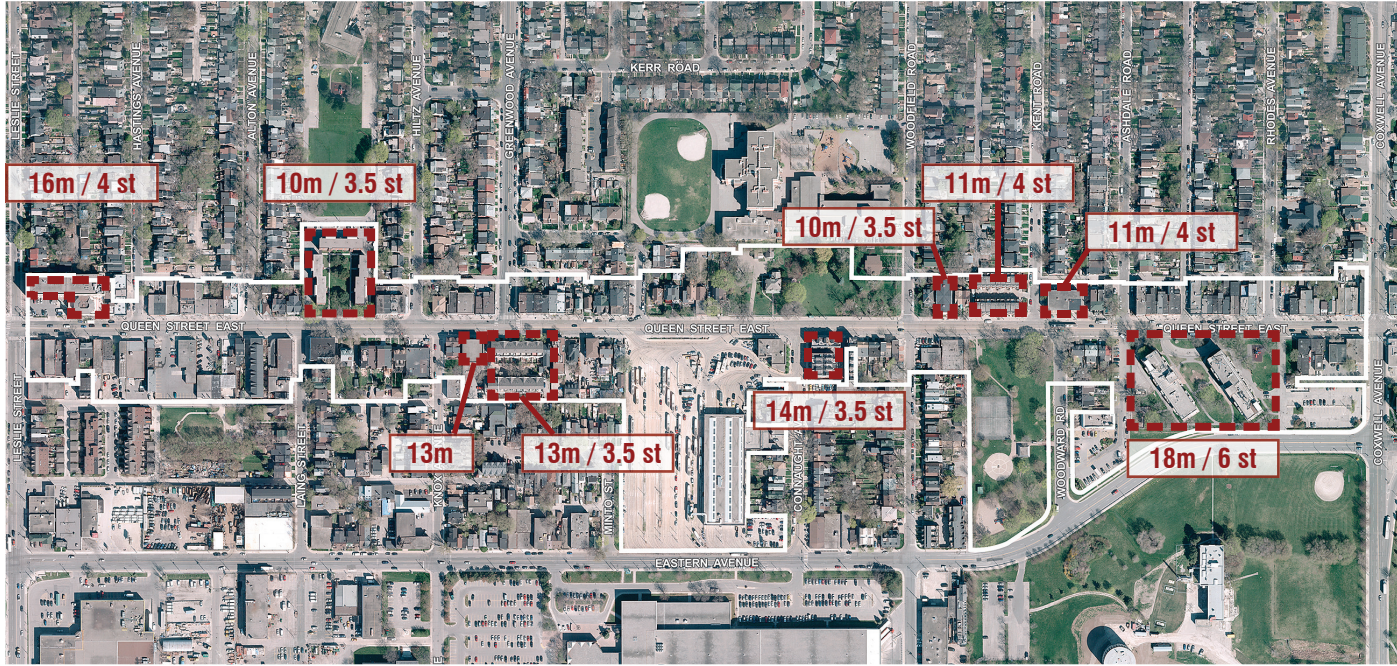


# 3.1 Existing Built Form

There is a wide variety of built form in the study area, generally comprising 2 and 3 storey buildings. This stretch of Queen Street East is somewhat atypical of Toronto's main streets, in particular Queen Street East, because many of the blocks have a mix of both commercial and residential uses at grade. The more typical 'main street' character consists of low-rise buildings with commercial uses at grade and residential units above. The purely residential buildings within the study area take a variety of forms - including single-detached, semi-detached, townhomes and apartment buildings. Most of the blocks within the Precinct have a combination of 'main street' type buildings as well as residential buildings.

For the most part buildings are 2 to 3 storeys; however, there are several buildings throughout the Precinct that are taller than 3 storeys (see aerial photo below). Currently, the tallest buildings within the study area are the two apartment buildings located on the south side of Queen Street East, close to Coxwell Avenue, at 6 storeys (approximately 18 metres) high.



