
QUEEN STREET EAST—THE BEACHES

Development along Queen Street East in the Beaches will be consistent with the following urban design guidelines. The guidelines provide a framework for re-development in the area and are to be read in conjunction with the urban design policies in the Official Plan.

LOCATION

Lands on Queen Street East between Woodbine Avenue and Victoria Park Avenue

GUIDELINES

THE BEACHES COMMERCIAL-RESIDENTIAL STRIP

Queen Street East in the Beaches has been divided into four distinct districts in order to provide detailed guidelines specific to the individual character of each sub-area. The four districts were derived after analysis of historic origin, lot size, architectural typologies, development pressures and land use.

The four sub-areas are:

1. The Entrance to the Beaches
2. The Western Regional District
3. The Central Local Service District
4. The Eastern Residential District.

These guidelines are presented in two parts. The first section identifies the general guidelines which apply to the entire Beaches Commercial-Residential Strip . The second section outlines guidelines specific to each of the sub-areas listed above.

GUIDELINES FOR ALL FOUR SUB-AREAS

PUBLIC REALM

Views of Lake Ontario gained from the local north/south oriented streets will not be obstructed at street level.

SITE ORGANIZATION

Store entrances will be recessed. At-grade retail/commercial windows will be modulated in the fashion of display, bay windows.

Existing institutional buildings such as the firehall, churches and libraries will be retained and reused if the sites are redeveloped.

Curb cuts off Queen Street East are discouraged.

Parking on the side yard of properties and on City boulevards is discouraged. These areas will be well landscaped.

All private parking facilities will be located underground or at the rear of the site.

MASSING

Buildings will contain both strong vertical and horizontal elements.

Rooflines will be detailed with cornice lines, pitched roofs, dormers, and/or parapets.

Buildings located at the terminus of a local north/south oriented street will contain architectural elements which reinforce the terminus of the local street.

The rear of buildings or the transition area from commercial to residential districts will have massing, setbacks and proportions which complement the abutting neighbourhood area.

Balconies facing onto Queen Street East will be recessed into the building facade and will complement the architectural detail of the buildings.

Residential entrances will be distinguished from commercial entrances. Residential entries to buildings will have separate and highly visible entrances on Queen Street East.

The visibility of stair towers and elevator penthouses will be minimized from Queen Street East. Where possible, these elements will be incorporated into the building design.

References to the dominant architectural styles found in the immediate vicinity of the site will be incorporated into the conceptual design of new development.

Untreated materials such as exposed concrete block will not be used or be visible from the street.

In order to complement the existing character of the Commercial-Residential Strip, a combination of traditional materials such as brick, stone, wood and stucco will be used.

Auto related uses such as gas stations, sales lots or parking lots will be buffered from Queen Street East through the use of landscaping or fencing.

Auto showrooms will replace open auto sale lots and be built to the streetline.

Additions to buildings that are either listed by Heritage Toronto or designated under the Ontario Heritage Act will complement the existing architectural character of the building.

PEDESTRIAN AMENITY

The construction of arcades, colonnades and internal malls is discouraged.

A variety of signage will be encouraged. Signage will complement, not overpower the building facade.

Canopies are encouraged. They will be used for weather protection and/or as a decorative feature of building facades.

GUIDELINES FOR EACH SUB-AREA

■ The Entrance to the Beaches

The intersection of Woodbine Avenue and Queen Street East is the “gateway” to the Beaches neighbourhood. This major access point represents the symbolic entry to the neighbourhood. It is important to encourage the construction of highly prominent buildings in this area which will act as a demarcation element or landmark for the neighbourhood and which will clearly define the street edge.

This sub-area is located at the intersection of Queen Street East and Woodbine Avenue (four corner properties only).

The objective is to create a well defined entrance to the Beaches neighbourhood by facilitating the development of prominent buildings having an outstanding architectural design which reflects the overall character of the neighbourhood.

PUBLIC REALM

Any building on the northeast corner will provide quality at-grade public open spaces along the Queen Street East frontage.

SITE ORGANIZATION

Any building(s) on the northeast corner of Queen Street East and Woodbine Avenue will be set back from the street line in order to protect views of the firehall clock tower.

MASSING

Blockform buildings will mark the entrance to the Beaches.

A high level of architectural detail is encouraged on building facades.

Building bays will not exceed 8m in width.

■ The Western Regional District

This sub area is located from one property east of the intersection of Queen Street East and Woodbine Avenue to Kew Beach Park at Bellefair Avenue.

The building form of the area is distinguished by its small scale massing. A mixture of blockform and houseform buildings exist in this sub-area, and many of the houseform buildings are set back from the street with mature landscaping lining parts of the streetscape. Gaps between buildings are prominent. All these characteristics give this part of Queen Street East a “small town” ambience.

The narrow width of most properties combined with the fragmented pattern of land ownership helps facilitate the creation of small retail shops, restaurants and local services. The proliferation of these uses helps create an appealing array of commercial uses and a stimulating visual experience for pedestrians.

