

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

RE: ORDER OF THE BOARD OF ALDERS RE EASEMENT OVER PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY, Building projections (cornices and awnings) at College Square 188, 196 College Street and 285 George Street (Atty Rolan Joni Young-Smith for Centerplan College Square LLC).

REPORT: 1505-17

ADVICE: Approval with Condition

BACKGROUND

The Board of Alders controls encroachments on the public right-of-way under the general authority of Article IV Section 5 of the Charter and Section 15-2 of the Code of Ordinances. The applicants, 188 College Street LLC, have submitted a proposed Order, which is accompanied by a letter describing the number and extent of the projections, and a drawing set. The Commission advises the Board in considering proposals for appurtenances over city sidewalks, and looks at suitability of design, scale, durability of product and its supports, quality of construction materials, and height above the sidewalk in the light of safety and potential vandalism. The city requires an indemnity agreement where the city is held harmless from damages. A public liability insurance certificate acceptable to the city's Corporation Counsel is required to be submitted.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Architectural elements such as window and door hoods, building watertables, string courses (types of horizontal moldings that project slightly from building faces) as well as eaves and cornices often project from building walls adding richness to the architecture and breaking down the scale of taller buildings. From time to time a business or residential building owner has proposed awnings, canopies or marquees over the sidewalk to protect pedestrians and merchandise from sun and rain, as well as to identify retail or residential entrances and display windows. These awnings can improve the pedestrian experience and the overall streetscape if they are well designed.

In the case of College Square the developer has designed (i) a cornice at the roof line that is five stories (66.5 feet) above the street and which projects approximately 4.25 feet from the building wall over the sidewalk on College Street, and which projects approximately 2.5 feet on the George and Crown Street sides. Additional smaller projections over the public sidewalks on College Street, George Street and Crown Street include: (ii) two horizontal cornice bands that project approximately 5 inches from the building wall, at approximately 16 feet and 48 feet above the sidewalk; (iii) several fabric awnings and canopies over the entrances and windows of the ground floor retail shops, which will extend no more than 3 feet over the sidewalk on a cantilevered metal frame (2.8 feet on Crown Street) at a minimum height of 8 feet (iv) a metal canopy over the main residential entrance to the building extending 7.75 feet cantilevered over the sidewalk and at a minimum height above the sidewalk of 8 feet and (v) and several lighting fixtures projecting approximately 1.75 feet from the building face, at a height of 12 feet above the sidewalk.

These are typical urban design features that the City has encouraged and permitted over the years, requiring that the owner of the building retain liability insurance, keep them in good repair and remove them if deemed necessary by City officials. In this instance none of the projections obstruct the public sidewalk as they are all supported from the building face. The materials proposed are similar or complement the materials of the building façade. The Commission is concerned that the awnings be colored and patterned in a unified scheme relating to the building

and that they not they not be used for additional retail signs, as there is a sign band location delineated on the building.

ADVICE

The City Plan Commission recommends approval of the proposed cornice, awnings, canopy and other projections with the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall submit a copy of his/her current insurance policy that names the city as an additional insured for review by Corporation Counsel.
2. The applicant shall maintain a **current** and continuous public liability certificate of insurance, acceptable to the City's Corporation Counsel, naming the City of New Haven as additional insured.
3. The City reserves the right to revoke the privilege for the projections if hazardous to pedestrians using the sidewalk or not maintained in good repair and clean condition, or the Certificate of Liability Insurance lapses.
4. Any type on the awning itself is to be limited to the street address.

ADOPTED: May 20, 2015
Edward Mattison
Chair

ATTEST: 
Karyn M. Gilvarg, AIA
Executive Director