



**QUEEN STREET EAST: ASHBRIDGE PRECINCT**  
**Urban Design Guidelines**

**Leslie Street to Coxwell Avenue**

## **City of Toronto**

### **Queen Street East: Ashbridge Precinct Urban Design Guidelines**

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The City of Toronto City Planning Division would like to thank all those who participated in the community consultation process. This document has been enhanced by your knowledgeable and helpful feedback.

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# Mandate

The mandate for this guideline document developed as a result of City Council's direction. The direction was to develop a set of guidelines specific to the study area that comply with Official Plan policies, while taking into account the area's existing character and the objectives of the community. At its meeting of June 13, 2014 Toronto City Council adopted a motion stating:

*"City Council request the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York to assess the portion of Queen Street East between Leslie Street and Coxwell Avenue to determine whether either the existing Urban Design Guidelines for Queen Street East between Coxwell Avenue and Neville Park Boulevard or the emerging Urban Design Guidelines for Queen Street in between Jimmie Simpson Park and Leslie Avenue, and associated Official Plan policies, should be extended to apply to the portion of Queen Street East between Leslie Street and Coxwell Avenue, and report back to Toronto and East York Community Council in 2015."*

The study area as outlined in the Council motion falls between the boundaries of two recently completed studies, Queen Street East (Coxwell Avenue to Nursewood Road) to the east, and Leslieville to the west.

Through observation and analysis of this study area, and through community consultation, it was determined that there were unique characteristics of this study area that warranted a thorough and distinct set of policies and guidelines. City Planning staff determined that an area-specific Official Plan policy would provide clarity regarding how the Official Plan applies to the area. The urban design guidelines contained here are intended to support and complement the Official Plan and Area-Specific Policy No. 501. The guidelines will be used as a tool to evaluate proposed development in the study area for lots that are able to support mid-rise development, and to place proposed development within the existing and planned context.

This supporting document provides detailed implementation guidance that is intended to support vibrant, high-quality, appropriately scaled, mixed use development within the study area.



Aerial photograph of the Study Area (2013)



*Queen Street East (Rhodes Avenue to Coxwell Avenue)*

# 1. INTRODUCTION

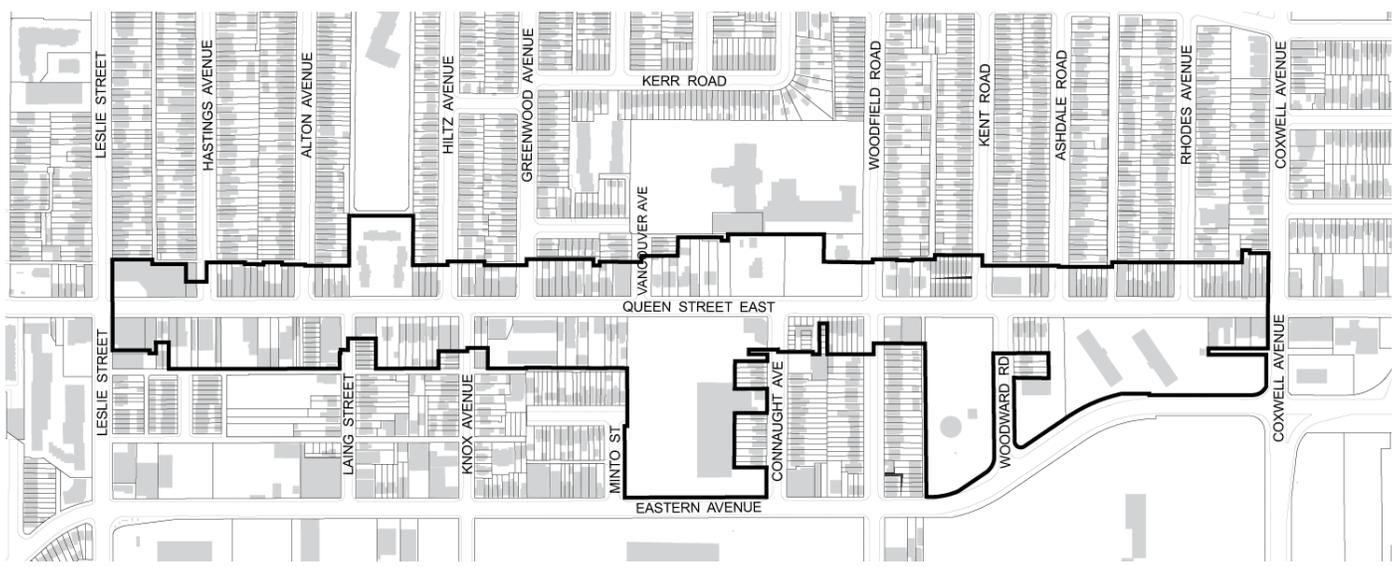
The urban design guidelines contained in this document provide part of the planning framework for redevelopment in the study area and must be read in conjunction with the Official Plan and Area-Specific Policy No. 501.



# 1.1 Study Area

The study area comprises all properties that front onto Queen Street East between Leslie Street and Coxwell Avenue. The study area falls between two recently completed planning and urban design studies - Queen Street East between Coxwell Avenue and Nursewood Road (the "Beaches") Urban Design Guidelines (2012) / Area Specific Official Plan Amendment No. 466 (2014) and the Leslieville Urban Design Guidelines and Area Specific Official Plan Amendment No. 469 (2014). The total length of the study area is just over one kilometre in length, a portion of which is contained within the Leslieville Business Improvement Area (between Leslie Street and Vancouver Avenue). The remainder of the study area does not fall within a BIA.

Through the course of the community consultation and preparation of this planning and urban design study, the study area became referred to as the "Ashbridge Precinct", primarily because of the Ashbridge Estate that lies at the centre of the study area. The Estate was built and occupied by the Ashbridge family, one of the founding families of Toronto.

