



**City of Toronto**

Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines

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

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MEADOWS

James  
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. The Guidelines cover a range of issues including site context, site organization, building types, building design, and the public and private realms.

The City-wide Comprehensive Zoning By-law 569-2013, as amended, defines and regulates residential building types within zone categories. "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 typically two or three units stacked vertically together. 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. Each unit typically has its own entrance at grade.

**Stacked and Back-to-Back Townhouses** share a rear wall as well as a sidewall and have units stacked vertically. Various unit configurations 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. Each unit typically 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 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 2.0 – Building Types for more detail on the various types of low-rise, multi-unit residential buildings)

**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.

## 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 style. 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 for 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 schools, shopping centres and other denser forms of housing. These townhouse developments were 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 the 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 townhouse developments, their lack of integration into the existing neighbourhood context, as well as their sub-standard treatment of the public realm and landscape design.

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, which 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.

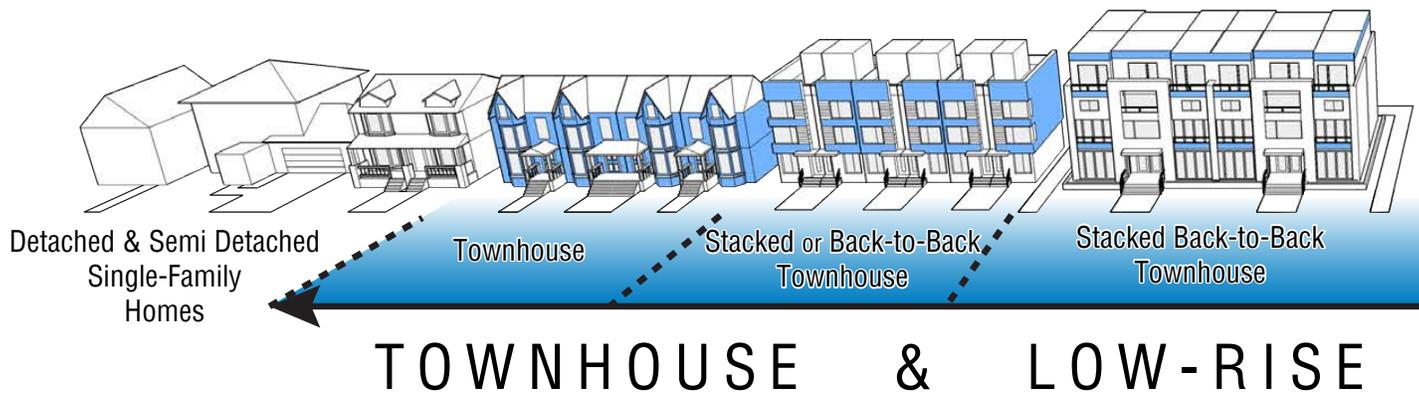
Since the adoption of these earlier standards, the demand for low-rise grade related housing has remained strong. Increasingly, townhouses and low-rise, multi-unit residential buildings are now being constructed on large sites with underground parking garages. These larger sites are often found at the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



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 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



A main objective of the Guidelines is to provide clarity 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 mature tree growth
- 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
- x. encourage affordable and transit-supportive housing developments with a range of building types and unit sizes appropriate for families.

## 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 developments will enhance and fit within the local area context, while balancing the need to accommodate housing in a growing city.

The "Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines" are intended to be read together and implement with 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 those found in the City of Toronto's Mid-rise and Tall Building Design Guidelines. These Guidelines address issues such 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. In some cases, not all guidelines can be met in full, however a development may be acceptable when it respects the Official Plan.

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 the 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, cultural and social events, vibrant districts, and our thriving neighborhoods. As our City grows and matures, it is important to create more beautiful environments which support healthy, vibrant communities and 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 our built environment.

## 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 managing impacts from new developments. 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 developments 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 architectural 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 materials 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.
9. Consider and respond appropriately to opportunities and constraints on a specific site to meet the overall intent of the Guidelines.



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

## 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: #0070C0; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Introduction	<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #00A68A; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 5.0 Pedestrian Realm
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #D9534F; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 1.0 Site Context	<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #F0C000; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 6.0 Demonstration Plans
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #70AD47; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 2.0 Building Types	<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #666666; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 7.0 Case Studies (Online Only)
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #E69A00; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 3.0 Site Organization	<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #A6A6A6; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 8.0 Glossary
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #6A329F; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 4.0 Building Design	

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

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

Section 6.0 Demonstration Plans, provides some examples of 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.



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.

## 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. Larger sites with multiple buildings and public realm elements will 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” areas and elements, such as loading/garbage collection areas, utilities, and parking access, into a building or underground away from view and the public realm.

### BUILDING DESIGN

#### 4.1 Fit and Transition

Ensure buildings fit within the existing or planned context and provide appropriate transitions in scale to 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 spaces.

#### 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

Carefully consider the architectural design and materials to enhance the quality of life and the public realm.

#### 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.

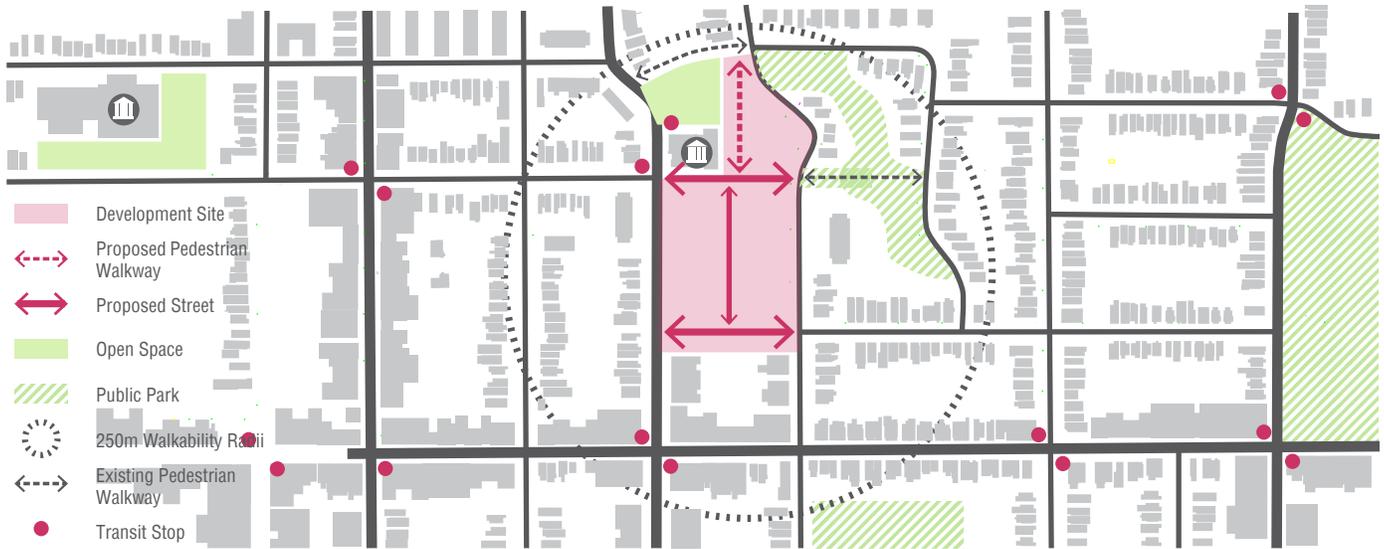


# 1.0 SITE CONTEXT

- 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. Larger sites with multiple buildings and public realm elements will 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, to illustrate through text and graphics at an appropriate scale the:
  - 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).
- 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 spaces if applicable
  - iv. adjacent and on-site heritage properties and identified heritage views or other important views from the public realm, if applicable
  - v. proposed building footprints, heights and facing distances and their relationship to neighbouring buildings, parks and open space
  - vi. 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
  - vii. topographical and landscape features including ravines, water courses, trees and any other significant aspects.
- c. For larger or more complex areas with multiple properties and/or buildings, a master plan may be required. In addition to guidelines 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. Include shared systems such as district community energy when appropriate

- iii. a range of unit sizes, including the provision of larger units suitable for families
- iv. where possible, 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.

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.

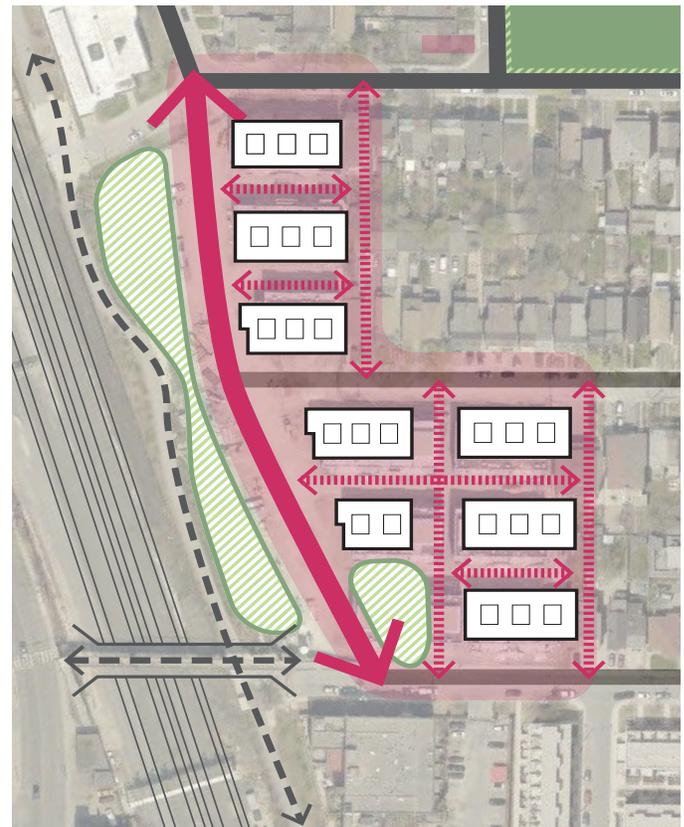
## RATIONALE

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



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 to:
- secure parkland in under-served areas of the City
  - enhance the function of an existing park, school yard or open space by adding new contiguous open space or parkland
  - improve the visibility and access to a park by increasing street frontage
  - provide for movement through a block between streets
  - assist in the enhancement and protection of environmentally significant areas or features
  - 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.



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

## 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.

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 public realm framework of streets, parks and open spaces, along with other city building components, begin to establish a city's structure which contributes to the enjoyment and quality of life for the city as a whole.



### 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

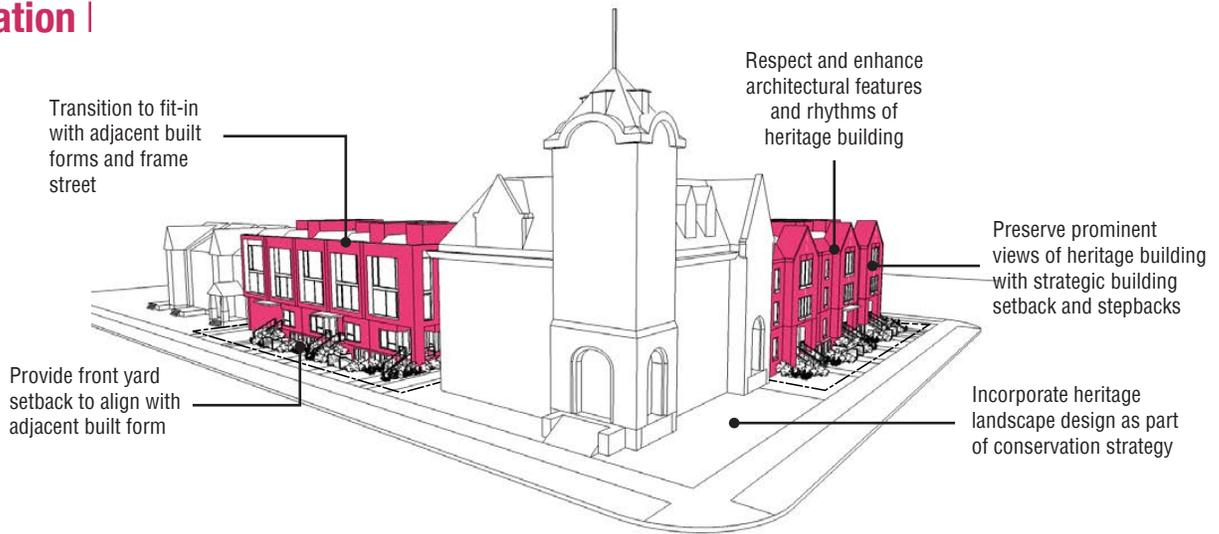


### Related Standards, Guidelines & Studies:

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 |



- 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) which requires that they be protected, and where appropriate, integrated into the 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 Hybrid Building
  - 2.1.6** Low-Rise Apartment 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.
- b. 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).
- c. Use the appropriate building type and unit configuration in order to avoid, where possible:
  - i. fronts of buildings facing rear yards or backs of buildings facing streets or parks
  - ii. too many individual entrances on one façade
  - iii. entrances not visible or with direct access from a street (See Section 3.1, m. and Section 4.3, a., i.)
  - iv. parking lots located between a building and a street.
- d. 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 conditions to meet the overall intent of the Guidelines.

This Section addresses building types and provides descriptions and illustrations of typical characteristics for low-rise, multi-unit residential buildings. It includes a discussion on desirable conditions and considerations for each type. This Section does not illustrate every possible type and combination.



#### Official Plan Reference

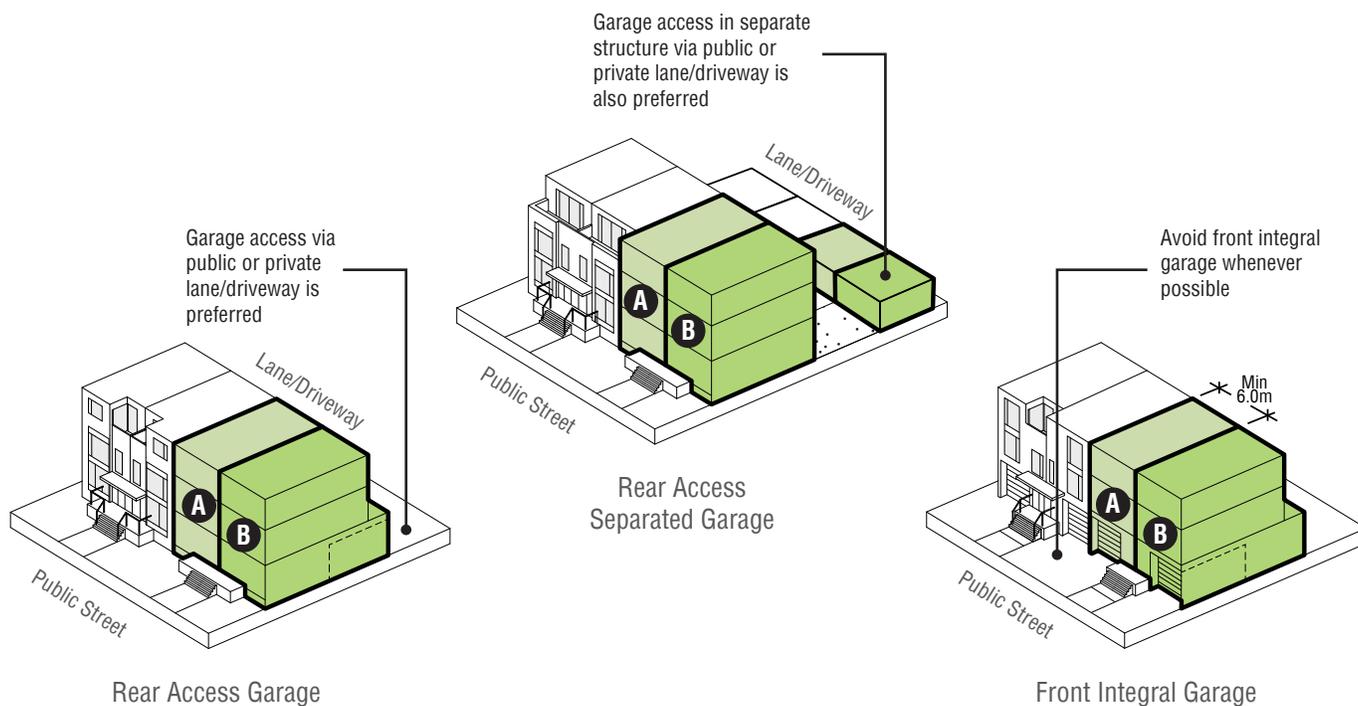
3.1.1 The Public Realm: Policy 1c, 1d, 1e, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13,14, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 | 3.1.2 Built Form: Policy 1 and 2 | 3.3 Building New Neighbourhoods: 1,2 and 3 | 4.1 Neighbourhoods: Policies 5-10 | 4.2 Apartment Neighbourhoods: Policy 2 and 3 |



#### 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.

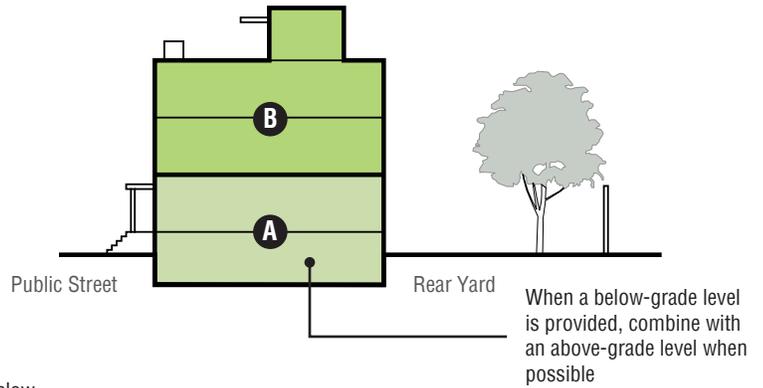
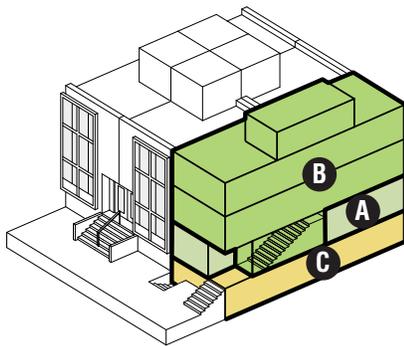
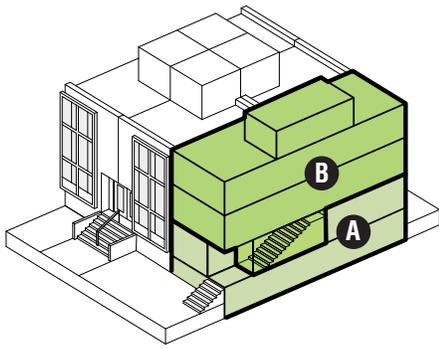


Well-designed garages complement the townhouse building and improves the quality of the lane. Planting along the side screens service elements.



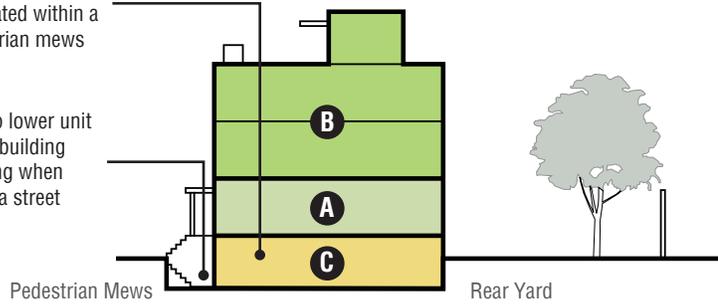
Avoid lanes like the above without accommodation for utilities, landscaping and quality design, especially when amenity spaces overlook the area.

