



Sept 2017

CITY OF TORONTO

TOWNHOUSE AND LOW-RISE  
APARTMENT GUIDELINES



TOWNHOUSE AND LOW-RISE APARTMENT GUIDELINES

DRAFT  
URBAN DESIGN  
GUIDELINES

2017

## **City of Toronto**

Townhouse and Low-rise Apartment Guidelines Core Team

Lorna Day, Director of Urban Design

Harold Madi, Former Director of Urban Design

Diana Birchall, Program Manager, Urban Design

Jason Brander

Leo DeSorcy

Maaja Eichfuss-Clarke

Emilia Floro

Victor Gottwald

Anthony Hommik

Jack Krubnik

Mladen Kukic

Peggy Lee

Joseph Luk

Deanne Mighton

James Parakh

Xue Pei

Andrea Reaney

Allison Reid

Michael Sakalauskas

Derrick Wong

Townhouse and Low-rise Apartment Guidelines online:

[www.toronto.ca/lowriseguidelines](http://www.toronto.ca/lowriseguidelines)

# Table of Contents

## INTRODUCTION

- Definitions
- Background - Evolution of the Townhouse and Low-rise Apartment Building
- Key Issues and Objectives
- Purpose of the Guidelines
- How and Where the Guidelines Apply
- Key Considerations
- Guiding Principles
- Organization of the Guidelines
- Principle Guideline Statements

## 1.0 SITE CONTEXT

- 1.1 Context Analysis and Planning for Larger Sites
- 1.2 Public Realm Framework
  - 1.2.1 Street and Block Patterns
  - 1.2.2 Public Parks and Open Spaces
- 1.3 Heritage

## 2.0 BUILDING TYPES

- 2.1 Building Types
  - 2.1.1 Townhouse
  - 2.1.2 Stacked Townhouse
  - 2.1.3 Back-to-Back Townhouse
  - 2.1.4 Stacked and Back-to-Back Townhouse
  - 2.1.5 Low-rise Apartment Building
  - 2.1.6 Low-rise Hybrid Building

## 3.0 SITE ORGANIZATION

- 3.1 Streets, Lanes, Mews and Walkways
- 3.2 Shared Indoor and Outdoor Amenity Areas
- 3.3 Building Placement and Address
- 3.4 Site Services, Access and Parking

## 4.0 BUILDING DESIGN

- 4.1 Fit and Transition
- 4.2 Facing Distances and Setbacks
- 4.3 Primary Entrances
- 4.4 Private Outdoor Amenity Space
- 4.5 Building Relationship to Grade and Street

## 5.0 PEDESTRIAN REALM

- 5.1 Streetscape, Landscape and Stormwater Management
  - 5.1.1 Streetscape
  - 5.1.2 Landscape
  - 5.1.3 Stormwater Management
- 5.2 Site Elements
  - 5.2.1 Utilities & Other Equipment
  - 5.2.2 Shared Site Elements
  - 5.2.3 Lighting
- 5.3 Building Elements
  - 5.3.1 Architecture
  - 5.3.2 Materials
- 5.4 Public Art

## 6.0 DEMONSTRATION PLANS

- 6.1 Shallow Mid-Block Site
- 6.2 Deep Mid-Block Site
- 6.3 Site Adjacent to or with Heritage Resource
- 6.4 Site with Multiple Building Blocks
- 6.5 Large Site with Tower
- 6.6 Large Site with Multiple Development Blocks

## 7.0 CASE STUDIES

## 8.0 GLOSSARY

# INTRODUCTION

- Definitions
- Background - Evolution of the Townhouse and Low-rise Apartment
- Key Issues and Objectives
- Purpose of the Guidelines
- How and Where the Guidelines Apply
- Key Considerations
- Guiding Principles
- Organization of the Guidelines
- Principle Guideline Statements

MEADOWS

THAMES  
HEAVEN AND EARTH  
2014

Credit: Quadrangle Architects Limited

# Introduction

To implement Official Plan policies and provide specific design direction, the City of Toronto has developed city-wide "Townhouse and Low-rise Apartment Guidelines". The guidelines will assist in achieving the appropriate design of low-rise (primarily residential) buildings. Building types range from townhouses, through to stacked and back-to-back townhouses and low-rise apartment buildings of 4 storeys or less in height. The Guidelines build upon and replace the "Infill Townhouse Guidelines" (2003). They address infill townhouse developments as well as developments on larger sites and the more complex and intense types of low-rise, multi-unit housing in terms of: building type, site context, site organization, building massing, detailed design, and the semi-private and public realm.

The City-wide Comprehensive Zoning By-law 569-2013, as amended, defines and regulates residential building types within zone categories. A "Stacked Townhouse" and "Stacked and Back-to-Back Townhouse" are defined as an 'Apartment Building' in Zoning By-law 569-2013. These Guidelines mainly address the residential building types defined in the city-wide zoning bylaw as Townhouse and Apartment Building, and to a lesser degree Triplex and Fourplex.

## DEFINITIONS

Low-rise, multi-unit residential buildings take many forms:

**Townhouses** are generally 2 to 4 storey structures that share a sidewall with a neighbouring unit and have at least three housing bays. They typically have a front and a back.

**Stacked Townhouses** share a sidewall and have units stacked vertically (typically two or three). Like the townhouse type they have a front and a back.

**Back-to-Back Townhouses** share a rear wall as well as a sidewall and the building block has two fronts. Typically, each unit has its own entrance to grade.

**Stacked and Back-to-Back Townhouses** share a rear wall as well as a sidewall and have units stacked vertically. Various unit organizations are possible including three units located on top of each other, two-level units stacked on top of one-level units, or two-level units stacked on top of two-level units. Typically each unit has its own entrance to grade.



Cabbagetown townhouses



An early example of 'tower in the park' infill with townhouses at Bedford Rd and Lowther Ave. When infill developments are well-designed and appropriately scaled, they can enhance the overall neighbourhood character.

**Low-rise Apartment Buildings** are 4 storeys or less and share interior corridors, vertical circulation and entrances, and have multiple units stacked vertically. Units may be organized on one or both sides of a shared corridor.

**Low-rise Hybrid Buildings** combine lower units with direct access to grade as well as upper units that gain access from a shared corridor, vertical circulation and entrance.

(See Section 2 – Building Types for more detail on the various types of low-rise, multi-unit residential buildings)

## BACKGROUND - EVOLUTION OF THE TOWNHOUSE AND LOW-RISE APARTMENT BUILDING

The City of Toronto has a long, rich history of townhouse or row house development. Traditional Toronto townhouses are generally 2 ½ to 3 ½ storeys high and are typically of a Georgian, Victorian, Edwardian or Arts and Crafts character. Townhouses of this nature have been a common and successful form of residential development since the mid-1800's. In the post-war period, townhouses were developed in new lot and block configurations of grade-related housing, promoted by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) as good for families. Typically these were laid out on large blocks near higher density forms of housing, schools and shopping centres. This type of townhouse was often organized around private streets or pedestrian mews. Vehicle parking was accommodated in small parking lots at the edges of the site or integral to the townhouse with access gained from a private street.

Over time, new types of housing units emerged within the townhouse form that introduced new relationships between the individual unit and the street. To help assess the large and growing volume of townhouse development applications on small, infill sites, the City of Toronto introduced the "Infill Townhouse Guidelines" (2003). These guidelines responded to, among other things, the decline in the quality of streetscapes and inadequate area for landscaping and street trees. This condition was created by narrow frontage units with front yard parking and integral garages and/or minimal front yard setbacks and narrow street widths.

Throughout the 20th century in Toronto, walk-up apartments were also built. The 2 to 4 storey buildings often served as a transitional element between busier main streets and lower scaled neighbourhoods. This assisted in the gradual and subtle intensification at the edges of the city's less dense neighbourhoods. 'Garden Apartments' a subset of the low-rise apartment type, were arranged around a courtyard, were often open at one end and sometimes included grade-related units with individual entrances.

More recently, mid-rise and tall buildings are developed with townhouse-like units at the base to help create a transition in height to lower-scale built form and to provide a livelier presence and house-form rhythm on the street.

The City's Official Plan, which was approved by Council in

2002, requires new developments to take their address and access from public streets. To support this policy goal, Council adopted the Development Infrastructure Policy & Standards (DIPS) in 2005. The DIPS standards place limits on the creation and design of private residential streets and establish clear directions for the layout and design of new public streets.

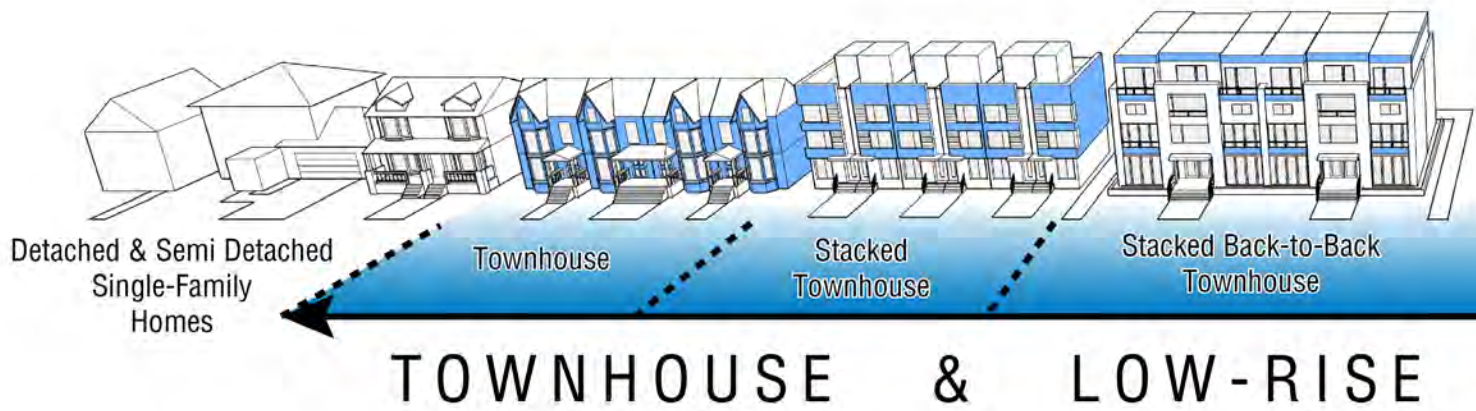
Since the adoption of these earlier standards, the demand for low-rise grade related housing has remained strong. Increasingly, townhouses and low-rise, multi-unit residential buildings are now being constructed on large sites with underground parking garages. These larger sites are often found at the edges of "tower in the park" apartment areas and on lands being converted from other uses. As well, low-rise residential intensification continues to take place on smaller infill sites. Along with the conventional townhouse, a variety of taller, denser and more complex forms of multi-unit, low-rise housing have evolved.



Spruce Court Apartments (completed in the 1920s), is one of the earliest examples of publicly supported, affordable, low-rise multi unit housing in Toronto. The 'Garden City' influence is prevalent through the use of large grassy, sunlit courtyards and play areas which were accessible to all units. Photo Credit: Spruce Court c1920, City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1224.



20th century low-rise, walk-up apartment buildings



## KEY ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES

A main objective of the Guideline is to provide certainty and some flexibility in creating building designs and development layouts that reflect the goals and policies of the Official Plan. This includes, making a positive contribution to the quality of life and fitting into the context of the surrounding community. Development proposals that do not meet the intent of the Guidelines, will likely require some redesign.

