



# City of Vancouver *Land Use and Development Policies and Guidelines*

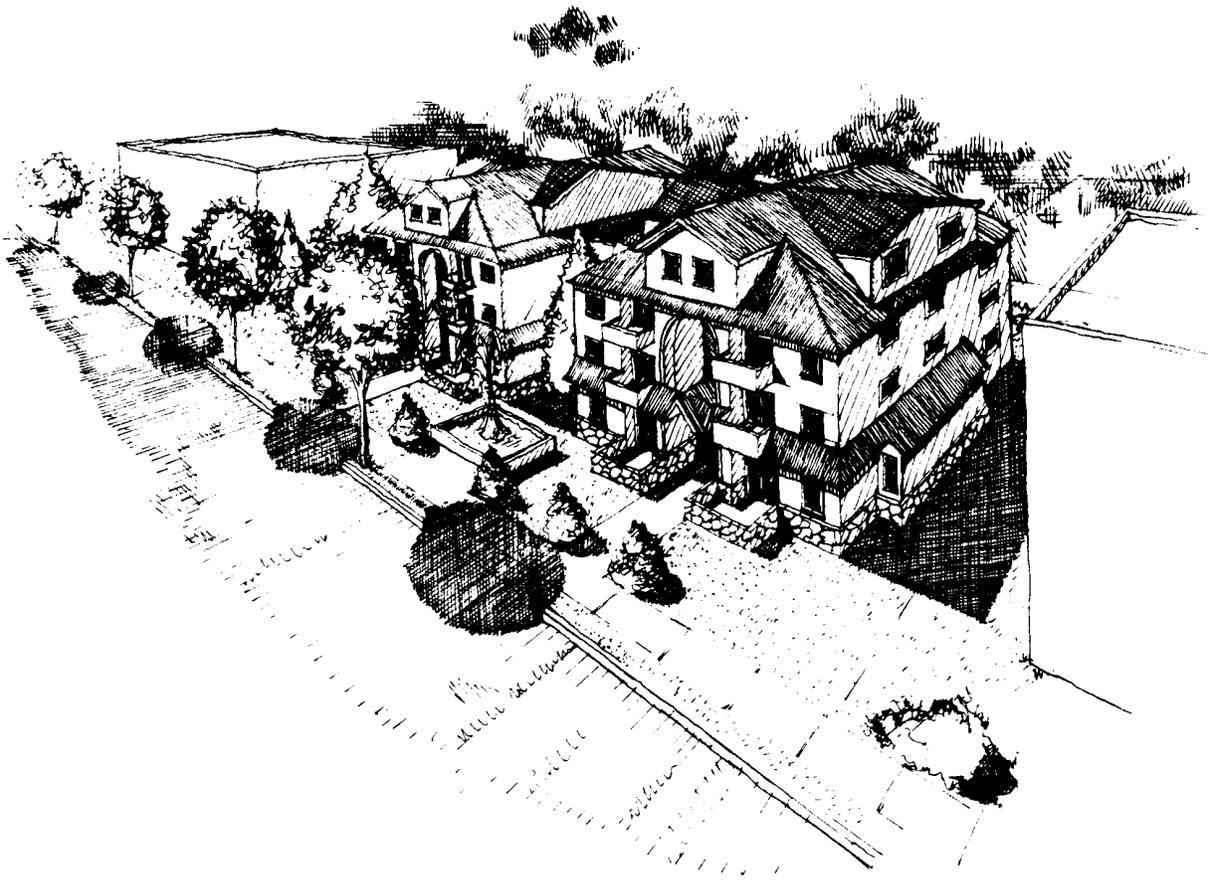
Community Services, 453 W. 12th Ave Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4 ☎ 604.873.7344 fax 604.873.7060

[planning@vancouver.ca](mailto:planning@vancouver.ca)

## MOUNT PLEASANT RM-4 AND RM-4N GUIDELINES

*Adopted by City Council March 6, 1990*

*Amended February 4, 1992 and January 20, 1998*



# Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Application and Intent ..... 1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>General Design Considerations ..... 1</b>
2.1	Neighbourhood Character..... 1
2.2	Street Character ..... 3
2.3	Orientation ..... 4
2.4	Views ..... 4
2.5	Topography ..... 5
2.6	Light and Ventilation ..... 5
2.8	Noise ..... 6
2.9	Privacy ..... 6
2.10	Safety ..... 7
2.11	Access and Circulation ..... 7
2.12	Heritage ..... 8
<b>4</b>	<b>Guidelines Pertaining to the Regulations of the Zoning and Development By-law ..... 8</b>
4.2	Frontage ..... 8
4.3	Height ..... 10
4.4	Front Yard ..... 11
4.5	Side Yard..... 12
4.6	Rear Yard ..... 12
4.9	Off-Street Parking..... 13
<b>5</b>	<b>Architectural Components..... 14</b>
5.1	Roofs..... 14
5.2	Windows ..... 15
5.3	Entrances ..... 15
5.4	Balconies and Patios ..... 16
5.5	Exterior Walls ..... 16
<b>7</b>	<b>Open Space ..... 17</b>
7.3	Private Open Space..... 18
<b>8</b>	<b>Landscaping..... 19</b>
	<b>Submission Requirements..... 20</b>

**Note:** These guidelines are organized under standard headings. As a consequence, there are gaps in the numbering sequence where no guidelines apply.

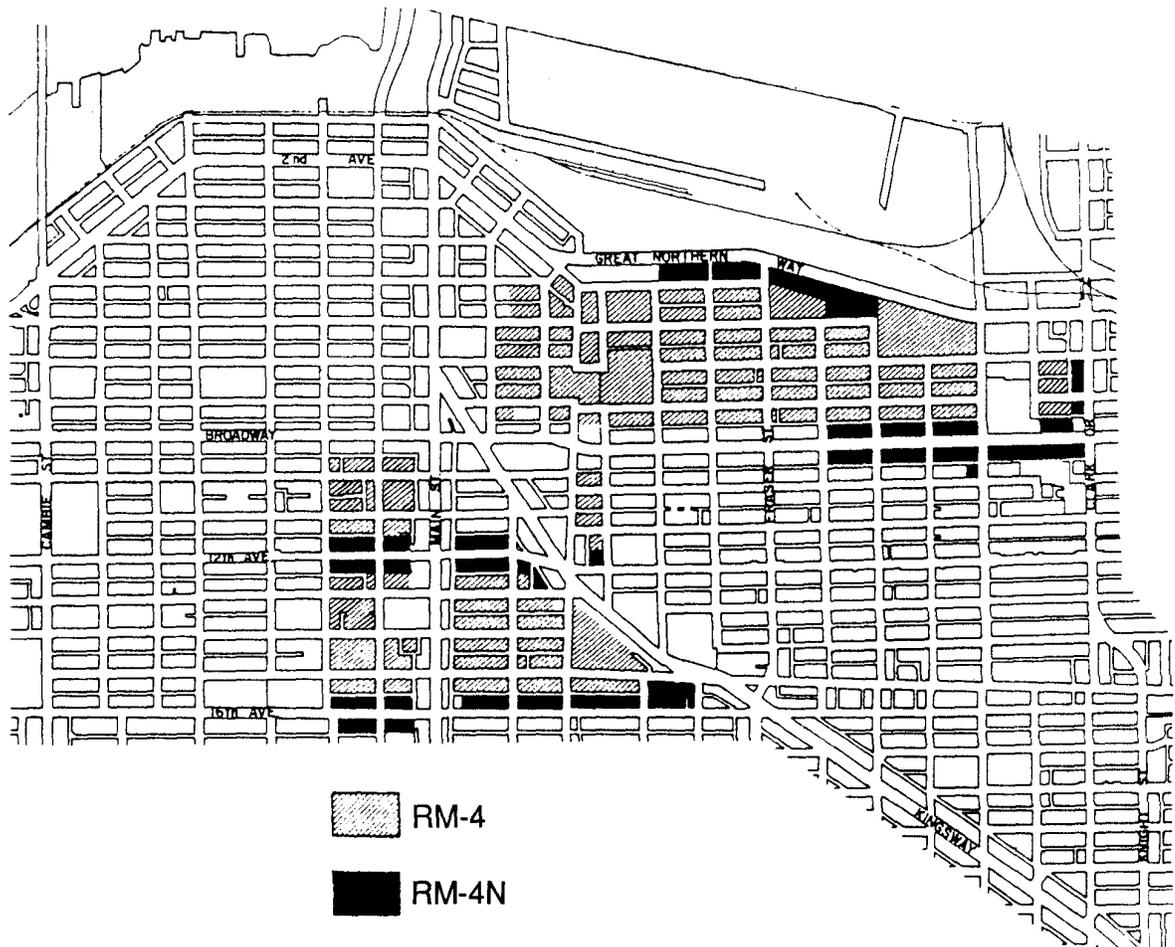
## 1 Application and Intent

These guidelines are to be used in conjunction with the RM-4 and RM-4N District Schedules of the Zoning and Development By-law for developments in the Mount Pleasant apartment areas (Figure 1). The guidelines should be consulted in seeking approval for conditional dwelling uses or for the relaxation of regulations. As well as assisting the applicant, the guidelines will be used by City staff in the evaluation of projects.