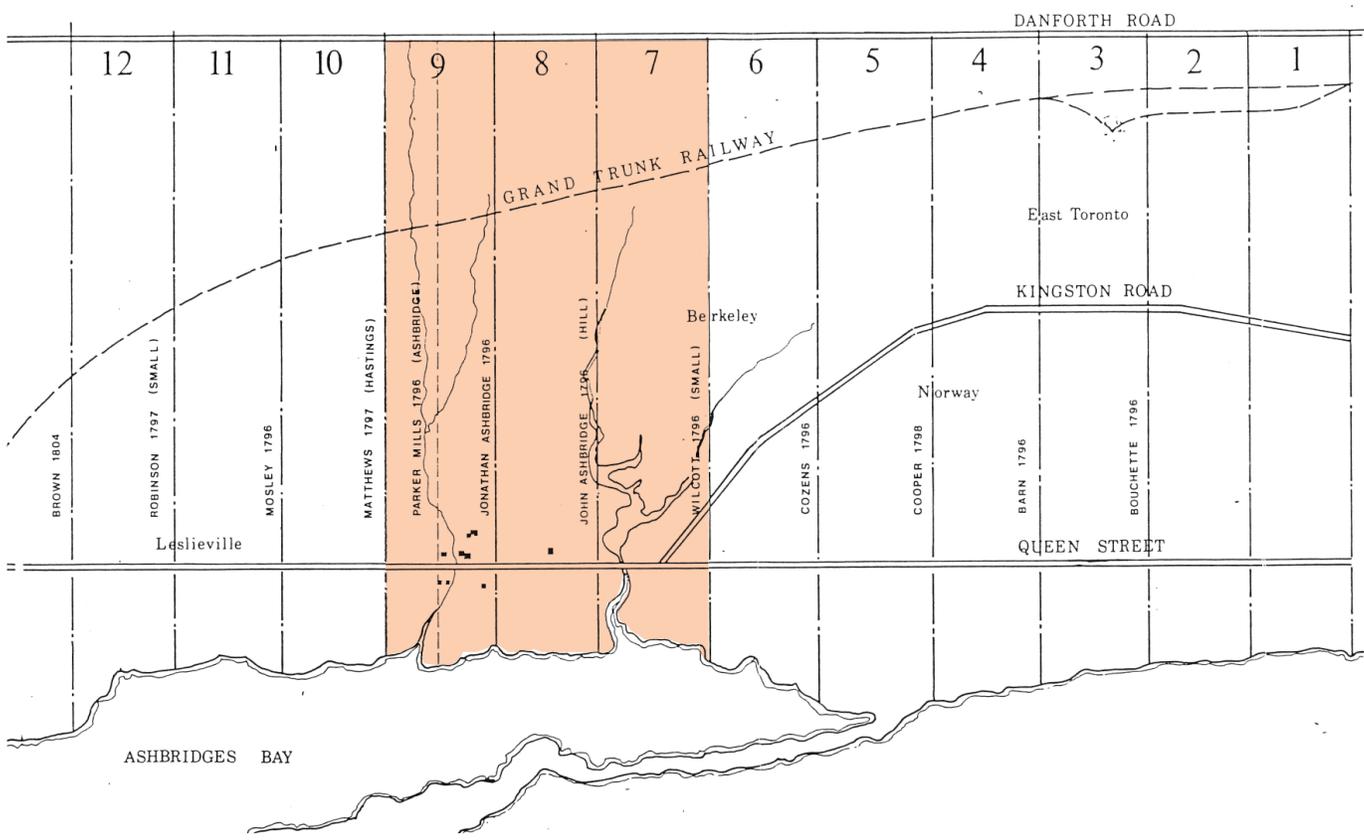


Map of the study area

# 1.2 Historical Overview

Queen Street (originally Lot Street) was laid out by Lieutenant Governor Simcoe in the 1790s as the baseline for the lot and concession system in the town of York. The Town of York was located just south of Queen Street between the present day perimeter of George, Berkeley, Front and Adelaide Streets. King Street was York's "main street" and it extended to the east then turned northeast on a diagonal to converge with Queen Street at the bridge crossing the Don River. All traffic from the town of York would traverse the bridge and head along the Kingston Road (as it was known until the 1880s when it was renamed Queen Street East). The land east of the Don was divided into 200 acre lots with John Scadding being the first landowner just across the river.

One of the founding families of Toronto, the Ashbridge family, is the only family in the history of Toronto to have occupied the same property for more than 200 years. Sarah Ashbridge and her family moved to the Town of York from Pennsylvania and began clearing land in 1794. In 1796, the Ashbridge family was granted 600 acres (243 hectares) between Ashbridge's Bay and present day Danforth Avenue. Woodfield Road, on the east side of the current property, was originally the farm lane leading to the fields farther north.

