MID-RISE BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

DRAFT

2024

TORONTO

Land Acknowledgement

We give thanks for, respect, and honour the land and the Indigenous peoples who have been its stewards for millennia. This document recognizes the need for reconciliation with Indigenous communities and acknowledges the importance of integrating Indigenous cultures and practices into city planning.

For time immemorial, the land which is now the City of Toronto has been home to Indigenous peoples. The City acknowledges it is located on the traditional territories of many nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. These territories are currently covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit and the Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.

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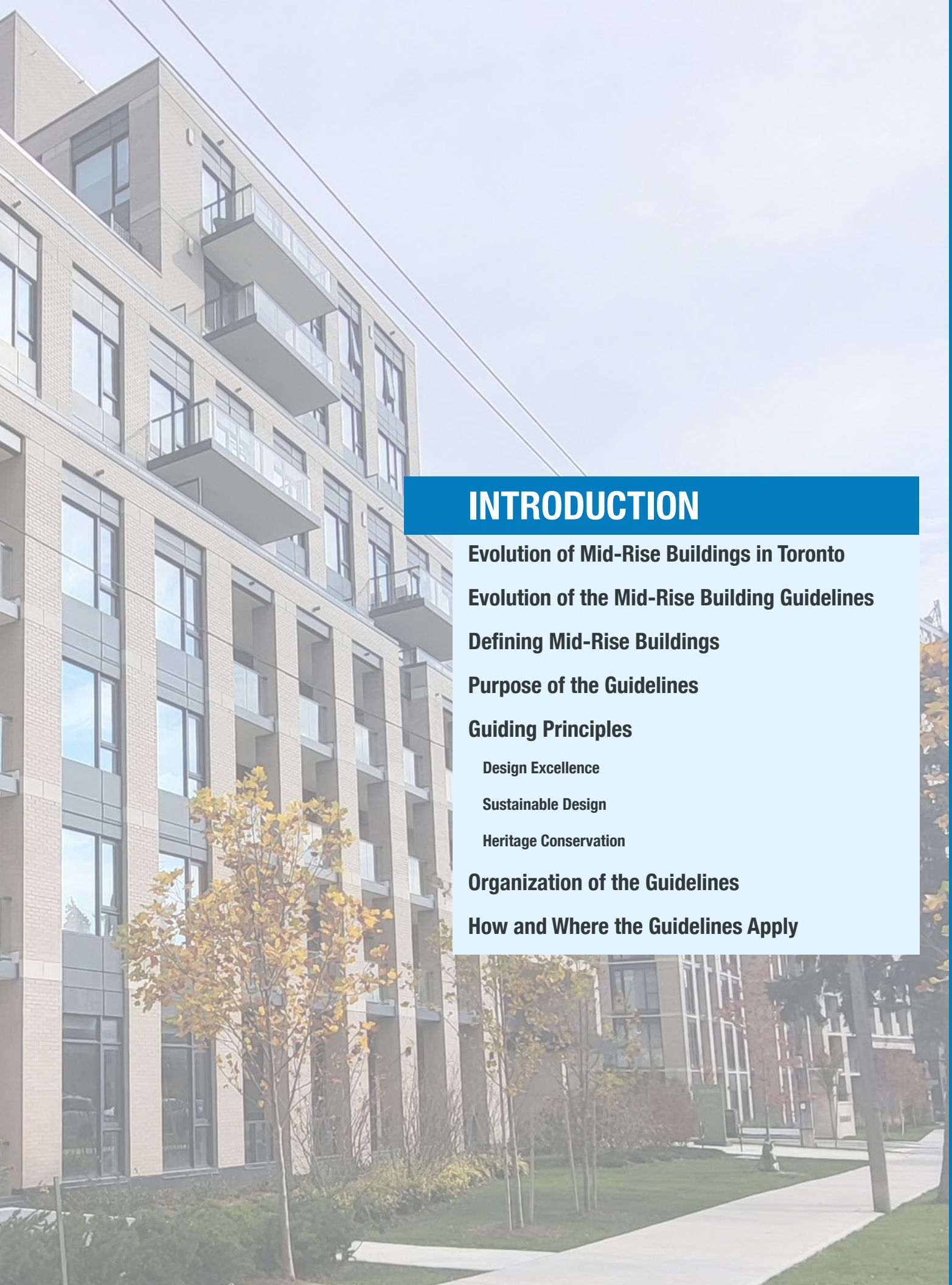

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The City of Toronto is the fastest growing City in North America and is growing at varying scales. Low-rise, Mid-rise, and Tall buildings add to the built environment and provide a variety of options and choice for people to live, work, learn, and play within.

Evolution of Mid-Rise Buildings in Toronto

Mid-rise buildings have been a defining feature of Toronto's urban landscape since the early 20th century, particularly in areas like King-Spadina, where the heritage buildings showcase this architectural legacy. These adaptable structures initially served industrial and commercial purposes, evolving over time into office buildings, residential apartments, and mixed-use buildings. This transformation underscores their capacity to respond to the city's changing needs while conserving the character and identity of these neighbourhoods.

Toronto's first mid-rise residential apartment building was completed in 1904, marking the city's initial move towards apartment living in line with trends in cities like New York and Chicago. By 1907, apartment development had grown significantly due to Toronto's doubling population and rising land values. By the 1950s, building technology had shifted, allowing concrete-form structures to rise, leading to a new generation of mid-rise apartment buildings. These buildings, primarily single-use residential structures, were built on large or deep lots and often surrounded by soft landscaping.

The design of these mid-rise buildings strikes a balance between height, density, and a comfortable human-scale, making them an integral part of

Figure 1: Heritage property at 317 Adelaide Street West, constructed in 1929.

Figure 2: Heritage property at 214 King Street West, constructed in 1917.

Figure 3: 1307 Wilson Avenue, constructed in 1961.

Toronto's urban fabric. They create vibrant, pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, fostering a sense of community while accommodating growth. Their relatively modest height allows for ample sunlight, access to skyview and air circulation, contributing to a more livable and sustainable environment.

The City's Official Plan states that Toronto's future is one of growth, of rebuilding, of reurbanizing and of regenerating the City within an existing urban structure. Future growth within Toronto will continue to be steered to areas which are well served by transit, and contain a mix of uses and services to provide for the daily needs of residents. In Chapter 2 of the Official Plan, Avenues are described as "important corridors along major streets where reurbanization is anticipated and encouraged." This reurbanization aims to provide increased housing and job opportunities, enhance the pedestrian experience, improve street aesthetics, boost local shopping, and strengthen transit services.

In 2010, the City of Toronto adopted the Mid-Rise Performance Standards, guiding how mid-rise buildings could be designed. New mid-rise developments were to fit within the context of the Avenue main streets. The height of these buildings is determined by the width of the adjacent street right-of-way, —meaning mid-rise heights should generally not exceed the width of the street they face. In Toronto, where streets are narrower (20 metres wide), mid-rise buildings are typically 6 storeys. On wider arterial streets , mid-rise buildings can rise up to 11 storeys. These buildings often feature step-backs or terraces at upper levels to reduce their apparent height from street level, allowing for sunlight and sky views on the sidewalks. Mixed-use developments, with retail on the ground floor and residential units above, became common. Many of Toronto's Avenues, including portions of Queen Street East and West, The Queensway, Kingston Road, and Sheppard Avenue, have become vibrant hubs for mid-rise developments.

Figure 4: 2A Queensbury Avenue, constructed in 2016.

In September 2020, Official Plan Amendment 480 (Built Form) came into force recognizing three scales of building types – Low-Rise , Mid-Rise, and Tall – for residential, office and mixed-use intensification as having emerged in the recent period of development. A number of mid-rise policies were approved through this Official Plan review, including policies about mid-rise heights, street proportion, daylight and privacy, corner sites, and deep sites.

Mid-rise building design is evolving in response to climate action and sustainable design practices, incorporating innovations such as mass timber and prefabricated construction. As energy efficiency, carbon footprint reduction, and optimized building layouts become increasingly essential, these factors are reshaping the approach to mid-rise form and function.

Technological advancements and the economic benefits of sustainable construction have also led to simpler, more efficient building forms. This shift supports both environmental goals and streamlined construction processes, contributing to more resilient and adaptable urban developments.

Across decades, mid-rise buildings have played a significant role in shaping Toronto's urban fabric. These buildings offer an ideal scale for urban streets—tall enough to create a sense of urban density, but low enough to allow access to sunlight and views of the sky. Mid-rise buildings support vibrant pedestrian environments with active ground-floor uses, such as shops, restaurants, and services. They also contribute to a more sustainable future for the city.

Evolution of the Mid-Rise Building Guidelines

In 2008, Toronto's City Planning Division initiated the Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study to provide design guidance for mid-rise buildings. The Mid-Rise Performance Standards from this study (with the exception of Standard 5B) were adopted by City Council in July 2010. City Council also directed City Planning to encourage the implementation of the Official Plan's vision for Avenues and to monitor the Performance Standards.

In 2016, an addendum to the Mid-Rise Performance Standards was adopted by City Council. This update clarified the use of the standards and was based on the results of the monitoring period. The addendum is now used alongside the 2010 Performance Standards when evaluating development applications for mid-rise buildings.

This updated city-wide "Mid-rise Building Design Guidelines" document consolidates and builds upon previous guidelines to establish a new, unified framework. Together with area-specific urban design guidelines, it provides a comprehensive set of guidelines for evaluating mid-rise building development applications across Toronto.

Defining Mid-Rise Buildings

Mid-rise buildings are a transit-supportive form of development that provides a level of intensification at a scale between low-rise and tall building forms. Mid-rise building heights are contextual and are informed by the width of the right-of-way onto which they front. In Toronto, where streets vary in width from 16.5 metres to over 45 metres, mid-rise buildings may vary in height between 5 and 14 storeys for residential uses and mixed uses,or fewer for office uses, depending on the floor-to-floor heights of the building and the width of the adjacent right-of-way it faces.

Mid-rise buildings contribute to a vibrant urban environment through their moderate scale, predictable street proportions, and ability to allow access to sunlight and sky views. These buildings are well-suited to supporting high-quality, accessible open spaces. While some mid-rise buildings may have a single use, such as residential or office, many contain a mix of uses, including retail, office, community services, and residential spaces.

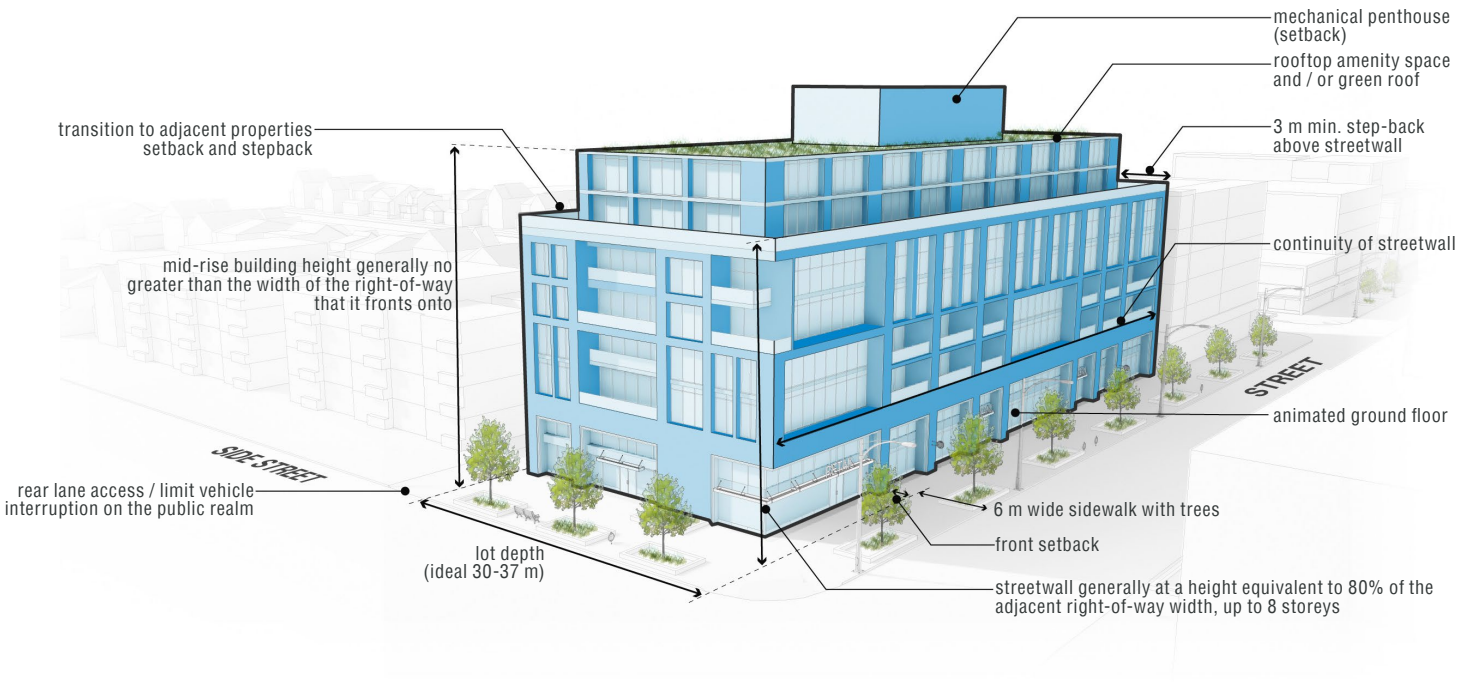

Figure 5: 3D diagram illustrating the key elements of the guidelines.

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:

- identifying strategies to enhance the quality of the living environment through improved spatial relationships, design, and materials;
- establishing a balance between protecting the quality of public realm spaces and heritage features while allowing for appropriate infill development and intensification; and
- providing guidance to citizens and stakeholders, particularly land developers, planners, urban designers, architects, landscape architects, and City staff in the creation and evaluation of development proposals.

Guiding Principles

The Guidelines do not determine where mid-rise buildings are permitted. Rather, they assist with the implementation of the City's Official Plan policies to help ensure that mid-rise buildings are located and organized to fit with their existing and planned context. The Mid-rise Building Design Guidelines provide specific and often measurable directions related to the following guiding principles:

- Promote sustainable practices to achieve climate resilience and carbon reduction goals;
- Promote architectural and urban design excellence, innovation, longevity, and creative expression with visionary design, high-quality materials, and leading-edge construction methods;
- Encourage the development of mid-rise buildings to expand housing options for residents and promote cost-effective building design and construction methods to reduce development barriers, making housing more accessible and affordable;
- Promote harmonious fit and compatibility with the existing and planned context, emphasizing relationships to surrounding buildings, parks, and open spaces;
- Explore opportunities, in collaboration with First Nations and Indigenous communities, to celebrate Indigenous cultures and heritage;
- Conserve and integrate on-site and adjacent heritage properties so that new mid-rise buildings are sympathetic to, and compatible with, the heritage property;
- Create a safe, comfortable, accessible, vibrant, and attractive public realm and pedestrian environment;

Figure 6: Examples of recently constructed mid-rise buildings, 109 Ossington Avenue & 875 Queen Street East.

- Have good, predictable street proportion, allow for access to sunlight in the spring and autumn, have open views to the sky from the street, and limit and mitigate pedestrian level wind impacts;
- Respond appropriately to prominent sites and landmarks, and significant views from the public realm; and
- Ensure high-quality living and working conditions, including access to public and private open space, interior daylighting, natural ventilation, and privacy for building occupants.

Design Excellence

Mid-rise buildings play an important role in defining the image of Toronto's Avenues and select Apartment Neighbourhoods, and should embody design excellence. Mid-rise buildings will reflect design excellence and innovation through the effective use of resources, high-quality materials, innovative and sustainable building design and construction, and through a sensitive and thoughtful response to the existing and planned context.

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. Mid-rise buildings should be compact and designed as efficient building envelopes and embrace sustainable building technologies and materials such as mass timber, modular and prefabricated construction to reduce energy use and embodied carbon.

There are also site design aspects, including landscaping, building organization and facade design that addresses directional orientation for maximum passive solar gain, which can be applied to improve both the adjacent pedestrian realm comfort and 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 results.

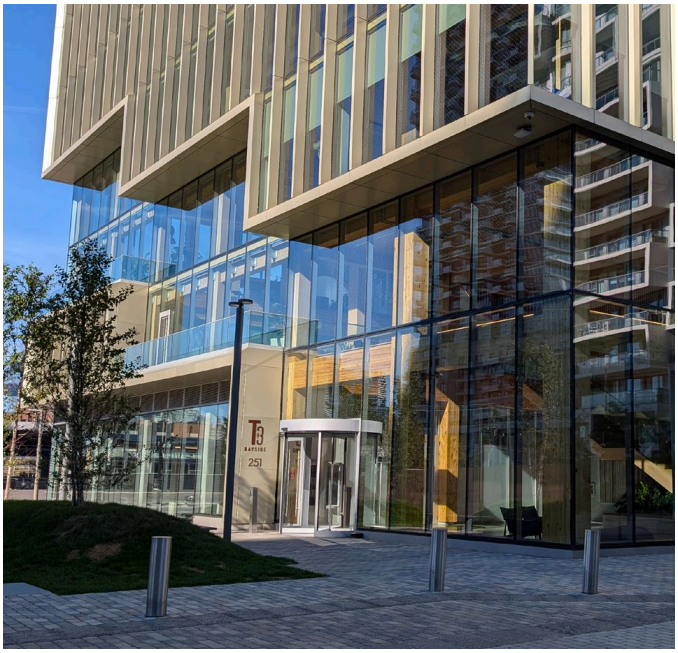

Figure 7: Example of a mass timber mid-rise building, 251 Queens Quay East.

Heritage Conservation

The City of Toronto values its heritage properties and requires that new developments on, or adjacent to, properties on the Heritage Register conserve the cultural heritage values, attributes, integrity, and character of those properties. Development should be consistent with accepted principles of good heritage conservation and the City's Official Plan Heritage Policies (Section 3.1.6).

New development should strive for the long-term protection, integration, and re-use of heritage resources. Heritage properties should inform the scale and contextual treatment of new developments. When well-designed and appropriately sited in the context, mid-rise buildings can positively contribute to certain historical settings.

Where a development is within a Heritage Conservation District (HCD), mid-rise buildings must conform to the HCD Plan's policies and guidelines specific to that district. HCDs are special areas with a concentration of cultural heritage resources and distinct heritage character. HCD Plans and Guidelines are designed to ensure that the district's heritage significance and character are conserved and enhanced.

Figure 8: Example of heritage conservation in mid-rise buildings.

Organization of the Guidelines

The Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines are organized into the following sections:

- Introduction
- 1.0 Site Context
- 2.0 Site Organization
- 3.0 Mid-rise Building Design
- 4.0 Pedestrian Realm
- 5.0 Glossary

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 and 4.0.

Section 5.0 Glossary provides terms and definitions.

How and Where the Guidelines Apply

The Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines are intended to be read together with, and to implement the relevant Official Plan policies, applicable Zoning By-laws, Heritage Conservation District Plans, area-specific Urban Design Guidelines, 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 mid-rise developments. 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 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 achieves the objectives of the Official Plan. The Guidelines should be weighed across the board with other City guidelines to determine whether a development application has successfully met the overall intent of the applicable guidelines, policies, and the Official Plan.

The Guidelines are periodically reviewed and may be revised from time to time, to reflect new findings or study recommendations that have an impact on the effective evaluation of mid-rise building applications.

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1.0 SITE CONTEXT

1.1. CONTEXT ANALYSIS

Evaluate the existing and planned context and consider on a site-by-site basis how the proposed mid-rise building responds to the patterns, opportunities, and challenges of the surrounding context and broader area.

Within the Planning Rationale, include a "walkable" context analysis, that uses text and graphics to illustrate the proposal at an appropriate scale, including but not limited to:

a. Official Plan land use designations and zoning permissions

b. 250m and 500m walksheds from the site

c. general layout and dimensions of streets, blocks, parks and public or private open spaces

d. area amenities and destinations (e.g. community centres, trails, libraries, schools, retail areas)

e. existing and planned pedestrian/cycling routes

f. existing and potential heritage properties and Heritage Conservation Districts

g. transit routes, stations, and stops, including distance to rapid transit nodes.

Include a Block Context Plan based on the Development Guide Terms of Reference requirements.

For larger or more complex areas with multiple properties and/or buildings, a master plan may be required. In addition to the guidelines above, the master plan should include:

a. a vision for the development of the entire site area, incorporating a hierarchy of streets and open spaces with characteristics based on their role as a place and as part of the movement network;

b. municipal servicing, vehicular circulation and major utility connections. Include shared systems such as district community energy when appropriate;

c. a range of unit sizes, including the provision of larger units suitable for families;

d. where possible, a percentage of the proposed units designed as universally accessible with a barrier-free connection from the public sidewalk; and

e. a phasing plan, schedule and interim landscape plan where two or more construction phases are involved.

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 relevant 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 within and appropriately respond 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 within and reinforce existing or planned built form patterns, while responding 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 site area, including how new streets, pedestrian and cycling routes, parks, and publicly accessible and private open spaces will be organized. When there is a Secondary Plan or Site and Area Specific Policy that applies to the site, with associated Context or Precinct Plans that include comparable information and detail, a Master Plan may not be required.

Official Plan Reference:

2.2 Structuring Growth in the City | 2.2.3 Avenues: Reurbanizing Arterial Corridors | 2.3.1 Healthy Neighbourhoods | 2.4 Bringing the City Together | 3.1.1 The Public Realm | 3.1.3 Built Form | 3.1.6 Heritage Resources | 3.3 Building New Neighbourhoods | 3.4 The Natural Environment | 4.1 Neighbourhoods | 4.2 Apartment Neighbourhoods | 4.5 Mixed Use Areas| 5.1.3 Site Plan Control

1.1.1. MAIN STREET CONTEXT

Main street contexts are typically defined by a continuous, pedestrian-scale streetwall with occasional breaks for mid-block connections, parks or open spaces. The fine-grained streetwall is articulated by a rhythm of narrow lot frontages and storefronts with recessed entrances, cornices and sign bands, creating a datum line.

Figure 1.1.1: Example of a mid-rise building within a main street context.

Typical characteristics of main street contexts include:

- Retail, office and institutional uses on the ground floor facing the street;
- Fine-grain unit entrances accessed from the street frontage;
- Buildings built to or close to the front property lines;
- Buildings built to all side property lines;
- Upper floor step-backs starting at the sixth floor or lower determined by the surrounding context; and
- Loading, servicing, and parking access via the side street or laneway at the rear of the property.

Rationale

The characteristics of mid-rise buildings are determined by their various uses and surrounding contexts. Analyzing the existing and planned context is essential for designing the appropriate mid-rise building to fit into the surrounding context.

In Toronto, sections of major streets such as Queen Street East, and West the Queensway, and Danforth Avenue are characterized by continuous retail, office and institutional uses. Existing buildings on main streets are typically built to the front and side property lines, forming a continuous streetscape defined by fine-grained built form and a low-scale streetwall. Loading, servicing and parking access are generally provided via side streets or rear laneways. In this context, mid-rise buildings often feature lower floors built to the front and side property lines, with the upper floors incorporating step-backs, as determined by the surrounding context.

There are also emerging main streets identified through the policy framework. The mid-rise buildings along sections of these streets, like Sheppard Avenue East and West, and Kingston Road feature retail, office and institutional uses on the ground floor, with continuous streetwalls that reinforce a pedestrian scale streetscape. Some emerging main streets are also characterized by generous landscaped setbacks.

1.1.2. RESIDENTIAL CONTEXT

Residential contexts are typically defined by a streetwall that is not continuous, but instead includes regular landscaped breaks between buildings to establish a pavilion rhythm along the street. The streetscape is expanded with landscaped front yard setbacks and breaks between buildings occur regularly and may also include mid-block connections, parks, and open spaces.

Figure 1.1.2: Example of a mid-rise building in a residential context.

Typical characteristics of residential contexts include:

- Active residential uses, such as townhouse or garden units with individual entrances on the ground floor facing the street;
- Small-scale non-res uses, such as cafes, community rooms or local service shops on the ground floor that serve both building residents and the local community;
- Generous landscaped setback in the front yard, allowing for the opportunity to plant additional trees;
- Windows on all elevations to maximize residential units' comfort and avoid blank façades; and
- Loading, servicing, and parking access via the side street or at the rear of the property.

Rationale

On streets where retail at grade is not required and residential uses are permitted, existing residential apartments often have generous landscaped setbacks in the front yards. Mid-rise buildings in these residential areas should incorporate similar landscaped setbacks, ideally including a second row of trees to create a buffer between the public and private realms. Ground floor townhouses or garden units with individual entrances are encouraged to face the streets, and buildings should feature windows on side elevations to provide natural light and ventilation to the residential units while avoiding blank façades.

Figure 1.1.3: Example of at-grade residential streetscape treatment.

1.2. CULTURAL HERITAGE

All mid-rise developments are to conform to the Official Plan's heritage conservation policies and other applicable policies and guidelines and be sensitively integrated with heritage buildings within their context.

Rationale

Heritage conservation plays an integral role in city planning as a powerful values-based approach to city building, helping convey what makes Toronto unique. Cultural heritage is widely understood to be an important component of sustainable development and place-making, and Toronto City Council is acting to ensure the ongoing conservation of significant heritage resources and areas.

Cultural heritage resources are protected and managed as part of planning for future growth under the Provincial Planning Statement. Heritage conservation is enabled through the Ontario Heritage Act. The Provincial Planning Statement (2024) requires that cultural heritage and archaeological resources, identified as key provincial interests, be conserved. It provides specific direction for the protection of built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes, archaeological resources, and areas of archaeological potential, both on development sites and where development is proposed on adjacent properties. Additionally, it emphasizes that cultural heritage and archaeology contribute to a 'sense of place'.

The Ontario Heritage Act (OHA) is the enabling legislation that allows municipalities to protect heritage resources, including buildings, districts and archaeological resources. It regulates how municipal councils can identify and safeguard heritage resources, and is supported by accompanying regulations, such as Ontario Regulation 9/06, which provides the criteria for determining cultural heritage value. The City of Toronto's Official Plan implements the provincial policy framework and provides policies to guide decision-making within the city. Section 3.1.6 of the Official Plan outlines policies pertaining to heritage conservation for both individual heritage properties, designated under Part IV of the OHA, and properties located within Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs), designated under Part V of the OHA. It also provides direction on how heritage resources should be maintained and integrated into new developments.

The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (Standards and Guidelines) provide sound, practical guidance to achieve good conservation practice, establishing a consistent, pan-Canadian set of conservation principles and guidelines. Adopted by Toronto City Council in 2008, the Standards and Guidelines offer results-oriented guidance for sound decision-making when planning for, intervening on, and using historic places. The Official Plan references the Standards and Guidelines as a key guidance document, requiring heritage properties to be conserved and maintained consistent with these principles.

The following guidelines outline the requirements for new development:

- On, or adjacent to, individual heritage properties (Part IV)
- Within, or adjacent to, Heritage Conservation Districts (Part V)

Moreover, building design should be sympathetic and sensitive to the historic context and existing fabric. Guidance on sensitive development is provided in various sections of Section 3.0 of this document.

Official Plan Reference:

2.2.1: Downtown: The Heart of Toronto

2.2.3 Avenues: Reurbanizing Arterial Corridors

3.1.3 Built Form

3.1.6 Heritage Conservation

Related Guidelines:

Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada

1.2.1. INDIVIDUAL HERITAGE PROPERTIES (PART IV)

Where development is on, or adjacent to, heritage properties, conserve the heritage attributes of the property, be sensitive to the surrounding context, and avoid negatively impacting heritage properties.

a. New development on, or adjacent to, heritage properties will require additional considerations, requirements, and design solutions to conserve and maintain the cultural heritage value, heritage attributes, and historic character of the heritage properties.

b. The design approach may include additional step-backs, at a lower height, informed by a Heritage Impact Assessment, to provide a varied streetwall and maintain the legibility and prominence of adjacent heritage properties and historic streetwalls.

c. Mitigation measures should be taken to ensure that heritage properties are conserved and not negatively impacted.

d. New development should be designed to be compatible with the scale, form, and massing of adjacent heritage properties, while respecting the prevailing historic streetwall and surrounding context.

e. Negative impacts on the three-dimensional integrity and character of heritage properties, as well as their prominence within the existing context, should be minimized.

f. New development adjacent to heritage properties should be generally set back to respect the existing setback conditions of the adjacent heritage property.

g. New development should reference the vertical and horizontal articulations, proportions, and solid-to-void ratios of adjacent heritage properties, historic streetwalls, and the surrounding context.

h. Views of heritage landmarks should be conserved, and new developments should not obstruct these views.

