

## URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE STAFF REPORT

APPLICATION NUMBER    Urban Design Record #UDR25011

APPLICATION TYPE        Advisory Review

ADDRESS/LOCATION        Bison Witches Sidewalk Cafe

HEARING DATE            March 04, 2025

ADDITIONAL MEETINGS   -

APPLICANT                Brandon Kosek, [bisonwitcheslincoln@gmail.com](mailto:bisonwitcheslincoln@gmail.com)

STAFF CONTACT           Arvind Gopalakrishnan, 402-441-6361, [agopalakrishnan@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:agopalakrishnan@lincoln.ne.gov)

### RECOMMENDATION: CONDITIONAL APPROVAL

#### Summary of Request

Nearly ten years ago, Bison Witches was approved for a sidewalk café that borders the east side of Tower Square at N 13<sup>th</sup> and P Streets. The patio space includes an overhead canopy that provides shade and overhead protection from the elements. A couple of years ago, it was discovered that Bison Witches had installed an enclosure around the patio (see attached images) that was not approved by the City. Upon an internal staff review of the added enclosure, it was determined that the Bison Witches sidewalk café was no longer in conformance with the approved application. In discussions with the applicant, they have conveyed that the enclosure is an attempt to expand seating in the cool-weather months when an outdoor patio would not otherwise be appropriate. The enclosure appears to be made of a thick canvas material with a red color finish and transparent, vinyl window openings.

When the original application was approved, there was an understanding that the activation of Tower Square was important and that sidewalk cafes could play a major role in that activation. Though consistently activating the space has proven to be a challenge, Bison Witches and their sidewalk café have been an overwhelming positive to Tower Square, and there is a desire to find a solution that works for them, while still preserving the City's investment in this critical corner of downtown.

The design team has returned with a revised design for the sidewalk café. The Urban Design Committee is being asked to weigh in on the modifications to help the City identify a path toward conformance.





## Compatibility with the Lincoln Municipal Code

As previously mentioned, Bison Witches was originally approved for a sidewalk café in 2013. The basic structure and layout of the space have remained unchanged and continue to be in conformance with Chapter 14.50 of the Lincoln Municipal Code (LMC). The new enclosure, however, is not in complete conformance, as highlighted by the following sections of the Lincoln Municipal Code:

### 14.50.020 Purpose.

It is found and declared that sidewalk cafés promote the public interest by:

- Making B-zoned districts an active and attractive pedestrian environment;
- Providing the opportunity for creative, colorful, pedestrian-focused commercial activities on a day/night and seasonal basis;
- Encouraging commercial activities which add excitement, charm, vitality, diversity, and good design to B-zoned districts;
- Encouraging the up-grading of storefronts and the development of compatible and well-designed elements within such districts; and
- Promoting land conservation, redevelopment, energy savings, and indirect tax revenue.

**Compatibility per Staff Analysis:** *The existing enclosed space offers the ability to extend the use of the patio beyond the outdoor café season, but is fully enclosed with little transparency, substantially limiting its potential impact on the pedestrian*



*environment. Further, it obstructs views of the building façade that was improved as part of the Tower Square project.*

*After several meetings and discussions, the applicant has returned with an updated design for the sidewalk café enclosure. The revised proposal introduces key design improvements including opaque segmented walls (color and height TBD), transparent storefront doors and windows, and roll-down clear phantom screens. These changes enhance transparency, improve the aesthetic appeal, and strengthen the connection to Tower Square.*

*Staff acknowledges that the revised design is a notable improvement over the current layout. The changes improve transparency which will enhance this important space in Downtown Lincoln. However, there is some uncertainty regarding the impact of the colored low-height wall, particularly with the space between it and the existing blue wall. To ensure the best outcome, staff would like to explore alternatives that incorporate a railing and extend the screens down to the floor.*

## **Application History**

2014: Original agreement for the sidewalk café approved.