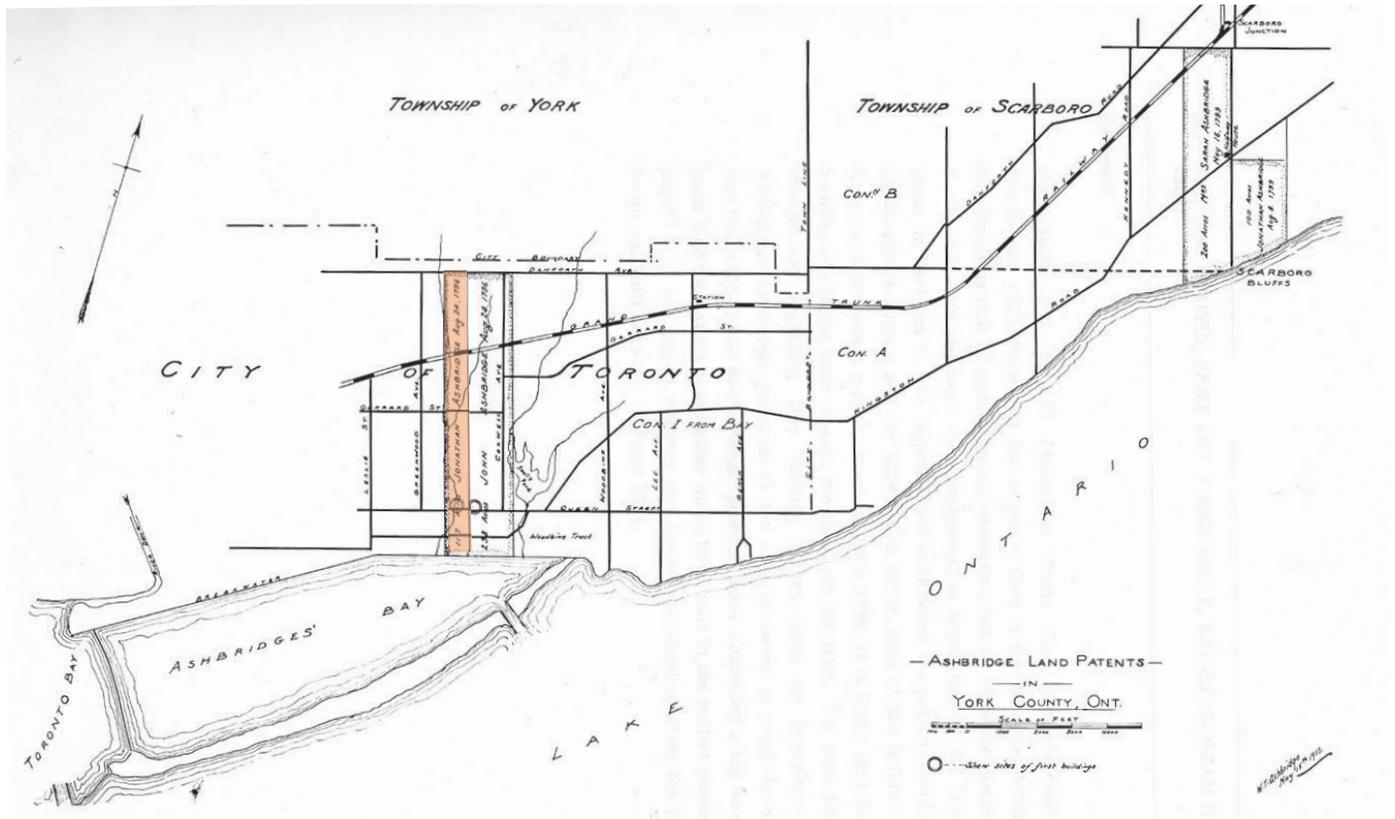


Patents for Part Lots 7, 8 and 9 were taken by Sarah Ashbridge in 1796 (Image courtesy of the Ontario Heritage Trust).

# 1.2 Historical Overview (continued)

By 1884, the communities East of the Don River along Queen Street including Riverside and Leslieville, were annexed by the City of Toronto and provided with water services and sewers. In 1893 all Toronto streetcars were electrified and the streetcar service on Queen Street East was extended to Lee Avenue. Historic atlases indicate that the area developed rapidly after this and large tracts of land were subdivided creating the current street pattern. By 1890 houses and shops stretched from Broadview all the way to the Beach with only a few gaps, such as the Ashbridge Estate. In 1909, the area known as the Midway District, north of Queen Street, including the Ashbridge Estate, was annexed to the city. Between Jones Avenue and Coxwell Avenue there were still three creeks, crossed by tiny wooden bridges. In the 1920s these creeks were submerged into the sewer system.

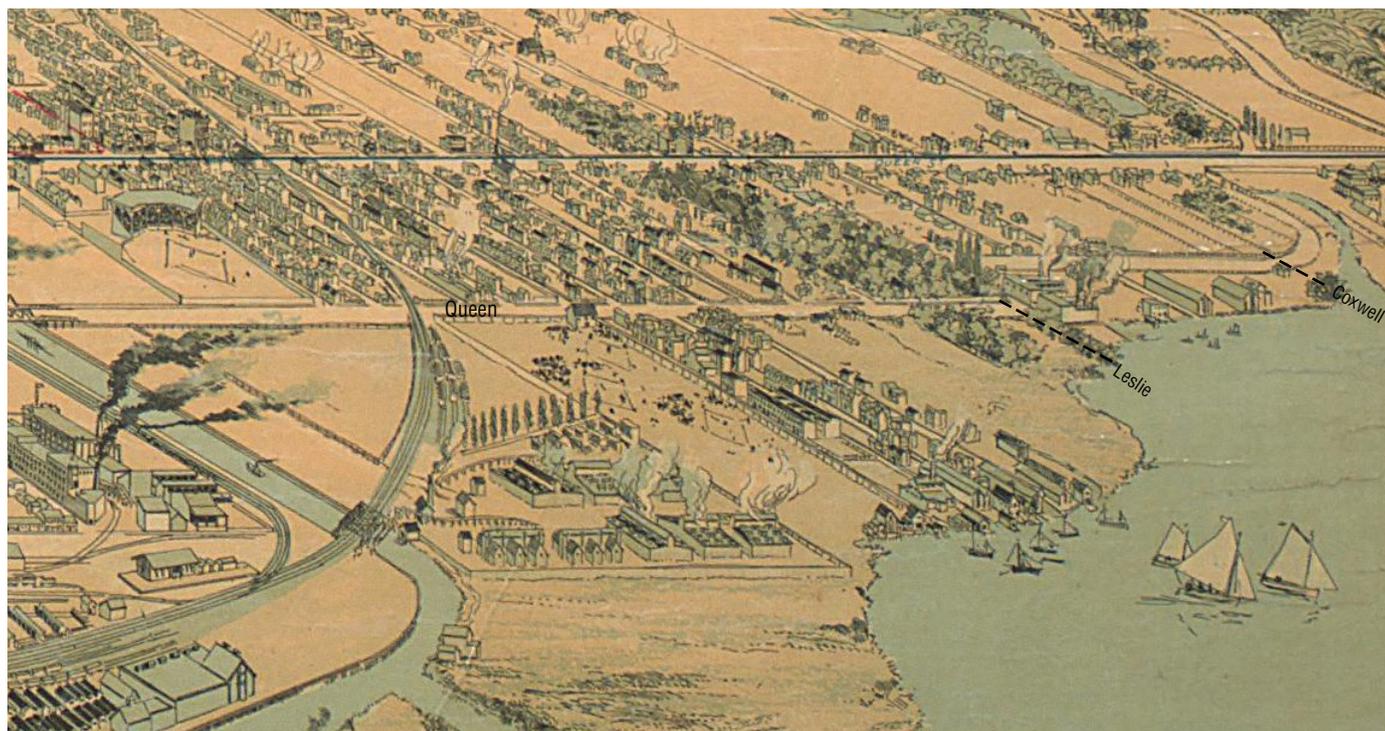
From its origins as a part of an agricultural frontier to a densely populated and diverse urban community, the Ashbridge Precinct is distinguished by two properties, the Ashbridge Estate and the Russell Carhouse, both of which encompass large areas of land along Queen Street East, whose built-form, open space and use contribute to the particular character of the neighbourhood while maintaining elements which are significant to its history and development.



Map showing Ashbridge farm lots, May 15, 1912 (Image courtesy of the Ontario Heritage Trust)

The Ashbridge Estate was a working farm and prospered until the 1880s when the city expanded eastward and encroached on the estate. The oldest house remaining on the site, the Jesse Ashbridge House, was built in 1854 according to a design by Joseph Sheard, architect and Toronto mayor (1871-72). The Shingle Style mansard roof was added c. 1899. In 1912-14, the Ashbridge family sold off much of their land including the orchard for the Duke of Connaught Public School (1912) and S.H. Armstrong Community Recreation Centre. The house retains the qualities of its original setting as it is situated in a large landscaped and well-treed property extending along the north side of Queen Street contributing with its publicly accessible open space to the urban amenities of the neighbourhood. In 1972, the property was donated to the provincial agency, the Ontario Heritage Trust, by Dorothy Bullen and her sister Elizabeth Burton, the last members of the family who continued living on the property until 1997.

