract from the character and the appearance of the building in question. Fabric awnings or canopies are not appropriate for every historically designated building and all applications shall be considered by the commission on a case by case basis. The commission, when considering the appropriateness of a particular proposal, shall consider the following:

1. What is the architectural period, and style of the building in question? What are the significant features of the building? Has the type of building under consideration historically featured awnings or canopies of the type being proposed? Does the awning or canopy type being proposed have some historical basis for complementary use with the particular architectural style or type in question?
2. Does the proposed awning(s) or canopy complement the facade's detailing, color, materials, scale, proportion and form? Do the color and pattern (if a solid color is not proposed) harmonize with the facade or do they overwhelm the facade's details? Ornamentation, including valance edges, should suit the character of the building. Does the awning or canopy fit within the frame of the window or door opening?
3. For what purpose is the awning(s) or canopy being proposed? New, commercial awnings or canopies should be designed in the spirit of traditional commercial awnings, or canopies and new residential awnings or canopies should be designed in the tradition of historic residential awnings. Residential awnings were designed to provide shade and cooling in the warmer months of the year. The commission shall consider fabric awning installations proposed for residential buildings, only if they are proposed for this purpose. In such cases, the fabric shall be removable or retractable. The commission shall consider year round, permanent, window awning installations for residential properties. The commission shall consider applications for permanent awning installations, when part of a traditional, commercial window display and the application, otherwise, meets requirements of the commission's awning and sign policies.
4. What is the setting of the building being considered? Is it an individual property or is it part of a group? Is its environment residential or commercial? Does the proposal affect a primary or secondary elevation? The commission shall be more lenient in its review of applications affecting secondary, less visible elevations including, but not limited to, the rears of buildings. Awnings installed on a secondary

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facade should not, however, give the elevation such new prominence that it competes for attention with the primary facade.

5. What is the maintenance/replacement plan for the awning or canopy proposal? All fabric awnings (cotton duck, vinyl-coated cotton duck, vinyl-laminated Polyester, and woven acrylic) have life spans that vary from 5 to 7 years. How frequently will the fabric be washed and what are the applicant's provisions for replacement upon damage or deterioration? Applications for awnings and canopies will not be considered by the commission without simultaneous submittal of a maintenance plan.
6. What is the plan for installation? Is the method of installation the least destructive and most stable possible?
7. What is the recommendation of the neighborhood association that represents the historic district in which the building is located?
8. Has the applicant or the applicant's contractor applied for a CHAP Notice to Proceed and a City of Baltimore Building Permit? Complete applications must be filed prior to receiving the commission's consideration of the proposal. It is the responsibility of the owner to insure that the proposal meets requirements, as needed, of the following: Building Code, Urban Renewal legislation, Minor Privilege legislation and the Zoning Code. Meeting this responsibility is accomplished through the Building Permit application process. Delegation of the application process to a contractor does not absolve the owner from meeting this responsibility.

Other: Traditional, historic, hard canopies and marquees, existing on commercial buildings should be retained, wherever possible. Reconstruction of historic canopies and marquees that have been removed shall be supported by the commission when the original design is duplicated.

The following categories of awning or canopy proposals do not meet the guidelines established by the commission:

1. Metal strip awnings or canopies, molded plastic awnings or canopies, or other non-fabric awnings or canopies, unless their existence as an original building feature can be confirmed.

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2. Year round, permanent window awning installations of any type on residential properties. Where part of a traditional, commercial window display, such installations shall be considered.
3. Awnings or canopies that obscure or detract from significant architectural features of buildings. Such features include, but are not limited to, cornices, -transoms, decorative lintels, fan lights, arched window tops, and recessed panels that are original building elements.
4. Awning or canopy proposals that lack an ongoing maintenance replacement plan.