## 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

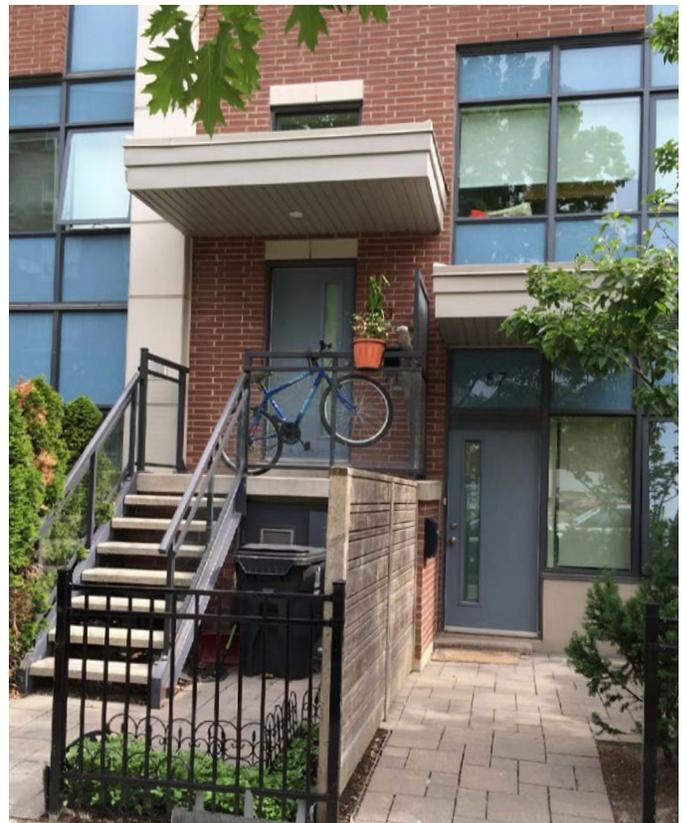


### TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS

- 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

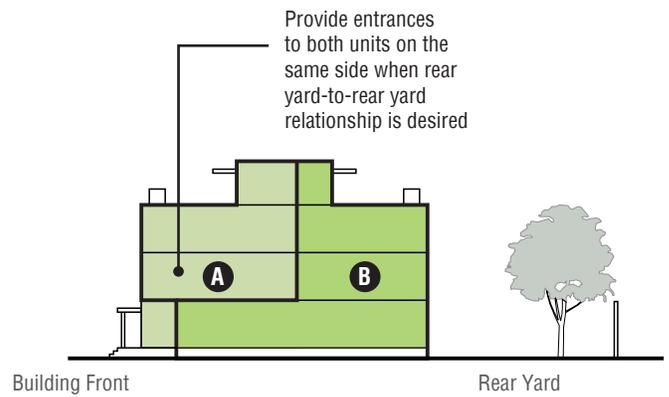
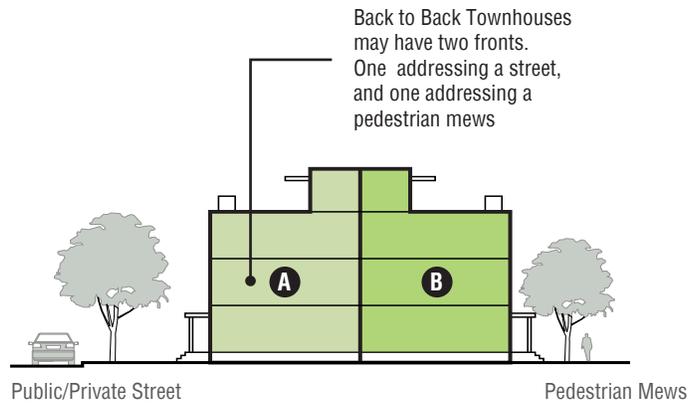
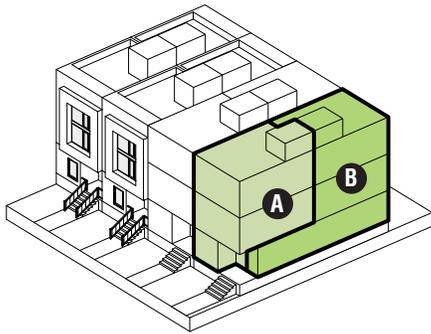
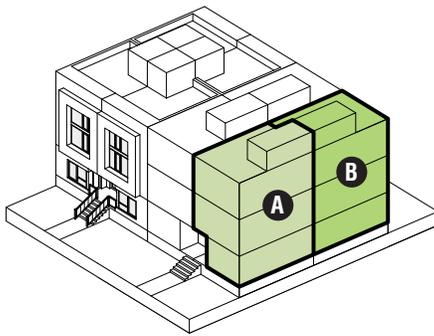
### DISCUSSION

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 visually lighter canopy and additional 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 one side of the building or on both
- 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.

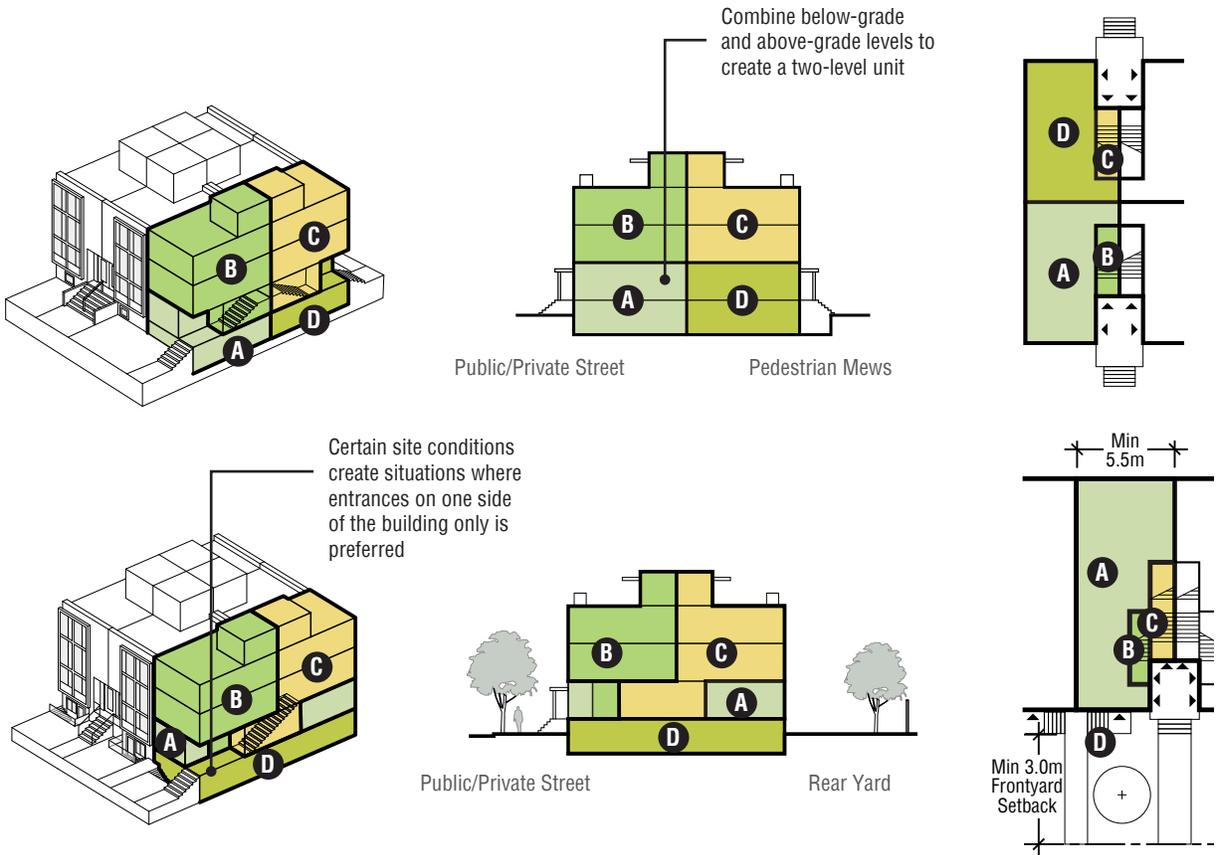
A variation has the entrances to both units located on the same side. This arrangement is preferred when a rear yard-to-rear yard building relationship is desired.

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. As "Apartment Buildings", the zoning by-law requirements with respect to indoor and outdoor shared amenity will 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

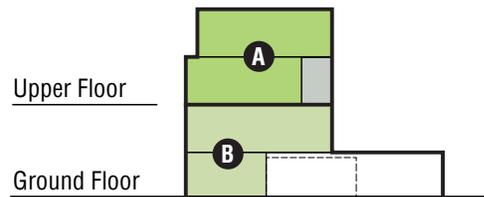
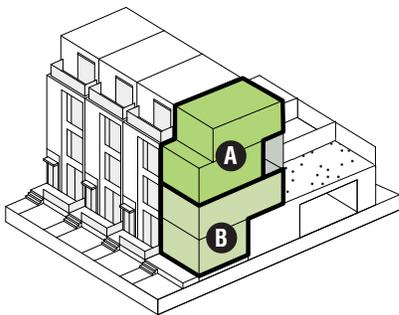
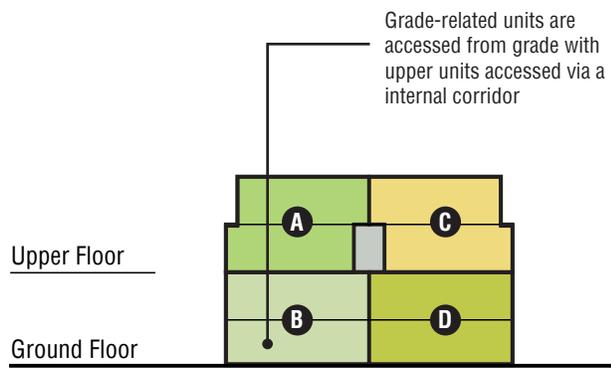
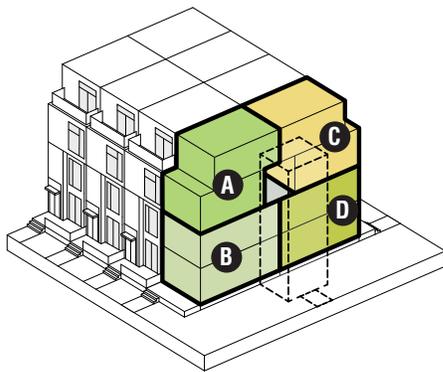
Similar to Back-to-Back Townhouses but with units one on top of the other, this housing type has two fronts where individual unit entrances are accessed via a street, or pedestrian mews. Challenging urban design issues are often created by this building type's internal organization and characteristics. 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 are 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 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 will apply.

## 2.1.5 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

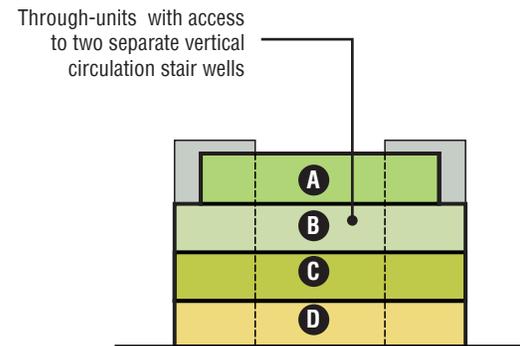
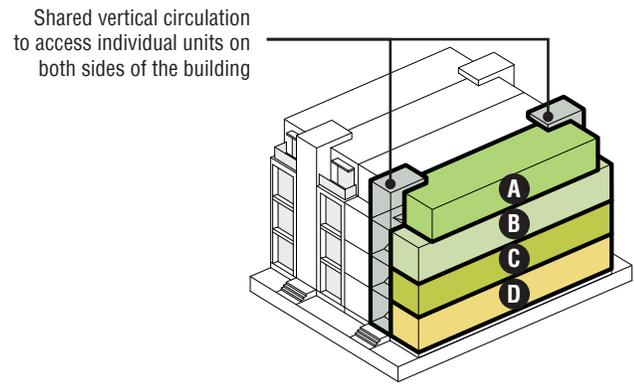
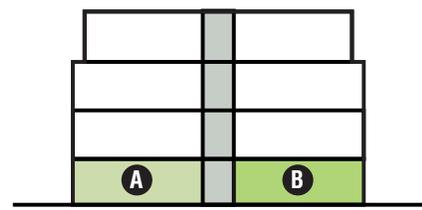
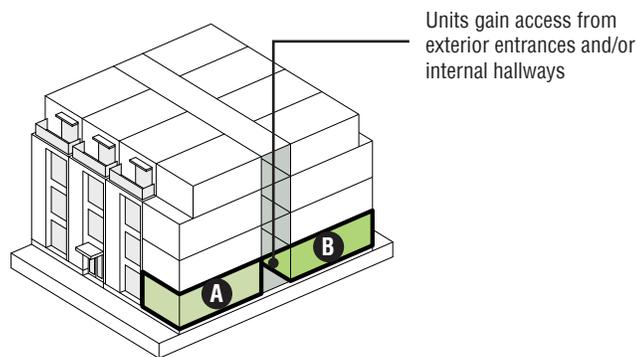
### DISCUSSION

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.

## 2.1.6 LOW-RISE APARTMENT BUILDING



### 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.



## 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

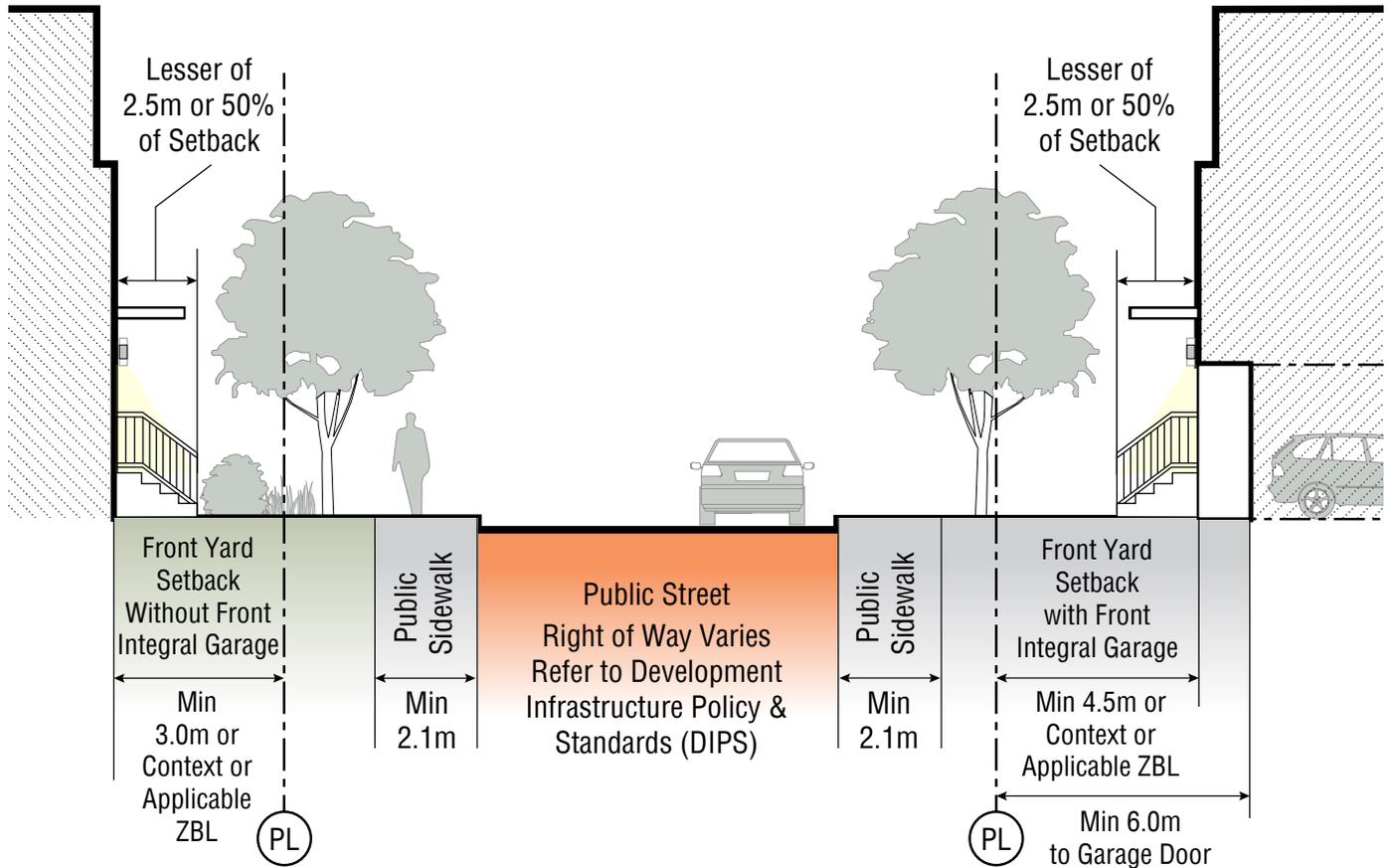


#### Related Standards, Guidelines & Studies

Toronto Green Standard | Road Works Standards |

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

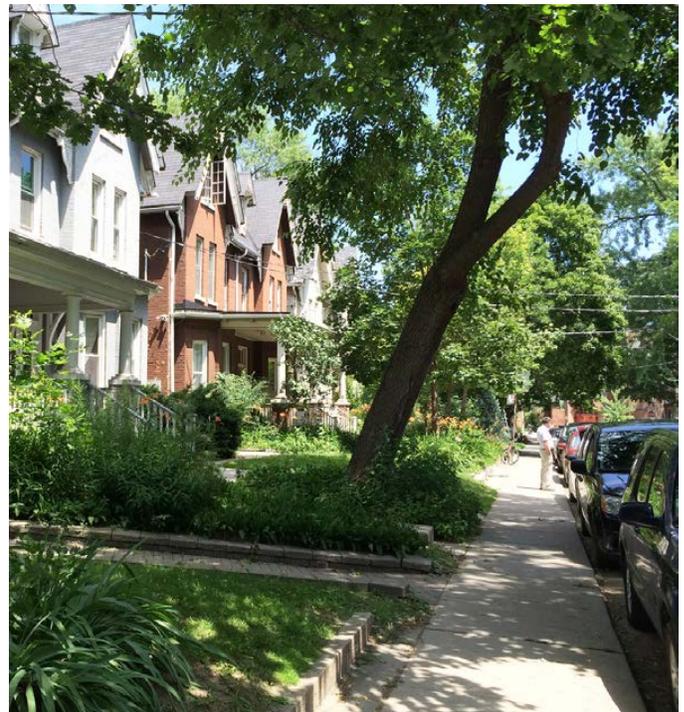
### 3.1 STREETS, LANES, MEWS AND WALKWAYS CONT.