It may not always be possible to achieve all the objectives in this document. On each site, trade offs will be considered to achieve the major design objectives.

The intent of the guidelines is to achieve high quality development and residential livability and to enhance the character and identity of each neighbourhood. Some guidelines apply only to specific areas. These instances are noted.

**Figure 1. Mount Pleasant RM-4 and RM-4N Zoning Districts and Neighbourhoods**



## 2 General Design Considerations

### 2.1 Neighbourhood Character

The Mount Pleasant apartment area consists of three distinct neighbourhoods (Figure 1). They are the Core apartment area, the West 10th Avenue apartment area and the Northeast apartment area. While these neighbourhoods share most design objectives as outlined in this document, there are distinct contextual issues which will require neighbourhood specific responses.

### 2.1.1 Mount Pleasant Core Apartment Area

Within the Core Apartment Area are three sub-areas. The borders of the Western Core are Ontario Street, 16th Avenue, 10th Avenue and Main Street. The Eastern Core area is defined by Kingsway, 16th Avenue and Main Street. The third area is a small enclave between Prince Edward and Guelph Streets from 10th to 12th Avenues.

In the Western Core area, there are some older masonry apartments. These apartments in conjunction with the large masonry commercial and institutional buildings near and along Main Street influence the area's character. Another influence is the large commercial-residential development on Main Street between 13th and 14th Avenues. This grouping of masonry construction buildings creates a more urban residential image than the rest of the Mount Pleasant area (Figure 2.A). Along the western edge of the area is the RT-6 zoned area.

Development along Main Street also influences the eastern Core area, but the scale of these buildings is smaller. Houses are of a more modest scale than those in the western core neighbourhood. A major impact is the traffic along 16th Avenue, 12th Avenue and Kingsway. The adjoining neighbourhood to the south is zoned RT-2. The Heritage Hall building, a Class A building, acts as a neighbourhood focal point and could be a catalyst for character redevelopment.

Kingsway isolates the last sub-area from the eastern Core area. It is situated between commercial zoning to the west and RT-5 zoning to the east.

#### **Objectives:**

New development should create a cohesive neighbourhood character that bridges Main Street linking the east and west sub-areas.

New development along the edge of the Mount Pleasant RT-5 zoned area should respond to the area's historical influence.

New development adjacent to Main Street should respond to the street's more urban character.

New development in the western sub-area should respond to the existing prominent masonry character.

### 2.1.2 Northeast Mount Pleasant Apartment Area

The Northeast Mount Pleasant apartment area contains a mix of housing types of varying ages. The predominant building type is the three to four storey, wood frame apartment building. Small apartment towers, older masonry apartments and some remaining houses are also located in this area.

There are few elements other than the sloping topography in the Northeast Mount Pleasant apartment area that set it apart from other East Vancouver neighbourhoods (Figure 2.B). There is, however, potential for emphasizing the positive characteristics to create a more identifiable neighbourhood character. Elements that enhance character include topography, view, landscaping and massing. Building features such as roofs, windows, entrances and finishing materials can also contribute.

#### **Objective:**

New development should contribute to creating a stronger and more distinctive visual image for the Northeast Mount Pleasant apartment area.

### 2.1.3 West 10th Avenue Apartment Area

The 10th Avenue apartment area extends from Yukon Street to Ontario Street. Along its southern boundary the Mount Pleasant RT-6 area is a strong influence creating a prominent heritage character with large 3 storey pitched roof houses. Its eastern boundary is the Mount Pleasant Core Area. The groupings of restored houses along 10th Avenue give the area identity and character and are more visually dominant than the more recent apartment development (Figure 2.C).

**Objective:**

New Development in the West 10th Avenue apartment area should emulate and enhance the heritage character of the adjacent RT-6 area.

**Figure 2. Mount Pleasant Development****2a. Mount Pleasant Core Apartment Area****2b. Northeast Mount Pleasant Apartment Area****2c. West 10th Avenue Apartment Area****2.2 Street Character**

The character of the street significantly contributes to a neighbourhood's image. The landscaping treatment of the front yard, the building massing and the pattern of buildings and side yards are important components. A variety of building styles can coexist if the streetscape ties them together with similar siting, massing and landscaping.

**2.2.1 Mount Pleasant Core Apartment Area**

In some parts of the western Core Area, a more urban street character is evident. The urban character is created by the minimal front yard setbacks and the streetwall presence of older apartment buildings. The proximity of large institutional buildings and commercial buildings along Main Street also contribute to the urban character.

**2.2.2 Mount Pleasant Apartment Area**

In the Northeast Mount Pleasant area, some apartments have long frontages which disrupt street rhythm. This creates an unfriendly, monotonous and institutional streetscape. An anonymous character for the area results, lacking identity and visual interest. The many sloping sites contribute to street character.

**2.2.3 West 10th Avenue Apartment Area**

The restored houses along 10th Avenue strongly contribute to the area's street character. Despite their prominence, the 10th Avenue streetscape is not visually cohesive. The apartment buildings do not visually complement the houses' detailing or massing, resulting in a fragmented streetscape.

**Objective:**

New development should contribute to creating a cohesive streetscape with character and visual interest.

This can be achieved by:

- (a) complimenting the building massing on adjacent sites, and creating visual rhythm.
- (b) maintaining a more urban streetscape, as characterised by a defined streetwall, in the Western Core area.
- (c) replicating elements from the adjacent RT-6 zoning district when located in the 10th Avenue heritage area.

**2.3 Orientation**

In some areas, housing adjoins commercial or industrial uses. These uses require loading bays, storage areas, surface parking and other less attractive elements. Apartments that do not respond to this problem may be less livable.

**Objectives:**

New development should minimize orientation towards incompatible commercial or industrial uses as much as possible.

New development on corner sites should create a frontage character for street facing facades.

New development should ensure that a unit's orientation does not compromise its attractiveness or livability.

This can be achieved by:

- (a) treating any street facade as a major elevation with detailing and finishing that is commensurate with its prominence. Other elements which can assist in creating frontage character include principal windows, entrances and landscaping.
- (b) ensuring that units that have as their main orientation a commercial building use also have a more attractive secondary orientation. An appealing near or distant view can also compensate for a less attractive orientation. If this is not possible, orienting the units towards an internal courtyard will improve livability.

**2.4 Views**

The level topography of the Mount Pleasant Core area does not provide many opportunities for distant views. In the Northeast Mount Pleasant apartment area, however, the sloping topography provides excellent views down to the False Creek basin. Good views of the North Shore mountains are also possible down most north-south streets.

The West 10th Avenue apartment area and the adjacent RT-6 enjoy good views of the mountains and the downtown core. In the future, tower development along Broadway could block these views. Restraint should be used in designing a new building with too much emphasis on these views.

Views can be contentious because achieving them sometimes results in other views being blocked. Careful consideration is needed of the impact of new development on existing views and the creation of public and private views.

**Objectives:**

New development should not unduly block or reduce existing views.

New development should open up views from surrounding sites.

New development should provide attractive near views when distant views are not possible.

This can be achieved by:

- (a) limiting building mass where it will block significant views from adjacent buildings.
- (b) linking new open space to open space on adjacent sites to extend the view depth.
- (c) locating landscaped open spaces next to windows and adjacent buildings with limited opportunities for distant views.