2023: Agreement renewed.

April 18, 2023: Red, vinyl enclosure denied by Sidewalk Café Committee.

June 6, 2023: Red, vinyl enclosure denied by the Urban Design Committee.

2025: Courtesy outreach to Jun Kaneko Studio - no response. Current proposal requires no impact to pavers.

## **Recommendation**

The new design is much improved and will enhance the transparency into the sidewalk café and will overall improve the environment between Tower Square and Bison Witches. Staff support this new design with a condition that the applicant review and propose a design that eliminates the opaque wall facing Tower Square.



## ATTACHMENT A - Location Map



2022 Aerial



**UDR23073 - Bison Witches Sidewalk Café (1300-1320 P Street)**

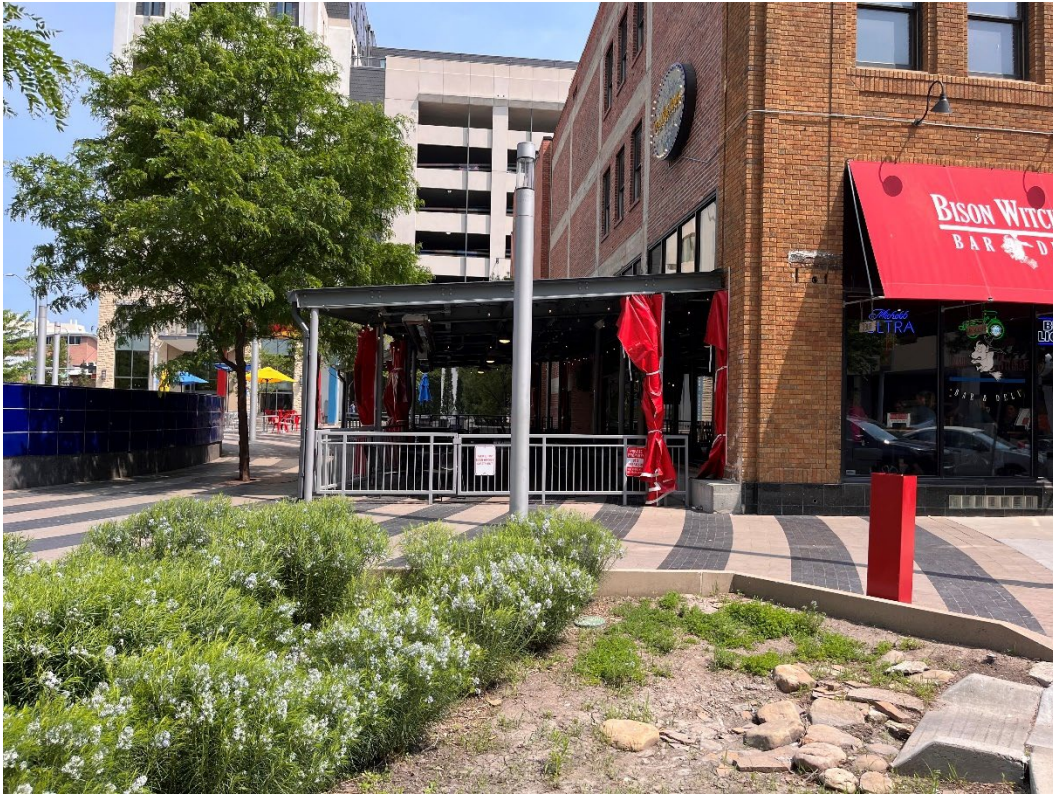
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PCP: 0305Plan2DevelopmentDC\_LocationMaps



## ATTACHMENT B – Photos













matching storefront windows and doors

roll-down, clear phantom screens at each segment between columns

existing; structure, roof, etc.

matching storefront windows and doors

Opaque, colorful, segmented, 1/2 wall to 36" a.f.f.



