



Town of Aurora

Urban Design Guidelines

For Additions and New Buildings in Stable Neighbourhoods

Aurora Heights Neighbourhood

Prepared by The Planning Partnership | June 2020

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	1
	1.1 Purpose of the Design Guidelines	2
	1.2 Design Guidelines Context	2
	1.3 What are Design Guidelines	4
	1.4 How will They Be Used	4
	1.5 Objectives of the Design Guidelines	5
	1.6 Character Attributes (general description)	6
2	Aurora Heights Character	9
3	Urban Design Guidelines	13
	3.1 Pattern of Lots	13
	3.2 Streetscapes	14
	3.3 Architectural Forms and Styles	18
4	Implementation, Monitoring & Updates	21
a	Appendix: Definitions and Glossary of Terms	22

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1 Introduction



Guided by the community vision articulated in the Official Plan (OP), and building on the principles of 'compatible' development, the objective of the Urban Design Guidelines is to provide direction for the design of future residential uses that 'respect and reinforce' the unique character of Aurora's Stable Neighbourhoods.

Throughout a number of Aurora's Stable Neighbourhoods, there is a growing trend of dwellings being renovated, enlarged, or replaced by new dwellings, which are often significantly larger and conflict with the existing character of the community.

Through consultation with the community and feedback from residents, the Town identified a number of concerns. It should be noted that while there were generally two perspectives expressed - with equal support by those in favour of development and those opposed to change, the following are highlights of some of the concerns that were heard:

- Compatibility of new dwellings with the existing fabric of the community, mainly with respect to built form, height, architectural style and scale;
- Issues of privacy, overlook and impact on sunlight in (private) amenity areas;
- Preserving the integrity of the existing landscaped pattern of front and rear yards, notably with mature trees and large front lawns;
- Side yard setbacks (the open space between dwellings) which form part of the neighbourhood character;
- Existing zoning provisions (R3) which do not reflect what is in the ground today, especially lot coverage;
- The limit of development and siting of additions and new builds in the Greenlands System;
- Calculation of gross floor area as an added restriction in the By-law and how that number was achieved;
- How grade is currently measured in the By-law, and the slope of a property, affecting the character of a lot relative to the street, in particular building height;

It should also be noted that there was general recognition that the each of the four Stable Neighbourhoods are:

- Unique and distinct and require an appropriate and customized approach;
- 'In transition' and while stable, are not static;
- Require a regulatory framework that allows for flexibility in architectural style while respecting and reinforcing the existing neighbourhood character; and,
- Urban Design Guidelines are a good tool to help with 'fit' for new infill development;

To address some of these challenges, Town Council identified the need for further direction in managing the built form of these changes in four specific neighbourhoods: Aurora Heights, Regency Acres, Temperance Street and Town Park.

The Stable Neighbourhoods Study and Peer Review information report, presented to Town Council January 2019, suggested a number of recommendations for strengthening the protection of Stable Neighbourhoods. The report recommended additional planning tools for managing character, including the preparation of amendments to the Zoning By-law (By-law Number 6190-19 enacted June 25, 2019) and Urban Design Guidelines.



Aurora Heights Neighbourhood (Zoning by-law boundary)



1.1 Purpose of the Design Guidelines

The purpose of the Urban Design Guidelines is to implement the Official Plan Vision for Stable Neighbourhoods, by identifying the key attributes that contribute to the character of the area and providing a framework to guide the design of additions and new buildings and landscapes that:

- Reconciles compatibility with diversity, while avoiding both monotony and harsh contrasts;
- Respects and reinforces the existing character of the neighbourhood; and,
- Promotes a contextual design approach that considers the adjacent and surrounding development and fosters pedestrian scaled/oriented streetscapes, while allowing for and encouraging appropriate flexibility, innovation and diversity in design, intrinsic to evolving communities.

The Urban Design Guidelines for Stable Neighbourhoods are intended to work alongside the Zoning By-law to implement the Official Plan vision for Stable Neighbourhoods, to ensure that new development is compatible with, and enhances existing stable neighbourhoods.

1.2 Design Guidelines Context

The Town's Official Plan is one of the guiding documents that is used to direct and manage growth; it articulates the vision and objectives for how the community should be developed and outlines the policies for how land in the community should be used.

The Official Plan is prepared with input from the public and the community and helps to ensure that future planning and development meets the specific needs of the community; it deals mainly with issues such as:

- Where new housing, industry, offices and shops will be located
- What services like roads, watermain, sewers, parks and schools will be needed
- When, and in what order, parts of the community will grow
- Community improvement initiatives

The Town's Council recognizes the importance of having a Vision to steer it through all of the many changes that are in the near and distant future and that, in order to be successful, meaningful and impactful, it must represent what the community is today and what it aspires to be in the years to come. In this regard, one of the key objectives for the successful evolution and development of the community is 'Ensuring Design Excellence'.

Ensuring Design Excellence extends to all areas within the Town, including existing, older residential neighbourhoods.

These areas are identified as 'Stable Neighbourhoods' in the Official Plan; this designation is intended to protect the Neighbourhoods from incompatible forms of development, while still permitting them to evolve and be enhanced over time.