The Russell Carhouse and yard located on the south side of Queen Street East at the corner of Connaught Avenue was originally built in 1913 by the Toronto Railway Company to house a paint shop. Six stub tracks entered the facility from Queen Street. When the King Street carhouse burnt down in 1916, Russell was hurriedly converted into a carhouse. In 1922, the TTC redirected all the streetcars to enter via Eastern Avenue when the western part of the yard was opened. In 1923, the TTC demolished the original building due to faulty foundations and the unstable Ashbridge's Bay "fill" which caused the building to sink. On December 13th, 1924, TTC opened the rebuilt carhouse. The property's importance to the TTC's streetcar fleet increased significantly in 1967 when the Danforth Carhouse was converted to full bus operation after the opening of the Bloor-Danforth subway.



*Toronto Railway Company's Map showing Street Railway Lines, 1892 Lithograph (Image courtesy Toronto Public Library)*

## 1.3 Community Feedback

Through the community consultation process, residents identified many aspects of the area that they were interested in preserving and enhancing. The community also felt that the Ashbridge Precinct should have its own set of guidelines rather than adopting the previously completed Leslieville or Queen Street East (Coxwell Avenue to Nursewood Road) guidelines to ensure that certain existing unique characteristics are maintained and that new buildings contribute to this character. Priorities identified in community feedback include:

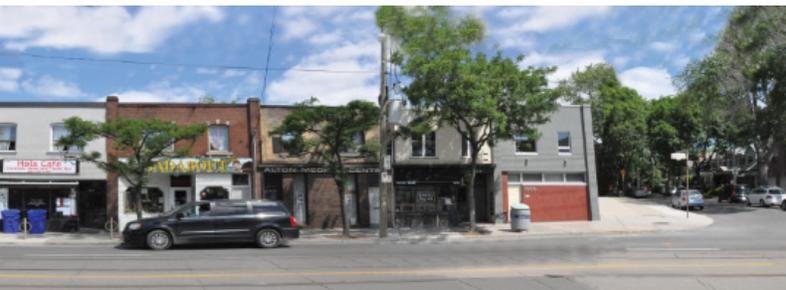
- **Preserve the character of the neighbourhood**
- **Protect existing green space & unique features such as the Ashbridge Estate**
- **Improve the pedestrian environment with wider sidewalks, improved streetscaping, bike parking & street furniture**
- **Ensure sunlight access on the street**
- **Create a family-friendly environment with family-sized residential units**
- **Encourage fine grain retail that serves the local community**
- **Promote walkability by prohibiting new curb cuts along Queen Street East and locating parking below grade**





Queen Street East (Hastings Avenue to Alton Avenue)

## 2. PLANNING CONTEXT

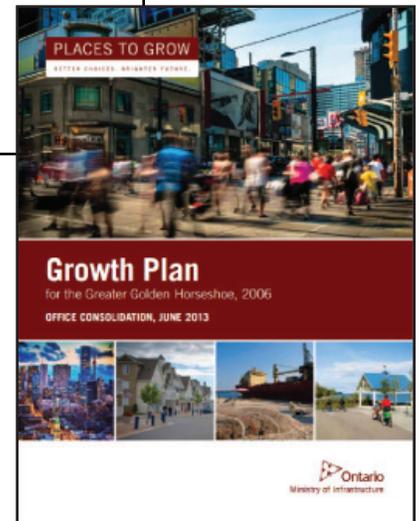
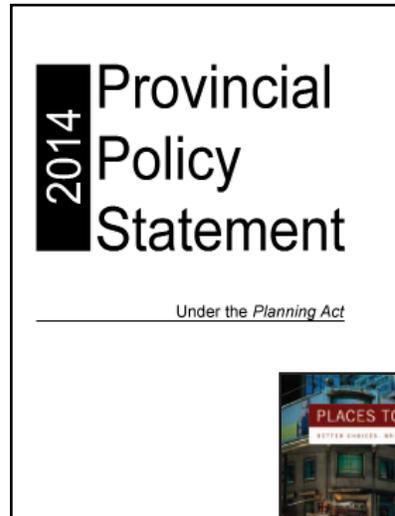


There are a number of municipal and provincial policies and guidelines that provide direction for growth in Toronto. The following section provides a synopsis of these policies and guidelines and their applicability to the study area.

## 2.1 Provincial Planning Documents

The 2014 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The PPS sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land. The key objectives include: building strong communities; wise use and management of resources; and protecting public health and safety. City Council's planning decisions are required to be consistent with the PPS.

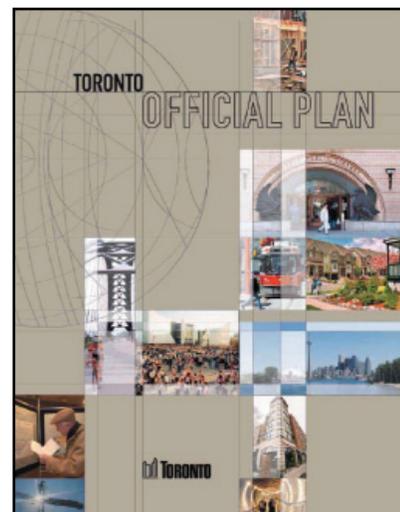
The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) provides a framework for managing growth in the GGH including: directions for where and how to grow; the provision of infrastructure to support growth; and protecting natural systems and cultivating a culture of conservation. City Council's planning decisions are required by the Planning Act to conform, or not conflict, with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.



## 2.2 Official Plan & The Avenues

The City's Official Plan provides a long-term vision for the City that is intended to be supported by implementation plans, strategies and guidelines. These supporting documents, including the subject Urban Design Guidelines for the Ashbridge Precinct, provide detailed implementation guidance for new development within the study area.

The Official Plan aims to create an attractive and safe city that evokes pride, passion and a sense of belonging, as well as identifying areas for growth. The Official Plan directs growth to the *Downtown, Mixed Use Areas, Centres, and Avenues*. Queen Street East is identified as an *Avenue* on Official Plan Map 2 – Urban Structure.



