

Attachment 6 – Yonge, Duplex, Helendale, Orchard View Urban Design Guidelines

**Yonge Duplex, Helendale, Orchard View
Urban Design Guidelines**



Yonge, Duplex, Helendale, Orchard View Urban Design Guidelines

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Yonge, Duplex, Helendale, Orchard View Urban Design Guidelines

Introduction

These Urban Design Guidelines have been developed as a part of the Yonge, Duplex, Helendale and Orchard View Planning Study.

The Planning Study was initiated in June 2012 by North York Community Council in response to two planning applications within the Study Area block; one at 31-37 Helendale Avenue proposing a 24-storey apartment building, the other at 2360 – 2378 Yonge Street proposing a 28-storey mixed-use building. Community Council requested that City staff undertake a study of the existing development proposals, potential development sites, and existing development within the block and determine the appropriateness of creating an Area Specific Policy for the block.

Through the community engagement process that included a stakeholder working group guiding principles for future development and civic improvements within the area were identified. These principles form the basis of the Urban Design Guidelines.



Aerial photograph, Study Area block and surrounding area (2012).

Role of Urban Design Guidelines

In the City of Toronto, Urban Design Guidelines are established to advance the vision, objectives and policies of the Official Plan. These guidelines are intended to be read with the Official Plan including the Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan and the Area Specific Policies proposed for this block.

They are intended to:

- Promote the highest quality of design;
- Encourage a co-ordinated approach to the design of the public realm while allowing for a range of acceptable development scenarios and architectural and landscape architectural expressions that can occur over time;
- Address issues and priorities for the block identified through the Planning Study; and
- Describe the anticipated or preferred approach to site planning, built form, landscape and amenities.

These Urban Design Guidelines offer guidance to developers, designers and City staff involved in the review process to ensure that new development and civic improvements proposed on the block contribute to and support the long term vision for the block and area and promote a vibrant, attractive and pedestrian friendly public realm.

These Urban Design Guidelines will also be used to inform the Parks, Open Space and Streetscape Master Plan Study for the larger Yonge-Eglinton area initiated by the City Planning Division in May 2013. The ideas for public realm improvements on the block and in relation to the historic Postal Station K site will be incorporated into this larger public realm initiative.

Guiding Principles and Concept Plan

Guiding Principles

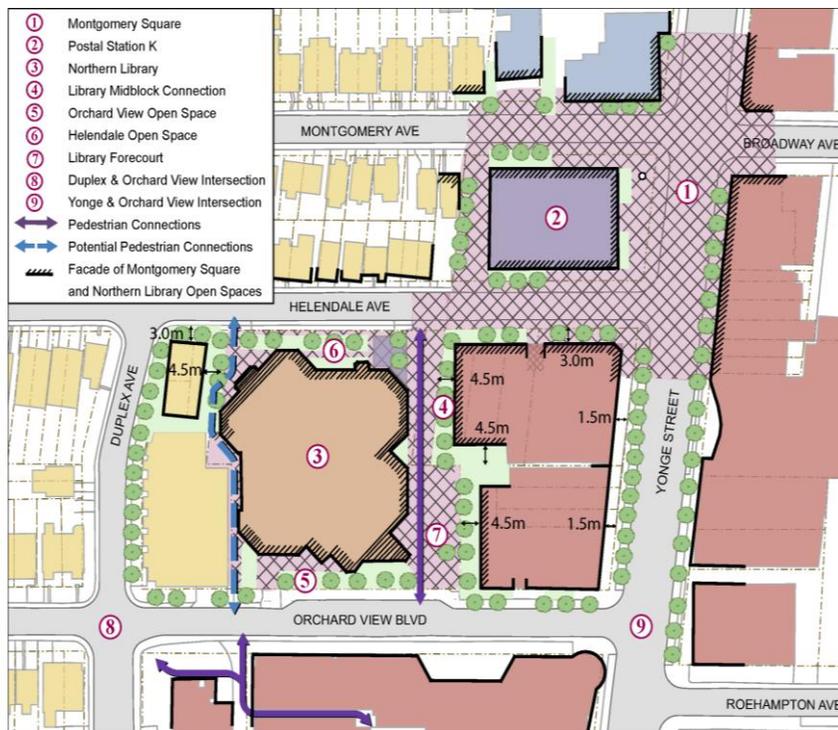
The following guiding principles emerged through the community engagement process:

1. Create a strong sense of place centred around the Northern District Library and Postal Station K sites;
2. Enhance the existing and planned character of Yonge Street;
3. Create walkable, safe, comfortable and inviting streets, pedestrian connections and open spaces;
4. Develop at an appropriate scale consistent with the Official Plan and sensitive to community context and character; and
5. Promote consolidated accesses and servicing functions within development sites.