While it is recognized that Stable Neighbourhoods are places that will continue to attract new residents and evolve, the policies direct that new development is to be sympathetic to and compatible with the form and character of the area, and appropriately considers the character of the area and the surrounding neighbourhood context.

Official Plan Policies that provide direction for Urban Design Guidelines include:

Policy 2.1 Ensuring Design Excellence

Ensure that Aurora promotes design excellence in all its land use and development decisions. High quality buildings, well-designed and functioning streetscapes, appropriate transitions between defined areas, integration between old and new development and connected open spaces are the elements that define a place. This Plan emphasizes the important link between managing growth, high quality design and Aurora's continued evolution as a memorable and beautiful place.

Policy 2.1.vi Protecting Stable Neighbourhoods

It is the intent of this Plan to ensure that Aurora's stable neighbourhoods are protected. Aurora's existing neighbourhoods, both older and newer, are not only a defining element of Aurora's character and urban structure, but also a tremendous asset and attractor for new residents and investment interests. This Plan seeks to ensure that the stability and vibrancy of these existing neighbourhoods is protected from the negative impacts of potential incompatible development and growth pressures. Any infill that occurs must be compatible with the established community character.

Policy 8.0 Intent

It is the intent of this Plan to ensure that the areas designated 'Stable Neighbourhoods'... are protected from incompatible forms of development and, at the same time, are permitted to evolve and be enhanced over time. All new development shall be compatible with its surrounding context and shall conform with all other applicable policies of this Plan.

Policy 8.1.3: Development Policies

New development and site alteration abutting existing residential development shall be sympathetic to the form and character of the [sic] existing development and shall be compatible with regard to building scale and urban design.

Policy 8.1.4: Design Policies

All new development within the 'Stable Neighbourhoods' designation shall respect and reinforce the existing physical character and uses on the surrounding area, with particular attention to the following elements:

Policy 4.2a:

New development, redevelopment, rehabilitation, and subdivision layout shall be encouraged to complement natural landscapes and grades, water courses, vegetation, heritage environments and existing or proposed adjacent buildings, through the conceptual design of buildings, their massing, siting, exterior, access and public areas.

Policy 4.2c:

Council shall support urban design which:

- Reconciles compatibility with diversity; and,
- Avoids both monotony and harsh contrasts.

Policy 4.2.f.i: *To achieve human scale, attractive and safe public environments, in entryways, heritage areas, in and adjacent to streets and open spaces, the following urban design approaches should be implemented:*

Development should encourage: sun penetration on outdoor spaces;

- Façade treatment should encourage: a variety of textures and colours on walls and walkways*

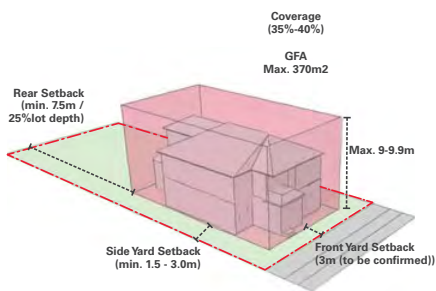


1.3 What are Design Guidelines?

The Zoning by-law addresses matters such as lot coverage, parking, setbacks and height - the 'quantitative' aspects of a neighbourhood's physical form. While zoning regulates how buildings sit within a lot/block, it represents only one of the planning tools that may be used to guide and shape development. To create development that promotes 'design excellence', is 'compatible' with and 'fits' within its surrounding context, zoning is best used in conjunction with design guidelines.

Design guidelines address the relative height, massing and articulation of elements (buildings and landscapes), their relationship to one another and to their surroundings - these 'qualitative' aspects of physical form work in combination with zoning parameters to lend shape and 'character' to a neighbourhood. These aspects more effectively addressed through Urban Design Guidelines.

Urban Design Guidelines are statements that include design guidance, criteria, standards and codes for how to shape the built environment, both the individual elements as well as how these should be spatially arranged and relate to one another. Urban Design Guidelines address diverse scales of development, from site specific to city-wide. Design Guidelines typically address the design of buildings, landscape features and their organization within a defined area as well as their relationship to their surroundings - built and natural.



Zoning By-law building envelope

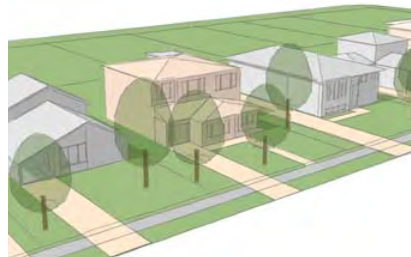
1.4 How will they be used?

These Design Guidelines will be used to evaluate proposals for **single-detached and semi-detached dwellings** consisting of:

- replacement dwellings or additions
- new and replacement detached garages
- accessory structures
- equal to or over 50m².

The Design Guidelines :

- Will be implemented through the Town's Site Plan Approval process.
- Are intended to provide guidance for homeowners, designers, architects, developers and landscape architects by outlining the framework and design principles for the site layout, massing and relationships of new and modified dwellings in the neighbourhood.
- Are non-statutory statements and therefore have inherent flexibility in their interpretation and application. As a planning tool, they may be changed or adjusted on a case-by-case basis.