Section 2.2.3 of the Official Plan describes *Avenues* as “important corridors along major streets where reurbanization is anticipated and encouraged to create new housing and job opportunities, while improving the pedestrian environment, the look of the street, shopping opportunities and transit service for community residents”.

The *Avenues* will be reurbanized incrementally on a site-by-site basis and over the course of many years. The framework for new development on each *Avenue* is generally established through an Avenue Study with the intent of encouraging reinvestment and intensification on underdeveloped *Avenues*.

Some of the city's *Avenues* function as traditional 'main streets' that serve the local and broader communities with a variety of non-residential uses. The more typical 'main street' *Avenues*, including parts of Queen Street East in the Ashbridge Precinct consist mostly of narrow lots with some larger and/or underutilized lots. Due to the local characteristics, the opportunities for mid-rise development within the study area will not be the same as other *Avenues* in the city.

The Official Plan notes that not all *Avenues* are the same. “Each *Avenue* is different in terms of lot sizes and configurations, street width, existing uses, neighbouring uses, transit service and streetscape potential. There is no 'one size fits all' program for reurbanizing the *Avenues*”. Although Queen Street East was not identified by staff as a priority for an Avenue Study, a planning analysis of the portion of Queen Street between Leslie Street and Coxwell Avenue was considered appropriate in order to implement the Official Plan policies while taking local context into account through development of detailed urban design guidelines.

Section 2.2.3 Avenues, Policy 3.a) states that development may be permitted on the *Avenues* prior to an Avenue Study, provided an applicant has submitted an Avenue Segment Study as part of the application. Proposed development that is accompanied by an Avenue Segment Study will be considered on the basis of all of the policies of the Official Plan. Avenue Segment Studies are required to discuss the implications for the portion of the *Avenue* resulting from the proposed development and whether the proposed development would be setting a positive precedent for future development of the remainder of the *Avenue*.



Excerpt from Official Plan Map 2 - Urban Structure

## 2.2 Official Plan & The Avenues (continued)

The Official Plan also includes development criteria to guide new development in different areas across the City. Development criteria are described for each of the Land Use designations within the Official Plan. The study area has a variety of Land Use designations (see map below), including, *Mixed Use Areas*, *Neighbourhoods*, *Employment Areas* and *Parks*.

The majority of the study area is designated *Mixed Use Areas* in the Official Plan. This designation permits a broad range of commercial, residential and institutional uses, and includes policies and criteria to guide development. *Mixed Use Areas* are intended to accommodate most of the anticipated growth in the city with regard to retail, service employment and new housing.

The development criteria for properties designated *Mixed Use Areas* include:

- creating a balance of high quality commercial, residential, institutional and open space uses that reduce automobile dependency and meet the needs of the local community;
- providing for new jobs and homes for Toronto's growing population on underutilized lands;
- locating and massing new buildings to provide a transition between areas of different development intensity and scale;

- locating and massing new buildings to frame the edges of streets and parks;
- providing an attractive, comfortable and safe pedestrian environment;
- providing good site access and circulation, and adequate supply of parking for residents and visitors;
- locating and screening service areas, ramps and garbage storage to minimize the impact on adjacent streets and residences; and
- providing indoor and outdoor recreation space for building residents in every significant multi-residential development.

There are several properties within the Ashbridge Precinct designated *Neighbourhoods*. *Neighbourhoods* are physically stable areas and development within *Neighbourhoods* must respect and reinforce existing physical character. Policy 2.3.1 requires new development in *Mixed Use Areas* that are adjacent to *Neighbourhoods* to provide a transition in scale and density towards the *Neighbourhoods*. New development in such an area is also required to maintain adequate light and privacy for existing residential properties, and to mitigate traffic or parking impacts on nearby residential streets.



**Toronto Official Plan** Extract from Map 21 Land Use Plan

Neighbourhoods
  Mixed Use Areas
  Employment Areas
  Parks

## 2.3 Zoning By-Law

Most of the properties within the study area are zoned Commercial Residential, which permits a wide range of commercial and residential uses (under the former City of Toronto Zoning By-law 438-86). Other permissions in the study area include:

- Commercial-Residential densities that range from 2.0 - 2.5
- The maximum permitted heights in the study area are 12.0 metres and 14.0 metres (approximately 4 storeys).

The harmonized City-wide Zoning By-law 569-2013 is currently under appeal at the Ontario Municipal Board. It includes the same permissions as 438-86 for the study area.

There are two properties that are exempt from City-wide Zoning By-law 569-2013 and are subject to the former City of Toronto Zoning By-law 438-86.



**Zoning** By-law 569-2103

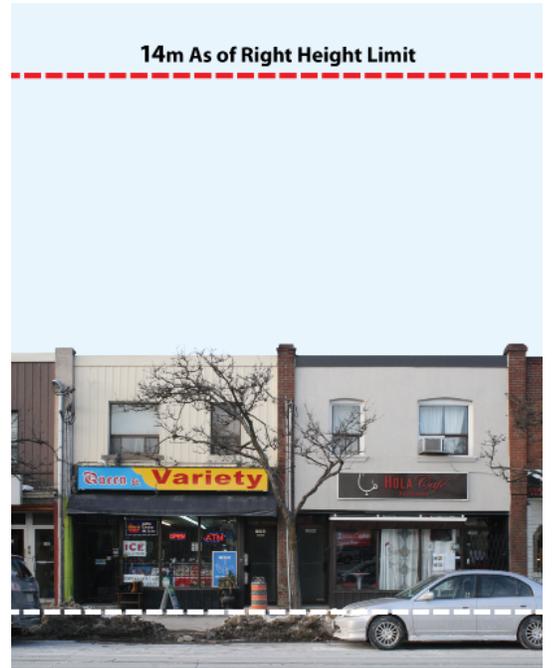
- Residential
- Commercial Residential
- Utility and Transportation
- Open Space
- Not Part of By-law 569-2013

