Design and Development Guidelines

Applicable to

Granville Street Plan and

Rupert and Renfrew Station Area Plan

Approved by Council June 4, 2025

Last amended July 8, 2025

CITY OF VANCOUVER

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Introduction

Background

Vancouver's built environment makes the city livable and unique. Good design isn't just about looks—it shapes how buildings work, the quality of spaces, and what they give back to the community. As the city grows, it's important to strike the right balance between thoughtful design and the need to build efficiently.

The Design and Development Guidelines (DDG) were developed to guide building and site design - including how sites are laid out, building massing and design, and open space. The DDG keeps things simple by focusing on the key ingredients that make great urban places. As a practical tool, it gives designers and developers more clarity and consistency, making the process more predictable and transparent.

This marks the first step toward Vancouver's City-wide Design and Development Guidelines, a more comprehensive document anticipated for Council consideration in 2026.

Applicability

This document is applicable to new developments seeking approval through:

- Rezoning application in the Rupert and Renfrew Station Area Plan (the Plan). Rezoning applicants within the Plan boundaries should read this document together with the Plan.

The High Density Housing for Families with Children Guidelines are integrated into this document and are therefore not applicable where this document is in effect.

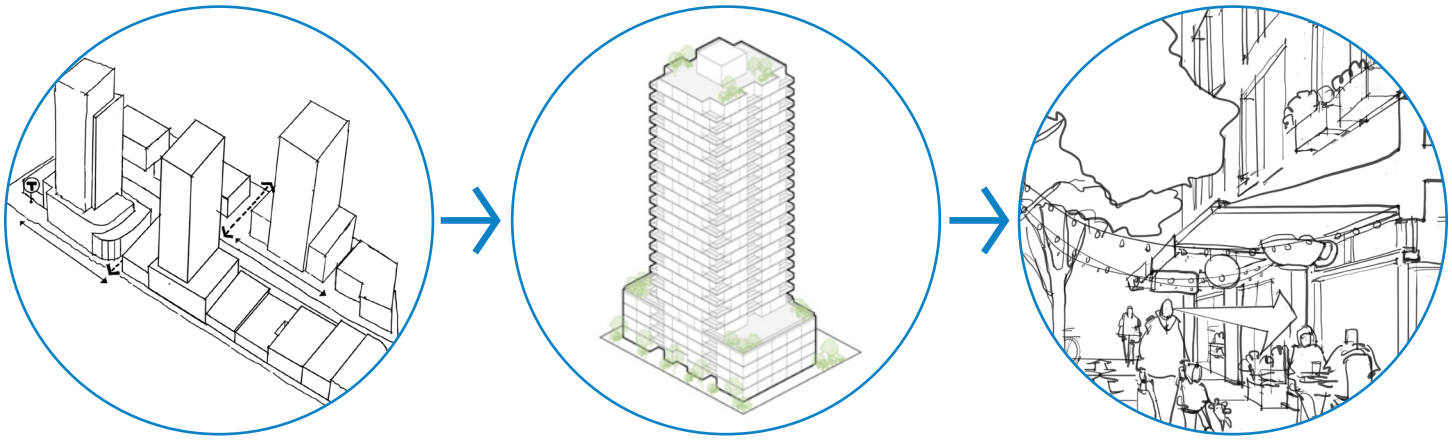
How to Use This Document

The DDG is a resource to help applicants shape strong proposals and gives staff a clear framework for evaluation and applying discretion.

Importantly, the DDG isn't about prescribing cookie-cutter solutions or limiting creativity. Instead, it lays out a clear vision and framework that encourages thoughtful, innovative design.

The DDG is generally structured from the largest scale - the neighbourhood or precinct - down to the finer details of how buildings interact with the public realm. Special attention is given to the design of ground floors and their interface with public spaces.

Illustrations and photos are used throughout to clearly show what good design looks like and how it can function. The simple, visual format makes it easy to use for a wide range of audiences—including the community, designers, developers, and City staff. It's designed to be easy to navigate, reduce repetition, and help applicants understand what's expected.



Neighbourhood **Building** **Ground floor**

How to Use This Document (Cont'd)

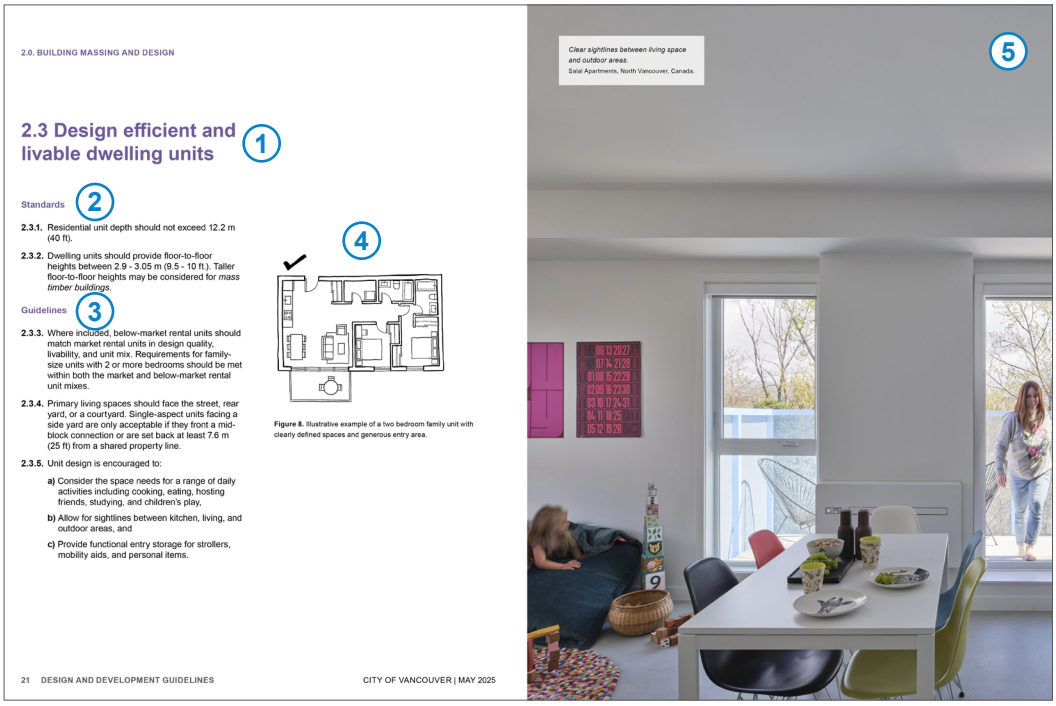
The DDG is broken down into three main Chapters and an Appendix.

- **Chapter A: General Guidelines** apply to all building typologies. All applicants and staff should read and understand this content, as they establish the overarching design expectations for each application.
- **Chapter B: Building Types** contains building type-specific design guidance. Applicants and staff only need to reference the sections relevant to their specific building type. This section includes helpful 'cheatsheets' of key form of development parameters and provides simple illustrations of typical development scenarios.
- **Chapter C: Special Design Districts** provides additional guidance for projects located in designated special areas of the city that require additional review. This section only needs to be consulted if a project falls within one of these districts.
- **Appendix** includes regulatory and policy references and a glossary of technical terms that are italicized throughout the document.

Sample Section

Within each Chapter, there are numbered Sections and Sub-Sections addressing specific elements of the built environment. Each Section is generally organized as follows:

1. **Statement:** to-the-point directive statement that explains the purpose or primary objective of the Section.
2. **Standards:** measurable design criteria—such as dimensions, distances, and clear language—to promote consistent design quality across projects, while still allowing for flexibility and site-specific solutions.
3. **Guidelines:** more flexible and qualitative in nature, offering direction that allows for a range of design responses and suggestions on how to meet a given objective or design intent.
4. **Diagrams:** clear diagrams to supplement and clarify Standards and Guidelines.
5. **Photos:** capturing real-world examples of projects that meet the intent of the Section.



2.0. BUILDING MASSING AND DESIGN

2.3 Design efficient and livable dwelling units (1)

Standards (2)

2.3.1. Residential unit depth should not exceed 12.2 m (40 ft).

2.3.2. Dwelling units should provide floor-to-floor heights between 2.9 - 3.05 m (9.5 - 10 ft.). Taller floor-to-floor heights may be considered for *mass timber buildings*.

Guidelines (3)

2.3.3. Where included, below-market rental units should match market rental units in design quality, livability, and unit mix. Requirements for family-size units with 2 or more bedrooms should be met within both the market and below-market rental unit mixes.

2.3.4. Primary living spaces should face the street, rear yard, or a courtyard. Single-aspect units facing a side yard are only acceptable if they front a mid-block connection or are set back at least 7.6 m (25 ft) from a shared property line.

2.3.5. Unit design is encouraged to:

a) Consider the space needs for a range of daily activities including cooking, eating, hosting friends, studying, and children's play,

b) Allow for sightlines between kitchen, living, and outdoor areas, and

c) Provide functional entry storage for strollers, mobility aids, and personal items.

(4)

Figure 8. Illustrative example of a two bedroom family unit with clearly defined spaces and generous entry area.

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Clear sightlines between living space and outdoor areas.
Salal Apartments, North Vancouver, Canada.

(5)

Design Principles

In 2022, City Council approved the Vancouver Plan—a unified land-use framework focused on building a more livable, affordable, and sustainable city for everyone. It outlines community values for growth based on what matters most to the community.

The design principles in this document build on that vision, turning big ideas into clear, practical goals for the built environment. These principles aren't something applicants need to respond to directly—they're here to show the intent behind the standards and guidelines, which *are* the parts applicants should address in their proposals.

Design spaces that support health and well-being.

This means:

- Designing homes that bring in lots of natural light, fresh air, great outlook, and a real sense of privacy.
- Adding outdoor spaces where people can relax, play, and feel connected to nature.

Celebrate and strengthen local character, culture, and identity

This means:

- Designing buildings and spaces that feel true to the area's architecture, materials, history, and cultures.
- Highlighting key views and working with natural features to strengthen the sense of place.
- Making sure new development blends in thoughtfully with what's already there.

Shape and animate the public realm.

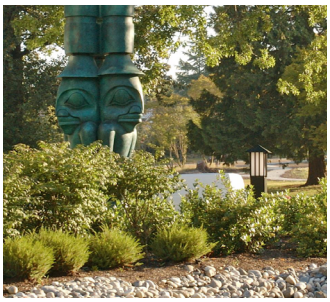
This means:

- Making streets and public spaces feel welcoming with people-friendly design and lively ground floors — like shops, restaurants, patios, and homes.
- Adding mid-block connections through big sites to make it easier and nicer to walk around.
- Designing privately-owned public spaces (POPS) as great spots to hang out, meet up, or just take a breather.

Design spaces that bring people together.

This means:

- Adding shared spaces like outdoor dining areas, play zones, and gardens where people can hang out and connect.
- Creating lively ground floors and friendly edges that spark everyday interactions.
- Making sure it's easy for everyone to get around, including folks using wheelchairs or pushing strollers.



Design spaces that boost biodiversity and help people connect with nature.

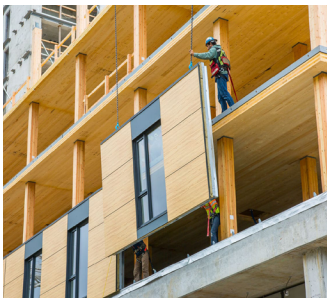
This means:

- Using eco-friendly landscaping and nature-based design strategies.
- Protecting existing trees and growing the urban canopy.
- Limiting parkades to allow for soil and healthier trees.
- Creating rooftop gardens or green roofs.

Design with a human scale and timeless features that feel good now—and last.

This means:

- Buildings that reinforce a fine-grained urban fabric and human-scaled design.
- Creating well-proportioned buildings with a clear, simple design idea
- Using quality, durable materials and thoughtful details.



Design with efficiency and sustainability

This means:

- Replacing high carbon materials and practices with low carbon alternatives.
- Making spaces flexible and adaptable so they can evolve over time.
- Focusing on simple forms and standardized components to reduce construction and maintenance costs.
- Designing simple, functional layouts that meet a diversity of needs.

Design Flexibility and Transparency

A key goal of the DDG is to support design flexibility and avoid repetitive, cookie-cutter outcomes. This is achieved in part by allowing a more permissive building envelope, enabling creative, site-specific designs that respond to unique site conditions. A balanced approach to flexibility supports architectural diversity, enhances building efficiency, and promotes livable neighbourhoods, while upholding Vancouver's high standards of placemaking.

Importantly, a more permissive building envelope—including greater height and larger tower floor plates—while maintaining overall density, offers a practical mechanism to achieve target densities on large sites (see Figure 1). In return, large sites are expected to provide publicly accessible open space at grade. This avoids the need for case-by-case negotiations and creates a more transparent and predictable approvals process.

This content is for informational purposes only and is intended to provide background rationale to support understanding.