#### Streets

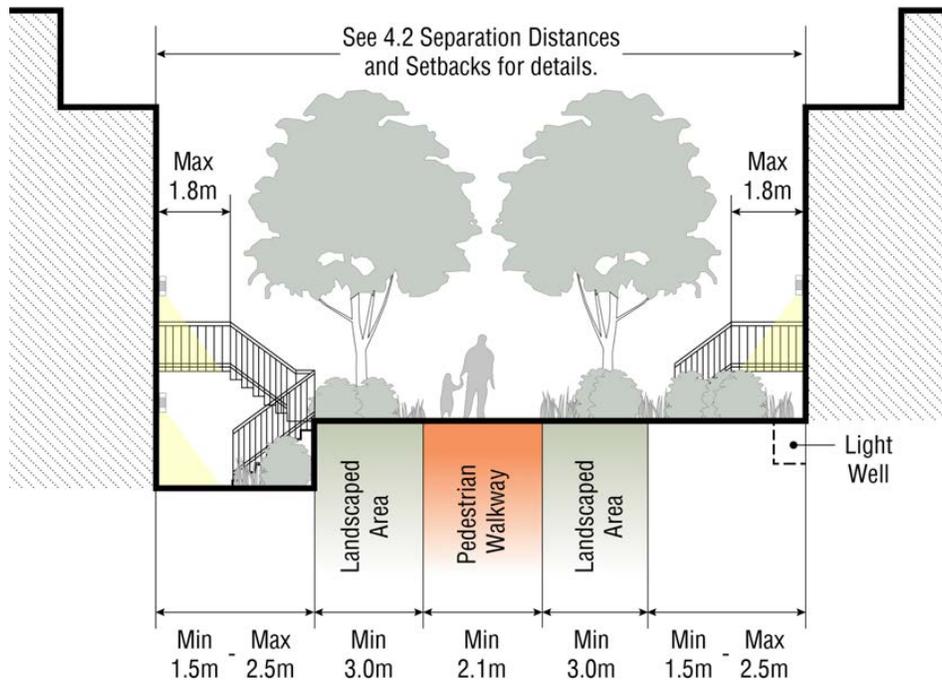
- i. Where parking is underground or at the rear, the minimum front yard setback from the property line is the applicable zoning by-law, 3.0m or the average of the existing front yard setbacks of buildings on either side of the subject property.
- j. Where front integral garage parking on a street is 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 on either side of a centrally located open space is acceptable.
- l. Pedestrian mews may be considered as a Privately-Owned Publicly Accessible Spaces (POPS) when designed to accommodate functions beyond a pedestrian route and meet the POPS guidelines.
- m. Pedestrian mews are acceptable in orientations when they are perpendicular to a street or in some cases a private drive.

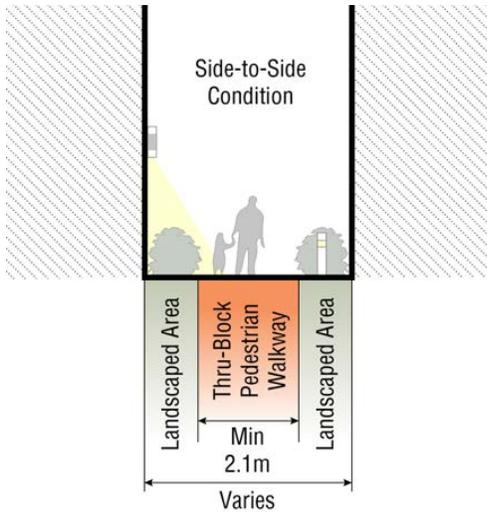


Pedestrian mews with central green space and pedestrian walkways framing the shared area.



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

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

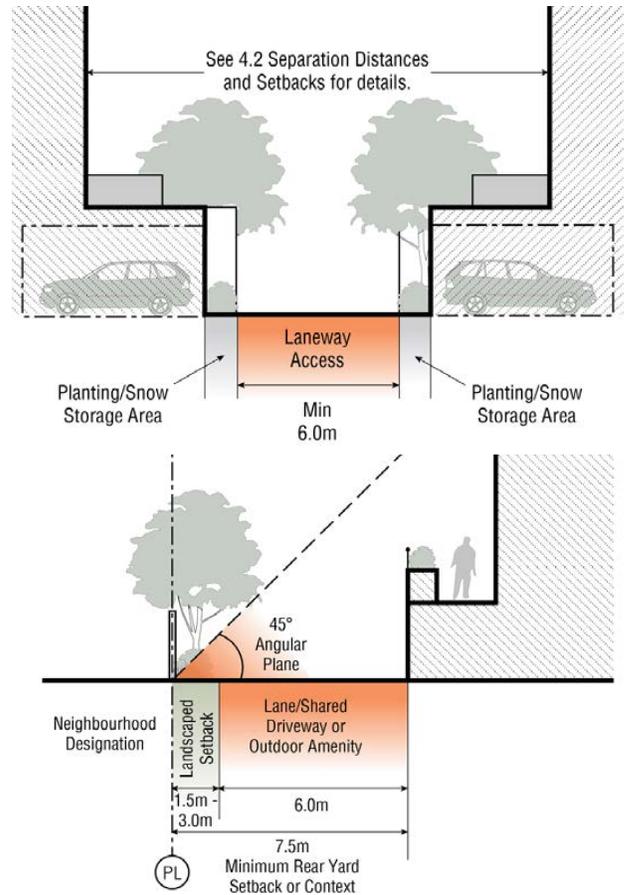


**Landscaped Walkway** - Typically a privately owned and maintained pedestrian path.

- n. 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 1.7m with landscaping and pedestrian scale lighting.



Narrow walkway between building blocks with landscaped area.



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

- o. Provide landscaping and lighting to create a comfortable and attractive environment that supports informal play, pedestrian circulation and small-scale gardening.
- p. Consider integrated areas to accommodate planting and snow storage.
- q. Organize utilities and building equipment in discreet locations. Ensure these elements are arranged carefully to reduce visual clutter.
- r. Lanes can be public or privately owned.

## 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. When shared outdoor amenity spaces are required, design these spaces to:
  - i. be located at grade and front onto streets, pedestrian mews and walkways to provide visibility and access.
  - 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
  - viii. provide support for outdoor activities such as seating, shade structures, children's play equipment and barbecues in a well-landscaped environment.
  - viii. be located away or screened with landscaping from parking, mechanical equipment and servicing areas.
- b. 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.
- c. Meet safety and universally accessible standards in shared indoor and outdoor amenity spaces.
- d. 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

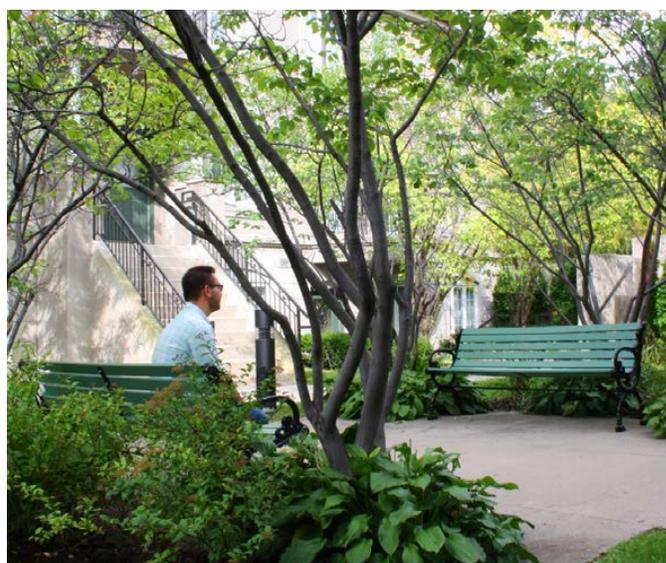


### Related Standards, Guidelines & Studies:

- 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.

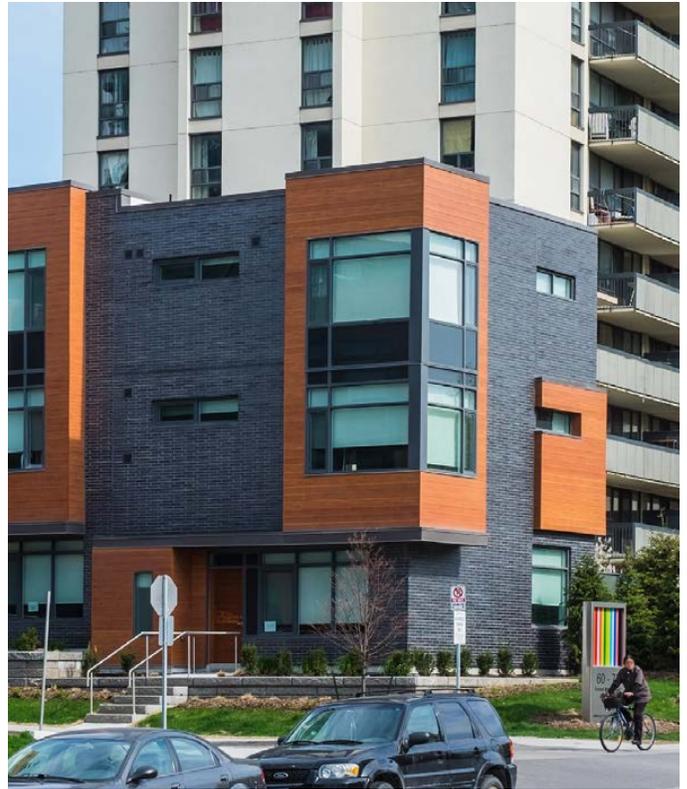
- k. On larger sites with multiple building blocks:
  - i. provide a combination of buildings either oriented parallel or perpendicular to streets, ensuring visibility and accessibility to all building entrances from street(s)
  - ii. ensure building blocks are interspersed with landscaped shared amenity/open 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” areas and elements, such as loading/garbage collection areas, utilities, and parking access, into a building or underground away from view and the public realm.**



Public realm can be significantly improved when 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/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 of 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 infill is taking place on an existing residential site (e.g. tower-in-the-park infill), replace surface parking and driveways with well-landscaped open space, where possible
    - 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. Ensure below-grade parking structures do not limit opportunity for mature landscape and tree growth on site by providing quality soil with appropriate volume and depth.

- k. Generally, avoid front driveways and garages in street-related townhouses generally and consider only when a unit is 6.0m or wider. Townhouses with front integral garage will:
  - 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.

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.

## 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



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

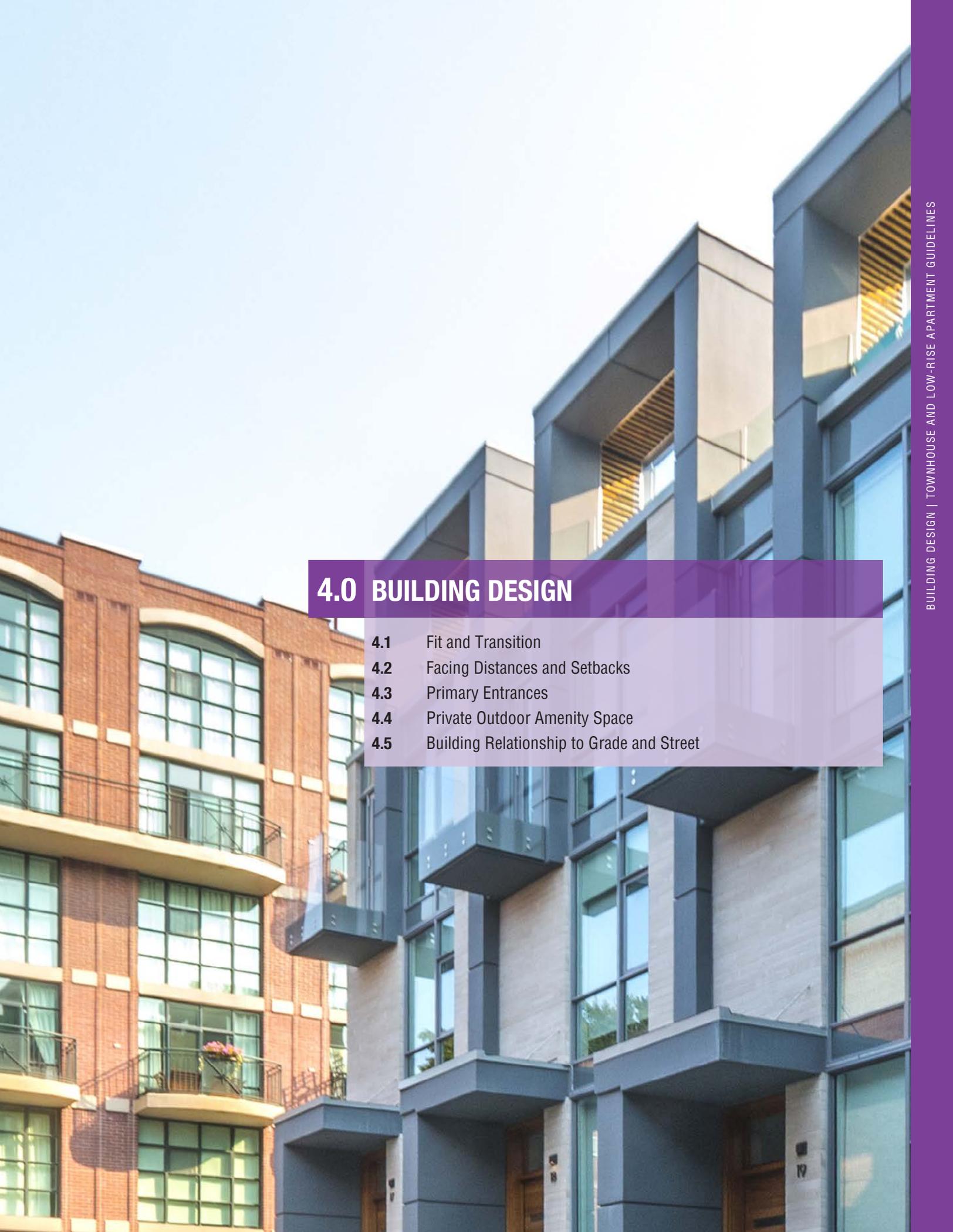
2.2 Structuring Growth in the City: Policy 3c | 2.3.1 Healthy Neighbourhoods: Policy 2d | 2.4 Bringing the City Together: Policy 2c, 7b and 8b | 3.1.1 The Public Realm: Policy 1d, 1e, 2 and 6b | 3.1.2 Built Form: Policy 1d, 2, and 5 | 3.4 The Natural Environment: Policy 18a, 18f and 20 | 4.1 Neighbourhoods: 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





## 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

## 4.1 FIT AND TRANSITION

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

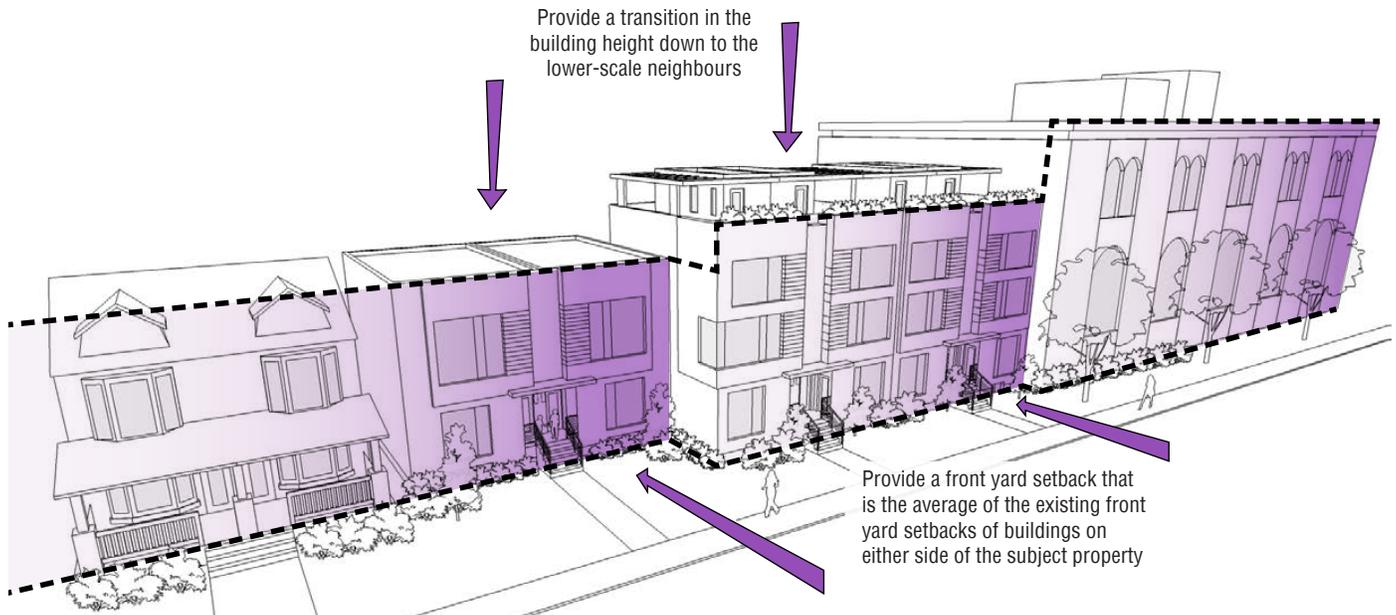
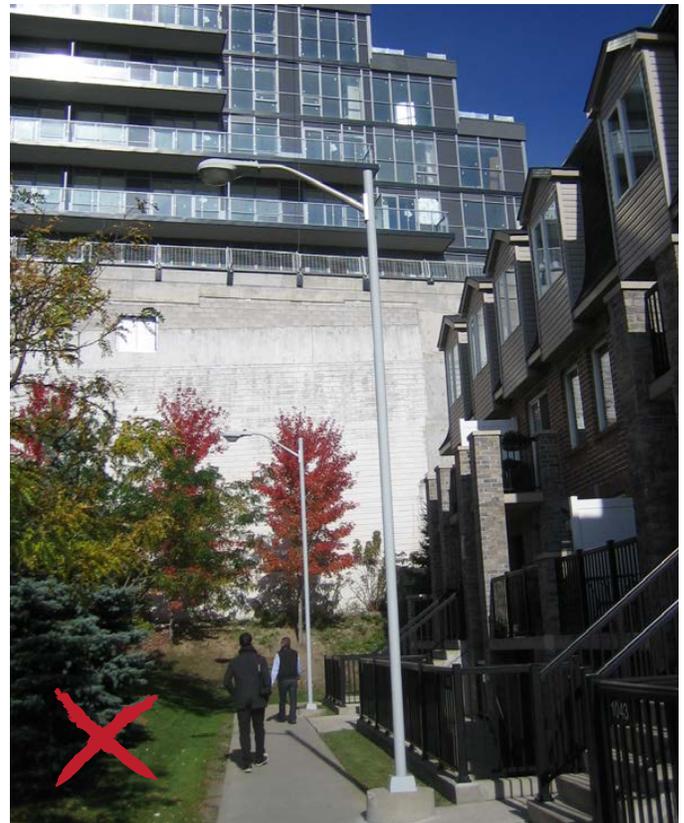


Figure 1: Step building massing or add porches, bays and other elements to provide transition to adjacent lower scale development.

- Apply angular planes, minimum horizontal separation distances, and other building envelope controls to transition down to lower-scale buildings, parks and open spaces.
- Minimize the impact of shadow and maximize access to sunlight, sky view, and privacy on neighbouring properties.
- Provide a transition in the building height down to lower-scale neighbours. Reduce the height of at least the first building, unit or bay where adjacent context is lower and not anticipated to change.
- Accommodate all aspects of fit and transition within the development site.
- For sites including or adjacent to heritage properties, design the scale and height of the building to respect and reinforce the height established by the historic context.
- For sites adjacent to employment and commercial uses, additional fit and transitional aspects may need to be considered such as landscape screening and building orientation, organization and construction.
- Apply a 45 degree angular plane measured at the property line adjacent to properties designated Neighbourhoods, Parks, Natural Areas, or Other Open Space Areas.



Lack of building transitions create undesirable building relationships and have a negative impact on the public and private realms.

## RATIONALE

Appropriate fit and transition is achieved when new buildings are integrated with the height, scale and character of neighbouring buildings and reinforce the city structure.

