Development in the Etobicoke Centre area will be consistent with the following urban design guidelines. The guidelines are to be read in conjunction with the Etobicoke Centre Secondary Plan, which City Council adopted November 29 2002. The guidelines were developed subsequent to those found in Chapter 12, of the Official Plan Secondary Plans

LOCATION:

These guidelines apply to new development and re-development in the Etobicoke Centre Area, as shown on Map 25, the Secondary Plan Key Map in Chapter Six of the Official Plan.

GUIDELINES

URBAN DESIGN GOALS

The Urban Design goals for Etobicoke Centre are to create a beautiful, comfortable and amenable area of the city. These guidelines are a framework, which can be used to guide the form and layout of new development in the area. The heights, setbacks and built-to zones described in the Zoning By-law are derived from the following goals:

To define the **character** of Etobicoke Centre as a whole, including its streets and buildings

To provide **open spaces and linkages** to encourage movement in and around Etobicoke Centre

To establish the relationship of **built form** to adjacent streets and open spaces

To clarify streetscape elements, view systems, and public art.

General Site Plan Objectives

In general, street related development with buildings ('street walls') typically sited parallel to the public streets and along the edges of open spaces and parks are encouraged to help define and animate the public realm. Grade related dwellings and other appropriate uses are encouraged on these 'public' building faces to provide safe, animated streets and open spaces. It is this fundamental relationship between buildings and their adjacent public spaces, which forms the basis for good urban design.

VISION FOR THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA

The Etobicoke Centre is envisioned to be a new mixed use neighbourhood where people can live, work and play. Redevelopment opportunities will help generate an intensified community, which will:

- Include a mix of uses in a variety of building forms
- Have a public road network which balances vehicular and pedestrian needs
- Ensure accessibility to community services and increase use and access to the Kipling and Islington subway stations.

The existing road network consists of the following set of streets that serve the transportation needs of the area and in the future will provide structure and focus to the community's emerging character and identity.

- Bloor Street
- Dundas Street
- Kipling and Islington Avenues
- The Six Points "Common"
- Local streets

Each of these streets acts as the focal point for the adjacent lands, and has a different form and character. The following is a brief description of the challenges and attributes of the various 'districts' as they existed in 2002.

Bloor Street

There are at least three distinct segments of Bloor Street in Etobicoke Centre. At the easterly end, an extension of the Bloor-Kingsway "main street" area extends into Etobicoke Centre along the south side of Bloor Street providing pedestrian scale development. The north side of Bloor Street in this area is home to the area's most intense cluster of office and residential development.

The section of Bloor Street between the rail corridor underpass and the Six Points intersection is currently composed of primarily vacant land, and is characterized by changing grade relationships. This section will ultimately provide a Bloor Street address for the Westwood Theatre lands, and will intensify with higher buildings organized around access to the Kipling subway station. New development has the opportunity to capitalize on a Bloor Street address and to take advantage of the undulating grade as an opportunity to 'stack' the main floors of new buildings.

The third section of Bloor Street is west of the Six Points intersection, and takes on more of the characteristics of the Islington Village portion of Dundas Street.

Dundas Street

There are two distinct segments of Dundas Street. North of Bloor, it is a local shopping street, and forms the focus of the Islington Village "main street" area.

South of Bloor Street, Dundas Street becomes a wider arterial with increased traffic volumes and speed. It is characterized by primarily auto-related uses and building forms. However, many of the sites offer redevelopment opportunities.

The lots on the south side of Dundas Street are deep, and back onto the rail corridor. A new public street will eventually create access and frontage for the rear portions of these sites. Buildings in this area will be massed and sited to create a street wall with enough space at grade to create a generous landscaped setback.

The public realm in this area needs to reinforce pedestrian access to the subway along the streets and walkways, and special consideration will be given to pedestrian movements across Dundas Street to facilitate easier access to the Kipling subway.

North–South Arterials

Kipling Avenue and Islington Avenue are the major north-south arteries. The future urban form on Kipling Avenue will be highly influenced by any potential changes to the Six Points Interchange. Opportunities may exist in the future to provide a better street wall condition and an improved pedestrian realm. On Islington Avenue north of Bloor, development over the Islington subway station will provide an opportunity to develop an urban scale similar to that which exists on the east side of the street. North of the subway station, opportunities will be provided to create a better street–line definition through the redevelopment of older apartment buildings that are set back from Islington Avenue.

Local Streets

Generally, local streets are to be tree-lined with sidewalks on both sides, with landscaped front yard setbacks (3-6 metres).

The massing and design of corner buildings and view termini will create positive community images and pedestrian relationships. Blank walls and empty unorganized spaces will be avoided.