The substance of the guidelines was informed by an inventory and analysis of relevant past planning applications, site tours, selected case studies and a review of best practices. This brought to light a number of key issues that require particular attention when considering development applications for townhouses and low-rise apartments, including:

- i. providing a good “fit” with and transition to existing neighbourhoods and the transition from the public realm (streets, parks and other open spaces) to the private realm (front yards, private amenity spaces and entrances)
- ii. providing safe and attractive parks, accessible open space and walkways as community focal points and, where appropriate, integrating these spaces into a larger network of streets, parks and other community spaces such as school yards
- iii. providing adequate building setbacks to enable suitable areas for soft landscaping and to provide sufficient soil for trees to flourish
- iv. maximizing the usability, comfort and appearance of front yards, building entrances, and private outdoor amenity spaces (balconies and terraces) while minimizing the negative impacts of overlook on public and private realms

- v. avoiding situations where front yards face rear yards or where rear yards face the street
- vi. ensuring generous facing distances between units to allow for adequate access to sunlight, sky view and privacy
- vii. improving the overall quality of design in terms of site and internal layout, architecture and landscaping, with the accompanying use of higher quality materials
- viii. ensuring servicing activities (such as vehicle parking, loading, garbage storage and collection) are located underground or internal to the building away from the public realm and public view
- ix. relating developments directly to the existing or “natural” grade and avoiding the creation of artificial grades

## PURPOSE OF THE GUIDELINES

The purpose of the Guidelines is to illustrate how the public realm and built form policy objectives of the Official Plan can be addressed by:

- i. identifying strategies to enhance the quality of the living environment through improved spatial relationships, design and materials
- ii. establishing a balance between the protection of stable residential neighbourhoods and heritage features while allowing for appropriate infill development and intensification
- iii. providing best practices and guidance to citizens and stakeholders, particularly land developers, planners, urban designers, architects, and landscape architects and City staff in the creation and evaluation of development proposals





# MULTI-UNIT HOUSING

## HOW AND WHERE THE GUIDELINES APPLY

The City of Toronto Official Plan seeks to direct and manage growth city-wide and managing change is different in different parts of the City. While the Official Plan directs major and sustained incremental growth to the City's Centres, Avenues, Employment Districts and the Downtown, much of the City's land area is taken up by stable residential neighbourhoods where modest physical change is intended to take place. Low-rise, multi-unit buildings will often be located adjacent to and sometimes within stable residential areas. As such, it is important to ensure that new development will enhance and fit within the local area context.

The "Townhouse and Low-rise Apartment Guidelines" are intended to be read together with, and implement the relevant Official Plan policies, applicable Zoning By-laws, Secondary Plans, Heritage Conservation District Plans, the Toronto Green Standard, as well as any other applicable regulations, policies and guidelines. The Guidelines apply to the design, review, and approval of new low-rise, multi-unit building developments that are 4 storeys or less, where townhouse and low-rise multi-unit buildings are appropriate. They will be applied through the evaluation of development proposals and design alternatives in Official Plan Amendments, Zoning By-law Amendments, Plans of Subdivision, and Site Plan Control applications.

The townhouse form is also, at times, employed at the base of mid-rise and tall buildings. Where this design approach occurs, Sections 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 of the Townhouse and Low-rise Apartment Guidelines provide additional guidance to that found in the City of Toronto's Mid-rise and Tall Building Design Guidelines. Addressing such issues as the transition from the public to private realms, unit entrances, and private amenity spaces associated with ground floor units.

The Guidelines are intended to provide a degree of certainty and clarity of common interpretation, however, as guidelines, they should also be afforded some flexibility in application, particularly when looked at cumulatively and be balanced against broad city building objectives.

The Guidelines should be weighed across the board with other City guidelines and "work together" to determine whether a development application has successfully met the overall intent of the applicable guidelines, policies, and the Official Plan.

In cases where the application requires further review due to the complexity of the project or conflicting priorities, senior staff are to provide direction for the application and/or City's Design Review Panel may assist in the process when needed.

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

### Quality of Life and Livability

Many aspects of urban design and approaches to city form are based on the concept of livability. These approaches recognize that design and structure can be very influential in the life of a city and the building of community. Part of what makes Toronto livable is access to a wide array of amenities and attractions, including natural areas, parks and the urban tree canopy; cultural and social events; vibrant districts and unique, thriving neighborhoods. As our City grows and matures, it is important to create more beautiful environments which support healthy and vibrant communities and greater prosperity by making choices that improve our quality of life. This includes a focus on neighbourhoods and main streets, so that everyone has access within biking or walking distance to the basic services and amenities offered in the City's most livable neighborhoods. Similarly, quality of life and livability is supported by the overall generosity and quality of design in terms of the site and internal layout of buildings.

## Design Excellence

Low-rise, multi-unit buildings play an important role in defining the image of Toronto and should embody design excellence. Design excellence includes a sensitive and thoughtful response to context and the impact of the new development. It also includes well-designed public spaces and buildings with the effective use of high-quality materials and construction.

## Sustainable Design

Sustainable design is an approach to developing sites and buildings to be less resource intensive and to improve the economic, social, and natural environment we live in.

Sustainable design involves technical aspects relating to building performance, alternative energy supply, materials and construction methods, water management, and the quality of the internal environment. There are also site design aspects, including landscaping and organizing buildings for maximum passive solar gain, which can be applied to improve the energy performance of buildings. Sustainable design measures should be identified at the project's initial or site planning stage when fundamental design decisions are being made. Followed by an integrated design process ensuring that all design and construction disciplines are involved to achieve better results.

The City of Toronto both requires and encourages sustainable design through the Official Plan and the Toronto Green Standard (TGS). The TGS sets out performance measures for buildings and sites and specifies strategies that can be used to achieve cost effective, environmentally and socially responsible end results. Planning applications submitted since January 2014 in the City of Toronto must meet Tier 1 of the Toronto Green Standard (TGS) performance measures.

## Heritage Conservation

The City of Toronto values its heritage properties and requires that new construction on, or adjacent to, a property on the Heritage Register be designed to conserve the cultural heritage values, attributes, and character of that property. Development should be consistent with accepted principles of good heritage conservation and the City's Official Plan Heritage Policies, 3.1.5.

New development should strive for the long term protection, integration, and re-use of heritage properties. Heritage properties should be used to inform the scale and contextual treatment of the new development. If well-designed and sited in the appropriate context, low-rise, multi-unit buildings can make a positive contribution in some historical settings.



Infill developments with low-rise buildings on existing tower sites can help to redefine and animate the street edge, create new amenity spaces, and improve overall site conditions.

Where a development is within a Heritage Conservation District (HCD), low-rise buildings must conform to the HCD Plan and/or any guidelines for that district. HCDs are special areas with a concentration of heritage properties and distinct heritage character. In such areas, HCD Plans and Guidelines are designed to ensure that district significance or character is not diminished by incremental or sweeping change.

## Public Safety

All areas will be designed using Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to create safe environments. CPTED is a crime prevention strategy used by landscape and architecture designers, police and security professionals to reduce the incidence of crime and improve quality of life through design strategies. Some of the main principles involve providing spaces with natural surveillance and animated uses, also referred to as "eyes on the street" or natural overlook, clear views and sightlines, adequate lighting, and avoiding entrapment areas in the design.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The guidelines do not determine where low-rise, multi-unit buildings are permitted. Rather, they assist with the implementation of the City's Official Plan policies to help to ensure that low-rise, multi-unit buildings, are located and organized to fit with its existing context and minimize their local impacts. The Townhouse and Low-rise Apartment Guidelines provide specific and often measurable directions related to the following guiding principles:

1. Enhance the quality of the public realm and promote harmonious fit and compatibility with the existing and planned context through appropriate scale, placement, and setbacks of buildings.
2. Improve connectivity to streets, parks and open spaces, community services and amenities.
3. Reinforce the structure and image of the City and respond appropriately to prominent sites and important views.
4. Integrate and enhance natural and man-made features such as trees, topography and open spaces and conserve heritage properties.
5. Create a safe, comfortable, accessible, vibrant, and attractive public realm and pedestrian environment.
6. Promote architectural, landscape and urban design excellence, sustainability, innovation, longevity, and creative expression with visionary design, high-quality material and leading edge construction methods.
7. Create comfortable living conditions by providing access to sunlight, privacy, natural ventilation and open space.
8. Minimize the impact of service areas and elements on the public realm.



A new high-rise development incorporates townhouse units integrated into the base of the building.



A townhouse block is included in a large multi-building development with a range of building and unit types to help the development fit with the neighbourhood context.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE GUIDELINES

The Townhouse and Low-rise Apartment Guidelines are organized into the following sections:

<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #444; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Introduction	<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #008080; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 5.0 Pedestrian Realm
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #d62728; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 1.0 Site Context	<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #ffc107; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 6.0 Demonstration Plans
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #2ca02c; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 2.0 Building Types	<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #666; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 7.0 Case Studies (link to website)
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #ff7f0e; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 3.0 Site Organization	<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 8.0 Glossary
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #9467bd; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 4.0 Building Design	

Design guidelines with supporting illustrations, photos, rationales, and selected related references, such as Official Plan policies and Toronto Green Standard performance measures, are provided for aspects of development in Sections 1.0, 3.0, 4.0 and 5.0.

Section 2.0 Building Types, provides descriptions and illustrations of characteristics for the townhouse and the low-rise building types addressed in this document.

Section 6.0 Demonstration Plans, provides some typical development scenarios.

Section 7.0 references a series of case studies that can be found on-line.

Section 8.0 Glossary, provides terms and definitions.

## PRINCIPLE GUIDELINE STATEMENTS

The following is a brief overview of principle guideline statements combined in sections 1.0 through 5.0.

### 1.0 SITE CONTEXT

#### 1.1 Context Analysis

Evaluate the existing and planned context and demonstrate how the proposed development responds to this context. For larger sites with multiple buildings and the potential for new public realm elements, coordinate development through a Master Plan.

#### 1.2 Public Realm Framework

Extend the public realm into developments to enhance public access to transit, parks, open spaces, amenities and other neighbourhood destinations.

#### 1.3 Heritage

Locate and design buildings to conserve the cultural heritage values, attributes and character of on-site and adjacent heritage properties and Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs).

### 2.0 BUILDING TYPES

#### 2.1 Building Types

Employ a suitable building type or types to ensure that the new development fits well and responds appropriately to the particular site conditions, adjacencies and surrounding context.

### 3.0 SITE ORGANIZATION

#### 3.1 Streets, Lanes, Mews and Walkways

Provide new streets, pedestrian mews and walkways for safe, comfortable and direct access and address for all new buildings.

#### 3.2 Shared Indoor and Outdoor Amenity Areas

Design shared outdoor amenity areas to be publicly accessible and a focal point within the development.

#### 3.3 Building Placement and Address

Locate buildings to frame the edges of streets, parks, and open space. Ensure that buildings fit harmoniously with the existing context and provide opportunities for high-quality landscaping and streetscaping.

#### 3.4 Site Servicing, Access and Parking

Locate “back of house” activities, such as loading, servicing, utilities, storage and parking, underground, internally or in the rear, away from the public realm and public view.

### 4.0 BUILDING MASSING AND DESIGN

#### 4.1 Fit and Transition

Ensure buildings fit within the existing or planned context and provide appropriate downward transitions in scale to lower-scaled buildings, parks and open space.

#### 4.2 Facing Distances and Setbacks

Locate and design buildings to ensure sunlight and sky views. Reduce overlook conditions between buildings and neighbouring properties.

#### 4.3 Primary Entrances

Ensure well-designed front entrances and front yards. Enhance privacy for the resident, while maintaining “eyes on the street”.

#### 4.4 Private Outdoor Amenity Space

Enhance the usability, comfort and appearance of private outdoor amenity spaces within the public realm.

#### 4.5 Building Relationship to Grade and Street

Developments should relate directly to the existing or ‘natural’ grade and blend in with the topography of the surroundings.

### 5.0 PEDESTRIAN REALM

#### 5.1 Streetscape, Landscape and Stormwater Management

Provide high-quality, sustainable streetscape and landscape between the building and adjacent streets, parks and open space.

#### 5.2 Site Elements

Well-designed site elements and the proper placement of utilities help to elevate the quality and experience of the public realm.

#### 5.3 Building Elements

Ensure attention to the quality of architectural design, materials, building articulation, and placement of building and utility elements.

#### 5.4 Public Art

Pursue public art opportunities and funding strategies for larger developments to enhance the quality of the development, the public realm and the City.

