
Midland/St. Clair

Urban Design Guidelines



Urban Development Services
City of Toronto
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Role of Urban Design Guidelines
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- 1.3 Visions and Design Principles

1. SITE ORGANIZATION

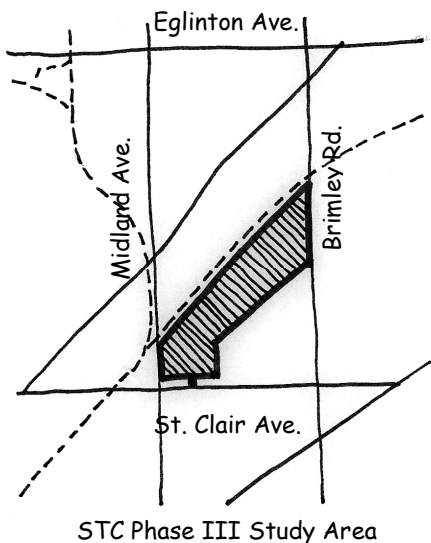
1.1 Role of Urban Design Guidelines

In the City of Toronto, urban design policies and guidelines are established to provide a comprehensive framework aimed at enhancing the physical form of an area or neighbourhood. Urban Design Guidelines are intended to:

Promote the highest quality of design,

Describe the anticipated or preferred approach to site planning, built form, landscape, and amenities; and

Provide a co-ordinated approach to the design and definition of the public space while allowing for a range of development scenarios, and architectural and landscape architectural expressions.



1.2 St. Clair/ Midland Urban Design Guidelines

Planning Context

The St. Clair/Midland Urban Design Guidelines have been developed as a component of the Phase 3 Scarborough Transportation Corridor (STC) Land Use Study.



1. SITE ORGANIZATION

The Scarborough Transportation Corridor (STC) is a stretch of land extending through southern Scarborough that was once intended for an extension of the Gardiner Expressway. It was designated as an expressway in Scarborough's first Official Plan in 1957. Since that time, several studies of the STC led to a decision that no major transportation facility be constructed in the corridor. In 1995 the lands were designated in the Scarborough Official Plan as a Special Study Area and the City then initiated a series of land use studies for the STC. The Phase 3 study commenced in 1996.

The Working Group for the Phase 3 STC Land Use Study initiated the process of establishing the St.Clair/Midland Urban Design Guidelines. This group included area residents, representatives of the local community association and the Ward Councillor. Through a series of workshops, with City staff, members of the Working Group identified their vision for the area and general design principles for future development. These ideas and principles form the basis of the Urban Design Guidelines.

Community Context

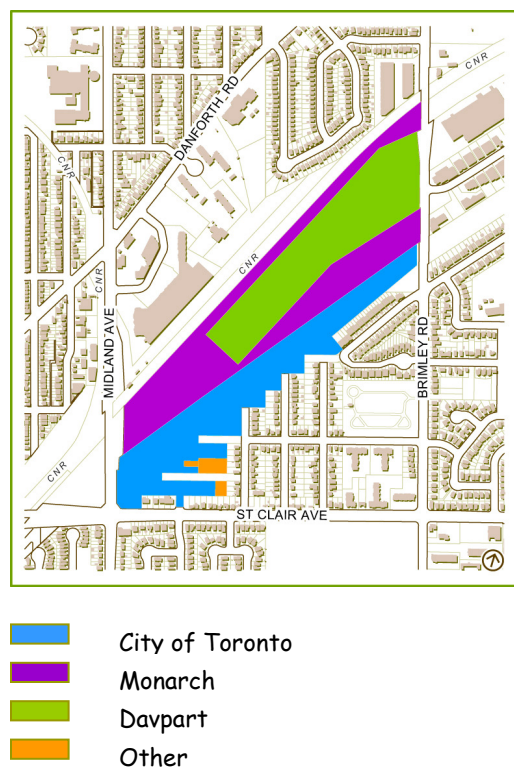
The Phase 3 STC study area includes approximately 30 hectares (75 acres) of land in both public and private ownership.

The urban design guidelines were developed in the context of the larger area extending from St. Clair Avenue north to the CN rail main line, and from Midland Avenue east to Brimley Road.

Within this area there is an existing established residential neighbourhood developed primarily with single-detached dwelling on fairly large lots. Most of the dwellings are low in scale, with recessed garages or carports. The local streets have a clear grid pattern with dead ends at the northern edge of the residential area at the STC. There are no sidewalks along these streets.