The Six Points "Common"

The Six Points Interchange, while not an idealized urban setting, will be considered positive open space, and landscaped accordingly. Pedestrians and cyclists currently cross this intersection, and the journey will be safe, direct and pleasant.

Massive landscaping of the intersection, in conjunction with safety guidelines, will help to transform this area from a traffic node into a green space.

GUIDELINES FOR THE PUBLIC REALM

In order to create a high quality urban environment, city streets and the buildings which form the edges to them must be co-ordinated. Typically, street sections are based on the street width, building heights, setbacks, and angular planes. Street proportion is the ratio of the height of the buildings along the edge of the street and the width of the space between the buildings on either side. Street proportion gives measure to certain qualities of the street including its access to sunlight and sky view. In this area, the streets are generally wide, and can accommodate both intensified building development and a comfortable and safe public realm.

Street Sections

New buildings will generally maintain a 1:1 proportion to the public street

Streetscape Improvements

Widened sidewalks and walkways may be required at major intersections, railway underpasses, important building entrances or routes connecting to transit.

New landscaping on the public boulevard, along site frontages and along public pedestrian routes, will be treated as explicit parts of the overall development design.

Existing street trees will be protected where possible.

The design and grading of any sidewalk and street area will be co-ordinated with all adjacent property owners.

Where retaining walls and/or fences are needed, the design articulation and materials will integrate with the building facades and complement the public streetscape.

Pedestrian Comfort

New buildings will reinforce the pedestrian activity and amenity of the adjacent streets.

Buildings will be located as close to the street–line as possible.

Main entrances to buildings will face public streets and provide direct connections to the public sidewalk.

All parking and driving aisles will be placed behind the front wall of the building.

Views and Gateways

Sites at the entry points into the Etobicoke Centre will be developed as landmarks to identify the Etobicoke Centre. Landmark identification can occur through the design of buildings at these locations as well as the provision of public elements and monuments. Panoramic views of the lake and downtown Toronto also have potential to be seized from various locations.

Public Buildings

Public buildings in the Etobicoke Centre will be the result of a design competition to promote excellence in architectural design. They will occupy prime, highly visible locations, and will be designed as neighbourhood landmarks, which may be achieved through a multi-storey design. Built form, massing and architecture will be based on a strong expression or interpretation of the site, its location in the city and community heritage.

Accessibility and Safety

Pedestrian amenity is created by landscape and architectural elements in and at the edges of streets, parks and open spaces that promote the safe and comfortable use of that space by everyone.

Portions of the area are largely car-oriented and inaccessible to people on foot, bikes, or in wheelchairs. As new development occurs, the public realm will be designed and built to overcome this situation.

Sidewalks will be widened where possible, to increase pedestrian separation from fast moving traffic.

On-street parking will be permitted, where appropriate, to shield pedestrians from traffic and to shorten walking distances to buildings.

The Bloor Street frontage where it undulates under the rail corridor and over Kipling Avenue, will be landscaped to form an accessible street edge to improve pedestrian comfort and safety.

Detailed landscape design will ensure appropriate treatment of any existing or new retaining walls that abut the street edge.

Natural surveillance opportunities are encouraged by strategically orienting building entrances and other active uses near vulnerable areas.

New Streets

As part of redeveloping the Westwood Theatre lands and certain lands south of Dundas Street, new public streets will need to be located and built.

Improvements will be undertaken to the street system to facilitate pedestrian movement particularly at the subways, and to upgrade the quality of the pedestrian environment.

Parks and Open Spaces

Private Landscaped Open Space provides visual amenity and, where appropriate, publicly accessible open space that complements and enhances the network of public open spaces within the community.

Non-residential development is encouraged to provide publicly accessible private open space.

Private open space and amenity areas may take the form of courtyards, plazas, forecourts walkways, urban gardens, patios or enclaves.

Private landscaped courtyards will be designed to provide active as well as passive outdoor areas. Play equipment, seating areas, allotment gardens, BBQ areas and tennis courts, are examples of what they could contain. Lighting, sidewalks and tree planting will blend with the design of the public streetscape. Courtyards will be visually linked to public open spaces, where possible.

Open spaces will be located and designed to be accessible and visible from public streets. Where this is not possible, unambiguous public landscaped walkways will connect the open space to public streets from more than one direction.

Spatial boundaries will be clearly defined by appropriate landscape elements such as tree rows and architectural elements such as trellises, colonnades or the actual built form.

The amenity and utility of the open spaces around Islington Junior-Middle School will be improved for the existing and future residential population by adding recreation facilities such as a jogging track and tennis courts, improving the facilities in the children's play area, and providing a walkway beside the playground to the playing field behind the school.

New open space will be provided where it has the greatest usefulness for residents and where it best establishes privacy and protection from the street.