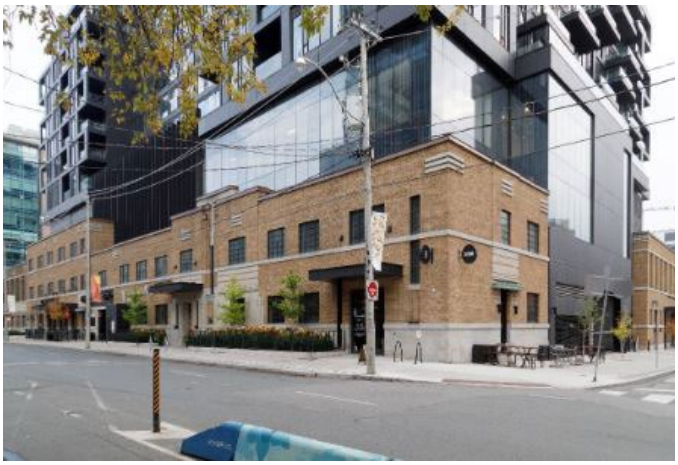


Figure 1.2.1: Adaptive reuse of the former Waterworks building at 497 Richmond Street West (2023).

Figure 1.2.2: Adaptive reuse of the former Waterworks building at 497 Richmond Street West (2023).

Rationale

The key piece of legislation governing heritage conservation in Ontario is the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA), which was created to support the conservation, protection, and preservation of heritage resources across the province. The OHA enables municipalities to conserve cultural heritage resources primarily through the designation of individual properties under Part IV and the designation of HCDs under Part V.

Certain areas of the city contain a higher concentration of heritage resources than others, but all heritage properties should be considered where redevelopment occurs on, or adjacent to, these sites. Many areas within the city have not yet been fully surveyed for heritage resources, and the City's Heritage Register is continually being updated. For the most up-to-date information on heritage properties, the City's Heritage Planning unit should be consulted. These guidelines ensure that heritage properties are protected and carefully considered during redevelopment along the Avenues.

Official Plan Reference:

3.1.6 Heritage Conservation

1.2.2. HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS (PART V)

Conserve and maintain the heritage character and cultural heritage values of HCDs to ensure that new developments are compatible with the district's heritage attributes and historic character.

Figure 1.2.3: Parkdale Main Street HCD - Queen Street West at Cowan Avenue (2022).

a. Development within an HCD should conform to the policies and guidelines established in the HCD plan for properties within the district (see City's website: Heritage Conservation Districts – City of Toronto)

b. New mid-rise development will be permitted in HCDs, provided it is in conformity with the policies and guidelines outlined in the individual HCD plans.

c. Where applicable, the policies and guidelines of HCD plans will prevail in the event of a conflict.

d. New development adjacent to HCDs should conserve and maintain the heritage value, heritage attributes, and historic character of the adjacent district.

Rationale

Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs) are an important part of the heritage planning framework in Ontario and the City of Toronto. They serve to ensure that historically significant areas are protected and reflect Toronto as a place and people through their heritage values and characteristics. HCDs are maintained so that every Torontonian, present and future, can appreciate and take pride in the City's rich cultural heritage.

The City of Toronto designates HCDs to conserve places that reflect Toronto's rich history and that contribute to its livability and appeal as a multicultural, sustainable, and equitable city. HCD Plans are valued for their ability to provide contextual, place-based policies and guidelines that conserve and enhance historic areas through the long-term management of change. By conserving our significant and historic areas, we recognize the importance of history and context within our growing city. As some areas experience rapid intensification, it is crucial to manage change in defined areas that hold cultural heritage value and reflect significant periods of the City's history and development.

New developments and redevelopments within HCDs must conform to the policies and guidelines of the HCD where they are located. In the event of any conflict, the HCD Plan's policies and guidelines will prevail.

Figure 1.2.4: Example illustrating the policies & guidelines for development on contributing properties - Parkdale Main Street HCD Plan.

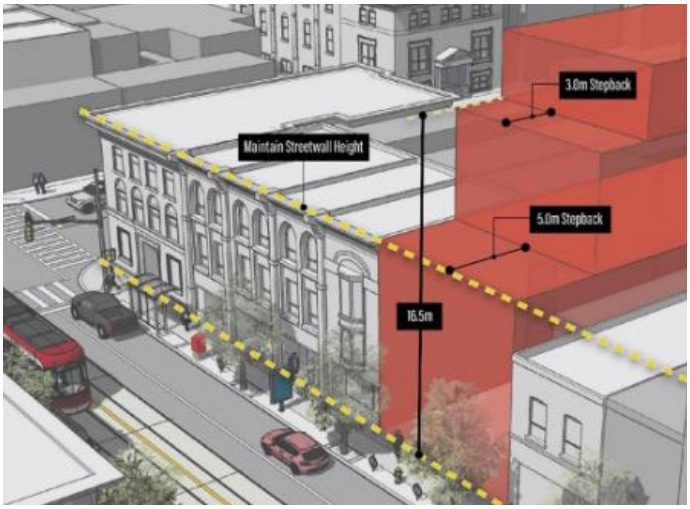


Figure 1.2.5: Example illustrating the policies and guidelines for development on non-contributing properties - Parkdale Main Street HCD Plan.

Official Plan Reference:

3.1.6 Heritage Conservation

1.3. SITE TYPOLOGY ANALYSIS

Evaluate the site conditions to ensure that the new development fits well and responds appropriately to the patterns, opportunities, and challenges within the surrounding context.

Rationale

Toronto features a variety of mid-rise site conditions, such as deep vs. shallow sites, large vs. narrow sites, midblock sites vs. corner sites, and sites with or without rear lanes. Many parts of the city also include variations in topography resulting in sloping sites and changes in grade which need to be incorporated into the design solution.

Among these factors, lot depths have the most impact on the development potential of mid-rise buildings. The table below outlines the ideal lot depth in relation to the adjacent right-of-way width and the building height.

This guideline considers the ideal lot depth for developing an efficient and well-designed mid-rise building. The ideal lot depth for a mid-rise building site increases with the width of the right-of-way and the corresponding height of the building in order to accommodate the appropriate setbacks, step-backs and separation distances within the site. Table 1 illustrates the ideal minimum lot depths on the prevailing right-of-way widths across the city.

The ideal lot depth is the preferred minimum lot depth required to support the intended development that maximizes the efficiency of a site while considering all guidelines in this document, including minimum rear yard setbacks and a front Façade designed to meet the five hours of sunlight requirement on the street boulevard. The ideal lot depths in Table 1 assume a development comprises a standard double-loaded corridor bar-building oriented parallel to the street, with an upper storey depth of 18 metres. Properties on the north side of east-west and diagonal streets with no shadow impact on the adjacent street may be able to achieve these requirements on shallower lot depths, based on site-specific conditions.

Understanding the site conditions early in the planning process is crucial for applying appropriate guidelines. Shallow sites may require the assembly of additional lots from adjacent neighbouring properties to accommodate mid-rise development. Deep and/or large sites can lead to a variety of design outcomes for mid-rise buildings. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Through-lot sites with dual frontages are becoming more viable for mid-rise development due to the City's Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods (EHON) major streets study and Avenues Policy Review work. These sites also require innovative, and site-specific design solutions.

Table 1: Ideal Lot Depth in relation to the adjacent Right-of-Way Width and Building Height*

R.O.W. WIDTH (Metres)	IDEAL LOT DEPTH (Metres)	BUILDING HEIGHT*	
		Metres	Storeys(Approximate)
20	30	20	6
27	34	27	8
30	34	30	9
36	36	36	11
45	37	45	14

** Heights shown in the table may be adjusted based on site conditions and geometry, geographical location in the city (or geographical location relative to proximity to transit), impacts on the public realm and solar orientation as described further in detail in these guidelines. This chart is intended to be read with the guideline document in its entirety.*

1.3.1. SITE PLANNING FOR DEEP AND/OR LARGE SITES

Where a mid-rise building is on a site that is deep enough to accommodate new streets or blocks, multiple buildings, and/or buildings with elements oriented perpendicular to the main street frontage, additional considerations, such as increased setbacks, step-backs or building orientation should be evaluated on a site-by-site basis.

a. Incorporating generous public and private landscaped open spaces on the site.

b. Developing a standalone small-scale built form between the mid-rise and adjacent low-rise areas.

c. Increasing the rear setback beyond 7.5 metres and providing additional soft landscaping along the rear property line.

d. Increasing setbacks to allow for active and/or glazed façades along all four sides of the building, particularly where buildings are oriented perpendicular to the primary street frontage and provide setbacks that allow for pedestrian connections.

e. Ensuring that mid-rise buildings on deep sites with irregular building wing configurations maintain privacy and access to sunlight and sky view through appropriate side yard property line setbacks and separation distances between proposed and potential future wings.

f. Locating the taller portion of the building in the middle of the site, ensuring a generous setback from both the street and surrounding properties to maintain a mid-rise scale.

g. Consider the impact of inside corner conditions on unit privacy and overlook. Mitigate these effects through unit layouts (e.g. wrap corners with large units), placement and staggering of windows, and/or provision of clerestory windows.

h. Consider natural ventilation, daylighting, solar orientation and energy performance when locating and orienting building elements.

Figure 1.3.1: Image of a mid-rise rear condition on a deep corner site at Dundas Street East and Carlaw Avenue, where a connected low-rise built form was included as part of the transition.

Figure 1.3.2: Image of a mid-rise rear condition on a deep corner site at Dundas Street West and Manning Street, where a standalone low-rise built form was included as part of the transition.

Deep Corner Sites

Official Plan Policy 3.1.3.5. provides direction for mid-rise corner sites: "Mid-rise buildings on corner sites with different right-of-way widths will have building heights along each street edge that relate to their corresponding right-of-way width". The Guidelines below provide additional direction for these unique sites (Figure 1.3.3).

a. Where a mid-rise building is proposed on a deep site with building wing extensions along a local street, the building wing(s) should step down in height from the primary street frontage to the local street after a distance of approximately 30 metres from the primary street. Mid-rise wings on local streets should generally not be taller than the width of the local right-of-way (typically 20 metres or 6 storeys).

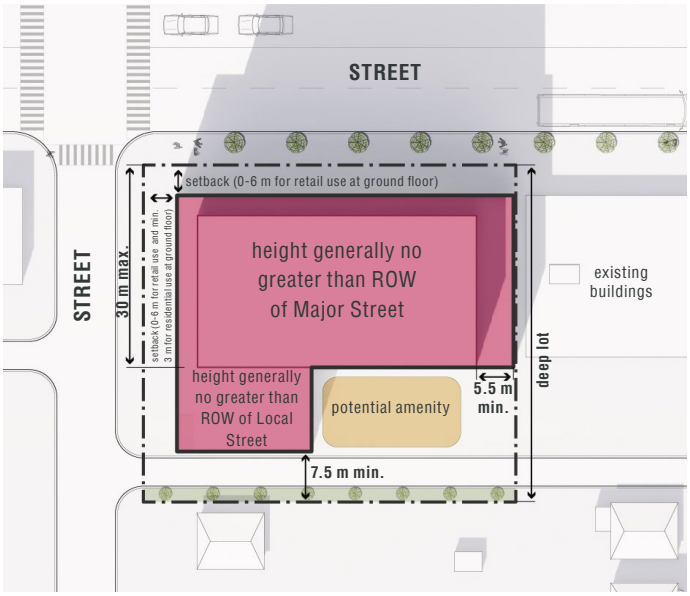


Figure 1.3.3: Sample illustration of a mid-rise building at a deep corner site.

Deep Mid-Block Sites

Deep sites in a mid-block location can also accommodate mid-rise wings provided the site is wide enough to accommodate all appropriate setbacks. Mid-rise wings should provide transition down in height from the primary street frontage to any low-rise areas to the rear (Figure 1.3.4).

b. Provide a minimum setback of 7.5 metres from the side property line to achieve a minimum separation distance of 15 metres between proposed mid-block wing(s) and future development to allow for facing windows as well as access to sunlight, soft landscaping and pedestrian connections.

c. Mid-block, mid-rise wings should generally not be taller than 20 metres (or approximately 6 storeys).

d. Where a mid-rise wing is located with units and primary windows facing the side property line, side yard setbacks must be provided in order to achieve privacy and allow access to sunlight and sky-view between the proposed wing and future development of adjacent sites.

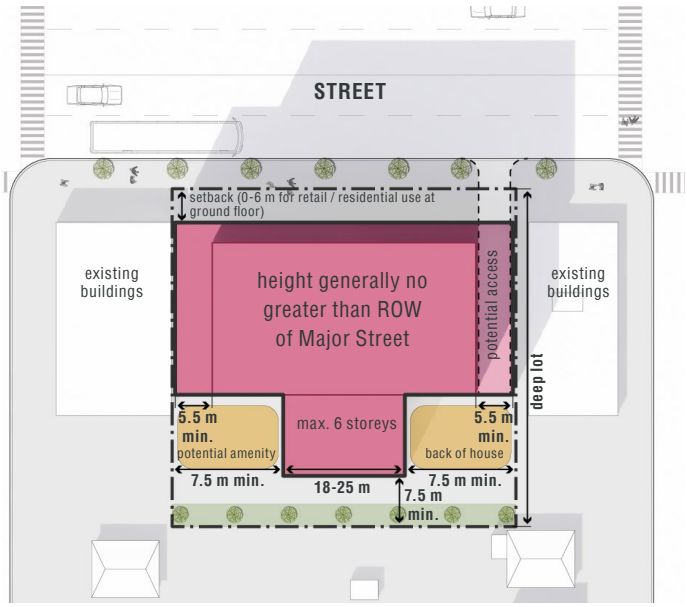


Figure 1.3.4: Sample illustration of a mid-rise building at a deep mid-block site.

Deep Courtyard Sites

Development sites with wide frontages on either corner or mid-block sites may be able to accommodate courtyard conditions. In this configuration, units with windows may be oriented internally, facing other wings of a building. Official Plan Policy 3.1.4.6 provides direction on mid-rise courtyard conditions, “Mid-rise buildings on deep sites should be designed to provide and frame accessible and well-proportioned open spaces that have access to sunlight and daylight” (Figure 1.3.5).

e. Provide an appropriate separation distance between mid-rise building wings to maintain privacy, access to sunlight and sky view for both courtyard facing units and the courtyard itself. Courtyard width should be proportionate to the average height of the building wings, at an approximate ratio of 1:1, or a minimum of 15 metres, whichever is greater.

f. Where possible, consider increasing the separation distance between building wings to achieve a courtyard width to wing height ratio of 1.5:1. This will promote the creation of larger, more functional landscaped courtyards with increased sunlight access.

g. Design courtyards to provide shared landscape amenity spaces, and limit servicing and parking functions.

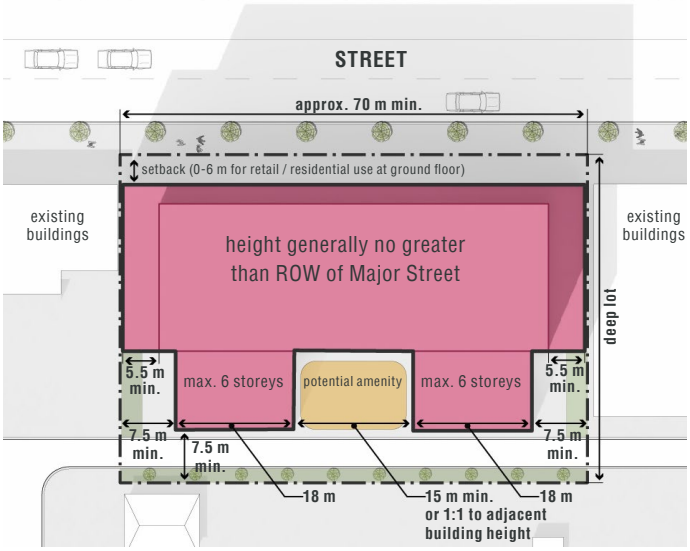


Figure 1.3.5: Sample illustration of a mid-rise building at a deep courtyard site.

Rationale

The Official Plan's Built Form – Building Types Policy 3.1.3.5 provides direction for deep sites: "Mid-rise buildings on deep sites should be designed to provide and frame accessible and well-proportioned open spaces that have access to sunlight and daylight".

There are numerous ways in which mid-rise buildings can be sited, massed and designed on a deep site. Rear transition is important for very deep and/or very wide sites, which lend themselves to the design of four-sided or irregularly-shaped buildings and careful consideration should be given to how each façade responds to its context. Some deep sites have provided transition through the creation of connected (Figure 1.3.1) or standalone low-rise built forms (Figure 1.3.2). Often on deep sites, mid-rise buildings are proposed with units facing side lot lines, or as buildings with extensions or "wings" –for example, taking a C, H, L, T or U-shaped building configuration in plan. Ensuring appropriate side and rear yard setbacks and separation distance between existing or planned buildings is important for privacy and access to sunlight and sky-view. Some of the typical mid-rise site conditions are outlined as Deep Corner sites, Deep Mid-Block sites, and Deep Courtyard sites. All of these types share some attributes, and the guidelines below may apply in part or in whole. This Performance Standard does not refer to a typical double-loaded corridor building oriented parallel to the primary street frontage.

Figure 1.3.6: Image of a mid-rise courtyard condition on a deep site at 1900 Bayview Avenue.

Figure 1.3.7: Image of a mid-rise courtyard condition on a deep site at 95 The Pond Road.

Official Plan Reference:

3.1.1 The Public Realm | 3.1.1 Built Form | 3.1.4 Built Form - Building Types | 4.1 Neighbourhoods
4.2 Apartment Neighbourhoods | 4.5 Mixed Use Areas

1.3.2. SITE PLANNING FOR THROUGH-LOT SITES

Where a mid-rise building is on a through-lot with dual frontages, ensure the development frames and supports both the adjacent streets and preserves the existing mature trees on site.

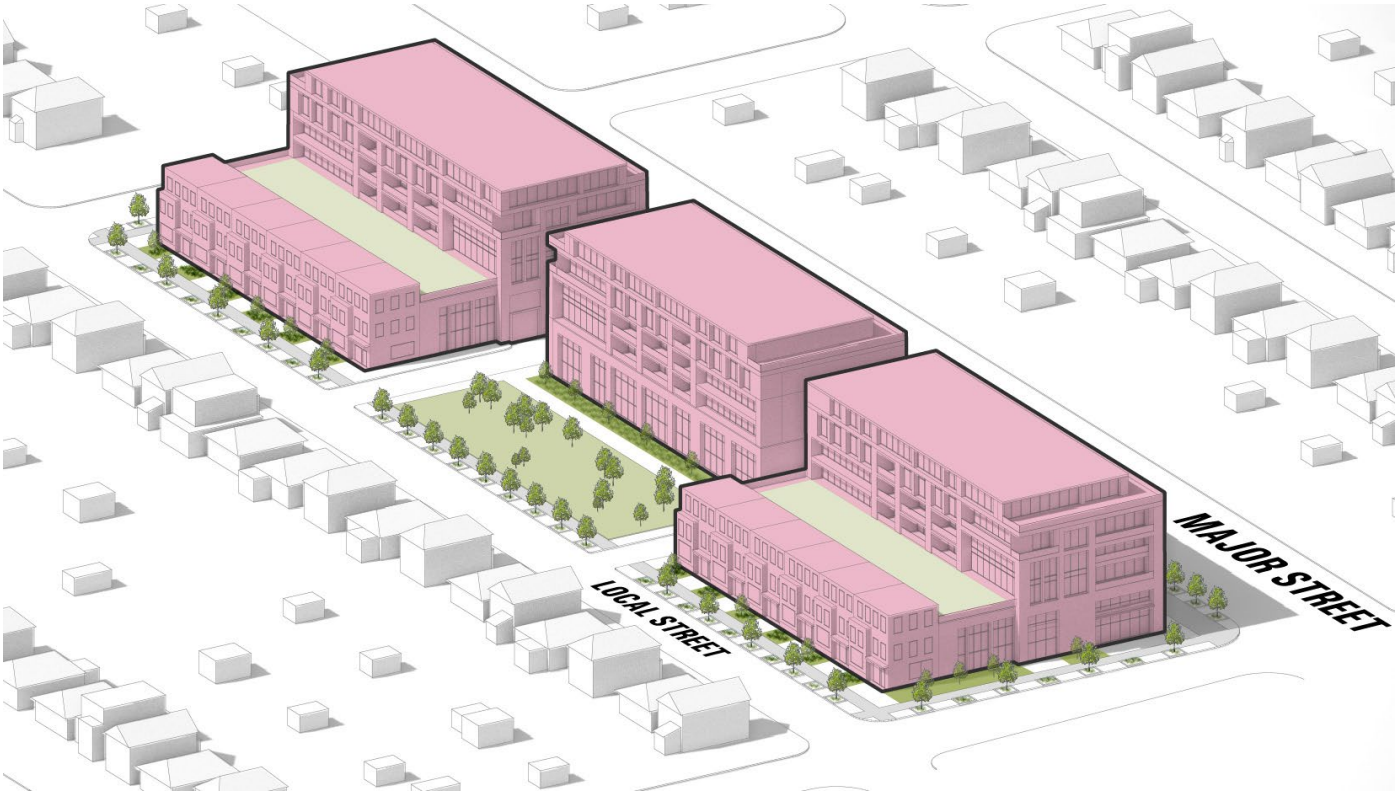


Figure 1.3.8: Sample illustration of a mid-rise development on a through-lot site.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to through-lot sites, but there are a number of guidelines that provide appropriate site planning and built form relationships that can be adapted where site conditions allow, including:

a. Provide generous landscape setbacks along both major and local streets to protect the existing mature trees and/or allow space for planting a new row of trees.

b. Encourage retail opportunities along the street frontages.

c. Create mid-block pedestrian and cycling connections between the major street and the interior of the site and adjacent areas.

d. Frame and support the adjacent streets with taller built form along wider rights-of-way and transition down to a maximum of 6 storeys or 19 metres facing local streets.

e. Consolidate and enclose loading, servicing, and access to parking in the side yard to maintain an attractive streetscape along the public street.

Rationale

Through-lots on major streets offer unique opportunities and challenges for mid-rise development. The majority of through-lots are found in the Scarbrough, North York and Etobicoke Districts. The sites often feature extensive soft landscaping, mature trees and fences facing major streets, requiring careful planning to integrate new development successfully into the context and preserve existing mature trees.

In addition, lower scaled massing up to a maximum of 6 storeys or 19 metres should be placed facing local streets to ensure appropriate transition in scale to the inner neighbourhoods and be consistent with the transition set in the EHON Major Street Zoning By-law.

Official Plan Reference:

3.1.1 The Public Realm | 3.1.1 Built Form Policy | 3.1.4 Built Form - Building Types | 4.1 Neighbourhoods

4.2 Apartment Neighbourhoods | 4.5 Mixed Use Areas

1.4. SUNLIGHT, WIND, AND COMFORT

Locate and design mid-rise buildings to protect access to sunlight, provide protection from prevailing winds, and improve comfort in the surrounding context of streets, parks, public and private open spaces, and natural areas.

a. Design the scale and height of the mid-rise building to appropriately frame the public realm, while maintaining access to at least 5 hours of midday sunlight on the public sidewalks at the equinoxes, generally between 9:18am and 6:18pm (see also 3.2.1. Sun/ Shadow Performance).

b. Through a Sun / Shadow study, demonstrate how the proposed mid-rise building maximizes access to sunlight and minimizes shadowing of streets, parks, public and private open spaces and natural areas such as ravines.

c. Through a Pedestrian Level Wind Study, demonstrate how the proposed mid-rise building is massed and designed to shield adjacent streets, parks, and public and private open spaces from the prevailing winds.

d. Implement thermal comfort design strategies to improve thermal comfort in the surrounding streets, parks and public and private open spaces.

e. For large sites, locate, orient and design the parks and public and private open spaces to maximize access to sunlight and protection from prevailing winds.

Rationale

The Official Plan Parks and Open Spaces Policy 3.2.3 provides direction for developments near parks and open spaces: “The effects of development from adjacent properties, including additional shadows, noise, traffic and wind on parks and open spaces will be minimized as necessary to preserve their utility.” In addition, the Official Plan Built Form Policy 3.1.3 requires development to provide “comfortable wind conditions and air circulation at the street and adjacent open spaces to preserve the utility and intended use of the public realm, including sitting and standing.” The Built Form – Building Types section in the Official Plan also indicates that mid-rise buildings provide a balanced and predictable street proportion, which allows for access to midday sunlight in the spring and autumn and maintains open views to the sky from the street.

Toronto’s climate is one of extremes, characterized by hot, humid summers, and cold, grey, damp winters. In summer, shade from trees and light breezes make the public realm more comfortable. In the shoulder seasons, spring and fall, access to direct sunlight and shelter from the wind become very important to improve the comfort, usability, and enjoyment of outdoor spaces. Required Sun/Shadow studies focus on the equinoxes to emphasize the importance of access to sunlight during these seasons. The review of other times of day and other seasons may be required depending on the type and shadow sensitivity of adjacent uses.

Official Plan Reference:

3.1.1 The Public Realm | 3.1.3 Built Form | 3.1.4 Built Form- Building Types | 3.2.3. Parks and Open Spaces

4.1 Neighbourhoods | 4.2 Apartment Neighbourhoods | 4.5 Mixed Use Areas

2.0 SITE ORGANIZATION

2.1. BUILDING PLACEMENT AND ADDRESS

Locate mid-rise buildings to frame the edges of streets, parks, and open space in a way that fits harmoniously with the existing and planned context, while providing opportunities for high-quality landscaping and streetscaping.

Figure 2.1.1: Illustration of streetwall placed parallel to the street with strategic setbacks, where appropriate.

Organize mid-rise buildings to use existing or new public streets for address, and ensure primary building entrances front onto public streets, are well-defined, clearly visible, and universally accessible from the adjacent public sidewalk.

a. Organize the site at the early stage of the planning process to consider microclimate and passive solar design to improve surrounding comfort and energy efficiency.

b. In general, orient the primary facades of buildings parallel to the street and extend the streetwall the length of the site along the edges of streets, parks, and open space.

c. Design all building elevations that face streets, parks and open spaces and mid-block connections to appear and function as fronts to activate the public realm.

d. Locate mid-rise buildings to:

   i. align with neighbouring building frontages where the existing setback pattern is consistent and not planned to change;
   ii. achieve a sidewalk zone of 6.0 metres where a consistent setback pattern does not exist or is planned to change, except for heritage properties;
   iii. resolve differences where existing setbacks are well-established but vary on either side of a proposed development; and
   iv. maintain and enhance the character of existing soft landscaped streetscapes.

e. Provide greater building setbacks at strategic locations to avoid long, monotonous facades to improve pedestrian amenity, including more space for tree planting, wider sidewalks, forecourts, plazas, and other publicly accessible open spaces.

f. On corner sites, align the building to the setback pattern of neighbouring buildings on both streets and provide primary facades facing both streets.

g. Organize the site to optimize the opportunity for high-quality, grade-related landscaped open space and tree planting at grade. Opportunities may include hard and soft landscaped setbacks, plazas, courtyards, etc. On smaller infill sites, this landscaped open space may be combined in part with above-grade areas, such as rooftop amenity or green roofs.

h. Use high-quality architectural and landscape design to emphasize primary entrances.

i. Differentiate between residential and commercial entrances in mixed-use buildings.

j. Provide an entrance to each ground floor retail unit, which is identifiable and directly accessible from the public sidewalk.

k. Encourage fine-grained articulation of the street facades and provide opportunities for secondary entrances to animate the street when a larger retail tenancy is planned and provide a flexible design for converting into small units in the future. Where building entrances are set back by a plaza or forecourt, ensure high visibility and direct, universal access from the public sidewalk.

l. Coordinate the location of building entrances with transit stops and stations.

m. Provide weather protection at entrances to allow pedestrians to move comfortably throughout all seasons. Ensure weather protection elements, such as overhangs and canopies, have sufficient depth and are well-integrated into building design, carefully designed and scaled to support the street, and positioned to maximize function and pedestrian comfort.

