Replacement housing in the former City of North York will be consistent with the following urban design guidelines. They provide a framework for residential re-development in the former City of North York and are to be read in conjunction with the urban design policies in the Official Plan.

LOCATION

Throughout the former City of North York.

GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

The Replacement Housing Design Guidelines are intended to ensure that new developments are compatible with, and enhance existing neighbourhoods. The guidelines will provide a positive direction for future replacement housing by promoting a contextual response that supports architectural and streetscape continuity, while allowing for and encouraging diversity.

The design guidelines will be used to evaluate proposals for single family replacement dwellings and provide information to architects, developers, landscape architects and residents.

The guidelines deal with issues such as context, massing, appropriate scale and articulation of the front façade, as well as siting issues that include placement and width of driveways, walkways, retaining walls, and landscaping. For each issue, the guidelines state a design principle that is supported by specific guidelines. 'Preferred' and 'Not Preferred' examples are provided for each principle and guideline.

The guidelines have been divided into two major components.

'**Site Organization and Amenity**' addresses issues related to driveways, fences, and hard and soft landscaping features.

The '**Building Massing and Architectural Design**' section gives direction for the massing and exterior treatment of proposed replacement houses.

SITE ORGANIZATION AND AMENITY

Sites can be organized and designed to support and enhance the local environment and to create or maintain a pleasant and comfortable streetscape. In neighbourhoods, the front yards and side yards provide opportunities for landscaping that can be seen from the public realm of streets, parks and open spaces. While adding to a comfortable pedestrian environment and visual amenity, landscaping also improves the environmental quality of a neighbourhood. For these reasons, large paved areas will be discouraged or minimized, and soft landscaping opportunities maximized in yards visible to the street.

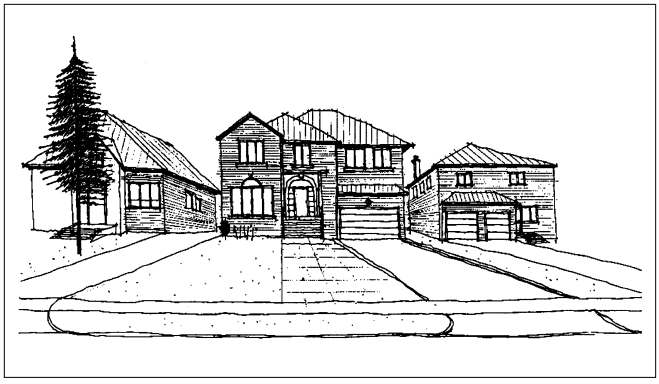
Front Yard Landscaping

Principle

Front yard landscaping provides visual interest, supports streetscape continuity and reinforces the natural environment within neighbourhoods. Front yard landscaping that pays attention to the quality, quantity and location of plant material will help to achieve compatibility with the existing neighbourhood and enhance the local streetscape.

Design Guideline

Provide a variety of trees and shrubs in the front yard to support and enhance the streetscape.



Not Preferred

Preferred

Not Preferred

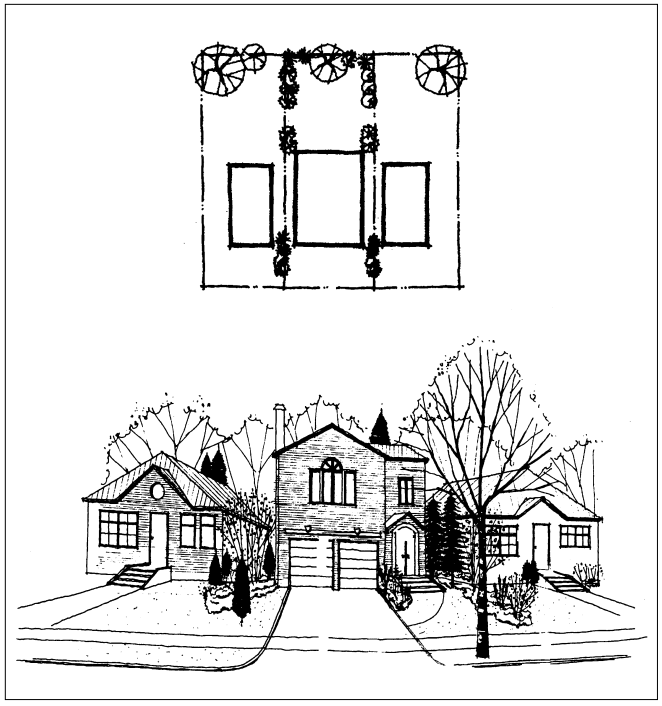
Rear and Side Yard Landscaping

Principle

Rear and side yard landscaping that includes trees, shrubs and fences can provide screening and buffering between residential lots. Intensive planting using large sized tree and shrub planting together with fencing can provide an appropriate transition and a visual buffer between existing and new development, reducing or ameliorating overview of new houses on existing dwellings. The plant species selection and size of plant material used, as well as the spacing between plants will be suitable for their type and the desired landscaping effect.