**2.5 Topography**

The most prominent topographical feature in the northeast Mount Pleasant apartment area is the north facing slope from Broadway to Great Northern Way. A more gradual eastern slope towards Glen Drive is also evident. In the West 10th Avenue area, there is a noticeable change in topography from 10th Avenue down to Broadway.

Topography can affect livability. Buildings located on the low side of the street will have their first storey lower than street level. This can result in limited view and decreased daylight as well as visually disconnecting the building from the street.

**Objectives:**

New development should respond to topography in its massing.

New development should be sure that topography does not affect livability of its units.

This can be achieved by:

- (a) stepping new development down a hill.
- (b) locating dwelling units at or above grade. If units are sited partially below grade due to a sloping site, also provide:
  - (i) a gradual stepped transition from the lowest building grade at the unit up to the lane or street grade.
  - (ii) a flat apron area in front of the unit. This in conjunction with the stepped area will improve light access to the unit.If the unit is substantially lower than the surrounding grade, it should have a second level to improve livability
- (c) extending the street grade to the building entrance. This will allow buildings that due to topography have their first storey lower than the street grade, to make a direct connection to the street.
- (d) providing attractive retaining walls and landscaped terracing where necessary. The retaining walls should not be higher than 1.2 m on a single face. If more height is needed, the wall should step back above the 1.2 m limit. Appropriate finishing materials include textured concrete, stone and brick.

**2.6 Light and Ventilation**

Natural light and ventilation are essential to residential livability. Buildings that are partially below grade can compromise daylight access resulting in dark, unpleasant units and possible water retention problems. Building layouts with convoluted access routes and excessive articulation can also result in dark spaces. The distance between buildings should permit adequate light access. Daylight access within a building should also be maximized.

**Objectives:**

New development should provide adequate natural light and ventilation for all units.

New development should minimize its impact on the existing level of daylight enjoyed by adjacent units.

This can be achieved by:

- (a) providing an adequate setback from decks, balconies, and major windows of adjacent units.
- (b) articulating the facade to provide as many units as possible with some form of corner exposure. This may not be necessary in the Western Core area where a more urban character is sought. There, the usage of bay windows can achieve a similar result.
- (c) locating units at or above grade.
- (d) orienting courtyards to the south.

**2.8 Noise**

Noise from vehicular traffic and adjacent commercial uses affects sites in the RM-4N area. These sites will require special measures to ensure livability.

**Objective:**

New development in the RM-4N zone should minimize the potential noise impact on habitable areas. Design buildings on the sites to meet the standards set out in the by-law.

This can be achieved by:

- (a) locating rooms most affected by noise such as living rooms and bedrooms away from the noise source.
- (b) using alternate ventilation systems such as baffled wall vents.
- (c) locating areas not affected by noise such as stairwells and single loaded corridors to create a noise buffer.
- (d) using materials and construction methods that limit noise transmission. Masonry construction, double stud insulated walls, double glazing and glass block are examples.
- (e) using landscape treatments and fences to help mitigate noise impacts upon open space areas.

**2.9 Privacy**

Privacy is valued in a higher density neighbourhood. It is important that new development not erode the present levels of privacy enjoyed by adjacent properties. The privacy between units in new development is also important. Development of towers along Broadway could create privacy problems for development along the north side of 10th Avenue.

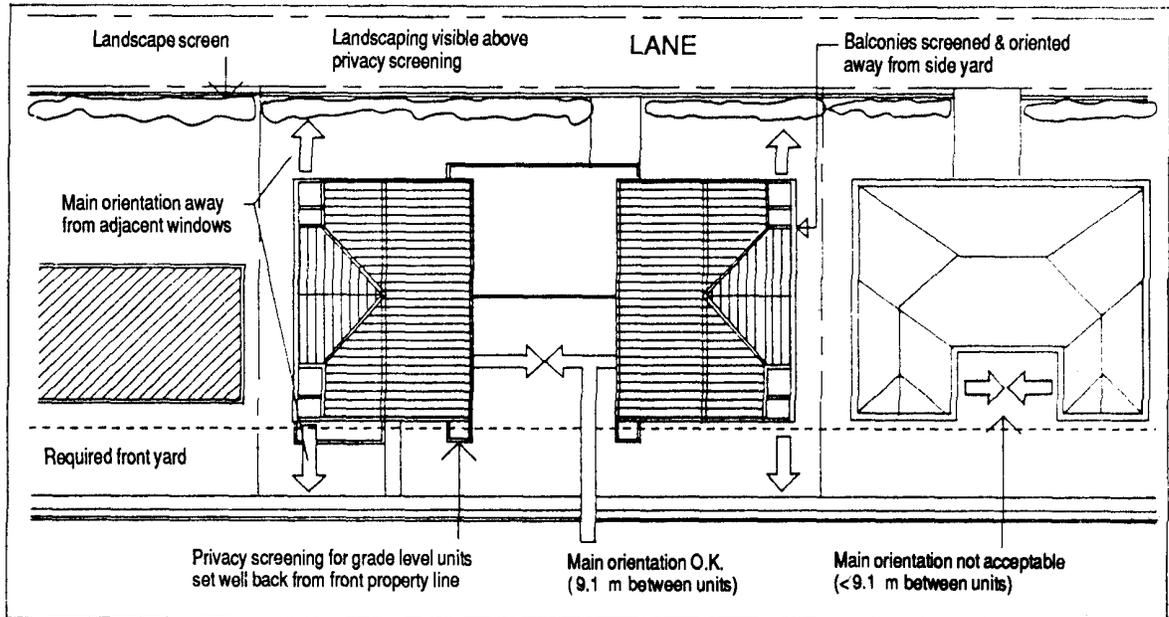
**Objective:**

Individual dwelling units should enjoy a high degree of privacy.

This can be achieved by:

- (a) orienting and locating major windows away from the major windows of adjacent units, including those in adjoining buildings to avoid creating a dead-on orientation. If the windows directly face one another, separate them by at least 9.1 m.
- (b) orienting balconies away from adjacent sites, or screening them to minimize overlook.
- (c) providing screening for grade level units near a lane, street, or access route. Achieve this screening primarily through landscaping when located in the front yard.
- (d) configuring exterior corridors to minimize the impact of people walking past the windows of adjoining units.

**Figure 3. Suggested Privacy Treatments**



**2.10 Safety**

Security and crime prevention is an issue in this neighbourhood. Through site planning and building design, create an environment that assists in discouraging crime.

**Objective:**

The building and landscape design should contribute to creating a safe secure environment.

This can be achieved by:

- (a) locating indoor common areas adjacent to outside common spaces to improve mutual security. Some units should overlook these areas to enhance surveillance.
- (b) orienting units around entrances to enhance surveillance of visitors.
- (c) designing fences, walls and landscaping to allow some views to grade level units and private open space from the street. Some views from the units to the street should also be possible.
- (d) making lobbies and entrances visible from the street.

**2.11 Access and Circulation**

Traditionally, access to buildings in these areas has been clear and direct. A single stairway leads from the street to the entrance of the original houses. The majority of apartments provide access from a central lobby. In new development the lobby can lose prominence if it is accessible only from the side yard. Exterior corridors create a strong horizontal image which is inconsistent with breaking the frontage into smaller elements. Their use contributes to an incompatible and non-residential building character.

These units may be for family accommodation which will require direct access. For development to build to the maximum FSR, 20 percent of the units will require two or more bedrooms.

**Objectives:**

Provide direct and simple access from the street to new development

Units designated for family use should have direct connections to grade wherever possible.