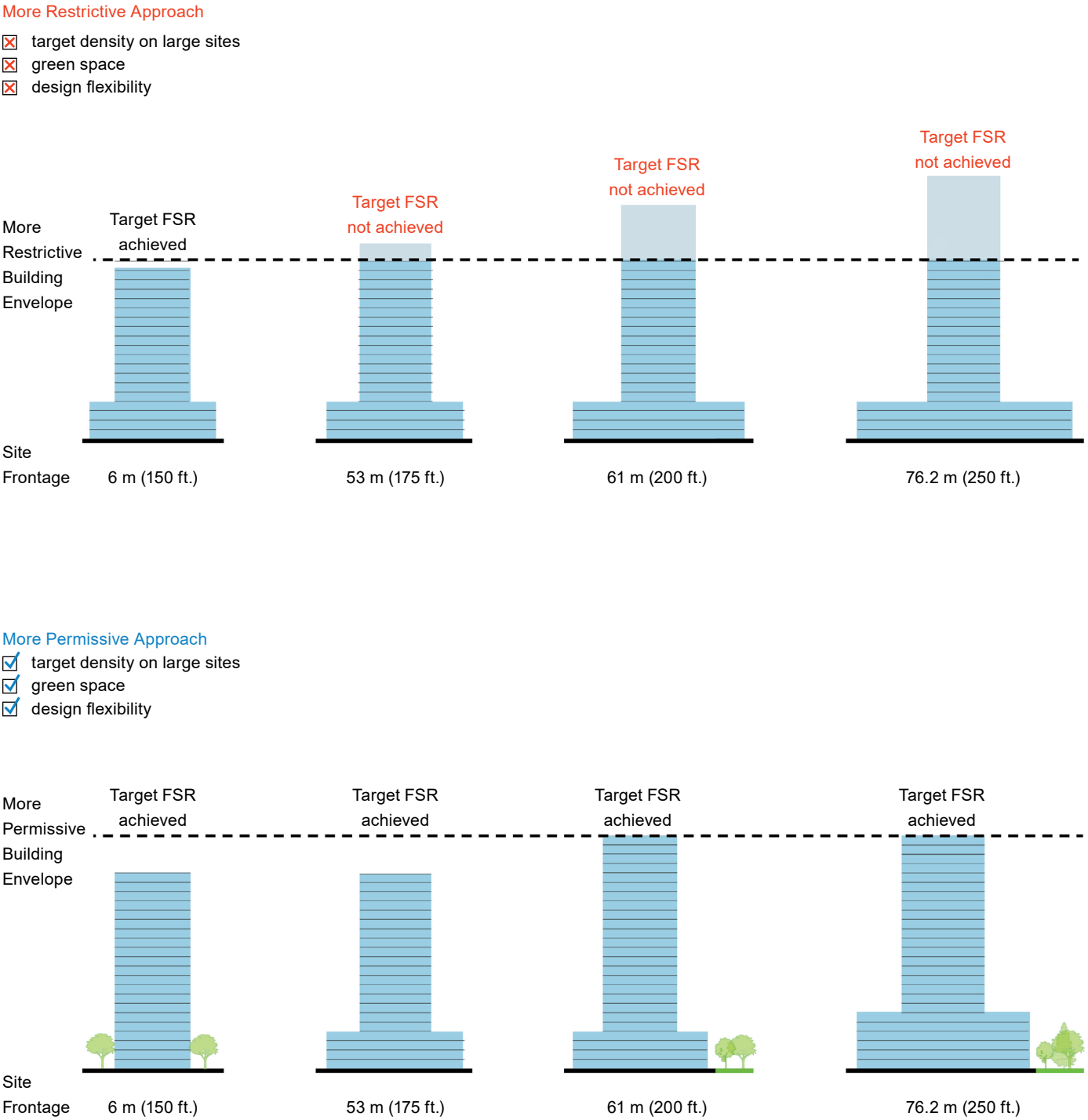


Figure 1. Illustrative diagram comparing a more restrictive building envelop (top) with a more flexible building envelope (bottom) that supports varied site sizes, building types, and the provision of publicly accessible open space on large sites.

A. GENERAL

This Chapter provides design guidance that applies to all building typologies. All applicants and staff should read and understand this content, as they establish the overarching design expectations for each application.

1 SITE ORGANIZATION

Introduction

Site organization involves the spatial arrangement of buildings, activities, open spaces, circulation, and access within a development site. Thoughtful site planning enhances functionality, supports sustainability goals, and creates a coherent relationship between built form and the public realm.

Intent

A well-organized **site layout** that:

- Incorporates existing natural features and makes the most of access to views and sunlight.
- Brings life to the public realm by placing active uses and building services in the right spots.
- Encourages walkability by creating smaller, more connected blocks that feel human-scaled and support vibrant street life.

1.1 Use open space as an organizing element

This section describes how to **locate** open spaces. For guidance on how to **design** them see Section 4 Open Space.

Guidelines

1.1.1 Open spaces should be intentionally located early in the site design process to ensure they are functional and welcoming, not leftover or constrained. Open spaces should:

a) Maximize sunlight and sky views,

b) Retain high value trees,

c) Minimize exposure to noise, pollution, and wind,

d) Be clearly separated from building circulation routes.

1.1.2 When provided, privately-owned public space (POPS) should be located to feel clearly public, with direct, prominent, and easily visible access from the sidewalk.

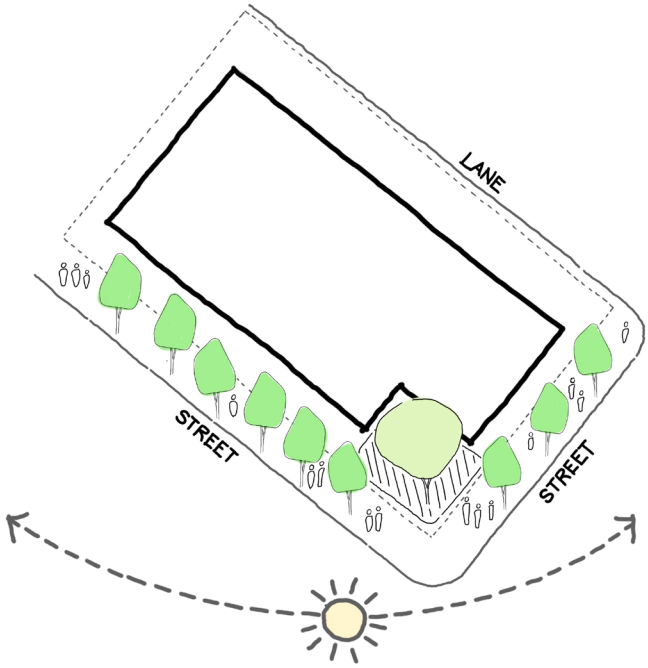


Figure 2. A small seating area at the corner offers good solar access and direct sidewalk entry. The building is set back to preserve a high-value tree.

1.2 Position uses to activate the public realm

This section describes how to **locate** uses to activate the public realm. For guidance on how to **design** for public realm activation see Section 3 Public Interface.

Guidelines

1.2.1 *Active uses* should be positioned to enliven streets, *open space*s, and mid-block connections. Pedestrian entries should be maximized to create engaging frontages.

1.2.2 Community uses should be at ground level with clear public access.

1.2.3 Ground-floor building services, including waste, loading, parking and parking access should be:

a) Minimized

b) Located away from streets, public spaces and on-site open spaces

c) Preferably located underground

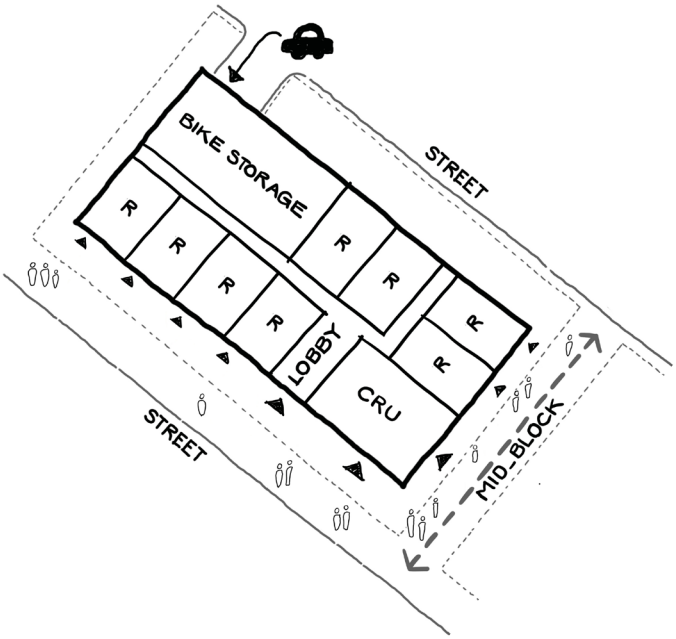


Figure 3. Active uses line the street and mid-block connection, while building services, vehicular, and loading access are provided from the lane or lowest-classified adjacent street.

1.3 Use mid-block connections to break up long blocks

This section describes how to **locate** mid-block connections. For guidance on how to **design** mid-block connections see Section 4.2.

Guidelines

1.3.1 Mid-block connections should be provided:

- **a)** Where identified in a Public Realm Plan or Framework.
- **b)** On mid-block Residential Tower sites with a frontage over 60.7 m (199 ft.) where it improves neighbourhood walkability.
- **c)** On Mixed-Use Tower sites with a frontage over 60.7 m (199 ft.) that are within 200 m (492 ft.) of a rapid transit station.
- **d)** Where a development can create a through-block connection by continuing an existing or planned pathway from a neighbouring site.

1.3.2 Developments should maintain and improve the quality of existing mid-block connections.

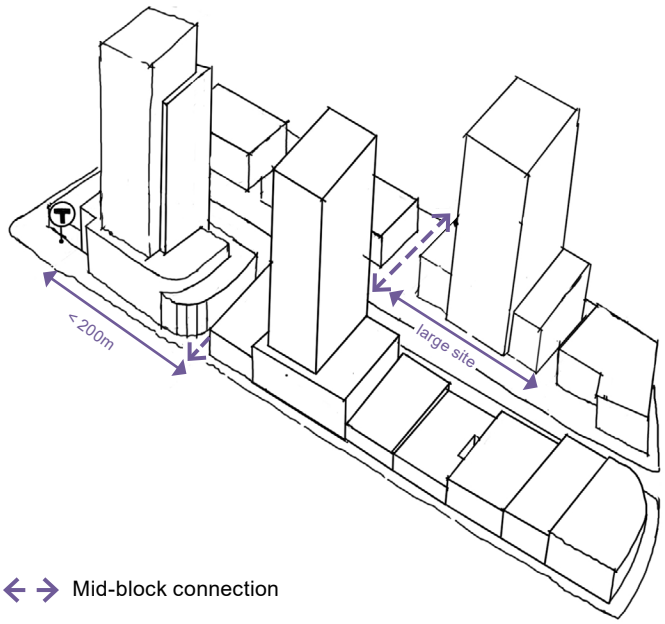


Figure 4. Mid-block connections can help to break up long blocks and improve connectivity, especially when in close proximity to a major destination such as a rapid transit station.

Mid-block connection from W 7th Ave local street bikeway to Granville Loop Park and Granville Island beyond.
Vancouver, Canada.

Building massing clearly defines streetwall and public spaces at ground level.
Marine Gateway, Vancouver, Canada.

2 BUILDING MASSING AND DESIGN

Introduction

Building massing and design addresses both the external expression of a building and it's internal layout and design. Guidelines in Sections 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5 replace the High Density Housing for Families with Children Guidelines

Intent

Building massing that:

- Is well balanced and appropriately scaled to create comfortable urban environments

Building facades that:

- Combine elements like windows, doors, materials, and colours to enhance the pedestrian experience
- Improve building performance related to energy efficiency, durability, and adaptability to climate

Building design that:

- Enhances the health and well-being of building occupants by ensuring access to natural light and proper ventilation
- Enhances privacy and the usability of indoor spaces
- Provides access to spaces for relaxation, recreation, and connection to nature as well as social connection
- Reduces the risk of crime, enhances security, and contributes to a sense of community well-being and comfort

2.1 Design buildings to respect their context and enhance the public realm

Guidelines

2.1.1 New developments should use building massing and site design to clearly shape and define streets and public spaces at ground level.

2.1.2 Building massing should respond to the existing scale and character of the neighbourhood and set the stage for future context - for example, by:

a) setting buildings back from the property line and using landscape to transition to lower-scale buildings

b) stepping down taller buildings through the use of podiums or upper storey step-backs

c) responding to existing streetwall heights and setback patterns.

2.1.3 Building frontages longer than 45.7 m (150 ft.) should incorporate noticeable vertical articulation in the massing to help divide the *facade* into distinct sections.

2.1.4 Buildings on sloped sites should step ground floors to match the grade and consider terracing buildings to accentuate the natural topography.

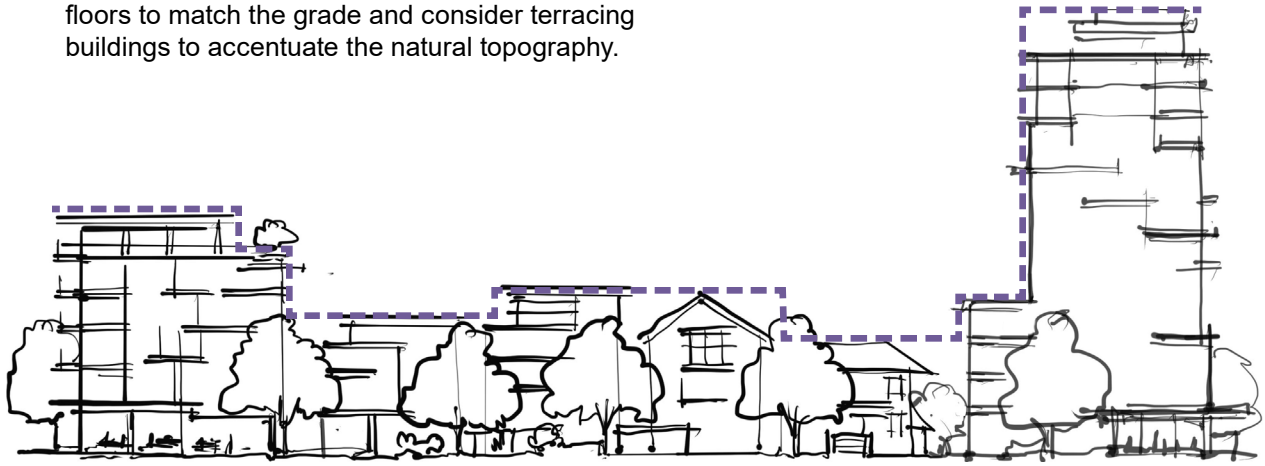


Figure 5. Creating sensitive transitions massing between building types.

Landscaped open spaces provide transitions between new developments while buildings terrace with the slope.

2.2 Use quality materials and design facades with visual interest

Guidelines

2.2.1 Building facades should provide visual depth and interest through the use of entrances, windows, balconies, integrated shading, or expression of structural elements. Corner sites should treat both street-facing facades as front elevations.

2.2.2 Blank walls that are visible from the public realm should be animated with colour, materials, or landscaping.

2.2.3 Materials and detailing should be durable, robust and low maintenance.

2.2.4 At lower levels, materials and detailing should be tactile and high quality to enhance visual interest and convey a sense of craftsmanship and design integrity. Consider soffit material and design, lighting, punched windows, and finishes at overhangs and entries for comfort and quality expression.

2.2.5 Facade design should improve compatibility with surrounding context - particularly in heritage contexts - by responding to key building elements such as building cadence, entry placement, cornice lines, massing, setbacks, colour, materials, and window patterns.

Figure 6. Design details at the ground and lower levels have the strongest impact on the experience of the public realm and present opportunities for high-quality, thoughtful design.

Animating a blank wall with exterior circulation and public art.
The Duke, Vancouver, Canada.