Figure 2.1.2: Example of a clear, visible entrance with direct access to the sidewalk, complemented by public art and landscaping.

Rationale

Toronto's traditional urban pattern is of buildings aligned parallel to the street with a consistent setback from the front property line. This pattern of building placement clearly defines the edges of streets, parks, and open spaces to promote a vibrant pedestrian environment. Well-placed base buildings create a coherent streetscape and help new buildings fit in with existing neighbours. Where the setback pattern is not consistent or planned to change, the placement of base buildings at the required setback line, parallel to the street, helps establish a pedestrian-oriented context for the future. Where the existing 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 include soft landscaping to improve pedestrian comfort and amenity. Buildings, site services, and amenities should also be arranged to maximize grade-related and other on-site opportunities for high-quality landscaped open spaces to enrich the public realm, improve living and working conditions, and promote sustainable design.

Setbacks allow for soft landscaping, spill-out spaces and patios for retail uses and projecting elements such as porches, canopies, and landings for residential uses. These elements add visual interest to the front façade, provide transition in scale from the sidewalk to the main wall of the building and contribute to the creation of a safe, animated and comfortable streetscape.

Well-designed entrances create an arrival experience and identity for the building and can help define the transition between public and private realms. Typically, the most vibrant and interesting streets are lined with active, street-related uses accessed by a series of entrances from the public sidewalk. Clear, visible entries and views from building interiors to the street provide security for building occupants and pedestrians. Direct, universal access from the public sidewalk to a mid-rise building or use within a building, animates the street and encourages pedestrian activity to occur in the public realm.

Official Plan Reference:

2.3.1 Healthy Neighbourhoods | 3.1.1 The Public Realm | 3.1.3 Built Form | 3.5.3 The Future of Retailing

4.2 Apartment Neighbourhoods | 4.5 Mixed Use Areas

Related Standards, Guidelines & Studies:

Accessibility Design Guidelines | Streetscape Manual

Privately Owned Publicly-Accessible Space Design Guidelines |Toronto Green Standard | Retail Design Manual

2.2. PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE OPEN SPACES

Provide grade-related, publicly accessible open space within the mid-rise building site to complement, connect, and extend the existing network of public streets, parks, open spaces, and laneways.

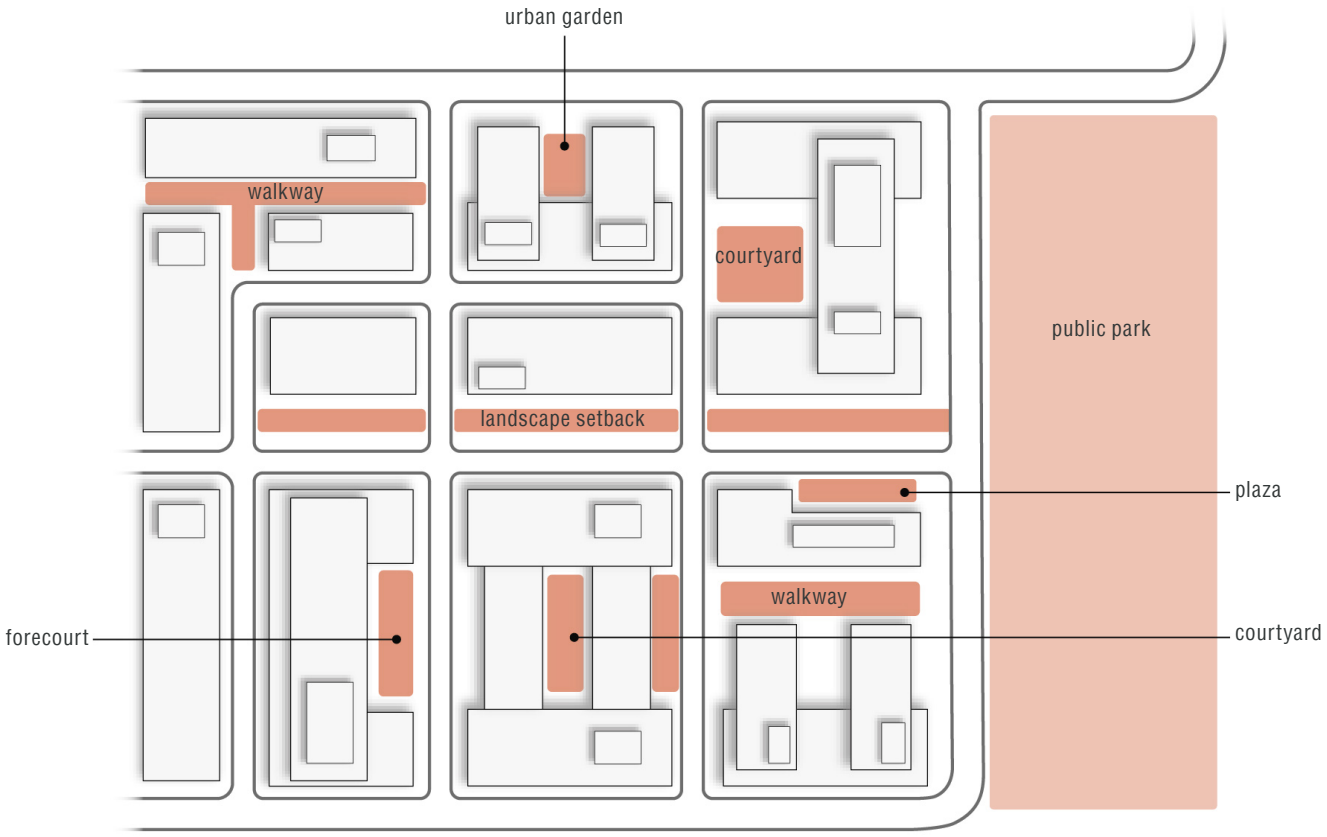


Figure 2.2.1: Illustration of the broad range of publicly accessible open space opportunities in mid-rise communities.

a. Locate and design publicly accessible open space to:
   i. read as a public place and include features and programming opportunities to encourage year-round use;
   ii. provide direct visual and physical connections to public streets, parks, and open spaces, including adjacent pedestrian and cycling routes;
   iii. complement and connect with publicly accessible open space on neighbouring properties, where possible;
   iv. maximize soft landscaping opportunities for site sustainability, stormwater management, and comfort, create attractive views and focal points;
   v. provide the opportunity to celebrate and honour the history and enduring presence of Indigenous peoples on the land as well as recognizing black and other equity-deserving communities; and
   vi. maximize safety, accessibility, comfort, and amenity, including access to sunlight, clear views to and from adjacent streets and buildings, universal accessibility, pedestrian-scale lighting, four season landscaping, seating, public art, and protection from wind and inclement weather.
b. On larger sites, use publicly accessible open space to provide mid-block pedestrian and cycling connections to support greater block permeability, finer-grained human-scaled

frontages, and an interconnected active mobility network.

c. Define and animate the edges of publicly accessible open space with well-proportioned streetwalls, permeable façades, and active uses at-grade.

d. Use design elements, such as surface materials, furnishings, landscaping, and pedestrian-scale lighting that are high-quality, functional, universally accessible, and environmentally sustainable.

Rationale

Mid-rise building sites are encouraged to provide publicly accessible open spaces to support the development of complete communities and provide spaces for all users to enjoy. Public open spaces should not be reserved only for large sites with multiple buildings and all sites are encouraged to provide these important spaces where possible. Mid-rise building sites present many opportunities to provide open spaces: within setback zones to soften the site edge and transition to the adjacent properties, between building wings to create well-framed courtyards, at corners to create prominence and space for pedestrian movement, adjacent to entrances to create places for rest, at a recessed point along the building facade to articulate the massing and provide a placemaking opportunity. In some cases, providing publicly accessible open spaces adjacent to heritage buildings enhances views of their facades and gives them greater prominence.

Although these open spaces are typically privately-owned and maintained, they should read as public places and be designed to encourage year-round public use. The location of open spaces on a site, along with the type, size, and intended use of the space, may vary depending on building use, site characteristics, and the range of open spaces available in the surrounding area. Providing good quality, publicly accessible open space within a mid-rise building site can help new development fit within the existing context and is particularly important when there is a shortage of public park space in the surrounding area. Publicly accessible open space should be large enough and flexible in its design to support a variety of uses and programming opportunities. The design should also create a micro-climate that supports pedestrian comfort, biodiversity, and should meet or exceed public standards for universal accessibility, safety, and high-quality architectural, landscape, and sustainable design.

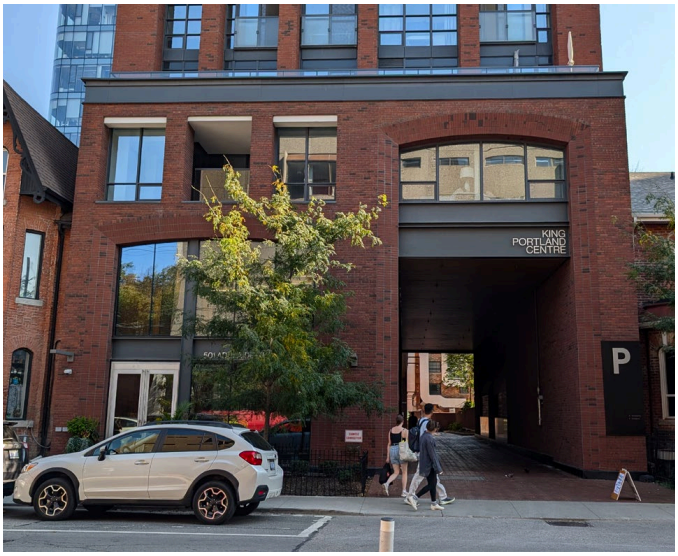
Legal agreements for easements on title to secure public access to open space and owner maintenance responsibilities may be required.

Types of publicly accessible open space may include:

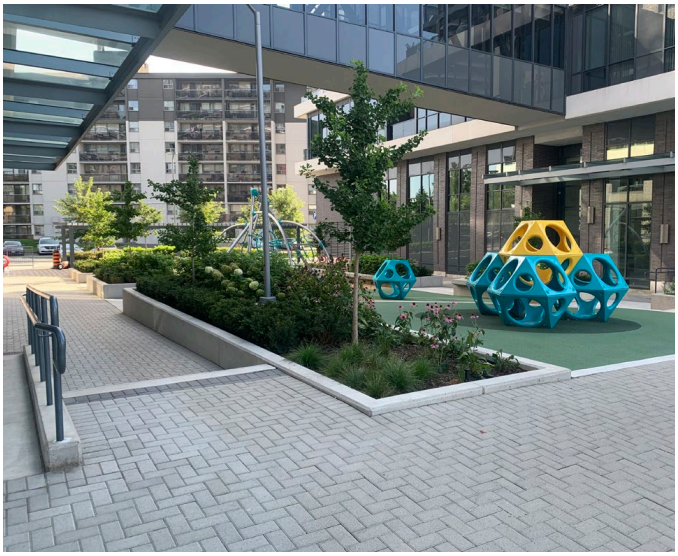
- **Courtyards -** landscaped open space, located in the centre of a single or consolidated block with no direct street frontage.
- **Forecourts -** landscaped open space between the public sidewalk and the main entrance of a building.
- **Landscaped Setback -** space between the public sidewalk and building face characterized by hard or soft landscape treatment.
- **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, located and oriented to provide maximum sunlight during midday.
- **Walkways -** exterior public pedestrian route at street level, usually providing connection through the block. A galleria, when glazed and enclosed.

Plaza with concrete pavers, public art and seating (1844 Bloor Street West).

Landscaped walkway providing a mid-block connection (1155 Queen Street West).



Covered mid-block connection (501 Adelaide Street West).



Publicly accessible open space with seating, whimsical elements for children, landscaping and decorative paving (2 Gibbs Road).

Figure 2.2.2: Examples of publicly accessible open spaces.

Official Plan Reference:

3.1.1 The Public Realm | 3.1.3 Built Form | 3.1.4 Built Form - Building Types | 3.2.3 Parks and Open Space

Related Standards, Guidelines & Studies:

Toronto Green Standard | Privately Owned Publicly-Accessible Space Design Guidelines

2.3. SHARED INDOOR AND OOUTDOOR AMENITY SPACES

Provide a range of high-quality, comfortable outdoor amenity space throughout the mid-rise building site.

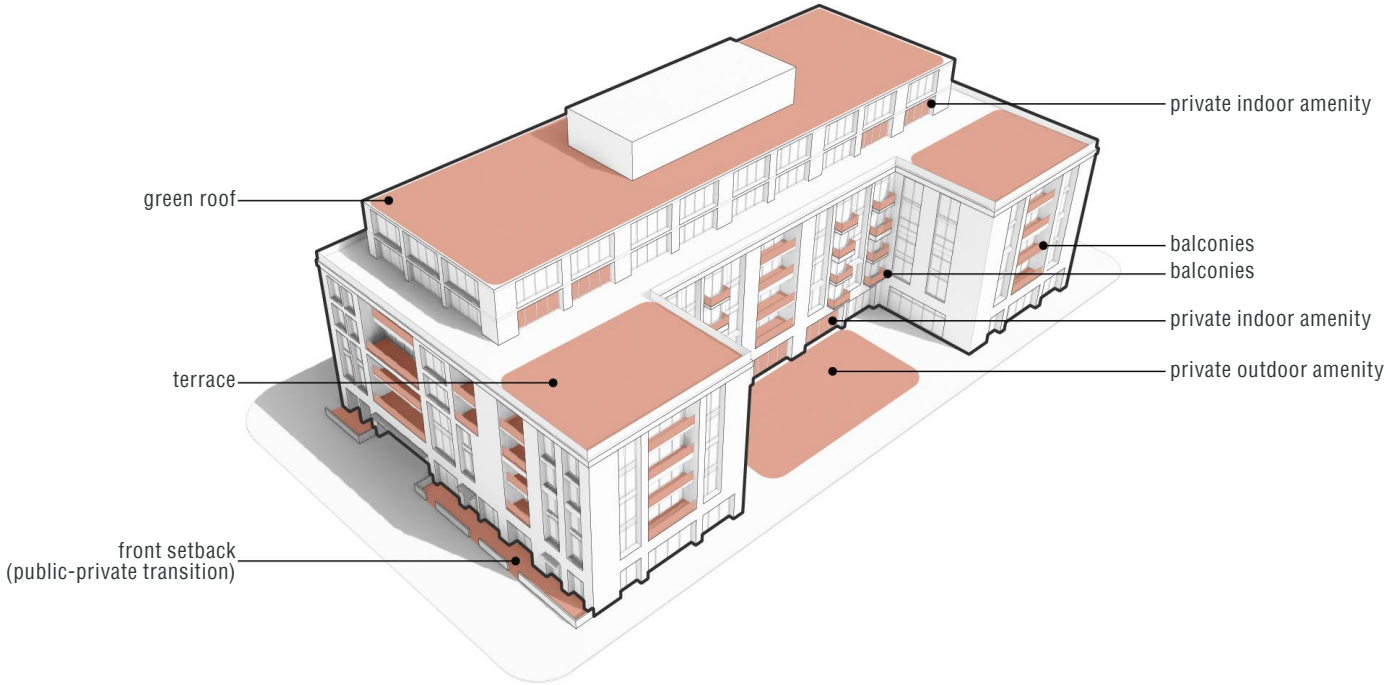


Figure 2.3.1 : Illustration of private and shared amenity space opportunities throughout a mid-rise building site.

a. Locate and design outdoor amenity space to:
   i. maximize comfort, which includes providing access to sunlight and minimizing wind impact, preferably without the use of free standing wind barriers;
   ii. minimize noise and air quality impacts from site servicing, mechanical equipment, etc.;
   iii. include high-quality, universally accessible, and environmentally sustainable materials, four season landscaping, seating, pedestrian-scale lighting, trees, shade structures, weather protection, screening, and programming opportunities, as appropriate.
   iv. Encourage outdoor amenity spaces to be located at grade.
b. To the greatest extent possible, locate private patios and gardens to minimize overlook from neighbours.
c. Make private balconies large enough to provide usable outdoor space, such as space for seating (see also Guideline 3.7 Balconies and Projections).
d. In residential or mixed-use developments, provide pet friendly amenity space in accordance with the Pet Friendly Design Guidelines and Best Practices for Multi-unit Buildings.
e. In residential or mixed-use developments, provide a range of flexible amenity spaces to support a variety of age groups in accordance with the Growing Up Guidelines.
f. When rooftops are used for outdoor amenity, ensure that the base of any building mass that faces onto the space is treated to protect migratory birds and mitigate wind.
g. Where possible, locate interior amenity facilities adjacent to shared outdoor amenity areas and provide windows and doors for direct physical and visual access between these spaces.

Rationale

Whether shared or accessed exclusively by individual building occupants, private open space should meet a broad range of needs, including those of families with children and pet owners. Private outdoor amenity space, such as balconies, gardens, courtyards, roof terraces, and accessible intensive green roofs, should be comfortable, safe, and designed to accommodate year-round use.

On-site shared outdoor amenity areas complement the public park and open space system and provide additional gathering space to support community life. Developments with well-designed and located shared amenity areas with places for children to play, 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 on 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 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.

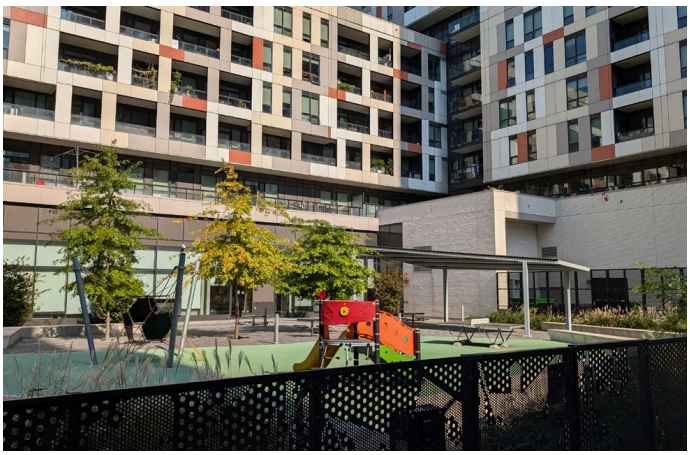


Figure 2.3.2 : Examples of at-grade shared outdoor amenity spaces.

Official Plan Reference:

3.1.1 The Public Realm | 3.1.3 Built Form | 3.1.4 Built Form - Building Types | 3.2.3 Parks and Open Space

3.4 The Natural Environment

Related Standards, Guidelines & Studies:

Growing Up Guidelines | Pet Friendly Design Guidelines and Best Practices for Multi-unit Buildings

Toronto Green Standard | Toronto Green Roof By-law | Bird-Friendly Development Guidelines

2.4. PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLING CONNECTIONS

Provide comfortable, safe, and accessible pedestrian and cycling routes through and around the mid-rise building site to connect with adjacent routes, streets, parks, open spaces, and other priority destinations.

a. Design on-site pedestrian and cycling routes to:
   i. read as publicly accessible (easements on title to secure public access may be required);
   ii. be direct, logical, and continuous to limit the need for added wayfinding measures;
   iii. include landscaping, pedestrian scale lighting, and other amenities to enhance safety, comfort, and four season use, and
   iv. meet or exceed design standards for universal accessibility and safety in the public realm.

b. Where appropriate, new streets and laneways should incorporate cycling connections and facilities and connect to transit stations and stops to facilitate multimodal trips.

c. Locate short-term and long-term bicycle parking with direct access from the public street and near entrances to buildings, transit, and other pedestrian infrastructure.

d. Where short-term bicycle parking is provided within mid-rise buildings at-grade, where possible, provide glazing to ensure the bike storage area is visible from the public realm and/or from active common areas within the building.

e. Design bicycle parking in accordance with the Toronto Green Standard and Guidelines for the Design and Management of Bicycle Parking Facilities.

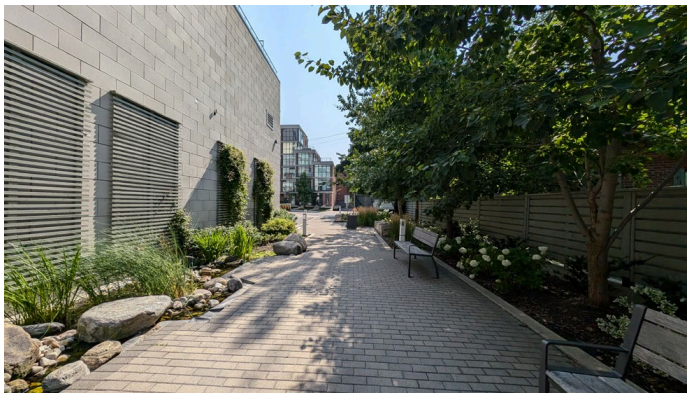


Figure 2.4.1: Examples of on-site pedestrian and cycling connections.

Rationale

Mid-rise buildings are a compact built form that can be accommodated in many areas across the city and are supportive of walking and cycling as primary modes of transportation. Mid-rise developments should support pedestrians and cyclists and provide amenities to make their journeys safe, comfortable and convenient. Mid-rise buildings should be sited and designed to encourage walking and cycling as viable transportation choices for building occupants. High-quality pedestrian and cycling routes should be well-connected with related infrastructure, such as transit, bicycle lanes, on-site bicycle parking and generous public sidewalks to reduce auto-dependency, support safer and more active streets, and promote a healthier city. Providing direct, convenient, safe, highly-visible, and universally accessible connections to the surrounding public realm is key to promoting walking and cycling.

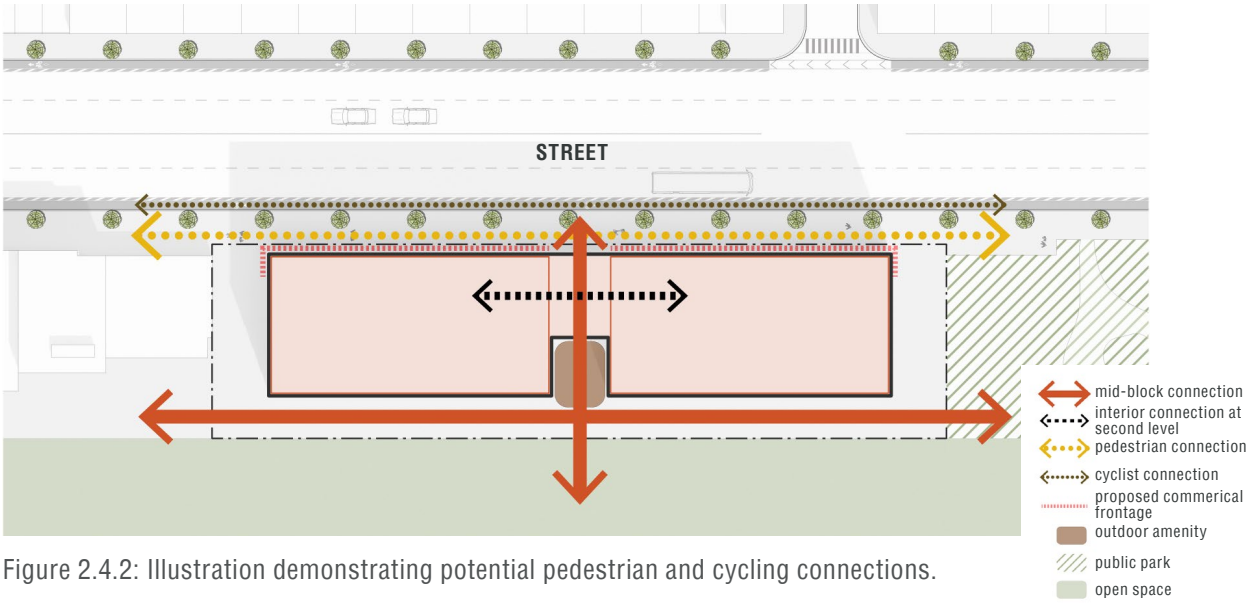


Figure 2.4.2: Illustration demonstrating potential pedestrian and cycling connections.

Figure 2.4.3: Examples of bicycle parking.

Official Plan Reference:

2.4 Bringing the City Together: A Progressive Agenda of Transportation Change | 3.1.1 The Public Realm

5.1.3 Site Plan Control

Related Standards, Guidelines & Studies:

Toronto Green Standard | Guidelines for the Design and Management of Bicycle Parking Facilities

Complete Streets Guidelines

2.5. SITE SERVICING, ACCESS, AND PARKING

Locate loading, servicing, utilities, and access to vehicle parking within the building mass, away from the primary frontage and screened from the public realm and public view.

Access

a. The location, design and arrangement of vehicular access, loading, servicing and parking access activities should limit negative impacts on the safety, accessibility, comfort, and quality of the public realm. Where appropriate, use high-quality architectural elements and landscape design to screen these activities from public view.

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

c. Wherever possible, vehicular access to on-site parking, loading, and servicing facilities should be provided from local streets and rear lanes.

d. Where there are opportunities to expand the public lane network and connect to an existing lane, access easements should be secured to ensure that private driveways can provide access for adjacent properties on the block in the future.

e. Mid-block vehicular access should be avoided wherever possible. However, there are instances where this is the only point of access for certain sites. For mid-block sites without rear lane access, a front driveway may be permitted, provided the following criteria are met:

   i. The driveway is located as far from the adjacent intersection as possible, or a minimum of 30 metres from the centre of the driveway to the centre of the nearest side street;
   ii. Appropriate spacing between adjacent driveways is maintained resulting in no more than one driveway every 30 metres;
   iii. Where possible, approved mid-block driveways to major streets should be designated for shared access to serve adjacent properties in lieu of, and until a rear public laneway is established as adjacent redevelopment occurs;
   iv. Where front driveways are permitted, they should be contained within the building massing with additional floors built above the driveway and,

f. Wherever possible, prioritize shared driveways, consolidated vehicular access points, and shared loading and parking facilities between multiple developments to limit curb cuts along public streets and reduce vehicular conflicts with pedestrian and cycling networks.

g. Organize drop-off areas into the side or rear of the site. When located at the rear, provide direct visual and physical pedestrian access with a through lobby to the front pedestrian entrance and to the public sidewalk.

h. Provide decorative paving to clearly define areas where vehicles may encounter pedestrians and cyclists at locations such as drive aisles, crosswalks and intersections.

i. Laneways, driveways and servicing areas should be designed to be safe, and comfortable for pedestrians. Animate these spaces and provide passive surveillance by providing active uses along a portion of the frontage wherever possible.

j. On sites with multiple frontages, building facades and public realm treatments on the “back of house” frontage should be designed with the same level of animation and articulation as the front facade to create a vibrant and comfortable pedestrian realm and prevent the creation of service-oriented streets.

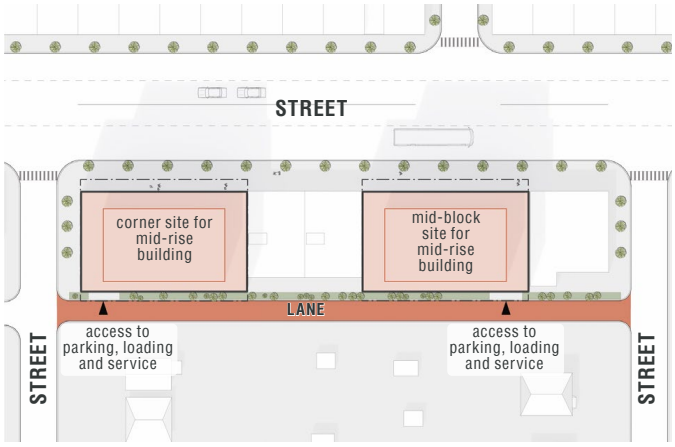


Figure 2.5.1: Illustration of vehicular access points from rear lane.