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Peace Studio Architects, Inc.  
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Patio Renovation

1320 'P' Street  
Lincoln, NE 68508

Preliminary Review

Job Number: 24023.bwp  
Date: 24 September 2024





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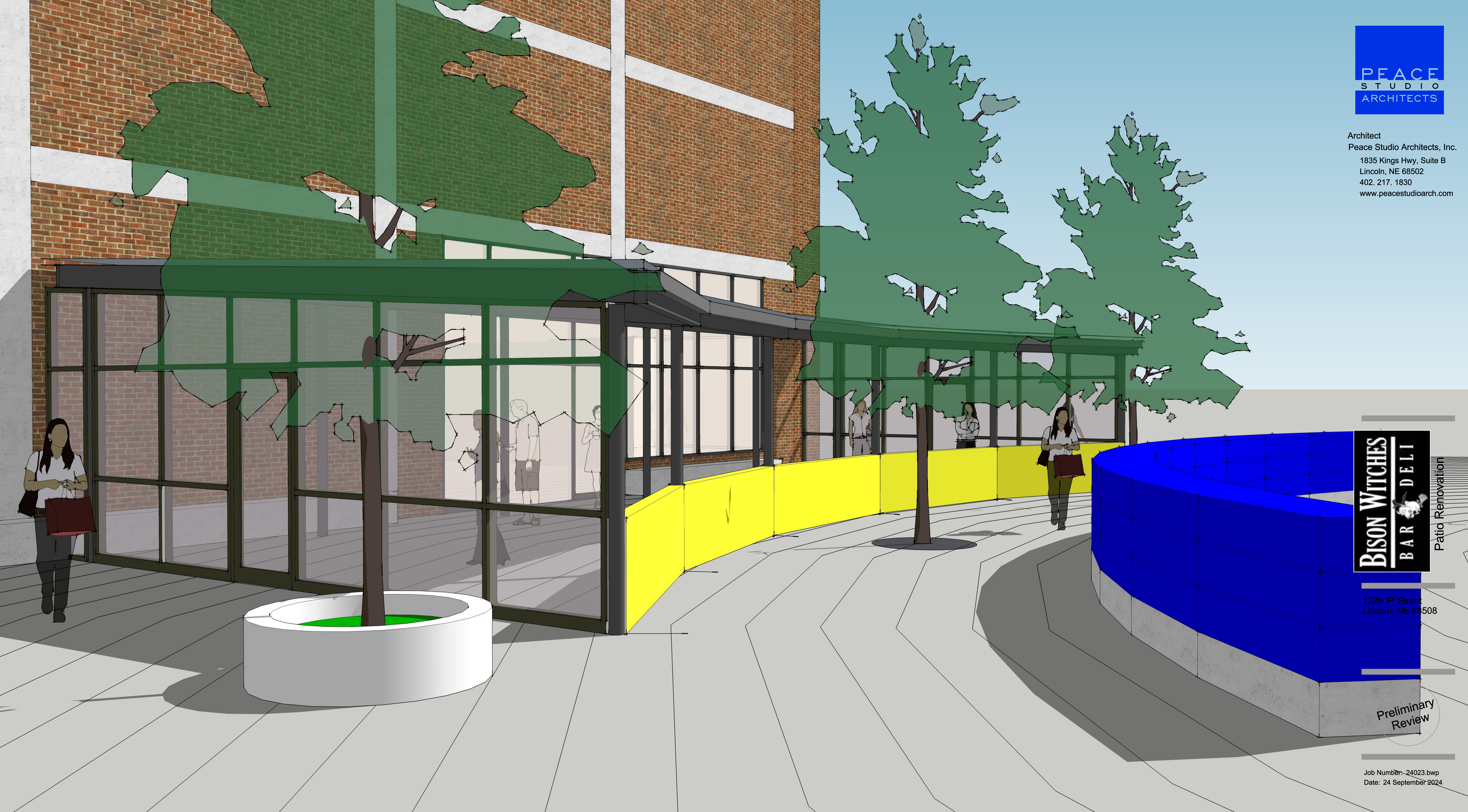
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**BISON WITCHES**  
BAR & DELI