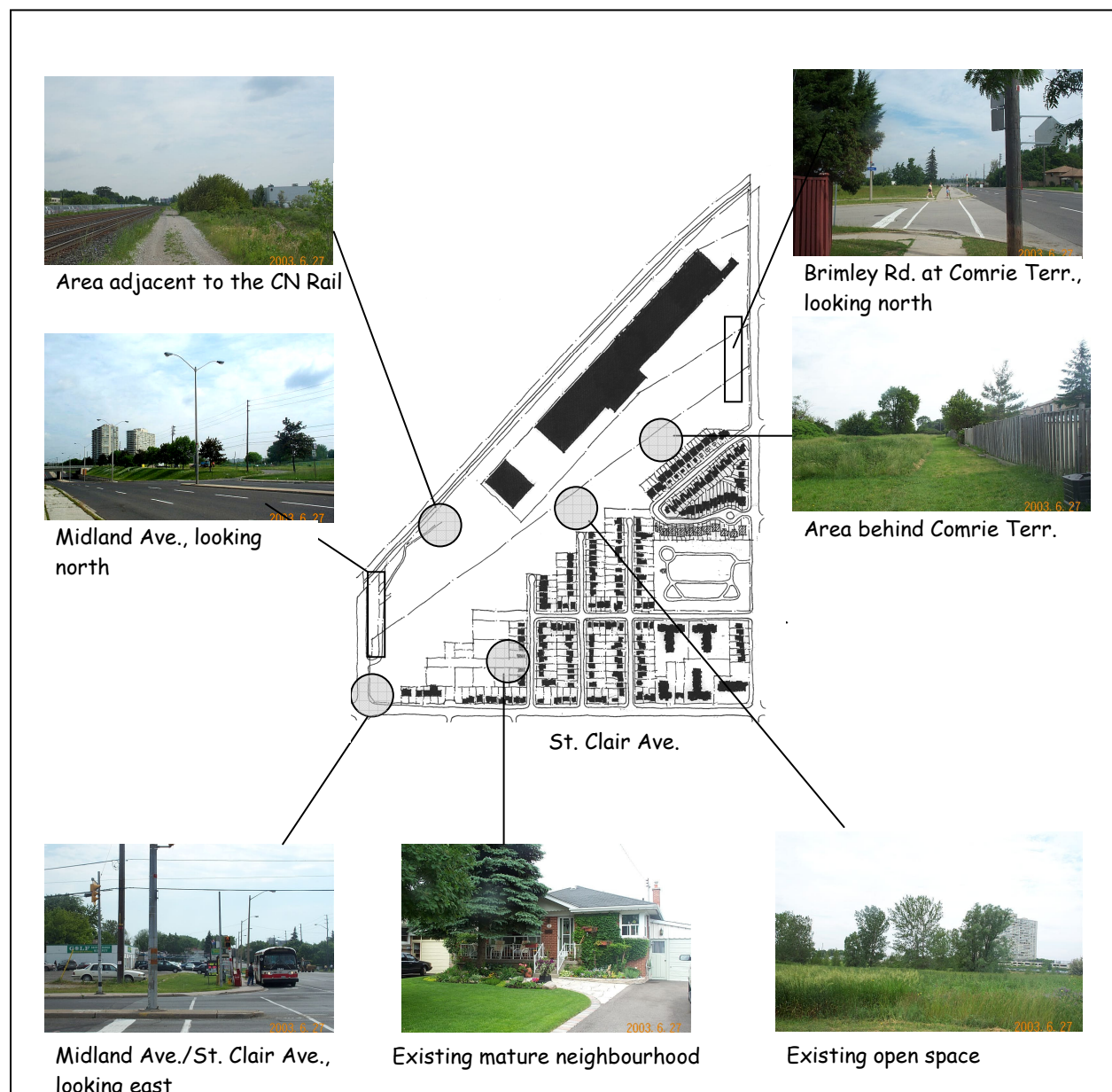
There is a small development of semi-detached dwellings at the eastern edge of the residential area. The local street serving this area accesses to Brimley Road.

To the north of the residential area is an industrial property developed with two large warehouses. There is a mixture of low scale commercial buildings, single detached residential dwellings, and several low-rise apartment buildings, fronting the north side of St. Clair Avenue.



1. SITE ORGANIZATION

There are vacant lands to the north and east of the residential area. There is no formal park or school within this community.