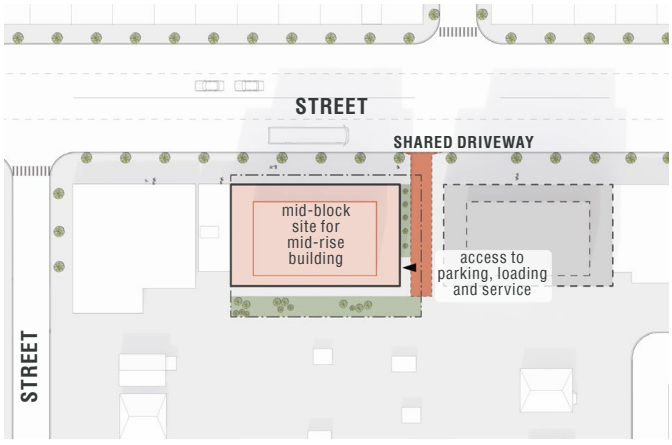


Figure 2.5.2: Illustration of vehicular access points for mid-block sites.

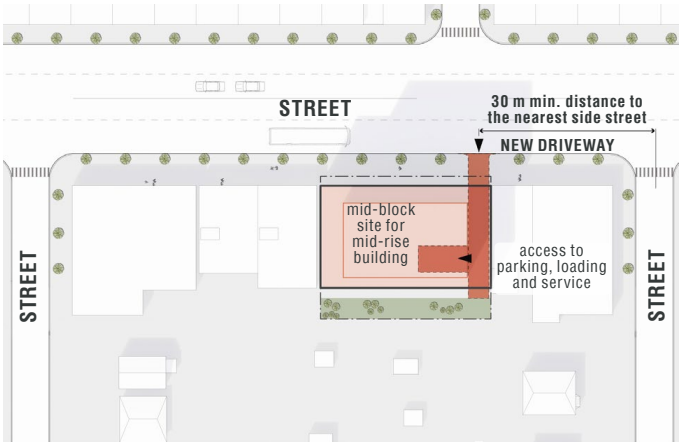


Figure 2.5.3: Illustration of vehicular access points for mid-block site with future lane/driveway access.

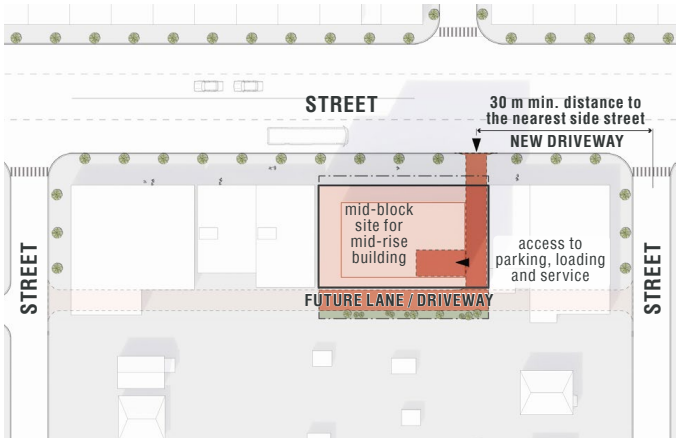


Figure 2.5.4: Illustration of consolidated vehicular access via a shared driveway.

Site Servicing

a. Locate loading and servicing areas in the interior of blocks and ,integrate them and underground parking into the area of the building footprint to maximize unencumbered landscaped open spaces and active uses at grade along all frontages.

b. Minimize the extent of site area dedicated to servicing and vehicular access through the use of shared infrastructure and efficient layouts and leave as much space as possible at grade, for outdoor amenity, landscaping and public realm improvements.

c. Recess, screen, and minimize the size of garage doors and service openings visible from public streets and public or private open spaces. Use high-quality doors and finishes.

d. Locate ventilation shafts, grates, and other above-ground mechanical or site servicing equipment, away from the public sidewalk (especially the pedestrian clearway) and public or private open spaces.

e. Locate gas metres in discrete locations, away from the public realm and screened by the building mass or other design features.

f. For mid-rise buildings serviced by curbside solid waste collection, the design of buildings and bin placement areas should ensure that curbside collection does not compromise the quality of the public realm, preserving space for tree planting and providing comfortable areas for pedestrians and cyclists, and avoid clearway obstructions.

g. Provide sufficient vertical clearance for loading areas, in accordance with the Loading Space Standards in the Zoning By-law.

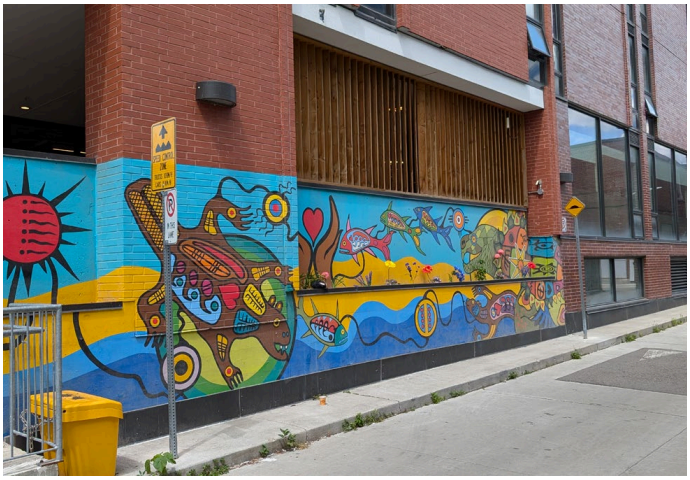


Figure 2.5.5: Example of service area treatments that animate the facade.

Figure 2.5.6: Example of discrete location and screening of gas meter.

Parking

a. Provide pedestrian and cyclist access to and from parking areas that are clearly visible, well-lit, convenient, and easily accessible from the street.

b. Minimize parking to reduce embodied carbon emissions and support sustainable design practices.

c. Locate parking underground within the building footprint.

d. Equip parking spaces with EV infrastructure in accordance with the Toronto Green Standard.

e. When parking cannot be located underground (due to, for example, below-grade transit infrastructure or high water table) locate parking within the building envelope and line at-grade or above-grade parking with active uses to animate the public realm and the building facades.

Rationale

As directed by the Official Plan, development will locate and organize vehicle parking, vehicular access and ramps, loading, servicing, storage areas, and utilities to minimize their impact and improve the safety and attractiveness of the public realm, the site and surroundings.

Servicing, access and parking activities are essential to the efficient 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. Using the building or high-quality architectural elements and landscape design to screen vehicular access and site servicing, also helps mitigate noise, air quality concerns, and unattractive views within the building site and on adjacent streets, public or private open spaces, and neighbouring properties.

Official Plan Reference:

3.1.3. Built Form | 4.5 Mixed Use Areas | 2.2 Structuring Growth in the City | 2.4 Bringing the City Together

3.1.1 The Public Realm | 5.1.3 Site Plan Control

Official Plan Reference:

Toronto Green Standard | Guidelines for the Design and Management of Bicycle Parking Facilities

Bird-Friendly Development Guidelines | City of Toronto Zoning By-law 569-2013

2.6. PUBLIC ART

Pursue public art opportunities and funding strategies on mid-rise building sites, or adjacent public lands, to enhance the quality of the development, the public realm, and the city.

Figure 2.6.1: Nicolas Baier, Network, 95 The Pond Road

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. It can help activate the site and create a more inclusive, vibrant, and visually engaging neighbourhood that reflects the values, aspirations, and diversity of its residents and visitors. Public art also provides the opportunity to celebrate and honour the history and enduring presence of Indigenous peoples on the land as well as recognizing black and other equity-deserving communities.

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

Public art opportunities on mid-rise building sites may include:

- a conceptual framework to organize open spaces including parks, plazas, setbacks, or streetscapes;
- a stand- alone artwork that marks an entryway, corner, feature area, or view terminus;
- the integration of public art within the building elements, including façades, canopies, floors, lighting, etc.; and
- public art combined with landscape design, functional, and decorative elements of a site, such as water features, lighting, seating, paving, walls, fences, entrances and exits, etc.

Paul Raff, Shoreline Commemorative Feature, 55 Front Street East

Olaf Breuning, Guardians, 85 East Liberty Street

Public Studio, We Are All Animals, 1830 Bloor Street West

Julie Dault, Wheel of Fortune, 115 Haynes Avenue

Figure 2.6.2: Examples of public art on mid-rise sites.

Official Plan Reference:

3.1.1 Public Realm | 3.1.3 Built Form | 3.1.5 Public Art

Related Standards, Guidelines & Studies:

Percent for Public Art Program Guidelines | Toronto Public Art Strategy 2020-2030 | Toronto Public Art Strategy Implementation Plan: Phase 1 (2024 – 2026)

3.0 MID-RISE BUILDING DESIGN

3.1. MID-RISE BUILDING HEIGHT

The Official Plan states that "mid-rise buildings will be designed to have heights generally no greater than the width of the right-of-way that it fronts onto".

a. Mid-rise building scale is contextual and maximum building height corresponds to the right-of-way (ROW) width ranging from 5 storeys (16.5m) up to 14 storeys (45m).

b. Achieving the maximum building height on each right-of-way will be dictated by the assessment of contextual fit, good street proportion and sun/shadow performance set out in subsequent guidelines.

c. Additional height taller than the adjacent ROW width may be considered on deep lots, provided that the development meets the objectives of the Official Plan policies and other guidelines in this document, including but not limited to the following criteria:

   i. Fits with the existing and planned context;
   ii. Maintains an overall mid-rise building scale with good street proportion;
   iii. Meets required sun/shadow performance on the adjacent street and public realm;
   iv. Provides appropriate setbacks, step-backs and separation distances; and
   v. Provides appropriate transition in scale and massing to adjacent heritage properties and context.

Height above the ROW width should be located and massed to reduce physical and visual impacts on the public realm and incorporate increased setbacks/step-backs equal to or greater than the additional height.

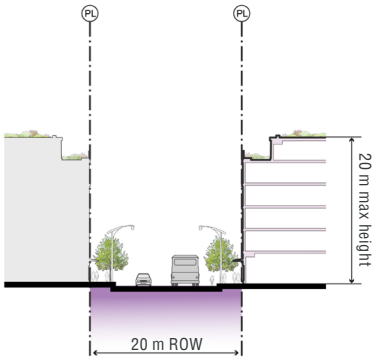


Figure 3.1.1: 1:1 on 20m ROW

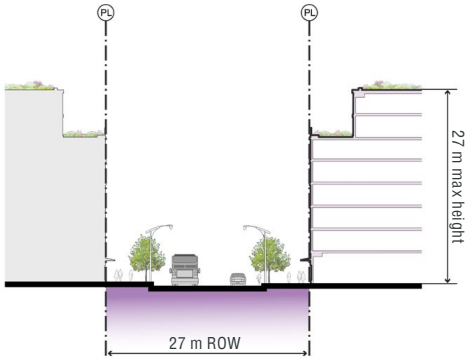


Figure 3.1.2: 1:1 on 27m ROW

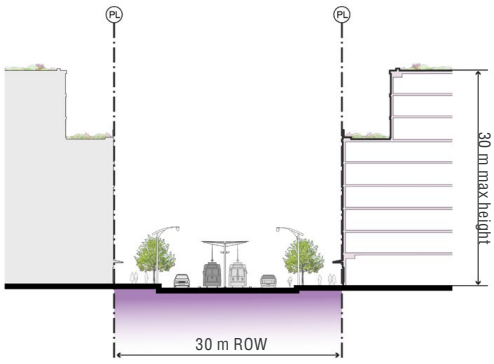


Figure 3.1.3: 1:1 on 30m ROW

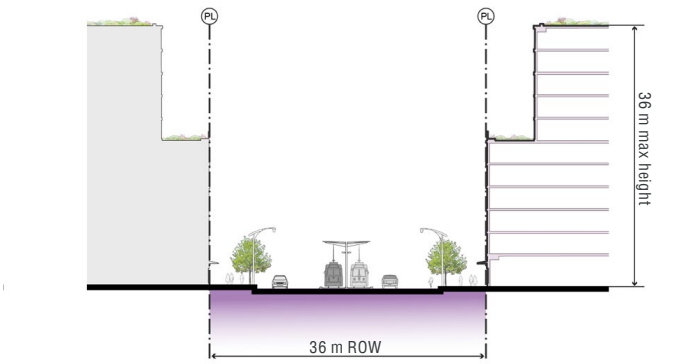


Figure 3.1.4: 1:1 on 36m ROW

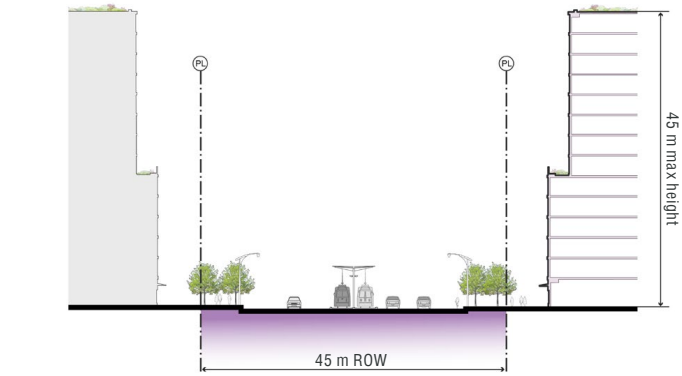


Figure 3.1.5: 1:1 on 45m ROW

Rationale

As defined in the Official Plan, mid-rise buildings are a transit-supportive form of development that provides a level of intensification at a scale between low-rise and tall building forms. Mid-rise building heights are contextual and are informed by the width of the right-of-way onto which they front. For example, on a street with a 20-metre-wide right-of-way, a mid-rise building consisting of commercial uses at grade and residential uses above, can be generally up to 20 metres in height, or approximately 6 storeys.

Official Plan Map 3 – Right-of-Way Widths Associated with Existing Major Streets, identifies major streets with seven different right-of-way (R.O.W.) widths: 20, 23, 27, 30, 33, 36, and 45 metres. The maximum mid-rise building height at 14 storeys (45 metres) is equivalent to the 45-metre right-of-way.

The Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study introduced Performance Standards for mid-rise buildings in 2010 which prescribe a maximum building height equivalent to the width of the adjacent right-of-way to a maximum of 11 storeys. Since 2010, many mid-rise buildings of various heights and scales have been constructed across Toronto, with many built to heights equivalent to the adjacent right-of-way width. In some instances, buildings that are taller than the right-of-way width, but still present a mid-rise typology have been approved through site-specific applications which were evaluated based on the context of the site, including considerations for proximity to transit, separation from Neighbourhoods properties and other low-rise areas and demonstration of the mitigation of built form impacts and appropriate contextual fit.

There may be certain circumstances where buildings that exceed the height of the right-of-way are appropriate. Consideration for the development of mid-rise buildings greater than the adjacent width of right-of-way should be evaluated on a site-by-site basis and is dependent on the criteria indicated in these guidelines.

The maximum allowable height defined in this section is the determining factor for height maximums. This guideline is not intended to replace other area-specific guidelines, rather, it should be read in conjunction with them to support the specific objectives and visions of each area. This guideline document recognizes that building height is only one aspect of regulating building design. Subsequent guidelines outline additional methods to shape and design mid-rise buildings.

Official Plan Reference:

3.1.3 Built Form

3.1.4 Built Form – Building Types

3.2. STREET PROPORTION AND FRONT FAÇADE

The Official Plan states that "mid-rise buildings will be designed to maintain street proportion and open views of the sky from the public realm by stepping back building massing generally at a height equivalent to 80% of the adjacent right-of-way width".

a. Consider existing and planned conditions to determine appropriate heights, scale, streetwall heights, pedestrian perception step-backs and setbacks of buildings that establish well-proportioned streetscapes and ensure sunlight onto public streets.

b. Mid-rise buildings on both sides of the street should be generally consistent in terms of heights, scale, streetwall heights, pedestrian perception step-backs and setbacks to create a balanced and comfortable streetscape.

Figure 3.2.1: Example of a mid-rise building that frames the adjacent right-of-way with good proportion.

Rationale

Street proportion is the ratio of the height of buildings along the edges of the street and the distance between buildings across the street. Street proportion is a fundamental determinant in the character and scale of the street, influences how people experience the urban environment and provides a measure of certain qualities of the street and the buildings that front onto it, including access to direct sunlight, daylight and views to the sky.

Street proportion is contextual and varies across the City. Good street proportion is used to guide the massing of development. It is determined by considering the existing and planned conditions and determining the appropriate setbacks, scale and massing of buildings to provide a street proportion that will provide good sunlight and daylight conditions, considering the planned intensity of development and expectations for the character and quality of the street in the future.

The guidelines that follow are meant to provide a flexible framework for developing mid-rise buildings with good proportion, appropriately scaled and well-designed street facing façades.

Official Plan Reference:

3.1.3 Built Form | 3.1.4 Built Form – Building Types

3.2.1. SUN / SHADOW PERFORMANCE

Mid-rise buildings should be designed to protect access to sunlight within the surrounding public realm. The height, scale and massing of the building and front façade should achieve at least five consecutive hours of sunlight on the street boulevard at the equinoxes.

a. The consecutive five-hour sunlight window will vary depending on the location of the site and the orientation of the street but will be measured generally between 9:18 a.m. and 6:18 p.m. on March 21st and September 21st.

b. The consecutive five-hour sunlight window on various streets across the City should generally align with the sample sun/shadow study provided in Appendix A.

c. Mid-rise buildings should demonstrate through a sun/shadow study, how the proposed building provides good access to sunlight and minimizes shadowing of nearby parks and natural areas.

d. On sites with multiple mid-rise buildings, limit or vary the height of buildings to reduce the extent of shadows and length of time they are cast on public realm elements and consider the cumulative effect of multiple buildings on resulting shadowing.

e. Additional shadow mitigation may be required for a particular street, park, open space, natural area, heritage property, Heritage Conservation District, or other shadow sensitive area on a site- or area-specific basis.

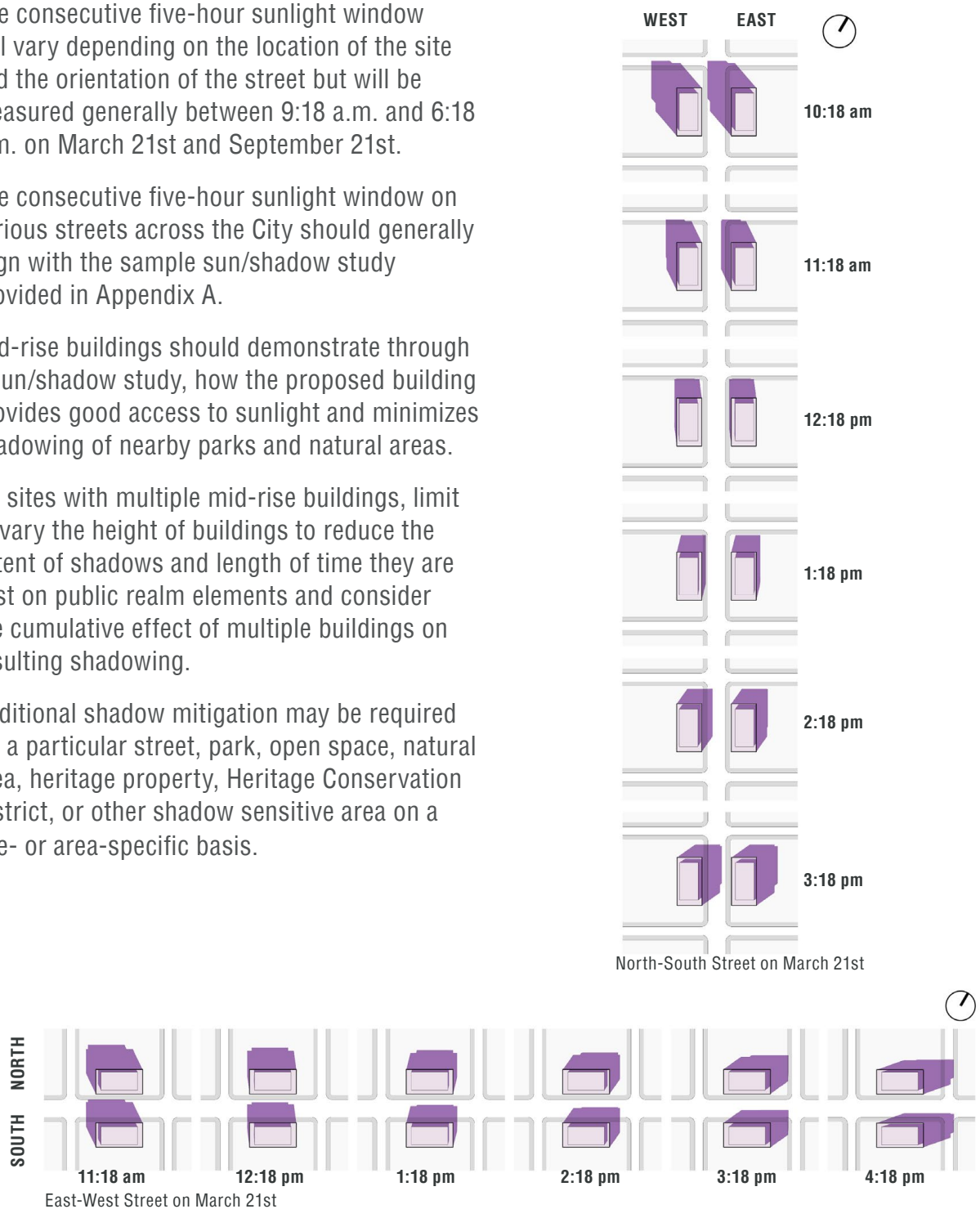


Figure 3.2.2: Sample illustration of five consecutive hours of sunlight on the boulevard.

Rationale

Extensive research about the effects of sunlight on Toronto's sidewalks was compiled in "Sun, Wind, and Pedestrian Comfort: A Study of Toronto's Central Area" by Bosselman et al., 1990. Key recommendations of this study support the objective to maintain a minimum of five hours of sunlight on Toronto's streets between the spring equinox and fall equinox to enhance pedestrian comfort during the shoulder seasons.

The City's Thermal Comfort Study (2024) also shows that access to sunlight is essential in Toronto. It allows all living things, including trees, vegetation, insects, animals and humans, to thrive and improves the usability and enjoyment of outdoor spaces. It enhances thermal comfort for pedestrians, as is easily observed on Toronto streets, where the majority of people choose to walk on the sunny side of the street, from September to May.

Given that there may be mid-rise buildings as tall as the adjacent right-of-way width, the upper storeys of buildings will need to be located and massed to provide sunlight on the opposite sidewalk. Buildings built to the front property line and to the maximum allowable height will need to provide step-backs to ensure sun/shadow performance in compliance with these guidelines.

The recommendations of these guidelines apply to all mid-rise development located on north-south, east-west, and diagonal streets.

Sample shadow studies illustrating the five consecutive hour sunlight intervals on various streets across the City are provided in Appendix A. The specific test time window should be confirmed with the City for each mid-rise development application.

Official Plan Reference:

3.1.3 Built Form | 3.1.4 Built Form – Building Types

3.2.2. STREETWALL HEIGHT AND PEDESTRIAN PERCEPTION STEP-BACK

Streetwalls should be designed to fit harmoniously within the existing and/or planned context of neighbouring building heights at the street edge and to respect the scale and proportion of adjacent streets and open spaces. Provide pedestrian perception step-backs above the streetwall height to reduce the perceived building height and create a comfortable pedestrian experience.

Figure 3.2.3: Example of a pedestrian-scale streetwall.

a. Streetwalls should be designed to fit compatibly within the existing and planned context of neighbouring streetwall heights.

b. Incorporate a gradual transition in streetwall height toward heritage properties to maintain the prominence of heritage buildings and the overall streetwall.

c. Where there is an existing streetwall height context, align the height of the streetwall on new buildings with the existing streetwall to maintain a consistent streetscape.

d. In the absence of an existing or planned streetwall height context, provide a streetwall height between 3 storeys (10.5m) and 80% of the adjacent street right-of-way width, up to a limit of 8 storeys (25.5m) in height.

e. An increased streetwall height, up to 6 storeys (20m), may be appropriate along the streets with a ROW width of less than 27metres, provided the development meets other guidelines in this document, including, but not limited to, compatibility and fit with the surrounding context, heritage conservation, and sun/shadow performance.

f. On sites where the adjacent context is lower-scale and not anticipated to change, provide an appropriate transition in streetwall height that steps down to the lower-scale neighbours.

g. The minimum dimension of the pedestrian perception step-back above the streetwall height should be no less than 3.0 metres to maintain the legibility and prominence of the streetwall and create opportunities for terraces and balconies above of a sufficient depth.

h. A pedestrian perception step-back that aligns with the structural grid is encouraged along the street facing façades to reduce embodied carbon and improve energy efficiency.

i. On corner sites, continue the pedestrian perception step-back along the side street and vary the height and form of the streetwall to respect and respond to the height, scale, and built-form character of both streets.

Rationale

Streetwalls support the pedestrian experience and reinforce human scale at the street level. The streetwall height and scale should frame and create an appropriate relationship between the streetscape and street proportion. Streetwalls should create an appropriate sense of enclosure along the street to promote and encourage the development of walkable streets. Pedestrian-scaled building elements make the streetscape comfortable and inviting and align with numerous city building objectives. The recommended streetwall height aligns with Official Plan Built Form Policy 3.1.4.4, establishing a consistent yet flexible framework. For narrow streets with a ROW under 27 metres, a streetwall height from 3 storeys up to 6 storeys may be appropriate, while a streetwall height from 3 storeys up to 8 storeys may be recommended for wider streets. This approach ensures that maximum streetwall height is generally equivalent to 80% of the ROW width while maintaining pedestrian scale and integrates the mid-rise building standards with the base building criteria in the Tall Building Design Guidelines. This will ensure a cohesive development of the Avenues, Major Streets and other areas across the city, with appropriate context-based variation.

The location of the step-back above the streetwall height is encouraged to be aligned with the structural grid and aligned with the height of the rear step-back where appropriate. The overall form of mid-rise buildings should generally be repeatable and produce predictable impacts on the surrounding area, but variation in architectural design is encouraged to create dynamic and memorable streetscapes, including accentuating a major intersection or corner, central open space, view terminus or other key urban design feature through streetwall height variation.

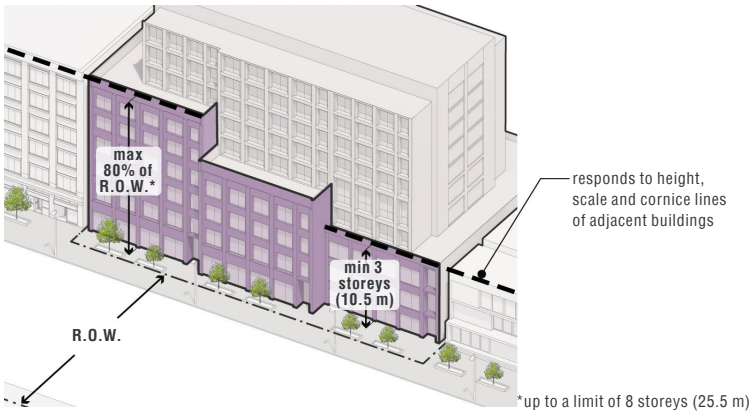


Figure 3.2.4: Example of variation in streetwall height.

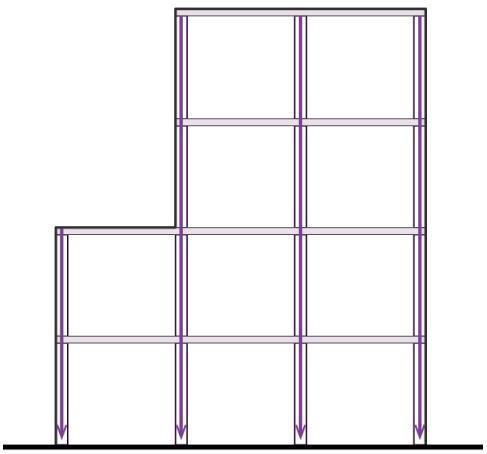


Figure 3.2.5: Illustration of step-back alignment with structural grid in a mass timber building to promote sustainable building design.