Streetscape after urban design guidelines are applied to the building envelope

1.5 Objectives of the Design Guidelines

The recent development activity has posed a number of challenges to maintaining the characteristics that define the Stable Neighbourhoods, including the Aurora Heights Neighbourhood.

These design guidelines work in combination with zoning standards to address the placement, scale and design of new buildings and additions relative to their surroundings and provide guidance to:

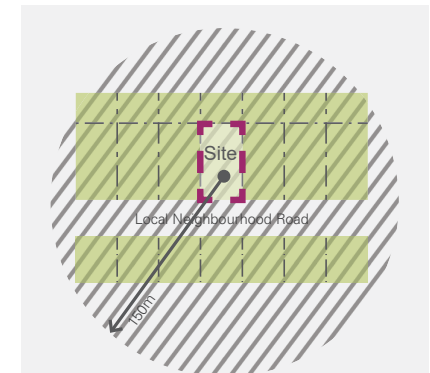
- promote **compatible development**;
- enhance **neighbourhood character**; and,
- promote **good urban design** and **best practices**.

Neighbourhood Character

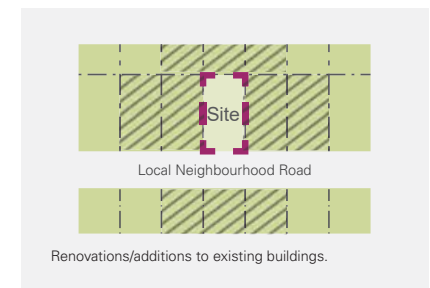
Neighbourhood character refers to the "look and feel" and considers the public and private realm components that define the area, including topography, age and style of housing, built environment, land use patterns, landscaping, street patterns, open space, natural heritage areas and streetscapes. Going beyond a categorization of the private and public realm, the character of individual properties and buildings cannot be viewed in isolation from the character of the street and surrounding context.

Neighbourhoods evolve over time, the incremental / cumulative changes that occur are important to the continued viability and vibrancy of the area; these changes, when taken in context, help to shape the character of the neighbourhood, including the following key attributes:

- **Pattern of Lots;**
- **Streetscapes;**
- **Architectural Forms & Styles; and,**
- **Cultural Heritage Resources.**



Minor redevelopment - existing dwelling is replaced by a new dwelling, or a lot is severed.



Renovations/additions to existing buildings.

Scale and type of development in relation to context



Figure ground graphic reflecting the pattern of lots

1.6 Character Attributes (general description)

Pattern of Lots

While the Zoning By-law speaks to individual lot sizes and lot frontages, urban design focuses on the combined/cumulative effect of the individual lots over a larger area, as an overall pattern. The pattern of lots is important as it informs where and how a building sits relative to the street and to one another, resulting in a rhythm of solid and void along the street as well as the proportion of building to landscape over the larger area.

Streetscapes

Streetscapes encompass the elements that contribute to spatially defining, articulating and animating the street environment, within both the public and private domains. Streetscape design requires that these elements are considered in a comprehensive manner, including the placement of buildings and driveways, building features that face the street, the open spaces between buildings, the roof line of buildings along the street, and landscaping within the street boulevard and front yards.

The illustrations below show what the general components of a streetscape.



Streetscape Plan



Streetscape elevation

Architectural Forms & Styles

The Zoning By-law speaks to how a building sits within a lot and a building 'envelope'. It does not address the form and style of buildings which have a tremendous collective impact on the character of an area.

While a rigorous adherence to a particular form or style is neither desirable nor realistic (even in new subdivisions), there are key elements of all building designs that can be used to ensure that different forms and styles can co-exist alongside one another in a compatible and complementary manner. This may include: front porches, windows, doors, horizontal bands, specific roof lines, etc.



Examples of architectural forms and styles

2 Aurora Heights Character



Aurora Heights is a relatively new neighbourhood located in the Yonge Street and Aurora Heights Drive area. It is characterized by large lots within a curvilinear pattern of wide streets with some variation in topography. These conditions, together with the well spaced low profile houses and generous setbacks with limited landscaping, contribute to a strong sense of openness.

As Aurora Heights continues to evolve, the construction of new buildings, building additions and building renovations is more common than ever. In order to ensure this construction fits well within the neighbourhood's character, future development should ensure **compatible development** through the recognition and enhancement of **neighbourhood character** and the promotion of **good urban design**.

For the Aurora Heights Neighbourhood, it is recognized that its character arises from a combination of the following key attributes.

Pattern of Lots

In the Aurora Heights Neighbourhood, a curvilinear street grid provides the frame for long, irregular, uninterrupted blocks lined with large-spacious lots. The combination of well spaced houses with low profile roof lines and front doors, large and consistent front and side yard setbacks and wide streets and boulevards result in a sense of openness throughout the neighbourhood.

In recent years older houses have been demolished and replaced by new larger/taller ones, placed closer to the street edge and/or adjacent units, while new additions, sometimes larger in height and massing than the main building, have been added onto existing homes. These new units/additions, together with the significant integrated garages and from driveways, have impacted the character of the neighbourhood, altering the pattern of lots.