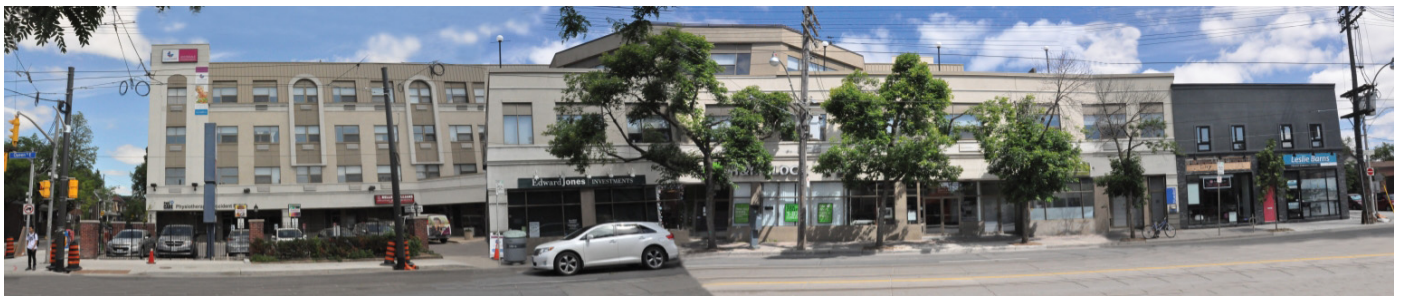
Map illustrating approximate building heights (illustrating buildings that are taller than the average 2 to 3 storey building)



*Greenwood Court apartments between Alton Avenue and Hiltz Avenue*



*Apartments at the northeast corner of Kent Road and Queen Street East*



*Chartwell Avondale Retirement Residence at the northeast corner of Queen Street East and Leslie Street*



*TTC Russell Division (Connaught) Streetcar Barns carhouse building at 1433 Queen Street East*



*Residential apartments, just west of Coxwell Avenue*

## 3.2 Main Street Characteristics within the Precinct

The blocks that comprise 2 to 3 storey commercial / residential buildings have some common characteristics that are typical of many of Toronto's 'main streets', particularly those in the former City of Toronto. These characteristics include:

- Low-scale of buildings that provide sky-views and sunlight access to the streets;
- Small-scale retail at grade, with residential or commercial uses above;
- Fine grain rhythm of entrances at grade and windows above;
- Recessed entrances with large, deep display windows;
- Animation zones along the façade of buildings, including display areas, seating and landscaping; and
- Extensive use of brick with large storefront windows at grade.



*Block between Greenwood Avenue and Vancouver Avenue*



The 'main street' type buildings provide a fine grain rhythm of entrances along the street and have a high degree of visibility through the use of display windows at grade.



Block between Craven Road and Ashdale Avenue

## 3.3 Unique Characteristics within the Precinct

The eclectic nature of the Ashbridge Precinct stems from the diversity of uses and buildings that front onto Queen Street East. Residential buildings, parks, open spaces and the TTC Russell Division (Connaught) Streetcar Barns, all contribute to an inconsistent streetwall throughout the Precinct. Some of these uses, such as the single and semi-detached houses, are characterized by a landscaped setback adjacent to the sidewalk providing a separation between the public and private realm. When properly maintained, these landscaped setbacks add visual interest and character to the street.

The unique properties within the Precinct include:

- Ashbridge Estate (buildings and grounds);
- The number of residential buildings that front onto Queen Street East, including singles, semi-detached and townhomes;
- Greenwood Court apartments between Alton Avenue and Hiltz Avenue;
- TTC Russell Division (Connaught) Streetcar Barns, just east of Greenwood Avenue; and
- Residential apartments, just west of Coxwell Avenue.



1381 Queen Street East



1353 Queen Street East



Apartment buildings just west of Coxwell Avenue



*Ashbridge Estate, at the northwest corner of Queen Street East and Woodfield Avenue*



*Block between Woodfield Road and Kent Road, illustrating the mix of building types - single detached, multi-unit residential and townhomes*



*Queen Street East (Connaught Avenue to Knox Avenue)*

## 4. URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES



The following urban design guidelines will provide direction to help shape both the public and private realm within the Ashbridge Precinct so that new development respects and reinforces the existing character of Queen Street East. The guidelines apply to *Mixed Use Areas* within the Ashbridge Precinct.