Concept Plan

The concept plan illustrates key principles and priorities for improvements. It reflects the overarching idea of 'Placemaking' expressed through the community engagement process. The creation of a community focal point and gathering place centred on the Northern District Library and Postal Station K sites is considered of primary importance.

Enhancements along the streets and to pedestrian connections and open spaces on the Library site are also illustrated. Consolidating accesses and intersection improvements on Orchard View Boulevard at Yonge Street and Duplex Avenue are priorities.



Concept Plan – Yonge, Duplex, Helendale, Orchard View Block, (City Planning, Urban Design).

The Block and Its Significance

The Yonge, Duplex, Helendale and Orchard View block occupies a unique place in the City and the Yonge-Eglinton area. At the time of preparing these Guidelines there were two active development applications on the block. The Planning Study provided an opportunity to consider development proposals in a comprehensive fashion in relation to the built form and public realm for the block, while addressing the unique characteristics of each site. Ensuring that new development fits within the existing and planned context, and positively contributes to the streets, open spaces, and surrounding properties are important objectives of the Urban Design Guidelines.

The Northern District Library site and Postal Station K site, located on the block to the north, are important civic assets highlighted through the Planning Study.

Northern District Library Site

The most prominent site within the block is the Library site occupied by the Northern District Library and Stanley Knowles Cooperative. This site occupies about half of the block (0.6 hectares), is centrally located and extends from Helendale Avenue to Orchard View Boulevard.

The Northern District Library is an important institutional focus in the neighbourhood. The Library along with its community rooms, programs and other social services has been an important community gathering space since it was built in 1975.



Northern District Library and Stanley Knowles Cooperative (2012)

The Library and Cooperative building has faces on two streets with open spaces surrounding on all sides. The main doors for the Library and Cooperative, and a landscaped forecourt and access ramp are located along Orchard View Boulevard. There is a large sunken plaza west of the access ramp. A publicly accessible mid-block walkway and a large sunken plaza are on the east side of the building. There is landscaping with no walkway on the west side of the building. A service driveway and loading area extends along the north side of the building parallel to Helendale Avenue.

The Library Open Spaces are highly valued by the community, and were identified in the community engagement process as very significant. The enhancement of the Library Open Spaces will be promoted.



Northern District Library and Stanley Knowles Cooperative, ramped forecourt (1981).



Northern District Library sunken courtyard on the east side of the building (2012).



Northern District Library, sunken plaza along Orchard View Boulevard (2012).

Postal Station K

The Postal Station K site north of the block is a National Historic Site and is listed on the City's *Inventory of Heritage Properties*. Its location at the top of the 'hill' on Yonge Street at the centre of the historic Eglinton Village makes this historic site an important place for the community and the larger City.

The site is occupied by the historically significant Postal Station K building designed by Murray Brown, constructed in 1936 and marked with the insignia of Edward VIII.

It is also the former site of Montgomery's Tavern, headquarters of William Lyon MacKenzie, leader of the Upper Canada Rebellion of 1837. The site was designated as a National Historic Site in 1925 and is marked by a Historic Sites and Monument Board of Canada plaque affixed to the base of a monument and flagpole situated to the north of the Station K building.

The Station K building is located at the east end of the block and faces Yonge Street. It has a generous setback and landscaped forecourt along Yonge Street. A weekly farmer's market is currently held in this forecourt open space. Station K is also well set back from Helendale and Montgomery Avenues and there are two historic buildings opposite on the north side of Montgomery Avenue; the Anne Johnston Health Station, designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, and Fire Station #134 listed on the City's *Inventory of Heritage Properties*.

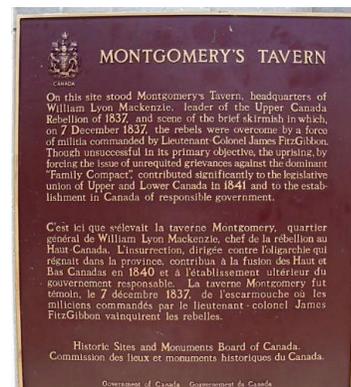
The Station K building, the forecourt and adjacent streets were identified in the community engagement process as very significant.