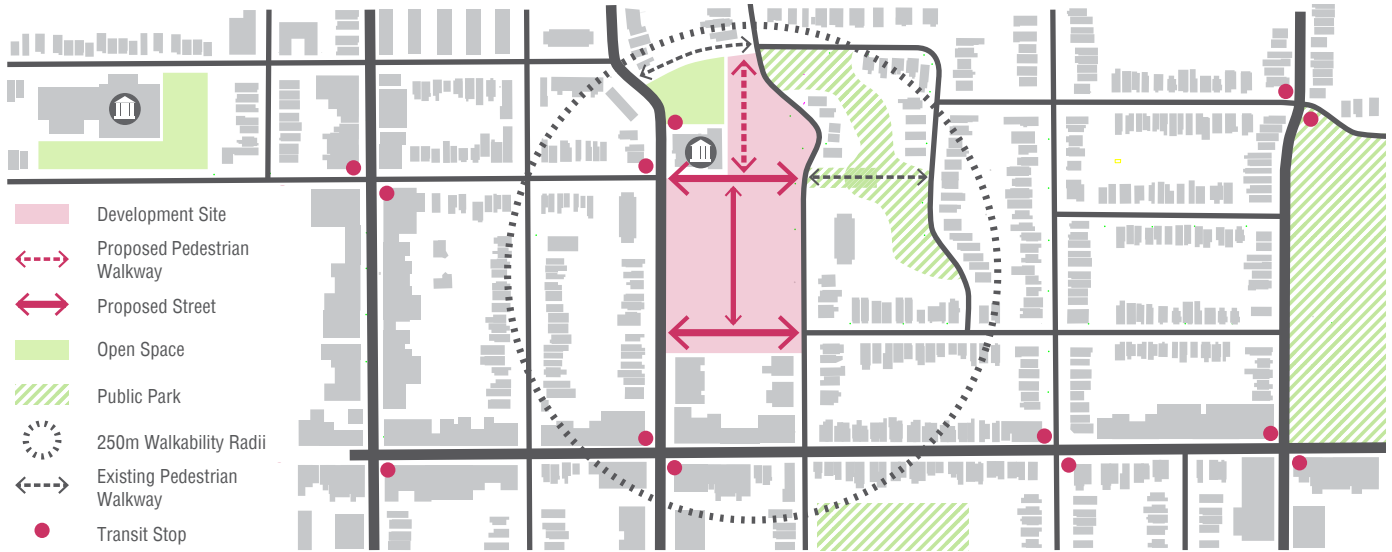


# 1.0 SITE CONTEXT

- 1.1 Context Analysis and Planning for Larger Sites
- 1.2 Public Realm Framework
  - 1.2.1 Street and Block Patterns
  - 1.2.2 Public Parks and Open Spaces
- 1.3 Heritage

## 1.1 CONTEXT ANALYSIS AND PLANNING FOR LARGER SITES

**Evaluate the existing and planned context and demonstrate how the proposed development responds to this context. For larger sites with multiple buildings and the potential for new public realm elements, coordinate development through a Master Plan.**



An illustration showing the analysis of the site context.

- a. Include a “Walkable” context analysis, showing the building proposal, and illustrating through text and graphics at an appropriate scale:
  - i. Official Plan land use designations and zoning permissions
  - ii. 250m and 500m “walkability” radii from the site
  - iii. general layout and dimensions of streets, blocks, parks and public or private open spaces
  - iv. area amenities and destinations (community centres, trails, libraries, schools, retail areas, etc.) existing and planned pedestrian/cycling routes
  - v. transit routes, stations, and stops (including distance to rapid transit nodes)
  - vi. adjacent and on-site heritage properties and identified heritage views or other important views from the public realm, if applicable
  - vii. proposed building footprints, heights and facing distances and their relationship to neighbouring buildings, parks and open space
  - viii. ground floor uses, setbacks, building entrances, street trees, site circulation, and site servicing elements including major utility elements on the development site and on adjacent sites
  - ix. topographical and landscape features including ravines, water courses, trees and any other significant aspects
- b. Include in the Planning Rationale or application a “Block” context analysis, showing the proposal and illustrating through text and graphics at an appropriate scale:
  - i. size of blocks and arrangement of parcels or lots
  - ii. location, size and organization of streets, laneways, walkways, transit stops, and other pedestrian and/or cycling routes
  - iii. location and size of parks and open space if applicable
- c. For larger or more complex areas with multiple properties and/or buildings, new streets, parks and open spaces, a Master Plan may be required. In addition to 1.1 a. and b. above provide:
  - i. a vision for the development of the entire area affected by the proposed development, incorporating a hierarchy of streets and open spaces with characteristics based on their role as a place and as part of the movement network

- ii. municipal servicing, vehicular circulation and major utility connections including shared systems such as district community energy
- iii. a range of unit sizes, including the provision of larger units suitable for families
- iv. a percentage of the proposed units designed as universally accessible with a barrier-free connection from the public sidewalk
- v. a phasing plan, schedule and interim landscape plan where two or more construction phases are involved

## RATIONALE

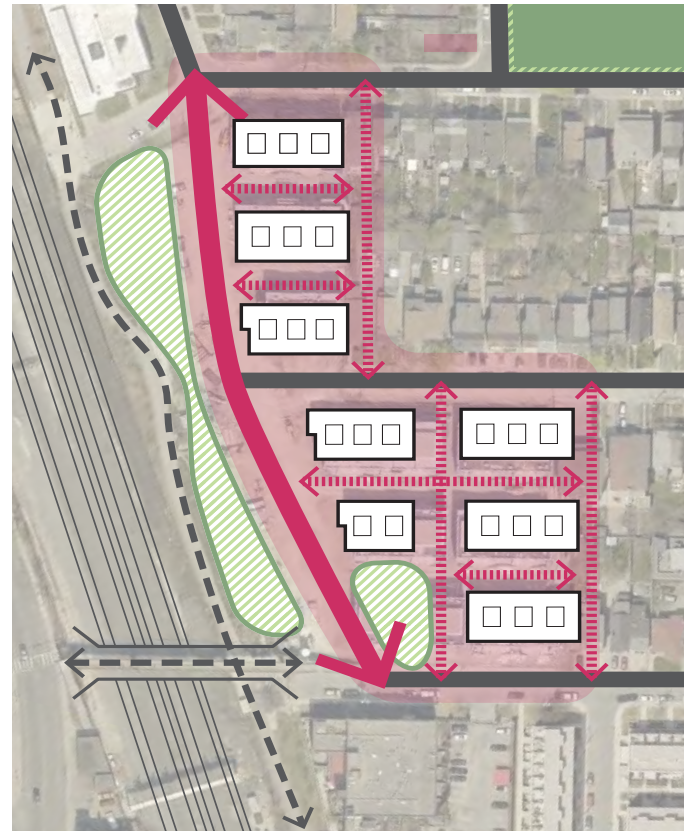
Context refers to the setting for a development, including both the existing physical surroundings and the planned vision for the future of the area. The planned context includes planning regulations and policies that apply to the site, most notably the Official Plan land use designation(s) and zoning controls. The intent of the context analysis is to identify patterns and opportunities, and to demonstrate how the proposed development will fit with and respond appropriately to its context.

The 250 and 500 metre radii are generally accepted measures for “walkability” and are roughly equivalent to a 5 and 10 minute walk. The intent of the context analysis at a “walkable” scale is to develop an understanding of how the proposed development will fit with and reinforce existing or planned built form patterns and respond appropriately to changes in land use and scale.

The block context analysis will also be used to determine what amenities, community facilities and public realm elements may need to be provided around or within the building site to achieve a high-quality living environment.

A Master Plan provides a planning and design framework to guide the incremental development of larger or more complex

areas with multiple buildings, new streets, parks and open spaces. The Plan should provide a vision for the development of the entire area effected by the proposed development, including how new streets, pedestrian and cycling routes, parks, and publicly accessible and private open spaces will be organized. When there is a Secondary Plan that applies to the site, with associated Context or Precinct Plans that include comparable information and detail, a Master Plan may not be required.



An illustration of a conceptual Master Plan for a larger development area containing multiple buildings, new streets and parks and connections to the broader neighbourhood.



### Official Plan Reference

2.2 Structuring Growth in the City: Policy 1 and 2 | 2.2.1 Downtown: The Heart of Toronto: Policy 4 | 2.3.1 Healthy Neighbourhoods: Policy 1, 2, 3 and 6 | 2.4 Bringing the City Together: Policy 2 and 8 | 3.1.1 The Public Realm: Policy 1c, 1d, 1e, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 | 3.1.2 Built Form: Policy 1 and 2 | 3.1.5 Heritage Resources: Policy 3, 4 and 17 | 3.3 Building New Neighbourhoods: Policy 1, 2 and 3 | 3.4 The Natural Environment: Policy 3 | 4.1 Neighbourhoods: Policy 5, 6, 7 and 9 | 4.2 Apartment Neighbourhoods: Policy 2 and 3 | 4.5 Mixed Use Areas: Policy 2 | 5.1.3 Site Plan Control: Policy 2 and 3

### Related Standards, Guidelines & Studies:

Toronto Green Standard | Toronto Walking Strategy | DIPS | Toronto Cycling Network Plan

## 1.2 PUBLIC REALM FRAMEWORK

**Extend the public realm into developments to enhance public access to transit, parks, open spaces, amenities and other neighbourhood destinations.**



Townhouse units frame and support an open space.

### 1.2.1 STREET AND BLOCK PATTERNS

- a. Provide safe, direct, universally accessible pedestrian and cycling links through the new development to destinations such as parks, schools, transit, community facilities and local retail areas.
- b. Use existing public streets for address and access to new buildings. When not possible, generally, extend the pattern of existing local streets and lanes into the new development.
- c. Utilize areas alongside rail or hydro corridors and ravines to extend the network of connections, where appropriate.
- d. Ensure fine-grained pedestrian networks between 80 -110m and vehicular networks of generally less than 200m in length.
- e. Provide new public streets in accordance with the City's Development Infrastructure Policy and Standards (DIPS) for access and address to buildings which are not accessible from existing streets.

### 1.2.2 PUBLIC PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

- a. Locate and design high-quality parks and open spaces to:
  - i. be visible and easily accessible with frontage on streets
  - ii. provide for safety, user comfort, accessibility and year-round use including good sunlight and wind conditions
  - iii. preserve and incorporate existing trees and natural topography as part of an open space feature, where appropriate
  - iv. protect access to existing parks and open spaces and develop new linkages, where appropriate
  - v. extend parks and open space networks into new development areas to expand the scale and function of these spaces, where appropriate
  - vi. co-locate parks and open spaces with other public amenities, community buildings, schools, shops and restaurants.
- b. Orient buildings to frame edges of parks and open spaces to provide animation and passive overlook.



- c. The City will determine, through the development review process, whether new or expanded parks are needed. Using the tools of the Official Plan, opportunities for new parkland will be sought:
  - i. secures parkland in under-served areas of the City
  - ii. enhances the function of an existing park, school yard or open space by adding new contiguous open space or parkland
  - iii. improves the visibility and access to a park by increasing street frontage
  - iv. provides for movement through a block between streets
  - v. assists in the enhancement and protection of environmentally significant areas or features
  - vi. where there isn't a park within 400m of the development, provide additional open space on site (as a park or POPS).



A fine-grained network of safe and attractive pedestrian connections to neighbourhood amenities helps to improve walkability.

## RATIONALE

Public realm consisting of streets, lanes, mews, walkways, parks and open spaces comprises the structure upon which a walkable community is organized. They are a significant part of the City's open space system, delineating development blocks which provide mobility as well as creating linear open spaces within the City. They also provide settings for social interaction and neighbourhood activities, address for individual buildings or units, sunlight and daylight into buildings and open spaces, and access to building services.

When sites are large and new buildings cannot take their address or be accessed from existing streets, new circulation networks will be needed. In general, the pattern of existing public streets and lanes should be extended into the new site. Small block patterns provide good opportunities for pedestrian access and mobility.

With new development and growth, additional parks and publicly accessible open spaces will be necessary to provide community gathering spaces for walking, meeting, recreation and other aspects of public life.



Parks are the focal points of communities and should be located centrally to provide ease of access and visibility.

Larger sites will be reviewed for opportunities to provide new appropriately sized, located and designed parks and open spaces. Smaller developments over a certain size threshold and type will be reviewed for opportunities to provide shared outdoor amenity areas.

The structure and character of streets, parks and open spaces, along with appropriately located, sized and detailed buildings, and their ground floor uses will, in part, determine the safety, enjoyment and the quality of these open spaces.



