

URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE STAFF MEMO

APPLICATION NUMBER Urban Design Record #UDR25105

APPLICATION TYPE Advisory Review

ADDRESS/LOCATION Bison Witches Sidewalk Café

HEARING DATE November 04, 2025

ADDITIONAL MEETINGS -

APPLICANT Brandon Kosek, bisonwitcheslincoln@gmail.com

STAFF CONTACT Arvind Gopalakrishnan, 402-441-6361, agopalakrishnan@lincoln.ne.gov

RECOMMENDATION: CONDITIONAL APPROVAL

Summary of the Previous Discussion at the March 04 UDC Meeting:

The Committee previously reviewed updated concepts for the Bison Witches sidewalk café enclosure at Tower Square. The proposal aimed to replace the existing red enclosure with a more transparent, retractable system featuring clear motorized curtains and a low floating wall along the existing handrails. The discussion focused on aesthetics, transparency, material alignment with the public plaza, and the structural elements of the café, with an expectation that the design team would return at a later date to present the choice of blinds or shades above the proposed low-height wall.

Overall, members appreciated the improved visibility and adaptability of the proposed design through the transparent storefront doors and windows, and roll-down clear phantom screens, while noting that color, texture, and material details would benefit from further refinement.

Current Review Item:

Since the March review, the applicant has provided shade samples for potential use in the café design with 3% openness. The samples are from [Draper Inc](#), and the website shows options that vary in color and openness factor, ranging from 3% to 10% openness. The samples will be presented at the Urban Design Committee meeting for your review.

Through correspondence with staff, the applicant has conveyed that the screens will be motorized and would be down only when the temperature is below 60 degrees, or in other extreme conditions. Precedent images of a shade with 3% openness:



The City's current code does not address shades, and shades such as these have not been previously approved for sidewalk cafés. However, as part of our ongoing update to the Sidewalk Café Code and our effort towards new Sidewalk Café Design Standards, we are recommending a minimum openness factor of 10–14% or above to ensure visual

https://linclanc.sharepoint.com/sites/PlanningDept-Boards/Shared Documents/Boards/UDC/Agendas/2025/Nov 4 Web PDF's/Bison Witches Sidewalk Cafe Staff Report_item2.docx

transparency between the streets and the sidewalk cafés. Sidewalk cafes are intended to activate public spaces where patrons and pedestrians can see from the café to the street and vice versa

Given that the Bison Witches sidewalk café is located on Tower Square, a city-owned park, and is already somewhat obscured by the existing blue wall, maintaining transparency remains a key goal. The intent is to balance aesthetics, visibility, and safety with practical protection from wind and extreme weather.

The applicant's engineer has noted that increasing to 15% openness would require an interior insect net, which would effectively reduce transparency again.

Request:

Staff requests that the UDC review the shade samples and provide advisory input on whether a 10% openness factor achieves an acceptable level of transparency and visual quality for this site.

Application History

2014: Original agreement for the sidewalk café approved.

2023: Agreement renewed.

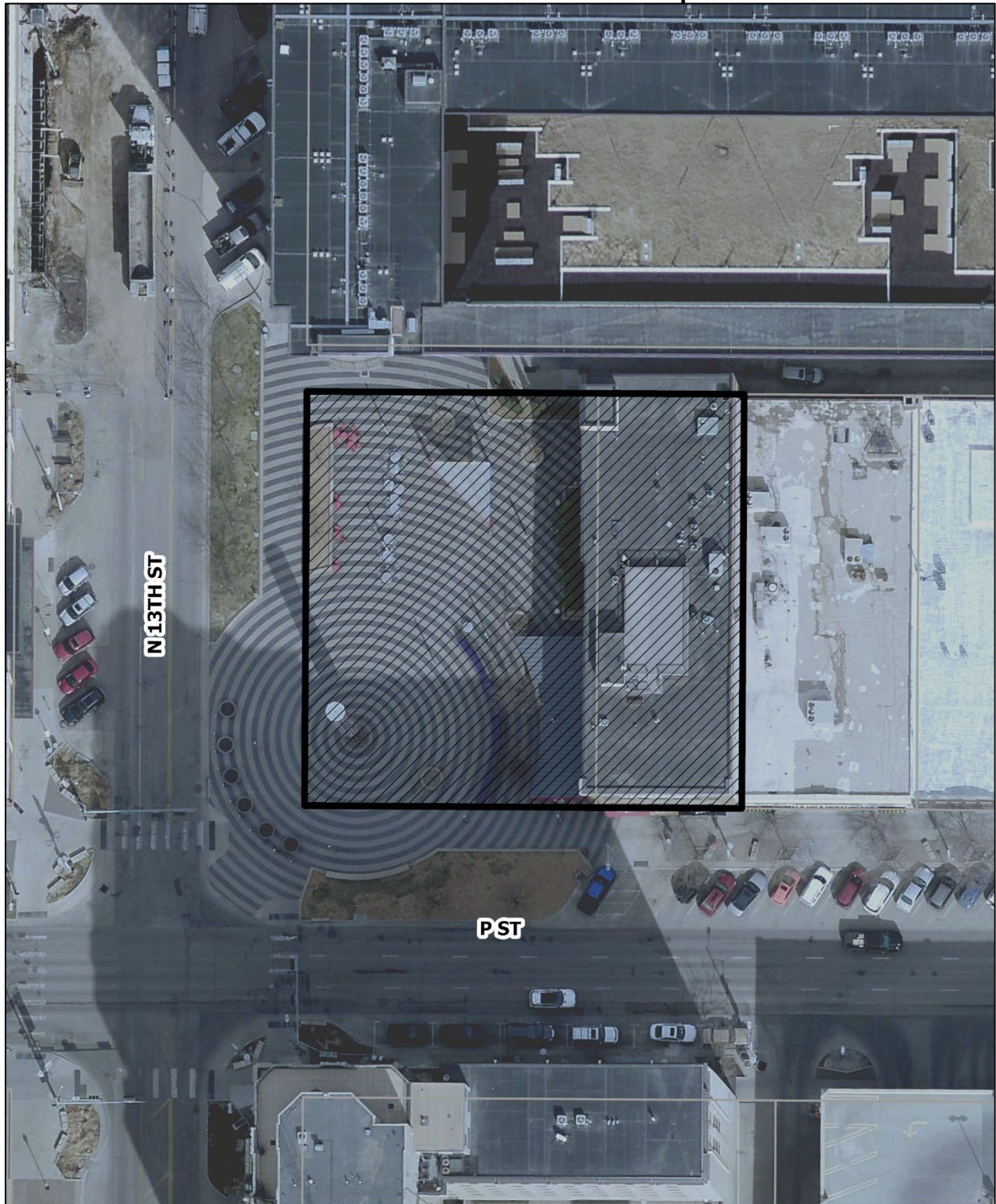
April 18, 2023: Red, vinyl enclosure denied by Sidewalk Café Committee.

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

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

March 2025: Approval of the transparent storefront doors on the south and north sides, and the segmented low-height wall along the existing railing fronting the Park space.

ATTACHMENT A - Location Map



2024 Aerial



UDR25105 - Bison Witches Sidewalk Cafe (1320 P St)

Project: _GIS\Projects\DevReview\UDC_LocationMaps.aprx
PDF: _\Boards\UDC\REPORTS\Location Maps

ATTACHMENT B – Site Photos