Existing Conditions

Historical Context

This area of Scarborough was settled in the early and mid 1800's when these lands were granted to European settlers for farming. Farming was the mainstay of life in this area of Scarborough into the early 1900's. Despite the long rural history, these lands were influenced by the pressures for change that accompanied advances in technology and periods of rapid growth throughout Scarborough's history. These influences have resulted in the mix of residential and industrial uses found here today.

The most significant change to affect this area was the opening of the Grand Trunk Railway (now CN) through this area in 1859 and the Toronto Nipissing Railway in 1871. Initially these railways spurred the growth of residential communities centered at the junction of the two rail lines on the west side of Midland Avenue.

The development of residential communities in the Scarborough Junction on the east side of Midland Avenue began when residential plans of subdivision were laid out in this area in the early 1900's in response to a period of rapid growth in southern Scarborough leading up to and after the First World War. The depression brought a drastic halt to growth in Scarborough and most of these subdivisions were not built. The exception is a portion of the Walton Heights subdivision, named for the original family who settled the land and includes Jeannette Street, Waltonice Road, Andrew Avenue and Minerva Avenue.

The view of Scarborough as "country" came to an end with the explosion of suburban development after the Second World War with returning vets and new immigrants eager to build a life in Scarborough. Thousands of houses, new roads, and shopping plazas were built to keep pace with this demand.

Expressways were needed to connect and move people and goods throughout the rapidly expanding centres around Toronto including the new suburb of Scarborough. The lands south of the railway presented an opportunity for a connecting expressway to link the Gardiner with Highway 401. The expressway corridor in this area was then promoted as an industrial centre.

Although some industrial development did occur, the vision of the area as an industrial centre was never fully realized. With the abandonment of the expressway an opportunity has been created to continue the process of building a more complete residential community. The

Midland/St. Clair Urban Design Guidelines have been prepared as a part of this process.

Purpose of the Midland/St. Clair Urban Design Guidelines

The purpose of the Urban Design Guidelines is to establish a common vision for the future development of the area and create a framework for the planning policies that apply to this area.

The guidelines build on the general design and planning principles established through the community consultation process, and are developed within the context of the City's New Official Plan. They provide guidance, standards, and general concepts in the areas of site planning, architectural design, landscape and open space design.

The guidelines are intended for the use of developers in the preparation of development proposals, and by the City of Toronto to review and assess the design aspects of development proposals within this area.

1.3 Visions and Design Principles

Through the community consultation process, main issues and themes emerged about the existing area and the prospects for future development.

The legacy of the STC has left a large amount of vacant undeveloped land within this area. This vacant land is considered a valuable open space resource to the residents. As a result, the retention of lands for open space or park purposes was considered important for this community.

There is an established residential area of primarily low scale housing developed adjacent to the subject lands. Streets within this area dead-end at the STC. As a result, there is an opportunity through future development to build on the existing development pattern in this area. New development should be compatible with and compliment the surrounding neighbourhood.

With arterial roads surrounding this area, there are also opportunities to enhance and improve the quality of these streetscapes. Special attention to the design of future developments along St. Clair Avenue, Midland Avenue and Brimley Road were considered important to promote a positive image of this community.

From these visions for the community, several design principles were developed as following:

Park as the Focus of the Community

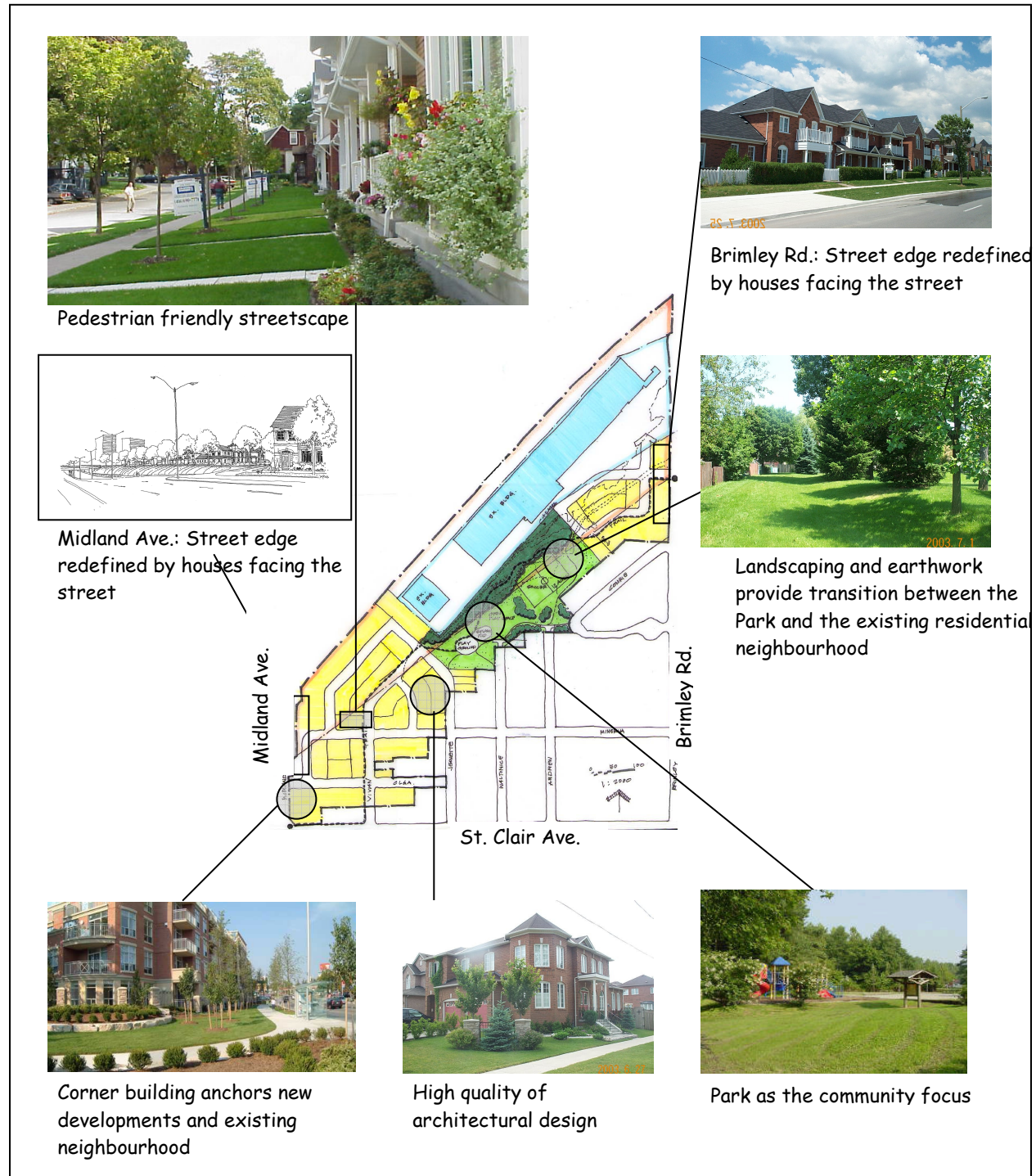
As the “outdoor living room”, the Park should be the focus of the new and old communities.

Ideally, the park should be centrally located within the triangular area bounded by Midland Ave., St. Clair Ave., Brimley Rd., and the CN Rail. Local residents and potential future residents should have easy access to the Park from all areas in the existing community and new development sites.

Compatible Development

The new community should be planned and designed to be an extension of the existing neighbourhood. New developments should be compatible with the surrounding existing community in relation to site planning, architectural design, and streetscape design.

1. SITE ORGANIZATION



Visions for Future Development

Proposed new developments shall not have negative impacts on the existing community.

Pedestrian Friendly Streetscapes

Well-designed streetscapes will provide a comfortable pedestrian walking environment and serve as a transition from the private space to the public space.

Enhanced Streetscape for the Arterial Roads

New developments along Midland Ave. and Brimley Rd. will re-define the street edge. Enhanced architectural and landscape treatments will significantly improve the overall image of the streetscape along the two major arterial roads.

A “Signature Building” at Midland Ave. and St. Clair Ave.

A well designed mixed-use or residential building at the corner of Midland Ave. and St. Clair Ave. will anchor the new developments and enhance the community identity. It will also help to establish a high standard of design for the potential re-development of the commercial buildings along St. Clair Ave.

The above vision will be realized through the application of the guidelines in the following sections.

2. SITE ORGANIZATION

2. SITE ORGANIZATION

The existing community has a clear grid street pattern. A modified grid pattern is encouraged to create strong physical and visual connections to the existing community.

The community park should be centrally located within the triangular area bounded by Midland Ave, St. Clair Ave., Brimley Rd., and the CN Rail.

Front buildings onto public rather than private streets where possible.