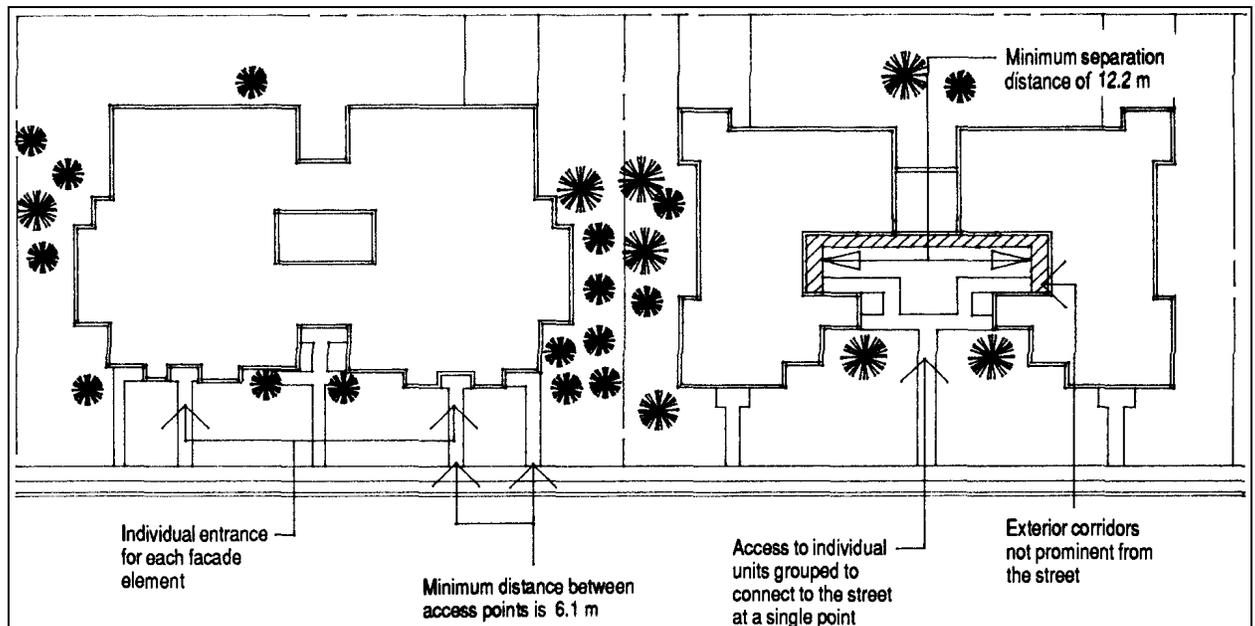
Access to units should create activity and visual interest along the street.

The impact and prominence of exterior corridors should be minimized.

This can be achieved by:

- (a) providing an entrance to individual units or groups of units for each facade element. (See section 4.2.) This entrance should take on the character of a traditional residential front entrance.
- (b) making lobbies prominent from the street.
- (c) locating the required 20 percent two-bedroom units which families might occupy at grade. Direct access to these units from grade by individual stairs, or from a grouped landing is also acceptable.

**Figure 4. Circulation and Access**



## 2.12 Heritage

The groupings of restored houses on both the north and south sides of 10th Avenue gives the area a valuable heritage character. Houses that if restored would enhance the heritage character of the area occupy some of the potential RM-4 development sites. Some of these buildings are noted in the Vancouver Heritage Register which is available from the Planning Department of the City.

### Objective:

Retain heritage buildings.

This can be achieved by:

- (a) building a compatible addition to the existing building.
- (b) include the existing building in a new, larger but compatible development.
- (c) providing compatible infill development.
- (d) giving consideration to buildings that are characteristic of the area although not listed in the Register.

## 4 Guidelines Pertaining to the Regulations of the Zoning and Development By-law

### 4.2 Frontage

The predominant building frontage in the northeast apartment area and the Core area is that of an apartment building. The frontages range from 24.4 m to 76.2 m in length. Some single-family houses remain on individual 10.1 m lots in both neighbourhoods.

In the West 10th Avenue area, apartments are also common, but the single house is still very evident. The streetscape, including the adjacent RT-6 development creates an impression in which the frontage created by the single house on the single lot is predominant.

If a building's frontage is not articulated it can create a bland and anonymous streetscape. Buildings with a more incremental frontage create rhythm, visual pattern, unit identity and add to the interest of the street.

**Objective:**

New development should provide a building frontage that creates identity, rhythm and variety, and avoids long horizontal massing.

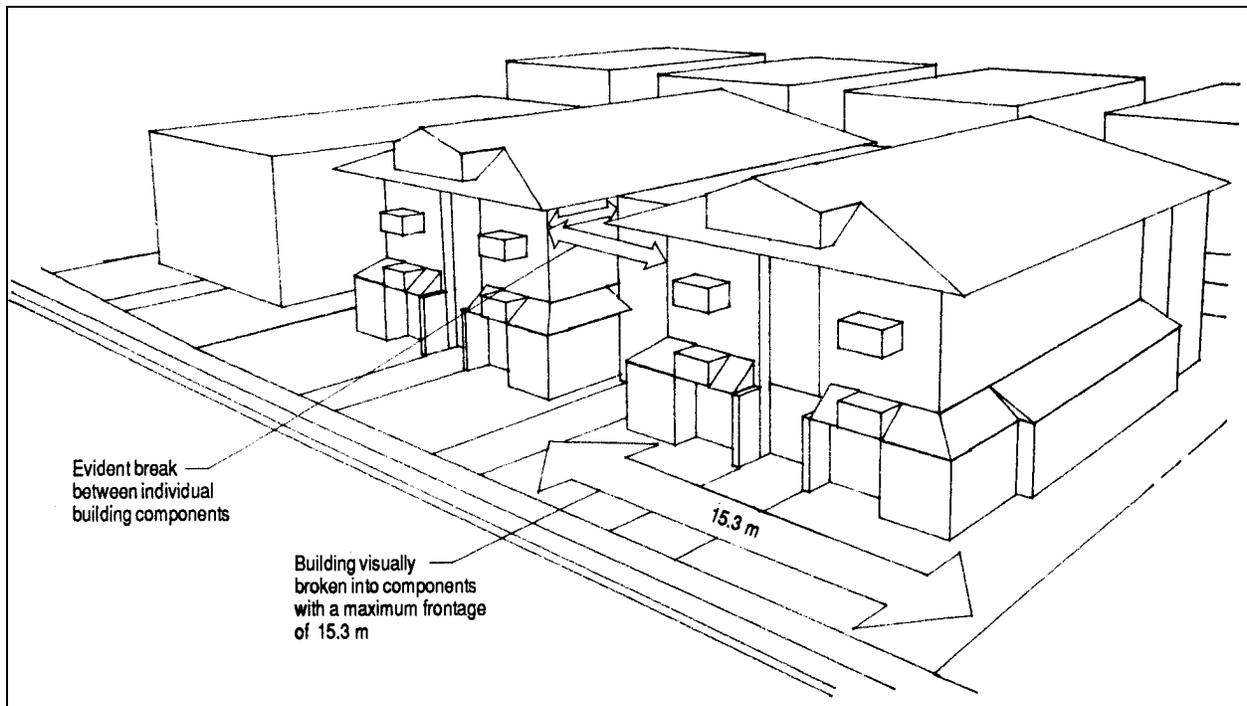
This can be achieved by:

- (a) visually breaking the massing into smaller individual components to express strong unit identity and the scale of a large house. These components should have a maximum frontage of about 15.3 m (Figure 12). This may not be necessary in the Western Core area with its more urban character. There, a less articulated and more formal frontage is appropriate.
- (b) creating breaks and indentations in the building's frontage to replicate the spatial breaks created by side yards between individual houses.

In the Northeast apartment area the following should also apply:

- (c) allowing the overall building frontage to exceed 45.8 m only when it leads to the creation of a substantial, contiguous open space occupying a minimum of 10 percent of the total site area in addition to the required yards.
- (d) providing a prominent landscape feature to assist in breaking up frontage length.
- (e) breaking development on larger sites into separate buildings, to maintain a more characteristic frontage.

**Figure 5. Suggested Frontage Treatment**



### 4.3 Height

Building height is important in defining building character. Often, developers want to construct a four-storey building. This creates difficulties because of the 10.7 m height limit and the restrictions of the Building By-law. To deal with these constraints, buildings are frequently sited partially below grade. This can result in an unattractive streetscape because buildings look like they have been pushed into the ground.