2.3 Design efficient and livable dwelling units

Standards

2.3.1 Residential units that have one aspect with exterior wall should not be deeper than 12.2 m (40 ft).

2.3.2 Dwelling units should provide floor-to-floor heights between 2.7 - 3.3 m (9 - 11 ft.) to accommodate structural and mechanical systems. Taller floor-to-floor heights may be considered for *mass timber buildings*.

Guidelines

2.3.3 Where included, below-market rental units should match market rental units in design quality, livability, and unit mix. Requirements for family-size units with 2 or more bedrooms should be met within both the market and below-market rental unit mixes.

2.3.4 Primary living spaces should face the street, rear yard, or a courtyard. Single-aspect units facing a side yard are only acceptable if they front a mid-block connection or are set back at least 7.6 m (25 ft) from a shared property line.

2.3.5 Unit design is encouraged to:

a) Consider the space needs for a range of daily activities including cooking, eating, hosting friends, studying, and children's play,

b) Allow for sight lines between kitchen, living, and outdoor areas, and

c) Provide functional entry storage for strollers, mobility aids, and personal items.

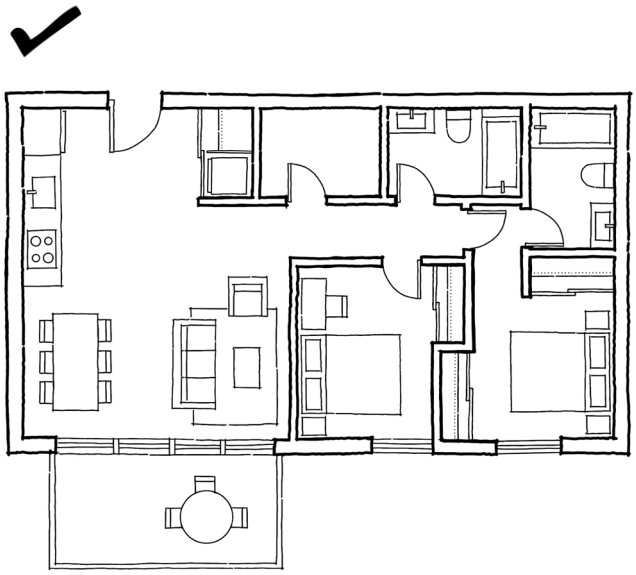


Figure 7. Illustrative example of a two bedroom family unit with clearly defined spaces and generous entry area.

Clear sight lines between living space and outdoor areas.
Salal Apartments, North Vancouver, Canada.

2.4 Provide indoor and outdoor amenity space

Standards

2.4.1 *Tower* developments should provide:

a) A minimum ratio of 1.2 m^2 of common indoor amenity space per dwelling unit, and

b) A minimum ratio of 2.0 m^2 of common outdoor amenity space per dwelling unit.

Guidelines

2.4.2 *Low-rise buildings* are encouraged to meet the minimum amenity space ratios in 2.4.1., if the building type and site constraints allow.

2.4.3 Indoor and outdoor amenity spaces are encouraged to be:

a) Co-located, with clear visual and physical connections where possible.

b) Located on rooftops, set back from the building edge, or near lobbies and daily travel routes.

2.4.4 Outdoor amenity areas should be secured and include space for a range of activities including children's play.

2.4.5 Indoor amenity rooms should include a kitchen, accessible washrooms, and storage.

2.4.6 In addition to the indoor amenity expectations noted above, consider additional opportunities for social spaces throughout the building such as multi-purpose lobbies or small seating areas.

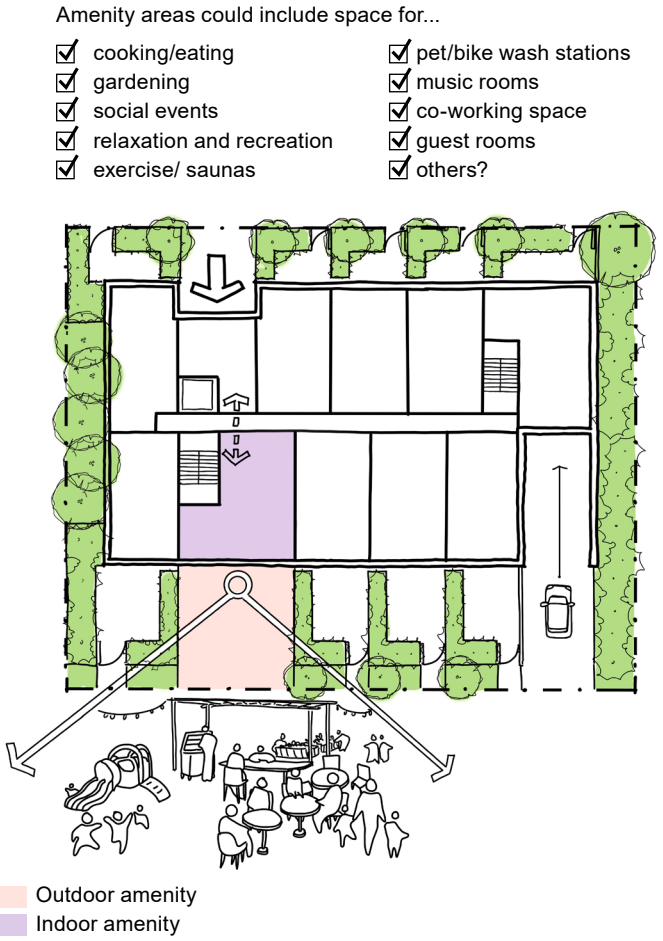


Figure 8. Indoor and outdoor amenity co-located along daily travel routes, connected to the building lobby and separated from the vehicle entry.

Outdoor amenity space with access to natural light and views, meeting the needs of a wide range of users by incorporating a secured area that accommodates children's play, seating, landscaping and urban agriculture.
YWCA Cause We Care House, Vancouver, Canada.

2.5 Provide comfortable balconies, patios and roof decks

Standards

2.5.1 All units should have access to private outdoor space with a minimum depth of 1.8 m (6 ft.) and a minimum area of 4.5 m² (48.4 sq. ft.).

2.5.2 Exceptions to 2.5.1 may be considered in the following cases, if a minimum of 4.5 m² (48.4 sq. ft.) of additional common outdoor amenity space beyond the expectations stated in 2.4.1 is provided for each unit that does not have private outdoor space:

a) Studio and 1-bedroom units

b) Any unit in a *mass timber building*

c) Any unit in a non-profit or government-initiated non-market housing projects

Guidelines

2.5.3 Where a full balcony is not provided, the unit should include either a Juliet balcony or full-height sliding windows with integrated safety guards.

2.5.4 Balconies should be designed for comfort and usability. This may be achieved by:

a) Incorporating screens, fin walls, planters, or opaque railings to enhance privacy

b) Insetting balconies - particularly above the 12th storey - to provide weather protection and support year-round use.

Figure 9. Cantilevered balconies may be appropriate for low-rise buildings on quiet local streets (left). On a retail high-street or tower, inset balconies may be more appropriate (right).

Functional private patios and balconies. Colourful opaque railing provides privacy and add visual interest to the building.
Salal Apartments, North Vancouver, Canada.

2.6 Ensure clear sight lines, good lighting, and natural surveillance

Guidelines

2.6.1 Building and site design should support safety and security by:

a) Providing clear sight lines and natural surveillance of sidewalks, entries, circulation routes, semi-private areas, and parking access

b) Avoiding hidden or secluded alcoves

c) Ensuring access routes and landscaped areas are well-lit without glare or spillover onto neighbouring properties

d) Limiting and controlling entry points to resident-only areas

e) Including clear, intuitive signage and wayfinding to support safe navigation

f) Using graffiti-resistant materials and design details

Well-lit access routes and landscaped areas, with natural surveillance of entries and circulation.
Heather Place, Vancouver, Canada.

2.7 Minimize the impact of building services on the public realm

Guidelines

2.7.1 Where a front driveway is required, design should mitigate the impact on the public realm through paving treatments (interlocking pavers, brick etc.) and landscaping to soften the appearance of paved areas.

2.7.2 Passenger loading spaces, when required, should be provided on-site, at-grade, from the lane.

2.7.3 Surface parking should be screened with landscaping or trellises and incorporate permeable paving when not situated on-slab.

2.7.4 Parking entries, exit stairs, loading areas, and at-grade bike storage should be integrated with the building and site design, avoiding disruption to courtyards, rear yards, and *open space*.

2.7.5 Consider designing below grade parking structures with an angled slab edge and/or corner notches to provide additional space for tree root development.

2.7.6 Mechanical equipment and other building services should be appropriately screened and located away from residential units, open spaces and the public sidewalk.

Parking entry and loading area is integrated with the building design.
Central Presbyterian Church, Vancouver, Canada.

Engaging ground floor design adds warmth and interest to the urban streetscape
Lululemon Flagship, Vancouver, Canada.

3 PUBLIC INTERFACE

Introduction

This section outlines key design considerations for the interface between buildings and the public realm. It addresses weather protection, residential and commercial ground floor design, and how development responds to adjacent parks and open spaces.

Intent

Weather protection that:

- Provides shelter from rain, making it more comfortable to walk and spend time outside

Residential ground floors that:

- Create welcoming and lively streets while offering privacy and usable outdoor space for residents

Commercial ground floors that:

- Support foot traffic and help create active, people-friendly streets that encourage socializing and support local business

Park interfaces that:

- Respect and protect park spaces while offering active building edges and passive surveillance for safety

3.1 Incorporate effective and attractive weather protection

Standards

3.1.1 Canopies should be installed 3.0 - 5.0 m (10 - 16 ft.) above grade, with a depth-to-height ratio of approximately 7:10 to provide effective weather protection. Flexibility will considered for sloped sites, civic buildings, heritage conservation, and awnings.

Guidelines

3.1.2 Continuous weather protection should be provided along ground floor commercial frontages on fronting and flanking streets.

3.1.3 Weather protection should be provided for common entrances and individual residential entrances.

3.1.4 Weather protection elements should be high-quality, integrated elements of the building and site design and contribute to neighbourhood character. This may be achieved by:

a) Enhancing soffits with careful detailing and high-quality materials.

b) Specifying canopies that reflect the unique qualities of the context, for instance, fabric awnings in historic areas or glass and steel canopies in business districts.

c) Varying the mounting height and depth of canopies to break up long *facade*s.

Figure 10. Diagram of desired weather protection height and proportions.

Continuous weather protection providing generous coverage for building entrances and commercial patio.
Weather Protection, Vancouver, Canada.

3.2 Design a comfortable residential edge to the public realm

Guidelines

3.2.1 Direct sight lines into living spaces should be minimized by by design solutions such as incorporating setbacks, grade changes and/or window position and sizing.

3.2.2 Consider the use of recessed entries for shelter and to provide visual depth at grade.

3.2.3 Outdoor spaces should:

a) Provide appropriately sized outdoor space to support a range of activities including outdoor eating, cooking, play areas, and gardening.

b) Use fencing or other design elements to define private spaces and create safe outdoor areas for children and pets.

c) Incorporate layered planting or hedges between private patios and the public streetscape to protect residents' privacy while maintaining visibility for safety.

3.2.4 The front and back boulevard should be landscaped as green space. At a minimum, they should be retained as grassed areas, but more intensive planting or environmental design (e.g. bioswale or rain garden) is encouraged where appropriate. Refer to the City's Boulevard Gardening Guidelines.

3.2.5 Consider a small seating area at corner sites to offer public rest space and improve accessibility.

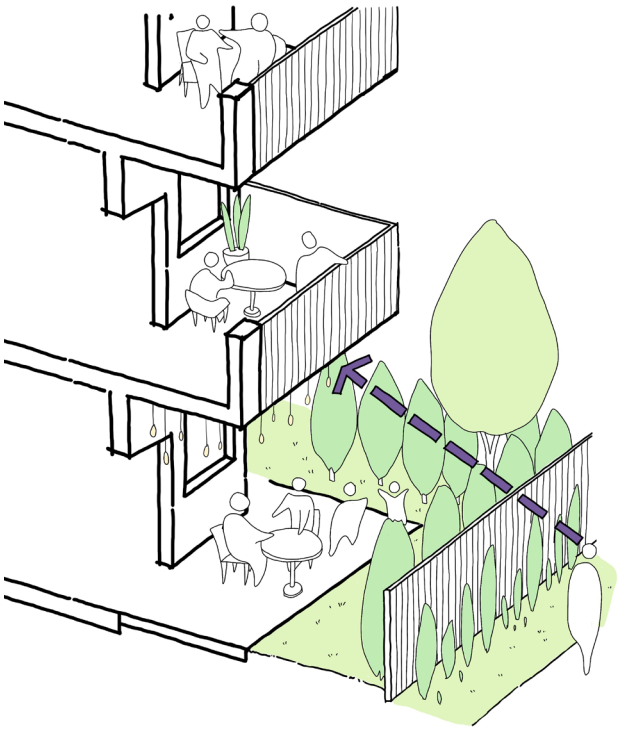


Figure 11. Fencing and layered planting provides privacy for interior living spaces and outdoor areas. Units may have direct access to the public sidewalk, but it's not required.

Fencing and layered planting define a generous private outdoor space and block direct sight lines into interior spaces.
Eastpark, Vancouver, Canada.

3.3 Design lively and people-friendly commercial ground floors

Standards

3.3.1 A minimum floor-to-floor height of 4.6 - 5.5 m (15 - 18 ft.) is encouraged for commercial spaces, unless significant site slope requires some areas of less than 4.6 m (15 ft.).

3.3.2 On high streets, the maximum unit frontage should be 15.3 m (50 ft.), except for grocery stores or other anchor retail.

Guidelines

3.3.3 Ground-floor commercial spaces should be designed with ample glazing and street-facing entrances. Doorways to support future unit demising should also be considered.

3.3.4 Ground-floor commercial frontages should include depth, articulation, and a sense of visual richness and avoid long expanses of floor to ceiling glazing. Structural bays may be used to reflect traditional storefront patterns.

3.3.5 Avoid the use of plastic film and tinted, opaque, or high reflectivity glass which obscures views into interior spaces. Security features should maintain clear views into tenancies at night to support safety and animation.

3.3.6 Commercial entries should be separate, easily identifiable, and architecturally distinct from residential entries or lobbies.

Figure 12. Door and window frames and wood soffits provide depth, thickness and a sense of warmth that enhances the pedestrian experience.

Ground-floor commercial with ample glazing and an architecturally distinct residential lobby.
Habitat, Vancouver, Canada.