Considerations of fit and transition should also take into account the impact of a development on adjacent parks, open spaces and streets in terms of maintaining a consistent wall height and access to sunlight and sky view.

On sites that are adjacent to or across the street from lower buildings, the massing of new low-rise buildings should step down and/or stepback to respond to the building height and mass of the neighbouring buildings.

The relationship of new buildings to more intense or noxious uses (e.g. certain employment and commercial uses, loading and service areas) should also be considered in terms of providing appropriate buffering or protection from these uses.

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate typical scenarios of building fit and transition. The actual design approach and methods used to achieve appropriate fit and transition will be determined on a site-by-site basis and may vary according to the:

- regulatory framework (e.g. Secondary Plans)
- existing and planned context
- size of the development site
- planned intensity of use and scale of development
- proximity, scale and land uses of adjacent built form
- location and size of adjacent streets, parks/open space
- potential impact on privacy, sky view, sunlight/shadow for the public realm and neighbouring properties
- potential impact on heritage properties and/or Heritage Conservation Districts
- potential impact on identified important views from the public realm
- environmental sensitivity of adjacent natural features (e.g. woodlots, ravines.)



New townhouses transition in height and setback to fit-in with surrounding context.

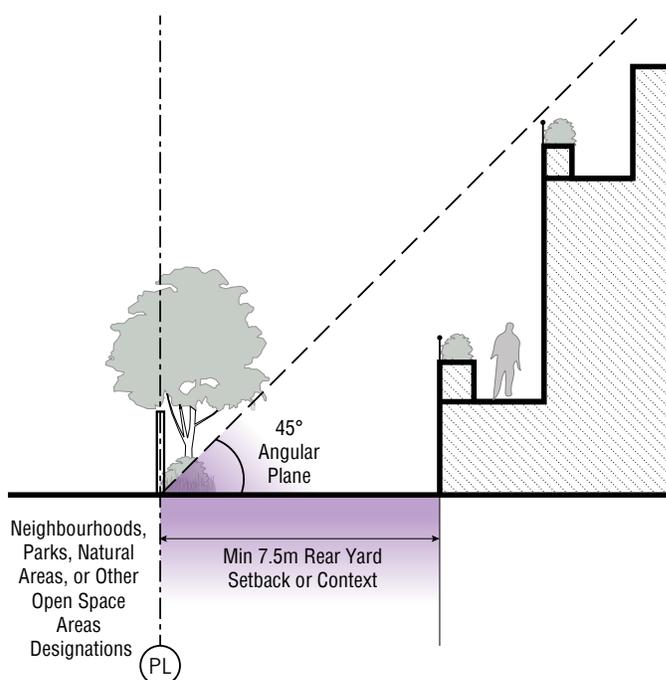


Figure 2: Rear setback and angular plane minimize building overlook and shadows onto adjacent properties.

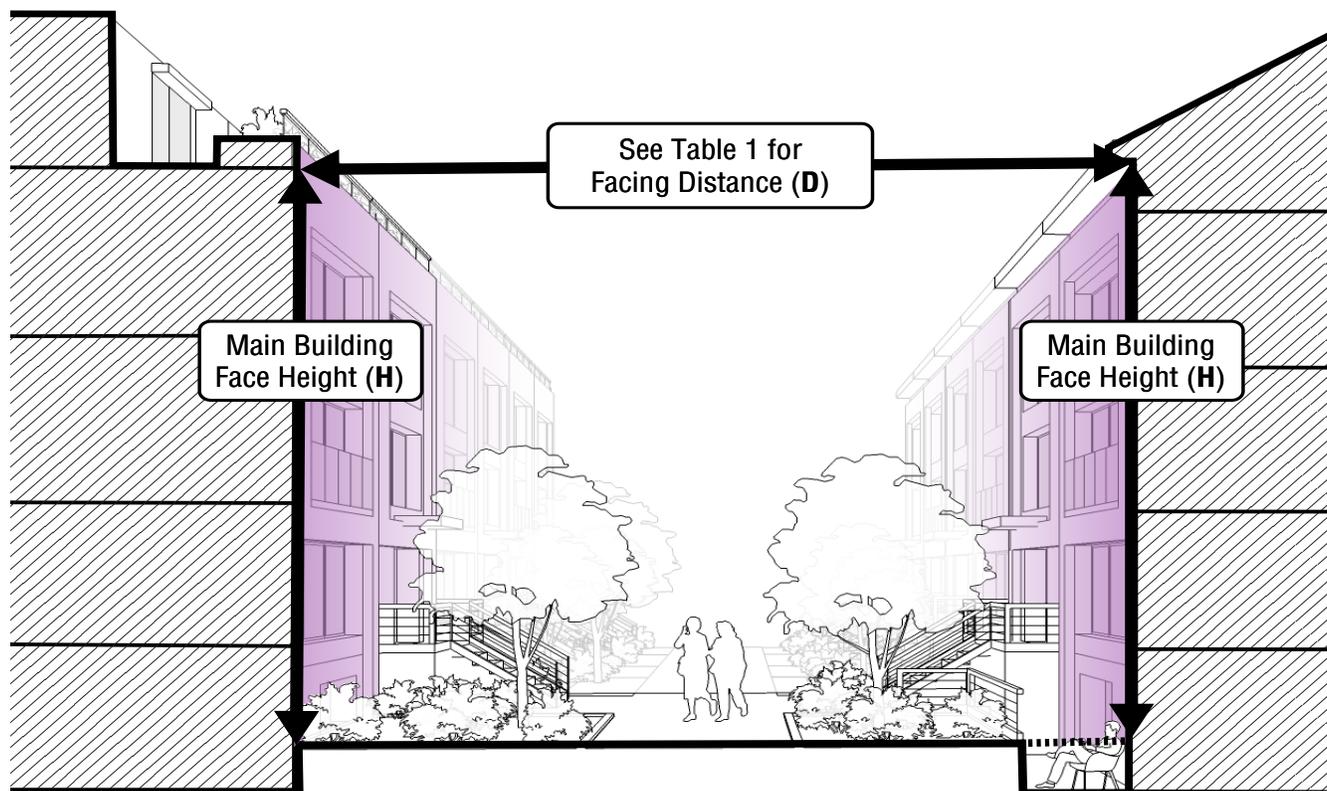


### Official Plan Reference

2.3.1 Healthy Neighbourhoods: Policy 1, 2a, 2b, 2c and 3 | 3.1.2 Built Form: Policy 1, 3 and 4 | 3.1.5 Heritage Resources: Policy 2 and 5 | 3.3 Building New Neighbourhoods: Policy 3b | 4.1 Neighbourhoods: Policy 5 and 9 | 4.2 Apartment Neighbourhoods: Policy 2a, 2b and 3d | 4.5 Mixed Use Areas: Policy 2c and 2d

## 4.2 FACING DISTANCES AND SETBACKS

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



- Provide separation between facing buildings according to Table 1, Facing Distance. An increase in the Main Building Face Height results in an increase to the facing distance.
- Ensure that any additional height beyond the Main Building Face Height fits under a 45 degree angular plane originating from the top of the Main Building Face Height.
- Provide a minimum 7.5m rear yard setback from the rear property line. A private lane or driveway may be included for the purposes of establishing the setback and angular plane.
- Provide half the distance specified in Table 1, Facing Distance, between the face of a building containing primary living spaces, such as living and dining rooms, and the side of another building or property line.
- Where parking is provided at the rear or underground, the minimum front yard setback from the property line is 3.0m or consistent with adjacent building setbacks.

Table 1: Facing Distance (D) **, ***		
Main Building Face Height (H)	Approx. no. of Storeys	Minimum Facing Distance (D)
Less than 9.5m	2 - 2.5	11.0m*
9.5m - 11.5m	3 - 3.5	13.0m*
More than 11.5m	3.5 - 4	15.0m

\*Additional 1.0m facing distance is required when below-grade entrances and/or below-grade private outdoor amenity spaces are provided.

\*\*Where facing buildings differ in height, use the average of the two.

\*\*\*The main building face height is measured from the average grade of the building frontage to the top of the roof or soffit.

- f. Where front integral garage parking is provided, the minimum front yard setback from the property line is 4.5m or consistent with adjacent building setbacks (with the garage portion of the building setback 6.0m).
- g. Limit building element projections, such as balconies, into setback areas, streets, mews, and amenity areas to protect access to light and sky view. (see Section 4.4 Private Outdoor Amenity Space, Balcony g. and h.)
- h. Ensure visual privacy between residential units including balconies, porches and terraces, through the design of units such as off-setting the location of windows in facing walls and by the use of landscaping or screening devices.



Sufficient facing distance allows for attractive landscaping between buildings, good access to sunlight and sky views. Avoid more than 3-5 steps up or 8-9 steps down to the units to further improve the shared spaces between buildings.

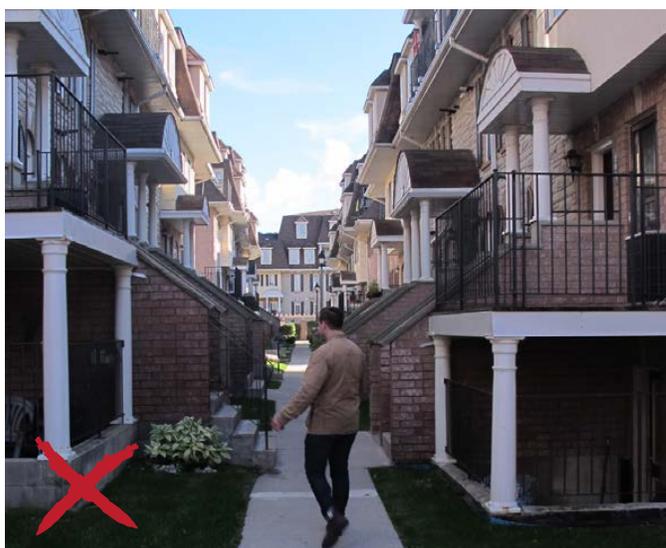
## RATIONALE

Adequate facing distances, setbacks and step-backs between buildings assist in achieving desirable public/private amenity spaces on the development site and appropriate relationships to adjacent properties avoiding shadowing and overlook.

These Guidelines establish minimum separation distances between facing buildings to ensure that three critical aspects of design are adequately addressed - sunlight inside a dwelling and to open spaces, reasonable view from a unit, and privacy. The formula to determine the recommended facing distance is tied to the main building face height which will typically generate facing distances from 11.0 to 15.0m.

When the appropriate facing distance is combined with effective angular planes, five hours of direct sunlight can be achieved within the units that face east, west, and south, during the solstices. Direct sunlight can reach into the lowest units, improving usability and enjoyment both indoors and outdoors. Trees and vegetation also have the opportunity to thrive.

Angular planes are a commonly applied measure to achieve acceptable transitions in scale between taller and lower buildings or areas (such as residential Neighbourhoods). By applying an angular plane, shadows and overlook from a building can be limited.



Limit projections into the open space to ensure that natural light is not restricted to areas below. Narrow facing distances between buildings and stacked private amenity spaces create poor light and privacy conditions as in the example above.



Example of pedestrian mews with appropriate facing distance and areas for landscaping.



### Official Plan Reference

3.1.1 Public Realm: Policies 1d, 1e and 2 | 3.1.2 Built Form: Policy 3d, 3e, 3f, and 4 | 3.2.3 Parks and Open Space: Policy 3 | 4.1 Neighbourhoods: Policy 5e, 5f and 9b | 4.2 Apartment Neighbourhoods: Policy 2a, 2b, 3d and 3e | 4.5 Mixed Use Areas: Policy 2d and 2e

## 4.3 PRIMARY ENTRANCES

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



Carefully composed and detailed facade, entrance, and fenestration design combined with high quality materials create a positive impression on the public realm.

- a. For all primary building entrances, provide:
    - i. a clearly visible front door directly accessible from the sidewalk via a walkway
    - ii. well-designed entrance features such as stoops, porches, shared landings, and canopies
    - iii. transition from the public to private realm with architectural and landscape cues such as subtle changes in grade, materials, decorative railings, and landscape plantings.
  - b. Where retail uses are part of a new development and permitted in the applicable Zoning By-law, provide a minimum 4.5m ground floor height with a separate entrance to each ground floor retail unit, identifiable and directly accessible from the public sidewalk.
  - c. Provide a way-finding system for developments with multiple blocks and/or when building entrances are not provided along a public street.
    - d. Consider a hybrid or apartment building type when individual unit entrances would not be clearly visible from a street or pedestrian mews.
    - e. 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 doors.
- Stoop and Porch** - A raised platform projected from the building face at the level of the entrance that may be open or covered.
- f. Design and locate stoops and porches to:
    - i. limit encroachment into required front yard setback to 3.0m or 50% of the setback distance, whichever is less
    - ii. limit projections to a maximum of 1.8m into the facing distance of a pedestrian mews
    - iii. have approximately a maximum 3 to 6 steps or be a maximum of 1.2m above the grade of the walkway leading to the front entrance. Internalize any additional steps required to gain access to the unit
    - iv. have weather protection over the entrance
    - v. finish floors and soffits in durable and attractive materials to avoid exposing building structure,
- Below-grade Entrance** - An entrance with a stair leading to a small landing providing access to a below-grade unit.
- g. Avoid accesses/entrances to below-grade units when adjacent to a street, lane/shared driveway, or landscaped walkway.
  - h. Provide access to below-grade units within a pedestrian mews when available or from an internal shared hallway such as in a hybrid or apartment building type.
    - i. Below-grade access on a street may be permitted only when it is important for all unit entrances to be on one side of a building. Design below-grade entrances to:
      - i. not encroach into the minimum front yard setback area
      - ii. have a maximum landing area of no more than 2.0m<sup>2</sup> and a maximum vertical depth of no more than 1.5m from the grade of the adjacent sidewalk

**Shared Landing** - A common landing area where multiple unit entrances open onto and gain access into individual units.

- j. Design shared landings to:
  - i. have all doors visible from pedestrian routes
  - ii. avoid having more than two doors in a row facing outward
  - iii. provide a generous landing area that is open to the sky, and/or as a two storey space
  - iv. have high-quality doors, railings, floor/wall finishes, lighting, and other hardware.

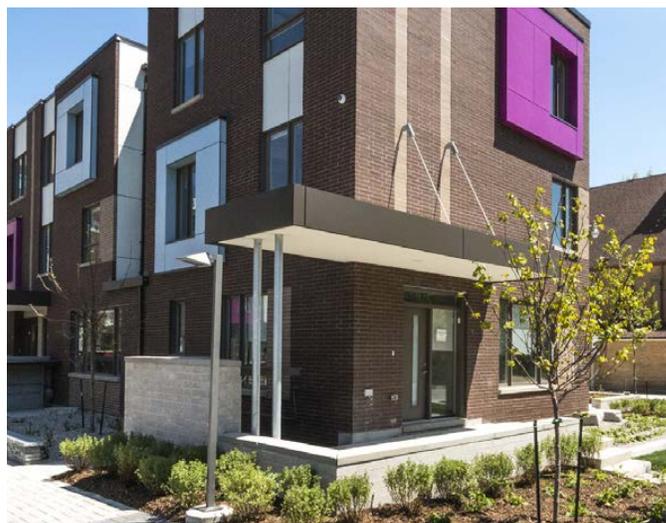
## RATIONALE

The space between the building facade and the public boulevard is an important part of the image and environment of the public realm. The front entrance and front yard function as a point of focus, transition, and entry for each resident and visitor. Well-designed entrances and landscaping maintain a level of formality and help to establish the character for the building and neighbourhood.

Typically, the most vibrant and interesting streets are lined with active, street-related uses and entrances connected to the public sidewalk. Clear, visible entries and views from building interiors to the street provide security for building occupants and pedestrians.

Below-grade entrances/accesses are to be avoided adjacent to a street. The combination of basement stairwells along with entrances to upper units can occupy most of the unit frontage and create a frontage of stairs and railings. This leaves less room for soft landscaping including foundation planting, street trees, and areas for water infiltration. When this condition cannot be avoided due to the need to have all unit entrances on one side of the building, the building should be further setback.

It is important for shared landing areas to be comfortable, attractive and inviting. Consider the design of these spaces to create a sense of openness with good visibility from pedestrian routes and also outward sky views.



Well-designed corner building with primary facades facing both streets. The raised porch and landscaping make a pleasant transition from the public to the private realm.



Avoid excessive projections such as stairs, porches, stoops, canopies, and private amenity spaces into pedestrian mews and front yard setbacks.



Carefully composed building design and landscaped front yard with appropriate privacy screening help to create a functional private amenity space and positively contribute to the public realm.



### Official Plan Reference

3.1.1 Public Realm: Policies 1d and 1e

3.1.2 Built Form: Policy 1b, 3a, 3b, 5b, 5c and 6



### Related Standards, Guidelines & Studies

Toronto Green Standard | Accessibility Design Guidelines

## 4.4 PRIVATE OUTDOOR AMENITY SPACE

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



- a. Design private outdoor amenity spaces to:
  - i. have direct access to sunlight and sky view
  - ii. mitigate impacts on the public realm and neighbours - increased facing distances between buildings may be required to reduce impacts
  - iii. have generous and well-designed landscaped areas to offer privacy, screening, and attractive interface with the public realm
  - iv. have railing designs to help increase privacy, screen items from view, and reduce risk of bird strikes
- b. Avoid a 'rear yard' condition along streets and parks/open spaces.
- c. Locate private outdoor amenity spaces for family-sized units so that they have views and access to outdoor play areas, where possible.
- d. Raised terraces are permitted on an existing or new residential street as shown in the Official Plan and as defined by DIPS. Design raised terraces to:
  - i. provide an entrance to only one unit
  - ii. be raised a minimum of 0.6m and a maximum of 1.2m
  - iii. provide privacy with planting and architectural elements and translucent or solid railings
- e. Avoid below-grade terraces adjacent to a street, lane/ shared driveway, landscaped walkway, or parks/open space. Below-grade terraces may be located in pedestrian mews. Design below-grade terraces to:
  - i. limit the vertical depth of the below-grade terrace to a maximum of 1.5m from grade; with a minimum of 1.5m and a maximum of 2.5m horizontal depth from the main building face to the below-grade terrace wall
  - ii. have generous landscaping at terrace and grade levels to enhance privacy and amenity for the unit dweller and passers by
- f. Design roof top terraces to:
  - i. have parapets, solid or translucent railings
  - ii. avoid transparent glass railings, or setback 1.0m from building face

**Raised Terrace** - An outdoor private amenity area adjacent to a unit located above-grade.

**Below-Grade Terrace** - An outdoor area adjacent to a unit located below-grade.

**Roof Top Terrace** - An outdoor area located on the roof of a building accessed via an enclosed stair access.

**Balcony** - An outdoor elevated platform projected from or integrated into a building, enclosed by a parapet or railing.

- g. Inset or partially inset balcony to offer greater privacy and shelter from wind, reduce the building bulk and minimize the impact of shadow on other amenity spaces below.
- h. Limit the size and avoid continuous projecting balconies, especially on residential streets, or when a private outdoor amenity space, pedestrian mews, and/or landscaped walkway is located below.

## RATIONALE

As per Official Plan Policy 3.1.2.6, "Every significant new multi-residential development will provide indoor and outdoor amenity space for residents of the new development. Each resident of such development will have access to outdoor amenity spaces such as balconies, terraces, courtyards, rooftop gardens and other types of outdoor spaces." Private outdoor amenity space for townhouses and low-rise apartments is either required in the Zoning By-law and/or desired as part of the development.