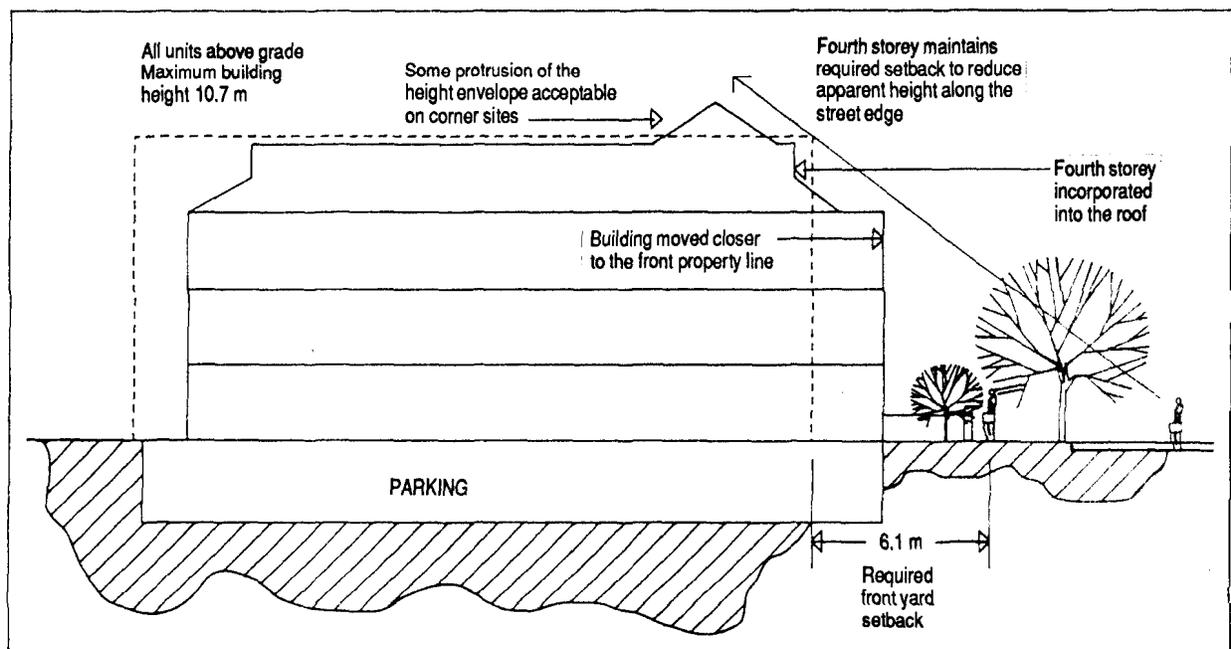
#### Objectives:

New development's height should be compatible with the neighbourhood scale and character and achieve other public design objectives.

This can be achieved by:

- (a) Exceeding the building envelope or providing a fourth storey only when the first storey is not below the base surface. City staff will take into consideration the constraints of topography when contemplating a height relaxation. Taller buildings may need to be sprinklered to meet building code requirements.
- (b) treating any portion of a building rising beyond the building envelope to create visual interest. The upper storey should be sculpted to replicate characteristic roof treatment and to provide variety, identity, rhythm and scale. Any portions of the building penetrating the height envelope should be balanced by reducing the building mass elsewhere. This reduction should help maintain views where they exist.
- (c) integrating a fourth storey in the roof. The fourth storey area should not exceed 75 percent of the area of the lower storeys. This will minimize the impact on the streetscape and adjacent properties.
- (d) maintaining the required 6.1 m setback for the upper storey when reducing if the front yard setback. This will minimize the impact of the building's height as viewed from the sidewalk.
- (e) ensuring that the building responds and provides a transition to the height of adjacent buildings.
- (f) allowing penetrations of the height envelope at street corners.

Figure 6. Preferred Height Treatment



An objective in the Northeast apartment area is to create more usable, visually distinctive open space. Site coverage, open space and building height influence one another. In order to decrease site coverage, building height must increase. Some relaxation in height is possible if it follows the above suggestions, as well as:

- (g) contributing to the creation of a significant open space feature occupying a minimum of 10 percent site area in addition to the required yards.

#### 4.4 Front Yard

The front yard and exterior side yards are the most public areas of a site. Their treatment strongly influences streetscape character and activity as well as how the building appears from the street. The front yard also provides open space for the occupants. There are a variety of front yard treatments in the Mount Pleasant apartment areas. They range from the full 7.3 m setback of remaining houses to the minimal setback of older masonry apartments found in the Core area. In the areas with a predominant, regular setback, some consistency with that setback and treatment can create unity. This will help assimilate a variety of building styles into a block.

The desire to provide more private open space and maximize site coverage can disrupt the continuity and character of the front yard open space along a street.

##### **Objectives:**

The front yard should respond to the setbacks of adjacent buildings, the setback pattern of the block, and site location.

The front yard should create visual interest.

The front yard should accommodate useable open space where appropriate.

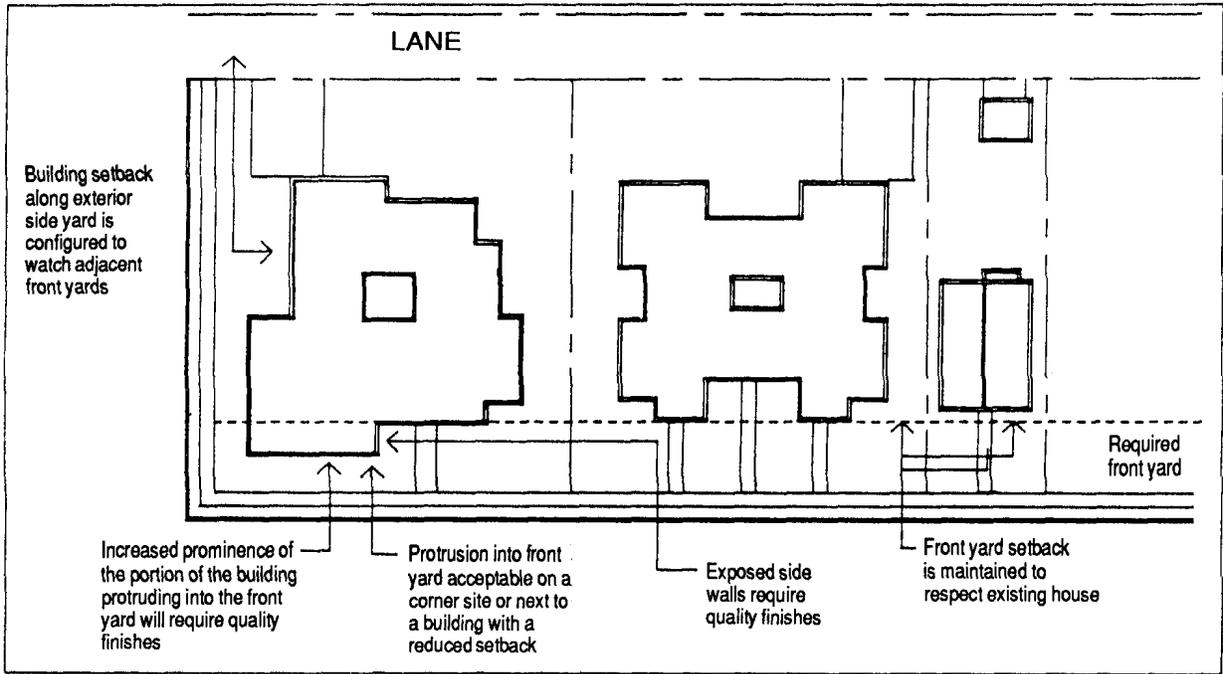
The front yard should provide a visual extension of public open space.

This can be achieved by:

- (a) providing a transition to the front yard setback of adjacent buildings. In no case though, should any portion of the front yard be less than 3.7 m.
- (b) treating any portion of a flanking wall extending beyond the front yard setback of an adjacent building to create a high quality image. This is necessary to respond to its increased visibility. Blank side walls visible from the street are unacceptable.
- (c) allowing a relaxation of the front yard in certain circumstances. It is most appropriate for sites in the Western Core area adjoining buildings with a minimal setback. A relaxation may also be appropriate at corner sites. For internal sites, relaxations will depend upon the configuration of adjacent sites. It is not appropriate to have a minimal front yard setback next to a building with a full front yard setback.

To consider a relaxation, it must achieve another design objective, such as maintaining or enhancing the livability of adjacent units. Any part of the building protruding into the front yard will need to be well detailed and exceptionally finished. High caliber materials commensurate with its increased prominence are appropriate. The reduced front yard area should incorporate quality landscape materials.

