



STAFF REPORT

This document is the staff's comparison of the Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation, Design Guidelines for Denver Landmark Structures and Districts, the Landmark Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 30, Revised Municipal Code) and other applicable adopted area guidelines as applied to the proposed application. It is intended to provide guidance during the commission's deliberation of the proposed application. Guidelines are available at www.denvergov.org/preservation

Project:	#2024-COA-960, Amendment	LDDRC Meeting:	January 8, 2026
Address:	1550 Market Street, 16M	Staff:	Amy Amidon
	Located in Special Review District #2		
Year structure built:	2013 (Period of Significance: 1860-1941)		
Applicant:	CDS Development Services, representing STK Steakhouse		

Past LDDRC Action:

Meeting Date: December 5, 2024

#2024-COA-960 1550 Market Street

Description: Outdoor dining patio railing and canopy

Motion by F. Glick: I move to approve with condition application #2024-COA-960 such that the location of the outdoor dining area and the surrounding railing are approved, but the canopy, lighting and heaters are not approved for 1550 Market Street, as per design policy, standards, and guidelines 5.3, 7.1, 7.2 and 10.4 from the Design Guidelines for Lower Downtown Historic District, 4.30 from the Denver Guidelines for Landmark Structures and Districts, and the section on Sidewalk Cafés from the Design Guidelines for Lower Downtown Streetscape, presented testimony, submitted documentation and information provided in the staff report.

Second: A. Duckett-Emke

Vote: Unanimous in favor, (7-0-0), motion passes

Meeting Date: September 4, 2025

#2024-COA-960 1550 Market Street

Description: Canopy over outdoor dining area

Motion by T. Strohe: I move to deny an amendment to #2024-COA-960 for the proposed canopy, lighting and heaters at 1550 Market Street, as per design policy, standards and guidelines 5.3, 7.1, 7.2 and 10.4 from the Design Guidelines for the Lower Downtown Historic District, 4.30 from the Denver Guidelines for Landmark Structures and Districts, and the section on Sidewalk Cafés from the Design Guidelines for Lower Downtown Streetscape, presented testimony, submitted documentation and information provided in the staff report.

Second: M. Utter

Vote: Unanimous in favor, (6-0-0), motion passes

Project Scope Under Review:

The applicant proposes a new outdoor dining area to serve a restaurant. On December 5, 2024, LDDRC reviewed the design and approved the location for outdoor dining tables surrounded by a metal and glass railing. Consistent with the staff recommendation at the time, the Commission did not approve a proposed overhead

canopy with operable louvers, decorative lighting and electric heaters. Among the concerns expressed was uncertainty as to whether DOTI would approve the extent of the canopy encroachment over the sidewalk, as well as questions about how the roof would drain. Some Commissioners also did not find that some guidelines were met. As a result, the railing was approved, but the canopy was not.

Afterwards, the applicant secured DOTI approval and a canopy redesign was resubmitted for LDDRC’s consideration in September 2025. The canopy was reduced in length and depth and the drainage system was clearly illustrated, but staff remained concerned that the canopy was not well integrated with the architecture of the building, and LDDRC agreed, denying the application at that time.

A third proposal was provided for LDDRC’s consideration on December 4, 2025 and the packet was issued, but the item was withdrawn before the meeting occurred. That design, with a slimmer profile to the projecting canopy over the restaurant entrance, is presented now for Commission review.

The design that is presented to LDDRC includes a canopy is broken into three sections that specifically relate to the building fenestration. The outdoor seating area has been substantially reduced by eliminating the portion to the right of the STK entry as one faces the door. The canopy over the restaurant doors sits high to denote the entry point, while the covering over the seating areas is lower than the Commission reviewed previously. A slight platform has been introduced beneath the seating to create a flat surface for dining tables, since the sidewalk pitches a bit towards the curb. The applicant has included necessary ramps for accessibility. Staff now finds that the project is a successful contribution to the building architecture and streetscape and staff recommends approval. For the Commission’s reference, business signage depicted in the application will require separate review.

Materials:

Canopy: Aluminum with dark bronze colored finish, operable louvers and integral gutters and downspouts.	Other: Infrared Electric Heaters, pendants and linear lighting
Railing: Aluminum with dark bronze colored finish. Frosted glazing behind the railing.	

Staff summary:

The building at 1550 Market Street was built in 2013. It is a large structure, spanning almost the full length of the blockface between 16th and 15th Streets. The tallest part of the structure, towards 16th Street, is located in Special Review District 2 of the Lower Downtown Historic District. This designation allows for the possible approval of extra height and density for new buildings. The lower part of the structure, toward the south, is outside of Special Review District 2. **Significant to this review, the Landmark Ordinance requires that six of the nine members of LDDRC must concur in order to approve a project in a Special Review District.** The proposed outdoor dining improvements span across the Special District boundary, therefore the policy regarding six consenting votes applies.

Outdoor dining enlivens downtown and is generally supported by the design guidelines. LDDRC reviews all permanently installed features, such as this railing and canopy, but does not review movable object such as dining furnishings and umbrellas.

Staff now supports the project as designed because we believe it meets the design guidelines. The applicant has addressed earlier feedback and successfully designed the canopy element so that it clearly relates to existing fenestration openings in the building. Staff does find that providing shelter to make the outdoor dining more comfortable will be a positive addition to the building and to the historic district.