Streetscapes

In the Aurora Heights Neighbourhood, the streetscape environment is defined by:

- Significant street widths, especially at curves and turning circles in cul-de-sacs.
- Buildings that are generally 1 to 2 storeys, with most having shallow pitched roofs.
- A consistent placement of dwellings generously setback from the street.
- Driveways that act as the main access to lots and to garages, with parking paths/driveways being as wide as the garage itself.
- A mixture of small attached garages, carports, detached garages in the backyard or driveway parking.
- Landscaping that includes significant grassy front lawns with shrubbery and some mid-age trees.
- Sidewalks with a grassed and/or treed boulevard provided on one side of most streets, with the more prominent streets having a sidewalk on both sides.



Detached garage is located to the rear and attached carport integrated to the massing of the dwelling to address the street frontage



Aurora Heights road pattern



Aurora Heights lot pattern

Aurora Heights streetscape



Wide boulevards and mature trees dominate the neighbourhood's streetscapes



Houses in Aurora Heights with large building setbacks contribute to the sense of openness in the neighbourhood's streetscapes



Architectural Forms and Styles

Aurora Heights is characterized by a generally homogeneous built form of well-spaced, modest 1 to 2 storey houses, with many split-level houses. Common shallow pitched roofs generally have the peak towards the centre of the house, or extending parallel to the street, creating a less visibly striking feature.

Low profile front entrances are often flush with the main front wall or set back to create a small porch. Some front entrances are also located to the side of the house. Predominant materials include a variety of brick, stucco, siding and stone.

The architectural style and colour palette of the houses are relatively consistent along each street.



Stone and brick are frequently used materials in the Neighbourhood



Split-level houses are common in Aurora Heights



Low profile houses dominate the Neighbourhood's built form

3 Urban Design Guidelines



The Zoning By-law establishes clear regulations for lot coverage, landscaping, front/rear yard setbacks and interior/exterior side yard setbacks. These guidelines are not intended to duplicate the Zoning By-law, but instead, to work in conjunction with the zoning standards to not only ensure 'no adverse impact', through quantified performance standards but also 'compatibility' of development through qualitative, context related design measures.

As such, the guidelines in this section are organized based upon the four key attributes that contribute to the character of the Aurora Heights Neighbourhood.

3.1 Pattern of Lots

Lot Sizes/Configurations and Rear Setbacks

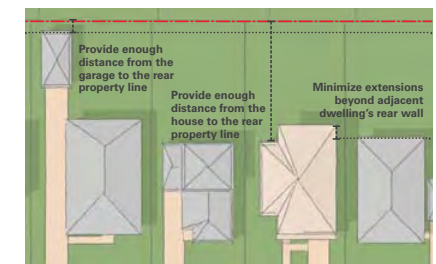
While lot size conditions the development possibilities in terms of building size/coverage, the way it is configured determines how the development relates to the public realm and other buildings along the street, as well as the consistency of the neighbourhood.

The objectives of the Urban Design Guidelines regarding lot size and its configuration and rear setbacks are to:

- Ensure compatible/similar lot sizes that enhance the rhythm along the streetscapes;
- Ensure lot configuration that reflect those of properties close by while achieving the desire relationship between the dwelling and the streetscape.
- Maintain the traditional range of building to lot relationship;
- Ensure that dwellings are in proportion to their lot sizes;
- Maintain the level of openness in the rear yard; and,
- Allow a measure of privacy between neighbours by providing space for light, landscaping and recreational uses.

Design Guidelines

- 1 Where possible, ensure that the rhythm along the streetscapes is respected and reinforced.
- 2 Where possible, enhance the public domain while maintaining appropriate separation of private areas.
- 3 Where possible, maintain the traditional building to lot relationship and encourage dwellings are in proportion to their lot sizes.
- 4 Maintain generous open space in the rear yard to allow for space for light, landscaping and recreational uses.
- 5 Ensure a measure of privacy between neighbours by providing sufficient distance between the back wall of the house and the rear property line.
- 6 Address rear yard privacy and sunlight issues when extending a home towards the rear property line or building a new dwelling by:
 - a) Minimizing extensions beyond the adjacent dwellings rear wall.
 - b) Keeping windows to a minimum on side elevations when the rear wall of the renovated/new dwelling extends beyond the adjacent dwelling's wall.
- 7 Provide enough distance between detached garages and the rear property line to minimize their impact on adjacent lots and allow opportunities for planting.