**Figure 7. Front Yard Configurations**



#### **4.5 Side Yard**

Side yards help establish a streetscape rhythm, allow views between buildings, and create open space. They also ensure that side facing units receive daylight and maintain privacy. Variations in the side yards may be appropriate to achieve these design objectives depending on site context.

##### **Objectives:**

Side yards should maintain the predominant rhythm of the street.

Exterior side yards, (the side yard along the street edge of a corner site), should act as a front yard space for any facing units.

Side yards should be large enough to ensure the livability of all adjoining units.

This can be achieved by:

- (a) increasing the size of the side yard in situations where adhering to the by-law standard will create privacy and livability problems.
- (b) locating, orienting or screening any windows or openings along the side yard. They should not directly look into any adjacent dwelling units or private open space.
- (c) limiting balconies or patios in the required interior side yard.
- (d) allowing some encroachment of the side yard on corner sites to balance a decreased front yard setback.
- (e) ensuring, if possible, that a protrusion into the side yard is offset by recessing the building elsewhere on the site.

#### **4.6 Rear Yard**

The constraints of high-density development often result in many units having a lane as their main orientation. The treatment and size of the rear yard affects the livability of these units. In addition to useable private open space they require an attractive near view to compensate for the lane orientation.

New development at a density greater than that of the remaining original houses will result in increased site coverage. This increase can create privacy and shadowing problems for the rear yards of adjacent properties due to the building extending beyond the line of adjacent buildings.

The sites along 10th Avenue back onto the Broadway C-3A zoning district. C-3A development will result in taller, larger buildings. These will affect the livability of the rear yards of development located on the north side of 10th Avenue.

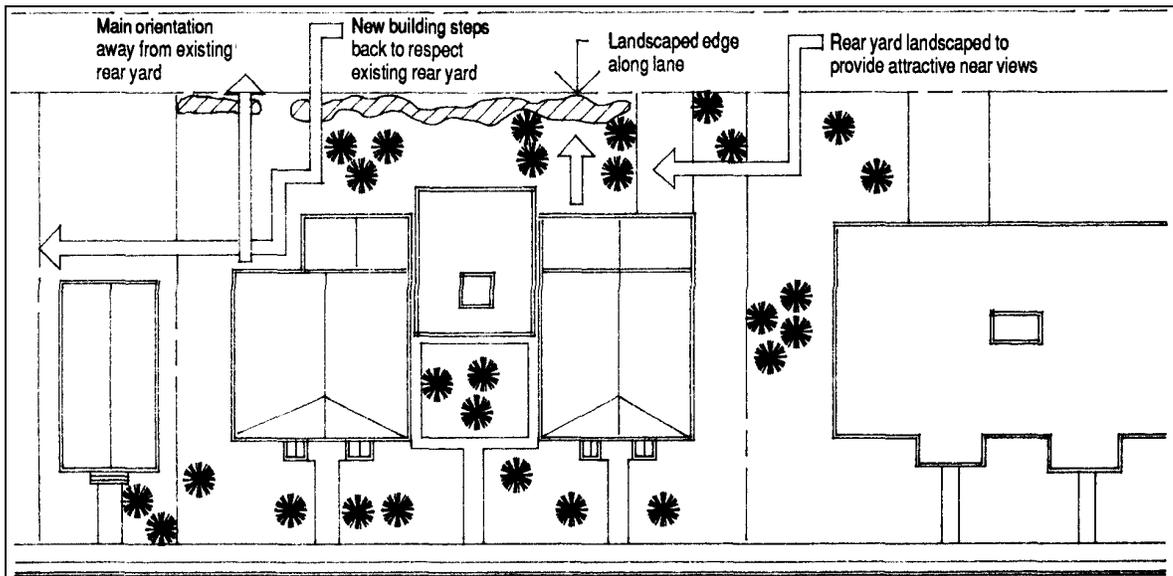
**Objective:**

New development should acknowledge the prominence and importance of the rear yard to the livability of residential units.

This can be achieved by:

- (a) treating the rear yard space for rear-oriented units as equally important as the front yard treatment for front facing units.
- (b) minimize privacy problems by screening or orienting windows away from adjacent rear yards. This is especially important when the building protrudes into the rear yard.
- (c) decreasing the rear yard for sites along the north side of 10th Avenue adjacent to the C-3A zone if it improves livability. A reduced rear yard should not impact the livability of adjacent sites.

**Figure 8. Rear Yard Configurations**



**4.9 Off-Street Parking**

Most of these neighbourhoods are serviced by lanes. For most development, the lanes provide the access to underground parking. Some sites, because of topography or the lack of a lane, must provide parking access from the street.

**Objectives:**

Parking access should be from the lane.

Where conditions cause parking access to be from the street, the parking entrance should create an attractive and integrated image.

Access routes to parking should be unobtrusive and present an attractive image.

This can be achieved by:

- (a) allowing parking access from the street only when lane access is not possible due to topography or lack of lane continuity. Access to surface parking should only be from the lane.
- (b) treating parking access from the street with high quality materials such as paving stones, brick or aggregate concrete to integrate the ramp into an overall landscape treatment.
- (c) predominantly solid parking garage doors should be used to create a more attractive streetscape. The garage entrance should either be low key and unobtrusive, or defined and detailed as a key and attractive element of the design.
- (d) providing landscaping and screening to help minimize the visual impact of parking ramps as viewed from above.
- (e) ensuring that surface parking on smaller sites unable to provide underground parking has an attractive appearance. Special paving materials, appropriate landscaping, and screening will improve its image.

## 5 Architectural Components

Architectural elements such as bays, dormers, turrets, room projections, porches, entry porticos and recessed balconies are important. They add to the basic geometric envelope of buildings, creating visual interest. The variety of projections and recesses, solids and voids, is what gives these facades their three dimensionality and depth. They also make an area architecturally distinctive. The areas with the most distinctive architecture, and where compatibility is most important, are the West 10th Avenue apartment area and the Western Core area.

### 5.1 Roofs

There are a variety of roof types in this neighbourhood. The original houses have pitched roofs; early apartment development is characterized by flat roofs with prominent cornices. Recent low-rise development is characterized by highly articulated parapets or a series of pitched roof elements. In the Northeast apartment area, the sloping topography results in the overlook of roofs.

Roof treatment in the Western Core area is characterized by a prominent detailed cornice.

In the West 10th Avenue apartment area, where many original houses are intact, there is generally a consistent building height. This is the result of a pattern of development that opened up one block at a time, often by the same developer. Frequently, the developer used the same pitched roof shapes creating a consistent street roof profile or silhouette. The most common profile is a steeply shaped gable roof, with the gable facing the street. These roofs often incorporate dormers. Hipped roofs are also common. Frequently a hipped dormer will spring from the ridge of such a roof. Typically, the roof “cap” of the building is the most dominant architectural component apparent from the street.

Secondary roof elements, projecting rooms, wings, bay windows, verandahs and entries are all characteristic. They contribute identity and visual interest to what are essentially simple volumes of the typical houses found in the area.

#### **Objectives:**

New development should add to and reinforce the neighbourhood character interest by incorporating distinctive and characteristic roof treatments.

New development should create an attractive roofscape when viewed from a nearby higher location.

New development should provide roofs that allow for some views through the site.

This can be achieved by:

- (a) relating roof treatment to facade elements and design.
- (b) ensuring that any parapets have a sense of depth and solidity commensurate with the cornice detailing.
- (c) using roof areas as open space.

- (d) screening mechanical rooms and elevator towers or integrating them into the roof. Group vents and other mechanical equipment together to create a cohesive roof image.
- (e) treating roofs, especially flat roof areas that adjacent buildings will overlook with attractive materials and forms. All flat roofs should have a prominent articulated cornice treatment.
- (f) emphasizing entrances and unit identity by incorporating secondary roof elements. Roofs on the lower storeys can also assist in minimizing a box-like massing, and reduce the apparent height.
- (g) using pitched roofs with the gable facing the street to maintain views through the valley portion. This is most important in the West 10th Avenue apartment area and the northeast apartment area.
- (h) using flat roofs with a prominent cornice in the Western Core area.

## 5.2 Windows

Windows are an important element in establishing character. New development provides an opportunity to enhance visual interest and the sense of quality construction through detailing.