Patio Renovation

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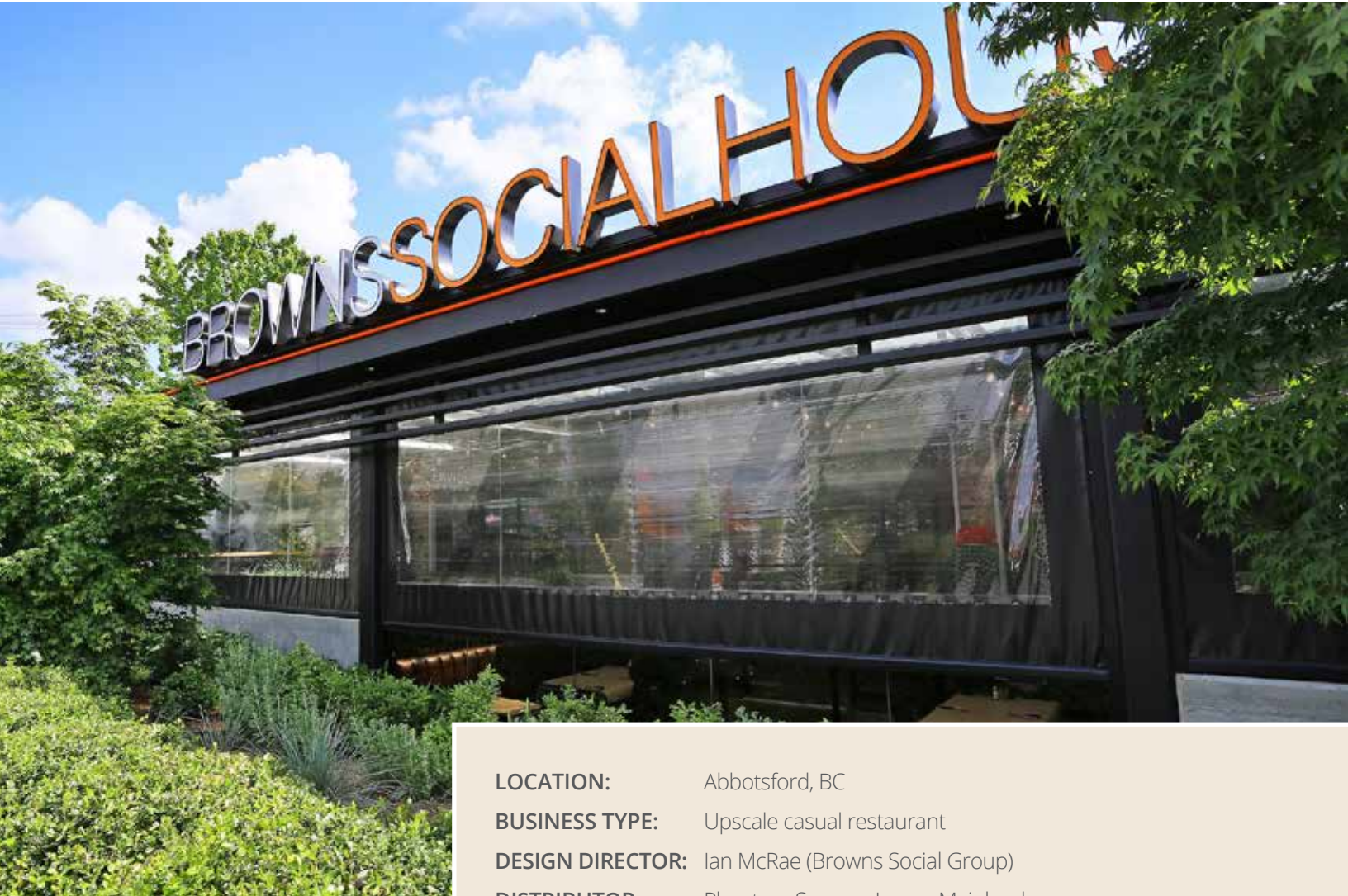
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# Browns Socialhouse