Development that exceeds the permitted height of 12 and 14 metres is only appropriate on lots with sufficient width and depth to accommodate all front, rear and side yard setbacks, step-backs and angular planes. Redevelopment proposals will also have to demonstrate the ability to provide access required for necessary parking and servicing. Such development proposals must demonstrate that the site size and context is adequate to accommodate the proposal.



## 4.1 Building on the Precinct's Assets

There are many assets within the Precinct that are unique and valuable to the area. The urban design guidelines that follow provide guidance for a mid-rise form that responds to these characteristics.

New development within the Precinct should:

- Replicate the 'main street' character when adjacent to blocks or groupings of buildings that look and function as a 'main street';
- Be of a scale and mass that retains sunlight on the sidewalks and provides appropriate transitions to surrounding low-rise buildings;
- Increase opportunities for greening the street, by setting buildings back from the property line and providing plantings, street trees, etc.;
- Increase active uses at grade to provide interest on the street; and
- Provide a range of retail, residential and community services to serve existing and new residents and employees;

Any new mid-rise buildings will co-exist with the existing 2 and 3 storey main street built form. The design of new buildings must reinforce and build upon the area's character and not undermine important character elements.



*Setbacks at-grade can be used for casual sitting and dining opportunities, as well as landscaping.*

## 4.2 Public Realm Guidelines

The public realm comprises streets, sidewalks, parks, open spaces and public buildings. The public realm should be beautiful, comfortable, safe and accessible because it is these shared assets that contribute to the image and character of the city as well as providing the spaces for people to congregate.

Recommendations to improve the public realm generally pertain to redevelopment sites. Recommendations for enhancing the public realm through redevelopment include:

- Requiring setbacks at grade to allow for wide sidewalks that meet accessibility standards and provide pedestrian interest and amenity. A minimum of 4.8 metres from curb to building face, including a minimum 2.1 metre pedestrian clearway. Setbacks at-grade also create opportunities for wider sidewalks and public amenities such as street trees, street furniture and potential for boulevard cafes;
- Restricting vehicular curb cuts on Queen Street East;
- Requiring recessed doors to storefronts and residential lobbies to keep the sidewalk clear;
- Seeking opportunities to develop public amenities such as landscaped setbacks, forecourts, seating areas, privately owned publicly-accessible spaces (POPS), mid-block connections and walkways; and
- Encouraging a fine-grain of retail to enhance the pedestrian experience.

The width, design and condition of sidewalks play an important role in the walkability of an area. The current width and condition of sidewalks along Queen Street East varies throughout the study area and should be improved and widened as sites are redeveloped. The setbacks required to achieve the minimum 4.8 metres from curb to building face will vary throughout the study area.

The City's Urban Design Streetscape Manual provides standards for the design of comfortable, aesthetically-pleasing sidewalks. It also emphasizes design quality and amenity in the pedestrian realm with specifications for paving, trees, medians, lighting and street furniture. All new developments should meet the Manual's requirements of minimum sidewalk width and public realm design specifications.

The design of buildings, particularly the at-grade portions of the buildings adjacent to the sidewalk, can contribute to an enhanced public realm. These characteristics, which include materials, entrances, and articulation are included in the subsequent built form guidelines.

In addition to improvements through redevelopment, there may be other opportunities on sites that will not be redeveloped (e.g. Jonathan Ashbridge Park, Sarah Ashbridge Estate) to improve the condition of sidewalks and increase soft landscaping; this will be determined on a site by site basis.



Sidewalks in the study area should provide for an interesting and comfortable pedestrian experience through wide sidewalks and public amenities.