Window treatment is especially important in the West 10th Avenue apartment area. The remaining houses have a solid, substantial appearance partly as a result of the limited window area. Even in wrap-around bay windows the heavy window frame and casing details give the impression of solidness. Window arrangement is quite straight-forward with a simple rectangular opening usually centred on the wall area in which it is situated. The geometric pattern achieves a balance if not a symmetry. On occasion a decorative diamond, octagonal or stained glass window appears.

### **Objective:**

New development should have windows that create interest and identity as well as reinforce residential and neighbourhood character.

This can be achieved by:

- (a) using windows with defined frames and detailing to create a sense of solidness and quality.
- (b) using bay windows in buildings in the Western Core area.
- (c) respecting the existing solid wall-to-wall area ratios and orderly window geometry in the West 10th Avenue area as much as possible. Views can be maximized through strategic window placement. Careful window detailing and arrangement can increase the feeling of facade solidness. This issue is less critical for facades that do not face the street.

Window shapes should generally be rectangular, and decorative window shapes should be used in moderation. Window arrangement should demonstrate a certain degree of balance and order.

## 5.3 Entrances

Most buildings in these areas have clearly defined, prominent entrances and many have large embellished entrances which animate the streetscape and create special identity.

Entry porches and verandahs are especially characteristic of old houses in the West 10th Avenue area. They have traditionally provided a place for socializing. Physically, they provide a recessed transition space from the public to semi-public parts of the building. This gives a comfortable balance to the individual facade as well as a distinctive repetitive form to the street.

In the West 10th Avenue apartment area the original houses emphasize the main entry by placing it on the raised main floor. The entry has a generous set of stairs leading to it, and an elaborate front door. Frequently the entry would be from a full porch or have its own separate roof or portico.

### **Objective:**

New development should provide entrances that add to and enhance the street character.

This can be achieved by:

- (a) emphasizing building entrances with roofs and special architectural treatments that provide weather protection.
- (b) orienting entrances towards the street.
- (c) making lobby entrances large and welcoming.

#### **5.4 Balconies and Patios**

Balconies provide private open space for residents of higher density development. Some balconies are not well integrated into the building and appear tacked-on. Other buildings have recessed balconies, creating a more cohesive image.

As many apartments have limited storage space, the balconies often play a secondary role as an exterior storage area. This can create an unattractive image of a balcony crowded with bicycles, hibachis, and miscellaneous clutter.

##### **Objective:**

Integrate balconies into the overall design of the building to ensure a cohesive, attractive image, and to avoid a tacked-on look.

Balconies and patios should be useable open space areas.

This can be achieved by:

- (a) using recessed or semi-recessed balconies rather than projecting balconies. This is most important in the Western Core area where maintaining a more urban character is important. Ensure that balconies do not dominate or erode the street wall by locating them away from the building corners.
- (b) finishing the balconies in materials compatible with those used for the overall building. The balconies should appear integrated and have a sense of strength. This does not imply that the balcony walls need to be opaque. Transmission of daylight to the unit is very important.
- (c) developing a balance between balcony frontage and building frontage. Balconies should neither dominate a building's facade, nor look like they were an afterthought.
- (d) providing adequate storage for each unit so bicycles and other material need not be stored on the balcony.
- (e) configuring balconies for usability, with a minimum depth of 1.8 m, and a minimum width of 3.1 m. Patios should have a minimum depth of 2.4 m.

#### **5.5 Exterior Walls**

There are a wide variety of exterior building finishes in this neighbourhood. These include wood siding, used on the remaining houses, masonry low-rises and towers and many stucco low-rise apartments. The variety of finishes does not detract from an overall cohesive character. The visual strength of other design elements tie the streetscape together. The areas where some consistency of building materials is most important are the West 10th apartment area and the Western Core area. In the West 10th apartment area character is achieved by various combinations of cedar shingle with narrow exposure and narrow clapboard. Many recent stucco buildings present a stark, flat image. As well, they are susceptible to weathering and staining and quickly take on a deteriorated look.

##### **Objective:**

New development should use materials that create a quality image and are resistant to weathering.

New development should use compatible finishing materials in the Western Core area and the West 10th Avenue apartment area.

This can be achieved by:

- (a) using finishing materials such as brick, stone, wood siding and concrete to create a quality image. Buildings should look solid and permanent. Brick and stone are especially appropriate

in the Western Core area. Appropriate wood siding is desirable in the West 10th Avenue apartment area.

- (b) avoiding the use of stucco on large uninterrupted surfaces. This will prevent an uninteresting, flat, walls that are prone to weathering. Walls finished predominantly in stucco should be articulated to create visual interest.
- (c) using another finishing material such as stone, brick or concrete to create a more substantial and durable base for stucco buildings.
- (d) wrapping the front wall finishing materials around to the side yards. This will create an attractive image when viewed from the street and to avoid a pasted-on look.
- (e) finishing fencing in materials that are compatible with the materials and detailing of the main building. Fences should look like an extension of the building and not appear as if they were added as an afterthought. For example, cedar fencing is not appropriate unless this is a primary finishing material of the main building.

## 7 Open Space

Higher density development needs open space to ensure the livability of its units. While residents have access to nearby parks, and the streets, on site communal open space is key in enhancing livability. The configuration of this open space in conjunction with the private open space of each unit contributes to neighbourhood character. Traditionally the front and rear yards of development have been the location of open space.

### **Objectives:**

New development should maximize useable and visually interesting open space.

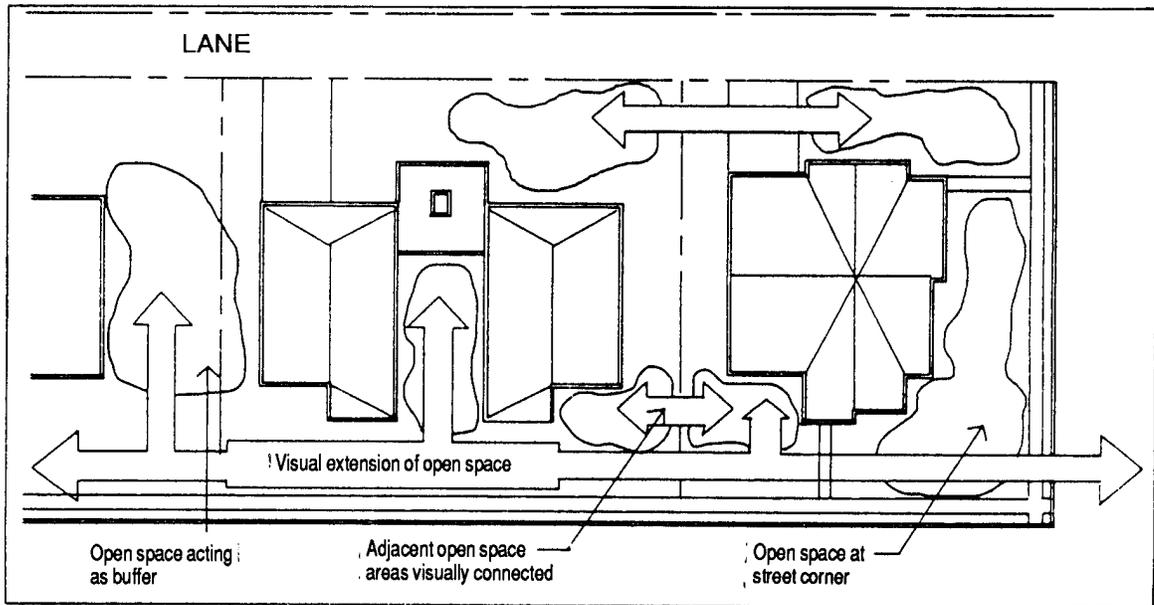
The treatment of open space should contribute to neighbourhood identity.

New development should not compromise the visual appeal of the open space along the street edge if reducing the front yard setback.

This can be achieved by:

- (a) creating large contiguous open spaces rather than a series of smaller isolated spaces. This is especially important along the street edge.
- (b) providing distinctive open space features.
- (c) providing major open spaces at street corners except where the existing building configuration suggests corner definition. An example of this situation is the Western Core area.
- (d) visually extending the open space of the street into the site. By not using high solid walls or hedges along the front property line there will be a visual flow of space.
- (e) using open space as a buffer between adjacent buildings when privacy and daylight access are issues.
- (g) locating any major open space away from the street edge in the Western Core area where street wall definition is important. A formal courtyard opening onto the street is appropriate.