Balconies, terraces, back yards or gardens can provide an important extension to the livable space of a dwelling unit. Private outdoor amenity spaces should have access to sunlight, be comfortable, designed to afford a level of privacy. The needs of families with children and pet owners must also be considered. Below-grade and at-grade terraces should not compromise the public realm by "over-privatizing" the area or preventing adequate landscaping in setback areas.

The placement and design of balconies and terraces can have a major impact on the real and perceived bulk of a building. When poorly located and designed, these spaces can clutter the face of the building, shadow spaces below, reduce privacy and sky view. Energy efficiency and bird-friendly considerations should factor into the design of balconies in terms of their location and the materials used in their construction.



### Official Plan Reference

- 3.1.2 Built Form: Policy 1b, 3a, 3b, 5b, 5c and 6 |
- 3.2.3 Parks and Open Space: Policy 1d |
- 3.3 Building New Neighbourhoods: Policy 2e |
- 3.4 The Natural Environment: Policy 18f |
- 5.1.3 Site Plan Control: Policy 3



### Related Standards, Guidelines & Studies

- Toronto Green Standard | Toronto Green Roof By-law

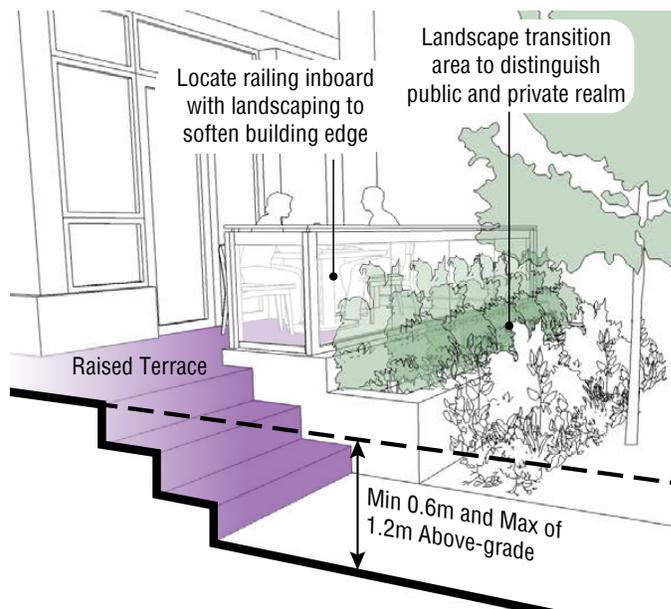


Diagram showing appropriate design of raised terraces and the relationship between the private outdoor amenity space with the public realm.



Landscaping at the level of the raised terrace and the sidewalk provide privacy for occupants on the terrace and an amenity for the public.

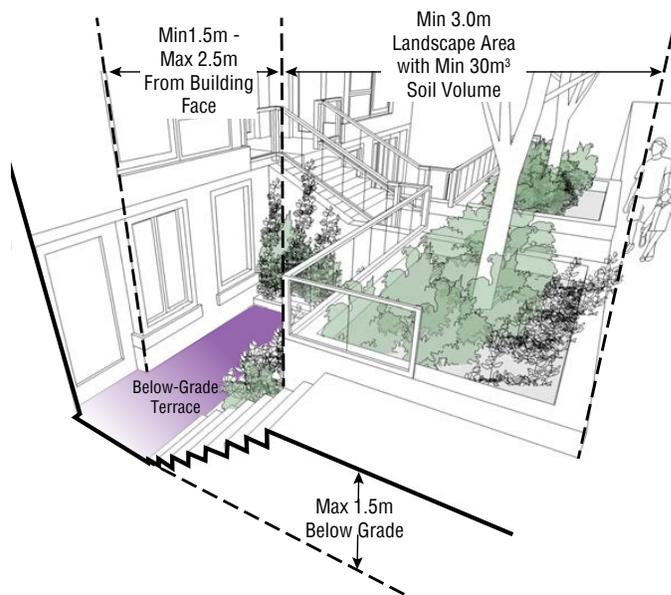


Diagram showing appropriate design of below-grade terraces and the relationship between the private outdoor amenity space with the public realm.

## 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.**



Good example of building relationship to grade with a minimal number of stairs. Existing trees have been preserved.

- a. Maintain the existing grade at property lines. Design with existing grades on site and avoid artificially raised or lowered grades, where possible.
- b. Limit the height of the stoop to the first floor to no more than approximately 3 to 5 steps and/or 1.2m above the grade of the sidewalk directly at the front of the entrance, to avoid a long barrier-like flight of stairs up to the porch or stoop. (See also Section 3.4 Building Entrance and Front Yard).
- c. Maintain the appropriate relationship to grade and step buildings or segments of buildings when a significant grade difference occurs across site.
- d. Limit the maximum grades on landscaped areas to 33% (3:1) or less to ensure that grassed slopes can be maintained.
- e. Limit the height and use of retaining walls, particularly along street frontages, parks, open spaces, ravines and other areas of the public realm.
- f. Where retaining walls cannot be avoided, provide them in the form of low terraces with the total height not to exceed 1.0m. Construct with durable and attractive materials and incorporate extensive soft landscaping.
- g. Use the existing site topography to incorporate and screen service areas, when appropriate.
- h. Provide a site grading plan compatible with the stormwater management approach selected for the site (see also 5.1.3 Stormwater Management).

### RATIONALE

Raising development above the level of natural grade or the grade of abutting properties can create problematic conditions for adjacent properties, abutting streets and open spaces. These problems relate to issues of drainage, pedestrian access, and the quality of the public realm. Where it is necessary to resolve grade differences, stepped landscaped terraces are the preferred solution. To the extent possible, new developments should establish a conventional relationship to grade with a moderate grade change to differentiate the public and private realms.



Grade alterations can create a negative impact on adjacent properties.



#### Official Plan Reference

2.3.1 Healthy Neighbourhoods: Policy 1 | 3.1.1 The Public Realm: Policy 13 | 3.1.2 Built Form: Policy 1c



## 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 and 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

## 5.1 STREETScape, LANDSCAPE AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

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

### 5.1.1 STREETScape

- Organize and coordinate streetscape and landscape elements to support an attractive, functional, safe, and comfortable pedestrian environment.
- Create a strong visual and physical connection between the building and public streetscape through the use of high-quality materials and design elements.
- Emphasize front entrances with high quality architectural and landscape design and materials, including lighting of paths and entries.
- Provide sustainable streetscape and landscape in accordance with the context and the City of Toronto Streetscape Manual and Green Streets Technical Guidelines.
- Provide privacy for dwellings in close proximity to a street with treatments such as trees and shrub planting, minor grade changes, judicious use of railings and lighting.
- Coordinate space for tree planting with utility locations and other city infrastructure.
- Consider providing soil volume under lanes, driveways and walkways using structural soil and/or soil cells.

### 5.1.2 LANDSCAPE

- Retain and protect existing trees, vegetation, natural slopes and native soils and integrate these features into the overall landscape plan, wherever possible.
  - Maximize high-quality landscaping throughout the site to create pleasant pedestrian and amenity space conditions, soften and screen services areas, reinforce circulation routes, and provide stormwater benefits.
  - Ensure that underground structures do not occupy the full extent of the property in order to provide unimpeded areas for tree growth and water infiltration.
- Select plant material that is suitable to the growing conditions of the site and include the following:
    - a variety of deciduous and coniferous trees, shrubs and perennials to provide year-round interest, texture, shape, seasonal colour and shade in summer
    - a variety within each plant type and where appropriate, drought tolerant and native species. Refer to the City of Toronto Drought Tolerant Landscaping Development Guide.
  - Where landscaping may have an impact on motorist/pedestrian sight lines or movement, keep shrubs below 0.85m in height and prune trees so that the lowest branches will be at least 2.0m above ground level. Limit any other landscape features that might cause obstructions to a maximum height of 1.0m.
  - Provide adequate snow storage on site.
  - Use permeable paving to allow for water infiltration.
  - Provide 1.5m minimum soil depth for planting above a underground structural slab.



Bio-retention integrated into development. Credit: PWL Partnership Landscape Architects



Retain and protect existing trees with appropriate setbacks above and below-grade.



Permeable paving allows for water infiltration. Credit: National Association of City Transportation Officials.

### 5.1.3 STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

- a. Manage rainwater and snowmelt on-site with best practice designs that encourage infiltration, evapo-transpiration and water re-use:
  - i. apply a “treatment train” approach
  - ii. plant trees, shrubs and other absorbent landscaping to provide shade and places for water uptake
  - iii. create bio-retention areas, such as swales and vegetated areas that provide a visual amenity
  - iv. incorporate opportunities to harvest rainwater (active or passive) from rooftops and other hard surfaces for landscape irrigation.
- b. Design and locate bio-retention areas appropriately to filter, store and/or convey the expected rainwater flows from surrounding paved areas. Note: Bio-retention areas can enhance and be integrated with shared outdoor amenity areas, but not replace them.
- c. Refer to the Toronto Green Standard and the Wet Weather Flow Management Guidelines for water balance, water quality, and water quantity requirements and recommended stormwater management strategies.

#### RATIONALE

Well-designed and vibrant streetscapes and landscapes are vital to the character and quality of the building site, surrounding public realm, and livability of the City. The benefits include:

- improving the quality of life for all residents
- low-cost but a high impact on the appearance
- significant environmental benefits such as reducing

wind and weather impacts; reducing the heat island effect and heating and cooling costs; improved air quality and improved ground water recharge

- aesthetic enjoyment, escape, tranquility, and establishing a character for the area
- providing privacy and assisting with the transition from public to private areas

The Toronto Green Standard, the Green Streets Technical Guidelines and the Wet Weather Flow Management Guidelines provide standards for water balance targets and stormwater management strategies such as rainwater harvesting, green roofs, bio-retention, permeable pavement, soakaways and swales, to help to ensure the continued health of aquifers, streams, rivers, lakes, fisheries and terrestrial habitats.



#### Official Plan Reference

- 2.3.1 Healthy Neighbourhoods: Policy 5 |
- 3.1.1 The Public Realm: Policy 1d, 5-7, 12-14 and 16-18 |
- 3.1.2 Built Form: Policy 1d, 2b, 5a, 5b, 5d, 5e, 5g and 6 |
- 3.4 The Natural Environment: Policy 1aiii, 1d, 18a and 18f |
- 4.1 Neighbourhoods: Policy 5f, 5g, 5h, 9b and 9c |
- 4.2 Apartment Neighbourhoods: Policy 2c, 3d, 3e, 3f and 3h |
- 4.5 Mixed Use Areas: Policy 2e and 2f |
- 5.1.3 Site Plan Control: Policy 3b, 3d, 3e and 3g



#### Related Standards, Guidelines & Studies

Urban Design Streetscape Manual | Toronto Green Standard | Wet Weather Flow Management Guidelines | Toronto Walking Strategy | Tree Planting Solutions in Hard Boulevard Surfaces: Best Practices Manual | Sustaining and Expanding the Urban Forest: Toronto's Strategic Forest Management Plan | Toronto Street Trees: Guide to Standard Planting Options | Design Guidelines for 'Greening Surface Parking Lots | Green Streets Technical Guidelines (2016) | Shade Guidelines | Vibrant Streets - Street Furniture and Policy Guidelines

## 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.**



Well designed garbage screening at the front of a unit facing the street.

- a. Use well-designed, high-quality site elements with durable and attractive materials and detailing, particularly where there is an interface with the public realm.
- b. Site elements which require careful attention to location and design include:
  - walkway paving, stairs, steps, privacy fences/screens
  - ironmongery, entry gates, railings, and decorative features
  - bike rings, mailboxes, garbage cans, pet waste collectors
  - utilities such as transformers, gas meters, communication boxes, hydro poles, etc.
  - other equipment such as HVAC, gas regulators, hydro meters, etc.
- c. Anticipate the need and design for site elements early on in the design process.
- d. Indicate the location of all site elements on site plan.

### 5.2.1 UTILITIES AND OTHER EQUIPMENT

- a. Locate all utilities such as transformers, utility metres, communication boxes and other site and building equipment within the building, at the rear of the property, or underground. When not located within the building or underground, ensure these elements are away from public view, organized neatly in discreet areas, and screened with attractive landscaping and/or enclosures.
- b. Locate HVAC units and other ventilation equipment into the building, on the roof, or at the rear of the property. Avoid locating this equipment in front yards, at building entrances, and/or in amenity areas.
- c. Avoid locating utilities and other equipment in areas which may affect the ability of trees to grow to maturity.
- d. Locate ventilation shafts and grates away from the public sidewalk, walkways, shared/private amenity areas, and open spaces.

### 5.2.2 SHARED SITE ELEMENTS

- a. Integrate shared site elements such as access stairs, garbage chutes, and mail areas into the building. Locate these elements in attractive, visible, accessible and protected areas.
- b. Where building entrances take their address from courtyards and pedestrian mews, provide a clear way-finding system.
- c. Use high-quality architectural elements and landscape design to screen service areas from public view. Options include insets into building facades and screening with landscaping or low walls.
- d. Recess and minimize the size of garage doors and service openings visible from streets and open spaces.

### 5.2.3 LIGHTING

- a. Provide a comprehensive Lighting Plan for the site including a photometric drawing which illustrates both horizontal (at grade) and vertical (at 1.8m above grade) lighting levels.

- b. Select different luminaires for various functions and consider the appearance in order to light pedestrian pathways, building/site entrances and other features.
- c. Coordinate the location of lighting with pedestrian clearways, tree planting and other landscaping.
- d. Provide pedestrian-scaled lighting, such as bollards or lower-scale pole fixtures along pedestrian routes.
- e. Balance the need for safety and security while reducing energy consumption and light pollution by:
  - i. installing appropriate lighting that is scaled to its purpose to avoid "over lighting"
  - ii. direct light downward, with shielded fixtures to avoid light overspill onto adjacent properties, streets and open spaces. Strive for vertical lighting along property lines to be 0 foot candles
  - iii. use energy-efficient bulbs

## RATIONALE

The location, design, and accessibility of site elements affect the daily life of residents and visitors in townhouse and low-rise developments. When careful consideration is given to the integration of these elements on a site, it can elevate the overall quality and experience of the built environment.

Site elements including utilities, shared elements, and lighting are all critical components of any site and building. While technical requirements regarding location and access must be satisfied, consider locations with the least visual, noise, and other impacts to pedestrian routes, building frontages, and amenity areas. When these elements are carefully located and considered, it can greatly improve the public realm and user experience.



Good example of mail area integrated into building design with lighting and canopy.



Locate and integrate utility meters in recessed coves and/or screen with landscape plantings to help maintain an attractive streetscape.



Poorly located utilities and mechanical systems adjacent to front entrance and street frontage negatively impact the quality and comfort of the public realm.



### Official Plan Reference

- 3.1.1 The Public Realm: Policy 1d, 6, 12 and 14 |
- 3.1.2 Built Form: Policy 2c, 2d, 3b, 3d and 5c |
- 4.2 Apartment Neighbourhoods: Policy 2d, 2e, 3g and 3i |
- 4.5 Mixed Use Areas: Policy 2j |
- 5.1.3 Site Plan Control: Policy 3g



### Related Standards, Guidelines & Studies

Toronto Green Standard



Bicycle parking rings in street furniture zone

## 5.3 BUILDING ELEMENTS

Carefully consider the architectural design and materials of a building to enhance the quality of life and the public realm.



Example of contemporary architecture with creative treatments to windows, doors, and roofs through material and colour choices. Credit: Superkül Architects. Photo by: BenRahn /A-Frame.

### 5.3.1 ARCHITECTURE

- a. Vary the design and articulation of each building façade to provide visual interest and respond to site conditions.
- b. Respect and reference built form pattern and significant architectural datum lines to help new building respect neighbourhood character.
- c. Adjust internal layouts, glazing ratios, balcony placement, fenestration, and other aspects of the design to manage passive solar gain and improve building energy performance, where possible.
- d. Building elements which require careful attention to the location, quality of materials, and design include:
  - doors, windows, roofs, garage doors
  - fire break walls, parapets, eaves, fascias and soffits
  - dormers and sky lights
  - roof top amenity space access
  - photo voltaic panels
  - shared landings, porches, terraces, stairs and railings
  - flues, ventilation pipes and covers, flashings, gutter pipes, and other rainwater details
- e. Design entrances and shared landing areas with care and attention to detail. The use of sidelights, clerestory windows, and doors with glazing in entrance areas is encouraged.
- f. Use attractively designed, high-quality railings. Consider the railing material, transparency, pattern, and overall integration with building and landscape design.
- g. Ensure that roof elements do not dominate the building, particularly on larger buildings. Where possible, minimize the visual impact of rooftop railings, screens, and accesses.
- h. When using dormers carefully consider proportion and composition relative to the rest of the building.
- i. Consider the detailed design of roof parapet firewall breaks in pitched roofs as they are often visible from the street.
- j. Screen mechanical/electrical systems, satellite dishes, and other equipment located on the roof from public view.
- k. Organize roof slopes so that they can accommodate photo voltaic panels, where possible.

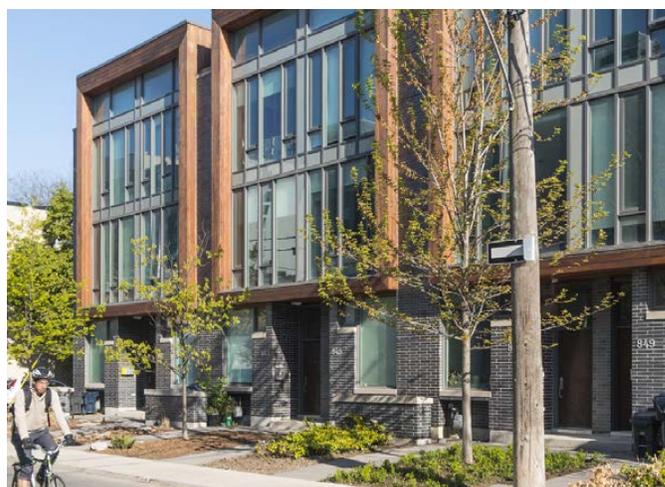
- l. Provide variations in architectural design between building blocks for multiple block developments to create a different but cohesive collection of buildings.
- m. A 1:50 scaled elevation drawing may be required to illustrate complex and detailed aspects of a building design and materiality.

### 5.3.2 MATERIALS

- a. Use materials that are high-quality, durable, and wear well with age. Source local materials with low embodied energy where possible.
- b. Materials such as wood, brick, and stone are strongly encouraged. These materials can be used effectively in both contemporary and traditional designs.
- c. Design buildings to fit-in visually with surrounding buildings, especially those along the same street, by using a small range of complementary materials.
- d. Avoid Exterior Insulation and Finish System (EIFS) and stucco-textured foam trims/moldings on highly visible facades at grade.



Well positioned and high quality doors, windows, and architectural details such as canopy, railing, screen, and planting areas all work together to enhance the public realm.



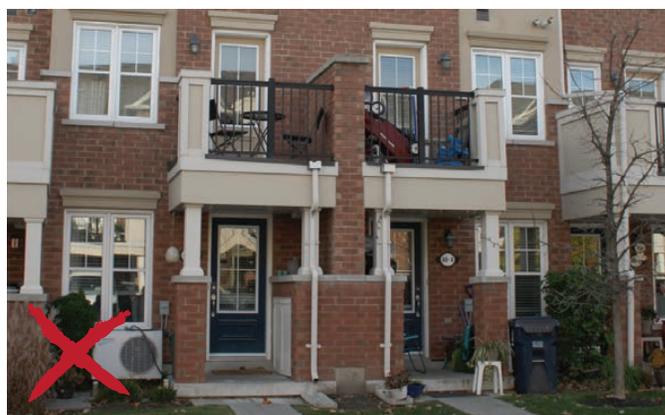
A simple palette of materials carefully detailed is designed to wear well with age.