### Official Plan Reference

2.3.2 Toronto's Green Space System and Waterfront: Policy 1b and 3b | 3.1.1 The Public Realm: Policy 19 and 20 | 3.1.2 Built Form: Policy 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 | 3.2.3 Parks and Open Spaces: Policy 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8

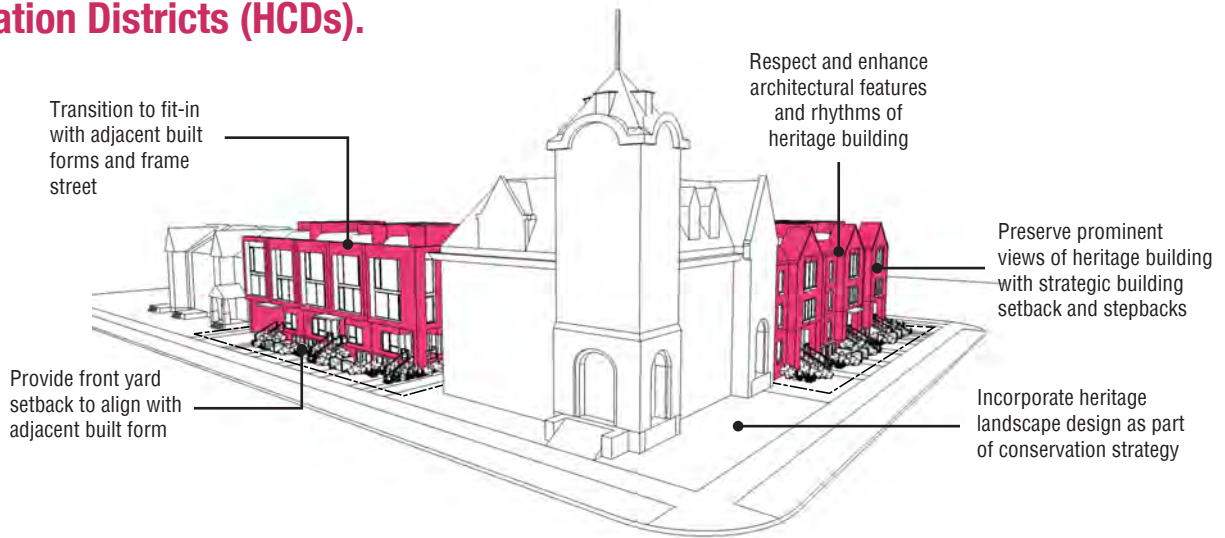


### Related Standards, Guidelines & Studies:

Toronto Green Standard

## 1.3 HERITAGE

### Locate and design buildings to conserve the cultural heritage values, attributes and character of on-site and adjacent heritage properties and Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs).



- a. Conserve and integrate heritage properties into developments in a manner that is consistent with accepted principles of good heritage conservation and the City's Official Plan Heritage Policies (3.1.5). A Heritage Impact Assessment will evaluate the impact of a proposed alteration to a property on the Heritage Register and/or to properties adjacent to a property on the Heritage Register to the satisfaction of the City.
- b. Ensure that the integrity of the heritage property's cultural heritage values and attributes will be retained. The retention of façades alone is discouraged.
- c. When a proposed building is adjacent to a heritage property:
  - i. design new buildings to respect the urban grain, scale, setbacks, proportions, visual relationships, topography, and materials of the historic context
  - ii. integrate the existing heritage character into the building through high-quality, contemporary design cues
  - iii. ensure consistency with applicable HCD Plan requirements
- d. Ensure that low-rise, multi-unit buildings do not visually impede or have a physical impact on the setting of properties on the Heritage Register.
- e. Adaptive re-use of heritage properties is encouraged.

#### RATIONALE

The City of Toronto values its heritage properties and Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs) and requires that they be protected and where appropriate, integrated into new development in a manner that is consistent with accepted principles of good heritage conservation and the City's Official Plan Heritage Policies (3.1.5).

There may be instances where conservation principles outweigh the goals of intensification and redevelopment, and may limit the construction of buildings or require additional “breathing space” to preserve the integrity of a heritage property or specific attributes. In locations where proposed developments allow for appropriate conservation measures to be undertaken, heritage properties should be referenced to inform the scale and contextual treatment of the new development. If well designed and appropriately sited, new development can make a positive contribution to an historic setting.



#### Official Plan Reference

3.1.5 Heritage Resources: Policy 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13



#### Related Standards, Guidelines & Studies

Parks Canada: Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada

## 2.0 BUILDING TYPES

### 2.1 Building Types

- 2.1.1 Townhouse
- 2.1.2 Stacked Townhouse
- 2.1.3 Back-to-Back Townhouse
- 2.1.4 Stacked and Back-to-Back Townhouse
- 2.1.5 Low-rise Apartment Building
- 2.1.6 Low-rise Hybrid Building



## 2.1 BUILDING TYPES

Employ a suitable building type or types to ensure that the new development fits well and responds appropriately to the particular site conditions, adjacencies and surrounding context.



- a. Analyze the patterns and characteristics of the surrounding built form, public realm and open space. Select the building type(s) and unit configurations that respond to the various conditions and relationships on the site and the surrounding context.
- c. Provide a less intense housing type (e.g. townhouses, where permitted) as a transitional form adjacent to low scale residential neighbourhoods, parks and open spaces, or other less intensive uses. (See Section 4.1 Fit and Transition for more detail).
- d. Use the appropriate building type and unit configuration in order to avoid:
  - i. fronts of buildings facing rear yards or backs of buildings facing streets or parks
  - ii. too many individual entrances on one facade
  - iii. entrances not visible or with direct access from a street
  - iv. parking lots located between a building and a street
- e. On large sites, generally avoid a monotonous repetition of one type.

### RATIONALE

Building placement, type, unit configuration and design, play a significant role in the successful integration of new development into an existing and/or planned context. Through the appropriate configuration, scale of development and type(s) of building for the proposed land use and open space, new development can be sensitive to neighbouring uses that are less intense or lower in scale. Building types and unit configurations should be analyzed and tailored to respond to the particular site and adjacencies and meet the overall intent of the guidelines.

This Section addresses building type and provides descriptions and illustrations of typical characteristics for low-rise, multi-unit residential building types, along with a range of typical site sizes and densities for each type (note: this has yet to be developed). It also includes a discussion on desirable conditions and considerations for each type. This Section does not illustrate every possible type and combination.



**Official Plan Reference**

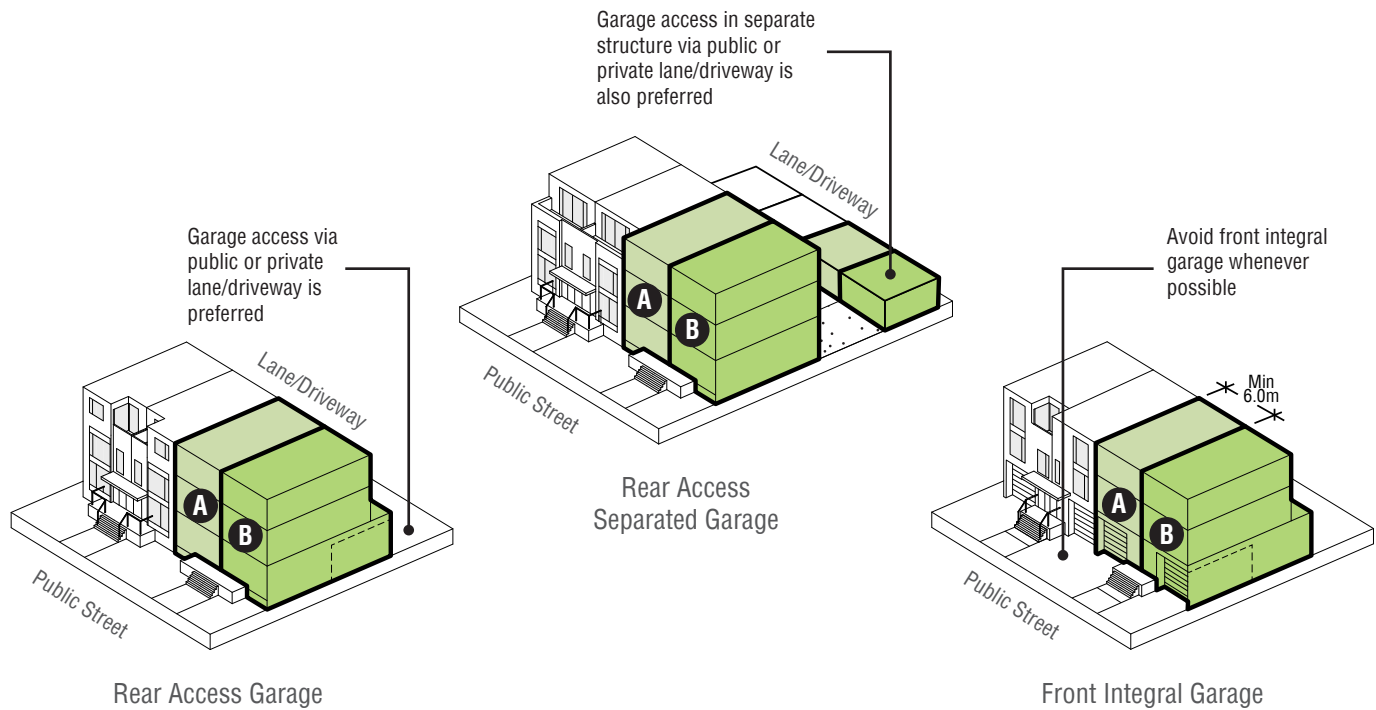
3.1.1 The Public Realm: Policy 1c, 1d, 1e, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13,14, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 | 3.1.2 Built Form: Policy 1 and 2 | 3.3 Building New Neighbourhoods: 1,2 and 3 | 4.1 Neighbourhoods: Policies 5-10 | 4.2 Apartment Neighbourhoods: Policy 2 and 3 |



**Related Standards, Guidelines & Studies**

Avenues and Mid-Rise Building Study | Tall Building Design Guidelines

## 2.1.1 TOWNHOUSE



### TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS

- 2 to 4 storeys
- Shares side walls with neighbouring units
- Individual unit entrance with direct access to grade
- Distinct front and rear conditions
- Garage located at the rear or front

### DISCUSSION

Parking for street-related townhouses underground or at the rear of the building accessed via a lane or driveway is preferred.

Townhouses with front driveways and garages should be avoided generally as they reduce front yard areas for landscaping and soil volume for tree growth. The garage doors present a face to the street lacking in animation and multiple curb cuts reduce pedestrian comfort and safety. Front integral garages should only be considered when no other option is technically feasible and each unit is 6.0m or wider.

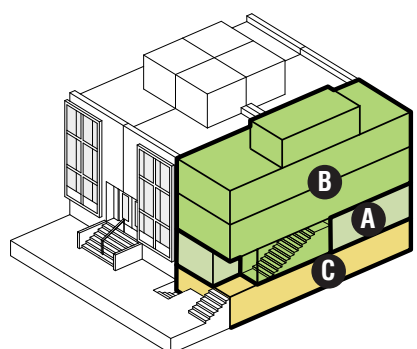
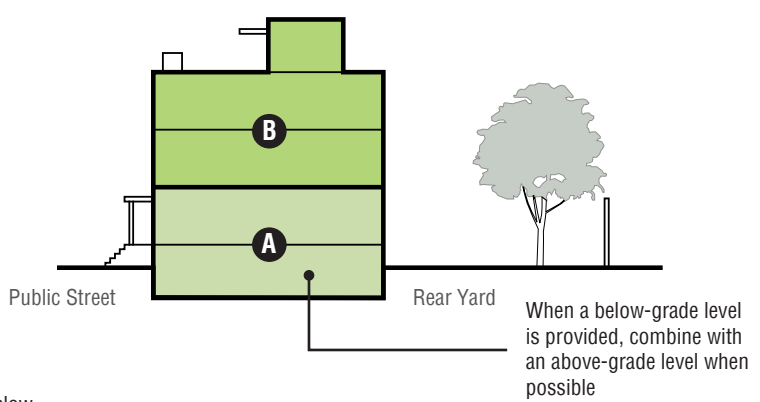
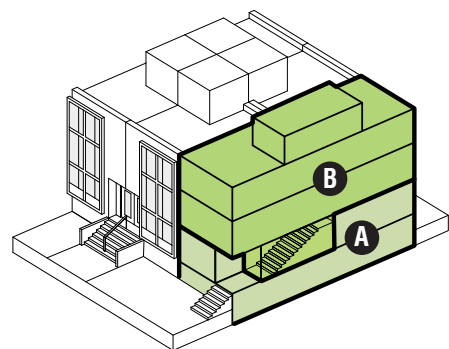


Garages complement the townhouse building and improves the quality of the laneway. Planting along the side screens service elements.