## 2.3 Zoning By-Law (continued)

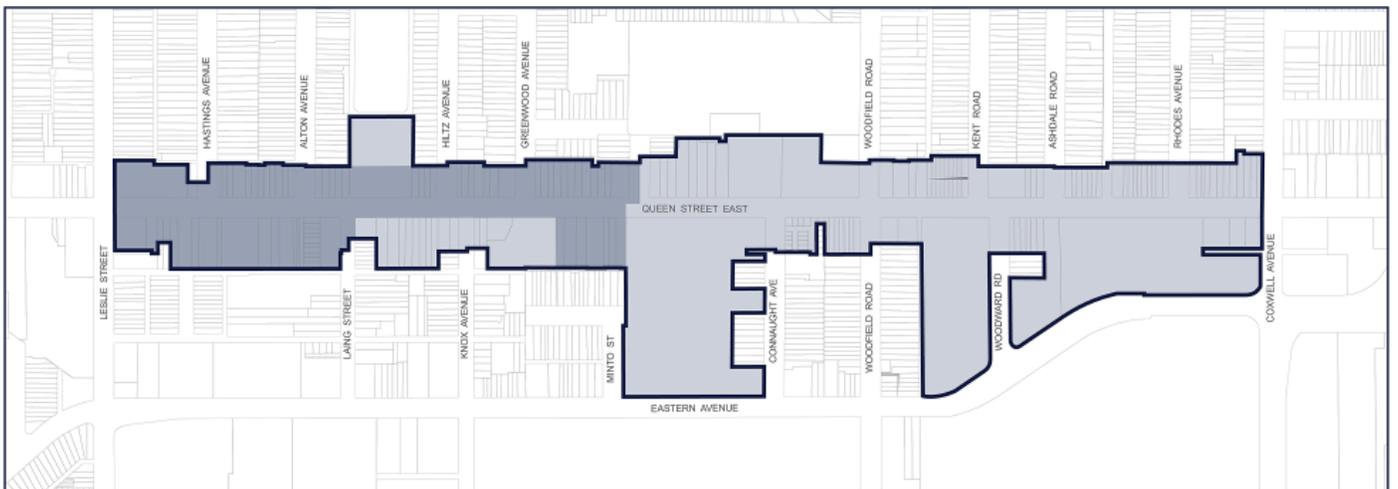
The diagrams below illustrate (approximately) the application of the as-of-right heights within the study area. Much of the study area comprises 1, 2 and 3 storey buildings, while the as-of-right heights of 12 and 14 metres would permit up to approximately 4 storeys.



Queen Street East at Rhodes Avenue



Queen Street East at Alton Avenue



**Height Limits** By-law 569-2103  
 ■ 12.0 metres ■ 14.0 metres

## 2.4 Avenues & Mid-Rise Buildings Study

In 2010, City Council adopted the Avenues and Mid-Rise Building Study and related performance standards (commonly referred to as the Mid-Rise Guidelines). The study includes performance standards for mid-rise developments along the City's *Avenues* that are identified on Map 2 – Urban Structure of the Official Plan. The portion of Queen Street East that is identified as an *Avenue* (Broadview Avenue to Victoria Park Avenue, including the study area) was removed from the Avenues and Mid-Rise Building Study map in 2010 and therefore the performance standards/guidelines do not apply to Queen Street East.

As previously mentioned, Urban Design Guidelines were prepared for both Leslieville (Jimmie Simpson Park to Leslie Street) to the west and Queen Street East (Coxwell Avenue to Nursewood Road) to the east.

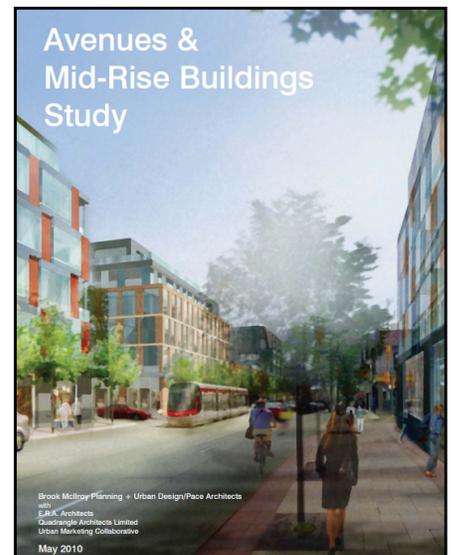
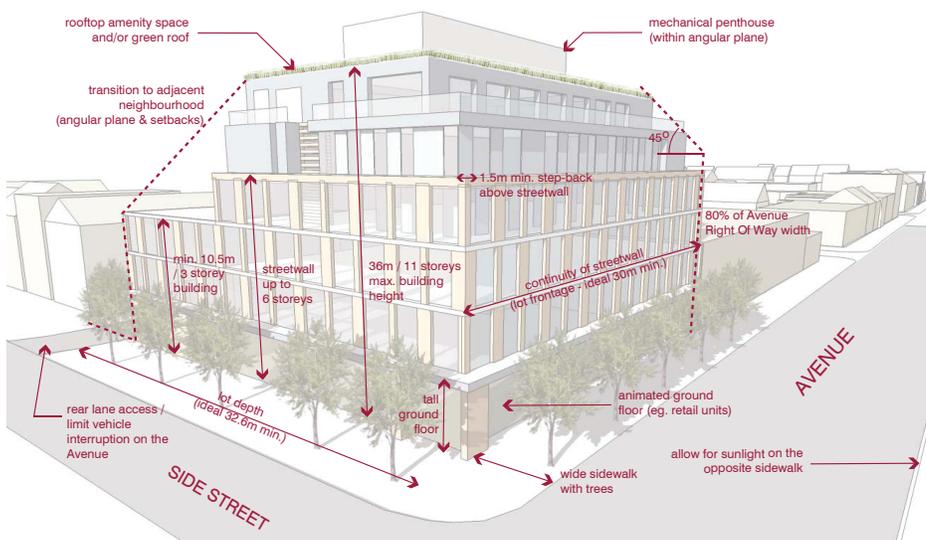
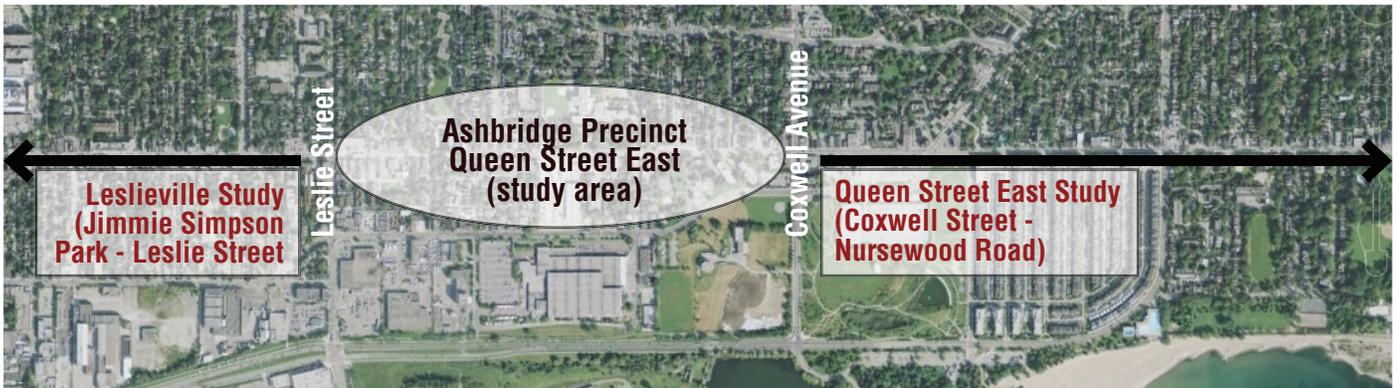
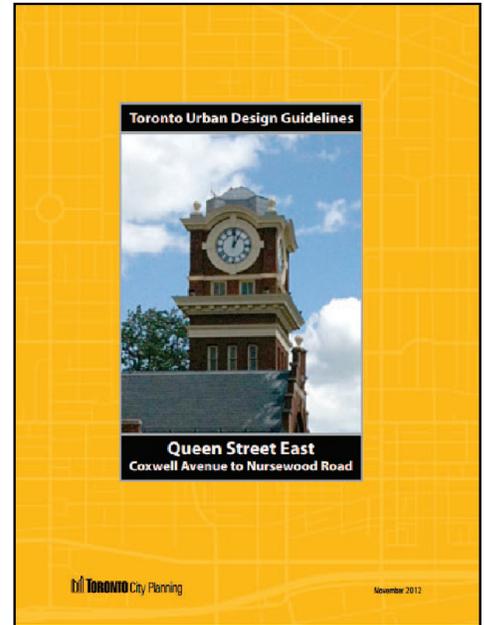
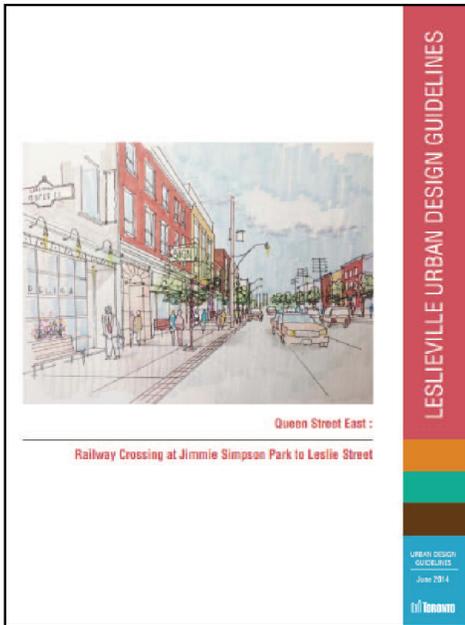