# 4.3 Built Form Guidelines

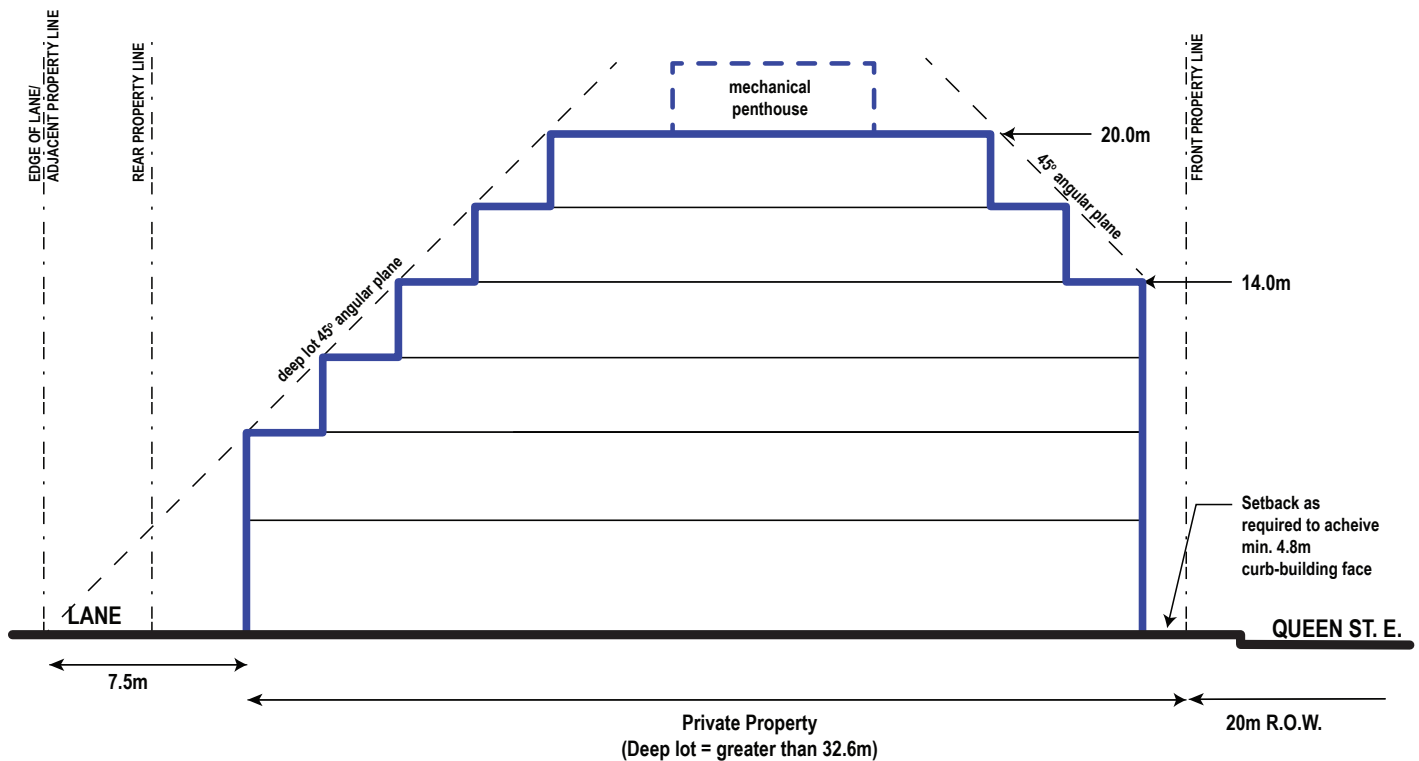
## 4.3.1 Site Organization

Improvements to the public realm should be paramount as part of any new development along Queen Street East. Features that detract from the public realm, including curb cuts, surface parking, servicing and loading should be avoided. Parking and servicing access should be contained within below grade structures of new developments, and vehicular access to new developments should be located and designed to minimize interruptions to pedestrian movement (e.g. access from rear laneways or side streets). Curb cuts for vehicles on Queen Street East will not be permitted as they interrupt the pedestrian environment and prohibit continuous streetscape improvements.

## 4.3.2 Building Height & Massing

The maximum permitted building height in the study area is 20 metres (equivalent to 6 storeys), excluding mechanical penthouses. The recommended maximum 20 metre height establishes a 1:1 ratio of building height to right-of-way width for Queen Street East.

To reduce the overall appearance of new developments that are taller than the current maximum as-of-right heights and to support a transition from existing to new buildings, a 14 metre (equivalent to 4 storeys) streetwall is recommended. The streetwall, or location of the first front step-back, will be a maximum of 14 metres in height. New buildings on corner lots will include front step-backs above a height of 14 metres for both the Queen Street East and flanking street frontages.