Design Guideline

Provide and maintain sufficient landscaping in the side and rear yards to reduce the impacts of height and mass of new developments and reduce overview.



Preferred

Tree Preservation

Principle

Mature trees on public and private property are important to the character, identity and the visual quality of a neighbourhood. The trees soften and complement the pavement and buildings, and contribute to the existing 'urban forest'. Tree preservation supports streetscape continuity and contributes to a pleasant neighbourhood environment.

Design Guideline

Encourage tree preservation to maintain the character of the neighbourhood and in keeping with the City's Tree Protection Policy.

Not Preferred

Preferred

Not Preferred

Preferred

Hard Surfaces

Principle

On a residential lot where the front walkway and driveway are contiguous, the front yard appears to be dominated by pavement or hard surfaces. It is better to provide a soft landscaped strip between the walkway and the driveway. This softens the view of the large hard surfaces on the streetscape and also adds some visual interest.

Design Guideline

Provide a landscaped strip between the driveway and the walkway in order to soften the appearance of large paved areas.

Retaining Walls

Principle

Retaining walls along downward sloping driveways emphasize the severity of the slope and have a negative impact on the visual quality of the streetscape. The Ontario Building Code requires guards (ie. railings/walls) where retaining walls are higher than 0.6m. Generally, railings rather than elevated retaining walls are preferred along driveways. Sloping driveways can also be improved by replacing at least one of the retaining walls with landscaped slopes or stepped planters. These design measures can soften the appearance of downward sloping driveways on the streetscape.

Not Preferred

Design Guideline

Avoid retaining walls along both sides of a sloping driveway and encourage that at least one side of the driveway has stepped planters or a landscaped slope instead.

Preferred

Not Preferred

Preferred

Side by Side Driveways

Principle

Side by side garages and driveways on abutting lots result in large paved areas that have a negative effect on the streetscape. Landscaped areas between adjacent double driveways are desirable as they reduce the effect of large hard surfaces on the overall streetscape.

Design Guideline

Avoid side by side driveways and garages and encourage a landscape strip between two adjacent driveways.

Driveway Width

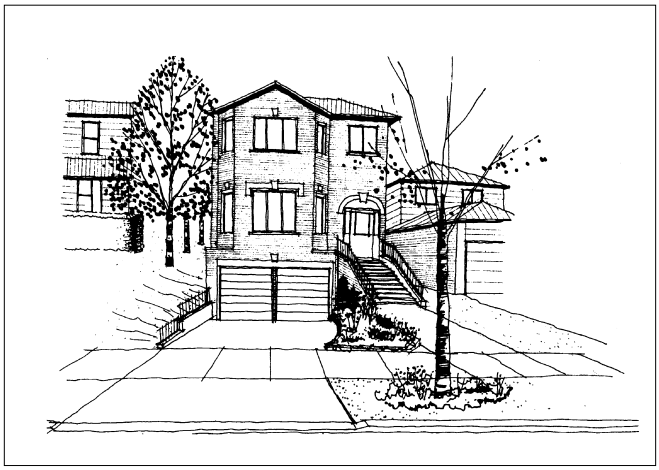
Principle

The width of a double, or larger, driveway may impact negatively on the streetscape. A reduction in the width of a driveway where it crosses the public boulevard, and its replacement with soft landscaping, will help reduce its visual impact on the streetscape. There are cases where the paved area could also be reduced on private property without affecting the ease of car movement. These areas could be planted to further improve the streetscape. In some instances, a reduction in the width of a driveway could also be used as an effective measure for the protection of street trees.

Design Guideline

Reduce the width of the driveway in the public boulevard and, where possible, on the lot, and replace the paved area with soft landscaping.

Not Preferred



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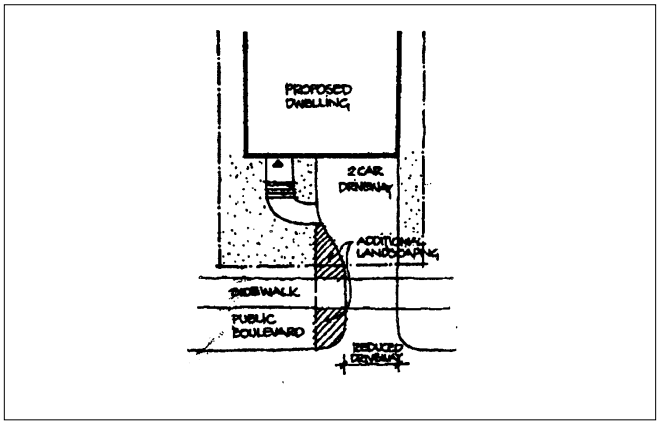

