What is a canopy?

A canopy (including awnings and blinds) is an architectural feature which provides protection from the weather. Canopies are usually fixed to the facade of a building but may also be free-standing.

When might a canopy be allowed?

The Galway City Council Development Plan 2011-2017, Section 11.5 (Shopfronts) provides that:

“In general canopies shall not be permitted except where they are necessary to protect goods on display, or where they are deemed acceptable under prevailing Tables & Chairs policy”.

The circumstances in which canopies may be allowed therefore are:

- where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that the canopy is necessary to protect goods on display; and/or,
- where the premises has been granted a license for outdoor tables and chairs.

Do I need planning permission for a canopy?

A canopy materially affects the appearance of the building on which it is placed. Planning permission is therefore required for canopies fixed to the facade of a building. A license is required for free-standing canopies placed in public areas.

What type of canopy is acceptable?

In view of the individuality of buildings, and of streetscapes, it is necessary to assess each proposal on its own merits. The Council will however apply the following general principles in determining what type of canopy may be acceptable:

- canopies should be appropriately integrated into the overall design of the shopfront or pubfront, and the streetscape, with attention given to the style, scale, position and materials/colour of the canopy,
- canopies on adjoining buildings may need to be of a similar style, to establish reasonable uniformity,
- vertical front and side sections (enclosing the seating area from the street) are prohibited,
- it may not be appropriate to fix a canopy to the facade of certain significant buildings. In exceptional cases, alternative forms will be examined.
The following, more detailed design guidance should be followed:

**Style**
Retractable, open-ended canopies are preferred, and should always be used in the case of a traditional style shopfront or pubfront. Vertical front and side sections are unacceptable in all cases. The canopy frame should be lightweight and visually discrete. Where possible, the box casing should be recessed within the facade (below or above the fascia, as appropriate).

**Scale**
The size of the canopy (its width and length) should have regard to the scale and proportions of the shopfront or pubfront. Where a business occupies two adjoining buildings, and where there is a clear visual distinction between the buildings, two canopies should be fixed instead of one longer canopy straddling the buildings.

**Position**
The canopy should be positioned so as to avoid covering any distinctive architectural features on the shopfront or pubfront, and with regard to the proportions and composition of the building (with respect to floor heights and fenestration, for example). Where there are, or there is the potential for, canopies on adjoining premises, the canopy should be also positioned with regard to this.

**Materials and Colour**
The canopy should be of high quality fabric in a single block colour which has regard to the colour scheme of the shopfront or pubfront. The canopy frame should be of a similarly high quality material, be lightweight and discrete, and be of a colour which compliments rather than contrasts with the colour of the canopy. Lighting on the canopy is unacceptable.

**Signage and Advertising**
The canopy should not be used for advertising purposes, other than the name of the business, and where this is appropriately integrated into the overall design. Commercial logos may be acceptable where they are discrete and can be appropriately integrated into the design.