*Phantom Screens maximize the usage of the patio area, increasing profitability*



*"The Phantom team was really great to work with to execute this project. There was definitely good preliminary coordination in the design process."*

- Ian McRae,  
Browns Restaurant Group

<b>LOCATION:</b>	Abbotsford, BC
<b>BUSINESS TYPE:</b>	Upscale casual restaurant
<b>DESIGN DIRECTOR:</b>	Ian McRae (Browns Social Group)
<b>DISTRIBUTOR:</b>	Phantom Screens Lower Mainland
<b>PRODUCT:</b>	Phantom's motorized screens
<b>SCREEN TYPE:</b>	Clear vinyl with black vinyl perimeter
<b>NEED:</b>	The owner wanted a solution that could maximize their usage of the patio space year-round while adding customer comfort.
<b>SOLUTION:</b>	Phantom's motorized screens were installed to extend patio life and create guest comfort. The vinyl screens create a barrier from debris and help control temperature during the colder months.
<b>BENEFIT:</b>	The screens create a space that delivers an enjoyable dining experience year-round for consumers while increasing revenue for the business owner.



## OVERVIEW

Browns Socialhouse is an upscale casual restaurant located in Abbotsford, BC near a bustling university district. The 750 square foot patio area encompasses 12 tables, and the owner estimates that at capacity this dining space generates \$2,000 - \$3,000 per day of operation. An area that was once only available during the warmer months now provides over \$300,000 in extra revenue a year. Also, having the area enclosed with Phantom's screens help prevent theft and save time by not having to move everything back inside.

The motorized screens are located in the restaurant's patio where they create a protective barrier from inclement weather and help control temperature. The screens also blend in with the architectural design & décor of the restaurant. According to the business owner, the screens "complement the structure of my restaurant by adding to the patio 'feel' and guest comfort the screens create." Additionally, the screens are totally clear and provide 90% UV block - preserving the beautiful view while preventing furnishings from fading in the sun.

Browns Socialhouse originated in Western Canada, and the franchise is quickly expanding locations in Eastern Canada. With its rapid success, Brown's Socialhouse has won a multitude of awards including the *Franchise Award of the Year* and the *Pinnacle Award of the Year*.

## APPLICATION HIGHLIGHTS

### Increase revenue

A revenue-generating dining area that was once only available in the warmer months can now be used all year round. With Phantom's motorized screens the space can be used to its full potential, which increases profitability.

### Local service

Phantom Screens has the largest network of Authorized Distributors. Local installation and maintenance service is only a phone call away.

### Complements any space

Phantom's motorized screens blend with the architectural design and décor of the restaurant and easily retract out of sight into their housings when not needed.

## APPLICATIONS

Phantom provides motorized screens for insect protection, solar shading, privacy and temperate control on indoor and outdoor spaces that retract out of sight.

For a complete list of products for **doors**, **windows** and **multi-panel systems** visit our website at [phantomscreens.com](http://phantomscreens.com).

	MAX. WIDTH	MAX. HEIGHT
<b>SINGLE UNIT</b> with Track	Up to 300" 301" to 480"	192" 132"
<b>SINGLE UNIT</b> with Cable	Up to 300" Up to 108"	132" 240"
<b>SINGLE UNIT</b> with Vinyl	Up to 216"	168"



*"Our clients were very satisfied with our service, and saw it as adding value to their business."*

- Iain Twiddy,  
Authorized Phantom Distributor  
Phantom Screens Lower Mainland

For more information visit our  
website or call us today!

[phantomscreens.com](http://phantomscreens.com) | 1-888-444-4142