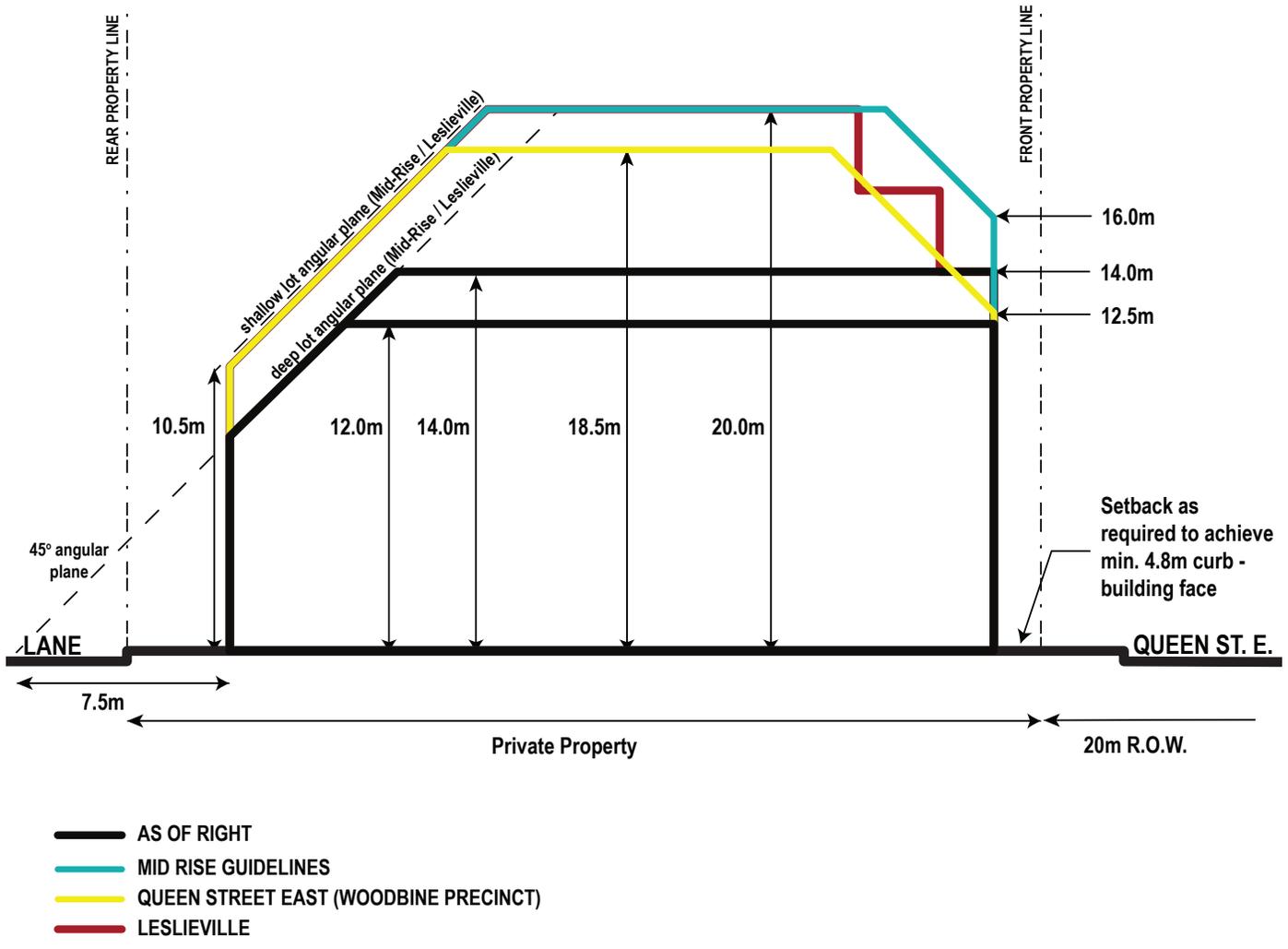
Illustration of Performance Standards as applied to a sample mid-rise building (from the Avenues & Mid-Rise Buildings Study)

# 2.5 Built Form Guidelines Comparison

Over the last several years, studies have been undertaken to develop design guidelines for built form, both locally and at a city-wide scale. The relevant studies include the Queen Street East (Coxwell Avenue to Nursewood Road) Urban Design Guidelines (2012) and Official Plan Amendment (2014), the Leslieville Guidelines and Official Plan Amendment (2014) and the Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study (2010). Although none of these studies apply directly to the Ashbridge Precinct study area, the section comparison of the application of the built form guidelines on the opposite page illustrates the variations and consistencies amongst the various built form guidelines.