3.4 Create a sensitive park interface

Guidelines

3.4.1 The interface between development sites and parks should enhance park integrity by:

a) Ensuring all above and below grade structures are sufficiently set back from the park so that construction and maintenance activities will occur entirely on-site and all park features, including trees, are protected and retained.

b) Differentiating between parkland and on-site outdoor space, for example through changes in elevation, material and/or landscape features.

c) Ensuring ground floor residential units and any other building exits link to collector paths on private property. Pathways from individual units leading directly into parkland are not supported.

d) Minimizing park-facing blank walls. Buildings adjacent to parks should provide *active frontages* along at least 25% of the building edge facing the park, with screening required for any inactive frontage.

3.4.2 Parks should not be impacted by new development or its supporting infrastructure. For example, stormwater from development may not be directed into parkland, and groundwater management should be planned so as not to temporarily or permanently impact parkland.

3.4.3 Placement of utilities, vents, and micromobility stations should not encroach on or obstruct parkland.

Clearly distinguishing parkland from private property through setbacks, pathways, and landscaping features.

Outdoor space that prioritizes green space for both people and nature.
The Apollo, Washington, US.

4 OPEN SPACE

Introduction

This section provides guidance on the design of open spaces to ensure they are functional, attractive, and contribute to the overall livability and sustainability of a development.

Intent

Open space design that:

- Prioritizes trees and green space that boosts health, well-being, biodiversity and resilience.
- Introduces mid-block connections to improve walkability, break up large blocks, and create opportunities for landscaping and open space.
- Delivers privately-owned public open spaces (POPS) that expand access to open space, foster social interaction, and support local businesses.

4.1 Design to support biodiversity and natural systems

Guidelines

4.1.1 Where outdoor space is proposed over parking structures, soil depths should meet or exceed the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects (CSLA) Canadian Landscape Standard to provide sufficient soil depth to support a variety of landscape treatments including trees.

4.1.2 In support of the City's tree canopy goals, new trees should be introduced to the greatest extent possible with a focus on the perimeter of the site.

4.1.3 Where a development is adjacent to a site or corridor prioritized for ecological protection and restoration or a blue green systems, consider providing additional above and below grade setbacks and ecological landscaping.

4.1.4 Landscapes should use diverse, non-invasive, drought-tolerant native or adapted plants and incorporate trees, shrubs, natural groundcovers, and grasses to create vertical vegetation and support wildlife habitats.

4.1.5 Landscapes should incorporate habitat features such as snags and downed wood, birdhouses, bat boxes, insect hotels, and birdbaths to provide for the needs of a variety of species including pollinators.

4.1.6 Artificial turf as a landscape material should be avoided except in a limited capacity for high-traffic areas like small dog runs.

Generous open space with layered planting incorporating trees, shrubs, and natural groundcovers.
Concord Gardens, Richmond, Canada.

4.2 Design comfortable mid-block connections

Guidelines

4.2.1 *Mid-block connections* should be:

a) Safe, attractive, well lit and provide space for movement as well as pausing, particularly where it meets a sidewalk or public space.

b) Direct and provide clear line of sight from one end to the other.

c) Publicly accessible and appropriately secured through a pedestrian statutory right-of-way.

d) Open to the sky except where canopies are provided for shade or weather protection.

e) Lined by *active frontages*.

f) Landscaped with trees.

4.2.2 *Mid-block connections* should have consistent, clear, visible and welcoming signage.

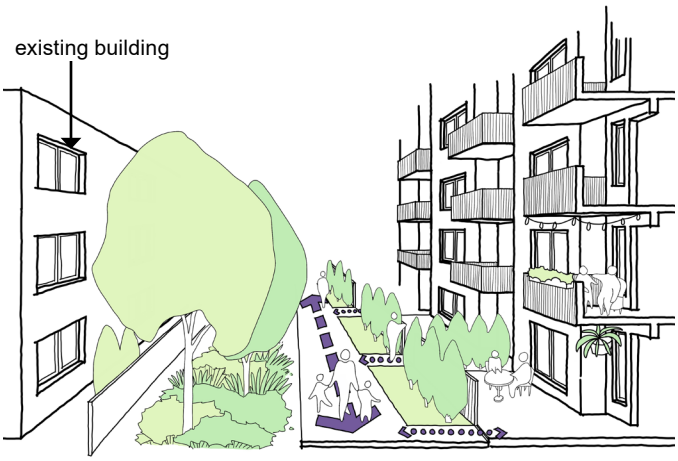


Figure 13. High quality mid-block connections provide sufficient space for both movement and pausing. They are lined with active frontages and provide clear and direct access.

Mid-block connection lined by active frontages and landscaped with trees Olympic Village, Vancouver, Canada.

Mid-block connection providing space for movement as well as pausing, with clear line of sight from one end to the other. Vancouver, Canada.

4.3 Design safe and attractive POPS

Guidelines

4.3.1 Privately Owned Public Space (*POPS*) should be provided:

a) Where identified in a Public Realm Plan or Framework.

b) On Residential Tower sites with a frontage over 60.7 m (199 ft.).

c) On Mixed-Use Tower sites with a frontage over 60.7 m (199 ft.).

4.3.2 *POPS* should be:

a) Designed with a clear purpose (ie. gathering, green space, play, or a mix) and include design features to support that use (ie. seating, lawn, play features, etc).

b) Publicly accessible and appropriately secured through a statutory right-of-way

c) Open to the sky

d) Lined by active frontages

e) Landscaped with trees for shade

4.3.3 *POPS* should have consistent, clear, visible and welcoming signage.

4.3.4 At-grade utilities, vents, building circulation and bike/scooter stations should not block access to or reduce the usability of the *POPS*.

Figure 14. *POPS* with green space, trees, and seating, lined by active frontages.

POPS designed for comfort, usability and durability in a high density urban context.
Woodward's Redevelopment, Vancouver, Canada.

B. BUILDING TYPES

This Chapter provides specific design guidance tailored to different building types, offering more detailed direction beyond the general guidance outlined in Chapter A.

The guidance in this Chapter recognizes the unique spatial, functional, and contextual requirements of various building types and aims to ensure that each contributes positively to the public realm, urban fabric, and overall livability of the city.

Applicants and staff only need to reference the Section relevant to their specific building type.

5 BUILDING TYPES

Standards and guidelines in this section are categorized based on the following building types:

5.1 Residential Low-Rise

5.2 Residential Tower

5.3 Mixed-use Low-Rise

5.4 Mixed-use Tower

5.5 Mixed Employment / Industrial

5.6 Groundwater Protection Area

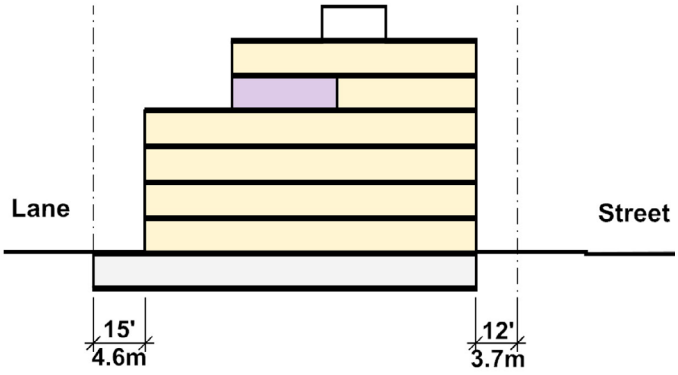
5.7 Heritage Low-Rise

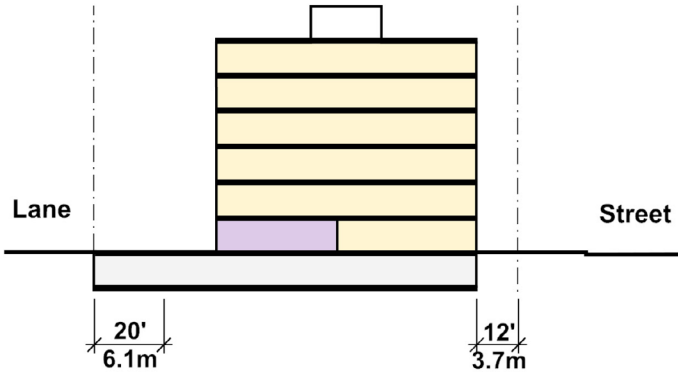
5.8 Heritage Tower

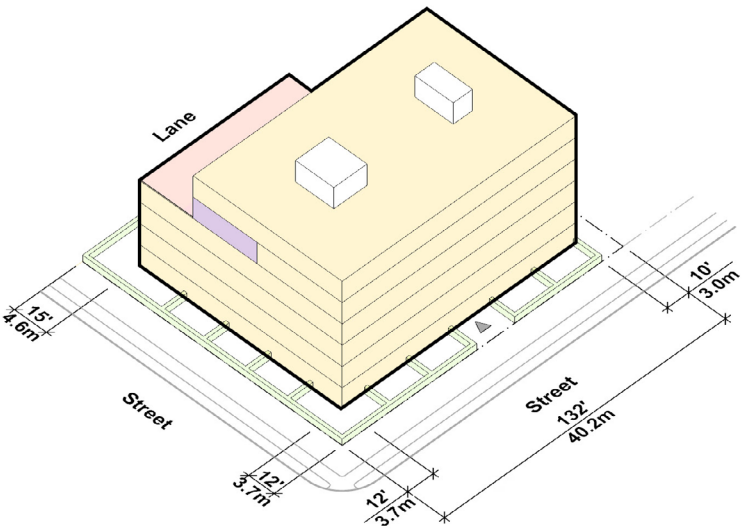
1090

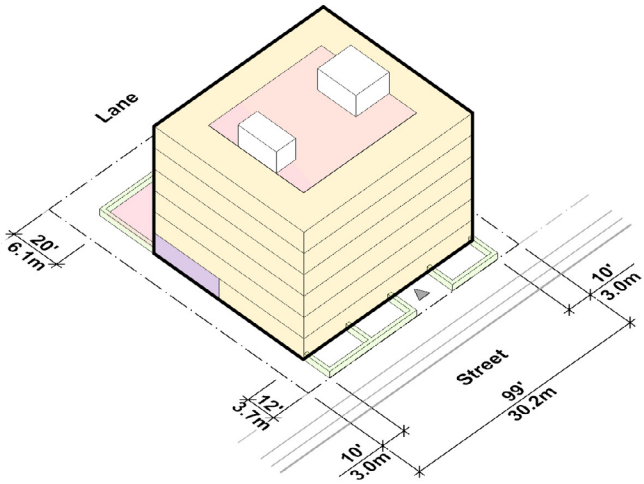
5.1 Residential Low-Rise

These buildings are generally up to 6 storeys in height (8 storeys if the form of tenure is secured as residential rental tenure, and a minimum of 20% of the residential floor area is secured as below-market rental dwelling units, or 100% of the residential floor area is developed as social housing) and may include non-residential uses, such as retail or community space, but this is not required.









Residential | Indoor Amenity | Outdoor Amenity | Parking

Table 1: Summary of Key Residential Low-Rise Standards

			Standards				Reference
Density	Typical Sites		1.45	1.75	2.40 **(3)**	-	n/a
	Corner **(1)** or Shallow **(2)** Sites		1.45	2.00	2.70	3.00 **(4)**	
Building Height	Expected Number of Storeys		4	4	6	8 **(4)**	n/a
	Maximum (Numeric)	Residential and Mixed-Use	23.0 m (75 ft.)			27.5 m (90 ft.) **(4)**	n/a
		Townhouse at Rear	10.7 m (35 ft.)				
Site (Minimum)		Site Area	460 m² (4,950 sq.ft.)	613 m² (6,600 sq.ft.)	920 m² (9,900 sq.ft.)	1,470 m² (15,823 sq.ft.)	DDG 5.1.1 Density and Site Requirements
		Site Frontage	13.7 m (45 ft)	20.1 m (66 ft.)	30.1 m (99 ft.)	40.2 m (132 ft.)	
Yards (Minimum)		Front/Exterior Side Yard	3.7 m (12 ft.)				DDG 5.1.3 Yards and Building Separation
		Side Yard	1.8 m (6 ft.)		3.1 m (10 ft.)		
		Rear Yard	Varies				
Building Depth (Maximum)			21.3 m (70 ft.) - 22.9 m (75 ft.)				DDG 5.1.2 Building Depth
Underground Setbacks (Minimum)		Front/Exterior Side Yard	3.7 m (12 ft.)				DDG 5.1.4 Underground Setbacks
Amenity (Suggested Minimum)		Indoor Amenity	1.2 m² of space per dwelling unit				DDG 2.4 Indoor and Outdoor Amenity
		Outdoor Amenity	2.0 m² of space per dwelling unit				
Private Open Space (Minimum)			4.5 m² (48.4 sq. ft.) per dwelling unit				DDG 2.5 Balconies and Patios
Dwelling Unit Design		Unit depth	Maximum 12.2 m (40 ft.) if single aspect with exterior wall				DDG 2.3 Dwelling Unit Design
		Floor-to-floor height	2.7 - 3.3 m (9 - 11 ft.)				

(1) Corner sites with a minimum site frontage of 40.2 m (132 ft.) and a minimum site area of 1,470 m² (15,823 sq. ft.) are eligible.

(2) Shallow sites with a maximum site depth of 33.5 m (110 ft.) are eligible.

(3) 2.70 FSR for non-profit or government-initiated projects with non-market housing.

(4) For sites within defined Transit-Oriented Areas (TOA), where tenure is secured as residential rental, development will be considered up to 8 storeys and 3.0 FSR for developments including a minimum of 20% below market rental or 100% social housing.

5.1.1 Density and Site Requirements

Intent: Align building scale with surrounding context by tailoring site requirements to the allowable density, ensuring setbacks, yards, and other parameters are met.

The Rupert and Renfrew Station Area Plan outlines the maximum allowable density along with the associated site requirements, including minimum site area and frontage, as summarized in Table 1.

Standards

5.1.1.1 To support the intended building form, sites should meet the following minimum depths:

a) 30.5 m (100 ft.) for low-rise apartments

b) 41.2 m (135 ft.) for low-rise apartments with rear townhouses

c) 53.3 m (175 ft.) for double fronting sites with a second low-rise apartment at the rear.

5.1.1.2 Flexibility may be considered for shallower lots where privacy concerns can be addressed.

Guidelines

5.1.1.3 Where a development site is not accessible from a lane or street at the rear of the site, lane dedication may be necessary.