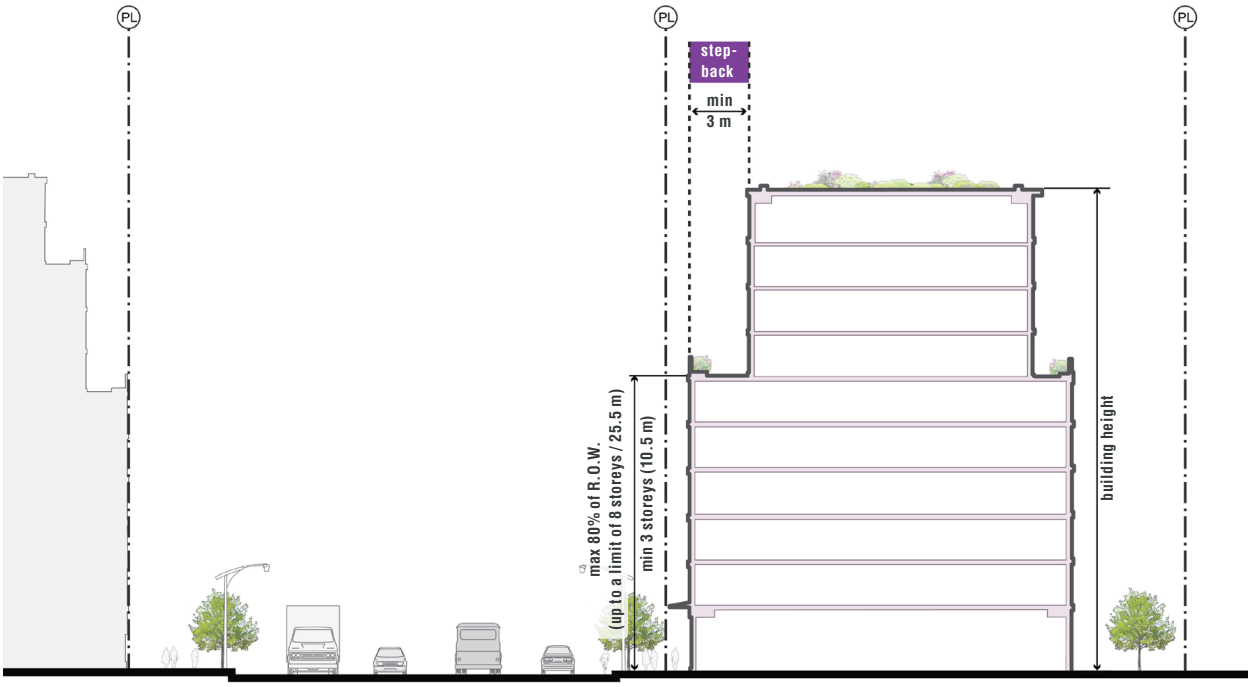


Figure 3.2.6: Illustration of pedestrian perception step-back.

Figure 3.2.7: Example of a step-back above the streetwall that reduces the perception of height when viewed from the pedestrian level.

Official Plan Reference:

3.1.3 Built Form | 3.1.4 Built Form – Building Types

3.2.3. STREETWALL DESIGN

Front façades of mid-rise buildings should be designed to frame and support the adjacent public realm, including streets, parks and open spaces, through well-articulated and appropriately scaled façades.

a. Design front façades to create a comfortable, highly animated, pedestrian environment through architectural elements and expressions, including building entrances, windows, canopies, recesses and projections, and other design interventions to reinforce a variety of scales and textures.

b. Where there is a defined streetwall character and established architectural rhythm, new buildings should be designed to respect and reinforce existing character reflected in elements such as the vertical rhythm and fine-grained built form, as well as the fenestration and window patterns of neighbouring structures. Additionally, integrating datum lines from adjacent buildings will help reinforce the architectural rhythm.

c. Where there is no prevailing streetwall character, design streetwalls to establish a new architectural character, with a fine-grained pattern and sense of pedestrian scale through the use of vertical and horizontal articulation.

d. Variations in streetwall height should be provided to break the long continuous façade and provide an appropriate transition to adjacent properties.

e. Reinforce the human-scaled nature of the pedestrian perception zone with human-scaled materiality and textures to add visual interest. Where retail uses are provided, design the streetwall to be compatible with traditional storefront compositions, such as recessed entries, bulkheads, transom windows, display windows, piers, signage bands, and storefront cornices. Refer to the Retail Design Manual for further details.

f. Design windows to encourage views and interaction between the interior spaces and exterior pedestrian environments.

g. Utilities, vents, gas meters and other functional servicing elements should be avoided on the lower levels of façades adjacent to the public realm or should be integrated into the architectural composition and away from public view.

h. Where there is a change in grade along a street frontage, step the floor plate of the ground floor level of the front façade to maintain a consistent relationship with the public sidewalk.

Rationale

Streetwall design interventions, such as articulation and architectural rhythm, play an important role in ensuring streetwalls are compatible with the existing and planned context. How the building addresses the street is essential for establishing a positive first impression and successful interface between the public street and private building. The way a building performs in this regard is strongly influenced by the quality of its ground floor design, façade articulation, material use, and the location and treatment of building entrances.

The façade is the exterior of a building visible to the public, and its exterior design contributes to a more beautiful and environmentally sustainable Toronto. The exterior design of a façade includes the form, scale, proportion, pattern and materials of building elements, including doors, roofs, windows, and decorative elements. It is important to consider the

exterior design of a façade at grade as it relates to the general layout and organization of interior spaces closest to the pedestrian environment. In particular, the placement of doors and unobstructed clear glass windows, with little or no tint, play an important role in supporting a safe, accessible and vibrant public realm, provided that the design is also bird-friendly. These design measures are necessary to help new development support the public realm and fit with the existing and/or planned context.

Building articulation is equally important in a building's contribution to human-scale at the street level. The application of sensitive building massing, high-quality and compatible materials and sustainable design will ensure that all new mid-rise buildings contribute to a great public realm.

Figure 3.2.8 : Examples of streetwall design.

Official Plan Reference:

3.1.3 Built Form | 3.1.4 Built Form – Building Types

Related Standards, Guidelines & Studies:

Retail Design Manual

3.2.4. ALIGNMENT

The front façade of mid-rise buildings should establish a front setback line that appropriately responds to the existing and planned context, while providing a sidewalk zone at least 6.0 metres in width wherever possible.

Figure 3.2.9: Illustration of a mid-rise building placed parallel to the street and aligned with the frontages of neighbouring buildings.

a. On blocks where a consistent setback pattern does not exist or is planned to change, the streetwall should be located at the required setback line to achieve a 6.0-metre sidewalk zone.

b. here the existing setback pattern is consistent and not planned to change, the front streetwall should align with the frontages of the neighbouring buildings.

c. If existing setbacks are well-established but vary on either side of the mid-rise building site, the front streetwall should be located and designed to resolve the differences, avoiding blank side walls visible from the street.

d. On corner sites, the setback pattern and alignment of neighbouring buildings on both streets should be considered.

e. Greater building setbacks should be provided at strategic points or along the entire frontage, as appropriate, for architectural interest and to enhance pedestrian amenity. This includes more space for tree planting, wider sidewalks, building entrances, outdoor marketing areas, forecourts, plazas, mid-block connections and other publicly accessible open spaces.

f. At special corners, major intersections, or other focus areas, more generous setbacks are encouraged, as these locations play a key role as important cultural, civic, and social places, or present opportunities to improve the interface between such spaces. Public realm improvements at focus areas are encouraged to honour and celebrate the history of the surrounding community in which they are located, including Indigenous heritage.

g. Where applicable, the character of existing soft landscaped streetscapes should be maintained and reinforced by providing generous setbacks for trees and plantings, and prioritizing tree preservation.

h. To ensure adequate space for public realm elements at grade when below-grade utilities limit design options, a cantilever into the setback zone may be considered. This option is site-specific and requires the first 10.5 metres of the building to align with the setback line. The cantilever must maintain a minimum of 3.0-metre setback from the tree planting zone to protect existing and future tree canopy.

i. Any below-grade building structures should be built to the setback line at grade and ensure sufficient soil volume and depth are provided to support mature tree growth and unencumbered tree plantings where possible in the setback areas.

j. In residential contexts, the front façade of mid-rise buildings should provide a minimum 3.0-metre landscaped setback to enhance the quality of the public realm spaces and provide privacy for residents at the lower level of the mid-rise buildings. Soft landscaping, trees and plantings, are required in the setback zones.

k. In residential contexts, where the existing setback pattern is consistent and not planned to change, the front yard setback should be the average between the two neighbouring buildings, up to a maximum of 6.0 metres.

Rationale

Buildings oriented parallel to streets with a consistent setback, create clear edges for walkways and green spaces and define the public realm. Well-placed streetwalls create a coherent streetscape and help new mid-rise buildings fit in with existing and future neighbours.

Providing consistent and aligned front yard setbacks ensures that development will frame and support adjacent streets, parks and open spaces to promote civic life and the use of the public realm, and to improve the safety, pedestrian comfort, interest and experience.

When determining the appropriate setback from the front property line, the uses at grade along with objectives for streetscape design, including the minimum sidewalk zone and tree planting zone requirements, should be considered. The appropriate setback from the front property line will also vary based on the mid-rise building typology. Main street mid-rise buildings seek to create an urban street edge condition where a smaller setback is generally desirable, while residential mid-rise buildings seek to create a residential street edge where a more generous landscaped setback is desirable. The setback from the street should also consider the location of the neighbouring buildings and should seek to resolve any jogs in the streetwall as well as other considerations provided in these guidelines.

Properties develop incrementally over time and may result in inconsistent setbacks along the street. Where this occurs, new buildings and streetscapes should be designed to limit the perception and impacts of inconsistent setbacks on the public realm.

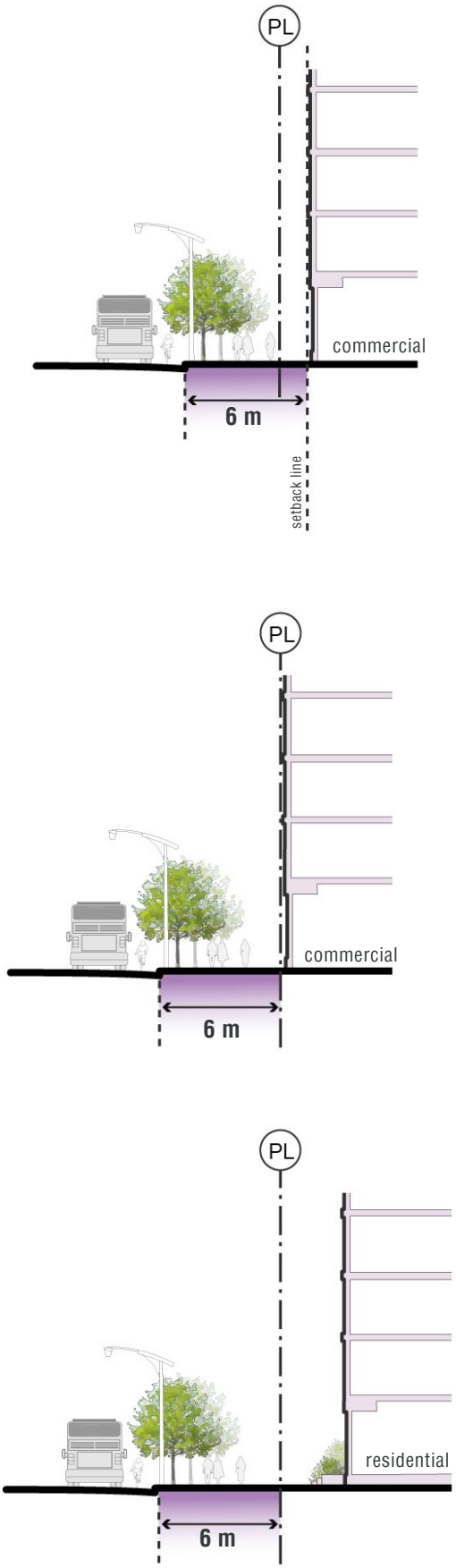


Figure 3.2.10: Examples of setback conditions with a minimum 6.0-metre sidewalk zone.

Official Plan Reference:

3.1.1 The Public Realm | 3.1.3 Built Form

3.1.4 Built Form – Building Types

3.3. REAR TRANSITION

3.3.1. REAR TRANSITION TO BUILDINGS

The transition between a mid-rise building and abutting buildings and properties to the rear should be created through a combination of building heights, horizontal separation such as setbacks and/or step-backs of upper floors, landscaping, as well as façade articulation.

a. Transition should be provided between mid-rise buildings and abutting buildings and properties to the rear. This transition should include a minimum setback of 7.5 metres from the rear property line to the mid-rise building face. The 7.5-metre setback allows for the creation of rear lanes and/or vehicular access for parking, servicing and loading, open spaces, outdoor amenity areas, as well as space for tree plantings with adequate soil volume.

b. For mid-rise buildings up to 20 metres (6 storeys) in height, no step-backs are required along the rear of the building (see Figure 3.3.1).

c. For mid-rise buildings with heights greater than 20 metres (6 storeys), a 2.5-metre step-back should be provided along the rear of the building, 7th storey. The height of the step-back should be determined based on the surrounding land uses, existing and planned building heights and built form impact (see Figure 3.3.2).

d. There may be scenarios where increasing the rear setback while reducing or eliminating upper-level step-backs may be appropriate to achieve appropriate transition with a more simplified built form. This option should be considered on a site-by-site basis and be informed by the appropriate supporting studies that demonstrate that built form impacts (e.g., wind impact) can be appropriately limited and mitigated (see Figure 3.3.3).

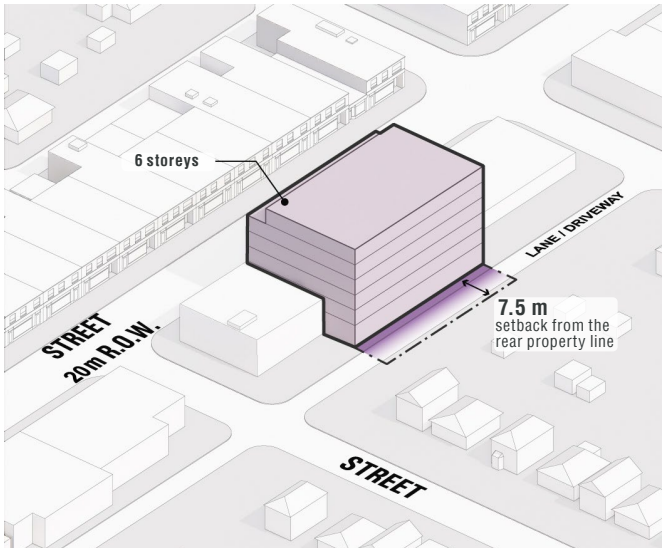


Figure 3.3.1: Sample illustration of a 6-storey building with no step-backs required at rear setback line.

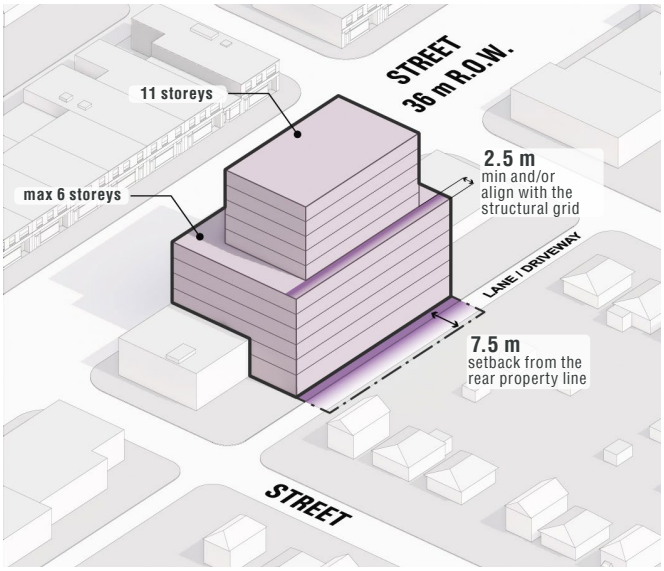


Figure 3.3.2: Sample illustration of an 11-storey building with one step-back at 7th storey rear setback line.

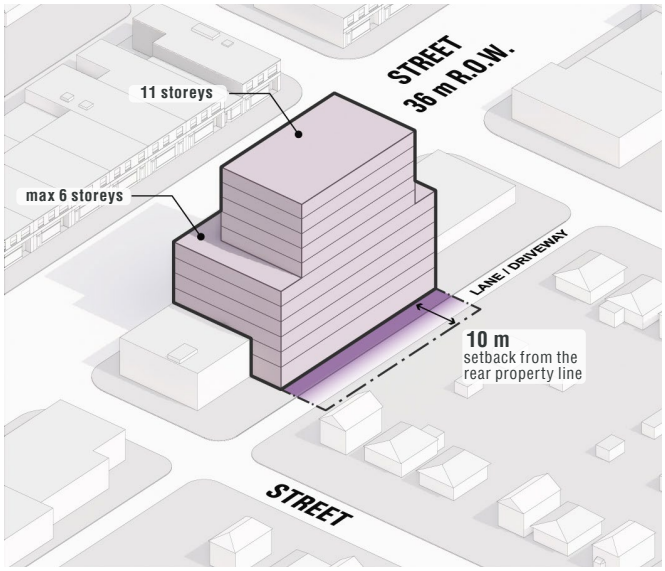


Figure 3.3.3: Sample illustration of an 11-storey building with increased setback and no step- backs at the rear.

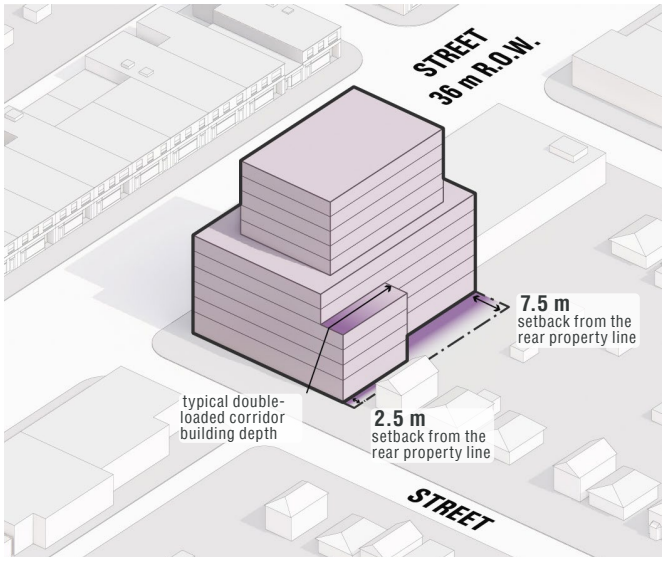


Figure 3.3.4: Sample illustration of an 11-storey building with one step-back at the rear for the taller portion of the building and a reduced setback at the rear for the lower portion of the building facing the existing side yard along the side street (rear yard to side yard condition).

e. On some corner sites, the rear setback for the portion of the building facing onto the side street may be reduced to 2.5 metres so the building frames the side street if the following conditions apply (see Figure 3.3.4):

   i. there is no opportunity to create or extend a continuous vehicular laneway at the rear;
   ii. vehicular entrances and circulation will be contained within the building and/or site;
   iii. the maximum height within the 7.5- metre setback area from the rear property line is no taller than 4 storeys; and
   iv. the existing and/ or proposed building portion in the reduced setback area has no primary windows facing the shared property line.

f. The minimum separation distance provided between mid-rise buildings in a singular site or on adjacent sites should increase with the building height to ensure privacy between units and allow good access to sky view, sunlight and daylight within spaces between buildings and the units within the buildings. When a building is on an adjacent property or proposed as part of the same development as the mid-rise building, the following separation distances apply (see Figures 3.3.5-3.3.7):

   i. Up to a height of 6 storeys, a minimum separation distance of 15 metres should be provided;
   ii. For mid-rise buildings, or building elements, taller than 6 storeys, a minimum separation distance of 20 metres should be provided; and
   iii. For mid-rise buildings that have additional height above the 1:1 ratio and/or building frontages exceeding 60 metres, building massing articulation and additional separation may be required to meet the objectives of the Official Plan and other guidelines in this document.

g. Where a mid-rise building is adjacent to a mid-rise or tall building in an Apartment Neighbourhood, greater separation distance and additional step-backs may be required, in keeping with the existing and planned context of these areas.

h. Where appropriate, mid-rise buildings should provide an active edge at-grade along the rear façade, through grade-related units with individual entrances (residential, non-residential or community uses) or other appropriate design interventions. Walkways and landscaping should be provided along the edge of the building.

i. Ensure that any existing open spaces associated with an existing mid-rise or tall building to the rear are not negatively impacted by new mid-rise buildings by providing appropriate setbacks and step-backs and mitigation of shadows and pedestrian-level wind conditions. Where an adjacent mid-rise or tall building has an associated open space amenity, Guideline 3.3.2 will apply.

j. Existing healthy trees along the rear property line should be preserved with sufficient soil volumes in accordance with City standards to enhance the transition to the adjacent properties in the rear.

k. A minimum 2.5-metre unencumbered landscaped setback should be provided along the rear property line, wherever possible, to mitigate development impact, support mature canopy trees and allow for the planting of new trees where possible that can grow to maturity.

l. Ensure the rear setback allows for a continuous rear lane system where appropriate, with additional spaces for pedestrian access and landscaping.

m. Where an existing public laneway abuts a site, the width of the laneway may be included for the purposes of establishing the rear setback.

n. Where a mid-rise or tall building abuts or is planned on the other side of the laneway, the rear setback should be measured from the centreline of the laneway.

Rationale

The Official Plan's Built Form policies are clear in their direction for development to "… provide good transition in scale between areas of different building heights and/or intensity of use in consideration of both the existing and planned contexts of neighbouring properties and the public realm." The livability of existing and new mid-rise buildings should be supported by appropriate transition between building typologies, including mid-rise to mid-rise buildings. Official Plan Policy 3.1.3.3. supports this direction "Development will protect privacy within adjacent buildings by providing setbacks and separation distances from neighbouring properties and adjacent building walls containing windows."

This guideline typically applies to infill sites with one building proposed, although it may apply to deep sites, where a mid-rise building is proposed. It is not meant to apply to very deep or large sites, which would include sites that require new streets and blocks, and sites with multiple buildings or buildings that are not a typical double-loaded corridor oriented parallel to the main street frontage.

Transition to sites in Apartment Neighbourhoods may be different from tall buildings on infill sites in Mixed Use Areas, for example. Apartment Neighbourhoods are characterized by their open space and landscape settings, and any mid-rise development adjacent to these sites should provide a transition that respects and reinforces the context of these sites.

Guidelines for setbacks and step-backs vary based on the overall building height. Generally, the taller the mid-rise building, the larger the overall setbacks and step-backs away from the building area should be. The greater the height, the greater the need for transition. A combination of these standards may apply and should be considered based on the site's existing and planned context.

The rear transition guidelines outlined here are intended to apply to buildings up to 45 metres (approximately 14 storeys) in height. For buildings exceeding this height, refer to the Tall Building Design Guidelines for appropriate guidance. For larger sites, refer to Guideline 1.3.1 for additional design considerations to ensure cohesive and context-sensitive development.

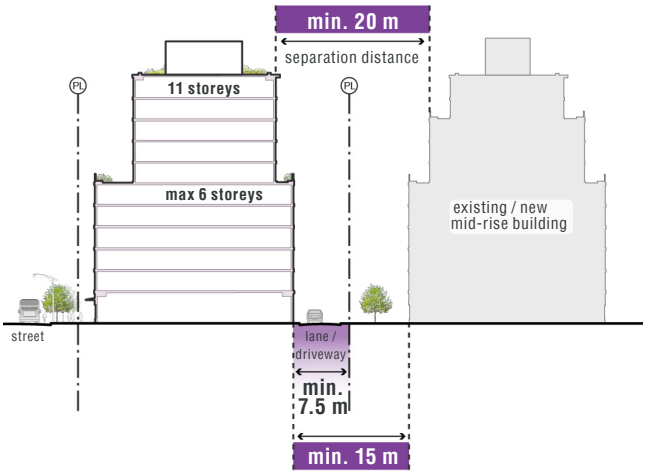


Figure 3.3.5: Sample illustration of a mid-rise building with a mid-rise building to the rear, showing a minimum 20- metre separation distance, with step-backs applied.

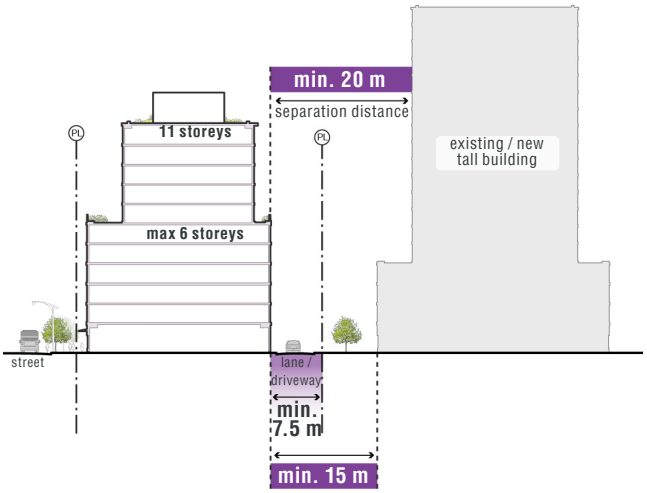


Figure 3.3.6: Sample illustration of a mid-rise building next to and abutting a tall building. A 15- metre separation distance is shown between the lower storeys, and a 20- metre separation distance is shown between the mid-rise and tall building.

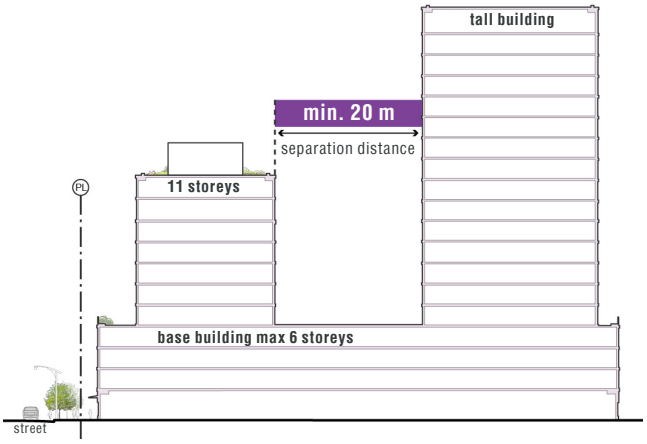


Figure 3.3.7: Sample illustration of a mid-rise building that shares a base building with a tall building. A minimum 20-metre separation distance is shown between the mid-rise building and the tall building.

Official Plan Reference:

3.1.1 The Public Realm | 3.1.3 Built Form | 3.1.4 Built Form – Building Types | 4.5 Mixed Use Areas

3.3.2. REAR TRANSITION TO PARKS & OPEN SPACES

The transition between a mid-rise building and parks, open spaces or natural areas to the rear should reinforce a human scale next to the open space, maximize access to sunlight, minimize shadow impacts and create comfortable wind conditions on the parks, open spaces, or natural areas through a combination of setbacks and step-backs.