A program of major tree planting will be undertaken throughout the district. One or more distinctive species will differentiate the Etobicoke Centre area from its surroundings and emphasize the street structure of the district.

GUIDELINES FOR BUILT FORM

Building location and organization

On each potential development parcel, the primary ground plane will be clearly identified, as many sites within the district abut artificially manipulated grades (such as the rail underpass and the bridge at the Six Points Interchange). Secondary frontages may be incorporated on a different level than the primary plane.

Build-To Zone

Buildings will be massed to define streets and open spaces with good proportion and with adequate access to sunlight and sky-view. To achieve this, a range of building heights is encouraged, with a consistent base condition called a 'built-to'. This zone is intended to ensure a predicable street edge from one property to the next, and to frame and enhance the public realm.

New buildings will occupy a minimum of 60% of the primary frontage of a lot.

New developments will have a minimum base height of two storeys, and a maximum of four storeys.

The base of new buildings will be within 3 metres of the front property line to ensure that the building front engages with the public realm, with no parking at the front of the building.

Building mass above the base will be stepped back a minimum of three metres.

General Building Design

Each building will be designed with its own architectural character. Although buildings will share basic massing with streetwalls and overall heights, individual expression and architecture is encouraged.

Roof top expression is encouraged to generate local landmarks and character.

The facades of buildings will be articulated and fenestrated in a fashion that breaks down large-scale building mass and avoids large expanses of blank walls.

Public Street Address for Main Entrances

Lobbies and security areas will be visible and accessible from the public sidewalk. Entrances will be close to finished grade.

Multiple entrances along a street promote its use. Grade related units are encouraged at the base of residential buildings. Retail uses are also encouraged to have multiple access at grade while access to retail uses from interior malls will be discouraged.

Entrances to buildings will include weather protection.

Environmental Impact: Sun and Wind

Building heights must ensure a good surrounding environment. This means shadow impacts minimized on adjacent public and private areas and improved wind conditions.

Design features, such as setbacks and stepped building facades, mitered corners, balconies and canopies, stepped elevations and podiums will be incorporated to help intercept or diffuse winds at the pedestrian level.

Key streets, such as Bloor and Dundas Street West, will have three to five hours of sunlight per day on at least one sidewalk between March 21 and September 21.

Parking and Servicing

On-street parking is generally encouraged where feasible in this area to assist in shielding pedestrians from traffic volumes. The impact of large areas of parking will be mitigated through the provision of landscaping, to screen and shade parking areas.

Edge treatments will incorporate streetscape standards.

Internal landscaping for surface parking lots will provide one shade tree per five parking spaces, organized as “islands’ or ‘peninsulas’

Adequate bicycle parking will be provided, in more than one location, especially near building entrances, and some spaces will be indoors, with easy and direct access to an exit.

Parking, automobile drop-off and servicing access will be carefully planned and designed so as not to interfere with the continuity of public sidewalks and the regularity of street tree planting. These access points will have minimal physical and visual impact on public streets and open spaces.

Access to parking, car drop-off areas and servicing areas will be designed to minimize potential conflicts with pedestrians on public sidewalks.

Underground access ramps into the ground floor of buildings will be incorporated where possible. Where servicing and access ramps are within the block interiors, they will be incorporated into the landscape design, and not form the focus for private landscaped areas.

The use of shared rear driveways and service courts between or behind buildings will be encouraged.

Parking structures above grade will not be permitted.

Surface parking will be minimized in new residential projects and limited to spaces assigned for visitors.

Underground parking garages will be organized to allow ventilation to occur on the building face above pedestrian levels rather than within publicly accessible areas at grade.

Open Spaces and Setbacks

New developments will provide consistent setbacks from the street to ensure a continuity of enclosure for public streets and accessible open spaces. These setbacks are to be landscaped to provide a setting for new buildings, to integrate with existing buildings, and provide amenity for residents and visitors.

Front setbacks from the property line on residential streets will be between 0 and 6 metres.

Adequate setbacks of buildings above and below grade will be provided to ensure that existing mature trees can be saved and integrated into new development. The saving of mature trees at the edges of development sites is strongly encouraged to help integrate new development into the neighbourhood.

To ensure adequate light, views and privacy, the minimum separation between towers will be 20 metres and the minimum distance between main windows of residential buildings will be 11 metres.

Indoor amenity areas will be located to have direct access to outdoor amenity areas.

Building Heights

In accordance with the policies contained in this plan, the massing of new buildings is intended to accomplish the following.

Frame and support the streets and open spaces at a scale that balances building height and built form with street width.

Support the Centre initiatives.

Provide adequate transition to adjacent stable areas.

A variety of building forms is encouraged within the district through four general height ranges organized to meet these principles.