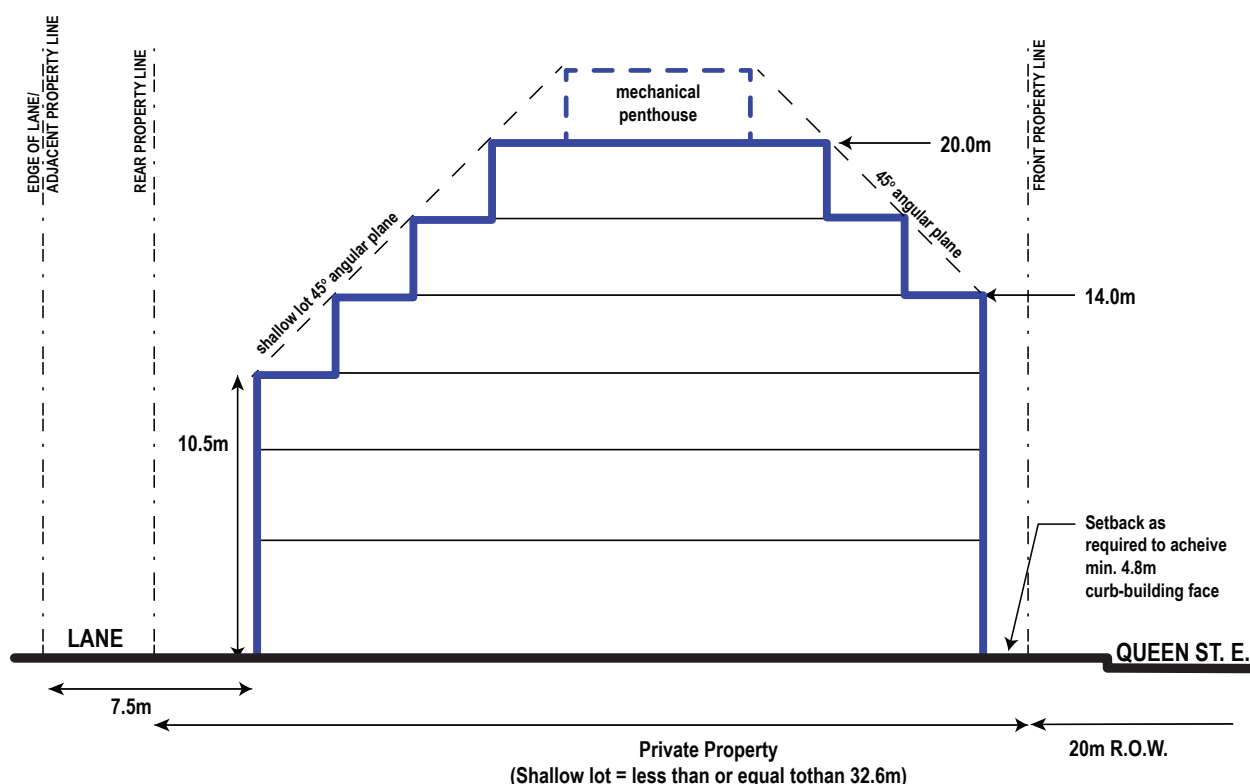
Sample building section illustrating a deep lot rear transition

### 4.3.3 Rear Transitions

In addition to the front step-backs, a 45-degree angular plane should be applied to the front façade from the 14 metre streetwall height to provide further transition and mitigate shadow impacts. This angular plane applies to both the Queen Street East and flanking street frontages. Mechanical/elevator penthouses, stair towers, equipment, services, parapets and balconies should not project into the angular plane.

New development applications will be required to include sun/shadow studies that demonstrate a minimum of 5 hours of sunlight (March through September) will be provided on the opposite sidewalk, which will also be applicable to sidewalks on flanking streets. Where new development is proposed adjacent or in proximity to parks and open spaces, sun/shadow studies will have to demonstrate that there are no shadow impacts on these open spaces.