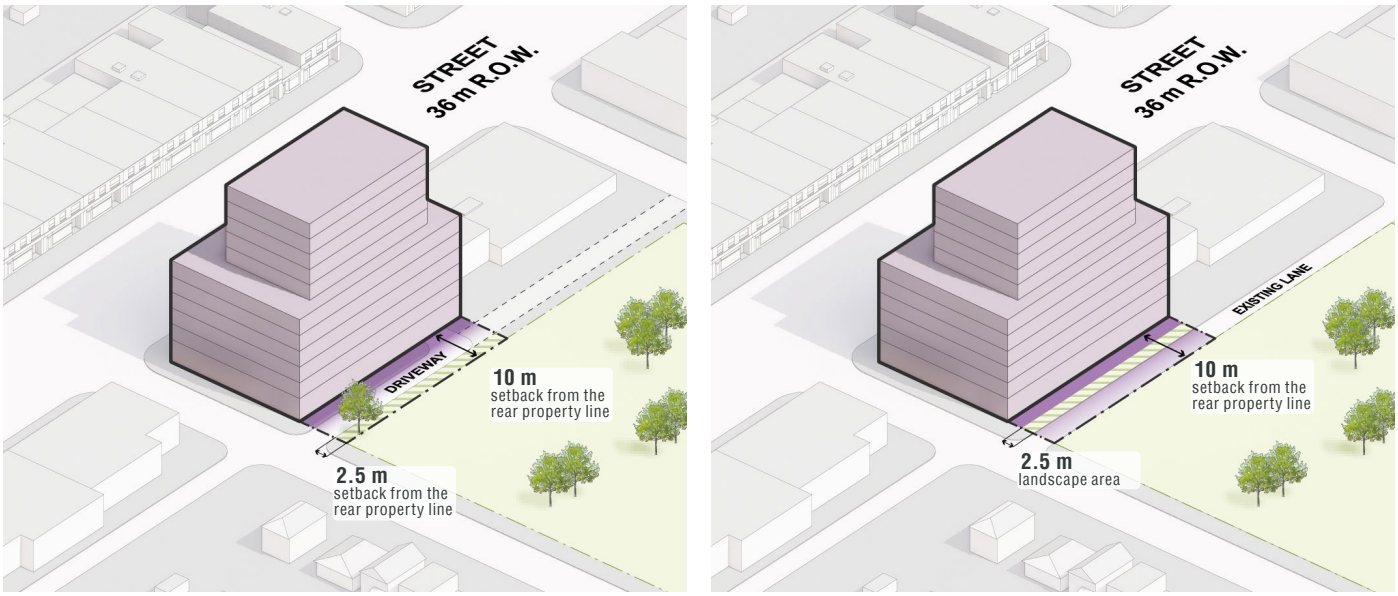


Figure 3.3.8: Sample illustrations of a mid-rise building with rear access abutting a park or open space to the rear. The setback at grade includes a landscaped area along the building edge or the property line depending on the nature and arrangement of vehicular access.

a. Where a mid-rise building is separated by a rear public laneway and/or driveway from abutting parks, open spaces or natural areas, the transition for mid-rise buildings will include a minimum rear setback of 10 metres to the building face from the property line, or a greater setback where prescribed by natural heritage/ravine bylaw requirements. The setback should be designed to accommodate outdoor amenity spaces, the extension of existing rear lanes and/or vehicular access for parking, servicing and loading, as well as the creation of a minimum 2.5- metre landscaped, treed setback area (see Figure 3.3.8).

b. In addition to the 10- metre setback, a 2.5-metre rear step-back should be introduced between the 3rd and 7th storey. The height of the step-back should be determined based on the surrounding land uses, existing and planned building heights and built form impact.

c. The transition for mid-rise buildings to adjacent parks, open spaces and/or natural areas, should be based on the location of the mid-rise building relative to the parks, open spaces or natural areas. These are generally outlined below:

   i. Where a park or open space is generally south of a development site, and there are limited shadow impacts, additional step-backs may not be necessary beyond those identified in Guideline 3.3.1 for building adjacencies.
   ii. Where development of a site would have shadow impacts on adjacent parks, open spaces, or natural areas, additional setbacks

and step-backs and shaping of the massing should be applied to minimize shadow on these spaces.

d. Where a public laneway abuts a site, the width of the laneway may be included for the purposes of establishing the setback.

e. The lower portions of a mid-rise building should provide an active edge at ground level facing the park, through grade-related units with individual entrances (residential, commercial or community uses) or other appropriate design interventions. Where there is no public lane, and/or where vehicular access is not appropriate along the edge of the park or open space, the setback to the park can be reduced to a minimum of 6 metres to encourage the creation of a pedestrian-friendly boulevard with a walkway and landscaping, and sufficient maintenance space as per Parks, Forestry and Recreation standards (see Figure 3.3.9).

Figure 3.3.9: Sample illustration of active edge along a park with a 6.0-metre setback.

Rationale

The Official Plan's Built Form policies are clear in their direction for the public realm to be safe, comfortable, and enjoyable spaces for all. Where a mid-rise building is adjacent to parks, open spaces, or natural areas, it should be located and massed to ensure direct sunlight is maximized and adverse shadow impacts are limited. These impacts can be mitigated through setbacks, step-backs, and overall building height.

The creation of an appropriate relationship between a mid-rise building and parks, open spaces, or natural areas to the rear, should be "designed to provide good transition in scale to the parks or open spaces to provide access to direct sunlight and daylight" (Official Plan Policy 3.1.3.8). These public realm spaces should be comfortable, with new development scaled and massed to provide thermal comfort, including access to sun for wildlife, people and vegetation, and comfortable pedestrian-level wind conditions. The scale next to parks and open spaces should also reflect an appropriate human scale. Where appropriate, the mid-rise building should provide an active frontage along the park, and vehicular access provided internal to the building or site.

This guideline typically applies to infill sites with one building proposed. Sites large enough to require new streets and blocks, or sites with multiple buildings or buildings that are not a typical double-loaded corridor oriented parallel to the main street frontage may require additional and/or site-specific transition measures. Refer to Guideline 1.3.1 for design considerations for larger sites.

Figure 3.3.10: Image of a mid-rise building with individual units along the park edge, with a lane (1285 Queen Street East).

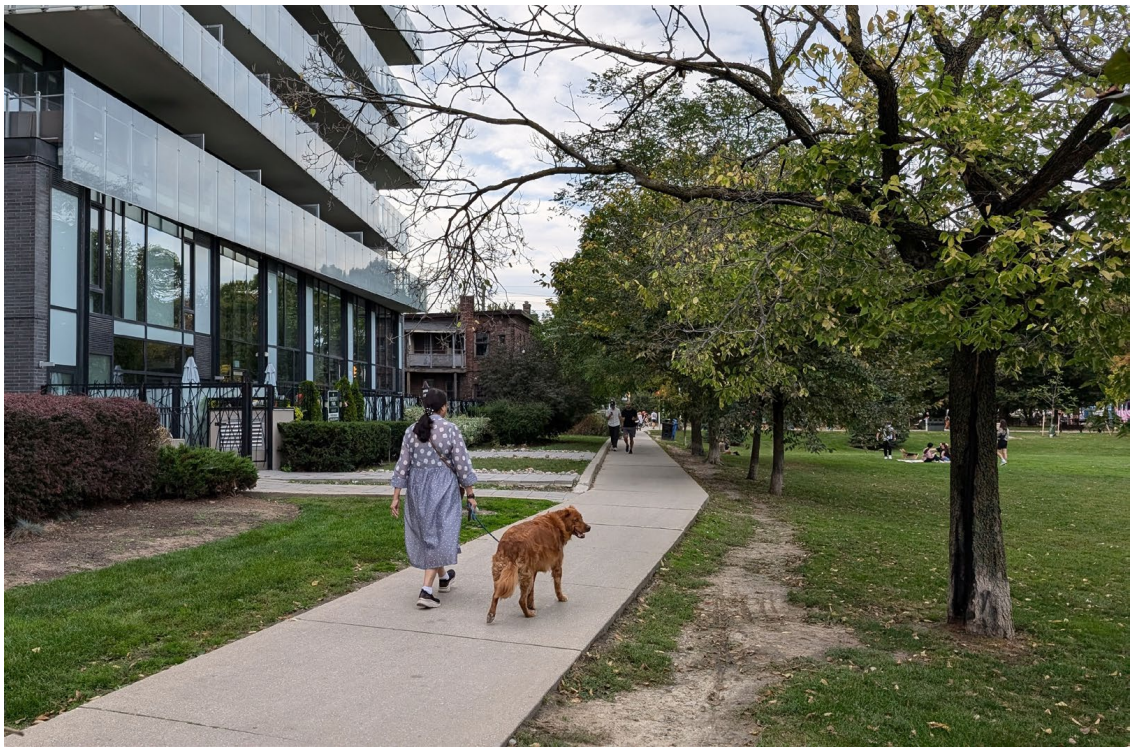


Figure 3.3.11: Image of a mid-rise building with individual units along the park edge (15 Stafford Street).

Official Plan Reference:

3.1.1 The Public Realm | 3.1.3 Built Form | 3.1.4 Built Form- Building Types | 4.5 Mixed Use Areas

3.3.3. REAR TRANSITION FOR SHALLOW SITES

On a site that is otherwise appropriate for a mid-rise building but is too shallow to feasibly accommodate the building, consideration may be given to expanding the site through site consolidation with properties to the rear to enable development of the site, while adhering to all front, rear and side setbacks, and step-backs.

a. If the existing site depth cannot reasonably accommodate a functional mid-rise building floor plate based on the mid-rise building design guidelines, consideration may be given to increasing site depth to approximately 30 metres for a maximum 6-storey building,36 metres for a maximum 11-storey building and 37 metres for a maximum 14-storey building (see Table 1 provided in Guideline 1.3 for more details).

b. If any portion of the development is located in the Neighbourhoods designated lands, that portion will have a maximum height of 4-storeys (see Figure 3.3.12).

c. A minimum 7.5-metre rear setback should be provided to allow for the creation of a continuous rear lane system, extend, widen or realign an existing laneway, where feasible, or provide sufficient space for vehicular access to the rear of the mid-rise site, as well as landscaping, tree planting and other pedestrian amenities.

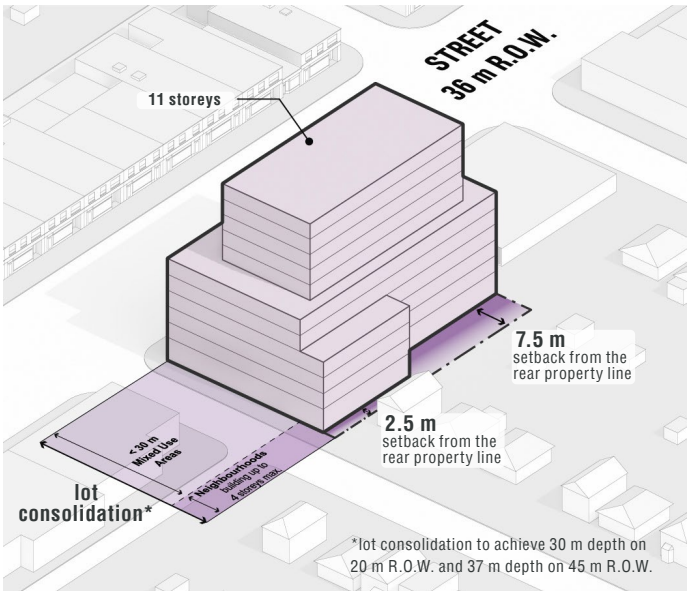


Figure 3.3.12: Sample illustration of a low-rise portion of a mid-rise building within the Neighbourhoods land use designation.

Rationale

Where a site is too shallow to accommodate an efficient and feasible mid-rise development (i.e., an approximately 18- metre building depth is required at the uppermost storeys for a typical double-loaded corridor building), consideration may be given to applications that propose to consolidate additional properties within Neighbourhoods or abutting sites to the rear. This would allow shallow properties to achieve mid-rise heights with a more regular envelope and floorplate. On shallow sites, without consideration for increasing lot depth, a mid-rise building could not be achieved or could result in a less feasible floorplate (single loaded corridors) at upper levels.

This guideline considers the ideal lot depth for developing an efficient and well-designed mid-rise building. The ideal lot depth for a mid-rise building site increases with the width of the right-of-way and the corresponding height of the building in order to accommodate the appropriate setbacks, step-backs and separation distances within the site. Ideal minimum lot depths based on the prevailing right-of-way widths across this city are provided in Guideline 1.3 Mid-Rise Site Typologies.

The ideal lot depths identified in the guidelines are not intended to encourage the consolidation of properties in order to accommodate taller buildings on deeper sites – building height should be proportionate to and generally no greater than the width of the adjacent right-of-way. The intent of this guideline is to allow for the feasible development of a 1:1 mid-rise building on a shallow site, where lot depth precludes the optimal redevelopment of the site.

Any new mid-rise building should follow the applicable guidelines for their respective rear transition condition and other applicable guidelines. Support for consolidating properties designated Neighbourhoods will be contingent on other guidelines being achieved (e.g. widened boulevards and sidewalks, maximum building heights, building setbacks and step-backs, etc.). There are other considerations including, but not limited to, heritage conservation, public realm improvements and achieving Toronto Green Standard soil volumes for tree planting, which would also be considered to demonstrate the appropriateness of a mid-rise building on a site. Any portions of a mid-rise building built on Neighbourhoods designated properties would be required to comply with the Official Plan direction for development in Neighbourhoods. In this regard, the height of the building element would be limited to 4 storeys, and design considerations for preserving the character of the Neighbourhood will apply.

This guideline is presented as one solution to developing mid-rise buildings on shallow sites and may not be applicable in all circumstances.

Official Plan Reference:

3.1.1 The Public Realm | 3.1.3 Built Form

3.1.4 Built Form- Building Types

4.1 Neighbourhoods

4.2 Apartment Neighbourhoods | 4.5 Mixed Use Areas

3.4. SIDE YARD SETBACKS

Mid-rise buildings should be designed with regard for the existing and planned conditions of the abutting properties and other immediate adjacencies. In determining the appropriate side yard setbacks, consideration should be given to the redevelopment potential of the adjacent properties to maintain appropriate facing conditions between buildings in the present and future, while allowing access to sky view and sunlight on the adjacent public street.

Figure 3.4.1: Examples of continuous streetwalls.

a. Mid-rise buildings in main street or emerging main street contexts should generally be built to the side property lines up to the height of the streetwall, typically between 10.5 metres (3 storeys) and 20 metres (6 storeys).

b. The construction process used to build a side wall next to the side wall of an adjacent building should result in a minimal gap to avoid unsightly areas that are unusable and collect refuse.

c. Mid-rise buildings in residential contexts should be set back from the side property lines to provide windows on all elevations and opportunities for soft landscaping and a walkway, where appropriate.

d. Where the side elevation is set back from the side property line, it should provide a well-articulated façade design that complements and continues the front façade design.

e. For buildings taller than 6 storeys, floors above the streetwall should be set back from the side lot lines by a minimum of 5.5 metres to provide sky views and increased sunlight access on the adjacent public street(s).

f. Where more "porous" streetwalls are preferred, side step-backs are encouraged above the minimum streetwall height of 10.5 metres (3 storeys).

g. In some cases, reducing or eliminating side step-backs at upper levels on narrow sites may be appropriate to improve building performance. This option should be considered on a site-by-site basis and supported by the relevant studies demonstrating that the building:

   i. Appropriately supports the existing and planned context;
   ii. Meets requirements for sun access within

the public realm;

iii. Responds to human scale within the public realm;

iv. Provides acceptable pedestrian-level wind conditions;

v. Meets requirements for conserving cultural heritage resources; and

vi. Contributes to sustainable development.

h. On narrow sites, alternative design solutions may be considered in order to reduce the impacts of the party wall and provide access to daylight for residential units. The use of lightwells, notched elevations and other design interventions may be appropriate to provide additional windows, daylighting and ventilation into dwelling units. Where lightwells provide the only windows and means of daylight into a unit, the dimensions should generally be a minimum of 5.5 metres by 11.0 metres in size to provide adequate access to light, air and privacy.

Rationale

Avenues, certain major streets and other built-up Mixed Use Areas are envisioned to maintain a continuous streetwall lined with shops, restaurants, cafes and other community and commercial services. A break in the continuity of the streetwall and building fabric is disruptive to the success of the public function of the main streets. This will also be dependent on the width of a building site, and where it is necessary for development to maximize density and build to a lot line.

For this reason, front yard parking, automotive uses and buildings with large setbacks are detrimental to the evolution of streets with a main street character in mixed-use and commercial areas. The continuous "streetwall" portion of a building's front façade is defined as a minimum of 10.5 metres (3 storeys) up to a maximum of 20 metres (6 storeys) in height (see Guideline 3.2.2). Streetwalls of main street buildings should therefore generally be built to the side property line with no side windows.

In circumstances where this is not possible or undesirable and side windows are provided, the side yard setbacks in Guideline 3.4.2 and Table 2 apply.

Figure 3.4.2: Examples of porous streetwalls with 4-sided pavilion typology buildings.

While continuous streetwalls are generally desirable in a main street context, there are many contexts across the city where this condition is not appropriate, and greater separation between buildings and increased landscape coverage provide a more appropriate built form response. Development sites in the post-war areas in the city are less likely to be adjacent to existing properties with buildings built to side property lines. Many of these sites also tend to have larger lot sizes and wider frontages. The development model that has emerged to-date for these larger sites demonstrates a preference for four-sided buildings that include windows on all sides and employ larger side property setbacks, often with soft landscape and tree planting. For additional information and guidance for determining the appropriate mid-rise built form typology for a site, refer to Guideline 1.1.

As mid-rise buildings are built across the city, it will be important to maintain sky view and sunlight access to the public realm. On larger rights-of-way, this will be particularly important, because the maximum building heights will be taller. By requiring side property step-backs at upper storeys, the potential for a "canyon effect" will be avoided.

Where properties have a wider frontage, the uppermost storeys of the building can step back on the sides to allow for increased sunlight, daylight and sky view, as well as side glazing reducing the extent of blank side walls. Side yard step-backs provided at upper storeys will reduce the height of blank side walls, provide spaces for additional primary windows in units, provide both greater light penetration and varied rooflines, and create opportunities for private outdoor terraces and sitting areas.

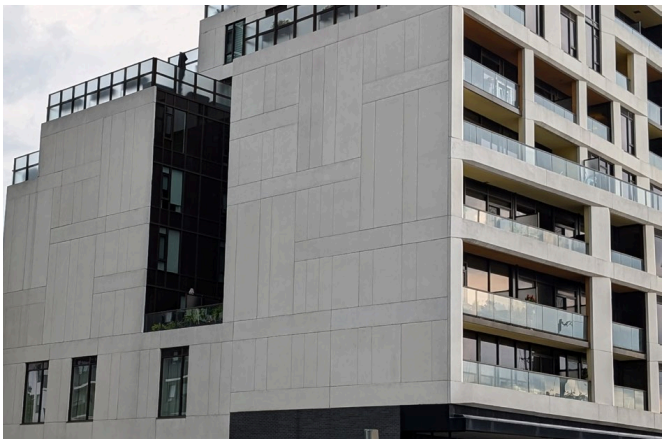


Figure 3.4.3: Example of a lightwell.

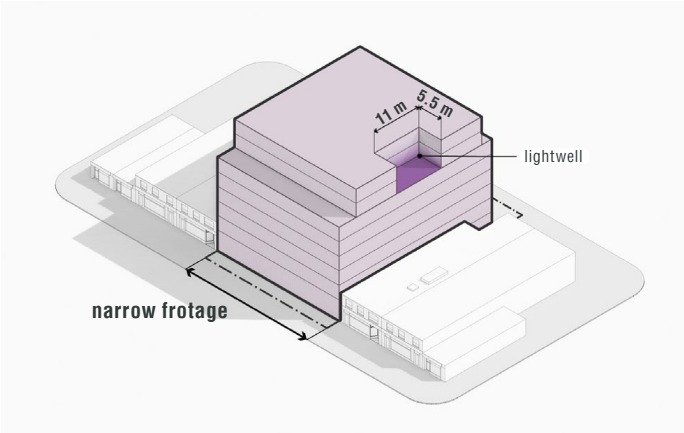


Figure 3.4.4: Illustration of a lightwell design.

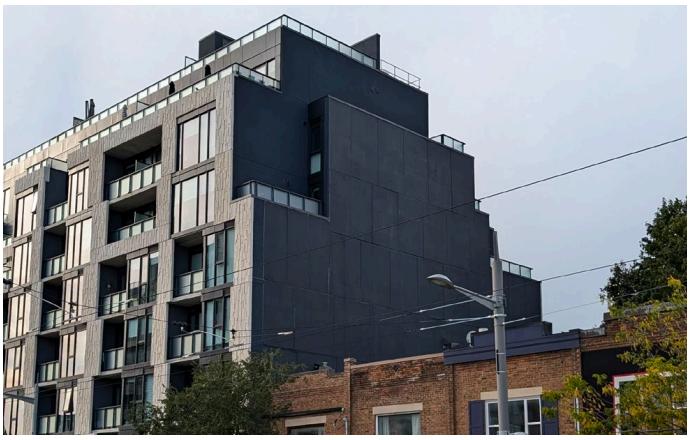


Figure 3.4.5: Example of a notched elevation.

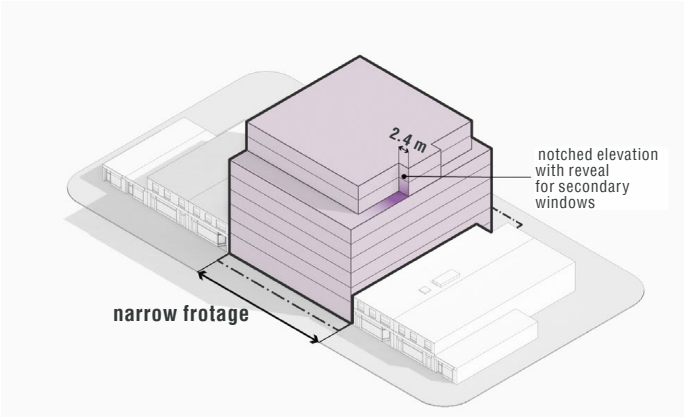


Figure 3.4.6: Illustration of a notched elevation.

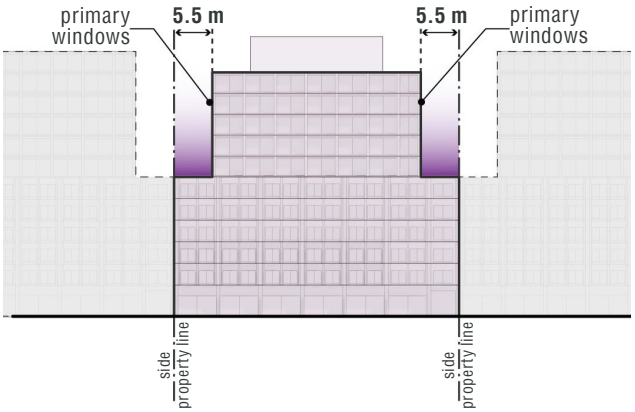


Figure 3.4.7: Illustration of side yard setbacks in main street or emerging main street contexts where upper storeys above the streetwall should provide a minimum of 5.5- metre setback.

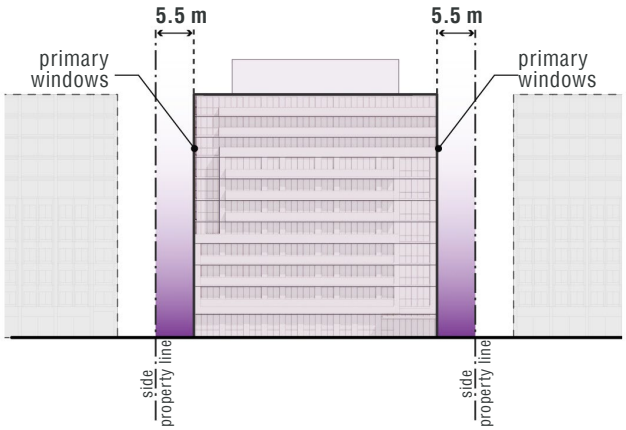


Figure 3.4.8 : Illustration of side yard setbacks in residential contexts, where a minimum 5.5- metre side yard setback should be provided to the adjacent side yard property lines.

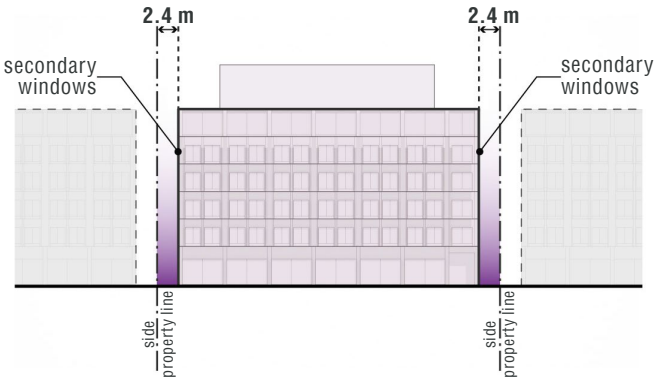


Figure 3.4.9: Illustration of 6 storey mid-rise building side yard setbacks in residential contexts, where a minimum of 2.4- metre side yard setback is required.

Official Plan Reference:

3.1.3 Built Form

3.4.1. LIMITING BLANK SIDE WALLS

Blank side walls or party walls should be designed as an architecturally finished surface and large expanses of blank side walls should be avoided.

a. Generally, blank side walls should be no taller than the streetwall.

b. Blank side wall conditions may be acceptable in limited cases above the height of the streetwall if treated appropriately with a similar level of architectural and material quality as the main façade.

c. To mitigate the impact of blank side walls, they should be designed with a material finish that complements the architectural character of the main building façade(s). Blank walls provide an opportunity to add visual interest when viewed from the public realm and should incorporate high-quality design treatments, such as green walls, murals, or other façade enhancements, where appropriate.

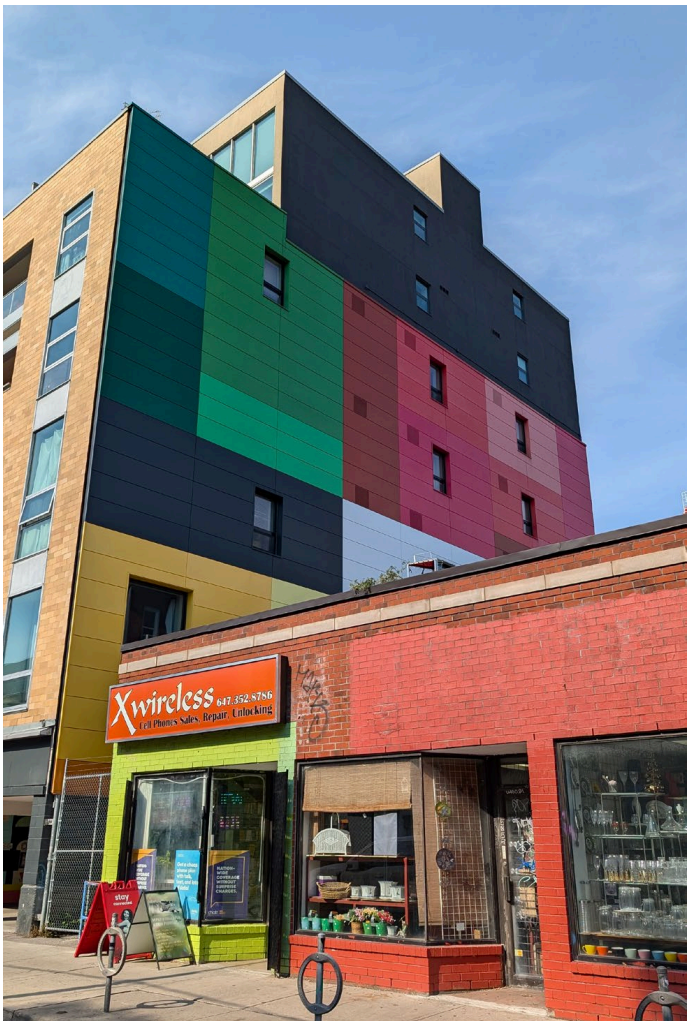


Figure 3.4.10: Example of a highly animated blank wall at Kensington Market Lofts (160 Baldwin Street).

Rationale

As areas of the city reurbanize with mid-rise buildings, some buildings will be taller than existing structures or new structures that are not built to the full height limit. The extent of these blank walls is a result of both the height of adjacent buildings and whether the upper storeys of the new building step back at the sides. While exposed blank side walls are to be expected during this period of transition, design standards are required to mitigate the appearance and height of blank walls.

In some instances where lots are deep, the length of the building is positioned perpendicular to the street. In these cases, blank walls are generally not an issue except on the lower levels of the building that may extend closer to the side property lines. For these contexts, a more porous streetwall condition should be expected.

Official Plan Reference:

3.1.3 Built Form

3.4.2. SIDE WINDOWS

Mid-rise buildings should provide side yard setbacks that appropriately respond to the facing conditions of the adjacent properties. New developments should not negatively impact existing or potential future buildings with side wall windows.

a. Side walls of new buildings should incorporate glazing where possible.

b. Where adjacent properties have walls with no primary windows, new mid-rise buildings should ensure a minimum separation distance of 5.5 metres is provided between all existing walls with no primary windows and all new walls with no primary windows.

c. For mid-rise buildings that are 20 metres (6 storeys) in height or less, a minimum side yard setback of 2.4 metres should be provided where no primary windows are located along the side elevations.

d. Where primary windows are located along the side elevations of a new mid-rise building, a minimum side yard setback of 5.5 metres should be provided from the side property line in order to create appropriate facing conditions and maintain appropriate separation between windows, and to provide sky views and increased sunlight access on the adjacent street and open spaces.

e. For mid-rise buildings oriented perpendicular to the street, or with long side elevations with primary windows, a minimum setback of 7.5 metres should be provided from the side property line.

f. Some conditions may require additional setbacks. Setbacks in this case will be determined on a site-by-site basis. For guidance related to separation between building wings and side yard setbacks for large and deep sites, refer to Guideline 1.3.1 Site Planning for Deep Sites and/or Large Sites.