Postal Station "K", 2013 (Heritage Preservation Services).



Archival Photograph, Postal Station "K", 1973: showing the building prior to its listing on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties. The commemorative plaque is shown on the right (Toronto Historical Board).



Photograph, Commemorative Plaque, 2013: showing the bilingual replacement plaque marking the property as a National Historic Site. (www.torontoplaques.com/Pages_MNO/Montgomerys_Tavern.html).

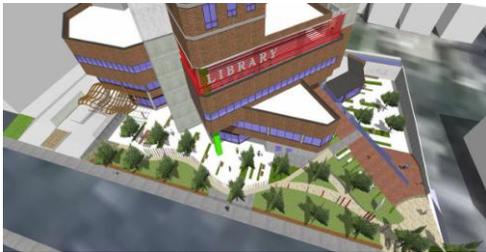
Public Realm

1. Library Open Spaces and Montgomery Square

Library Open Spaces

Revitalizing the Library Open Spaces will strengthen the identity of this important civic institution and community destination. At the time of preparing these Guidelines, the Library was embarking on a plan for open space enhancements. The Urban Design Guidelines will inform this initiative.

Development proposed adjacent to the Library Open Spaces will be designed to contribute to the safe and comfortable use of these open spaces with appropriate setbacks, landscape improvements and ground floor uses.



Concept Plan of Library Open Spaces along Orchard View Blvd., including the sunken plaza and Library entrance ramp by: Ken Fukushima Architecture.

Montgomery Square

The creation of an open space to be called 'Montgomery Square' will be a significant public gathering place in the Yonge-Eglinton area. The building edges which define the walls of this new 'civic room' will include Postal Station K, the buildings in the Block along Helendale Avenue, those across Yonge Street, and the heritage buildings on the north side of Montgomery Avenue.

Guidelines for Library Open Spaces and Montgomery Square:

Designs for the Library Open Spaces and Montgomery Square should reflect the civic importance of these spaces, strengthen local identity, and foster a sense of place. These high quality public open spaces will be integrated and unified. Together they will provide pedestrian amenity for the residents, visitors and workers in the area.

- Use high quality paving, seating, pedestrian scale lighting, public art, landscaping and other amenities to create identity, character and pedestrian amenity for the community.
- Promote active uses in the ground floor of buildings near the Library Open Spaces and Montgomery Square with direct access to these open spaces.
- Design the streets and open spaces to support a wide range of pedestrian activities and community events for all ages in all seasons.
- Integrate the design of streets and boulevards and setbacks adjacent to the Library Open Spaces and fronting Montgomery Square to support the place-making role of these civic spaces.



The scale, proportion and materials used in development adjacent to the Summerhill train station contributes to a 'civic room' at this location.

Guidelines for Library Open Spaces

- Remove the existing walls and visual barriers to integrate the Library Open Spaces with adjacent public streets and enhance their visibility, accessibility and use.
- Provide generous pedestrian areas along the public streets that include wide sidewalks and areas for landscaping, seating and other pedestrian amenities.
- Encourage active uses in the Library at grade, adjacent to the pedestrian mid-block walkways, the courtyards and the public streets.
- Reduce the size and visual impact of loading and service areas by integrating them into landscaped open spaces including providing opportunities for shared pedestrian use.
- Use high quality paving, landscape planting, seating, lighting and/or public art to improve the overall quality of the open spaces.
- Design the Library's forecourt and entrance ramp including signage to strengthen the visual identity and prominence of this important community facility.
- Design mid-block walkways to be visible from adjacent streets and promote a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment.
- On development sites adjacent to the Library, set the ground floor of new buildings back a minimum of 4.5m from the Library property to provide opportunity for full windows and doors for ground floor uses, and adequate space for soft landscape and walkways.



Water, landscape, lighting and paving help create a distinct character and pedestrian amenity (Don Mills Centre, Toronto).



Seating, lighting, and high quality paving helps create amenity (Seneca College, North York Campus).



Public Art helps create distinctive identity "Sentinelles", Jean - Pierre Morin (5409 Yonge Street, Toronto).



At grade apartments adjacent to the Library mid-block walkway help create a safe well used pedestrian route (Townhouses facing Sir Winston Churchill Park, St. Clair Avenue West and Russell Hill Road, Toronto).

2. Public Streets

The four streets that surround the block have different characters. Streetscape improvements on each should be considered as part of a whole, balancing the unique characteristics of each to create a pedestrian friendly public realm that is unified, coherent and connected.