Excerpted from Design Guidelines for Lower Downtown Historic District (2002)

Standards & Guidelines	Meets Standards & Guidelines?	Comments
<p>Policy 5.3. Facade Compositions A building's scale, articulation and definition are critical factors in determining how well it fits its context.</p> <p>5.3.4 Scale</p> <p>Requirement: Building facades shall be designed with appropriate human scale and scaling elements.</p> <p>Preference: Scaling elements may include, but are not limited to, expressions of materials by means of texture, color, and size; articulation of floor lines and structural grids; attention to details, including articulation of doors, windows, and balconies; articulation of cornices and banding; use of color changes; and streetfront or storefront articulation, including the use of awnings, canopies, signs, transoms, and kick plates.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Staff supports the outdoor dining patio and canopy because they relate well to existing architectural elements on the building and will add visual interest and pedestrian scale elements to the building.</p>
<p>Policy 7.1. Awnings Awnings are like eyebrows over storefront windows: they help shade the merchandise from harsh sunlight and the observer from glare. Materials, configuration, dimensions, and location of awnings must be appropriate to the building. For requirements related to awning signage, refer to Appendix A: Signs.</p> <p>7.1.1 Design</p> <p>Requirement: Awnings shall be designed as integral elements of building façade.</p> <p>Preference: Awnings should be a minimum of three feet deep (front to back).</p> <p>Preference: Awnings should be functional, actually offering people and merchandise shelter from rain and sun.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The canopy design is well integrated with the existing façade. It will provide shade and protection from weather and will create a lively place to sit and dine, contributing to the experience of lingering and enjoying this part of downtown Denver.</p> <p>Staff finds that the proposed materials are consistent with other materials on the façade.</p>

<p>7.1.2 Placement</p> <p>Preference: A continuous band of awning should not obscure architectural details.</p> <p>7.1.3 Materials</p> <p>Requirement: Awnings shall be constructed of traditional materials, such as fabric, metal and glass.</p> <p>Requirement: Plastic awnings shall not be permitted.</p>		
<p>Policy 7.2. Lighting</p> <p>All exterior lighting shall be of a relatively low level in keeping with the overall historic character of Lower Downtown.</p> <p>7.2.1 Floodlighting</p> <p>Requirement: General floodlighting of any exterior building surface is not permitted.</p> <p>7.2.2 Exterior Downlighting</p> <p>Preference: Lighting of sidewalk surfaces shall be generally discouraged except at defined dining areas. Within these areas, lighting shall be kept at the lowest possible level.</p>	Yes	The application includes a specification for pendant lights which will illuminate the dining tables at an appropriate level.
<p>Policy 10.4 Sidewalk Merchant Zones</p> <p>The sidewalk is the realm of the pedestrian. But other uses can peacefully coexist, provided certain considerations are made and rules followed.</p> <p>10.4.1 Restaurants and dining</p> <p>Requirement: Railings shall enclose dining areas.</p> <p>Requirement: No features of a dining area shall overhang the boundary defined in its revocable permit.</p> <p>Requirement: Railing design shall be reviewed and approved by the LDD/DRB.</p>	Yes	Staff finds no conflict with this guideline.

Excerpted from Design Guidelines for Denver Landmark Structures & Districts (2022)

Standards & Guidelines	Meets Standards & Guidelines?	Comments
<p>4.30 When locating a plaza, courtyard, patio, dining area or deck with a new building, minimize visual and functional impacts on the streetscape.</p> <p>a. Locate a plaza or courtyard to be level with, and directly accessible from, the public sidewalk.</p> <p>b. Consider locating an at-grade dining area to the side or rear of a property.</p> <p>c. Place decks to the side or rear of a property (preferred).</p> <p>d. Maintain views of a historic building when locating a patio or dining area adjacent to the street and sidewalk.</p> <p>e. Use high quality materials for patio railings and furniture.</p> <p>f. Use simple, low, and open patio railings.</p> <p>g. Avoid highly decorative patio railings.</p> <p>h. Do not affix umbrella holders or planters to patio railings.</p> <p>i. Do not use projecting or cantilevered decks.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The outdoor dining area is placed on the existing sidewalk, against the building façade. The size of the dining area is reasonable and leaves ample space for pedestrians passing by.</p> <p>The slightly elevated deck for the dining tables is a new addition to the application, but will improve the function of the dining area given the slope of the sidewalk. Staff does not find it to be in conflict with the guidelines.</p> <p>Staff also does not find that the proposal, including the canopy, would have a negative impact on the visibility any historic resource.</p>

Excerpted from Design Guidelines for Lower Downtown Streetscape (1991)

Standards & Guidelines	Meets Standards & Guidelines?	Comments
<p>Sidewalk Cafes</p> <p>Sidewalk cafes are encouraged in Lower Downtown. They allow patrons to enjoy people-watching, the District's interesting buildings, and the Colorado sunshine. The seating area should be well defined and easy to maintain. Metal railings painted federal green should be used to distinguish the outdoor cafe from the pedestrian path. Seating areas for cafes should not block the free flow of pedestrians. Sidewalk cafes should be located back from intersections where pedestrians tend to queue up before crossing the street. The placement of</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Staff supports the proposal for an outdoor dining area at this location. It appears that this particular blockface would benefit from some animation of the streetscape.</p>

defined seating space should leave ample room for pedestrians to pass by.		
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Basis: The outdoor dining area will enhance and enliven the historic district and meets the design guidelines.

Suggested Motion: I move to APPROVE application #2024-COA-960 Amended, including the proposed canopy, seating platform, railings, lighting and heaters at 1550 Market Street, as per design policy, standards, and guidelines **5.3, 7.1, 7.2** and **10.4** from the Design Guidelines for Lower Downtown Historic District, **4.30** from the Denver Guidelines for Landmark Structures and Districts, and the section on **Sidewalk Cafés** from the Design Guidelines for Lower Downtown Streetscape, presented testimony, submitted documentation and information provided in the staff report.

END