5.1.1.4 In cases where a lane dedication is required as a condition of a development approval, yards and setbacks are measured from the property line after accounting for dedications; whereas, the allowable density is based on the site area before dedications.

5.1.2 Building Depth

Intent: Enhance natural light, ventilation, and privacy for building occupants and improve compatibility with adjacent homes.

Standards

5.1.2.1 In double-loaded corridor buildings, overall building depth should generally not exceed 21.3 m (70 ft.). Minor increases to accommodate building articulation may be permitted, as long as the depth does not exceed 22.9 m (75 ft.) at any point.

Guidelines

5.1.2.2 On corner sites with a minimum frontage of 40.0 m (132 ft.), buildings may wrap the corner with an “L” or “C” configuration. Applicants are encouraged to step building height down at the rear to create a more sensitive transition at the lane and to allow for private or shared roof terraces. See Section 5.1.5 Development Scenarios for conceptual illustrations.

5.1.3 Yards and Building Separation

Intent: Create smoother transitions to smaller-scale homes, improve access to light and air, provide space for landscaping and outdoor use, enhance the street and lane interface, and help maintain privacy between buildings.

Standards

5.1.3.1 The minimum front yard should be 3.7 m (12 ft.). Where site conditions allow, larger front and exterior side yards are encouraged.

5.1.3.2 The minimum side yard should be:

a) 1.8 m (6 ft.) for sites with frontage less than 30.1 m (99 ft.), and

b) 3.0 m (10 ft.) for sites with frontage of 30.1 m (99 ft.) or greater.

5.1.3.3 No side yard is expected adjacent to sites zoned for required commercial at grade.

5.1.3.4 The minimum rear yard should be:

a) 3.1 m (10 ft.) if building height at the rear is 3 storeys,

b) 4.6 m (15 ft.) if building height at the rear is 4-5 storeys, and

c) 6.1 m (20 ft.) if building height at the rear is 6 storeys. See Figure 16.

5.1.3.5 The minimum building separation for:

a) apartments located side by side on a site frontage should be 4.9 m (16 ft.).

b) townhouses located side by side should be 3.1 m (10 ft.).

c) two apartments positioned face-to-face should be 15.2 m (50 ft.).

d) an apartment and a townhouse positioned face-to-face should be 7.3 m (24 ft.).

5.1.3.6 In single loaded courtyard apartments with exterior circulation, the minimum courtyard width should be 7.3 m (24 ft.).

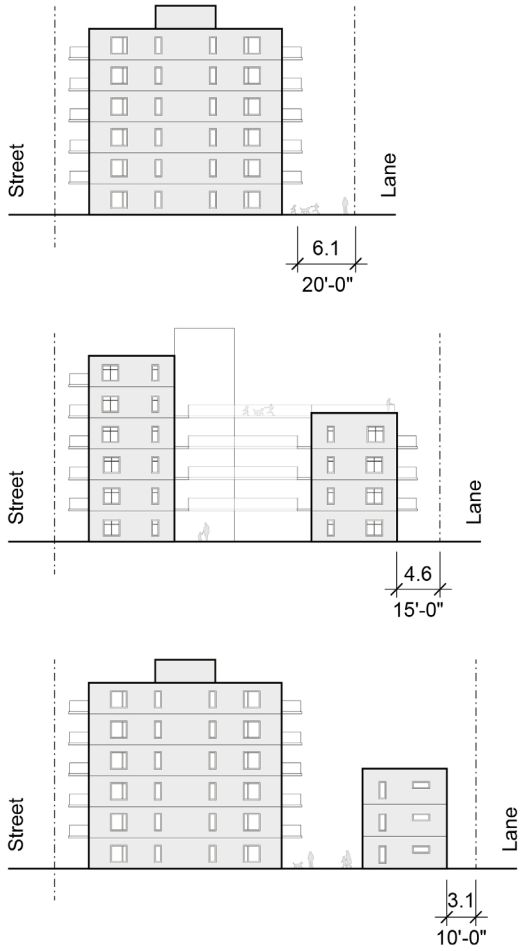


Figure 15. Rear yards should respond to the height of the building at the rear.

5.1.4 Underground Setbacks

Intent: Setting underground structures back from the property line is intended to support:

a) A healthier urban tree canopy:

- Protect street trees: Allow space to retain large street trees during redevelopment and provide more soil volume for better long-term outcomes.
- Retain high value trees on-site: Create room for meaningful retention strategies.
- Provide space for new on-site and street tree planting off slab: Trees planted off-slab generally live longer and perform better.

b) Natural water and soil systems:

- Rainwater infiltration and groundwater recharge: Underground setbacks leave room for rainwater to soak into the ground, replenishing aquifers and reducing runoff.
- Space for groundwater flows: Avoiding 100% parkade site coverages improves opportunities for groundwater to flow around underground structures.

Standards

5.1.4.1 Where underground parking is provided, it should be set back 3.7 m (12 ft.) from the fronting and, where applicable, exterior side property lines.

Guidelines

5.1.4.2 Where roughly equivalent site area is provided, alternative configurations of the underground setback may be considered to better support high-value tree retention or on-site planting – provided they do not negatively impact street trees or GRI in the public right-of-way.

5.1.4.3 Decreased underground setbacks may be considered for corner sites with a site area less than 1,470 m² (15,823 sq. ft.), or where the development demonstrates exceptional support for the urban tree canopy and rainwater management. This is contingent on the development addressing any potential impacts on street trees.

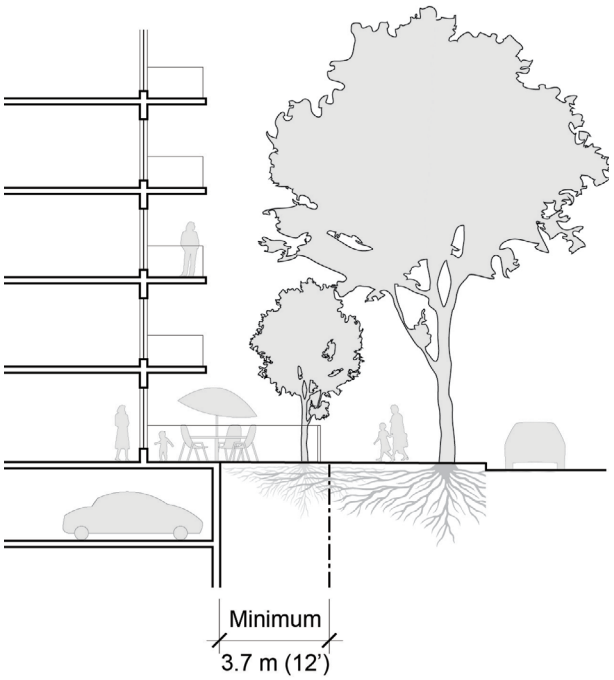


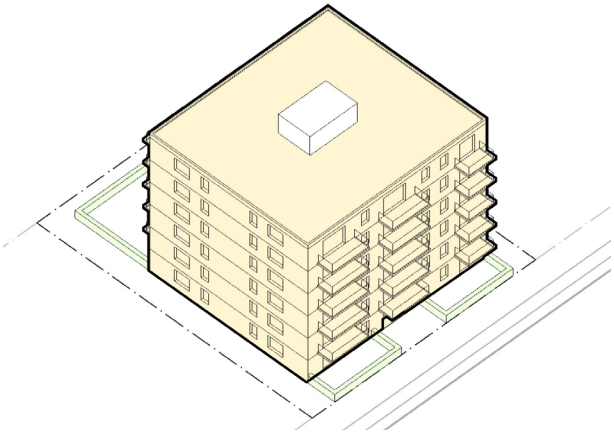
Figure 16. Underground setbacks to support tree retention and long-term tree health

5.1.5 Development Scenarios

This section provides a brief introduction to the expected residential low-rise typologies and elaborates on various development scenarios. Low-rise apartment buildings typically consist of 4 to 6 storeys of stacked apartment units. Below are three suggested baseline typologies. Other innovative typologies may be considered relative to the intent of the relevant rezoning policy and all applicable Council policies and guidelines.

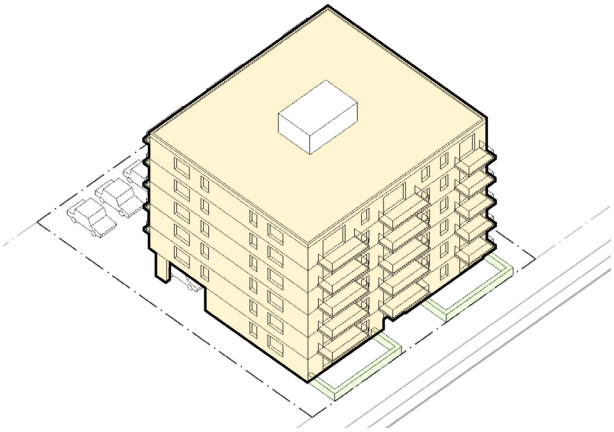
Double Loaded Apartment

Apartment building with a double loaded corridor is a common typology suitable for shallow and regular sites. All units except corner units have one aspect with an exterior wall.



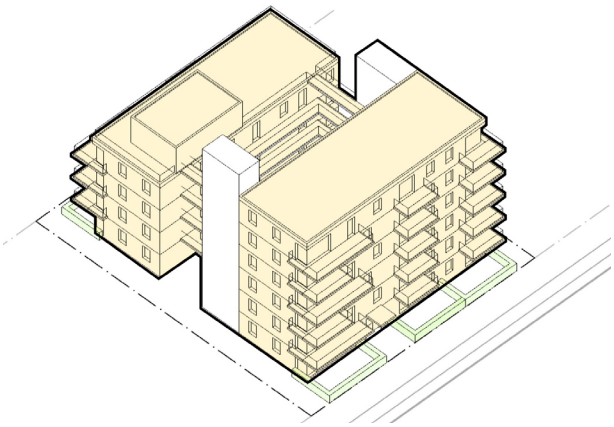
Tuck Under Parking

Tuck under parking extends at grade vehicle parking under the building to maximize surface parking efficiency.



Courtyard Apartment with Exterior Circulation

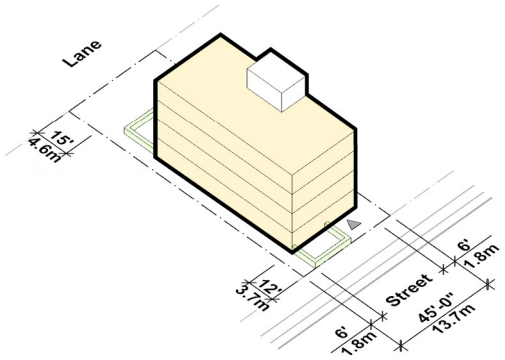
Courtyard apartment with single loaded exterior corridor allows the majority of units to have minimum of two aspects with exterior wall (one facing the central courtyard, and at least one facing the street or rear), achieving cross ventilation, access to natural light, and climate resilience.

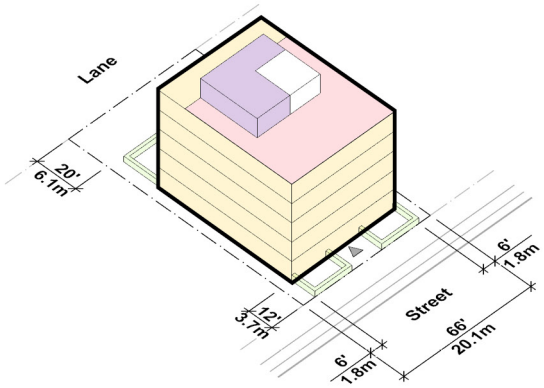


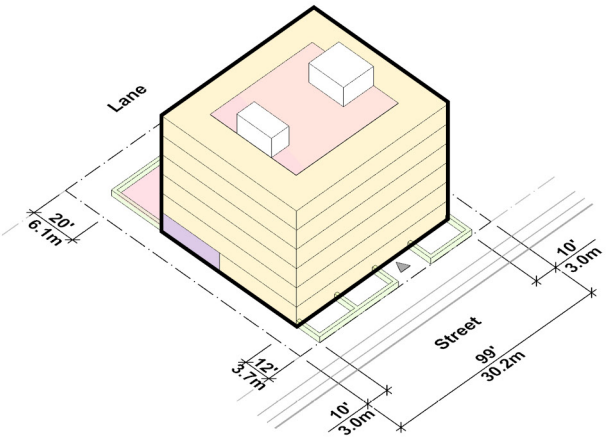
Double Loaded Apartment

Mid-Block

Mid-block sites will typically accommodate a single principal building with a double-loaded corridor arrangement.



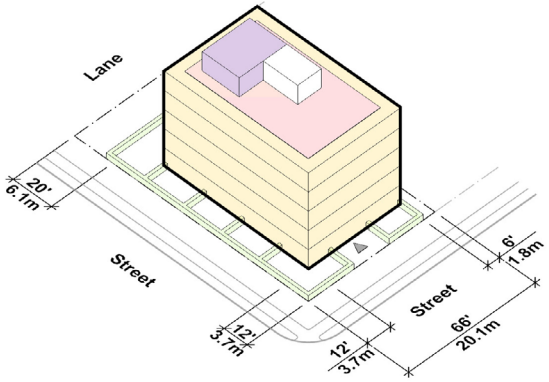


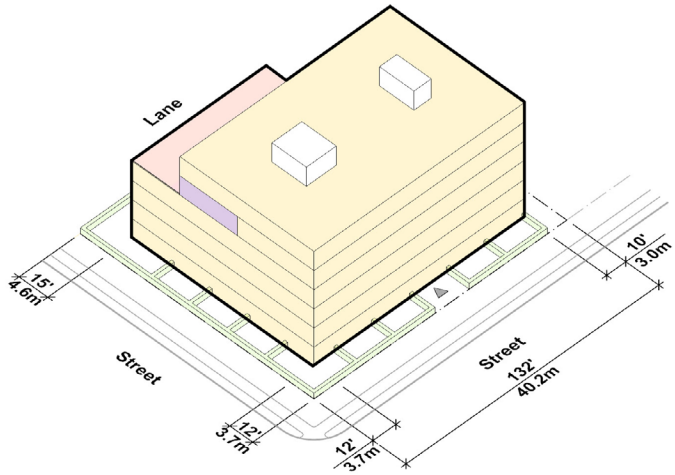


Double Loaded Apartment

Corner

Corner sites present a unique opportunity for low-rise apartments to activate both the fronting and flanking streets, enhancing the public realm and creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment. Their dual frontage also allows for increased density while maintaining a sensitive transition to adjacent properties.