New streets are encouraged to be connected to the existing streets. However, they shall not be designed to encourage shortcuts from Brimley Road to St. Clair Ave.

In areas adjacent to the Park, the front faces of the buildings of the new developments should face the community park, where possible.

Pedestrian connections and linkages should be provided so that the community park and other green open spaces can be easily accessed from all areas within the community.

3. BUILT FORM

Built Form is an important element in the streetscape and has a major impact on the image, character, and quality of the community as a whole. Individual buildings should be well designed and sited so that they are integrated into the streetscape. To achieve this objective, guidelines are provided in the following areas:

- 3.1 Built Form Principles
- 3.2 Building Types and Setbacks
- 3.3 Single Detached and Semi-detached Houses
- 3.4 Townhouses

3.1 Built Form Principles

Building massing should be compatible with the adjacent buildings in areas near the existing neighbourhood

Neighbouring new buildings are encouraged to share a similar scale and setbacks to promote harmony and continuity

Flexible design expressions are encouraged through varieties of building types, elevations, and treatment of building edges.

3.2 Building Types and Setbacks

Different house types and designs are encouraged to provide visual interest and enhance the quality of the streetscape. Building types include single detached houses, semi-detached houses, townhouses, and walk-up apartment buildings at certain locations

Buildings should be located close to the street and should provide a strong architectural presence

Front yard setbacks should be modulated to provide visual interest and streetscape variety while conforming to relevant design guidelines.

3.3 Single Detached and Semi-detached Houses

Roofs

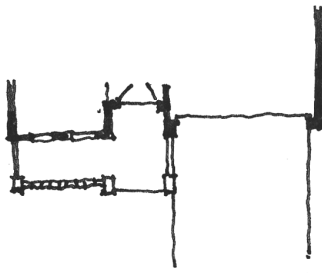
A variety of ridge orientations and massing, including front gable and side gable roofs are encouraged

Roof vents and gas vents should be located so as not to be visible from street views, or located close to the ridgeline. All roof and gas vents should be coloured or painted to match the roof colour

Main Entrance

The main entrance should be visually dominant on the front façade of the building. A porch or balcony is encouraged as part of the main entry.

Covered porches, overhangs, or recesses are encouraged to provide shelter from the weather.



With garage recessed into the house form, the main entrance becomes the focus of the front elevation

The use of transoms, sidelights or door glazing are encouraged to provide natural light to the interior of the house.

Porches and Verandas

Porches and verandas deep enough for seating, should be integrated in the front elevation to provide a connection between the house and the street, and to add to community safety by promoting “eyes on the street”.

Exterior colours and materials

Brick with warm, earth tones should be considered as the primary cladding material. Other materials, such as siding and stone, can be incorporated as secondary materials.

Window Detailing

Scale and proportion of windows should compliment the massing of the building

Building Projections

Projecting elements are encouraged to add detail and variety to the building elevation. These items include: bay windows, bow windows, entry stoops, porches, porticoes, roof extensions, cantilevered elements, buttresses, roof dormers, balconies, chimney projections, and alcoves.

Utility Service Meters and Mechanical Equipment

Utility service meters and mechanical equipment, such as meters for gas, hydro, and water, and cable and telephone connection boxes, should be carefully located and screened. These units shall not be visible from the street.

Integral Front Garages

The garages play an important role in the streetscape and have a significant impact on the overall image of the community.

Integrate the garage with the dwelling to promote a more attractive and welcoming streetscape; De-emphasize the dominance of the garage by limiting the projection of the garage or recessing the garage into the house form.



Garage recessed into the house form

Garages Accessed from a Rear Laneway

Where laneways are provided to access garages located at the back of the houses:

Garages should be setback from the lot line separating the rear yard from the laneway

Garage sitings are encouraged to be staggered to avoid creating a long, flat building edge along the laneway

A variety of roof designs are encouraged for the garages in order to create an interesting lanescape

Width of Driveways

The width of driveways leading to garages shall not exceed the exterior width of the private garage

Corner Lot

All exposed elevations (front, flankage and rear) should be given special attention in relation to architectural design, detailing, and finishes.

Architectural features such as wrap-around porches, turrets or bay windows are encouraged.

Corner Lot Fencing

Fencing should be provided on all flankage lots where the rear yard is exposed to the street.

Corner lot fencing should be consistent in detail, colour, and material.