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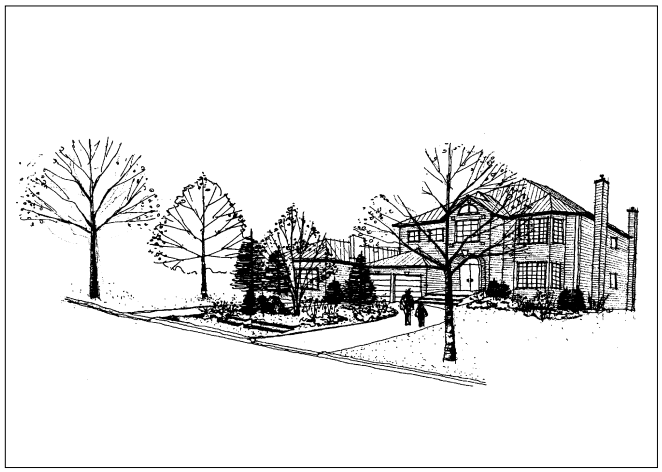


Preferred

Circular Driveways

Principle

Circular driveways are discouraged on lots narrower than 18m (60'). In many instances, the large paved areas and the curb cuts resulting from circular driveways, prevent the planting of street trees at regular intervals. This situation can be improved by landscaping the area surrounded by driveways. The planted island will help improve the appearance of pavement and building and also create visual interest along the street.

Design Guideline

Encourage landscaping in the island surrounded by a circular driveway and connect it visually to planting along the base of the house.

Sloping Driveways

Principle

Downward sloping driveways are often used on smaller lots where the garage has been depressed below grade in order to maintain a useable ground floor. Sloping driveways often lead to safety problems as views when backing out onto the street may be limited. They also disrupt streetscape continuity by creating a 'moat' effect along the house frontages.

Design Guideline

Discourage downward sloping driveways.

Not Preferred

Preferred

BUILDING MASSING AND ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

Existing and new developments can successfully coexist, if there is some visual continuity and an appropriate fit or transition in scale, building form and proportion.

A unified community image is supported and enhanced by the use of common building design elements, which include building mass and style, facade treatment, materials, texture, colour and detail. When the existing community's design elements are repeated or complemented by the new development, a positive image of the community is created.

The use of similar elements is not intended to create a monotonous repetition of structures or to standardize design; rather, it is to create a design vocabulary that makes visual references to the existing neighbourhood context while encouraging diversity and originality.

Second Storey Stepbacks

Principle

Stepping back a portion of the second storey of a house back from the lower floor is often a good method of articulating a new house with a sizeable front facade by 'breaking up' the building mass and reducing its apparent size.

Design Guideline

Encourage second storey stepbacks, where appropriate.

Not Preferred

Preferred

Not Preferred

Preferred

Facade Projections

Principle

New houses with sizeable front facades that present large, flat areas are often considered to be poorly designed. The use of projections is a way of articulating the front facade and creating better massing. Building components such as bay windows and front porches can be used to 'break up' large flat facade areas and reduce a massive appearance.

Design Guideline

Encourage the use of bay windows, canopies, small roofs and other similar projections.

Finishes

Principle

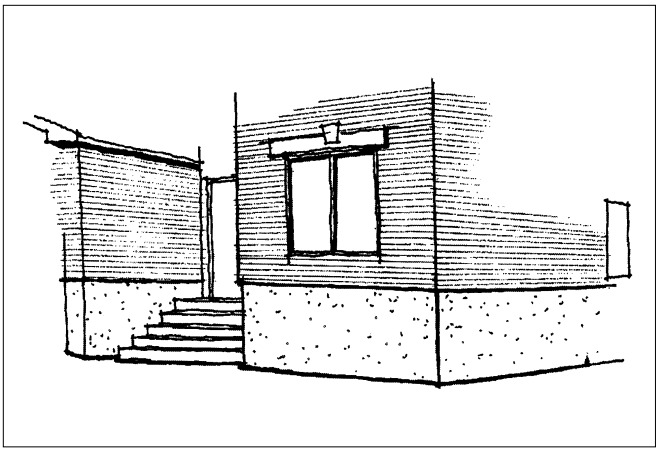
New dwellings should complement an established neighbourhood. Careful consideration of the details and character of the neighbourhood is needed to achieve a harmonious fit between existing and new development. Materials used in a new building that are responsive to the context will help preserve visual continuity.

Design Guideline

Encourage the use of details and materials compatible with existing homes in the neighbourhood.