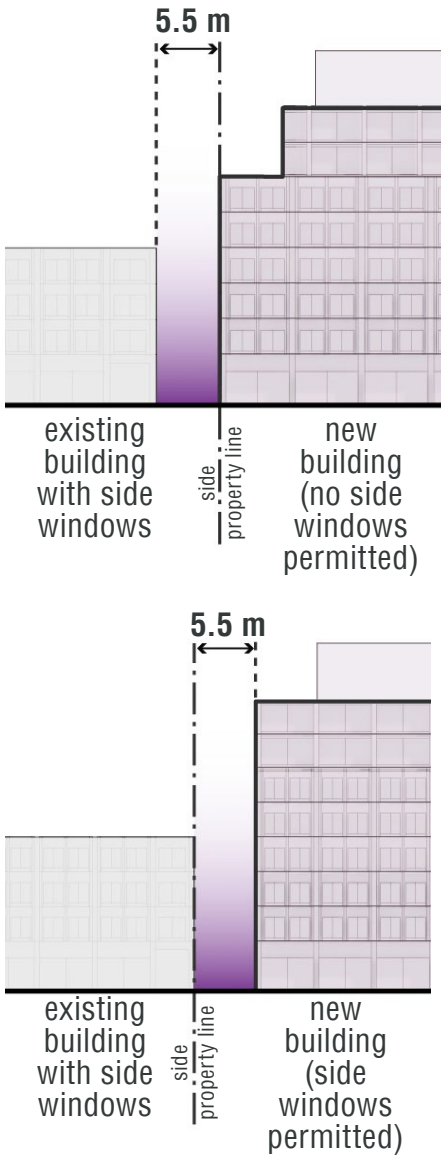


Figure 3.4.11: Illustration of setbacks based on facing conditions.

g. Mid-rise buildings should be designed with regard for the existing and planned context. In determining the appropriate side yard setbacks, consideration should be given to the redevelopment potential of the adjacent properties to maintain an appropriate facing condition between buildings in the present and future.

h. Where the side property line abuts a public lane, the side yard setback should be measured from the centre line of the lane.

i. The minimum separation distance provided between mid-rise buildings or building wings should increase with the length of the façade to ensure privacy between units and allow good access to sky-view, sunlight and daylight within spaces between buildings and the units within them. When mid-rise buildings or wings of a mid-rise building have primary windows along the side elevation, the following separation distances apply:

    i. For building façades less than 25 metres in length with primary windows facing the side property lines, a minimum separation distance of 11 metres should be provided.
    ii. For building façades exceeding 25 metres in length with primary windows facing the side property lines, a minimum separation distance of 15 metres should be provided.

Rationale

Mid-rise buildings with side windows should be designed to respond appropriately to the existing and planned context of the adjacent properties. Based on the site context and facing conditions, side setbacks and the resulting separation distances should be designed to protect access to daylight, sunlight, and privacy for existing and future residential and commercial units to ensure livability, usability and a high-quality of life. Table 2 outlines the side yard setbacks that mid-rise buildings should provide, based on typology and side wall conditions.

Side Wall Condition of New Mid-Rise Building	Side Yard Setback	
	Streetwall (80% of R.O.W. up to a limit of 8 storeys/25.5m)	Above Streetwall
No Windows	0m	N/A*
Secondary Windows	2.4m	5.5m
Primary Windows	5.5m	5.5m
Primary Windows on Long Façades Perpendicular to the Street	7.5m	7.5m

Table 2 – Side Yard Setbacks for Side Windows

**Mid-rise buildings should not provide blank façades above the streetwall. Refer to Guideline 3.4.1 and 3.4.2.*

Official Plan Reference:

3.1.3 Built Form

3.5. BUILDING WIDTH

Where mid-rise building frontages are more than 60 metres in width, building massing should be articulated or "broken up" to ensure that façades are not overly long.

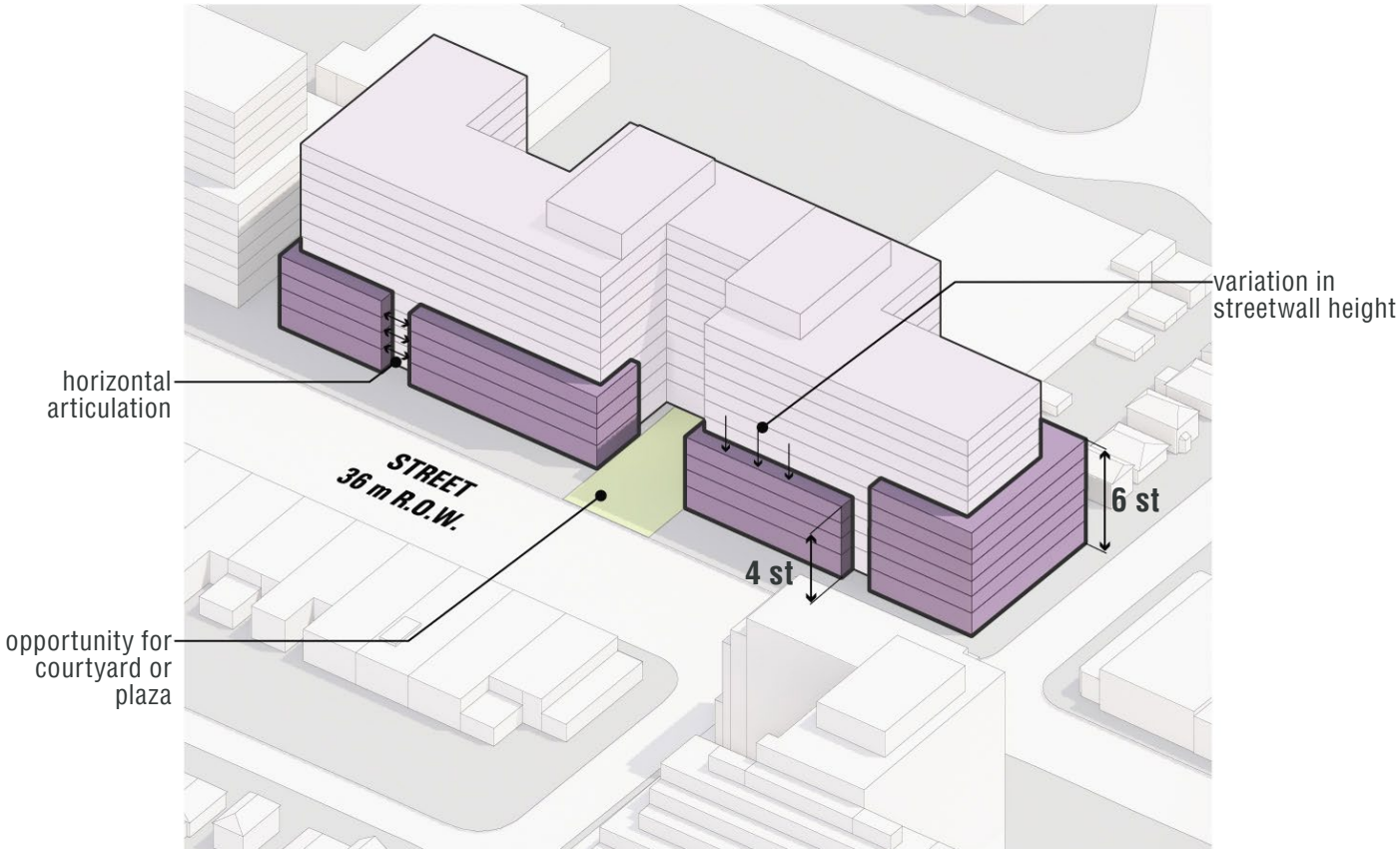


Figure 3.5.1: Illustration of various approaches to breaking up building massing on a long façade.

a. Create multiple buildings on wide sites and provide opportunities for open spaces and pedestrian and cycling connections.

b. Where buildings exceed 60 metres in width, create interesting building/streetwall façades through the use of articulation, including recesses, varied building heights, setbacks, and step-backs, and changes in horizontal and vertical planes.

c. For taller mid-rise buildings (typically above 8 storeys) break up and/or limit the width of upper-level floor plates above the streetwall height to increase sky view and sunlight access.

d. Step-backs and articulated design elements should be of sufficient depth to ensure that the break is perceivable and contributes to enhancing the public realm.

e. Articulation and breaks should reference the architectural scale and rhythm of the surrounding context and maintain a fine-grain pedestrian scale along the streetwall.

Rationale

Long, uninterrupted façades have a negative impact on the pedestrian realm. They provide less interest and variation at the pedestrian level. At upper storeys, long, continuous façades prevent sunlight access and sky views at the street (see also Guideline 3.4.1 Side Yard Setbacks). Where multiple long buildings develop next to one another, they can create a canyon effect along the street, which can contribute to reduced sunlight within the public realm, lead to urban heat island effect and create uncomfortable pedestrian level wind conditions. Long façades can also contribute to a disjointed public realm as they limit opportunities to improve site permeability and provide mid-block connections and open spaces.

Building façades should be broken up both physically and visually. Breaks in long building façades provide mid-block connections for pedestrians and allow for the creation of additional "corners" and spaces to gather or interact.

There are multiple approaches to breaking up larger sites, the most appropriate is dependent on the surrounding context, the program of the building(s) and the dimensions and geometry of the site. Some methods include, but are not limited to:

- Vertical break type 1: The building remains connected, and a visual break is created using articulation (see Figure 3.5.2). This type of break should be multi-storey in scale and ideally extend from ground level to the top of the building.

- Vertical break type 2: The streetwall remains connected, and a physical break is provided in the upper building (see Figure 3.5.3).

- Vertical break type 3: The streetwall and upper building breaks, creating a bridge connection.

- Creating multiple buildings (most appropriate on larger sites depending on the site orientation and context).

The most appropriate approach to vertical breaks will be determined on a site-by-site basis.

Where articulation in the façade results in primary windows that face each other, the separation distances outlined in Guideline 3.4.3 Side Windows should be adhered to, ensuring that units are afforded daylight and privacy.

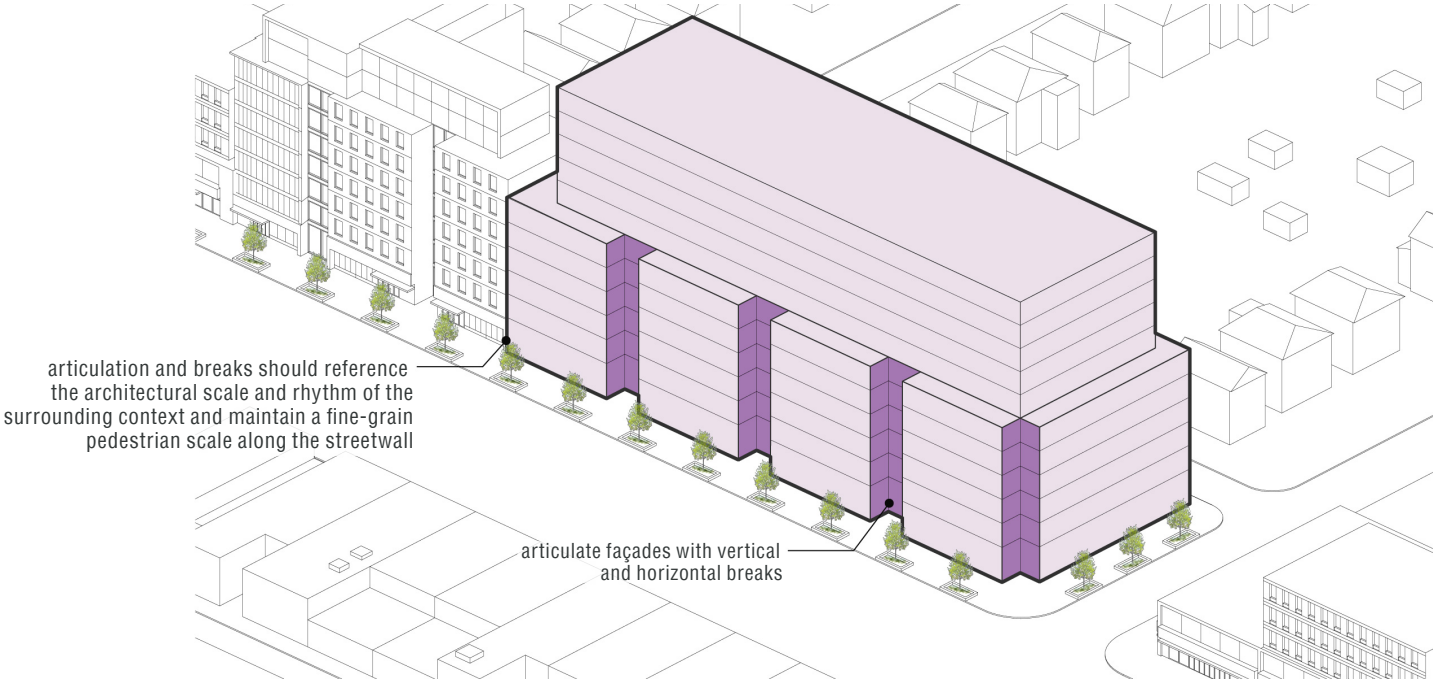


Figure 3.5.2: Illustration of design solutions for incorporating visual breaks into façades.

Figure 3.5.3: Example of a physical break above the streetwall.

Official Plan Reference:

3.1.1 The Public Realm | 3.1.3 Built Form | 5.1.3 Site Plan Control

3.6. GROUND FLOOR HEIGHT

The minimum floor-to-floor height of the ground floor, except for heritage properties, should be 4.5 metres to facilitate commercial and other non-residential uses at grade.

a. Ground floor heights should be a minimum of 4.5 metres (floor to floor, measured from average grade) to accommodate retail uses and provide sufficient clearance for trucks into internal spaces of a building. Where residential uses front onto streets at grade level, the vertical distance from exterior grade to the top of the second storey floor level should also measure 4.5 metres.

b. In the residential context, the ground floor height may be reduced if the primary uses are residential at grade.

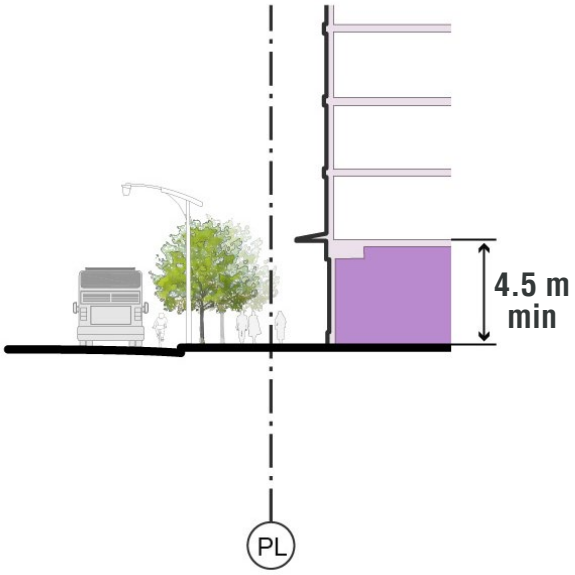


Figure 3.6.1: Illustration of 4.5m minimum ground floor height.

Rationale

Floor heights for commercial uses are generally higher than a typical residential floor. A taller floor-to-floor height at grade will provide for flexibility of grade-level uses and increase the marketability of retail spaces. A floor-to-floor height of 4.5 metres has been cited as the desirable height to achieve this. A taller floor-to-floor height at the street level also emphasizes this portion of the building and thereby increases the visibility of any developed retail. A floor-to-floor height of 4.5- metres generally provides sufficient clearance for trucks into the internal spaces of a building (i.e. would not require double height garage door openings), which should be met at the rear of the site. A 4.5- metre floor-to-floor height is also required for at-grade residential uses. For residential uses, the 4.5 metres height would be taken from exterior grade to the top of the second storey floor level. This approach could help to enhance privacy for the ground floor residential units by slightly raising the interior grade of the first floor. As community and market needs evolve over time, residential uses at grade may be converted to retail uses. The 4.5- metre height considered with a horizontal setback required for residential uses provides an infill zone that can accommodate this transition.

Official Plan Reference:

2.2 Structuring Growth in the City: Integrating Land Use and Transportation | 3.5.2 The Future of Retailing

Related Standards, Guidelines & Studies:

Retail Design Manual

3.7. BALCONIES AND PROJECTIONS

Balconies and other projecting building elements should not negatively impact the public realm or prevent adherence to other guidelines.

a. Balconies should be designed to maximize usability, comfort, and building performance to meet sustainability objectives.

b. Balconies within the streetwall setback zone (between 2 and 6 storeys) should be inset behind the streetwall to create a sense of privacy and provide shade and thermal comfort for residents, reduce the overall impact on the volume of the building massing, and be less carbon intensive than other design alternatives.

c. Balconies or other permanent building elements should not encroach into the public right of way or front yard setback and should ensure at least 3 metres of horizontal clearance is maintained from tree planting zones.

d. Balconies should be designed and located with consideration for their impact on the building's physical and apparent visual mass. Projecting balconies immediately above the pedestrian perception step-back should be limited.

e. Balconies should provide external shading, associated with the building orientation and height on the building façade, where possible, to provide thermal comfort and long-term heat resilience.

f. Cantilevered and thermally broken “attached” balconies are generally discouraged as they are more carbon-intensive and increase total carbon metrics.

g. Avoid projecting balconies and cantilevered portions of new developments above heritage properties to maintain the visual prominence of heritage buildings and the streetwall.

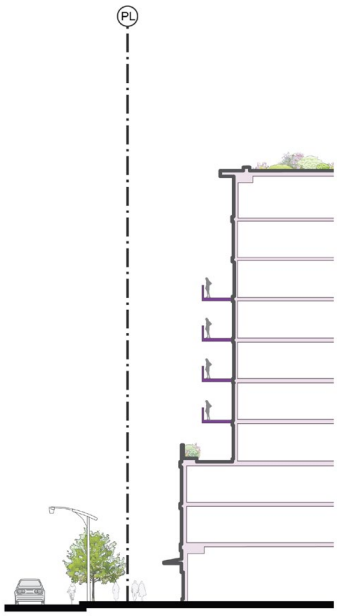


Figure 3.7.1: Illustration of balconies.

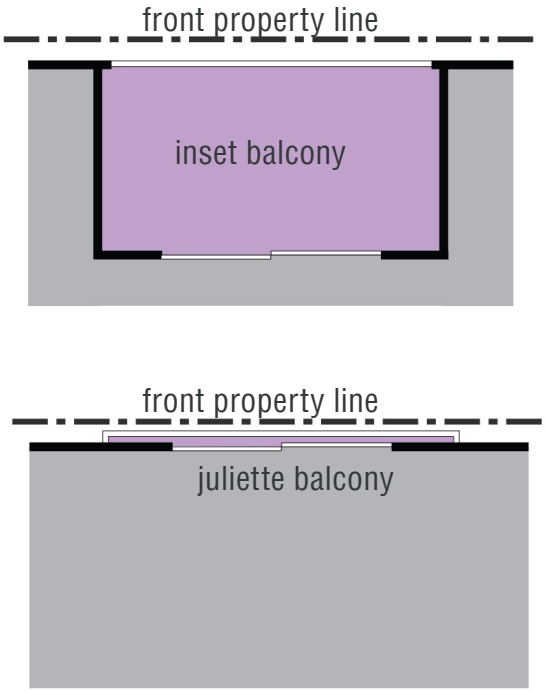


Figure 3.7.2: Illustration of balconies in plan view.

Rationale

The guidelines in this document have been developed to promote appropriately scaled and massed mid-rise buildings with good street proportion. The intent of these guidelines is to allow mid-rise buildings to frame the street while limiting negative impacts on the public realm or neighbouring properties, including excessive shadowing or overlook.

Therefore, any architectural features that project from the building face (horizontally or vertically) should be contained in a manner that respects and reinforces these relationships to streets, open spaces and other buildings.

To support mature tree canopy growth, projecting balconies should not be located within the Pedestrian Perception Zone, or below the first step-back along a street. Within this portion of the building, recessed balconies, Juliet balconies and terraces (as part of a step-back) are acceptable.

Full floor height screens or louvres are sometimes utilized on balconies for noise or sun protection. The two considerations for the design and use of these screens include their material and their percentage of the total façade area. Generally, these should not form more than 50% of the street facing façade.

The Embodied Carbon Study (2024) undertaken by the City of Toronto and the Atmospheric Fund, prepared by Ha/f Climate Design, provides recommendations for the design of balconies incorporated into this guideline. Balcony design provides an opportunity to reduce embodied carbon and carbon intensity, while also working towards the achievement of thermal comfort targets. Balconies should be located and designed to provide effective solar shading and reduce total carbon metrics. The use of inset balconies and non-cantilevered balcony designs can reduce carbon intensity, while also creating outdoor amenity spaces that provide privacy, shade and comfortable thermal conditions for residents.

Official Plan Reference:

3.1.3 Built Form

Related Standards, Guidelines & Studies:

Embodied Carbon Study

3.8. ROOFS AND ROOFSCAPES

Mechanical penthouses may exceed the maximum height limit by up to 5 metres and should respect building envelope controls such as step-backs.

a. Mechanical penthouses should be minimized in size and be strategically located to limit any additional visual and physical impacts on the public realm, the site and surrounding properties, including limiting pedestrian level shadow impacts. Mechanical penthouses should be set back from building edges, in proportion to their heights, and away from public streets.

b. All mechanical penthouses should be designed and clad with materials to complement the building façades.

c. The areas of the roof not utilized as mechanical penthouses should be developed as green roofs and/or usable outdoor amenity space. Green roofs shall comply with the City's Green Roof By-law.

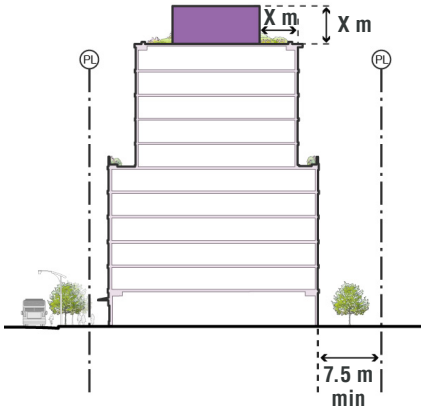


Figure 3.8.1: Illustration of mechanical penthouse placement.

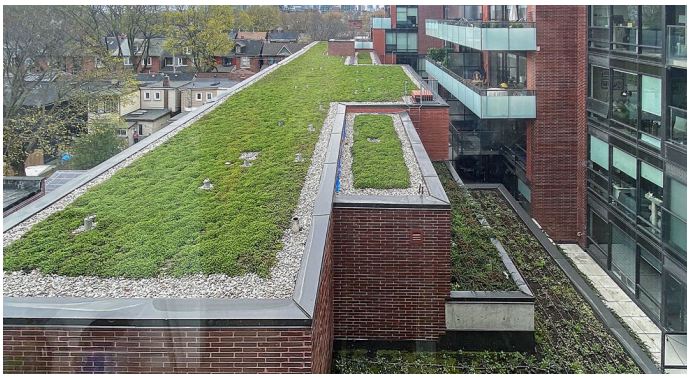


Figure 3.8.2: Example of green roof developed on areas of the roof not utilized as a mechanical penthouse.

Rationale

Mechanical penthouses above maximum allowable heights are already permitted through City zoning by-laws. Mechanical penthouses that extend above the height limit but fall within the 1:1 ratio between their heights and the step-backs to the exterior roof edges, will not impact shadowing, will generally not be visible from the adjacent public sidewalks and are minimally visible from the opposite sidewalk. Keeping penthouses within the 1:1 ratio between their heights and the step-backs to the exterior roof edges, will position the penthouse to the centre of the roof. However, as mechanical penthouses will be visible from adjacent properties, including neighbourhoods, they must be designed with materials that are complementary to the architecture of the building. Methods for reducing the height and size of mechanical penthouses should be explored or integrated into the top floor of the building.

Where it is not possible to achieve a mechanical penthouse within these guidelines, the optimal building height may not be achieved, or the mechanical penthouse will need to be located within the uppermost storey of a building.

Other sustainable technologies, such as photovoltaic panels, are also encouraged for the roofs of mid-rise buildings.

Official Plan Reference:

3.1.3 Built Form | 3.1.4 Built Form- Building Types

Related Standards, Guidelines & Studies:

Green Roof By-law

3.9. EXTERIOR BUILDING MATERIALS

Buildings should utilize high-quality materials selected for their permanence, durability and energy efficiency.

a. Exterior building materials should be compatible with the architectural character of the surrounding context.

b. The use of masonry, stone, steel and bio-based materials in cladding systems is encouraged to reduce embodied carbon.

c. Where possible, consider material reuse to reduce waste and embodied carbon and pay homage to the site's history.

d. Where possible, design for disassembly to allow for the easy recovery of parts and materials when a building is disassembled or renovated to ensure the building can be recycled as efficiently as possible at the end of its lifespan.

e. Minimize glazing at locations of greatest thermal heat loss and solar heat gain to reduce operational emissions.

f. Design mid-rise buildings with exterior building materials that meet or exceed the Toronto Green Standard energy performance standards.

Rationale

Building materials are a key component of exterior building design, and the choice of appropriate materials is integral to the process of creating new buildings that will positively influence the character of the streetscape.

The use of appropriate exterior building materials at grade, particularly at the streetwall and areas which are visible from the public realm, is an important design consideration to help new development support the public realm and fit with the existing and/or planned context.

The choice of cladding materials, their thickness (material efficiency), and replacement cycles (durability) directly impact a façade's emissions. To minimize both embodied carbon and operational emissions, careful selection of exterior building materials is critical. This guideline seeks to encourage such sustainable practices while supporting design innovation.

Through the City's Site Plan control review process, new development will provide drawings depicting the exterior design, including materials. In reviewing a project through Site Plan Control, the City can consider and secure the exterior design and exterior architectural details to the extent that the appearance impacts matters of health, safety, accessibility, sustainable design or the protection of adjoining lands. The City can also consider general façade materials, which influence a project's character, scale, appearance and how it relates to adjacent buildings and the surrounding context.

Figure 3.9.1 : 38 Howard Park Avenue - Tier 2 TGS Compliant – Key energy performance measures include: Over 15% of the construction materials used for the development was derived from post and pre-consumer recycled sources by cost, reducing the environmental impact of resource production.

Figure 3.9.2 : 118 Merchant's Warf - Tier 2 TGS Compliant - Key energy performance measures include: Opaque wall comprising a window-to-wall ratio of 40 per cent and double-pane glazing with low-E coating.

Figure 3.9.3: 120-160 Canon Jackson Drive - Tier 2 TGS Compliant - Key energy performance measures include: High performance building envelope components RSI-7.04/R-40.0 Insulated Roof, RSI-4.40/R-25.0 Fibre Cement Panels.

Official Plan Reference:

3.1.1 The Public Realm | 3.1.3 Built Form

3.10. FAÇADE DESIGN & ARTICULATION

Mid-rise buildings should be designed with well-articulated façades that enhance pedestrian scale, create visual interest, and prioritize sustainability.

a. Façades should be designed with a cohesive architectural composition with careful consideration for proportions, rhythm, and material selection.

b. Create a dynamic and visually engaging façade by articulating the building's massing to distinguish the pedestrian perception zone from the upper storeys.

c. Design building elevations that emphasize three-dimensionality through the strategic use of architectural elements. Incorporate changes in plane, material transitions, step-backs, and varied fenestration patterns to add depth and character to the façade. Integrate architectural elements like balconies, recesses, projections, cornices, columns and window treatments to add layers of texture and reinforce a variety of scales within each component of the building.