Main Street Buildings:

Grade related buildings are generally 2 to 5 storeys and commonly take the form of walk up apartment buildings and older main street buildings with retail at grade. The commercial main streets will be strengthened to create active retail frontage with buildings that support the use and scale.

Buildings up to 5 storeys in height will be grade related, and respect the 45-degree angular plane to the existing stable residential areas. The 5 storey height limit anticipates commercial uses at grade with residential above.

New buildings will fit both with the adjacent as well as with the existing shop buildings.

A cornice line at the second storey will be incorporated to help break the vertical mass of new buildings, as well as to blend in with existing two–storey buildings.

New development will have parking located in the rear, with generous streetscaping in the front.

New building will fill the lot frontage to a minimum of 75% along main frontages up to a minimum of 2 storeys to ensure the built form continuity.

Buildings will be setback a maximum of 3 metres from the street line to ensure that parking occurs in the rear.

The ideal distance from the curb to the building face is 3.5 metres, within which is the public sidewalk, tree planting, and other streetscape furniture.

Streetwall and Mid-Rise Buildings:

Streetwall and Mid-rise buildings normally fall into the eight to twelve–storey range. Streetwalls are so called because of the proportional relationship they have with the adjacent street (normally1:1 ratio).

For areas such as Dundas Street south of Bloor Street, streetwall buildings are anticipated. They will be sited to align with the adjacent streets, parks and open spaces, and to frame and animate these areas.

New streetwall buildings may rise up to a maximum of eight storeys.

New buildings will be setback approximately 3 metres from the streetline in order to shield grade uses from the volume of traffic and to discourage parking between the front wall of the building and the street.

New buildings will:

Provide a ‘streetwall’ building base with a minimum height of 2 storeys with upper storeys setback a minimum of 3 metres

Occupy at least 60% of the property frontage to ensure that new development appropriately addresses the primacy of the street

Have a 2 storey base with upper parts of the building setback 3 metres from the street edge of the base

Achieve a minimum building height of 4 storeys to ensure appropriate built form objectives may be met incrementally.

Mid-Rise:

Mid-rise buildings will occur predominantly in the Islington area. A range of height is possible depending on the width of streets, the size of the landscaped setbacks and terracing. Typically, buildings from 24 to 36 metres (8 to 12 storeys) are possible; however, heights up to 20 storeys may be achievable provided floor plates above the twelfth storey are reduced to a maximum of 825 square metres in order to avoid tall slab buildings.

In some instances, the density provision for a site may produce a mass which exceeds the height limit. In those cases, the heights and built form criteria must be met to ensure contextual compatibility.

Mid-rise buildings will:

- Generally be sited to align with streets, parks and accessible open spaces, framing these areas with building mass
- Be sited and massed to form usable landscaped courtyards or other open spaces within a block, or opening onto adjacent streets
- Where appropriate, have animated ground floor uses to support the amenity of the adjacent public realm
- Have a 3-6 metres front yard setback from the street to provide for gardens and landscaped areas between the public sidewalk and the building
- Have a well-defined 8-12 metre base on the lower floors
- Remain at or below the 1:1 street proportion
- Fit within the 45-degree angular plane from adjacent low-rise residential areas
- Have a maximum floor plate area of 825 square metres for heights between 12 and 20 storeys

Tall Buildings:

Tall buildings are those that rise above the 1:1 street proportion, generally over 36 metres (12 storeys). In keeping with the policies contained in the Secondary Plan, taller buildings may be located near both the Kipling and Islington subway nodes and on portions of the former Westwood Theatre lands. Through the community consultation process, it is expected that the taller buildings will not exceed 30 storeys in height. In most instances, it is recommended that new development take full advantage of the heights permitted.

In general, tall buildings will:

- Take the form of point towers above a 2-4-storey podium or base building. The base defines the streets and open spaces of the area and the slender proportions of the point tower casts fewer shadows and opens sky views to streets from neighbouring buildings
- Have a floor plate with a maximum dimension of 34 metres in either direction; the point tower will step back from the base building, generally 6 to 9 metres, and be located and oriented in a manner that minimizes shadow and wind conditions in adjacent streets, parks and open spaces
- Have a 45-degree angular plane gradient from adjacent low-rise residential areas, where appropriate, to restrict the impact of higher buildings
- Where more than one building on a site is proposed, only one will be at the maximum height; others must represent a full range of heights
- To avoid massive continuous building mass, tower floor plates above 20 storeys will be limited to 750 square metres (excluding balconies and projections), and the upper portions of towers will be stepped back to create a distinct skyline character and to allow views through the site.

Public Art

A District Public Art Plan will be implemented to encourage the pooling of Public Art funds into a comprehensive plan for the area.