The high level of physical amenity and diversity of this part of the Beaches Commercial-Residential Strip provides an important public benefit to both local residents and visitors to the neighbourhood.

The objective in this sub area is to maintain the ‘small town’ scale and character of Queen Street East.

PUBLIC REALM

Only a variety of vegetation such as tree planting, shrubbery, flower beds, and grass will be used to supplement existing landscaping. Hard landscaping is discouraged.

SITE ORGANIZATION

Gaps will be created between buildings by siting buildings at least 1m from the side lot line.

MASSING

Construction of both blockform and houseform buildings is encouraged where such respective building types already exist.

Retention of houseform buildings is encouraged through renovation, conservation and/or construction of rear additions.

Small scale redevelopment is encouraged.

Redevelopment of individual properties is encouraged, hence land assembly of properties for redevelopment will be discouraged.

Building mass will be sensitive to the existing small scale character of the area. Buildings will be 3 storeys in height and/or be perceived as 3 storeys.

Buildings bays will not exceed 8m in width in order to preserve the small scale character of the area.

■ The Central Local Service District

The Central Local Service District is bounded by Bellefair Avenue and Glen Manor Drive. This area can be characterized by its dense, homogeneous appearance of 2-3 storey buildings, closely knit and built to the street right-of-way. The majority of these buildings occupy the whole street frontage of their lots, thus providing Queen Street East with its most continuous streetwall. This contributes to the built up or urban atmosphere of this sub-area. Most buildings in this section are adjoining blockforms. This sub-area of Queen Street East can be referred to as the Central Local Service area, for this is where the larger stores, banks, drug stores, flower shops, second floor offices and food stores are located.

The objective for this sub area is to strengthen the urban character of the Central Local Service District as a focal point for local activity, and to maintain the houseform characteristics of the existing duplex building form.

SITE ORGANIZATION

Buildings will be sited along the streetline with one exception. Duplexes will retain their existing frontyard setbacks.

Building frontages will be constructed to the side property lines in order to produce a continuous streetwall with the following exceptions:

1. existing sideyard setbacks (usually 1m) associated with duplexes will be maintained when the building is redeveloped
2. any building developed adjacent to a duplex building form will have an equivalent front and sideyard setback.

All floors of buildings will be constructed to the streetline with the exception of duplexes.

MASSING

Construction of blockform buildings will be encouraged. (The exception being the existing duplex building form.)

Retention of off-street houseform buildings (i.e. duplexes) will be encouraged through renovation, construction and/or construction of rear additions.

If demolished, existing off-street houseform buildings will be replaced only by similar buildings.

Land assembly of properties for redevelopment projects is acceptable.

Construction of on-street houseform buildings will be discouraged.

Building bays will not exceed 12m in width.

PEDESTRIAN AMENITY

More street embellishments such as benches, paving, and planting will be provided in this area.

■ The Eastern Residential District

The Eastern Residential District is bounded by Glen Manor Drive and Victoria Park Avenue. Like the Western Regional District, this part of Queen Street East has a medium scale building fabric and character. The built form however, is more diverse than the Western Regional District. Mixed-use buildings in this sub-area have a fine grain, small scale appearance while the blockform residential buildings have a coarser grain, medium scale massing. In the Eastern Residential District, blockform buildings are either located along the streetline, or setback from the street with front yard landscaping. Houseform buildings exhibit similar variations. The most distinctive characteristic of this part of Queen Street East, which is different from the rest of Toronto's commercial-residential strips, is that many of the buildings are exclusively walk up apartment buildings, and the retail activities are primarily oriented to local residents. Consequently, the intensity of pedestrian and vehicular traffic is less than other parts of the commercial strip. It is the residential land uses, the intensity of the pedestrian traffic, and the small scale nature of most of the building forms in this part of Queen Street East which contributes to the, "small town" atmosphere present in the Eastern Residential District.

The objective for this sub area is to enhance the existing medium scale, 'small town' character of the area and maintain the primarily residential nature of this part of Queen Street East.

PUBLIC REALM

Only a variety of vegetation such as tree planting, shrubbery, flower beds and grass will be used to supplement existing landscaping. Hard landscaping is discouraged.

SITE ORGANIZATION

Existing frontyard setbacks will be adhered to when a property is redeveloped.

Residential buildings will be encouraged to be set back from the streetline and sideyard in relationship to other residential buildings.

Mixed-use buildings will be sited along the streetline.

Mixed-use building frontages will be constructed to the side property lines in order to produce a continuous streetwall.

MASSING

Retention of houseform and blockform residential buildings will be encouraged through renovation, conservation and/or construction of rear additions.

Construction of houseform buildings will be encouraged where such buildings already exist.

Redevelopment of individual properties will be encouraged, while land assembly of properties for redevelopment will be discouraged.

Small scale redevelopment is encouraged.

Solely residential buildings, of blockform type, are encouraged. One storey retail additions to existing buildings is discouraged.

Building mass will be sensitive to the existing medium scale character of the area.

Mixed use buildings will be 3 storeys in height and/or will be perceived as 3 storeys. It is acceptable to construct a 4 storey blockform residential building.

