BUILT FORM



SECONDARY PLAN REVIEW

Built Form Planning Tools - A Glossary

BUILT FORM

Built form describes what a building looks like, how tall it is, how much land it takes up, how far it is set back from the sidewalk and the street, and how it relates to the other buildings and open spaces around it.

There are a number of tools that planners can use to control the shape and size of buildings to ensure that all new buildings fit into their surroundings. These include:

GROSS FLOOR AREA (GFA)

The total amount of space within a building.

Example: A one-storey building that is 10 metres deep and 5 metres wide would have a gross floor area of 50 square metres. A two-storey building that is 10 metres deep and 5 metres wide would have a gross floor area of 100 square metres.

FLOOR SPACE INDEX (FSI)

The ratio of a building's gross floor area relative to the size of the property that it occupies.

Example: An FSI of 1.0 can be a 1-storey building that covers the entire property, or a 2-storey building that covers half the lot. An FSI of 2.0 can be a 2-storey building that covers the entire property or a 4-storey building that covers half the lot.

HEIGHT

The height of a building is measured from the ground to the top of the building. A typical residential floor is 3 metres tall. A typical retail ground floor is 4.5 to 6 metres tall.

Example: A 10-storey building with retail at grade would be approximately 31.5 to 33 metres tall.

Ground floor (retail):	4.5 to 6.0 metres	
9 floors x 3.0 metres:	+	27 metres
	31.5 to 33 metres	



Figure 1. Diagram illustrating how different buildings can have an FSI of 1.0 times the size of the lot.

SECONDARY PLAN REVIEW



Figure 2. Built form controls.

SETBACK

The distance between a property line and a building on the lot. A setback can be required at the front, side or rear of a building.

Example: A building with a required front setback of 3 metres must be built at least 3 metres away from the front property line.

STREET WALL

The street wall is the part of the building that is built closest to the edge of the street. In most areas of King-Parliament the street wall has a consistent height, above which the building "steps back" (see definition below).

STEPBACK

Describes the distance that upper storeys of a building are required to be pushed back from the edge of the building below.

ANGULAR PLANE

An imaginary flat surface projecting over a lot at an angle. These are often used to allow visual and sunlight access to the street. No part of the building can penetrate into the angular plane.

TOWER FLOORPLATE

The size of one floor of a tower. Residential towers have tower floorplates that are about one-third the size of nonresidential towers.

Example: If an office tower has dimensions of 40 metres by 50 metres then the tower floorplate would be 2,000 square metres.



Figure 3. Diagram illustrating building stepback and street wall.

SECONDARY PLAN REVIEW

Existing Character Areas

WHAT ARE CHARACTER AREAS?

A character area is defined by the distinct look and feel of a part of a neighbourhood. They can be described as areas that have their own distinctive, individual character or "sense of place". Elements that define a character can include the age and size of buildings, the uses within the buildings, the width of the street, the presence of natural features, and the presence (or lack) of street trees.

The existing King-Parliament Secondary Plan has defined character areas, called Policy Areas in the plan, including:





Figure 4. Existing Policy Areas under the in-force King-Parliament Seconday Plan.

JARVIS PARLIAMENT AREA

The Jarvis Parliament Area contains the original 10 blocks of the City of Toronto as well as many industrial warehouses that housed industry up until the early-1990s. Public connections through the larger blocks — some through laneways, many just for pedestrians — are typical of this area. Although there are few parks within the Jarvis Parliament area, larger parks such as Moss Park, St. James Park and David Crombie Park are all just outside its boundaries. Much of the recent development in King-Parliament has taken place in this character area.

CORKTOWN AND QUEEN STREET EAST

Queen Street East consists of a wide range of building types including, houses – used both as residences and as small businesses, older multiple storey industrial buildings and retail shops. Corktown is characterized by narrow streets and unique spaces created by the construction of the Richmond and Adelaide Street flyover ramps. Corktown is regarded as a unique, small scale community consisting generally of small properties with narrow frontages, including heritage buildings.



Figure 5. Examples of buildings in the Jarvis Parliament area.

Figure 6. Examples of buildings in the Queen Street East and Corktown areas.

WEST DON LANDS

The West Don Lands is a master-planned community where development is guided by a Precinct Plan. The neighbourhood is defined by a generous and connected public realm, a new transit connection on Cherry Street, housing provided in a range of sizes and for a diverse range of residents, and new community facilities and services.



Figure 7. Examples of buildings in the West Don Lands area.

GOODERHAM & WORTS

Also known as The Distillery District, this area includes cafes, residential towers, shops, a theatre complex and a brewery, all within the largest collection of Victorianera industrial architecture in North America. A defining feature of the area is that many of the streets are for pedestrians only, allowing for patios and activity to spill out from the adjacent buildings.



Figure 8. Examples of buildings in the Gooderham & Worts area.

Development Activity in King-Parliament

Over the past 15 years, the overall number of proposed planning projects has increased. The number of storeys proposed for new buildings has also increased. The trend is for taller building proposals. So – buildings are getting taller.

The 1996 Secondary Plan and the existing zoning by-law have generally been successful at shaping built form in this area. They both provide direction for development to be built within the 12 to 19 storey range and that's where the majority of projects fall on the chart below. However, an increasing number of projects have been proposed outside of this range in recent years – pushing beyond 20, 30 and 40 storeys. The King-Parliament Secondary Plan Review is the opportunity to redefine the standards that will help guide appropriate built form in this area.





Source: IBMS-Land Use Information System II, January 2019 Prepared by: Toronto City Planning Division, Research and Information

Development Pipeline in King-Parliament

The map below shows the number of active planning projects in the area for the five-year period between July 2013 and December 2018.

The orange dots show projects that are under review. This means that City Planning staff are either working on the file and it hasn't yet been approved or refused by City Council, OR it could mean that a project is under appeal to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (or LPAT) – formerly the Ontario Municipal Board. The purple dots show active projects. Active projects have been approved, but they may or may not be under construction.

The blue dots show built projects. These projects are either ready for occupancy or are fully occupied.



Figure 10. Active Projects between July 1, 2013 and December 31, 2018

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