### RATIONALE

Great public realm demands high-quality materials and design for buildings, streetscape and landscape. As a general principle, new developments should have an exemplar architecture that is of 'its time and place'. Poor quality buildings with a pastiche of architectural styles and details will not be supported as they do not help to create a coherent identity for the development and by extension, the City.

The position, shape and size of windows, doors and roofs have a profound effect on the elevation and are important to consider. The design of smaller elements such as rainwater leaders, eaves, fascias, etc. are also critical and can dramatically affect the overall aesthetic value of the building.

Official Plan Amendment 66 provides the City of Toronto with the ability to review the exterior design of buildings as well as the inclusion of sustainable building features under paragraphs 2(iv) and (v) of Section 114(5) site plan control. These guidelines are intended to help the City raise the overall quality of buildings.



Example of a front facade over-cluttered with rainwater leaders, air conditioning units, utilities, and vents.



#### Official Plan Reference

- 3.1.1 The Public Realm: Policy 1d and 1e |
- 3.1.2 Built Form: Policy 3b, d and 6 |
- 5.1.3 Site Plan Control: 1, 2 and 3



#### Related Standards, Guidelines & Studies

Toronto Green Standard

## 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.**



The public art creates an entry feature into a public park and the neighbourhood.

- a. Where applicable, provide adequate building setbacks and space around public art so that it can be properly viewed and experienced from the public realm.

### RATIONALE

Public art enriches the public realm by making buildings and open spaces more interesting, engaging, and memorable.

When considered early in the project planning stages, the most effective locations and opportunities for public art can often be identified and secured.

Public art opportunities on low-rise, multi-unit building sites may include:

- a conceptual framework to organize open spaces including parks, plazas, setbacks, or streetscapes
- an independent sculpture or two-dimensional work that marks an entryway, corner, feature area, or view terminus
- a combination of visual arts with the building elements, including façades, canopies, floors, and lighting
- visual arts combined with landscape design including the functional and decorative elements of a site, such as water features, lighting, seating, paving, walls, fences, entrances and exits



Public art integrated with landscape elements.



Public art located along a mid-block connection provides a placemaking opportunity.



#### Official Plan Reference

3.1.2 Built Form: Policy 5g | 3.1.4 Public Art: Policy 1d and 1e



#### Related Standards, Guidelines & Studies

Percent for Public Art Program Guidelines



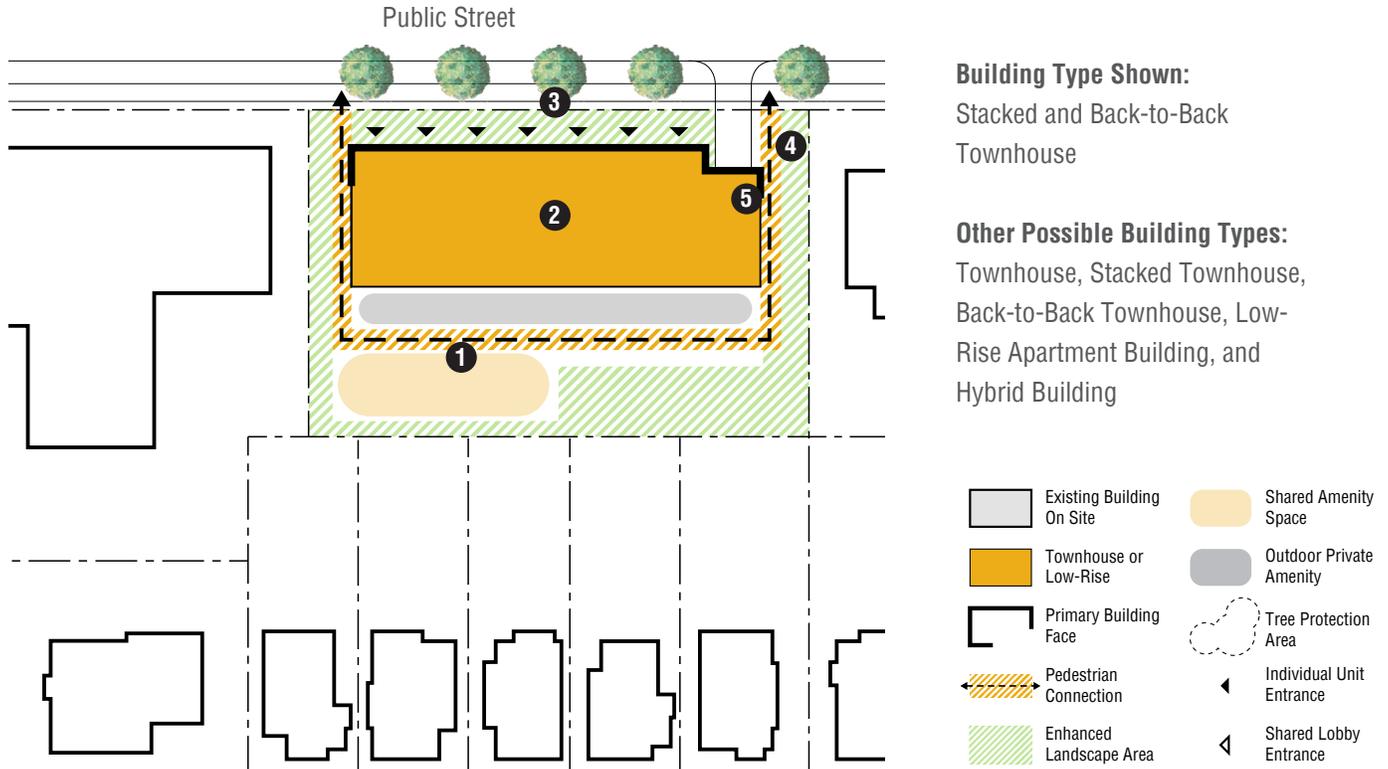
## 6.0 DEMONSTRATION PLANS

- 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

## 6.0 DEMONSTRATION PLANS

Section 6.0 provides a demonstration of how low-rise, multi-unit building types can be accommodated on different sites with a selection of guidelines to describe key areas for consideration. These demonstrations are not intended to be a 'how to' for developing sites with similar characteristics.

### 6.1 SHALLOW MID-BLOCK SITE



### SELECTION OF GUIDELINES

The selection of guidelines below is intended to highlight key aspects of each demonstration plan. Additional guidelines will apply.

#### 1 Section 3.2 Shared Outdoor Amenity Areas

- a. When shared outdoor amenity spaces are required, design these spaces to:
  - ii. maximize high-quality landscaped open space on the site. Opportunities may include hard/soft landscaped area for passive recreation and children's play space

#### 2 Section 3.3 Building Placement and Address

- 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.

#### 3 Section 3.3 Building Placement and Address

- 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

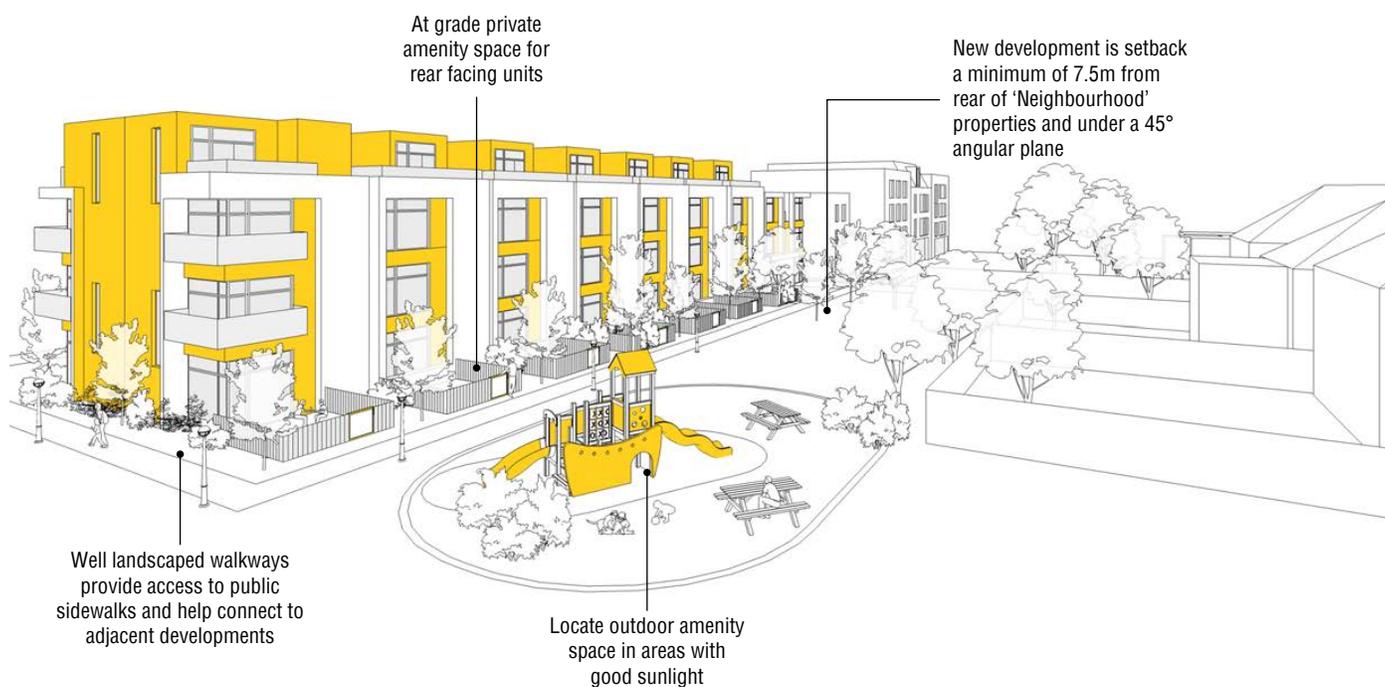
a street, park or publicly accessible open space, locate all entrances facing the street/open space, or preferably use a hybrid, low-rise apartment or through unit type instead.

#### 4 Section 3.3 Building Placement and Address

- e. Setback new buildings:
  - 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.

#### 5 Section 3.4 Site Services, Access, and Parking

- a. Incorporate parking garage ramps, access stairs, garbage collection/storage areas, and loading areas into the building.



## RATIONALE

Shallow mid-block parcels exist in many parts of the City. Redevelopment of these sites, especially with the Stacked and Back-to-Back Townhouse type, can be especially challenging.

This demonstration plan considers the context of the neighbourhood to select a building type that appropriately frames the edge of the street, provides a landscaped front yard, and improves the public realm. Other building types such as the Low-Rise Apartment or Hybrid Building may be preferred depending on the context.

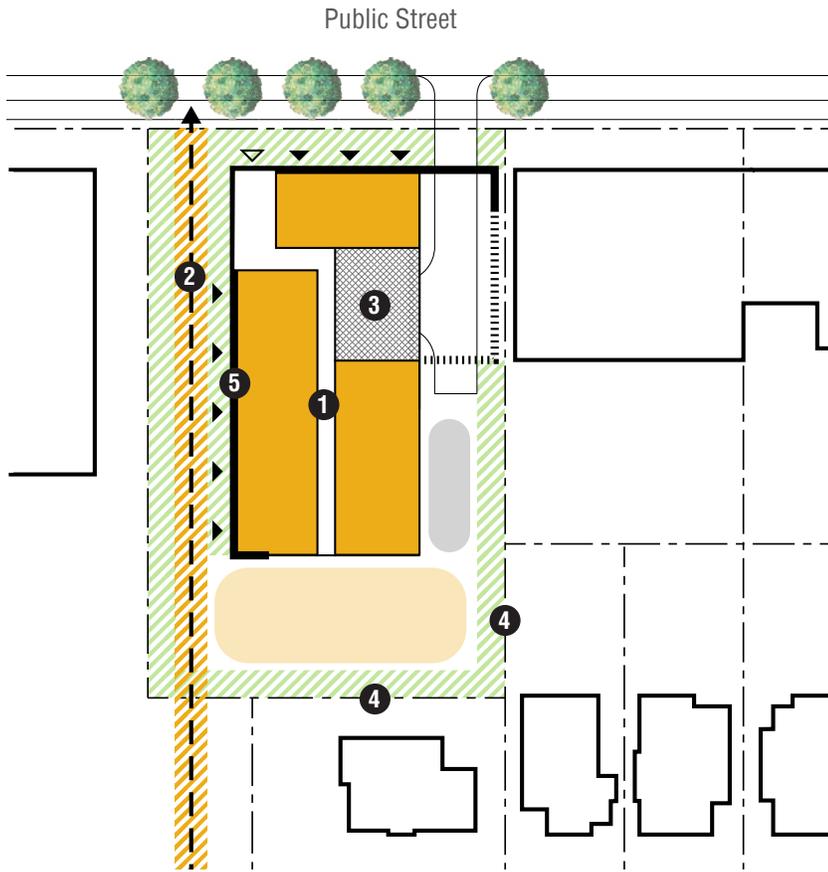
A key concern with Stacked and Back-to-Back Townhouses on shallow sites are the location of unit entrances. Individual unit entrances facing the rear yards of abutting properties are to be avoided due to the lack of visual connections to a public street, safety and way-finding concerns for residents and visitors. Locating entrances at the rear also creates atypical building relationships which are not desirable or consistent with Toronto's urban fabric.

It is possible for a building to employ an internal organization where single or multiple entrances are located fronting a public street, which retains the rear of the site as shared or private outdoor amenity space and landscaped area.



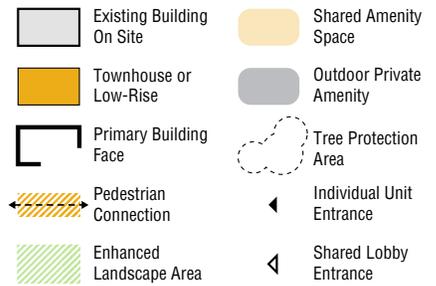
New apartment building development respects neighbourhood context by providing front yard setback consistent with adjacent buildings. Credit: Audax Architecture. Photo by: Joy von Tiedemann.

## 6.2 DEEP MID-BLOCK SITE



**Building Type Shown:**  
Hybrid Building

**Other Possible Building Types:**  
Townhouse, Stacked Townhouse,  
Back-to-Back Townhouse, Low-  
Rise Apartment Building, and  
Hybrid Building



### SELECTION OF GUIDELINES

The selection of guidelines below is intended to highlight key aspects of each demonstration plan. Additional guidelines will apply.

#### 1 Section 3.3 Building Placement and Address

- 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.

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

- c. Locate and design streets, lanes, mews and walkways to provide safe, direct, universally accessible pedestrian and cycling facilities within the new development.

#### 3 Section 3.4 Site Services, Access, and Parking

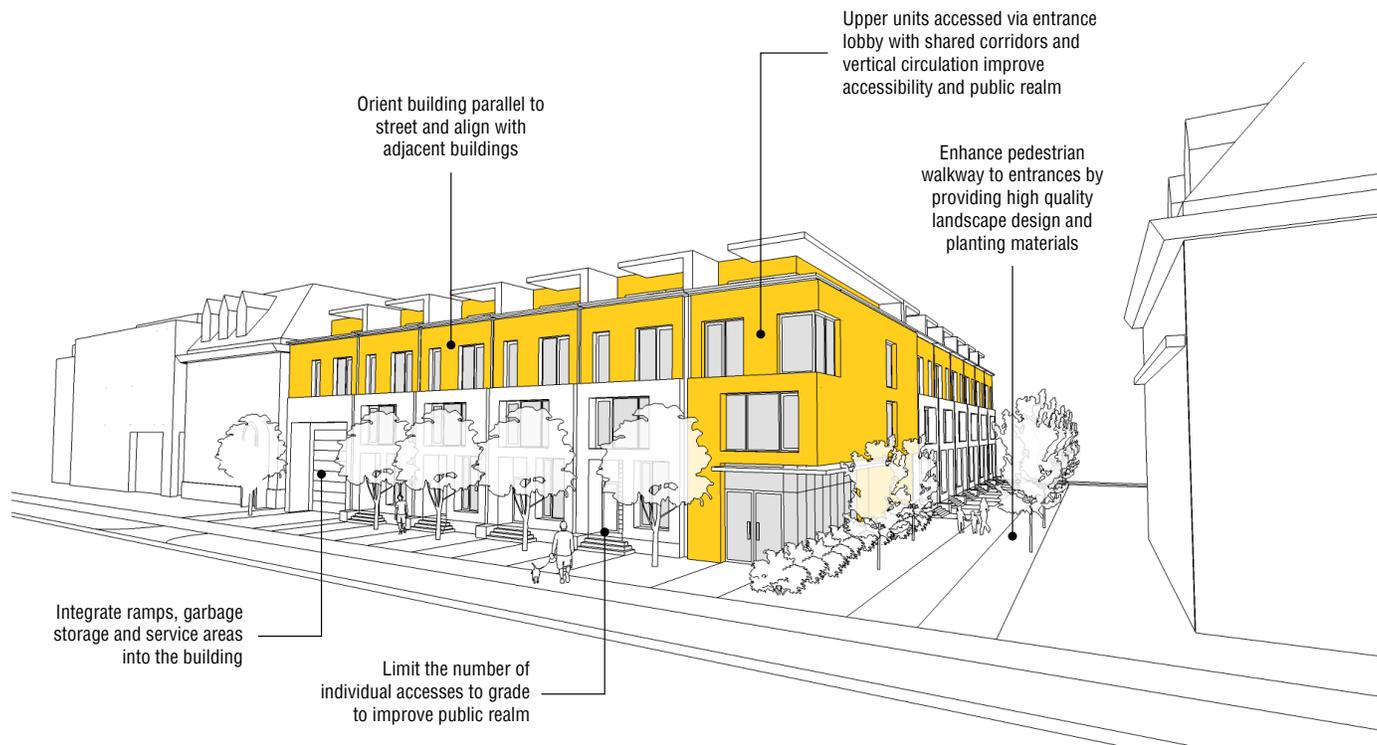
- a. Incorporate parking garage ramps and access stairs, garbage collection and loading areas into the building.

#### 4 Section 4.1 Fit and Transition

- a. Apply angular planes, minimum horizontal separation distances, and other building envelope controls to transition down to lower-scale buildings, parks, and open spaces.

#### 5 Section 4.3 Primary Entrances

- d. Consider a hybrid or apartment type when individual unit entrances would not be clearly visible from a street or pedestrian mews.



## RATIONALE

Redevelopment on parcels with narrow public street frontage present significant site organization challenges.