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Double Loaded Apartment

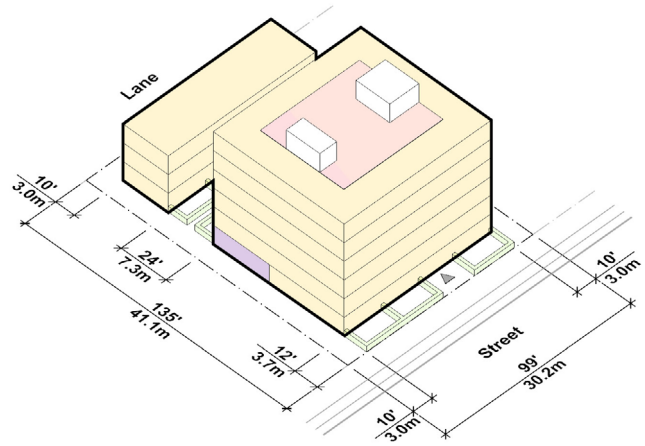
Deep Sites

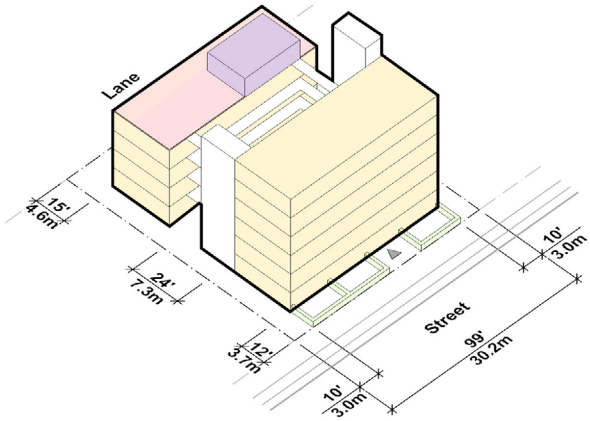
Deep sites offer the opportunity to accommodate multiple buildings, allowing for a more efficient use of space while creating varied housing options. This configuration can enhance livability by incorporating shared courtyards, improved access to light and air, and better transitions to surrounding properties.

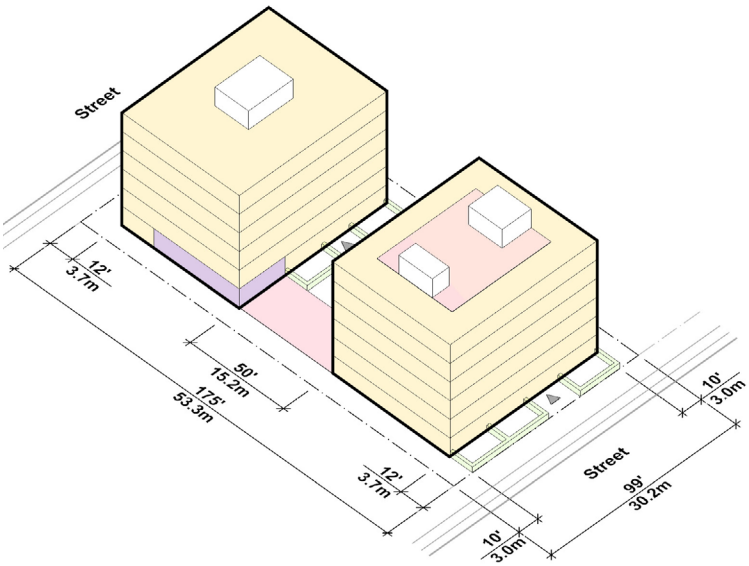
Courtyard Apartment

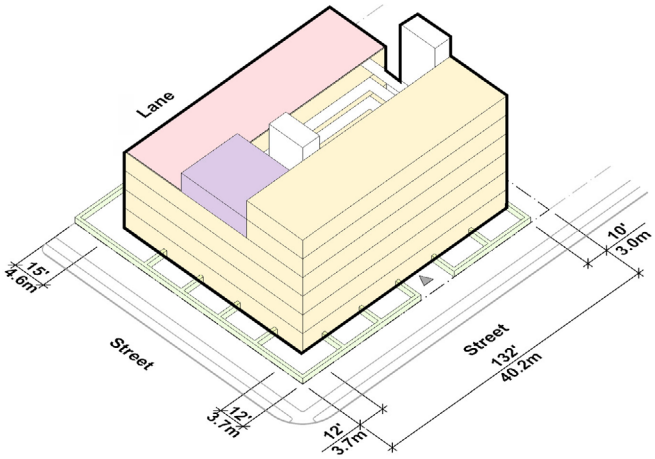
Mid-Block (top) and Corner (bottom)

The courtyard apartment typology is well-suited to larger sites that can accommodate the central courtyard.









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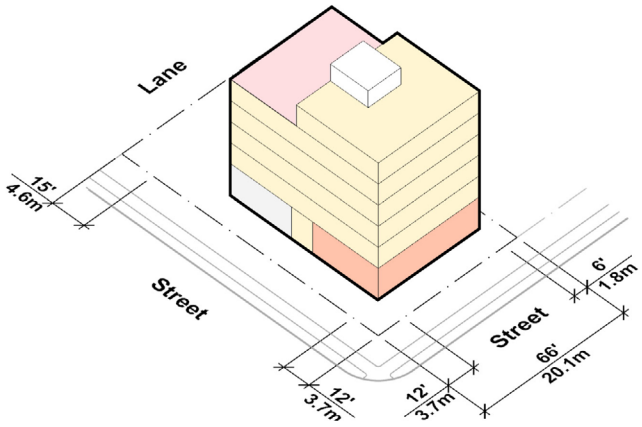
Mixed-Use Residential

Corner

Mixed-use residential low-rise typologies are intended to integrate into both existing and future residential neighbourhoods, providing retail and services that support the local community. See Section 3.3 for guidance on commercial ground floor design.

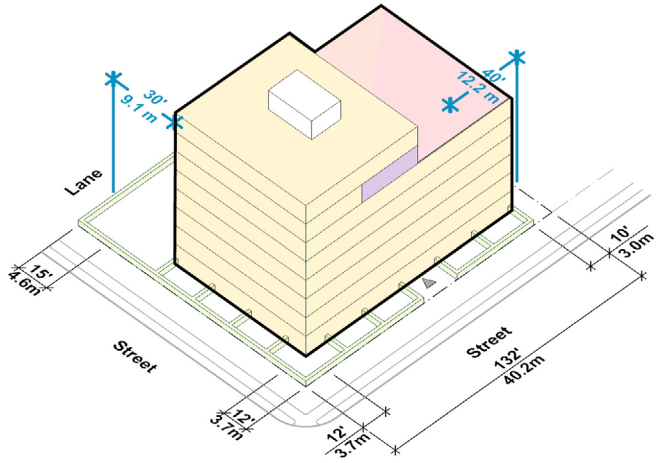


TOA Areas

Corner

If the form of tenure is secured as residential rental tenure, and a minimum of 20% of the residential floor area is secured as below-market rental dwelling units, or 100% of the residential floor area is developed as social housing, a height of up to 8 storeys is available.

The seventh and eight storeys are considered tower ele*ments*, and should follow the guidelines in Section 5.2.3 Tower Setbacks and Separation.



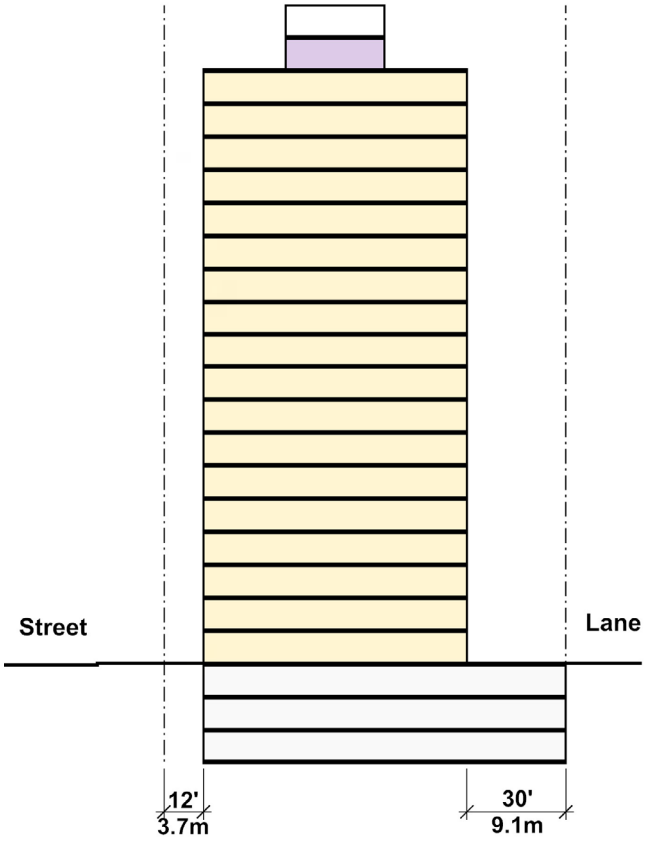
Residential | Indoor Amenity | Outdoor Amenity | Parking

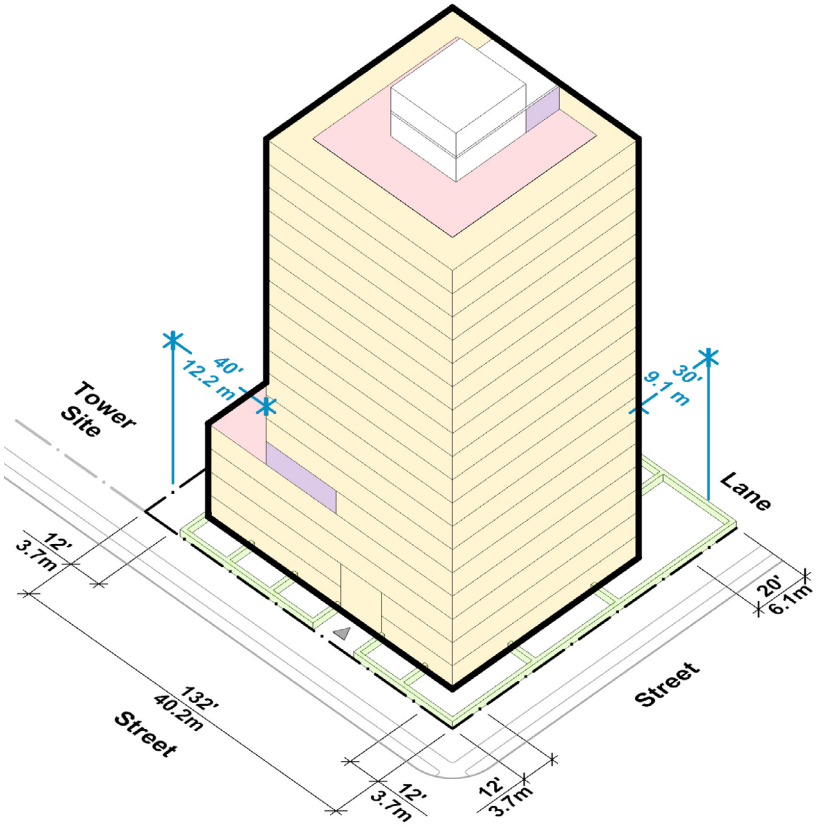
5.2 Residential Tower

Residential tower building types include residential mid- and high-rise apartment buildings. They may include non-residential uses, such as retail or community space, but this is not required.

Multiplex, townhouse and residential low-rise apartments are options for sites that do not pursue a tower form:

- Multiplexes should follow the R1-1 District Schedule and may refer to the Low Density Housing Options How-to Guide for additional direction.
- Townhouses should follow the RM-8A Districts Schedule and Design Guidelines.
- Low-rise apartments should follow the Residential Low-rise Design Guidelines.





Residential
Indoor Amenity
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Parking

Table 2: Summary of Key Residential Tower Standards

		Standards	Section Reference
Site (minimum)	Site Area	Corner: 1,348 m² (14,520 sq. ft.) Mid-block: 1,532 m² (16,500 sq. ft.)	DDG 5.2.1 Density and Site Requirements
	Site Frontage	Corner: 40.0 m (132 ft.) Mid-block: 45.7 m (150 ft.)	
	Site Depth	33.5 m (110 ft.).	
Building Height (maximum)	Overall	Varies	DDG 5.2.2 Building Height
	Podium	15.2 m (50 ft.) - 4 storeys	
Podium Depth (maximum)		22.9 m (75 ft.) For alignment with tower: 24.4 m (80 ft.)	DDG 5.2.6 Podium Depth
Yards (minimum)	Front and Exterior Side Yard	3.7 m (12 ft.)	DDG 5.2.5 Yards
	Side Yard	3.7 m (12 ft.)	
	Rear Yard	6.1 m (20 ft.)	
	Enhanced Open Space Setback	20% of the site width for sites with a frontage exceeding 60.7 m (199 ft.)	DDG 5.2.8 EOSS, *POPS* and Mid-Block Connections
Tower Setbacks (minimum)	Front and Exterior Side Property Line	3.7 m (12 ft.)	DDG 5.2.3 Tower Setbacks and Separation
	Side Property Line	12.2 m (40 ft.)	
	Rear Property Line	9.1 m (30 ft.)	
Tower Separation (minimum)		Minimum tower separation: • Residential to Residential: 24.4 m (80 ft.) • Residential to Hotel: 24.4 m (80 ft.) • Residential to Commercial (except hotel): 18.3 m (60 ft.)	
Tower Floorplate	Floorplate area (Maximum)	Varies	DDG 5.2.4 Tower Floor Plates
	Dimension (Maximum)	29.0 m (95 ft.)	
Underground Setbacks	Front and Exterior Side Yard	3.7 m (12 ft.)	DDG 5.2.7 Underground Setbacks
Amenity (minimum)	Indoor Amenity	Minimum 1.2 m² of space per dwelling unit	DDG 2.4 Indoor and Outdoor Amenity
	Outdoor Amenity	Minimum 2.0 m² of space per dwelling unit	
Private Open Space (minimum)		Minimum 4.5 m² (48.4 sq. ft.) per dwelling unit	DDG 2.5 Balconies and Patios
Dwelling Unit Design	Unit Depth	Maximum 12.2 m (40 ft.) if single aspect with exterior wall	DDG 2.3 Dwelling Unit Design
	Floor-to-floor height	2.7 - 3.3 m (9 - 11 ft.)	