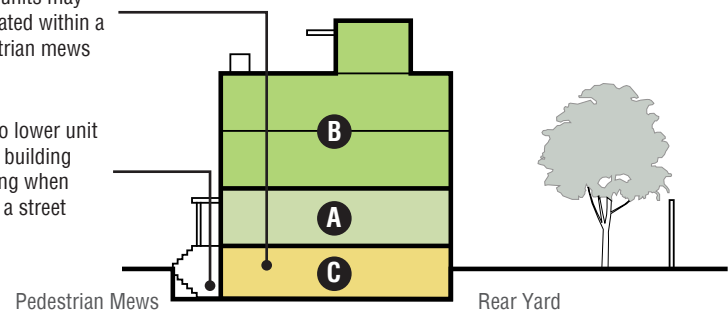
Avoid lanes like the above without accommodation for utilities, landscaping and quality design, especially when amenity spaces overlook the area.

## 2.1.2 STACKED TOWNHOUSE



Entrance to below-grade units may be located within a pedestrian mews

Stair to lower unit within building massing when facing a street



### TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS

- 3 to 4 storeys
- Share side and back walls with units stacked vertically
- Individual unit entrances with direct access to grade from shared outside landing
- Distinct front and rear conditions
- Garage located underground or at the rear

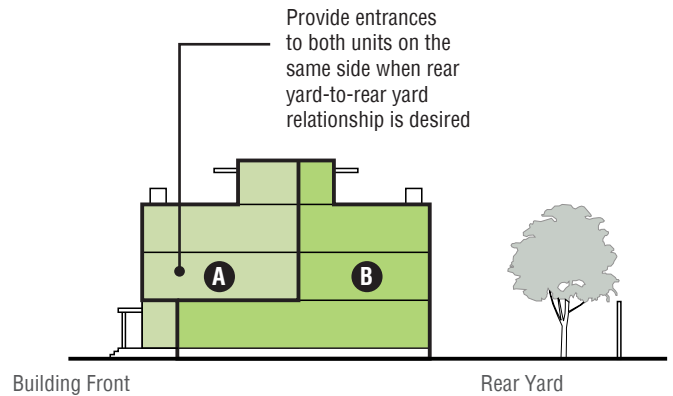
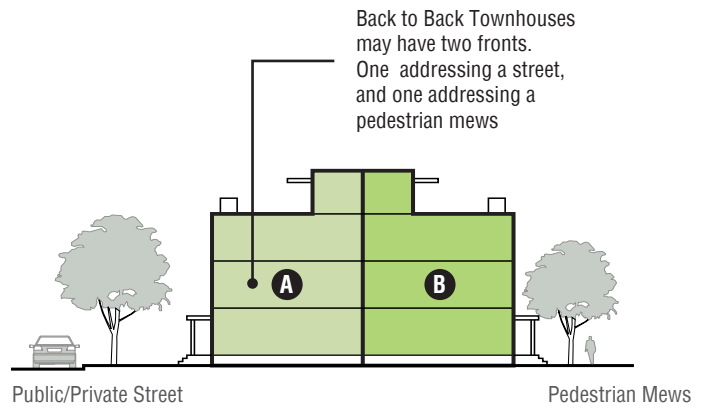
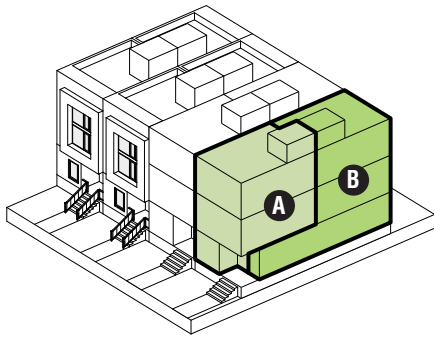
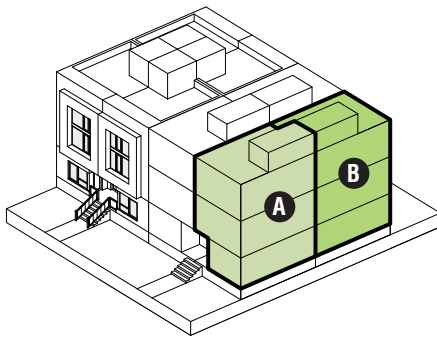
### DISCUSSION

Similar to townhouses but with units one on top of the other. Typically, this grade-related housing type provides a level of intensity while allowing for a rear yard-to-rear yard facing condition which is desirable in most existing and/or planned building contexts.



Accessible units at-grade are desirable in Stacked Townhouse building type. This project could be improved by internalizing some of the stairs to the upper units, a lighter canopy and more and better soft landscaping.

## 2.1.3 BACK-TO-BACK TOWNHOUSE



### TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS

- 2 to 4 storeys
- Shares side and back walls with neighbouring units
- Units have direct access to grade often on more than one side of the building
- Garage located underground

### DISCUSSION

Back-to-Back Townhouses typically have two fronts where individual unit entrances are accessed via a street, or pedestrian mews. Due to the two sided building design, this building type usually does not have a rear yard.

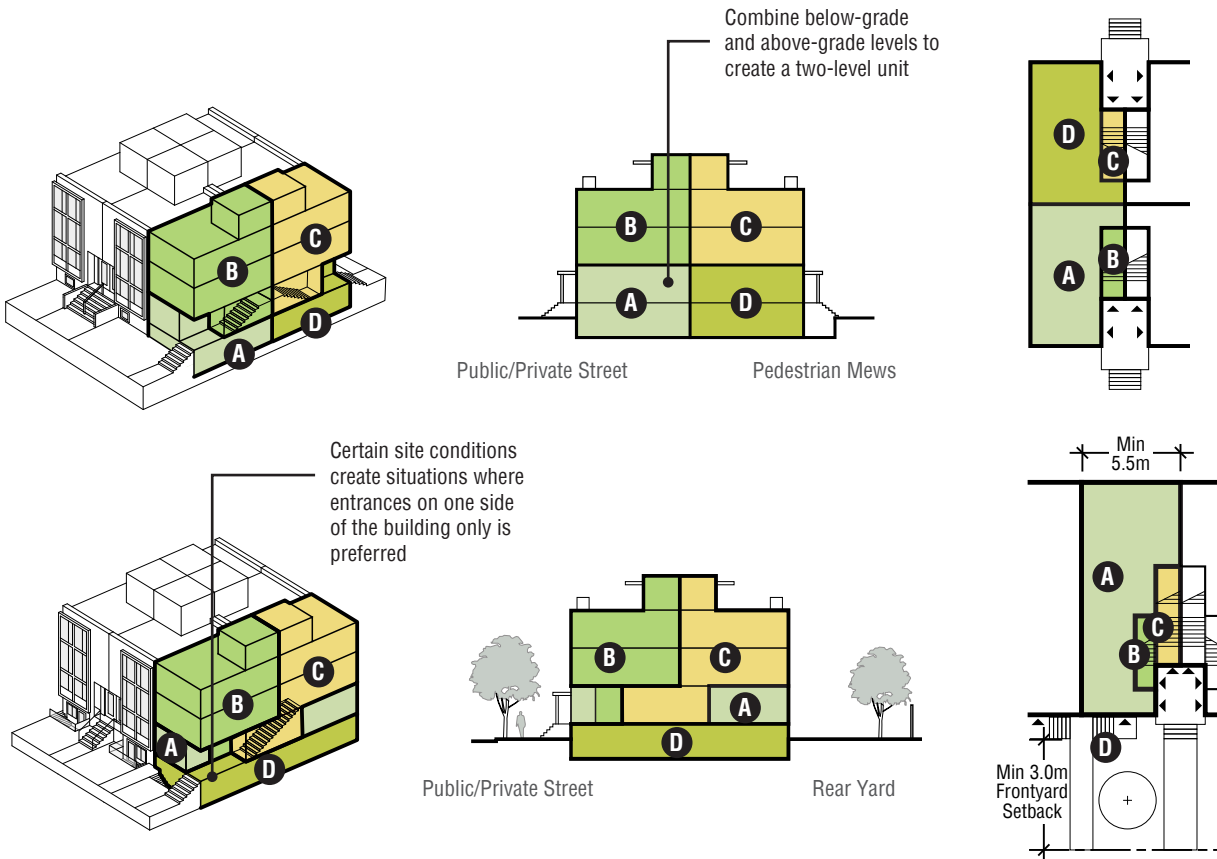
A variation has the entrances to both units located on the same side. This arrangement is preferred when a rear yard-to-rear yard building relationship is desired.

A back to back townhouse with part or all of a unit above another, is defined as "Apartment Building" under the City-wide zoning by-law and as such, the requirements with respect to elements including indoor and outdoor shared amenity, storage and loading apply.



Along with the preservation of existing mature trees, the buildings are setback to align with prevailing neighbourhood patterns.

## 2.1.4 STACKED AND BACK-TO-BACK TOWNHOUSE



### TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS

- 3 to 4 storeys
- Share side and back walls with units stacked vertically
- Unit entrances have direct access to grade from an outside shared landing, often on more than one side of the building
- Garage located underground
- Defined as "Apartment Building" in the City-wide zoning by-law

### DISCUSSION

Similar to Back-to-Back Townhouses but with units one on top of the other, this housing type has two fronts where individual unit entrances are accessed via a street, or pedestrian mews. Challenging urban design issues are often created by this type's organization and characteristics. The number of shared landings, unit entrances up and down, and private amenity spaces often overwhelm the private and public realm. Thoughtful design and coordination of these elements is essential.

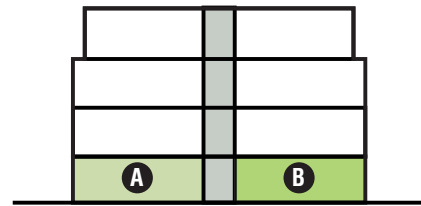
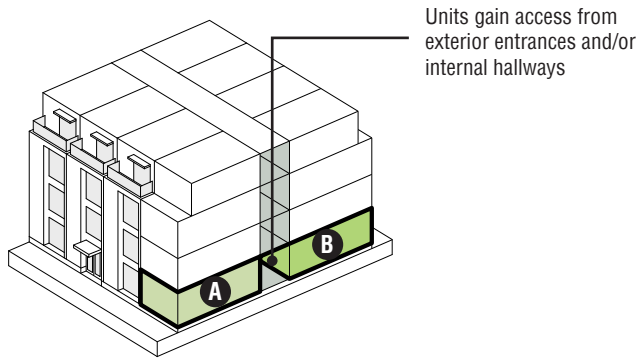
When a rear yard-to-rear yard condition is desired, employ a Low-Rise Apartment Building or Hybrid Building type instead. When this is not possible, design the building to have entrances on the street side only with a minimum unit width of 5.5m in order to accommodate multiple entry stairs while providing adequate width in the front yards for tree planting. In these instances, also avoid below-grade units with the associated outside stair. Where possible, combine a below-grade level with an above-grade level unit to create a two-level unit. Entrances to below-grade units are only allowed when no other entrance option is possible and when not located within the minimum front yard setback.

When units face both a street and pedestrian mews (a front yard-to-front yard condition), entrances and outdoor amenity spaces for below-grade units may front onto the pedestrian mews.

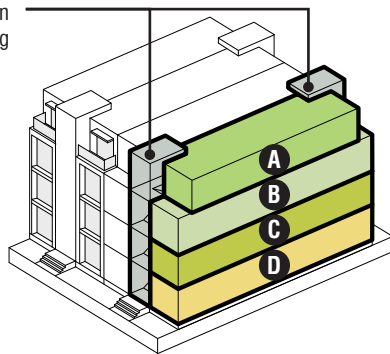
The Stacked and Back-to-Back Townhouse type is defined as "Apartment Building" under the City-wide zoning by-law and as such, the requirements with respect to elements including indoor and outdoor shared amenity, storage and loading apply.