Aerial photograph of study area



Sample section drawing illustrating various built form guidelines

## 2.6 Heritage

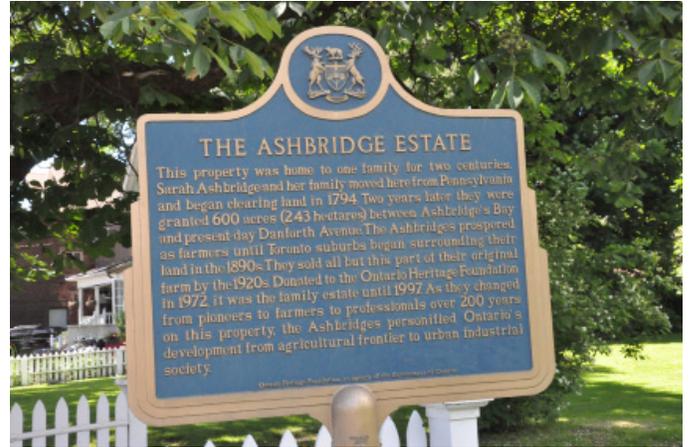
### 2.6.1 Heritage Policies

Properties currently listed on the City of Toronto Heritage Register and those that are designated under either Parts IV or V of the Ontario Heritage Act will be conserved in accordance with relevant legislation, City policy and the Standard and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.

In accordance with the City's Official Plan policies, Listed or Designated Heritage buildings are to be preserved in their entirety. Preserving only the façades is strongly discouraged. A Heritage Impact Assessment will be required for development applications that affect existing and potential properties.

Treatment of Cultural Heritage is an important component of sustainable development and place making. Official Plan Section 3.1.5: Heritage Conservation, provides direction on the protection and management of the City's built, cultural and archaeological heritage resources. The Official Plan also provides direction on impacts of new development on, or adjacent to, a property on the Heritage Register, and directs that any new development should conserve the cultural heritage values, attributes and character of that property and to mitigate visual and physical impact on it.

The Ontario Municipal Board recently issued the decision for appeals of the Official Plan Amendment 199 giving approval of the updated Heritage Policies in the Official Plan (except for those site-specific appeals that remain outstanding to this decision).



*Views of the Ashbridge Estate*

## 2.6.2 City's Heritage Register

Queen Street East has a long history and the heritage buildings and cultural landscapes contribute to the overall character of the street.

The Ashbridge Estate, located at 1444 Queen Street East, has been listed on the City's heritage register since 1973 and is commemorated by an Ontario Heritage Trust Provincial Plaque. The property is identified under section 25.2 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* as a provincially significant "Cultural Heritage Landscape" and a provincially significant "Built Heritage Resource" under the *Standards and Guidelines for Conservation of Provincial Heritage Properties*.

The Duke of York Hotel, which is located at the southwest corner of Queen Street East and Leslie Street, directly adjacent to the study area, is a Listed Heritage property.

Individual buildings of heritage interest will continue to be identified and studied for inclusion on the City's Heritage Register.

## 2.6.3 Archaeology

Any sites that are identified by the City as having archeological potential in the City's Archaeological Master Plan will be required to include a Stage 1 Archaeological Resource Assessment as part of a planning application.

The Ashbridge Estate contains a registered archaeological site.



*The Duke at 1225-7 Queen Street East is a Listed Heritage Property (although not within the study area, is located at the southwest corner of the Leslie Street and Queen Street East).*

## 2.7 Community Services & Facilities

There are a range of community services and facilities within and close to the study area that serve the local community. These include parks, schools, community facilities and recreation centres, shelters/affordable housing, libraries and places of worship. As incremental redevelopment occurs within the study area, it is important to recognize the importance of these existing services that contribute to the quality of life and ensure that new services are introduced as needed.

### Parks & Open Space

Jonathan Ashbridge Park is a large public park located just east of Woodfield Avenue, with approximately 80 metres of frontage along Queen Street East. There are two other green spaces that front onto Queen Street East, including the forecourt of Greenwood Court and the open space at the Ashbridge Estate. Neither of these are publicly owned; however, they do contribute to the open space character of the area.

Other existing parks and open spaces within and adjacent to the Precinct include:

- Woodbine Park
- Maple Leaf Forever Park
- Duke of Connaught Public School Playground
- Main Sewage Treatment Plant Park

### Community Services & Facilities

Community facilities provide programs and activities for people of all ages. The following is a list of facilities within and in proximity to the study area:

**Schools:** Duke of Connaught Jr. and Sr. Public School

**Child Care Centres:** Woodfield Day Care (Woodgreen), Coxwell Early Learning & Child Care Centre

**Community Centres:** S.H. Armstrong Community Recreation Centre, Applegrove

**Health Centres:** East End Community Health Centre

**Places of Worship:** Centre for Spiritual Living, Toronto Gospel Lighthouse

Please see Appendix D for Community Services and Facilities maps.



*S.H. Armstrong Community Recreation Centre*



*Jonathan Ashbridge Park has significant frontage along Queen Street East.*



*Queen Street East (Greenwood Avenue to Vancouver Avenue)*

### 3. AREA CHARACTER



Queen Street East in the Ashbridge Precinct has a character that is influenced by the mix of uses and building types within the area. Many blocks comprise street-related, mixed-use buildings with commercial uses at grade and residential dwellings above. Single and semi-detached residential buildings, many with landscaped front yard setbacks, are interspersed throughout the Precinct. Unique buildings and uses in the area - the historic Ashbridge Estate, the Russell Yards streetcar facility, and the landscaped areas associated with the occasional apartment buildings - are part of the area context, and the positive attributes of those buildings contribute to the unique character of the Precinct. New development within the Precinct should respect and reinforce this character. The scale of the Precinct's buildings, combined with their age, materials and detailing, all contribute to the overall character of the street.