Residential building bays will not exceed 10m in width in order to preserve the scale of the area. It is desirable that retail building bays not exceed 8m in width.

THE ARCHITECTURAL STYLES OF QUEEN STREET EAST

It is important that all building forms along Queen Street East reflect the existing context of the neighbourhood. Hence, the common principles, architectural styles and materials used along this arterial will be respected and understood.

A variety of architectural styles prevail along Queen Street East. The following outlines the building elements common to the local architecture:

LATE GEORGIAN

Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, late Georgian architecture dominated both residential and commercial buildings in the Beaches. As Queen Street East began to develop a number of modest buildings were constructed along the street in this influence.

Typical features include:

- A gabled roof with the gable often facing the street
- Vertical flat-topped windows, originally multi-paned and occasionally louvered
- Simple storefront cornices
- Symmetrical facades.

Buildings in this style were most often built in wood, clad with horizontal siding of brick or stone. The wall surfaces were frequently unadorned.

VICTORIAN

Victorian architecture was more common to residential buildings than commercial structures in the Beaches. This style became popular during the period between the 1850s to the First World War.

Typical features include:

- Steeply pitched roofs
- Gables were “gingerbread” in character and highly decorative

- Vertical windows (usually single paned) flanked with either flat, segmented or, occasionally, pointed arches
- Porches, verandas and stoops
- Bay or oriel windows
- Towers and turrets
- Asymmetrical facades.

Larger houses in this style were most often built in brick while smaller cottages were usually clad with horizontal wood siding. Many of the decorative features were inspired by gothic and medieval architecture. The majority of the large houseforms on Queen Street East were either in this style or of a later variation.

QUEEN ANNE

The Queen Anne style is a variation of Victorian architecture. However, it is more flamboyant and classical (rather than gothic) in its inspiration for decorative features. It was popular between 1886–1914. It was frequently used in residential buildings and only occasionally in commercial building forms. This style was very eclectic borrowing from many different current and previous styles.

Typical features include:

- Ornate and complex building cornices which are filigree-like and light in appearance
- Large, vertical multi-paned windows using a variety of arches
- Oriel windows
- Towers and turrets
- Porches and verandas (in residential buildings)
- Large display windows (in storefronts).

Commercial buildings were generally constructed from brick while residential structures were clad in either horizontal wood siding, brick, stucco or in various combinations.

EDWARDIAN

Edwardian architecture is prevalent along Queen Street East.

Typical features include:

- Flat roofs
- Large building cornices, heavy in appearance, or “mock” roofs applied to the top of the facade
- Pronounced storefront cornices (but smaller and usually less elaborate than building cornices)
- Large display windows with multi-paned transoms (in storefronts).

The most typical feature of this style is the use of red brick with quoins, horizontal stripes, lintels, sills or detailed diamonds, squares, etc. in contrasting light-coloured stone, generally subdued and box-like in appearance. This style can be considered a more subdued and commercial variation of Queen Anne architecture.

Many buildings used features from both Edwardian and Queen Anne, although the larger commercial buildings tended to use the more monumental forms of Edwardian architecture, while houseforms employed Queen Anne elements with greater consistency. So-called “Boomtown Fronts” are simplified forms of this style

MODERN BRICK VERNACULAR

As Queen Street East continued to develop in the period between the wars (1919 – 1939), this style often termed ‘Tapestry Brick’ also became popular. It was a simple and economical way of adding some visual interest to otherwise straightforward speculative buildings.

Typical features include:

- Flat roofs
- Top of facades were very modest, but still defined with either simple corbelling for cornices, stepped parapets or “mock” roofs
- Flat-topped windows, vertical or horizontal. With this style thin metal-framed casement and awning-type windows were introduced
- Simple storefront cornices
- Large display windows (in storefronts).

The most common feature of this style is the use of textured brick in various colours and configurations. Decoration was usually restricted to inlays of brick panels in the shape of diamonds, squares or horizontal bands above or beside the upper facade windows. In this period it also became fashionable to apply certain exotic features to essentially modest brick apartment buildings. Along Queen Street East the most favoured elements were usually popular conceptions of old England (Tudor Revival) or the Mediterranean architecture (Spanish Revival).

ART DECO AND STYLE MODERNE

In the nineteen thirties, the more prosperous developers (such as Kresge, Woolworth and other chain stores), consistently used Art Deco and Style Moderne architecture.

Both styles share many of the same qualities:

- Flat roofs
- Flat walls (often very smooth)
- Flat-topped windows frequently with thin metal mullions and frames
- Frequently constructed out of yellow brick, stone, porcelain steel panels, glazed terra cotta or stucco
- Strong, clean lines dominate

Art Deco emphasized the vertical in:

- The overall shape of windows
- The emphasis of window mullions
- The use of decoration, especially bas-relief panels (using classical or stylized motifs)

Style Moderne emphasized the horizontal in:

- The overall shape of windows
- The emphasis of window mullions
- The use of decorative materials in contrasting colours and textures.