Rear yard setbacks

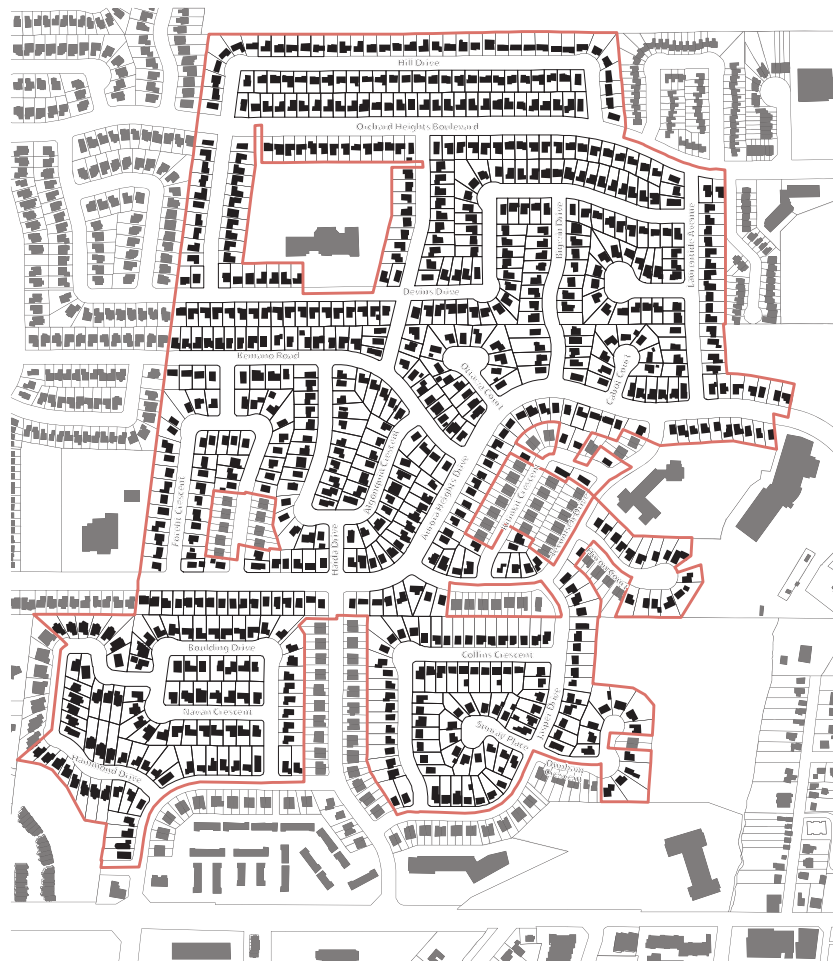


Figure ground graphic reveals modest rear setbacks when compared to the depths of the dwellings, as well as consistency of building sizes/depths and placement among those on the same street frontage, which results in an even rhythm of built form to void along the neighbourhood's streetscapes.



3.2 Streetscapes

The form (height, scale and massing) and placement (setbacks) of buildings in relation to the street and to adjacent developments are important considerations that define streetscapes.

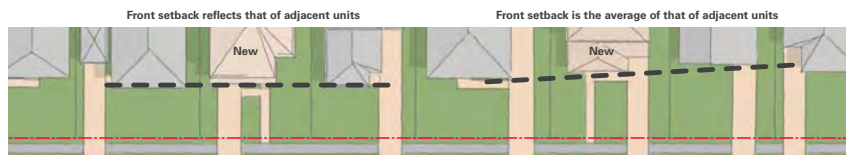
The height, scale, massing and placement of buildings are important to creating the 'street wall' and framing the streetscape.

Front Yard and Side Yard Setbacks

The relationship between buildings through placement on the lot is important to ensure a consistent neighbourhood 'feel', and defines/frames the street while impacting the sense of openness and enclosure. The positioning of houses on their lots contribute significantly to the streetscapes and the character of the Aurora Heights Neighbourhood.

The Zoning By-law establishes clear regulations for front yard setbacks and interior/exterior side yard setbacks. The objectives of the Design Guidelines in directing the relationship of the building to the side lot lines are to:

- Maintain a consistent spacing between dwellings, and
- Allow a measure of privacy between neighbours by providing space for light and landscaping.



Front setback approaches



Consistent spacing between buildings

Design Guidelines Between Buildings and the Street

- 8 Reflect the front setback of adjacent dwellings; when substantially different, ensure the new dwelling's setback is equal to the average distance of those on either side of it.
- 9 Encourage a pedestrian oriented streetscape by placing new units close to the street edge/property line.
- 10 Provide side yard setbacks that reflect those of adjacent homes, or are the average distance of those on either side of the development, in accordance with existing zoning standards, to a minimum of 1.5 metres and 3.0m beyond the main rear wall of adjacent dwellings.

Design Guidelines Between Buildings

- 11 Maintain consistent spacing between dwellings.
- 12 Maintain a consistent 'street wall'.
- 13 Provide space for light and landscaping between neighbours.
- 14 Protect the privacy between units by minimizing the number of windows on side elevations.

Building Height and Scale

Buildings in Aurora Heights range from 1 to 2 storeys, with a mix of architectural styles ranging from cottage bungalows to homes with projecting garages; split level houses are common in the neighbourhood. For the purposes of these guidelines, a storey shall be defined as one level of habitable living space.

The objectives of the Design Guidelines in directing the relationship of the building scale along the street are to:

- Ensure a scale, massing, roof line and building orientation that is commonly found in the neighbourhood;
- Ensure a sensitive transition to adjacent residential dwellings; and,
- Promote more pedestrian-scaled streets.