Rear and Side Yard

Where buildings are visible from streets, public walkways, and where pedestrian access is adjacent to the parks and open spaces:

The exposed elevations should have similar quality and treatment of detail as the front elevation;

Where portions of the first floor elevation are not visible due to fencing, attention should be given to the architectural treatment of all remaining visible portions of the elevation, including the second floor and roof.

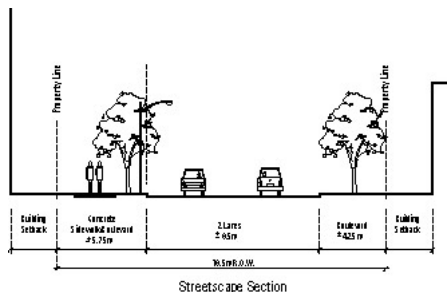


Both sides of the corner buildings should have articulated architectural details

3.4 Townhouses (Refer to Townhouse Guidelines)

4. STREETSCAPE AND LANDSCAPE

4. STREETScape AND LANDSCAPE



Pedestrian friendly streetscape



Storm water management facilities should be designed to be aesthetically pleasing with pedestrian amenities

Streetscape

Provide pedestrian friendly streetscapes with sidewalks, decorative street lighting, and street trees.

Along major arterial roads, provide upgraded streetscape features such as decorative fencing and enhanced landscaping.

Landscape

Provide private open space that maximizes amenity, visibility and sun conditions.

Maximize landscaped areas in the front yard

Existing healthy trees should be preserved, where possible.

Integrate existing natural features and topography into open spaces within the development, where possible

Pedestrian linkages and connections should be provided to the park.

Area near the CN Rail line

In areas adjacent to the CN Rail line, construct acoustic barriers and landscaping to minimize the impact of noise and reduce the visual impact of the barrier.

Storm Water Management Facilities

Where storm water management facilities are required, they should be designed to be both functional and aesthetically pleasing. Pedestrian amenities such as walkways, benches, and lighting should be provided. Fencing (if required) should be well designed and camouflaged from the public view.

5. COMMUNITY PARK

5. COMMUNITY PARK



Existing dead-end streets



The community park should be designed to accommodate active and passive activities



Landscape treatment provides transition between the existing community and the park

The Park should be centrally located within the triangular area bounded by Midland Ave., St. Clair Ave., Brimley Rd., and the CN Rail

All areas of the new and existing communities should have convenient access and connections to the Park

Park design should provide for both active and passive activities

To reduce the visual impact of paved areas for vehicular access, and to provide a gradual transition from the dead-end streets to the Park, special treatment should be considered for the design of the areas where the existing streets meet the park

Proper landscape screening should be provided as a transition in the areas adjacent to the existing community.

Where there are non-linear boundary lines, special landscape treatment such as planting and earth work, should be applied to make the areas more user friendly.

Where possible, existing vegetation should be preserved and enhanced along the northern boundary of the parkland.

A trail system connecting the park to the western and eastern ends of the community should be provided through the park

6. SPECIAL TREATMENT AREAS

- 6.1 Area west of Brimley Rd.
- 6.2 Area east of Midland Ave.
- 6.3 Corner of Midland Ave. and St. Clair Ave.
- 6.4 Area behind Comrie Terrace

6. SPECIAL TREATMENT AREAS

6.1 Area West of Brimley Rd.

Street patterns in this area shall be designed to discourage shortcuts to St. Clair Ave.

Locate buildings close to the street to provide a defined street edge.

Front elevations facing the arterial road and the flankage elevations should have strong articulation of architectural details.

Garages should be located at the rear of the houses to minimize the visual impact.

Upgraded streetscape treatment should be provided to create a pleasant pedestrian walking environment. These include decorative fences and enhanced landscaping.



Existing condition along Brimley Rd.



Street edge redefined:
Buildings with varied rooflines and articulated details provide strong architectural presence.

6. SPECIAL TREATMENT AREAS



Existing condition along Midland Ave.