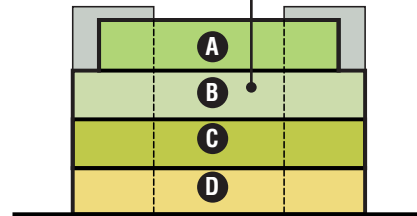
## 2.1.5 LOW-RISE APARTMENT BUILDING



Shared vertical circulation to access individual units on both sides of the building



Through-units with access to two separate vertical circulation stair wells



### TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS

- 3 to 4 storeys
- Multiple units stacked vertically and horizontally
- A shared main entrance and secondary accesses to units within the building
- Unit entrances accessed through internal corridors and vertical circulation
- Underground parking

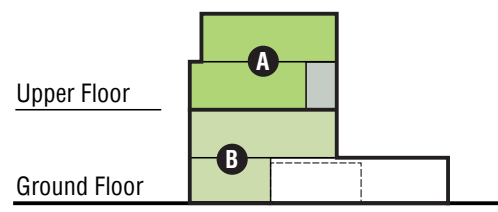
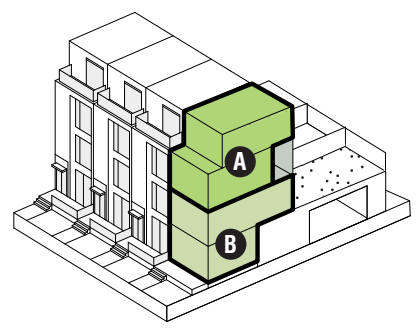
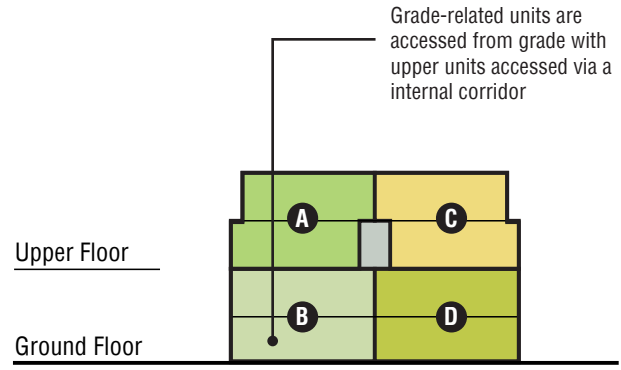
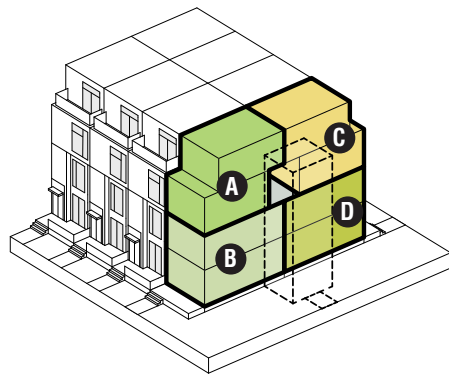
### DISCUSSION

This building type can be found in many parts of the City in various forms. In certain instances, this housing type is preferred over the Stacked and Back-to-Back Townhouse type. By consolidating and internalizing unit entrances, the building frontage can be better designed to respond to local context. Opportunities such as commercial/retail may also be appropriate in certain areas.



Low-rise apartment building fits into existing context. Credit: Audax Architecture. Photo: Joy von Tiedemann.

## 2.1.6 LOW-RISE HYBRID BUILDING



### TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS

- 3 to 4 storeys
- Share side and back walls and have units stacked vertically
- Ground level units have individual entrances with direct access to grade
- Upper units gain access through a shared entrance into building by vertical circulation and corridor
- Underground or rear integrated parking

### DISCUSSION

The Hybrid Building type is generally preferred over the Stacked and Back-to-Back Townhouse building type. Hybrid buildings allow for some grade-related units with direct access from the street while providing a centralized access for the upper units. This arrangement can help to provide opportunities for larger landscaped frontages by minimizing the number of entrances, stairs and walkways, thus improving the overall public realm.



The hybrid building type can be employed when a reduction in individual unit access to grade is warranted.



## 3.0 SITE ORGANIZATION

- 3.1 Streets, Lanes, Mews and Walkways
- 3.2 Shared Indoor and Outdoor Amenity Areas
- 3.3 Building Placement and Address
- 3.4 Site Services, Access and Parking

### 3.1 STREETS, LANES, MEWS AND WALKWAYS

**Provide new streets, pedestrian mews and walkways for safe, comfortable and direct access and address for all new buildings.**



A contemporary townhouse development fits harmoniously with the existing context through appropriate building type, scale, placement of buildings, and use of materials. This helps to frame the street and create a comfortable pedestrian environment. Credit: Tact Architecture Inc.

- a. Extend and connect new streets, lanes, pedestrian mews and walkways to the local street/pedestrian network and provide links to schools, transit, community facilities, and retail areas, where possible.
- b. Provide new public streets and lanes that conform to the City's standards.
- c. Locate and design streets, lanes, mews, and walkways to provide safe, direct, universally accessible pedestrian and cycling facilities within the new development.
- d. Design streets and lanes to be inviting. Create attractive and comfortable, pedestrian environments with landscaping including canopy trees, pedestrian scale lighting and other amenities. (For lanes, adapt streetscaping elements to fit within tighter dimensions).
- e. Provide through streets and lanes to minimize vehicle turnarounds, where possible.
- f. Locate access to sites on secondary streets, where possible and consolidate driveway/laneway access points to minimize curb cuts.
- g. Incorporate easy to maintain traffic calming features, such as on-street parking bays and bulb-outs, textured materials and crosswalks to create a pedestrian friendly environment.
- h. Provide and connect pedestrian and cycling pathways alongside ravines, open spaces, and rail corridors, where possible.

#### RATIONALE

Streets, lanes, mews and walkways are fundamental site organizational elements in low-rise developments. More than just circulation routes, they are place-making opportunities that can provide a sense of place and allow communities to connect with each other. These routes have the potential to be attractive, enjoyable, and publicly-accessible environments that enhance the user experience and quality of life.

New streets and lanes should be public and conform to the City's standards of quality. Standard public street right-of-way widths must accommodate space for essential municipal services and utilities above and below grade. Streets and lanes should accommodate streetscape elements appropriate to the type, such as sidewalks, street lighting, landscaping and trees. They must also accommodate space for garbage collection and snow storage. Refer to City of Toronto "Development Infrastructure Policy and Standards" (DIPS) for Public Local Residential Streets and Private Mews.



#### Official Plan Reference

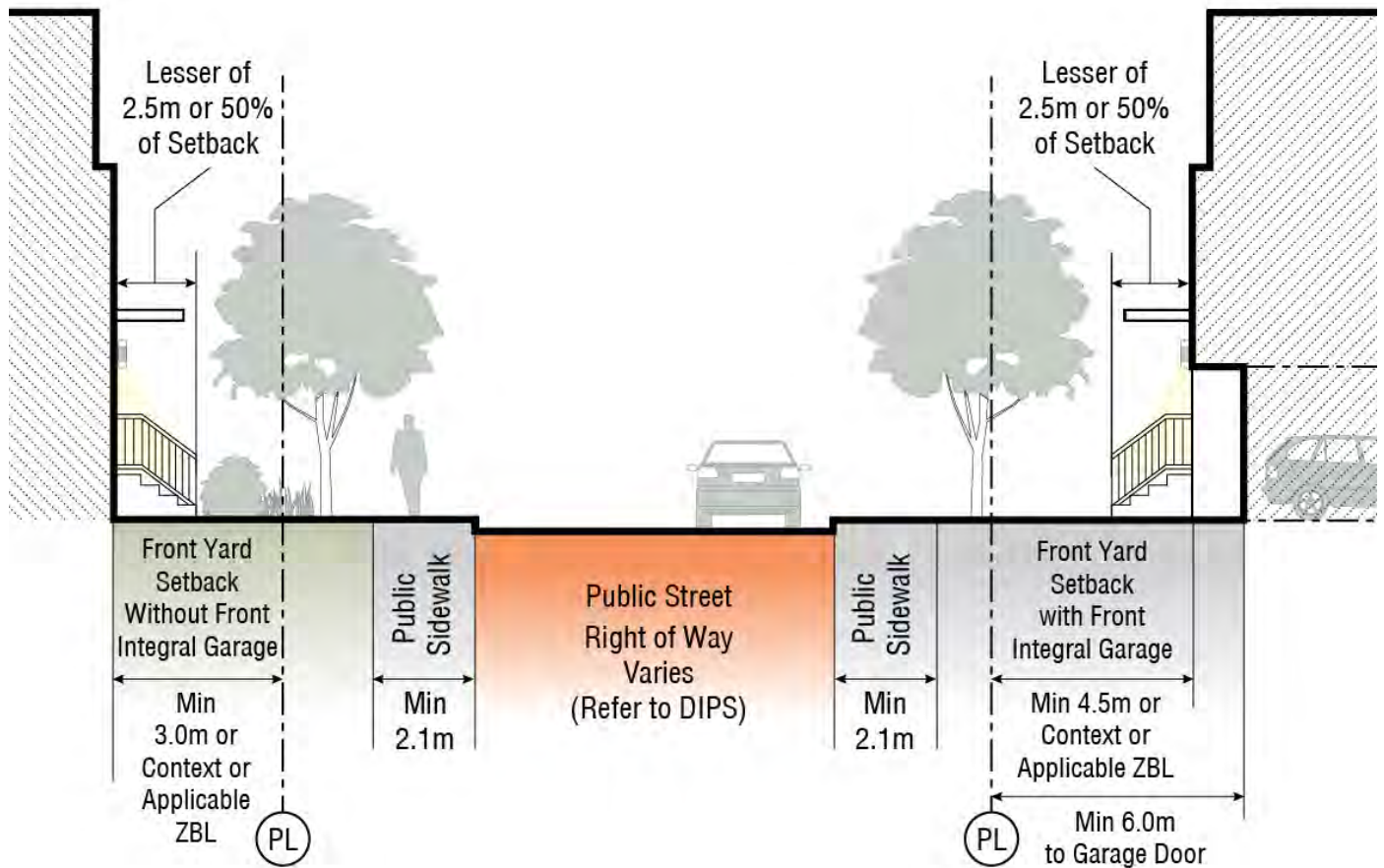
3.1.1 Public Realm: Policy 5, 6, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18 |  
3.1.2 Built Form: Policy 5 | 3.3 Building New Neighbourhoods:  
Policy 1a, 2b and 3a | 5.1.3 Site Plan Control: Policy 3



#### Related Standards, Guidelines & Studies

Toronto Green Standard | Road Works Standards |  
Streetscape Manual | DIPS | Privately Owned Publicly-  
Accessible Space Design Guidelines

### 3.1 STREETS, LANES, MEWS AND WALKWAYS CONT.



#### Streets

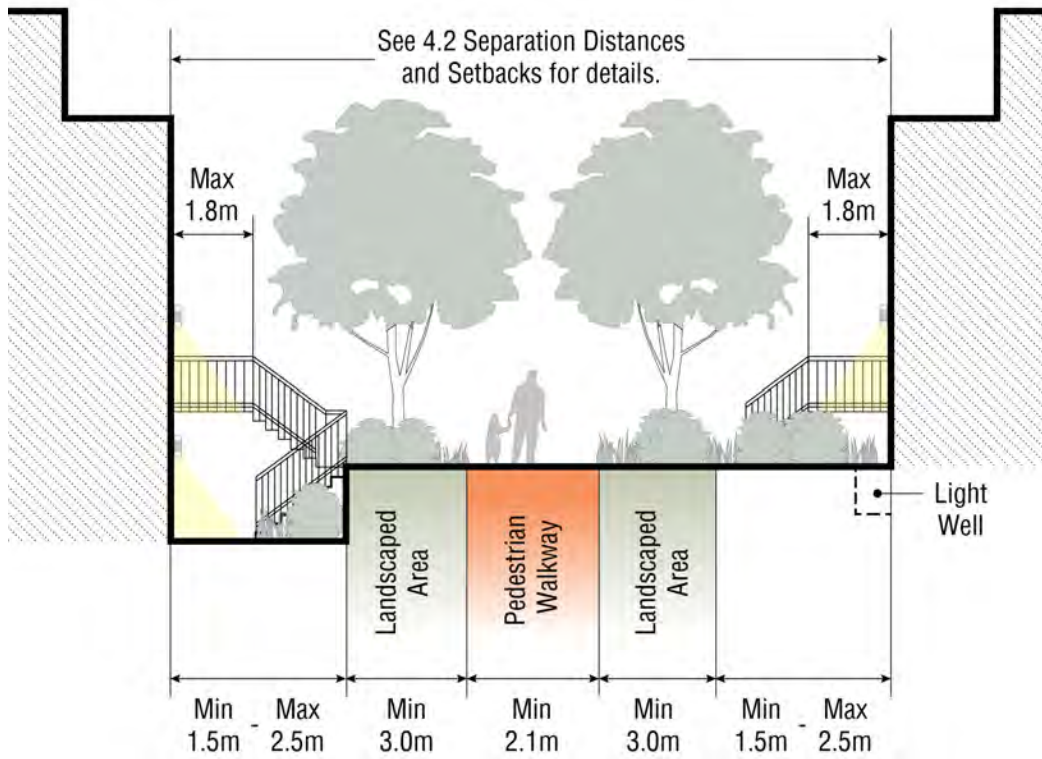
- i. Where parking is underground or at the rear, the minimum front yard setback from the property line is the applicable zoning by-law, 3.0m or the average of the existing front yard setbacks of buildings on either side of the subject property.
- j. Where front integral garage parking on a street is provided, the minimum front yard setback from the property line is the applicable zoning by-law, 4.5m or the average of the existing front yard setbacks of buildings on either side of the subject property (with the garage portion of the building setback 6.0m).