Design Guidelines for Framing the Street

- 15 On blocks where single storey or 1.5 storey homes are predominant, second storey additions or new 2 storey homes may require particular attention to ensure sensitive transitions to adjacent properties.
- 16 Where possible, maintain the existing lot grading and the neighbourhood's characteristic first floor height, and, if appropriate, consider split level houses when related to the lot's grading.
- 17 Design to reflect the massing of the surrounding built form context for those elevations exposed to the public and provide any additional massing away from them.
- 18 Provide appropriate transition to/from existing adjacent buildings and ensure no new building is more than 1.5 storeys or 4.5m higher/lower than the adjacent dwellings.
- 19 Aim for clean, modern lines and simple geometry that complement the surrounding built form character.

- 20 Discourage historic architectural styles.

- 21 Encourage roof lines with shallower pitches to reflect those of existing dwellings in the neighbourhood, and consider simple, articulated profiles to generate visual interest.

- 22 Ensure flat roof tops complement the massing and character of adjacent dwellings.

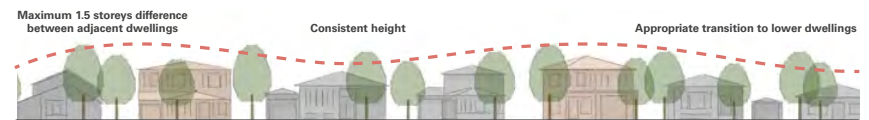
- 23 Keep the height of detached garages to a maximum of 4.5m to the peak of the roof or 3.5 meters to the mid-point of the roof, whichever overall height is less.



A consistent building height of 1.5 storeys frames the streetscape



Encourage shallow pitched roofs that reflect those in the neighbourhood



Approach to height and scale including transition

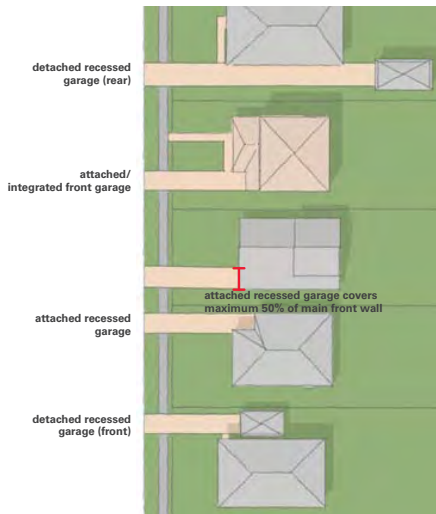


Garage & Driveway Width and Location

Garages and driveways should be located and sized based on the established pattern of the neighbourhood. In Aurora Heights parking is provided as either small attached garages- carports (mostly flush or projected beyond the main front wall of the dwelling), detached garages located at the rear or driveway paths in front of the dwelling.

The objectives of the Design Guidelines in directing the width and location of garages and driveways along the street are to:

- Ensure that garage doors do not dominate the front facade of the house;
- Minimize the garage and driveway presence on the street-scape; and,
- Maintain a consistent garage type and driveway width along the street.



Example of appropriate garage configurations that support the neighbourhood's character and a pedestrian-oriented public realm

Design Guidelines for Driveways and Garages

24 For attached garages/carports, de-emphasize their visual impact on the streetscape by:

- Integrating the attached garage/carport into the massing and design of the dwelling.
- Recessing them from the main front wall and avoid projecting it beyond the main front wall of the adjacent dwellings.
- Considering the attached garages include a second storey over the garage, where height limitations permit.
- Designing the roof line of the attached garage/carport to be compatible with and complement the roof line of the dwelling. Where appropriate, consider extending the dwelling's roof to cover garages/carports to reflect modern, minimalistic architectural styles.
- Integrating garage doors into the dwelling's façade design.
- Ensuring that garage doors do not dominate the front facade of the house.

25 Encourage a consistent garage type and location along the street.

26 Encourage narrow driveways and ensure their widths do not substantially exceed the garage/carport width.

27 Encourage rear detached garages.

28 Where detached garages are proposed, locate them recessed from the dwelling's main front wall, and design them to reflect and complement the materials and character of the house.

29 Ensure the size of the garage is compatible with the size of the lot/dwelling;

- Front-facing attached garages should not take up more than 50% of the width of the main front wall of the dwelling.
- A maximum of a 2-car garage is considered appropriate for this neighbourhood.

30 Where appropriate due to lot grading, consider half-below grade garages; ensure it is recessed from the main front wall and livable spaces are placed on top of it (i.e. proportionate windows or balconies addressing the main frontage).

Landscape Treatment

In Aurora Heights generous setbacks provide for front yards with extensive grassed areas and mature trees. In some cases, minimalistic/simple landscaping is provided along the dwelling edge and/or entrance features to complement them.

The objectives of the Design Guidelines with respect to landscape are to:

- Maintain the green landscape character of the neighbourhood;
- Plan for the urban canopy;
- Screen views to rear yard parking; and,
- Preserve mature trees.