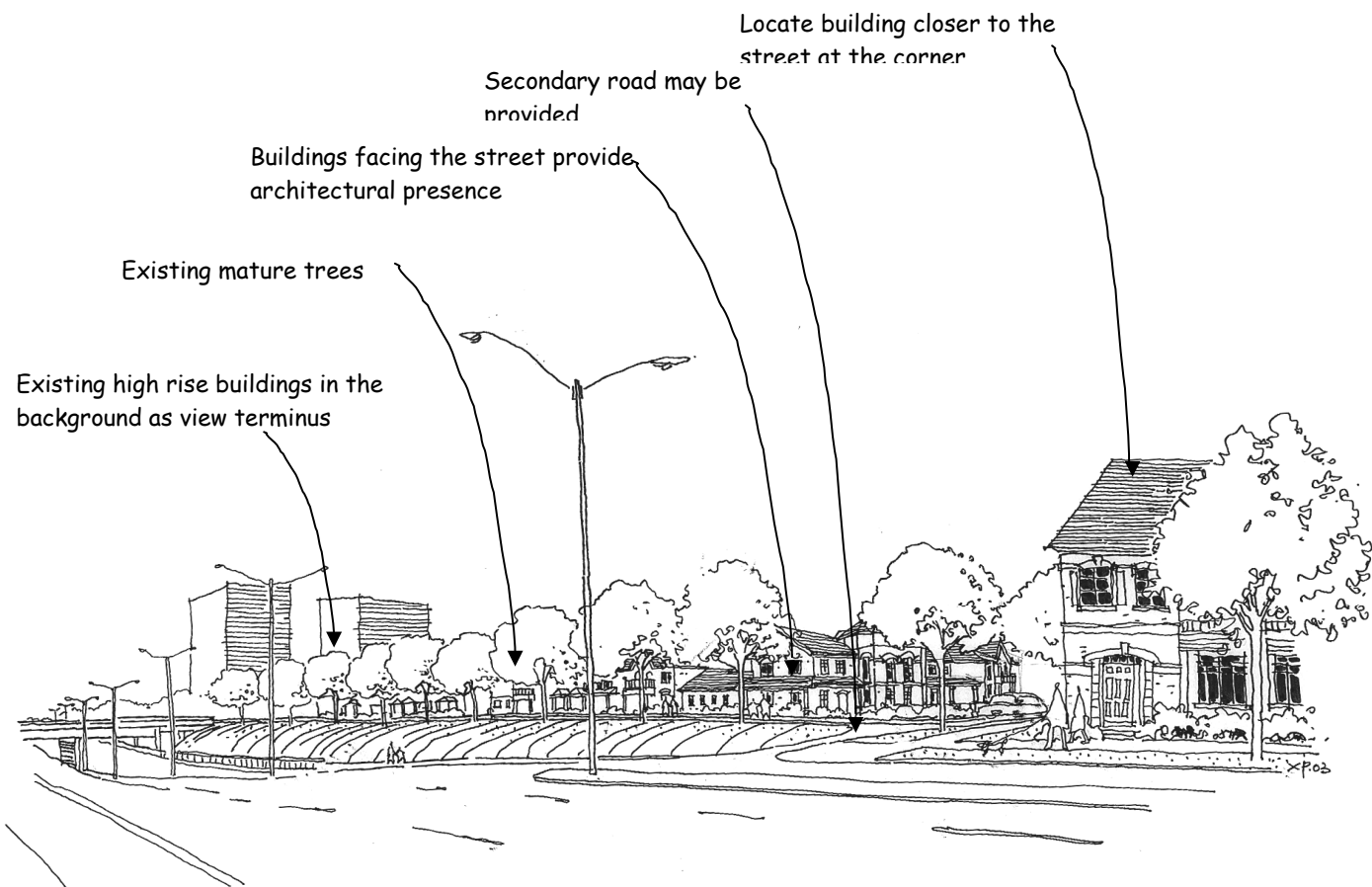
6.2 Area East of Midland Ave.

Where possible, buildings should face Midland Ave.

A secondary road may be provided to facilitate access to the houses; A landscaped area between the secondary road and the arterial road should be provided

The front elevation and flankage elevations should have articulated architectural details to provide a strong street presence.

Upgraded streetscape treatment should be provided to create a pleasant pedestrian walking environment. These include decorative fences and enhanced landscaping.



6.3 Corner of Midland and St. Clair



Existing condition



A well designed corner building

Orient the corner building to be parallel to the street to provide a strong presence along the street frontages.