Guidelines

- Enhance the streets and adjacent setbacks with pedestrian amenities including hanging baskets, planting boxes, bicycle infrastructure, seating, street furniture and public art.
- All new development should provide street trees.
- Provide bicycle infrastructure such as bicycle rings and bicycle share station, based on Guidelines for the Design and Management of Bicycles.
- Design streetscapes and adjacent landscapes on front setbacks as a whole.



Front Street East, Toronto

Yonge Street

Yonge Street is one of Toronto's most important streets. Fundamental in the planning and layout of Toronto and Ontario, it is often considered to be Toronto's main street and is an important transportation link for vehicles and transit. In this area it is also the Yonge-Eglinton community's local main street.

Through this block, Yonge Street rises slightly from south to north cresting on the hill centred on the Postal Station K site. Along the block and to the north Yonge Street is characterized mostly with 2 to 3-storey mixed-use buildings with retail at grade and small store fronts. This location near the Eglinton subway station and bus depot makes it a busy and important pedestrian street.

The lower scale buildings ensure that sunshine reaches the sidewalks creating a comfortable and vital street. Yonge Street's built form, fine grain retail fabric and role as an important pedestrian route contributes to the vitality and identity of the district.

Guidelines

To enhance the existing and planned character of Yonge Street:

- Setback the ground floor for new buildings a minimum of 1.5m to provide additional space for pedestrians and streetscape amenities.
- Integrate and unify the design of the boulevard and setbacks.
- Provide pedestrian amenities including continuous weather protection such as canopies or overhangs and seating to promote pedestrian activity and comfort.
- Plant shade trees flush with the grade to maximize the space for pedestrians.



Integrating the paving of a setback with the landscape of the public boulevard creates a generous pedestrian zone. Overhangs and canopies enhance pedestrian comfort (RBC Centre, 155 Wellington Street West, Toronto).

Orchard View Boulevard

Orchard View Boulevard is an important local east west street, north of Eglinton Avenue. It extends from Yonge Street, two blocks to the west, to Eglinton Park. The street is busy. It supports servicing functions for the properties along it as well as local vehicular and pedestrian traffic. It also provides the addresses for the Library and Stanley Knowles Cooperative.

The servicing role of Orchard View Boulevard often overshadows its other functions, with the significant loading and parking activity for the RioCan commercial complex directly south of the study block. On the block there is garbage storage and parking access for the Library and Stanley Knowles Cooperative. The new apartment building at Duplex Avenue will also have loading and parking access from the street.



Multiple service doors along Orchard View Boulevard diminish the pedestrian experience and would be enhanced with screening.

In spite of these service functions, Orchard View Boulevard is an important pedestrian street providing direct access to Eglinton Park, the district park for the Yonge-Eglinton community. In its current state the sidewalks are narrow, typically 1.5 metres wide and street trees do poorly in the small tree pits. The streetscape has a cluttered appearance with signage, newspaper boxes and planters. The servicing accesses leave little room for street trees or other planting particularly along the south side, and the view along the north side of the street adjacent to the Library site is to a large setback, with a retaining wall and sunken plaza.

Guidelines

Improve the pedestrian experience along Orchard View Boulevard by:

- Integrating the design of the setbacks and the public boulevard (with a 2m clear sidewalk) to enhance the streetscape and promote a comfortable usable pedestrian environment.
- Planting shade trees flush with the grade to improve walkability.
- Designing the boulevard and setbacks at the entrances of residential buildings with an appropriate amount of open space to promote visibility of the door, and provide a generous, attractive and comfortable amenity area for residents, visitors and the general public.
- Reorganizing the existing impediments to pedestrian movement within the boulevard.
- Enhancing the existing pedestrian connection in the RioCan shopping mall and to the TTC station.
- Promoting safe pedestrian crossings of Yonge Street and Duplex Avenue.



Concept plan of the Orchard View Boulevard frontage of the Northern District Library, by Ken Fukushima Architecture,

Duplex Avenue

Duplex Avenue is a busy north south collector street which runs parallel to Yonge Street from Davisville Avenue to Yonge Boulevard. It has a 20 metre right-of-way and a narrow road surface, despite its larger vehicular role. Duplex Avenue has a residential character with many grade related houses in various forms. Houses have shallow setbacks and sidewalks are narrow, approximately 1.5 metres.