Design Guidelines for Landscape Treatment

31 Protect mature trees and encourage planting of new trees to enhance the urban canopy and create tree-lined streets.

32 Enhance the bio-resiliency of the area through planting of native, non-invasive trees and shrubs.

33 Encourage grassed areas to cover most of the front yard and consider keeping any landscape elements simple and complementary to the dwelling's design and materiality.



Mature trees and extensive grassed areas dominate front yards

34 Minimize hard surface landscaping/pavement in front yards and consider them for walkways and driveways only.

35 Encourage permeable paving for new walkways and driveways to reduce run-off to storm sewers and soften the streetscape appearance.

36 Provide a walkway from the front door to the sidewalk or to the driveway in the absence of a sidewalk.

37 Provide landscaping in front of blank walls.

38 Encourage front yard hedges do not exceed 1.2m in height, to allow for "eyes to the street" and avoid blocked views from/to dwellings.

39 Avoid privacy fencing at the front of the house; if considered, privacy fencing should not extend beyond the main front wall of the dwelling.

40 Favour corner lot fencing materials that complement the dwelling's character as well as that of the surrounding neighbourhood;

41 Encourage the use of natural stone finishes for paving and landscape walls.



Simple front yard landscaping complements the dwelling's side entrance



3.3 Architectural Forms and Styles

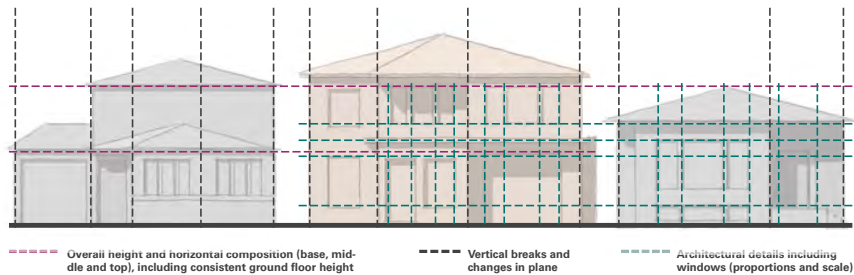
Front Elevation Treatment

The main front wall of a dwelling has an important role in defining and framing the streetscape. Its design / articulation is equally important to animating the street, and to establishing a positive connection to the broader neighbourhood.

In the Aurora Heights Neighbourhood most dwellings have low profile front entrances, close to grade, either flush or recessed from the main front wall and connected to the driveway, not the sidewalk, by modest walkways. Flush entrances are often covered by shallow pitch roofs that extend beyond the width of the entrance feature. Windows are generous in size and often wider in proportions.

The objectives of the Design Guidelines in directing the relationship of the building front elevation and entrance to the street are to:

- Promote “eyes on the street” and a strong presence of the main elevation on the street;
- Ensure that the prominence of house front entrance and the proportion of glazing are maintained and consistent with the surrounding neighbourhood; and,
- Ensure the entrance remain the main feature of the house and is oriented to and clearly visible from the street.



The design of new dwelling reflects the proportions of those adjacent to it

Design Guidelines

- 42 Design dwellings to have articulated elevations, especially those exposed to streets and/or open spaces.
- 43 Avoid blank walls facing the public realm (i.e. streets and open spaces)
- 44 Incorporate the vertical and horizontal proportions, rhythm and elevation design elements of surrounding dwellings including fenestration, lintels, sills, cornice and roof lines.
- 45 Consider keeping entry steps to a maximum of 3 and ensure they lead to an entrance element/portico.
- 46 Encourage entrance features close to the ground when grading permits (1-2 steps).
- 47 Design entrances to be consistent with the height and relationship to the street of adjacent dwellings.
- 48 Ensure front doors are prominent, clearly visible and approachable from the street via a walkway or driveway.
- 49 Encourage entrance features to be located at the front wall and highlight their prominence through articulated architectural elements.
- 50 Discourage side entrances. If they are considered, highlight their presence through massing and architectural gestures that provide a “public face” (e.g. wrapping porches/stoops and articulated elements) and provide a clear connection to the sidewalk or driveway.

- 51 Encourage weather protection elements at the main entrance and design them to complement the overall design of the dwelling.
- 52 Where appropriate, consider extending the dwelling’s roof to cover entrance features to reflect modern - minimalistic architectural styles.
- 53 Avoid metallic - cottage style awnings attached to main front wall.
- 54 For new homes or additions to existing ones located where there is a dominant pattern of existing front porches, incorporate similar elements into the design and encourage they are consistent in size and style with those in the surrounding neighbourhood.
- 55 Design porch roof to complement the roof lines and proportions of the dwelling.
- 56 Provide enough glazing in the main elevation(s) through windows that complement the proportions and style of the dwelling, and those of adjacent dwellings.
- 57 Discourage ornamented styles with excessive decorative details.
- 58 Ensure corner units to display equal design quality on both elevations visible from the street and consider:
 - a) Locating the main entrance at the exterior side wall.
 - b) Incorporating wrap-around porches and corner features where appropriate.