5.2.1 Density and Site Requirements

Intent: Align building scale with surrounding context by tailoring site requirements to the allowable density, ensuring setbacks, yards, and other parameters are met.

The Rupert and Renfrew Station Area Plan outlines the maximum allowable density along with the associated site requirements, including minimum site area and frontage, as summarized in Table 2.

Standards

5.2.1.1 The minimum frontage for a tower development is 40.2 m (132 ft.) for corner sites and 45.7 m (150 ft.) for mid-block sites.

5.2.1.2 Sites with a frontage exceeding 60.7 m (199 ft.) should provide an above grade Enhanced Open Space Setback (EOSS) equal to 20% of the frontage that extends the full depth of the site. See Section 5.2.8 EOSS, POPS and Mid-Block Connections.

5.2.1.3 Tower sites should have a lot depth of at least 33.5 m (110 ft.) after dedications. Shallower sites may be considered if they meet or exceed design expectations.

Guidelines

5.2.1.4 Where a development site is not accessible from a lane or street at the rear of the site, lane dedication may be necessary.

5.2.1.5 In cases where a lane dedication is required as a condition of a development approval, yards and setbacks are measured from the ultimate property line which is the property line after accounting for dedications; whereas, the allowable density is based on the site area before dedications.

5.2.2 Building Height

Intent: Ensure a smoother transition between towers and lower-scale buildings, enhance the pedestrian experience, and preserve solar access.

Maximum building heights vary by policy area and can be found in the Rupert and Renfrew Station Area Plan.

Standards

5.2.2.1 Where podiums are provided, they should not exceed 4 storeys (approximately 15.2 m (50 ft.))

Guidelines

5.2.2.2 Podium heights of up to 6 storeys (approximately 21.3 m (70 ft.)) may be considered:

a) For non-profit or government-initiated projects with non-market housing, or

b) On sites with a frontage greater than 60.7 m (199 ft.), provided public at-grade open space is included. See Section 5.2.8 EOSS, POPS and Mid-Block Connections.

5.2.2.3 Standard buildings on typical assemblies will not need the maximum overall building height to achieve the maximum floor space ratio. Increases in density and/or floor-to-floor heights to reach the maximum building height are not supported.

5.2.3 Tower Setbacks and Separation

Intent: Ensure access to natural light, air, and views, protect privacy, reduce shadowing on homes and open spaces, and support a healthy, livable urban environment.

Standards

5.2.3.1 Tower size and placement should demonstrate a minimum *tower separation* between existing towers and potential future towers as follows:

a) Residential to Residential (including Hotel): 24.4 m (80 ft.)

b) Residential to Non-Residential (except Hotel): 18.3 m (60 ft.)

5.2.3.2 Tower setbacks are designed so each site provides half of the expected tower separation, while also meeting front and exterior side yard requirements. This typically results in the following minimum setbacks:

a) Front/exterior side property line: 3.7 m (12 ft.)

b) Interior side property line: 12.2 m (40 ft.)

c) Rear property line with typical rear lane: 9.1 m (30 ft.)

d) Rear property line without typical rear lane: 12.2 m (40 ft.)

5.2.3.3 Tower setbacks from the interior side property line may be reduced to 6.1 m (20 ft.) if the adjacent site is a *non-tower site*. See Figure 18.

5.2.3.4 If a neighbouring tower is closer than 12.2 m (40 ft.) to the property line, an increased on-site tower setback beyond 12.2 m (40 ft.) is expected to ensure adequate *tower separation*.

Guidelines

5.2.3.5 Tower setbacks should be measured from the ultimate property line after accounting for dedications.

5.2.3.6 A *block study* may be necessary to demonstrate that a tower development can meet its expected *tower separation*.

5.2.3.7 Minor encroachments into the separation distance, such as for balconies or building articulation, may be considered provided the impacts on views, privacy, light and open space are minimal.

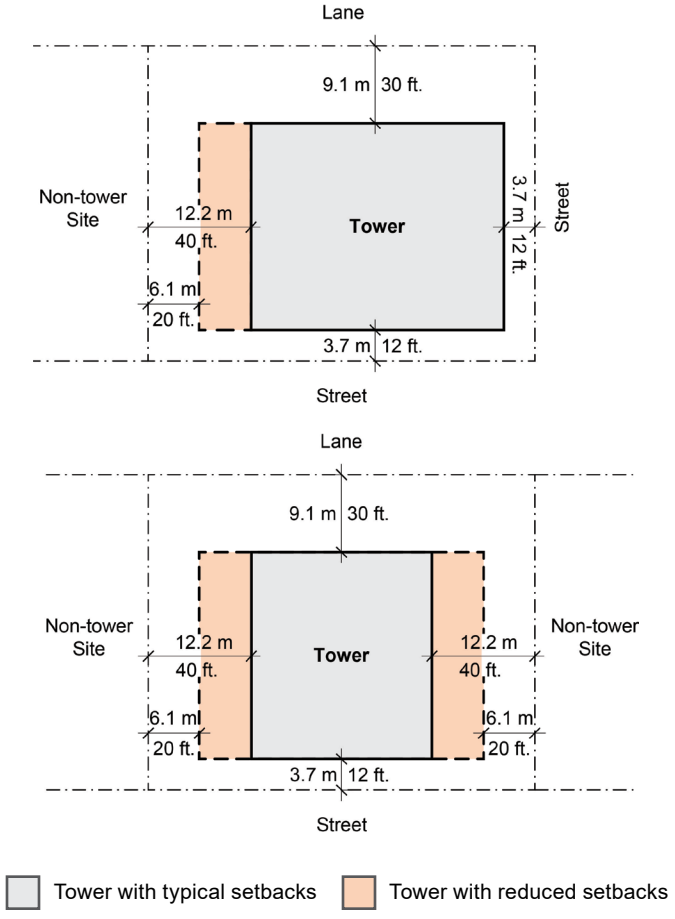


Figure 17. Plan diagrams illustrating tower setbacks and supported reductions on a corner site (top) and mid-block site (bottom).

5.2.4 Tower Floor Plates

Intent: Support access to natural light, air, and views for occupants, preserve solar access and views in the broader neighbourhood, and ensure adjacent sites remain unencumbered to enable efficient development and review.

Standards

5.2.4.1 Developments should generally comply with the limits outlined in Table 3 and 4.

Guidelines

5.2.4.2 *Tower floor plate*s up to 743 m² (8,000 sq. ft) may be considered for *mass timber* buildings and non-profit or government-initiated projects with non-market housing, despite potential for constraints on adjacent development parcels.

5.2.4.3 To meet technical requirements, such as additional elevators, tower floor plates up to 745m² (8,000 sq. ft.) may also be considered for towers exceeding 40 storeys in height. This is contingent on the development aligning with urban design and livability expectations, and demonstrating that it does not negatively constrain adjacent development parcels.

5.2.4.4 Achieving the maximum *tower floor plate* outlined in Table 3 and 4 may not be feasible for all developments depending on site size and adjacencies.

5.2.4.5 Residential *tower floor plates* should not exceed 29.0 m (95 ft.) in either direction to minimize the visual and solar access impacts of the tower.

Table 3: Tower Floor Plate Limits (Corner Development Site)

Site Adjacent to Subject Site	**Subject Site Frontage**		
	30.2 m (99 ft.)	**40 m (132 ft.)**	Greater than or equal to **45.7 m (150 ft.)**
Non-tower site	511 m² (5,500 sq. ft.)	669 m² (7,200 sq. ft.)	669 m² (7,200 sq. ft.)
Tower site	372 m² (4,000 sq. ft.)	604 m² (6,500 sq. ft.)	

Table 4: Tower Floor Plate Limits (Mid-block Site)

Site Adjacent to Subject Site	**Subject Site Frontage**		
	45.7 m (150 ft.)	**50.3 m (165 ft.)**	Greater than or equal to **61 m (200 ft.)**
Two *non-tower site*s	669 m² (7,200 sq. ft.)	669 m² (7,200 sq. ft.)	669 m² (7,200 sq. ft.)
One tower site, one *non-tower site*	604 m² (6,500 sq. ft.)		
Two tower sites	511 m² (5,500 sq. ft.)	604 m² (6,500 sq. ft.)	

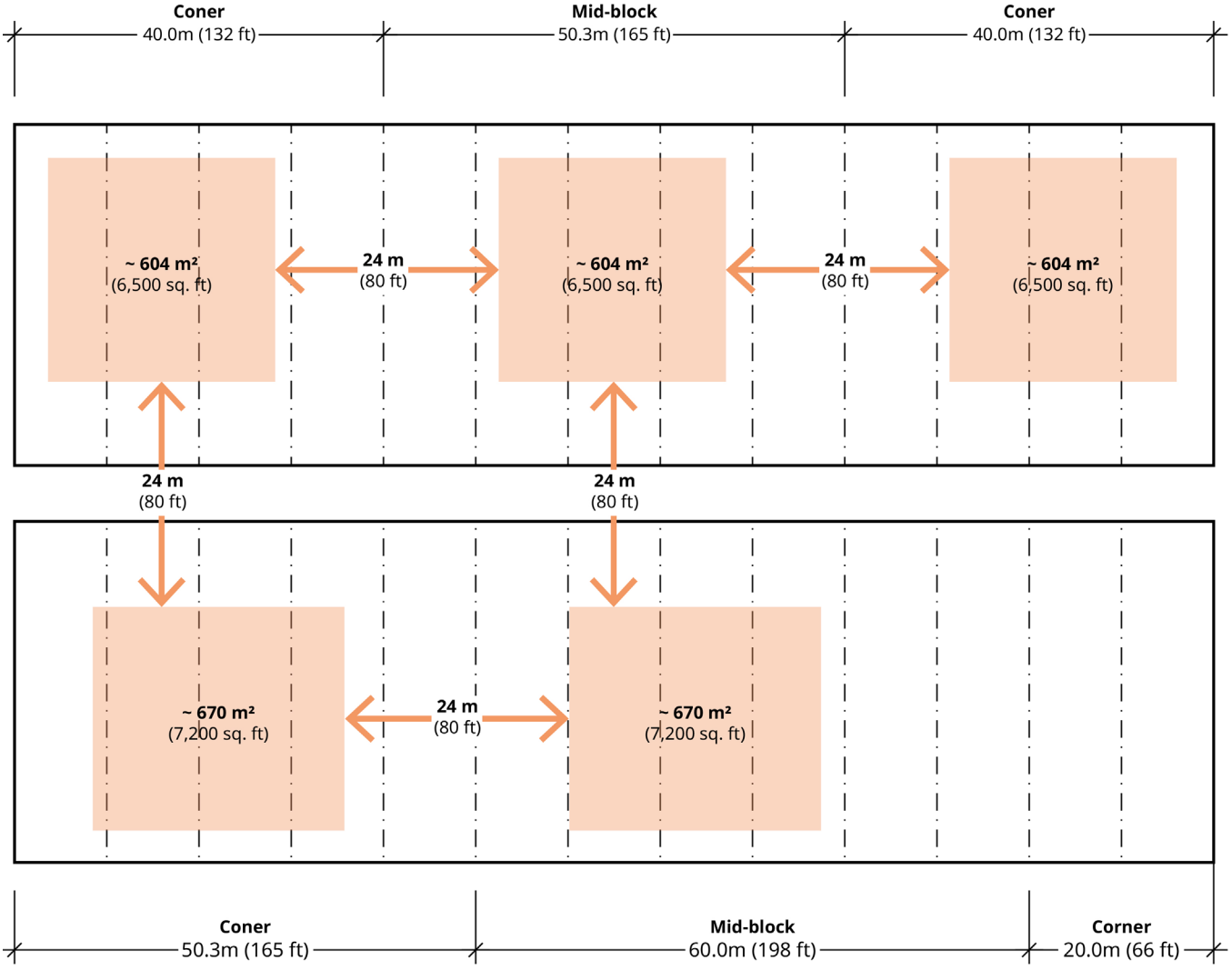


Figure 18. Example tower development scenarios on a typical Vancouver block.

5.2.5 Yards

Intent: Create smoother transitions to smaller-scale homes, improve access to light and air, provide space for landscaping and outdoor use, enhance the street and lane interface, and help maintain privacy between buildings.

Yards are measured from the ultimate property line (i.e. after any dedication).

Standards

5.2.5.1 Residential tower developments should follow the minimum yards below:

a) Front yard: 3.7 m (12 ft.)

b) Exterior side yard: 3.7 m (12 ft.)

c) Side yard: 3.7 m (12 ft.)

d) Rear yard: 6.1 m (20 ft.)

Guidelines

5.2.5.2 Where site conditions allow, larger front and exterior side yards are encouraged.

5.2.5.3 When a street dedication or statutory right-of-way is required at the front of the site a decrease in the front yard to a minimum of 3.1 m (10 ft.) may be considered.

5.2.5.4 For corner sites where the flanking street is part of the *Blue-Green System* or an Ecological Corridor, a larger exterior side yard setback is encouraged.

5.2.5.5 Non-dwelling uses should follow the minimum yards described in 6.2.5.1 except where new development is adjacent to commercial or mixed-use residential sites in C, RR-3 or CD-1 districts, in which case the side yard may be reduced to zero.

5.2.6 Podium Depth

Intent: Enhance natural light, ventilation, and privacy for building occupants and improve neighbourhood compatibility.

Standards

5.2.6.1 Podium depth should not exceed 22.8 m (75 ft.), except for the portion of the podium beneath the tower element. Podium depth may be increased to approximately 24.4 m (80 ft.) for the entire podium to facilitate tower and podium alignment, provided unit depths do not exceed 12.2 m (40 ft.) for units that have one aspect with exterior wall.

5.2.7 Underground Setbacks

Intent: Setting underground structures back from the property line is intended to support:

a) A healthier urban tree canopy:

- Protect street trees: Allow space to retain large street trees during redevelopment and provide more soil volume for better long-term outcomes.
- Retain high value trees on-site: Create room for meaningful retention strategies.
- Provide space for new on-site and street tree planting off slab: Trees planted off-slab generally live longer and perform better.

a) Natural water and soil systems:

- Rainwater infiltration and groundwater recharge: Underground setbacks leave room for rainwater to soak into the ground, replenishing aquifers and reducing runoff.
- Space for groundwater flows: Avoiding 100% parkade site coverages improves opportunities for groundwater to flow around underground structures.