Guidelines

New development should compliment and extend the residential character of the street and enhance pedestrian experience by:

- Providing a minimum 2m wide clear sidewalk on the east side of Duplex Avenue with additional decorative paving to provide an overall 2.3m wide walkway.
- Planting street trees, shrubs and gardens between the sidewalk and building face to enhance pedestrian experience.



Small urban gardens along Duplex Avenue will integrate larger scale development with the surrounding neighbourhood.



Montgomery Condominium, 3085 Bloor Street West, Toronto.

Helendale Avenue

Helendale Avenue is a local east west street which extends from Yonge Street to Edith Drive. It is part of the network of streets and sidewalks that provide access to Yonge Street from the neighbourhood. It is one of the original

streets of the Village of Eglinton and has a narrow right-of-way approximately 15 metres wide.

Helendale Avenue is adjacent to both the Library site and the Postal Station K site. Designs that integrate the street into the larger concept for the Library Open Spaces and Montgomery Square will be promoted.

On the block there are two properties with active development applications that have frontage on Helendale Avenue. There is currently a landscape strip and service road running parallel to Helendale Avenue along the Library frontage used for loading and servicing. There are 3 single-detached dwellings west of Library near the corner of Duplex Avenue.

Guidelines

New development and civic improvements on Helendale Avenue should contribute to the integration of the Library Open Spaces and Montgomery Square and enhance and extend the pedestrian realm on this narrow street by:

- Integrating the design of the setbacks and the public boulevard to enhance the streetscape and promote a comfortable usable pedestrian environment.
- Setting new buildings back a minimum of 3m to provide additional area for a wider sidewalk, trees, shrubs and gardens.
- Designing the boulevard and setbacks at the entrances of residential buildings with an appropriate proportion to promote visibility of the entrance and provide a generous, attractive and comfortable amenity area for residents, visitors and the general public.



Residential entrance with a generous landscape setback and canopy, Yorkland at Heron's Hill Condominium, (265 Yorkland Boulevard, Toronto).

3. Public Art

Public art takes many forms and is found in many places. It can range from stand alone art installations to artworks integrated into buildings, streetscapes and landscape treatments. Public art has broad appeal and can strengthen the identity and character of a place by telling its story.

Guidelines

- Opportunities to integrate public art into new developments, streetscapes and open spaces will be promoted.
- Public art contributions and process will be based on the City of Toronto's Percent for Public Art Program Guidelines.



"Sentinelles", Jean - Pierre Morin (5409 Yonge Street, Toronto).



"Entryway", Carl Tacon (One St. Thomas Condominiums, Toronto).



"Dormez Vous", Alexander Moyle (Meridian Residences, 15 Greenview Avenue, Toronto).



Canopy Installation, United Visual Artists (Maple Leaf Square, Toronto).

SITE ORGANIZATION

Site Servicing and Access

Consolidate servicing to minimize the width and frequency of curb cuts to public sidewalks.

Guidelines

- Create a continuous shared driveway behind the Yonge Street frontage to provide access for loading and servicing functions for all development blocks.
- Minimize the width and number of driveways on all street frontages including consolidating accesses wherever possible.
- Use high quality paving, landscape planting walls and fences which could include public art to screen the loading and servicing areas.
- Reduce the size and visual impact of loading and service areas by integrating them into landscaped open spaces including providing opportunities for shared pedestrian use.
- Building extensions over driveways will be encouraged to form a continuous street wall that reinforces the built edge of the public realm including streets, Montgomery Square and the Library Open Spaces.



Areas for improvements to servicing and access within the block, (City Planning, Urban Design).



Servicing access integrated into the street wall (Merton Street, Toronto).



Servicing access integrated into the street wall (650 King Street West).



Servicing access integrated with the larger landscape idea (Yorkville Park, Toronto).

BUILT FORM

The Study Area block is part of a larger area of civic importance containing community facilities, public open spaces and heritage properties. The design of new buildings on the block will balance the need to fit in and unify these civic places while expressing the individual character of each building.

General Guidelines

- In general, new buildings should be designed to reflect a contemporary architectural language, with scale, proportion and materiality that responds to and respects the heritage buildings north of the block and civic buildings on the Library site. The goal is to create coherent, identifiable and memorable civic spaces, focused around the Library site and the Postal Station K site.
- To enhance the existing and planned character of Yonge Street and support the place-making role of Montgomery Square the building envelope for new development within the *Mixed Use Areas* and *Apartment Neighbourhoods* will be designed to ensure that existing sunlight is maintained on the Yonge Street sidewalks and on the open space adjacent to Yonge Street on the Postal Station K site from 12:18 until 3:18pm from March 21st to September 21st.