Simple architectural lines and massing are predominant in the neighbourhood



Example of a slightly recessed entrance feature covered by the main roof



An example of a contemporary style dwelling with simple architectural lines and enhanced entrance feature

4 Implementation, Monitoring & Updates

Residential Zones

R3-SN (497)
R7-SN (497)
R3-SN (498)
R3-SN (499)

Building Addition (equal to or greater than 50m²)



or

New Building



'Basic' Site Plan Process & Urban Design Review

- Site Design (grading, servicing, lot coverage and configuration, setbacks, garage and driveway width and location)
- Urban Design Guidelines
- Zoning
- Building Design (building height and massing, architectural design, front elevation treatment, building materials, heritage resources)
- Major alterations to existing heritage buildings need to obtain a Heritage Permit through the review and approval by Council prior to the issuance of site plan approval.
- Refer to Site Plan Application Guide

Building Division

- Ontario Building Code
- Refer to Building Permit Application Guide

+

Site Plan Approval Building Permit

Planning & Development Services



Building Materials

The variety of building materials contributes to the interest along the street and to the varied architectural character of the neighbourhood.

There should be no strict imposition of material palettes. However, broad categories of building appearances are identified and described which provide sufficient flexibility to accommodate variety, while ensuring that no jarring interventions will be inserted to interrupt the visual harmony of a neighbourhood.

The objectives of the Design Guidelines for renovations, additions and new construction are to:

- Ensure high quality materials are used;
- Preserve the variety of design, colour and building materials within a range that enhances the character of the neighbourhood; and,
- Ensure that while buildings will inevitably change over time, they will maintain the cohesive visual character of the street.



A variety of wood clapboard and brick are extensively used as primary materials



Stone is used as secondary/accent material at the elevation base

Design Guidelines

- 59 Encourage a variety of coordinated and complementary materials that enhance the design of the development and the character of the neighbourhood.
- 60 Promote the use of high quality materials. The following are recommended as primary building materials in the Aurora Heights Neighbourhood:
 - a) Brick.
 - b) Wood clapboard (siding) or wood batten.
- 61 Discourage the use of stone and stucco or its equivalent, and consider to use them as secondary or accent materials only.
- 62 Consider more contemporary materials (i.e. metal, concrete) to complement the modern/minimalistic character of the neighbourhood.
- 63 Incorporate traditional materials used in the surrounding neighbourhood into contemporary designs.
- 64 Consider natural finishes.
- 65 Provide colour palettes that take their cues from the built form on surrounding streets and/or are compatible with it.
- 66 Favour traditional red to light grey bricks, and a variety of colours/tones for wood clapboard/batten, including lighter ones. Avoid bright palettes.
- 67 Consider metallic railings and window frames as well as painted wood for porches, porch railings, bay window surrounds and shutters.
- 68 Consider cedar and asphalt shingles on roofs.
- 69 For additions or renovations to an existing building, incorporate materials and colours that are consistent with and complement the main building.



appendix: Definitions & Glossary of Terms



Adverse Impact: Any impairment, disruption, destruction or harmful alteration.

Angular Plane: an imaginary flat surface projecting over a lot, at an inclined angle measure up from the defined lot line.

Building Footprint: the footprint of a house is the total ground area covered by the home including garages and porches.

Character: a unique combination of features (i.e. existing pattern of development, built form and streetscape design) that should be embraced and reinforced.

Coexist: two or more elements /structures that harmoniously exist in the same place.

Compatible: As per the OP "...development that may not necessarily be the same or similar to the existing buildings in the vicinity, but, nonetheless, enhances an established community and coexists with existing development without causing any undue adverse impact on surrounding properties."

Complement: built form that responds in a respectful and thoughtful manner to its context to reinforce it and make better.

Enhance: strengthen, exalt and/or further improve the qualities that contribute to the character of a place. Reinforce.

Existing: found in a particular place i.e. neighbourhood, street, development pattern. As per the OP "...means lawfully in existence on the date of this Plan's adoption, and for greater certainty does not include a use, building or structure that is in existence on that date without being lawful"

Front building face width: the width of the main front wall of a dwelling, including a front-facing attached garage.

Front-facing attached garage: a garage that is built into the front structure of a dwelling, with a garage door that faces and is accessed from the street.

Historic/traditional style home: broad range of styles developed in the 19th and early 20th century, each displaying very unique features. Traditional home designs are influenced by historic styles (i.e. Victorian, Colonial, Craftsman, or Neo-classical architecture). Common features among them include large/open porches with overhanging beams and rafters, dormers, and tall/pitched rooftops with one or more gables. Common materials include brick, wood, stucco, and stone.

Main Front Wall: the dwelling's primary exterior front wall, not including permitted projections or a front attached garage door.

Modern/contemporary Style: variety of styles developed in the latter half of the 20th century. Their design is based on the simple/clean lines, shapes and forms, mostly related to their structure. Straight lines, big openings, bold roofs lines (flat or low-sloped) and minimum texture are often seen in this type of houses. Common materials include concrete, brick, wood, and stucco.

Stable Neighbourhoods: existing, older residential neighbourhoods where a thriving community and a distinctive built/natural environment coexist and depend on each other.

Sympathetic: that is compatible and supportive of an specific(s) built characteristic or element.

Vicinity / Surrounding Context: area near or surrounding a particular place, or that is in enough proximity to share a physical relationship.

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