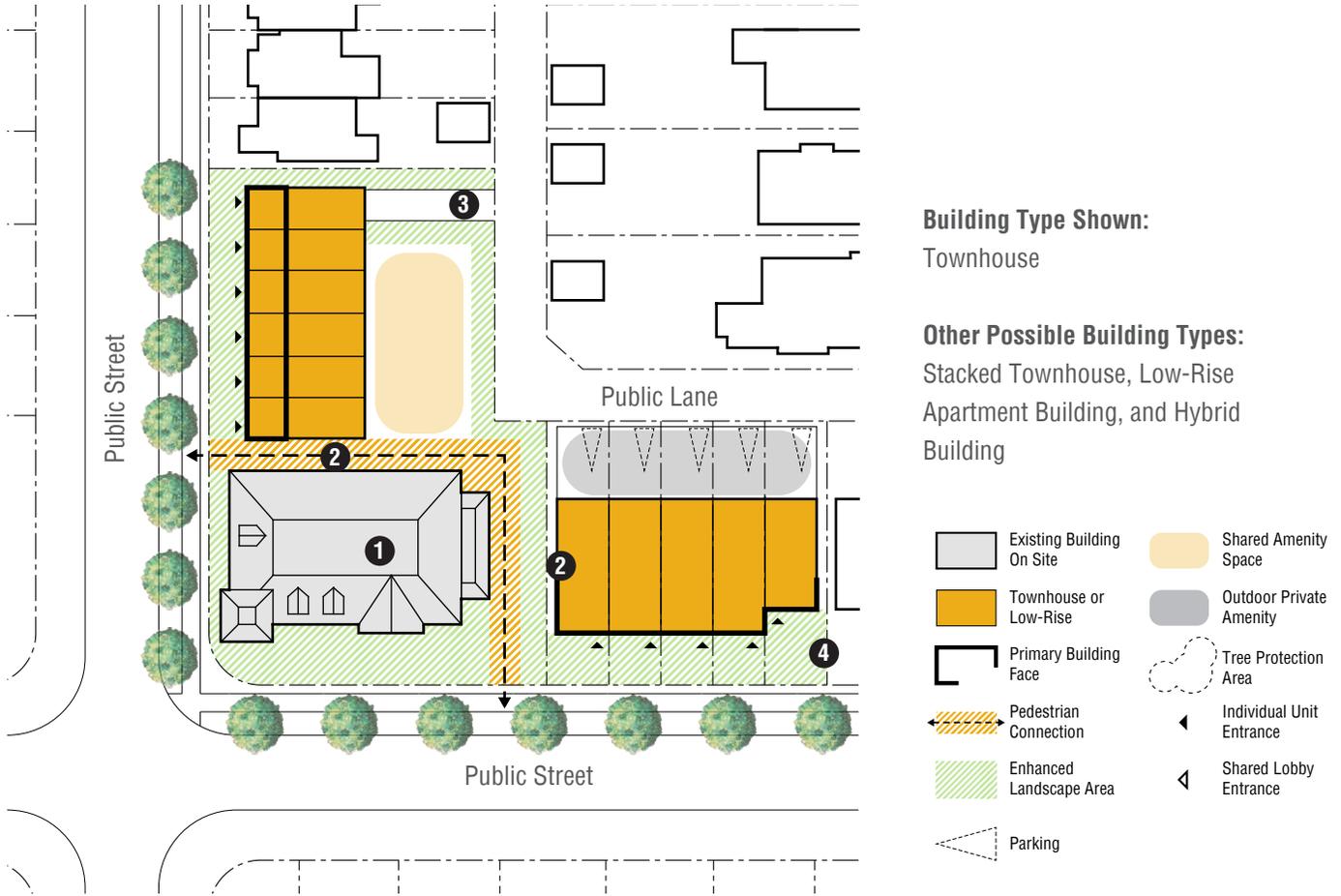
In general, when the site is very deep and the travel distance required to access a unit entrance from a public street is greater than 6-8 units, consider the Low-Rise Apartment Building or Hybrid Building type. It is preferred for deep mid-block parcels to locate unit entrances on the public street frontage only and avoid entrances facing the side property line. In scenarios where access to units are located along the side, provide clear sightlines, lighting, pedestrian amenities, and landscaping to create a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment.

It is especially important to reduce the impacts of site servicing elements on parcels with limited public street frontage. To reserve space for public realm enhancements, integrate servicing and ramp accesses into building and minimize width of vehicular access. When a private street or vehicular mews is proposed, design them to have the characteristics of a public street.



Pedestrian walkway and shared amenity space work together to provide access to grade-related units and gathering space for residents. Credits: David Peterson Architect Inc., Triumph Developments. Photo by: Ben Rahn/A-Frame.

## 6.3 SITE ADJACENT TO OR WITH HERITAGE RESOURCE



### SELECTION OF GUIDELINES

The selection of guidelines below is intended to highlight key aspects of each demonstration plan. Additional guidelines will apply.

#### 1 Section 1.3 Heritage

- 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.

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

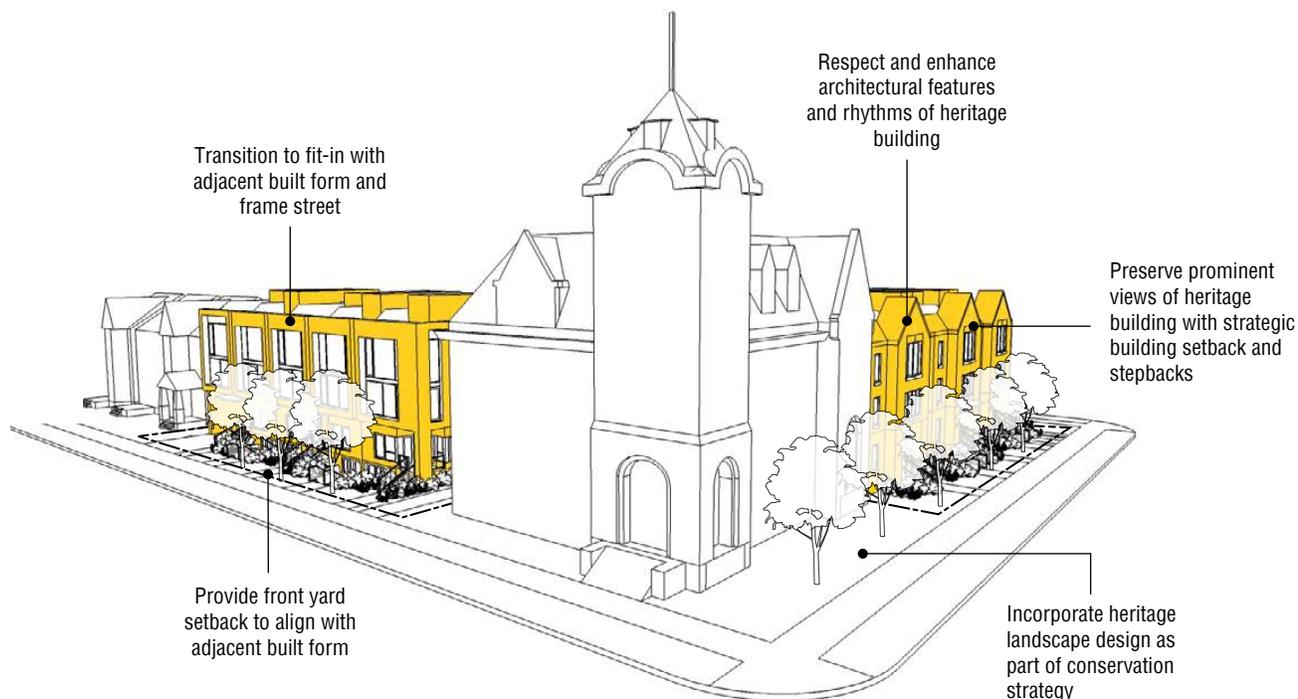
- n. Employ minimum walkway dimensions as follows:
  - i. when the walkway is the primary access to units, provide a minimum building separation of 6.0m and a clear path width of at least 2.1m with landscaping and pedestrian scale lighting

#### 3 Section 3.4 Site Services, Access, and Parking

- b. Provide access to site servicing and parking at the rear of the building/site, from a lane, or from a shared driveway.

#### 4 Section 4.1 Fit and Transition

- c. Provide a transition in the building height down to the lower-scale neighbours. Reduce the height of at least the first building, unit or bay where adjacent context is lower and not anticipated to change.



## RATIONALE

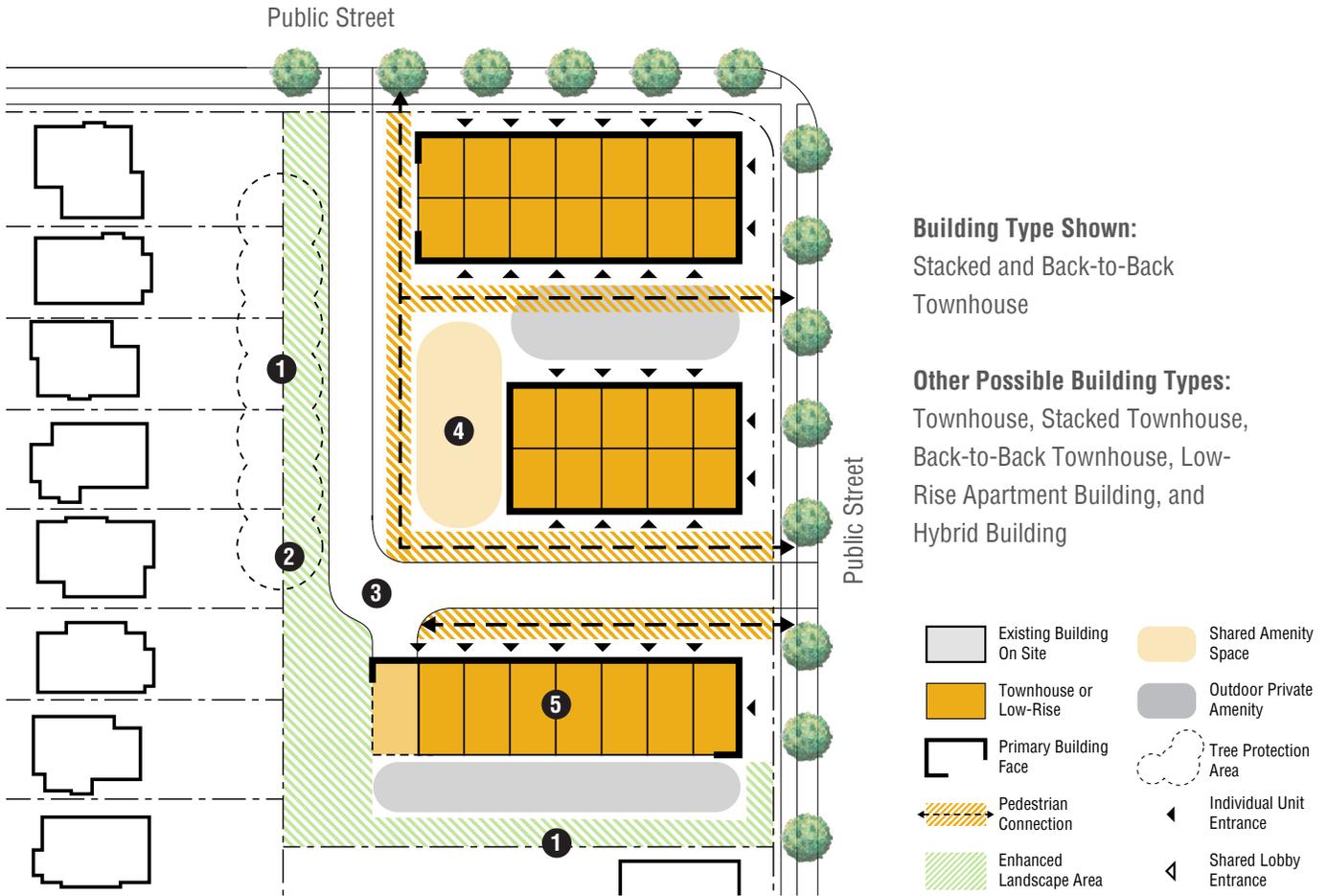
When redevelopment occurs, employ strategies to complement and respect the scale, character, form and setting of heritage assets on or near the site.

This demonstration plan provides sufficient facing distances between the new development and the heritage building. The new development is also setback in order to maintain prominence of the heritage building and allow for preservation of heritage features such as windows and cornices which would otherwise be hidden.



Design of the new development is informed by the character of the adjacent Victorian townhouses. Extra care must be taken to maintain and enhance the neighbourhood characteristics such as front yard landscape and entrance design.

## 6.4 SITE WITH MULTIPLE BUILDING BLOCKS



### SELECTION OF GUIDELINES

The selection of guidelines below is intended to highlight key aspects of each demonstration plan. Additional guidelines will apply.

#### 1 Section 4.1 Fit and Transition

- a. Apply angular planes, minimum horizontal separation distances, and other building envelope controls to transition down to lower-scale buildings, parks, and open spaces.

#### 2 Section 5.1.2 Landscape

- a. Retain and protect existing trees, vegetation, natural slopes and native soils and integrate these features into the overall landscape plan, wherever possible.

#### 3 Section 3.4 Site Services, Access, and Parking

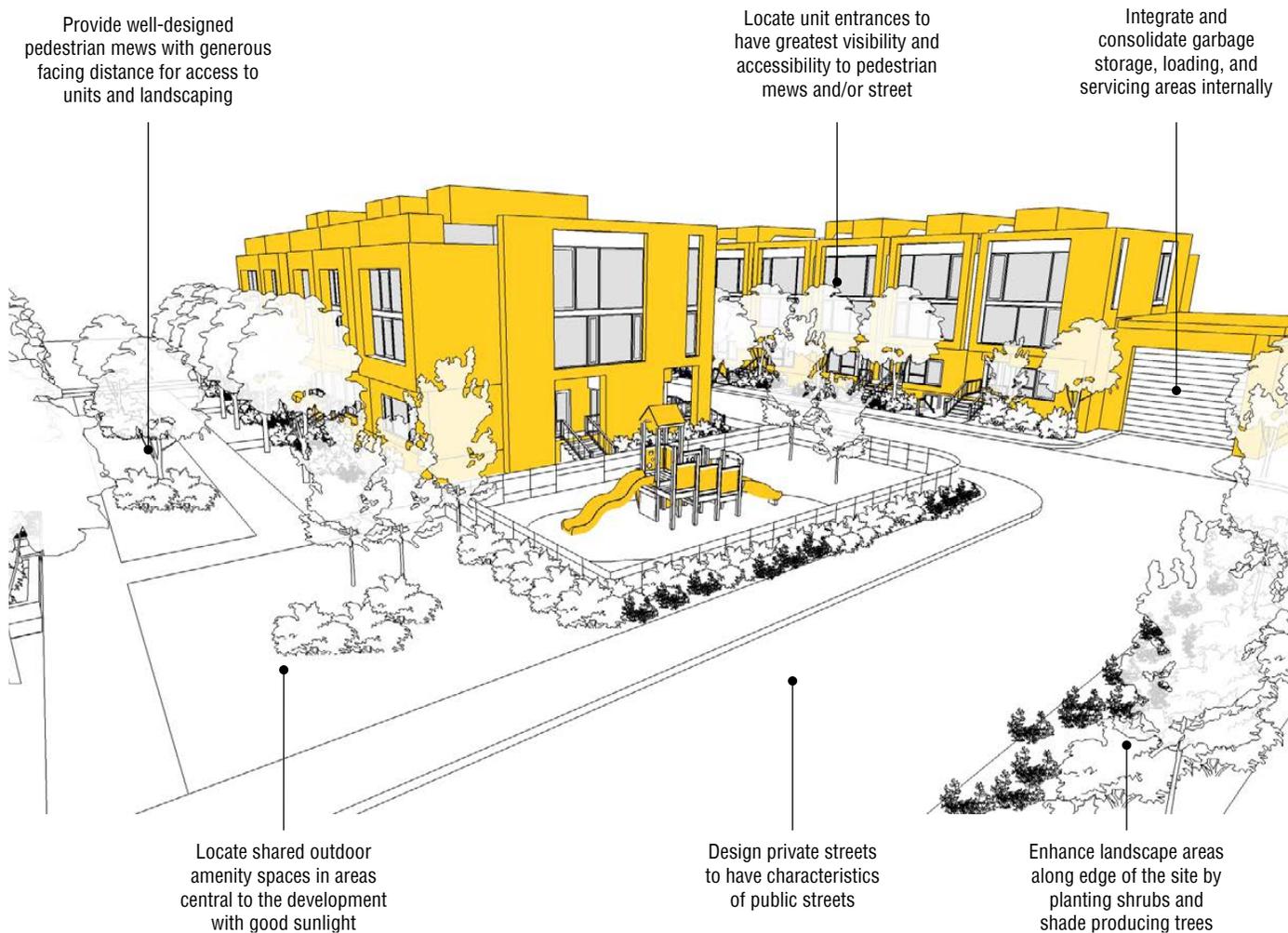
- e. Minimize the extent of site area dedicated to servicing and vehicular access through the use of shared infrastructure and efficient layouts, where possible.

#### 4 Section 3.2 Shared Outdoor Amenity Areas

- a. When shared outdoor amenity spaces are required, design these spaces to:
  - ii. maximize high-quality landscaped open space on the site. Opportunities may include hard/soft landscaped area for passive recreation and children's play space

#### 5 Section 3.3 Building Placement and Address

- 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.



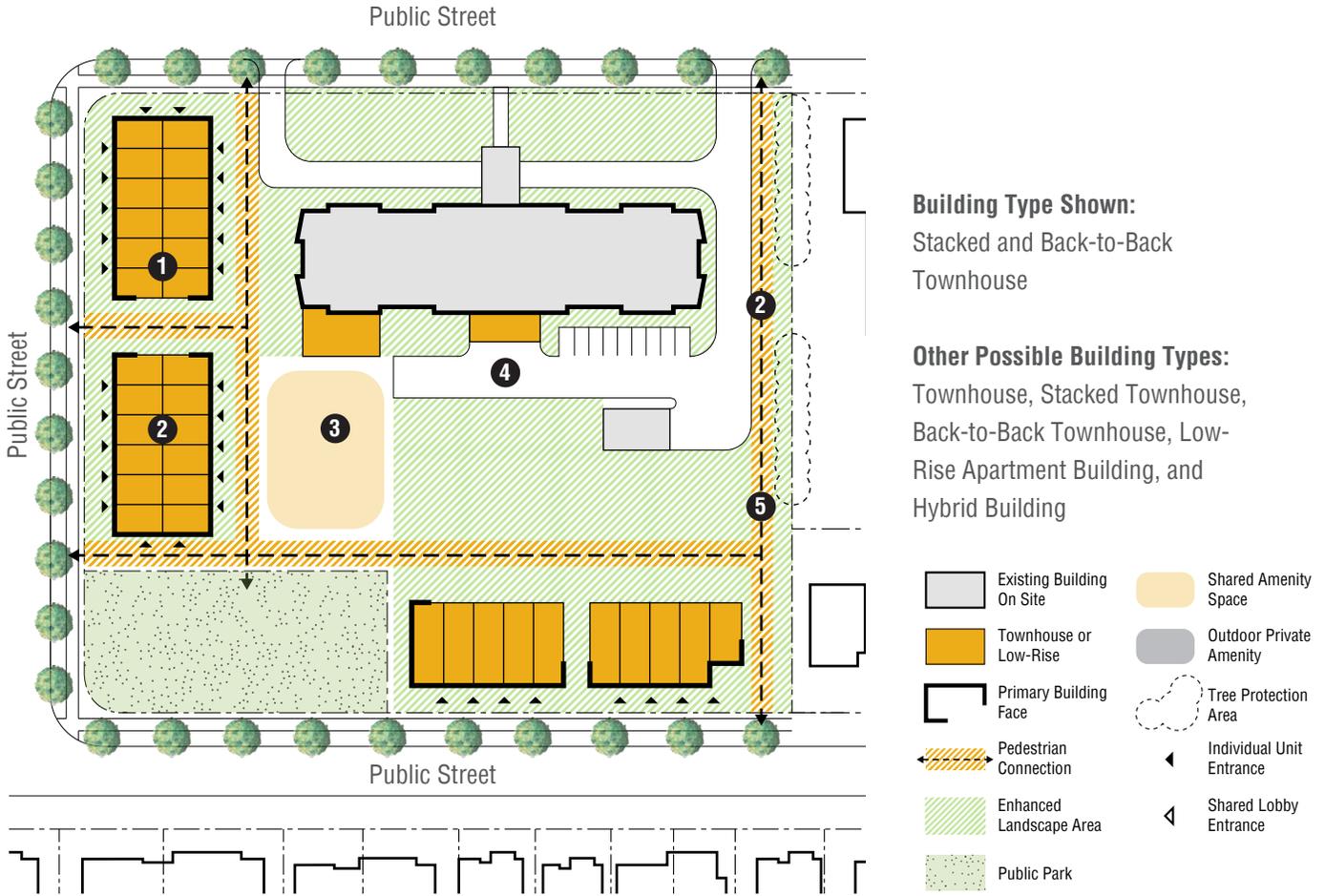
## RATIONALE

Small communities are created when multiple building blocks are developed on a site. These developments are large enough to form a distinctive character of their own, but too small to become their own neighbourhoods. Parcels with multiple building blocks should look at the site's configuration and neighbourhood character to identify the appropriate site organization, building type, and public realm design to strike a balance between fitting-in and creating a sense of place.