Note: The public/private street, private vehicular and pedestrian mews, lane/driveway, and walkway sections with associated setbacks and permitted encroachments are typical access elements for townhouse and low-rise apartment buildings. The dimensions do not necessarily equate to zoning standards and the design standards for some of the elements (streets, lanes and vehicular mews) are specified in Development Infrastructure Policy and Standards (DIPS). (See also Section 1.2 Public Realm Framework)



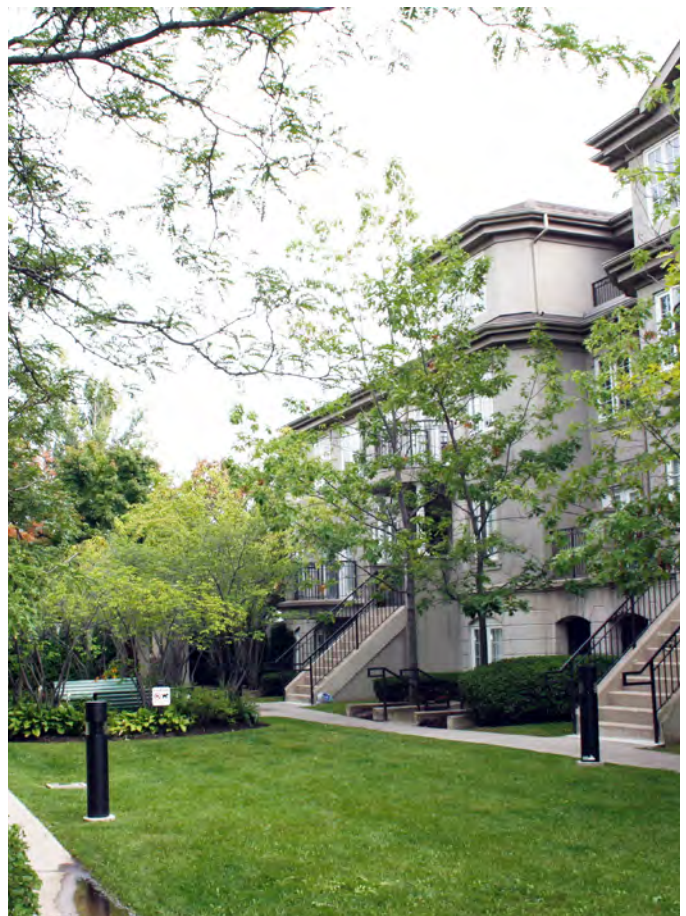
Well-proportioned public streets create framework for attractive neighbourhoods and streetscapes.

### 3.1 STREETS, LANES, MEWS AND WALKWAYS CONT.



**Pedestrian Mews (Pedestrian)** - A privately owned and maintained pedestrian route visible from the street which provides public access and address to individual buildings and units within a larger development site. For facing distances between buildings see Section 4.2 Facing Distances and Setbacks.

- k. Location and size of walkway(s) and landscaped areas may vary. For example, two walkways with a minimum of 1.5m on either side of the open space.

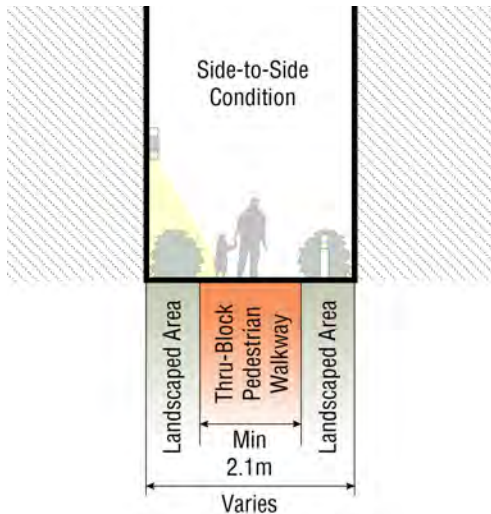


Pedestrian mews with central green space and pedestrian walkways framing the shared area.



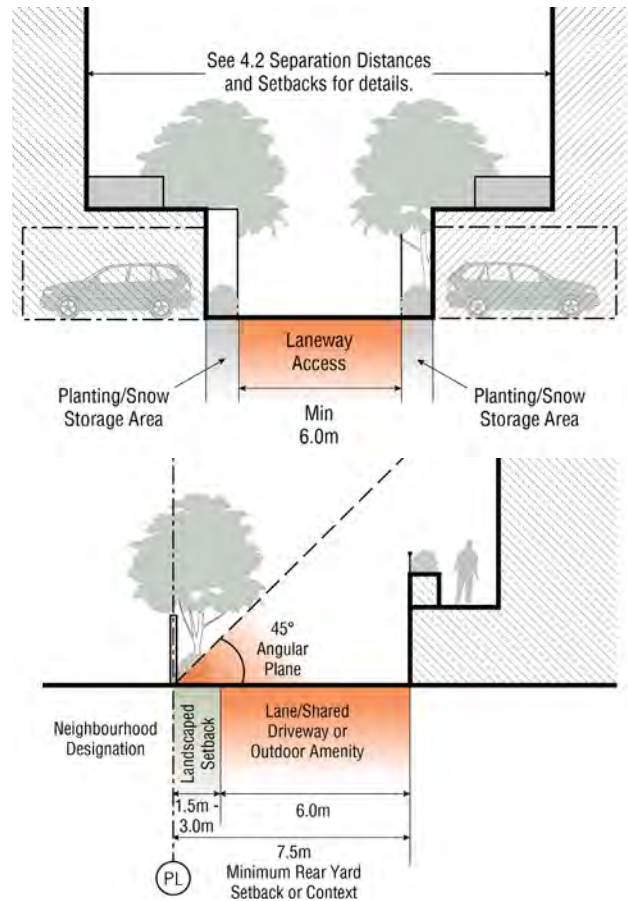
Generous walkway through the building massing frames views and creates a gateway.

### 3.1 STREETS, LANES, MEWS AND WALKWAYS CONT.



**Landscaped Walkway** - Typically a privately owned and maintained pedestrian path.

- I. Employ minimum walkway dimensions as follows:
  - i. when the walkway is the primary access to units, provide a minimum building separation of 6.0m and a clear minimum path width of 2.1m with landscaping and pedestrian scale lighting
  - ii. for a walkway providing a mid-block connection between two streets or to site features, provide a minimum building separation of 4.5m and a clear path of at least 2.1m with landscaping and pedestrian scale lighting
  - iii. for a walkway that does not provide direct access to a unit or is not a mid-block connection, but provides for example, access to a parking or service area, provide a minimum building separation of 3.0m and a clear path width of at least 1.5m with landscaping and pedestrian scale lighting



**Lane** – a facility that provides vehicular access to a parking garage/area and/or service area and which does not provide address for buildings.

- m. Provide landscaping and lighting to create a comfortable and attractive environment that supports informal play, pedestrian circulation and small-scale gardening.
- n. Setback or provide recesses/gaps in the buildings to accommodate planting and snow storage.
- o. Organize utilities and building equipment in discreet locations. Ensure these elements are arranged carefully to reduce visual clutter.



Narrow walkway between building blocks with landscaped area.

### 3.2 SHARED INDOOR AND OUTDOOR AMENITY AREAS

**Design shared outdoor amenity areas to be publicly accessible and a focal point within the development.**



High quality, centrally located, and sun filled amenity spaces are focal points of communities. Credit: David Peterson Architect Inc. Triumph Developments. Photo by: Ben Rahn, A-Frame.

- a. For multi-residential developments defined as "Apartment Building" under the City-wide by-law, with 20 units or more, provide a minimum of 4m<sup>2</sup> of shared amenity space for each unit, 2m<sup>2</sup> of which is provided as indoor shared amenity space.
  - vii. provide support for outdoor activities such as seating, shade structures, children's play equipment and barbecues in a well-landscaped environment.
  - vii. be located away or shielded with landscaping from parking, mechanical equipment and servicing areas
- b. Design shared outdoor amenity spaces to:
  - i. be located at grade and front onto streets, mews and walkways to provide visibility and access. A mews will not be considered a shared outdoor amenity space
  - ii. be animated and framed with appropriate building massing and active uses (e.g. entrances and primary windows)
  - iii. be located centrally, in highly visible areas and accessible to all residents (particularly a children's play space). Avoid locating in isolated, irregularly shaped, inaccessible areas. Provide a minimum of 50% of the shared outdoor amenity space in one contiguous area and a minimum 40m<sup>2</sup> adjoining or directly accessible to the indoor amenity space.
  - iv. preserve existing trees and topography wherever possible and incorporate into the landscape design
  - v. maximize access to sunlight
  - vi. maximize high-quality landscaped open space on the site. Opportunities may include hard/soft landscaped area for passive recreation and children's play space
  - vii. complement and connect with open space on neighbouring properties, where possible
- c. Provide and locate interior amenity facilities adjacent to shared outdoor amenity areas and provide windows and doors for direct physical and visual access between these spaces.
- d. Meet safety and universally accessible standards in shared indoor and outdoor amenity spaces.
- e. A dog run and/or dog grooming station is encouraged as part of larger developments.

**Types of outdoor shared amenity area may include:**

**Courtyards** - landscaped open space, located in the centre of a single or consolidated block with potential for children's play space and no direct street frontage.

**Plazas** - animated gathering place with predominantly hard surfaced landscape features flanking a public street.

**Urban Gardens** - landscaped space, usually of intimate scale, open to a public street with predominately soft landscaping and potential for children's play space and communal gardening.



## RATIONALE

Residential developments zoned as apartments (primarily stacked and back-to-back townhouses and low-rise apartments) are required to provide shared outdoor amenity area for developments with 20 or more units. Although this type of amenity space is typically privately-owned and maintained, it should be accessible and designed for year-round use, particularly when part of its function is as a pedestrian connection through the site.

On-site shared outdoor amenity areas complement the public park and open space system and provide additional gathering space to support community life. Townhouses and low-rise, multi-unit buildings are popular with families with children and pets owners. Developments with well-designed and located shared amenity areas with children's play space, facilities for pets and other shared elements like communal gardens, allow residents to experience and share in their collective property.

The location of open spaces on a site, along with the type, size, and intended use of the space, may vary depending upon building use, the nature of the planned community, site characteristics and the range of existing open spaces within walking distance. Providing well located, appropriately scaled, open space within a building site can help the new development fit with the existing context. These considerations are particularly important in areas where there is a shortage of public parks and open spaces or on large sites with multiple building blocks.

The design should also create a micro-climate that supports pedestrian comfort, biodiversity, and meet or exceed standards for universal accessibility, sunlight, sustainability and safety.