New and old building facades create a unified, harmonious street façade (King Street East, Toronto).

- A range of building typologies can be considered within the *Apartment Neighbourhoods* including low-scale, mid-rise and tall building forms. The scale and character of new buildings within the *Apartment*

Neighbourhoods will respect the context of the site within the block and surrounding area, the unique characteristics of the site, and be consistent with City policies and guidelines including the Infill Townhouse Guidelines, Mid-rise Building Guidelines and Tall Building Guidelines.

Buildings on Yonge Street

The existing character of Yonge Street adjacent to the block and north is generally of 1 to 3-storey buildings with retail uses at grade. Postal Station K as well as the heritage buildings north of Montgomery Avenue contribute to the character of Yonge Street in this area. With a few exceptions, the fine grain lotting pattern in this area is reflected in the fine grain of buildings each with retail uses and doors every 5 to 10 metres. The planned context provides for midrise buildings along this Yonge Street *Avenue* in keeping with the policies of the Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan.

Guidelines:

- The scale and character of new buildings within the *Mixed-Use Areas* along Yonge Street will respect the existing and planned context.
- New buildings within the *Mixed Use Areas* along Yonge Street will have maximum base building heights of 12.5m with a minimum 1.5m step back above this height to respect the scale and form of the historic Postal Station K building at the northwest corner of Yonge Street and Helendale Avenue.



- The maximum base building height of 12.5m with a minimum 1.5m step back will extend along the Helendale Avenue frontage within the *Mixed Use Areas* at the corner of Yonge Street and Helendale Avenue.
- Design base buildings to reflect the fine grain rhythm of entrances and multiple retail units consistent with the existing street wall character of Yonge Street.
- Base building materials should be integrated with the architectural character of the surrounding area and in particular for new buildings near Montgomery Square, base building materials should reflect the architectural character of Postal Station K.



Examples of mid-rise buildings that have maintained a consistent cornice line with the surrounding built form context.

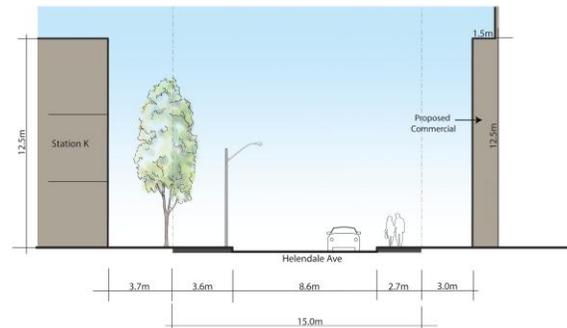
Buildings on Helendale Avenue

Low-rise buildings characterize the Helendale Avenue frontage of the block. Near Yonge Street there are 1 and 2-storey retail and commercial buildings. On the Library site the 2-storey Library is generously setback from the street and acts as a base for the 15-storey Stanley Knowles Cooperative above. West of the Library there are 2-storey single-detached dwellings on small lots. There are low-rise single and semi-detached and townhouse single and semi-detached and townhouse dwellings on the north side of the street.

Guidelines:

Buildings on Helendale Avenue will respect the scale of the existing physical context including Postal Station K, the 2-storey Library building and the low-rise houses on the north side of the street:

- Base buildings for new development should be no higher than 12m to maintain the low-rise character of the street and respect the Postal Station K heritage building.
- Provide a minimum 3m step back above the base buildings for tall buildings and a minimum 1.5m step back above the base buildings for mid-rise buildings.



- Base building materials should be integrated with the architectural character of the surrounding area, such as the Library, Postal Station K and the neighbourhood.



Townhouses in the base building using compatible material, such as brick (One Cole condominium, 1 Cole Street, Toronto).

Building at the south east corner of Duplex Avenue and Helendale Avenue

The consolidation of the three small residential properties at the northwest corner of the block would create a new development site.

Guidelines:

- New buildings will have a height of 4-storeys or less to respect the scale of the base building of the adjacent apartment building to the south, the Library to the east and provide a transition to the lower scale neighbourhood west of Duplex Avenue and north of Helendale Avenue.
- Setback the ground floor of new buildings a minimum of 4.5 m from the Library property to provide opportunity for full windows and doors for ground floor uses, and adequate space for soft landscape and walkways.



Townhouse development provides a transition to the lower scale neighbourhood (851-853 Richmond Street West, Toronto).