On deep multi-block sites, it is preferred to have buildings perpendicular to public streets where unit entrances have direct views to public streets. The pedestrian mews on deep sites serve as the main access for units and must be designed with a high quality pedestrian experience in mind. When the visibility of entrances from public streets is compromised, Low-Rise Apartment Building or Hybrid Building types may be more appropriate for the site.

Building types may vary throughout the development dependent on the location of the particular building block. Internal to the development site, buildings should have front to front facing relationships with adequate facing distance between blocks. In the demonstration plan, Block c is shown as Stacked Townhouse type with all unit entrances along the vehicular mews. This building type and entrance arrangement helps to avoid undesirable front-to-side building relationship.

## 6.5 LARGE SITE WITH TOWER



### SELECTION OF GUIDELINES

The selection of guidelines below is intended to highlight key aspects of each demonstration plan. Additional guidelines may apply.

#### 1 Section 3.3 Building Placement and Address

- 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.

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

- a. Extend and connect new public 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.

#### 3 Section 3.2 Shared Outdoor Amenity Areas

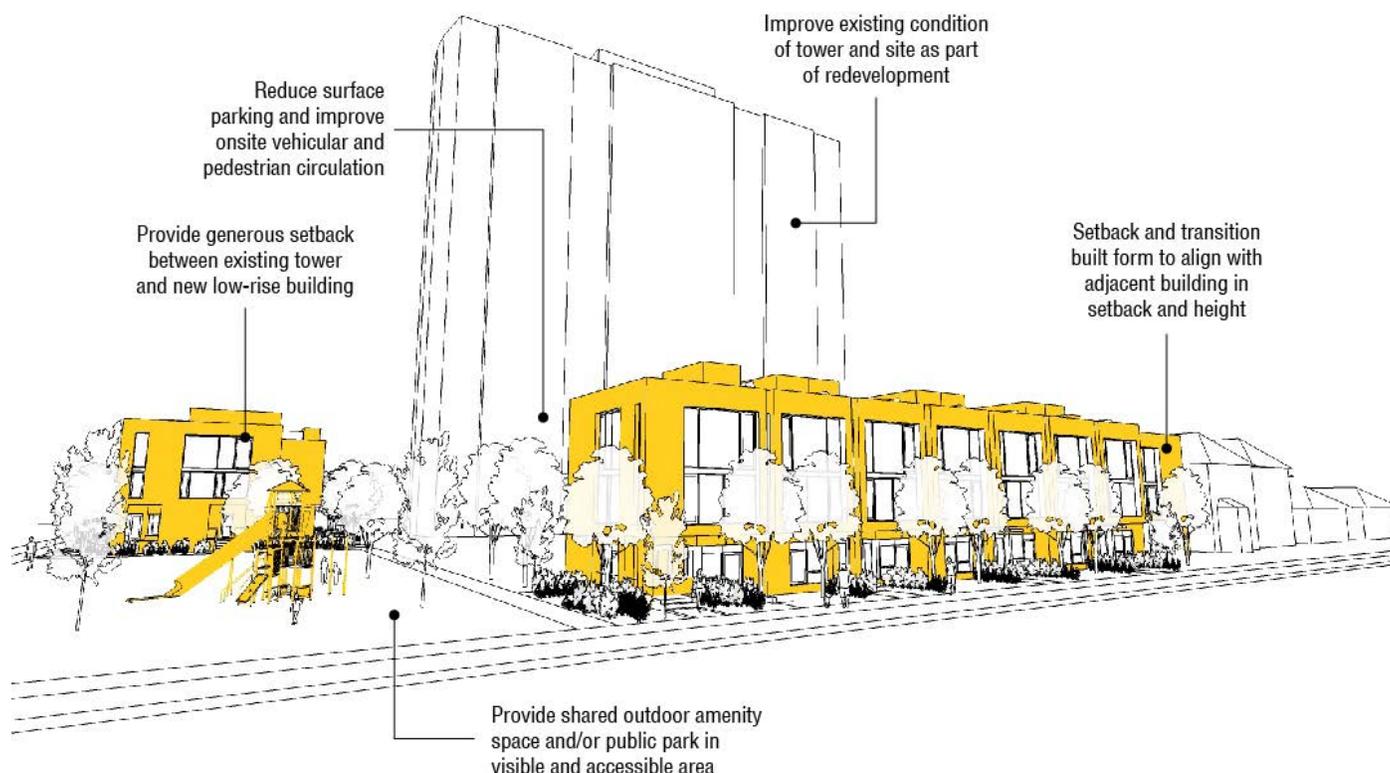
- b. Locate shared outdoor amenity area to maximize frontages on streets, mews and walkways to provide visibility and access.

#### 4 Section 3.4 Site Services, Access, and Parking

- f. Minimize surface parking, driveways and drop off areas:
  - iii. where infill is taking place on an existing residential site (e.g. tower-in-the-park infill) replace surface parking and driveways with well-landscaped open space, where possible

#### 5 Section 5.1.2 Landscape

- b. Maximize high-quality landscaping throughout the site to create pleasant pedestrian and amenity space conditions, soften and screen service areas, reinforce circulation routes, and provide stormwater benefits.



## RATIONALE

The "Tower in the Park" design concept was widely used in many parts of Toronto. These types of developments were often "Towers in the Parking Lots" instead and disrupted the pedestrian-oriented scale and character of many traditional Toronto neighbourhoods. When a tower site is appropriate for low-rise building infill, it is a priority for the redevelopment to rectify negative site conditions and improve connections to the surrounding neighbourhood.

In this demonstration plan, the new and existing buildings work together to frame streets and outdoor amenity spaces. Location of new buildings and open spaces consider the shadow impacts of the existing tower. Landscape areas throughout the site are improved to raise the overall quality of the property. Physical and visual connections are introduced to create a safer and more permeable site.

Every opportunity is made to eliminate under-utilized driveways and surface parking areas. Reorganizing the site may result in significant public realm improvements and can help to create more efficient and attractive site conditions.



New low-rise development helps to improve existing negative site conditions and create new shared amenity areas for all residents.

## 6.6 LARGE SITE WITH MULTIPLE DEVELOPMENT BLOCKS

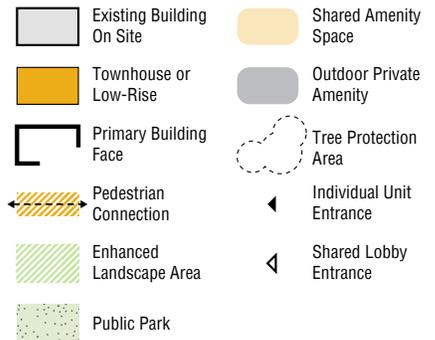


### Building Type Shown:

Townhouse, Stacked and Back-to-Back Townhouse

### Other Possible Building Types:

Stacked Townhouse, Back to Back Townhouse, Low-Rise Apartment Building, and Hybrid Building



### SELECTION OF GUIDELINES

The selection of guidelines below is intended to highlight key aspects of each demonstration plan. Additional guidelines will apply.

#### 1 Section 1.2.1 Street and Block Patterns

- 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.

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

- c. Locate and design streets, lanes, mews, and walkways to provide safe, direct, universally accessible pedestrian and cycling facilities within the new development.

#### 3 Section 3.2 Shared Outdoor Amenity Areas

- a. When shared outdoor amenity spaces are required, design these spaces to:
  - i. Locate shared outdoor amenity area to maximize frontages on streets, mews and walkways to provide visibility and access

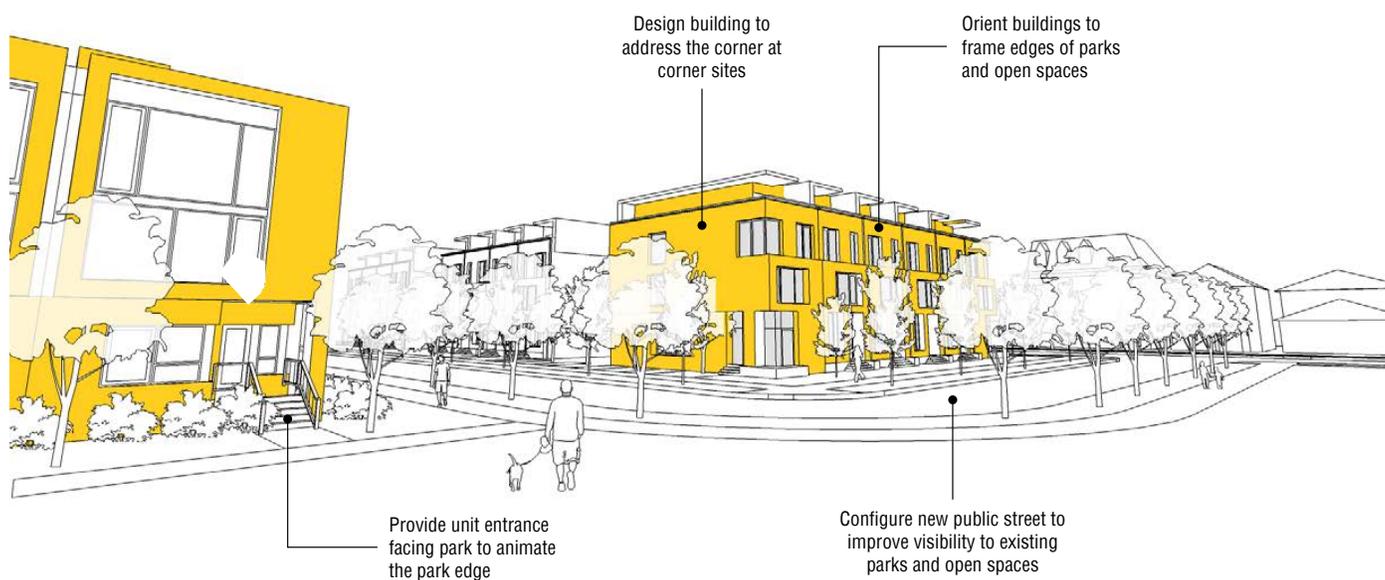
- g. Complement and connect with open space on neighbouring properties, where possible.

#### 4 Section 3.4 Site Services, Access, and Parking

- e. Minimize the extent of site area dedicated to servicing and vehicular access through the use of shared infrastructure and efficient layouts, where possible.

#### 5 Section 1.2.1 Street and Block Patterns

- c. Utilize areas alongside rail or hydro corridors and ravines to extend the network of connections, where appropriate.



## RATIONALE

Public streets, parks, open spaces, and built form all work together to define the public realm for large sites with multiple development blocks. The organization of the building blocks on large sites is critical to creating a transition between existing and new communities. It is vital that new developments respect the positive characteristics of its context and further enhance these attributes to create a cohesive neighbourhood.

Public streets are one of the fundamental building blocks to city building. On large sites, new public streets are often required to provide access. By aligning new streets to existing ones, they help stitch communities together. Public streets and pedestrian connections beyond the site should also be identified to protect opportunities for future extensions.

Public parks and open spaces are central to each new neighbourhood and can be used as an organizational element for large sites. They are civic spaces and place making opportunities which can bring a community together. Public parks should be located centrally within easy access to the community with prominent public street frontage, access to sky view and sunlight. Opportunities to expand public parks are encouraged. POPS can work together with existing open spaces to increase the possible activities and uses for the park.



Large blocks of townhouses can integrate well into established neighbourhoods by enhancing pedestrian connections and positive characteristics of its context.



## 7.0 CASE STUDIES

Section 7.0 (AVAILABLE ON-LINE ONLY) provides case studies of low-rise, multi-unit building developments that have been recently approved or built in the City of Toronto. These case studies exhibit some aspects of the intent of the Guidelines, while other aspects may require further improvements.

To access the case studies online, visit [www.toronto.ca/lowriseguidelines](http://www.toronto.ca/lowriseguidelines).





## 8.0 GLOSSARY

## 8.0 GLOSSARY

Section 8.0 provides definitions for terms used throughout the Guidelines. The terms and definitions are intended to describe aspects that assist in achieving the design objectives for low-rise housing forms. The definitions are not necessarily the same as those in the City Zoning By-laws or the Ontario Building Code.

**Address** - The front door of a building or unit that faces the public street or mews

**Above-grade** - over the level of the ground, not sunken or below ground

**At-grade** - at the level of the ground

**Amenity** - a space or element which provides additional practical and/or leisure functions to any users

**Angular Plane** – a theoretical plane which controls and defines a building massing to ensure adequate access to sun and sky views, and governs relationships between differing built forms

**Articulation** - the layout or pattern of building elements including walls, doors, roofs, windows, cornices and belt courses

**Back of House Activities** - activities, essential to the efficient function of the development, that are commonly situated at the rear of the buildings (eg. garbage storage and vehicle access)

**Balcony** - an outdoor elevated platform projected from or integrated into a building, enclosed by a parapet or railing

**Bay** - in architecture, any division of a building between vertical lines or planes, especially the entire space included between two adjacent supports

**Below-grade** - lower or beneath the level of the ground

**Corner Treatment** - the corner of a building where additional architectural treatment is provided to acknowledge the building's prominence on the street in terms of views and presence

**Courtyard** – a landscaped open space, located in the centre of a single or consolidated block with no direct street frontage

**Development Infrastructure Policy and Standards (DIPS)** - a City of Toronto policy with established directions for the layout and design of new public residential local streets and private streets or mews

**Driveway** - a paved vehicular access that typically leads from the street to a private or shared garage or service area

**Façade** - the exterior of the building visible to the public

**Forecourt** - landscaped open space between the public sidewalk and the main entrance of a building.

**Frontage** – the portion of a building or lot facing a street, park or other publicly accessible open space

**Harmonious** - having the elements arranged in a proportionate, orderly and pleasing way

**Heritage Conservation District (HCD)** - an area of the city that is protected by policies and guidelines to ensure its conservation and careful management. HCDs are designated based on their historic or cultural significance

**Human Scale** – the quality of the physical environment which reflects a sympathetic proportional relationship to human dimensions and which contributes to the citizen's perception and comprehension of buildings or other features of the built environment

**Infill Townhouse Guidelines** - design guidelines introduced in 2003 by the City of Toronto to address townhouse developments on public streets and short private mews

**Landscaped Open Space** – outdoor area characterized by hard and/or soft landscape treatment, but excluding driveways and vehicular parking areas. On-site landscaped open space may be publicly accessible or privately shared common outdoor space at-grade

**Landscaped Setback** - the space between the public sidewalk and building face characterized by hard or soft landscape treatment

**Massing** - the size and shape of a building above grade

**Main Building Face** - the predominant exterior vertical wall face of a building

**Mews Street** - typically a privately owned and maintained street which provides for the full range of roles of a public street. A mews provides access and address at all times

**Overlook Condition** - condition in which above-grade apartments or balconies have a view of private or public outdoor amenity spaces below them

**Pattern of Alignment** - the repeated location of the front face of buildings in relationship to the property line

**Pattern of Building** - the repeated physical characteristics of buildings within an area, on a street or block, including the building footprint, organization and massing

**Pavilion** – the opposite of a streetwall building, a building that stands distinctly on its own surrounded by landscaping

**Pedestrian amenity** - architectural and landscape elements, including lighting, trees, four season landscaping, decorative paving, seating, public art, water features, etc., that promote the safe and comfortable use of streets and open spaces

**Pedestrian Mews** - a privately owned and maintained pedestrian street which provides access and address to individual buildings and units within a larger development site. A mews is open to the public and accessible at all times.

**Pedestrian scale** - the quality of the physical environment which reflects a sympathetic proportional relationship to human dimensions and which contributes to a person's perception and comprehension of buildings and or other features in the built environment

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

**Porch** - a raised area projecting from the building at the level of the entrance

**Permeable Paving** - pavement that allows water movement through its surface

**POPS (Privately-owned Publicly Accessible Spaces)** - City of Toronto, Urban Design Guidelines, available online: [www.toronto.ca/planning/POPS.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/planning/POPS.htm).

**Private Outdoor Amenity** - an outdoor space associated with an individual unit that is available for use by the occupants

**Private Shared Driveway** - a paved vehicular access under private ownership, from a street and used as a circulation route through a development either with or without parking; for services and access to garages; does not provide pedestrian access or address for buildings

**Public Realm** – streets, lanes and walkways, parks and other open spaces and the accessible parts of public buildings

**Public Street** - a public way or thoroughfare in a City or town, usually with sidewalks

**Setbacks** – refers to the distance between a property line and the front, side or rear of a building

**Facing Distance** - distance between the face of a building and the face of another building or property line

**Shared Indoor Amenity** - an indoor space in a building that is communal and for use by the occupants of the building for recreational and social activities

**Shared Outdoor Amenity** - an outdoor space on a lot that is communal and available for use by the occupants of a building for recreational or social activities

**Siting / Building Orientation** - the location, positioning and orientation of a building on its site, generally taking into account its relationship to adjoining properties, building and street boundaries

**Soft Landscaping** – open, unobstructed area that supports the growth of vegetation such as grass, trees, shrubs, flowers or other plants, and that permits water infiltration into the ground

**Stepback** – refers to the setting back of the upper storeys of a building. Front and side stepbacks help to create a transition between built form of varying heights and provide appropriate separation between adjacent buildings and/or open spaces

**Stoop** - a small landing in front of and at the level of the building entrance

**Street** - a significant part of the City's open space system. In their role as connective linear open spaces, streets provide vehicular, pedestrian and utility access, address and light to individual lots and blocks within the urban fabric. In addition they are landscaped and lit in the evening and provide a setting for social interaction and neighbourhood activities.

**Streetwall** - occurs where the sides of buildings touch each other and the building facades visually join together into one long wall defining a street space

**Street Proportion** - the ratio of the height of buildings along the edges of the street and the width of the space between the building faces on each side of the street (includes setbacks)

**Terrace** - an outdoor sitting area which extends the interior living space and is either adjacent to or on top of a building

**Traditional Block** - divided into lots; on these, individual buildings are sited close to the perimeter streets with private open space at the rear and sometimes the side of buildings. (Open space on the block tends to be in the middle of the block and is typically fenced for private uses, service or parking)

**Transition Between Zones of Intensity** - on sites that are adjacent to lower height limits either on the block or across the street, the massing and shape of new development should step down to the adjacent height limit forming a base building at that height. Stepping the taller parts of the development away from the lower height area provides a transition from areas of differing intensity

**Treatment Train** - a system designed to treat stormwater run off for water quality benefits and to reduce stormwater runoff peaks and volumes

**Urban Design** - the analysis and design of the city's physical form

**Urban Garden** - a landscaped open space of intimate scale providing a tranquil setting adjacent to a city street

**Urban Tree Canopy** - the layer of leaves, branches, and stems of trees that cover the ground when viewed from above

**Walkway** - a street level exterior publicly accessible pedestrian way through the middle of or part of a city block