Not Preferred

Preferred



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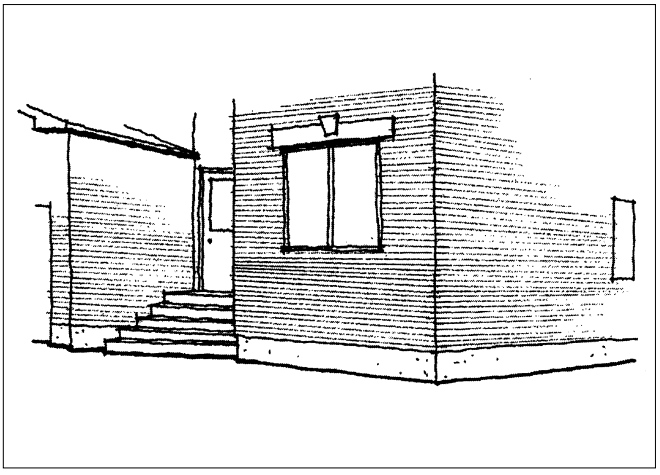

Preferred

Base Treatment

Principle

High quality materials are to be used on building facades visible to the public realm. Exposed concrete block or concrete is often left as the base of a house. Efforts will be made to provide brick or treatment similar to the rest of the facade in order to provide a finished base to a new dwelling.

Design Guideline

Provide brick or similar masonry base treatment within 200mm (8”) to 300mm (12”) from finished grade and step it to follow sloping grades where required.

Corner Lots

Principle

New dwellings on corner lots can blend harmoniously with the existing houses on both streets if their massing, facades and other features are articulated to reflect the existing context and not overwhelm it. Appropriate treatment of facades that respect both streets promotes an improved streetscape and a better fit in the neighbourhood.

Design Guideline

Encourage well-articulated façade treatments on both street frontages for houses situated on corner lots.

Not Preferred

Preferred

Not Preferred

Preferred

Side and Rear Elevations

Principle

Blank, unarticulated walls are to be avoided. Details and texture in the side and rear elevations will provide visual interest, especially when the houses back or flank onto open spaces. Bay windows, windows and decorative treatments are to be included in the side or rear elevations wherever possible to provide attractive views from the street, open spaces or neighbouring properties.

Design Guideline

Provide high quality treatments and detailing for the rear and side facades of houses, especially those that back or flank onto parks, accessible open spaces, or neighbouring properties.

Roof Configuration

Principle

In many cases, the extensive, uninterrupted roofs of new houses produce a discordant relationship with existing buildings. Structures with large roof areas often become excessively bulky in appearance and do not fit into the surroundings. Variations in the roof slope often minimize the appearance of the mass of a large house.

Design Guideline

Encourage variations in the roof slope within a given roof to reduce the scale of the development.

Not Preferred

Preferred

Not Preferred

Preferred

Visual Continuity

Principle

New buildings should be sympathetic to the form and proportion of existing houses. This can often be achieved by repeating, or making appropriate visual references to existing building lines and surface treatments. Large surfaces can be articulated by incorporating a roofline from the adjacent dwellings into the proposed structures.

Design Guideline

Incorporate rooflines and surface treatments from abutting structures onto the new house to integrate with the surrounding houses.

Double Garage Doors

Principle

In general, double garage doors dominate the main facades of a house and increase the impact of a house's mass. In many cases, dividing the width of a double car garage door with a pilaster, and the use of two doors instead of a wide double door, reduces the visual impact of a garage on the streetscape.

Design Guideline

Divide double garage doors into two single doors, wherever possible.

Not Preferred

Preferred

Not Preferred

Preferred

Garage Projection

Principle

Garages that project significantly in front of the living areas dominate the street façade of a house. The longer the projection, the more the garage becomes the main focus of the streetscape. A repeated pattern of projected garages has a negative impact on the neighbourhood streetscape by creating a street dominated by garages instead of living areas and porches.

Design Guideline

Limit the garage projection to maximum of 1.5m (5') into the front yard.

Three Car Garages

Principle

Three car garages, when all in the same plane, can result in facades that are visually unappealing and not in keeping with the existing surroundings. Various methods can be used to break up the massive appearance of houses with three car garages, such as: setting the third garage back from the other two garages; setting back the second floor above of the garages.

Design Guideline

Encourage horizontal or vertical articulation of three car garages within the overall massing of the house.

Not Preferred

Preferred

Not Preferred

Preferred

Garage Location

Principle

In general, garages located at the rear yard provide for a better streetscape allowing for a larger portion of the front yard to be used for landscaping and the living areas of a house to predominate along the sidewalk. Rear yard garages are an alternative that broadens the range of housing forms and residential environments.

Design Guideline

Encourage rear yard garages where feasible.