**Figure 9. Open Space Treatments**



### 7.3 Private Open Space

The provision of quality, useable private open space for each unit is key to maintaining livability in a high-density setting. Private open space is usually in the form of balconies and patios.

Newer development usually has more grade level private open space than older apartments. Unfortunately, this often disrupts the streetscape because of the need to ensure privacy. Privacy fencing or heavy planting cuts off visual continuity from the street. Providing grade level private open space is most important for more family-oriented housing.

#### **Objective:**

New development should provide each unit with useable private open space located in areas which do not disrupt the existing streetscape.

New development should ensure that the treatment of the private open space is compatible with the main building.

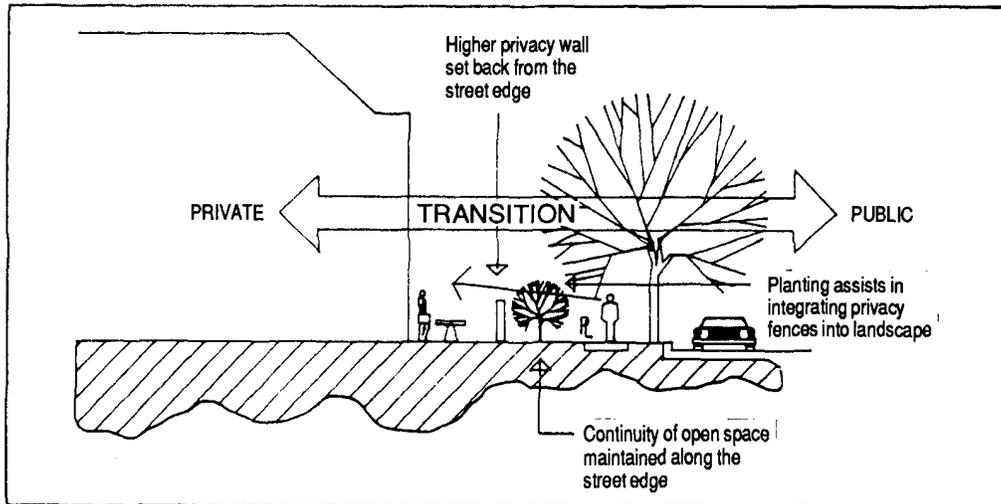
This can be achieved by:

- (a) creating a gradual visual transition from the public realm of the street to the private realm of the individual unit by:
  - (i) locating any fencing or landscaping needed to screen private open space back from the street edge. This will allow some visual continuity of open space between sites and across the street.
  - (ii) limit the use of high solid fences in the required front yard. Privacy screening through landscaping or fencing which is slightly perforated will allow a visual link between the open space and the street.

In the Western Core area, the more urban context requires a different response to private open space. There, because of the potential reduced front yard setbacks, low masonry privacy walls near the street edge may be appropriate.

- (b) providing an outdoor and indoor play space for buildings with family units. The indoor play space should be directly accessible from grade.

**Figure 10. Preferred Private Open Space Treatment**



## 8 Landscaping

These areas, like most areas that were originally single-family neighbourhoods, have simple formal front yard landscaping. Mature planting, especially street trees, are most evident along streets in the Core area. It is the most prominent landscape feature, contributing strongly to the neighbourhood character. There are few street trees in the northeast apartment area, and new development should re-introduce this characteristic treatment within their site.

Many units will have a lane as their main orientation. The higher density development requires treating the lanes in a special manner in recognition of their prominence.

### **Objectives:**

New development should provide landscaping which reinforces the neighbourhood character.

New development should provide landscaping that creates visual interest and identity.

New development should present an attractive night-time landscape image.

New development should enhance the landscape image of the lane.

This can be achieved by:

- (a) providing a variety of plant materials and treatments, some of which will achieve substantial size at maturity. They should have a large caliper when planted to ensure survival. In the northeast apartment area they should occupy 50 percent of the required front yard and exterior side yard.
- (b) reinforcing and integrating with the pattern and character of the existing public realm landscaping such as street trees.
- (c) providing opportunities for landscaping above grade. Roof top gardens and balcony planters will enhance a building's image.
- (d) incorporating lighting into the landscaping to create an attractive night-time appearance.
- (e) retaining existing mature trees and prominent landscape elements when possible.
- (f) providing attractive landscaping along the lanes, recognizing their importance as secondary orientation and access areas. Planting can also help screen private open space from the lane. Landscaping should be visible from both the site and from buildings on the other side of the lane.

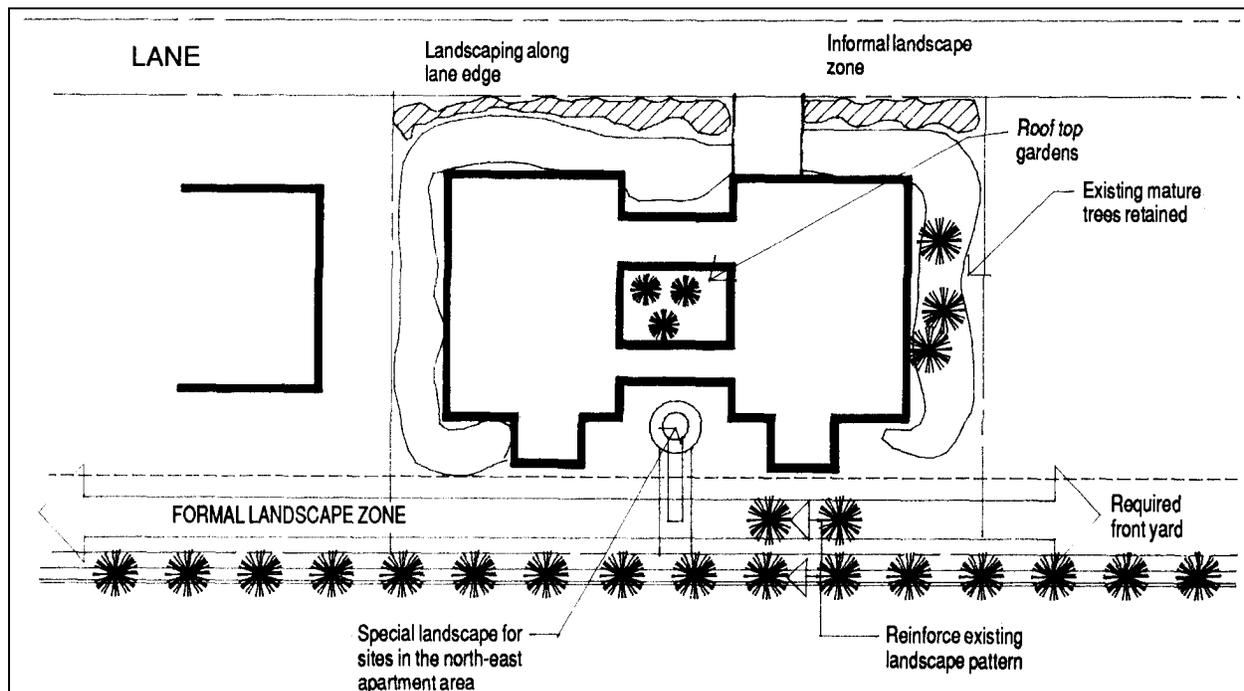
In the Northeast apartment area the following also applies:

- (g) incorporating special open space features to create visual interest along the street edge. These could be ponds, fountains, theme gardens, arches, arbours, bosques and sculpture. Active use areas such as playgrounds, tennis courts or swimming pools could look inappropriate along the street. They should be at least 3.0 m from the front and side property lines.
- (h) using plantings and retaining walls to lessen the impact of steep slopes.

In the Western Core area the following applies:

- (i) using only formal landscape treatments along the street edge. These include lawns, decorative paving, topiary, decorative planters and gardens. More informal planting and landscaping material may be appropriate adjacent to private open spaces. Locate them away from the street. Interior courtyards or along the lane are acceptable locations.

**Figure 11. Preferred Landscaping Treatments**



### Submission Requirements

Applicants should refer to the information required for significant development permit applications contained in the Checklist in Brochure #3 **How To...Development Permits for Major Applications**.