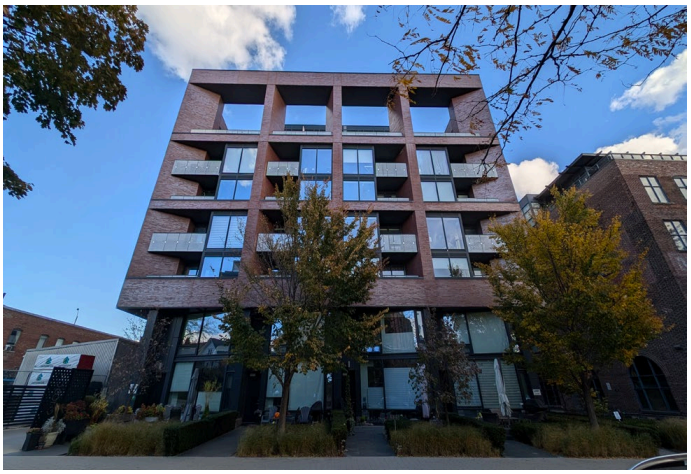
d. Consider natural ventilation, daylighting, wind flow, solar orientation, and energy performance when designing and articulating façades of mid-rise buildings. Articulation and sculpting should be strategic and assist in improving or mitigating these conditions and promoting sustainability. Where appropriate, adjust internal layouts, balcony placement, fenestration and other aspects of the building design to respond to manage passive solar gain and improve building energy performance.

e. Each building elevation should have a façade treatment that complements the overall building design, while responding to facing conditions. Blank walls should be avoided.

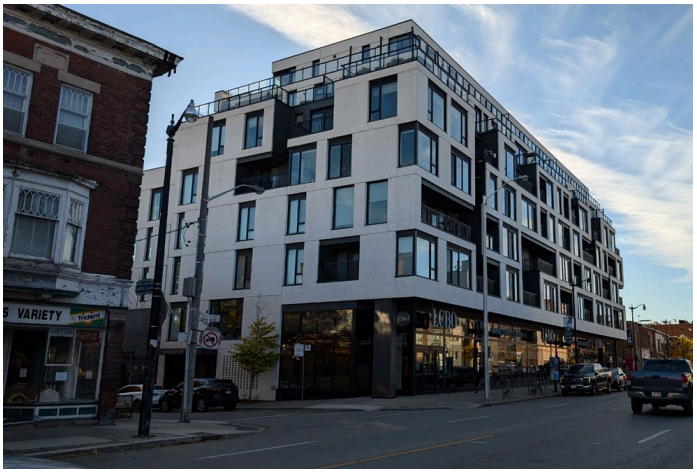
f. Provide a maximum of 60% glazed area for ground floors and commercial frontages and a maximum of 40% glazed area for residential façades in order to reduce embodied carbon and operational emissions.

g. On corner sites, design both elevations with the same level of wall articulation, architectural detail, fenestration and quality of materials to ensure a balanced presence within the public realm.

h. On large sites, architectural variation within development blocks is encouraged to avoid monotony and to create a more visually interesting and dynamic environment. A consistent design language should be maintained throughout the development to ensure overall cohesion and a sense of place.



383 Sorauren Avenue



2803 Dundas Street West

Rationale

A cohesive architectural style, characterized by well-proportioned elements composed with good rhythm and complementary materials, not only creates a visually engaging façade that breaks down the building's scale and integrates it more comfortably into the streetscape, but also contributes to creating places where people are proud to live, work and play.

Articulating a mid-rise building's massing should be considered for more than aesthetic purposes and should enhance the utility and functionality of the building. By integrating environmental considerations, functional requirements and contextual responsiveness, façade design can contribute to a building's overall sustainability and performance. Strategically positioned step-backs, recesses and projections can provide shading from direct sunlight, minimize solar heat gain and mitigate glare, as well as maximize daylight and natural ventilation, reducing reliance on artificial lighting and mechanical heating and cooling systems.

Considering aesthetics and performance in design ensures that mid-rise buildings fit harmoniously within their surroundings, both visually and functionally, and contribute to a comfortable and healthy environment for all users.

500 Lakeshore Boulevard West

80 Atlantic Avenue

Figure 3.10.1: Examples of façade articulation.

Official Plan Reference:

3.1.1 The Public Realm | 3.1.3 Built Form

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4.0 PEDESTRIAN REALM

4.1. SIDEWALK ZONES

Provide adequate space between the front of the building and adjacent street curbs to safely and comfortably accommodate pedestrian movement, streetscape elements, and activities related to the uses at grade.

a. Along the primary street frontages of a mid-rise building site, sidewalk zones should be at least 6 metres wide or greater where larger setbacks are established by the existing context or required by the Zoning By-law. The pedestrian clearway must be within public property. The broader sidewalk zone may be entirely public or a combination of public and private property.

b. The pedestrian clearway should have a minimum dimension of 2.1 metres and should be free of obstructions and ideally located away from the curb to ensure the safety and comfort of pedestrians.

c. The sidewalk zone should incorporate a landscape/tree planting zone, with a minimum planter width of 1.9 metres to support a continuous row of trees along the street. Ensure trees are placed to maintain sufficient separation from the built edge as per Urban Forestry standards to allow for mature canopy growth. Where utilities permit, trees should be located along the curb.

d. Mid-rise buildings at corners, transit nodes, or other locations with significant pedestrian use, or where there is a substantial change in grade, may require additional setbacks for all or portions of the building frontage to accommodate pedestrian flow.

e. Exceptions to the minimum 6-metre width may be considered when the extent of the mid-rise building frontage or potential for future redevelopment on abutting sites does not support establishing a new setback pattern. In such cases, creative solutions, such as eroding the first floor to achieve the sidewalk width at grade, or setting back a portion of the building to expand the landscape and furnishing zone, may be appropriate.

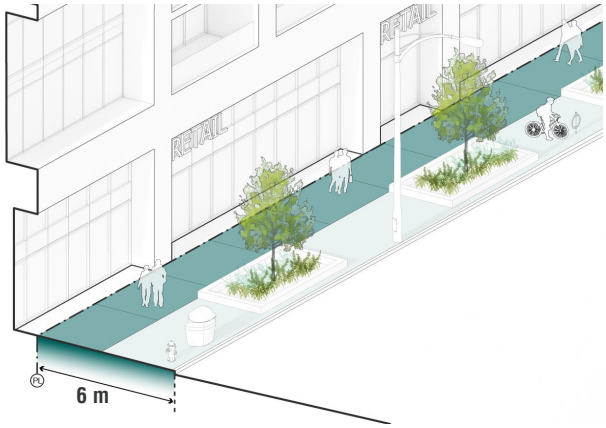

Figure 4.1.1: Illustration of a commercial frontage with a generous sidewalk zone to support an active frontage and vibrant pedestrian environment.

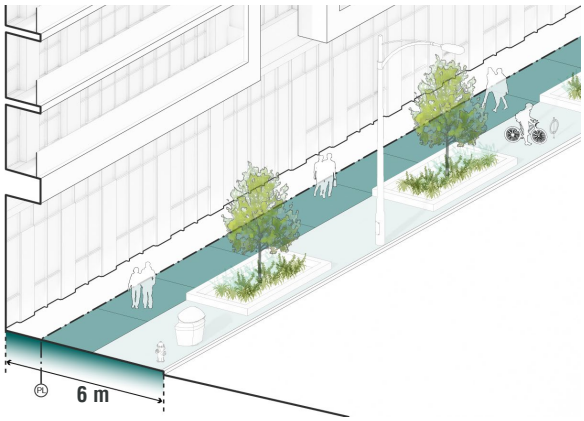

Figure 4.1.2: Sample illustration of an exception to the 6.0-metre sidewalk zone where a cantilever is appropriate.

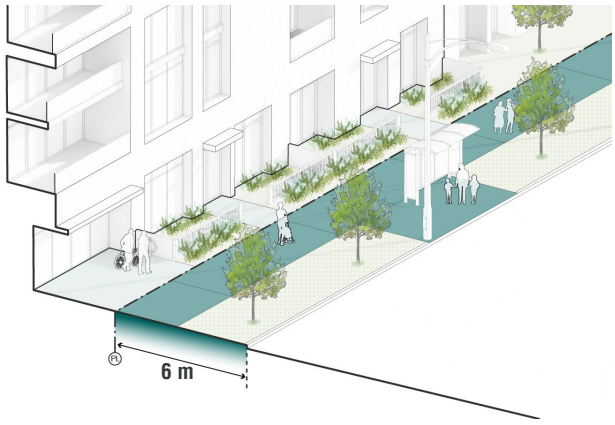

Figure 4.1.3: Illustration of a residential frontage with a generous sidewalk zone and landscaping to reinforce the character of the streetscape.

f. Exceptions to the minimum 6-metre width may be considered for mid-rise buildings adjacent to heritage properties. Locate and align the building face with the adjacent buildings, for a minimum of one building bay (5-8m) to avoid blank sidewalls that would otherwise remain visible on adjacent buildings.

Rationale

Sidewalks are a vital part of the public realm, and play a crucial role in dense urban areas, particularly when characterized by limited open space or parkland deficiencies. Since many streets in Toronto were not designed with mid-rise buildings and the associated density in mind, the width of the existing public sidewalk is frequently too narrow. A wider sidewalk zone, which may include a building setback, is often necessary to properly resolve competing demands for space from pedestrians, street furniture, trees, utilities, and commercial uses. Wider sidewalks can also provide space for grouped bicycle parking, boulevard cafés, public art installations, and other valuable street activities and amenities. New development, especially when at the scale of an entire block, offers the opportunity to improve sidewalk amenity by providing an edge zone, a generous furnishing and planting zone, a continuous, universally accessible pedestrian clearway, and an appropriate frontage or marketing zone depending upon the uses at grade. In order to achieve an appropriate sidewalk width, a mid-rise building may need to be set back further from the property line than the distance required by the Zoning By-law.

The sidewalk zone is the entire area accessible by pedestrians along the frontage of the building. While perceived as continuous, this area comprises two distinct parts: the public boulevard and the private setback zone within the property line.

The public boulevard is the area between the edge of the curb and the property line, consisting of:

- **Edge Zone -** the space behind the curb that acts as a buffer between moving/parked vehicles and the other sidewalk/boulevard functions. May accommodate sign posts, parking machines, decorative pavers, soft landscape, solid waste set out and snow storage.

- **Furnishing and Planting Zone -** this zone in the boulevard provides space for a wide range of street elements such as trees, other plantings, litter and recycling bins, benches, street lights, and bicycle racks.

- **Pedestrian Clearway -** the area of sidewalk that is free and clear of any obstacles so that people of all ages and abilities can travel in a direct, continuous path. This zone is dedicated to pedestrian movement and the amount of space required will depend on the volume and intensity of pedestrian activity on the street.

- **Furnishing and Marketing Zone -** The area adjacent to properties, such as building entrances, front yards, stoops, window shopping area, vending, café seating, and building-related utilities. This area may be part of the public right-of-way, or private, if a building setback is present.

The composition of the private setback zone is flexible and context-dependent, potentially incorporating elements of the marketing furnishing zone, soft landscaping and tree planting areas, extended walkways that link to the pedestrian clearway, and other pedestrian amenities.

Official Plan Reference:

3.1.1 The Public Realm | 3.1.3 Built Form | 3.4 The Natural Environment | 5.1.3 Site Plan Control

Related Standards, Guidelines & Studies:

Complete Streets Guidelines | Streetscape Manual | Toronto Green Standard

4.2. STREETSCAPES

Mid-rise buildings should provide vibrant pedestrian-oriented streetscapes with the highest level of urban design treatment, to create beautiful comfortable, sustainable, safe, and accessible pedestrian environments and great places to shop, work, and live for all.

Figure 4.2.1: Example of a pedestrian-oriented streetscape with extensive landscaping along Wellington Street West.

a. The design of streetscapes should follow the Complete Streets Guidelines, and design details in the Toronto Urban Design Streetscape Manual.

b. Integrate and prioritize sustainability and climate resilience into every streetscape design decision, such as incorporating green infrastructure, permeable surfaces, and energy efficient and biobased materials.

c. Preserve existing mature trees where possible.

d. Maximize tree planting opportunities and understory planting to support wildlife including pollinators, in the design of the public realm and minimize utility conflicts by coordinating and relocating (as needed) above and below grade (existing and/or proposed) utilities to accommodate tree planting opportunities to achieve the complete street objectives, meet the City's target of 40% tree canopy cover by 2050, and align with the TransformTO NetZero Strategy.

e. Provide a 3-to 5-metre clearance between trees and buildings or canopies to the satisfaction of Urban Forestry, to ensure healthy growth and proper maintenance.

f. Provide unencumbered soil in front yard setbacks and along site boundaries, where feasible, to support healthy tree planting, landscaping and water infiltration.

g. Where applicable, developments should incorporate design elements into the streetscape that reinforce a sense of place, contributing to the unique character and identity of the surrounding area, in consultation with the community and/or BIA. Such elements may include, but are not limited to, lighting fixtures and treatments, public art, gateway features, storefront features, murals, and whimsical elements that appeal to children.

h. Where applicable, honour and celebrate the history of the community and Indigenous heritage through streetscape design.

i. Where residential units are proposed at grade, the following additional streetscaping guidelines apply to provide adequate public/ private transition:

   i. Mid-rise buildings should be set back a minimum of 3 metres from the property line to support soft landscaping and provide privacy for residential units (see Figure 4.2.3).

   ii. In contexts where existing landscaped setbacks exceed 3 metres, such as in Apartment Neighbourhoods, the setback should be increased to be consistent with the existing setback to support enhanced soft landscaping and provide an opportunity for tree planting and mature tree retention.

   iii. Landscaping and tree planting within the setback area should complement the public realm, not replace it.

Rationale

A well-designed and vibrant streetscape is vital to the character and quality of the mid-rise building site and the surrounding public realm, as well as to the livability of the City. All building frontages facing public streets, parks, and open spaces must safely and comfortably accommodate pedestrian movement, street furnishings, lighting, bicycle parking, and landscaping. The space in front of buildings may also contain cafés, grocery stands, canopies, awnings, signage, public art, fountains, landscape structures, and other built or landscape features, which further animate the street, beautify the City and enhance pedestrian amenity.

Not only does the streetscape contribute to animating the pedestrian realm, but it also directly contributes to the livability of the City by preserving and reintroducing trees, plants and important ecological features that improve air and water quality, enhance the urban forest, increase biodiversity and minimize urban heat island effects. Trees and other vegetation offer numerous benefits to our city, including improved air quality, noise and dust reduction, minimized stormwater runoff, and increased shade which in turn reduces the need for heating and cooling. Ensuring that trees are given an environment in which they can thrive, with sufficient space and unencumbered soil to support their mature growth and longevity, is critical to ensuring we have a resilient city. Streetscapes offer a significant opportunity to enhance sustainability and climate resilience within the city. Well-designed streetscapes not only provide ecological benefits but also create more vibrant, beautiful, healthy and accessible public spaces for all.

Official Plan Reference:

3.1.1 The Public Realm | 3.1.3 Built Form | 3.4 The Natural Environment | 5.1.3 Site Plan Control

Related Standards, Guidelines & Studies:

Complete Streets Guidelines | Streetscape Manual | Toronto Green Standard

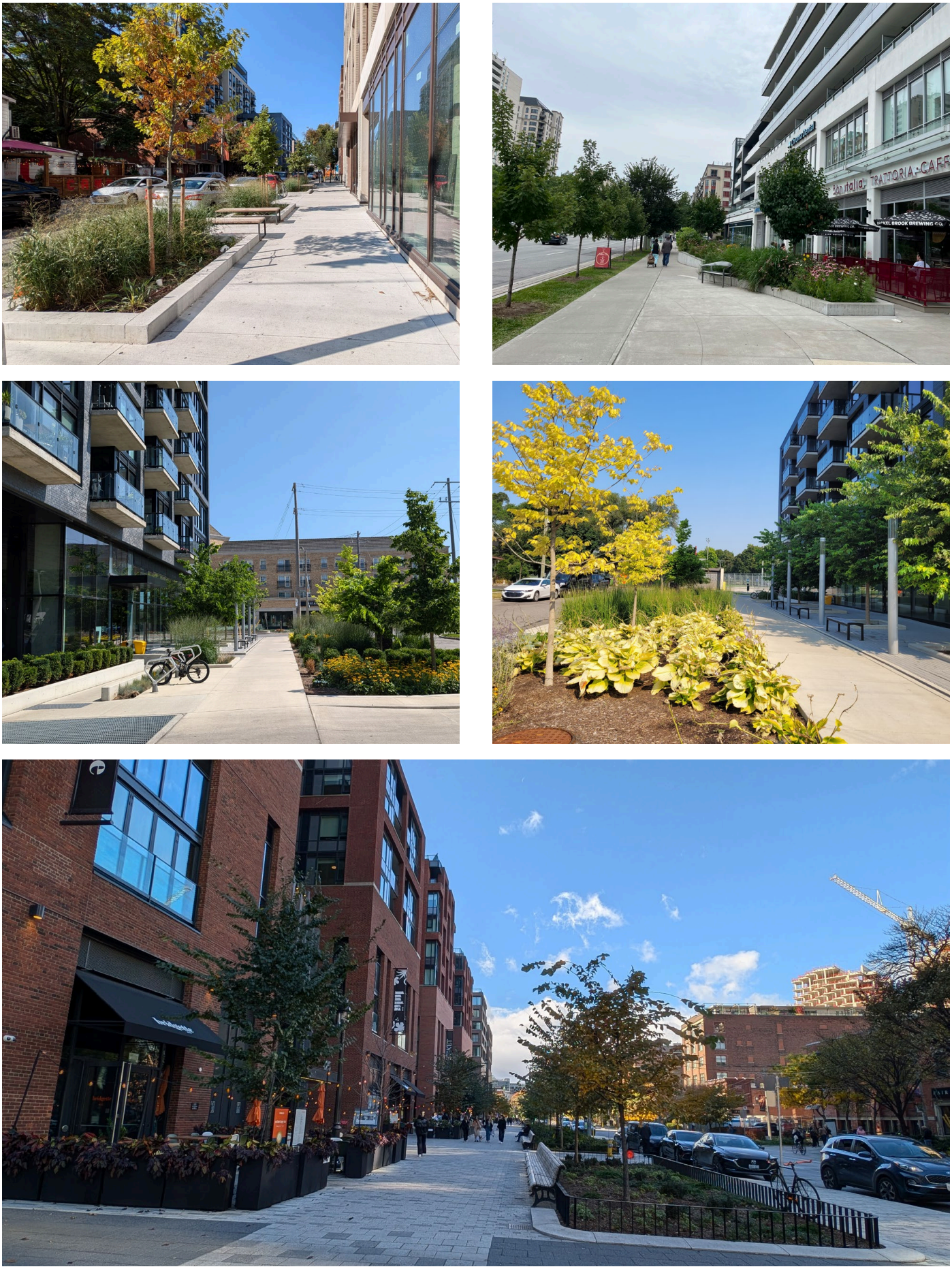

Figure 4.2.2: Examples of streetscape treatments.

Figure 4.2.3: Examples of streetscape treatments for grade-related residential units that respond to the character of the surrounding context.

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5.0 GLOSSARY

Glossary

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

Active Uses: at-grade uses within a building that support pedestrian activity and promote a high degree of visual and physical interaction between the building interior and adjacent public realm. Grand entrance lobbies, private indoor amenity space, guest suites, and large-format retail or commercial facilities are typically not considered active uses.

Address: The front door of a building or unit that faces the public street or mews.

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

Articulation: the layout or pattern, expression and material character of building elements, including walls, doors, roofs, windows and decorative elements such as cornices and belt courses.

At-grade: at the level of the ground.

Back of House Activities: activities, essential to the efficient function of the development, that are commonly situated at the rear of the buildings (eg. solid waste 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.

Context (Existing and Planned): the existing context of any given area refers to what is there now. The planned context refers to what is intended by City policies in the future.

Context Analysis: the study of how new development will fit with and respond to existing and planned patterns, opportunities, and challenges identified within the surrounding area.

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

Daylighting: access to natural light – direct or diffuse sunlight – within the building interior.

Façade: the exterior wall of a building visible from the public realm.

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

Facing Distance: distance between the face of a building and the face of another building or property line.

Façade: the exterior of the building visible to the public.

Front Façade: the predominant exterior vertical wall face of a building.

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

Frontage: the portion of a development parcel 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

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 or above-grade.

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

Low-Rise Building: a building that is generally up to four storeys in height.

Massing: the size and shape of a building above grade.

Master Plan: a planning and design framework to guide the incremental development of a large or complex area with multiple buildings, new streets, and/or parks.

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 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.

Plaza: an animated gathering place with predominantly hard surfaced landscape features flanking a public street.

Privately Owned Publicly Accessible Open Space (POPS): privately owned and maintained outdoor space that is designed to promote public access and use.

Primary Street: a street with high pedestrian priority, determined by the street and sidewalk widths, character of uses at grade, level of transit service, traffic volumes, number of vehicular and cycling lanes, and the overall level of civic importance within the structure of the city. A site can have more than one primary street frontage.

Private Shared Amenity Space: common spaces or facilities that are owned, maintained, and accessed privately by building 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 Art: site specific artwork created to enhance publicly accessible space through artistic interpretations that range from independent sculpture to integrated architectural treatment and landscape design.

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.

Separation Distance: the horizontal distance between buildings or building components measured from the exterior wall of the building or building component, but excluding balconies.

Setback: a horizontal distance measured at a right angle from any lot line to the nearest part of the main wall of a building or structure.

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.

Sidewalk Zone: the space between the roadway curb and property line. The sidewalk zone may be expanded when a building is setback from the property line.

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

Sky View: the measurable amount of sky seen from a street, park, or other open space above and in between building masses.

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.

Step-back: the setting back of the upper storeys of a building. Step-backs help articulate buildings, create a transition between built form of varying heights, and provide appropriate separation between adjacent buildings and/or open spaces.

Street: a significant part of the City's open space system. In their role as connective linear open spaces, streets provide vehicular, pedestrian, cycling, transit 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: the condition of enclosure along a street whereby the fronts of buildings align and the façades visually and physically join together to create a continuous defining edge for the street.

Streetscape: the distinguishing elements and character of a particular street as created by its width, degree of curvature, paving materials, design and placement of street furniture, trees, landscaping, lighting and other pedestrian amenities, as well as the setback and form of surrounding buildings.

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).

Tall Building: a building that is generally taller than the width of the adjacent street right-of-way, or the wider of two streets if located at an intersection.

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

Universal Access: built environments, buildings, facilities, accommodation, services and products that are inherently accessible to all people regardless of their abilities. Incorporating universal access and accessible facilities into the design and site layout of new development contributes to making Toronto's built environment "barrier free," enabling people of all abilities to move about freely and safely, participate fully in society and experience a better quality of life.

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.

Walkability: the extent to which the built environment promotes safe, comfortable and convenient conditions for pedestrian travel. Generally measured and evaluated within a 500-metre radius (10-minute walk) of a site.

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

Weather Protection: continuous canopies, overhangs, or other permanent building features which are sized and positioned to effectively shield pedestrians from inclement weather at-grade.

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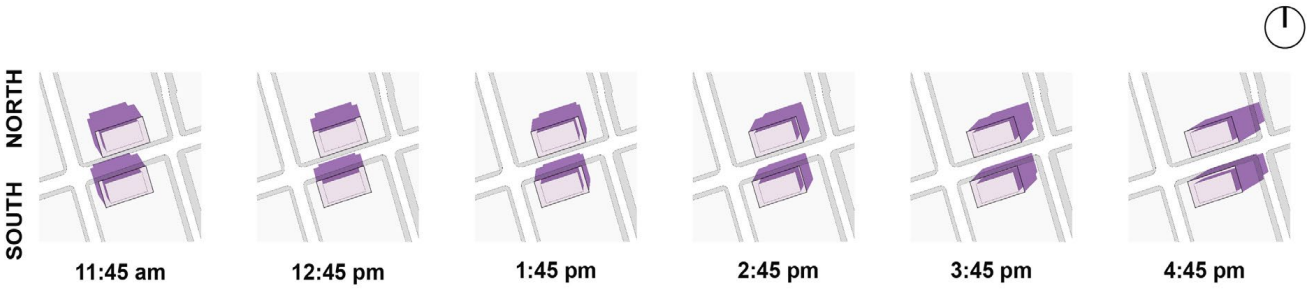
APPENDIX

Appendix A

Sample / Shadow Studies

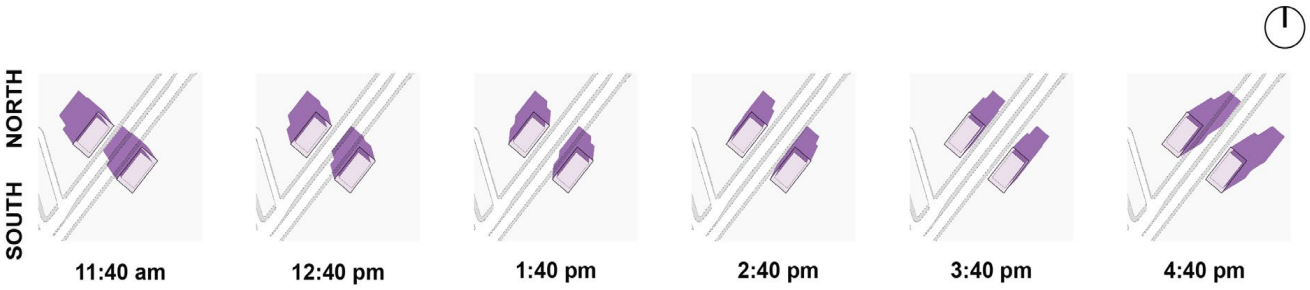
Queen Street East (between Beech Avenue and Neville Park Boulevard)

March 21st



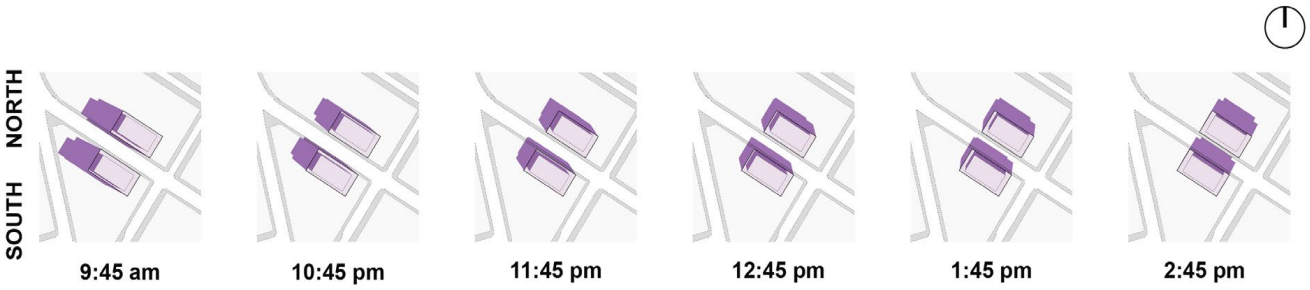
Kingston Road (between McCowan Road and Bellamy Road South)

March 21st



Dundas Street West (between Roncesvalles Avenue and Howard Park Avenue)

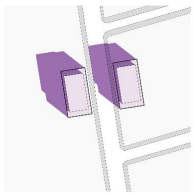
March 21st



Yonge Street (north of Heath Street)

March 21st

WEST EAST



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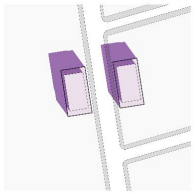

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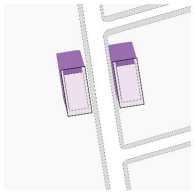

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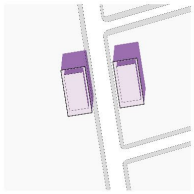

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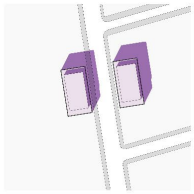

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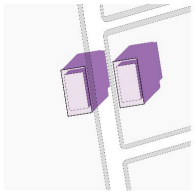

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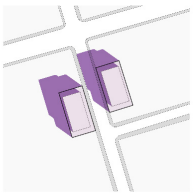
Yonge Street (south of Heath Street)

March 21st

WEST EAST



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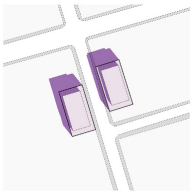

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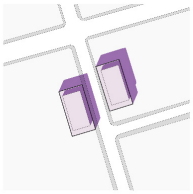

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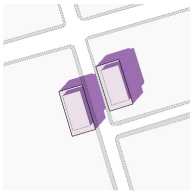

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