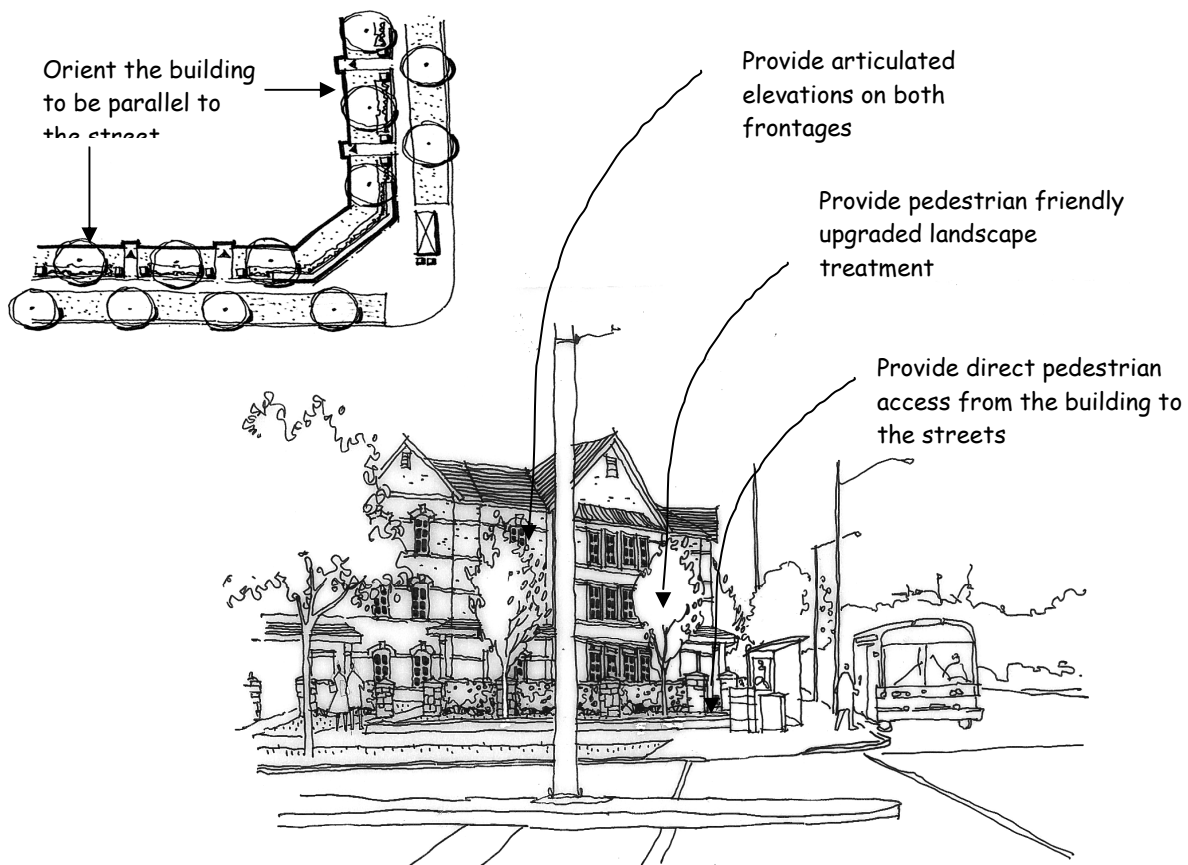
The massing of the corner building should be in proportion with the existing neighbourhood and proposed new buildings in the surrounding area

The corner building should have articulated elevations on both frontages.

A prominent entrance should be provided with direct pedestrian access to the street

The corner should be designed to allow for the creation of a small pedestrian friendly area with street trees, pedestrian scale lighting, seating, and other street furniture.

Convenient access to the adjacent transit stop should be incorporated into the design.





Trail between a park and an existing residential area

6.4 Area behind Comrie Terrace

Landscaping and a trail should be provided behind the existing houses to provide a transition zone between the houses and the park.

The design of the trail should promote pedestrian safety by incorporating adequate lighting and appropriate landscaping.

Where the trail meets Brimley Rd., special landscaping and gateway features should be provided to promote community identity.

7. IMPLEMENTATION

The guidelines are intended for the use of developers in the preparation of development proposals, and by the City of Toronto to review and assess the design aspects of development proposals within this area.

The guidelines will be implemented through the review of planning applications such as; Site Plan Control Approval applications, Subdivision application, Consent applications and Zoning Amendment applications.

The City will review plans that show the location, design and massing of buildings, the relationship to adjacent streets and buildings, public access areas, the layout of parking and service areas, site landscaping and other aspects of the development to ensure compliance with the guidelines.

For the areas and types of development where site plan control is applied, Council or delegated staff may approve the plans and drawings and the owner may be required to enter into an agreement to secure the construction of the project as shown in the plans.

A holding symbol may be placed on lands within the study area where the ultimate use of the land is specified but development cannot take place until conditions set out in the Official Plan and Zoning By-law are satisfied.