### Official Plan Reference

- 2.3.2 Toronto's Green Space System and Waterfront: Policy 1b and 3b | 3.1.1 The Public Realm: Policy 13, 14, 15, 19 and 20 | 3.1.2 Built Form: Policy 1d, 3f, 5b, 5d and 6 |
- 3.2.3 Parks and Open Space: Policy 1a, 1c and 1d |
- 3.3 Building New Neighbourhoods: Policy 2a and 2d |
- 3.4 The Natural Environment: Policy 18a and 18f |
- 5.1.3 Site Plan Control: Policy 3b and 3e

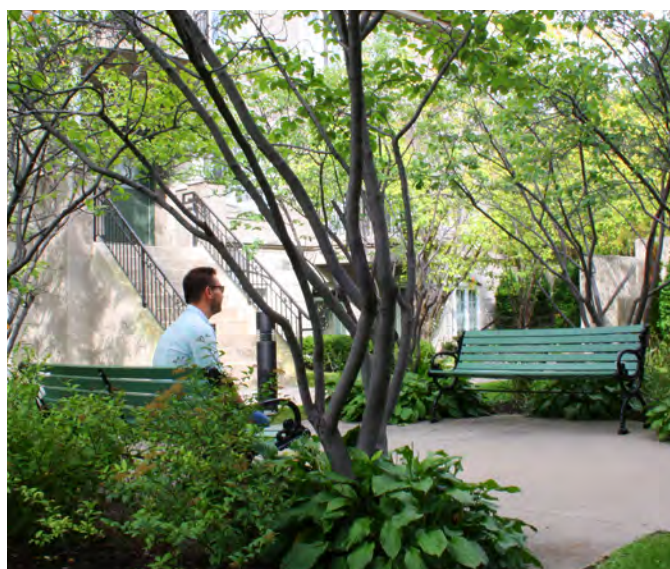


### Related Standards, Guidelines & Studies:

- Toronto Green Standard | Toronto Green Roof By-law |
- Bird-Friendly Development Guidelines



Townhouses frame a well-landscaped courtyard outdoor amenity area with reflecting pool.



A courtyard with seating areas, mature shade trees and planting.



A shared amenity space along the rail corridor.

### 3.3 BUILDING PLACEMENT AND ADDRESS

**Locate the buildings to frame the edges of streets, parks, and open space. Ensure that buildings fit harmoniously with the existing context and provide opportunities for high-quality landscaping and streetscaping.**



Buildings frame a courtyard with a children's play space and places for leisure.

- a. In general, orient the primary facades of buildings and front doors parallel to the street to frame the edges of streets, parks and open spaces.
- b. Maintain high visibility and direct access to front doors from the public sidewalk, especially when building entrances are not located on a public street.
- c. Design all building elevations that face streets, mews, parks and open spaces to appear and function as fronts, complete with porches/stoops, front doors and windows to activate the public realm.
- d. Provide upgraded elevations when visible from streets, mews, parks and open spaces.
- e. Setback new buildings:
  - i. to align with neighbouring building frontages where the existing setback pattern is consistent and not planned to change
  - ii. where existing setbacks are well-established, but vary on either side of a proposed development, setback all or part of the building to resolve the differences
  - iii. to maintain the character of existing soft landscaped streetscapes
- iv. the minimum or greater where a consistent setback pattern does not exist or is planned to change (See Section 3.1 Streets, Lanes, Mews and Walkways, i. and j. for minimum setback dimensions)
- f. Provide greater building setbacks at strategic locations to avoid long, monotonous facades in order to improve pedestrian amenity and increased space for trees and other landscaping.
- g. Generally, provide breaks between buildings every 36m (based on units 6m in width x 6, or units 4.5m in width x 8).
- h. Organize buildings to eliminate back-to-front facing relationships such as front doors facing rear yards on the site or on neighbouring properties. Avoid a rear yard condition facing any street.
  - i. On corner sites:
    - i. align the building to the setback pattern of neighbouring buildings on both streets
    - ii. provide primary facades facing both streets with the entrance facing the primary street.
  - j. On mid-block sites, where back to back units result in one side of the building facing an area that cannot be seen from

a street, park or publicly accessible open space, locate all entrances facing the street/open space, or preferably use a hybrid, low-rise apartment or through unit type instead.

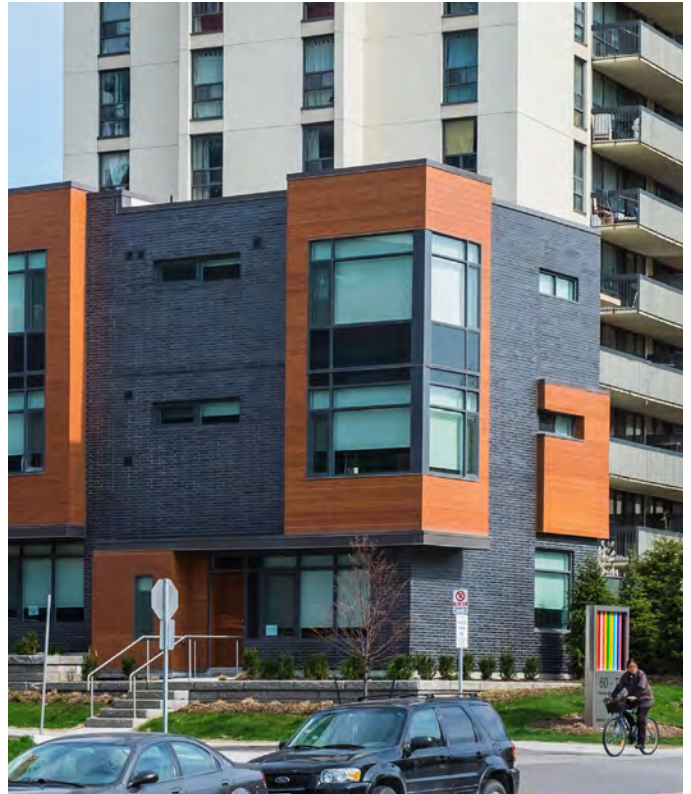
- k. On larger sites with multiple building blocks:
  - i. provide a combination of buildings either oriented parallel or perpendicular to streets, ensuring visibility and accessibility to all building entrances from street(s).
  - ii. ensure building blocks are interspersed with landscaped shared amenity/open spaces.

## RATIONALE

Toronto’s traditional urban pattern is buildings parallel to the street with a consistent setback from the front property line. Well-placed buildings can create a coherent streetscape and fit with existing neighbours. Where the setback pattern is not consistent or planned to change, the placement of buildings at the required setback line, parallel to the street, helps establish a pedestrian-oriented context for the future. Where the building setback line is close to the property line, greater building setbacks at strategic points or along the entire frontage may be required to expand the public realm and improve pedestrian comfort and amenity.

Appropriately located, sized and detailed buildings, and their ground floor uses, define the edges and help to determine the safety, use and quality of these spaces. Aspects that need to be considered include setbacks, height, transition and building relationship to grade. (See Section 4.0 for more detail). It is also important to break-up multiple blocks with open spaces.

Setbacks allow for projecting elements such as porches, canopies, and landings. These elements add visual interest to the front façade, enhance the prominence of the entrances, provide transition in scale from the sidewalk to the main wall of the building. These elements also often help the new development fit better within the existing neighbourhood context.



Example of corner expression on building.



Buildings placed parallel to street provide definition to street edge and help to reinforce the existing front yard setbacks of the neighbourhood. Credit: Tact Architecture Inc.



**Official Plan Reference** 2.3.1 Healthy Neighbourhoods: Policy 1 and 2 | 3.1.1 The Public Realm: Policy 1d and 9 | 3.1.2 Built Form: Policy 1, 2, 3, 5a, 5b and 5c | 3.3 Building New Neighbourhoods: Policy 3b | 4.2 Apartment Neighbourhoods: Policy 2b, 2c and 3e | 4.5 Mixed Use Areas: Policy 2e | 5.1.3 Site Plan Control: Policy 3c



**Related Standards, Guidelines & Studies:**

Accessibility Design Guidelines | Streetscape Manual | Privately Owned Publicly-Accessible Space Design Guidelines

### 3.4 SITE SERVICES, ACCESS AND PARKING

**Locate “back of house” activities, such as loading, servicing, utilities, storage and parking, underground, internally or in the rear, away from the public realm and public view.**



Public realm can be significantly improved when underground garage ramps and garbage storage areas are internalized into the building. Credit: Audax Architecture. Photo: Joy von Tiedemann.

- a. Incorporate parking garage ramps, access stairs, garbage collection/storage areas, and loading areas into the building.
- b. Provide access to site servicing and parking at the rear of the building or site, from a lane or from a shared driveway.
- c. Limit the negative impact of a service area or elements on the public realm, units, shared open space, and adjacent properties by locating the area out view and by screening with attractive architectural features and landscaping.
- d. Provide a maximum 100m distance to a common waste collection area and garbage chutes.
- e. Minimize the extent of site area dedicated to servicing and vehicular access through the use of shared infrastructure and efficient layouts, where possible.
- f. Minimize surface parking, driveways and drop off areas:
  - i. provide sufficient and convenient visitor parking underground. A minimal amount of parking may be dispersed on site circulation routes via parallel parking
  - ii. with the exception of front integral garage driveways, avoid locating parking between the building and public sidewalk or street (front yard areas)
  - iii. where intensification is taking place on an existing residential site (e.g. tower-in-the-park infill) replace surface parking and driveways, where possible, with well-landscaped open space
  - iv. design surface parking lots in accordance with the Toronto Green Standard and the Design Guidelines for 'Greening' Surface Parking Lots.
- g. Design bicycle parking areas/structures to be attractive and integral to the overall building and landscape design of the development. Refer to the Toronto Green Standard and Guidelines for the Design and Management of Bicycle Parking Facilities for additional information.
- h. Provide for safe and appropriate pedestrian/bicycle access to the underground parking garage.
- i. For apartments with over 30 units, provide secure storage for bulky items outside of individual units (e.g. in the ground or basement level of the building).
- j. Avoid below-grade parking structures encroaching into the setback areas on the site.
- k. Avoid front driveways and garages in street-related townhouses generally and consider only when a unit is 6.0m or wider. When providing the minimum:
  - i. provide a maximum width of 3.0m for a driveway and a walkway leading to the front door
  - ii. ensure a minimum soil volume of 30m<sup>3</sup> to support mature tree growth within the 50% soft landscaped portion of the front yard.
  - iii. provide for garbage and recycling bin storage in the garage

- iv. provide a minimum of 6.0m between individual driveways to accommodate on-street parking
- v. construct driveways with permeable paving and/or high albedo surface material

## RATIONALE

“Back of house” activities are essential to the functioning of new development. When these activities are concealed within and behind buildings, it promotes a safer, more comfortable and attractive public realm and pedestrian environment.

Incorporate within the building or use high-quality architectural elements and landscape design to screen vehicular access and site servicing. This helps to mitigate noise, air quality concerns, and unattractive views within the building site and on adjacent streets, public or private open spaces, and neighbouring properties.

Garbage pick-up on public streets and on private sites will be provided in accordance to "The City of Toronto Requirements for Garbage, Recycling and Organics Collection Services for New Developments and Redevelopments" (Revised 05/2012).

For fire access routes and fire fighting access to buildings, refer to provisions outlined in the Ontario Building Code, 3.2.5.1.

Parking elements for low-rise, multi-unit buildings should not dominate the streetscape, but instead be located in underground shared garages or to the rear of townhouses. Multiple curb-cuts and driveways reduce landscaping opportunities, safety and comfort for pedestrians. Buildings with front integral garages, which occupy the majority of the ground floor, create an undesirable condition and should be avoided.

Apartment developments should provide secure storage for bulky items such as, bicycle equipment, children’s outdoor toys or buggies outside the individual unit. This form of storage however does not satisfy bicycle parking requirements.



A landscape area along the rear property line provides buffer for adjacent property from new townhouses and garage and enhances the views from the townhouses.



Avoid freestanding underground garage ramps and access stairs, incorporate within the building.



Landscaped areas in a laneway help to create an attractive laneway environment.



### Official Plan Reference

2.2 Structuring Growth in the City: Policy 3c | 2.3.1 Healthy Neighbourhoods: Policy 2d | 2.4 Bringing the City Together: Policy 2c, 7b and 8b | 3.1.1 The Public Realm: Policy 1d, 1e, 2 and 6b | 3.1.2 Built Form: Policy 1d, 2, and 5 | 3.4 The Natural Environment: Policy 18a, 18f and 20 | 4.1 Neighbourhoods: Policy 9d | 4.2 Apartment Neighbourhoods: Policy 2d, 2e, 3d, 3g, and 3i | 4.5 Mixed Use Areas: Policy 2i and 2j | 5.1.3 Site Plan Control: Policy 3a, 3b and 3h



### Related Standards, Guidelines & Studies:

Toronto Green Standard | Guidelines for the Design and Management of Bicycle Parking Facilities | Design Guidelines for 'Greening' Surface Parking Lots | Growing Up, Planning for Children in New Vertical Communities