New development will provide a transition to properties at the rear that are designated as *Neighbourhoods* and *Parks and Open Space* in the Official Plan. For shallow lots (depth of 32.6 metres or less), a 45-degree angular plane will be measured from a setback of 7.5 metres from a lot in a residential zone and will begin at a height of 10.5 metres. For deep lots (depth greater than 32.6 metres), the 45-degree angular plane will begin at a height of 7.5 metres. Building massing and setbacks will mitigate shadow and overlook impacts on the abutting residential buildings.



Sample building section illustrating a shallow lot rear transition



Sample illustration of a building that would be permitted by the guidelines; the maximum building height of 6 storeys, with a maximum streetwall height of 14 metres.

### 4.3.4 Vertical Articulation

Consistent with the adjacent urban design guidelines for both Leslieville and Queen Street East (Coxwell Avenue to Nursewood Road), new development should have active uses at grade, as well as replicate the existing traditional 'main street' character through materials and detailing. The design of the front façade should have a rhythm of bays that generally range from 6 to 8 metres wide, similar to the traditional storefronts found along Queen Street East. This articulation can be achieved through the introduction of vertical elements or changes in materials. This spacing is also reflective of the area's prevailing lot pattern.

A combination of horizontal and vertical elements will help to create interest and a rhythm for building façades. Large areas of glass may be appropriate in certain locations, but should still include elements that break up the length of buildings. Horizontal elements can help to mimic a traditional cornice line and reinforce a prominent ground floor.

For corner buildings, façades that are located along north-south oriented streets should be treated similarly to front façades and provide articulation accordingly.

New development should also be encouraged to provide opportunities for small, independent retailers by providing smaller retail unit floorplates at-grade. This is consistent with the area's character of local shops and independent retailers and business owners.

### 4.3.5 Front Setbacks At-Grade

In an effort to enhance the public realm along Queen Street East, all new development will be required to be set back from the curb with a depth that will accommodate street trees and wide sidewalks. A total width of 4.8 metres is recommended, measured from the curb to the front wall of a new development. This will include an edge zone along the curb beside a tree planting/street furnishing zone of approximately 1.8 metres (with trees planted in the ground where utilities allow) and a pedestrian clearway width of 2.1 metres. The zone adjacent to the building may consist of plantings, sidewalk cafés, or display of commercial goods, such as a fruit market, or simply contribute to the overall width of the sidewalk.

In some locations, additional setbacks may be encouraged for the creation of forecourts, plazas or landscaped setbacks.



*The commercial-residential blocks in the study area exhibit a number of similar characteristics, including a fine grain rhythm of vertical articulation that should be replicated in new developments.*

### 4.3.6 Transitioning to Existing Low-Rise Residential Buildings

The application of additional setbacks and step-backs as described on the following pages will be determined on a site by site basis through the development application review process and will take into consideration both direct adjacencies and the overall block character.

#### Front Setbacks

One of the unique characteristics of the Ashbridge Precinct within the Queen Street East context, is the number of single and semi-detached houses that front onto Queen Street East. Many of these buildings are characterized by front yard setbacks that are deeper than the 'main street' commercial frontages. Some of these front yard setbacks are landscaped, while some are paved and have parking pads (which will not be permitted as part of new development on Queen Street East). These setbacks help to provide a buffer between the public sidewalk and the private residential uses, as well as contributing to the unique character of the Precinct. See Appendix E for mapping that illustrates where this setback condition generally exists (both landscaped and paved conditions).

Replication of this deeper front yard setback is not necessarily appropriate for all new development, but for sites adjacent to

a low-rise house form building with a deeper setback, the adjacent portion of the new development should be set back and landscaped. This will help reinforce the unique character of the area and provide a transition between new developments and existing low-rise residential buildings.

The setback for new buildings should be equivalent to half the distance between the front property line and the setback line of the adjacent low-rise residential building, at a minimum. This should occur at the flanking edges of buildings for one "bay" or approximately 6 - 8 metres. The space that is created through these setbacks should be landscaped.

Over time, if the existing low-rise buildings redevelop, this setback could be replicated, and the combined setbacks could become a landscaped forecourt or POPS.



*The front wall of buildings may be setback at the edges to respect the existing front yard setbacks that are found along the street.*