Standards

5.2.7.1 Where underground parking is provided, it should be set back 3.7 m (12 ft.) from the fronting and, where applicable, exterior side property lines.

Guidelines

5.2.7.2 Where roughly equivalent site area is provided, alternative configurations of the underground setback may be considered to better support high-value tree retention or on-site planting – provided they do not negatively impact street trees or GRI in the public right-of-way.

5.2.7.3 Reduced underground setbacks may be considered for sites with a lot depth of less than 33.5 m (110 ft.), or where the development demonstrates exceptional support for the urban tree canopy and rainwater management. This is contingent on the development addressing any potential impacts on street trees.

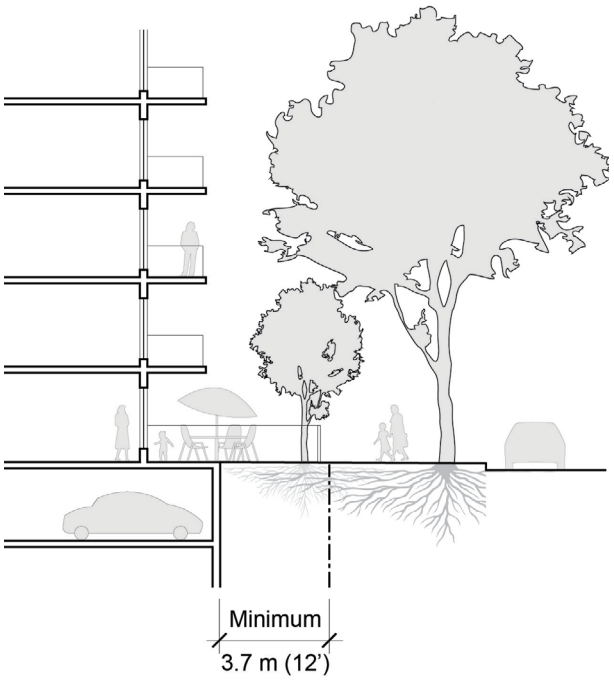


Figure 19. Underground structures aligned with the required front and exterior side yards.

5.2.8 EOSS and POPS

Intent: Create inviting, public open spaces while supporting tree retention and replacement, ecology and green rainwater infrastructure.

Standards

5.2.8.1 Sites with a frontage exceeding 60.7 m (199 ft.) should provide an above grade Enhanced Open Space Setback (EOSS) equal to 20% of the frontage that extends the full depth of the site.

5.2.8.2 Underground structures on these sites should take up no more than 80% of the site area and be located to prioritize existing high-value tree retention and future on-site tree planting.

5.2.8.3 At least 50% of the EOSS should be planted area and prioritize medium to large tree species.

Guidelines

5.2.8.4 The EOSS is primarily intended for public use and should be secured through a statutory right-of-way.

5.2.8.5 Private open space uses are generally not expected within the EOSS, except for:

a) Outdoor space associated with a public childcare facility.

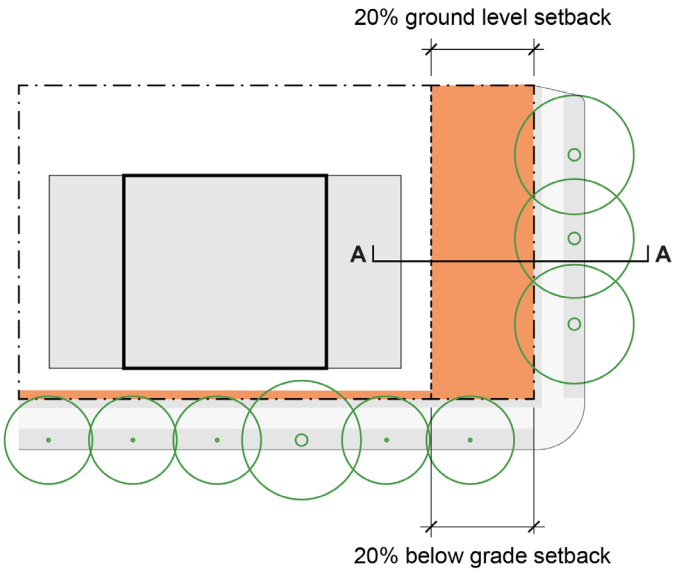
b) Modest encroachments for other uses if they support the intended use and function of the space.

5.2.8.6 Design features in the EOSS should support public use with elements like planting, seating, play features, or pathways, while respecting the residential context and focusing on quieter activities.

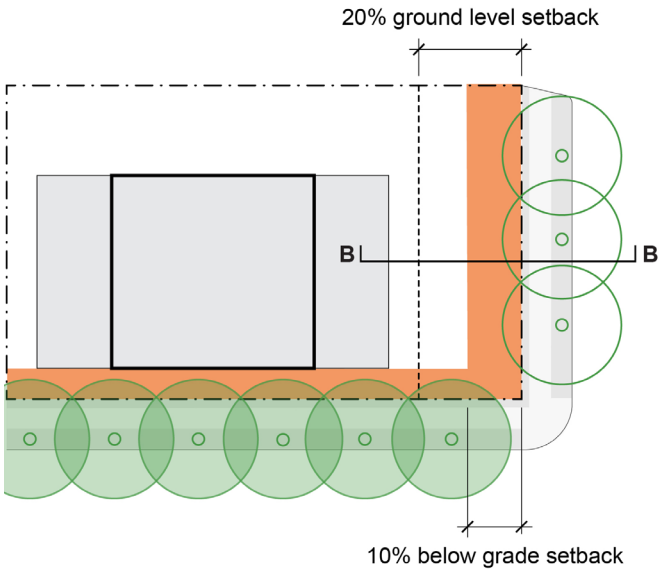
5.2.8.7 For non-profit or government-initiated projects with non-market housing, the design expectations in this section should be interpreted with flexibility.

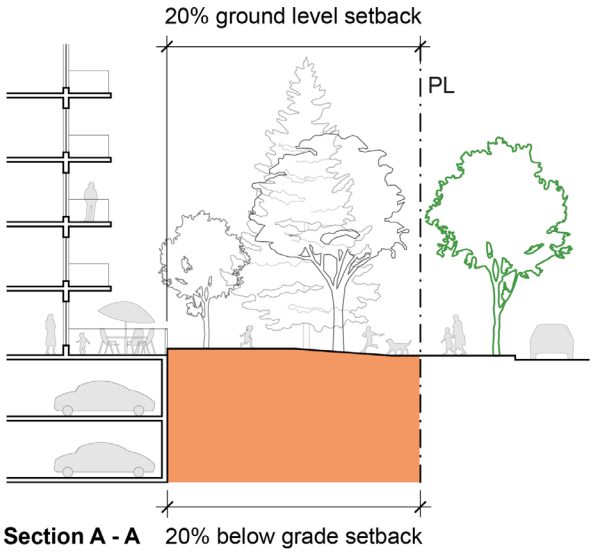
5.2.8.8 See Section 4.2, and Section 4.3 for additional guidance on the design of mid-block connections and *POPS*.

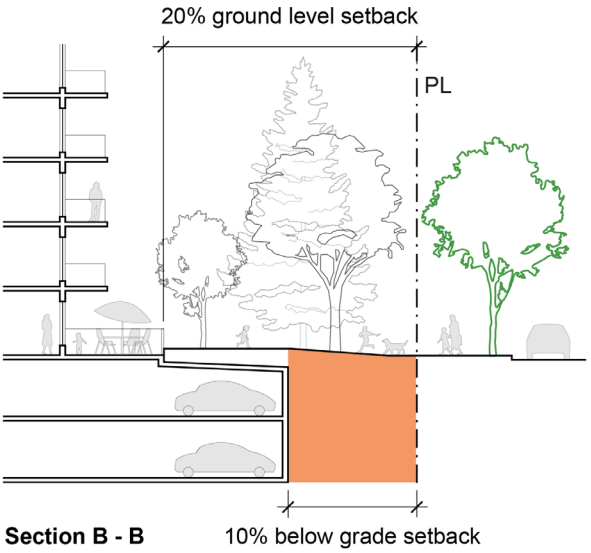
Option A



Option B







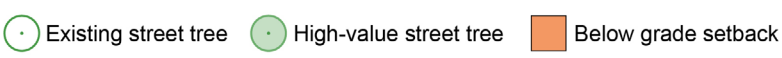


Figure 20. Option A (left) aligns above and below grade setbacks in the EOSS together with a decreased front yard underground setback. Option B (right) provides front and exterior side yard setbacks to balance high-value street tree retention on the fronting street with support for new tree planting in the EOSS.

Corner EOSS and POPS

The corner EOSS design supports and responds to building program and site context, inviting the public to spend time within the space. Residential patios face the public space for a more active edge, but are located outside of the EOSS. These yards are buffered with a wide planted area for residents' privacy. Pedestrian circulation within the EOSS is consolidated and simplified, so as not to fragment otherwise contiguous public space.

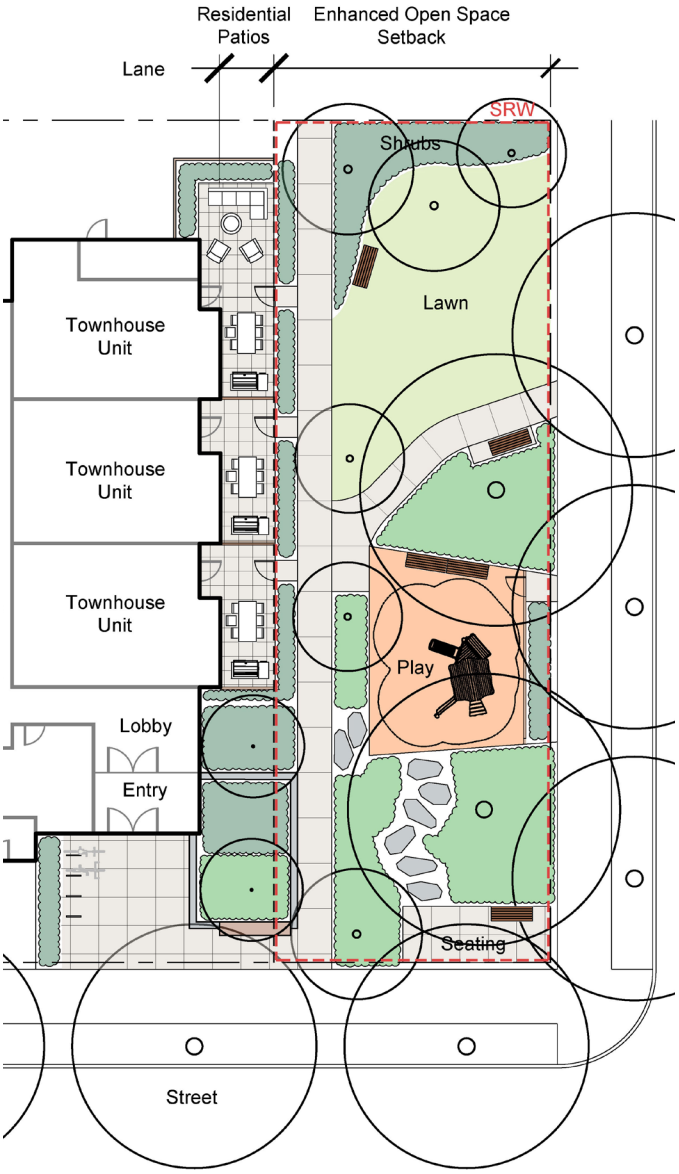


Figure 21. Corner EOSS and *POPS* in a residential development.

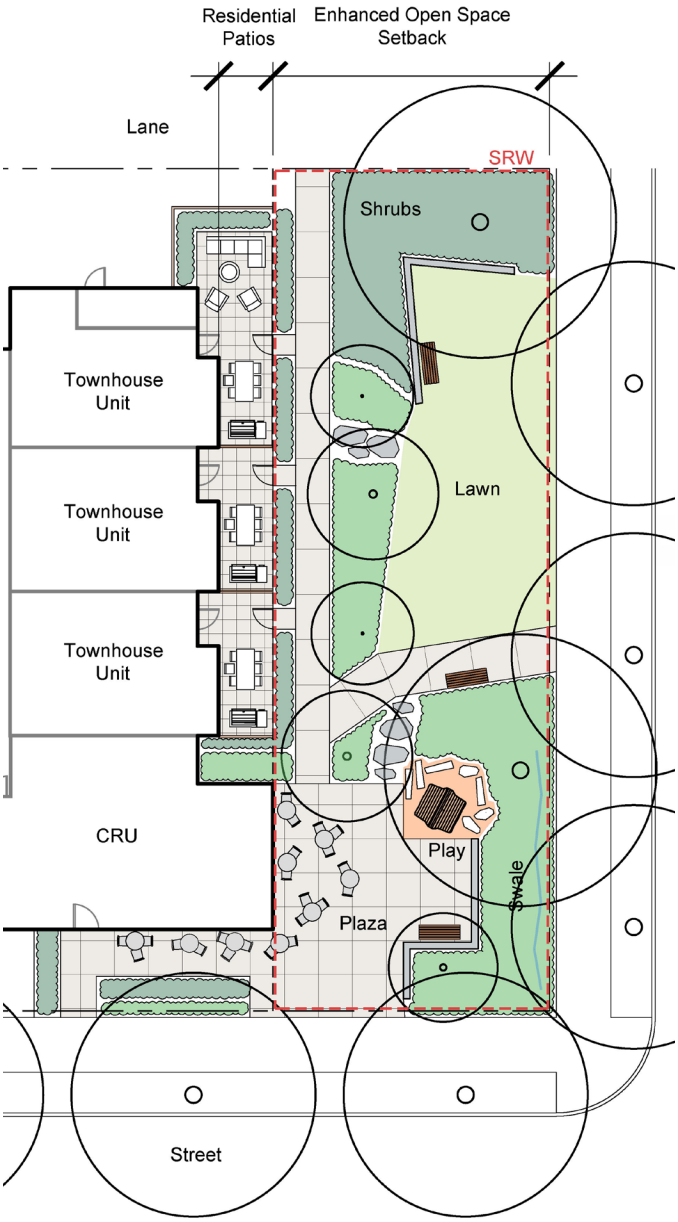


Figure 22. Corner EOSS and *POPS* in a mixed-use residential development.

Mid-Block Connections

The mid-block EOSS design supports and responds to building program and site context by creating mid-block pedestrian connections, inviting the public to pass through the space. Residential yards face the EOSS for a more active interface. The yards are buffered with a wide planted area for residents' privacy.

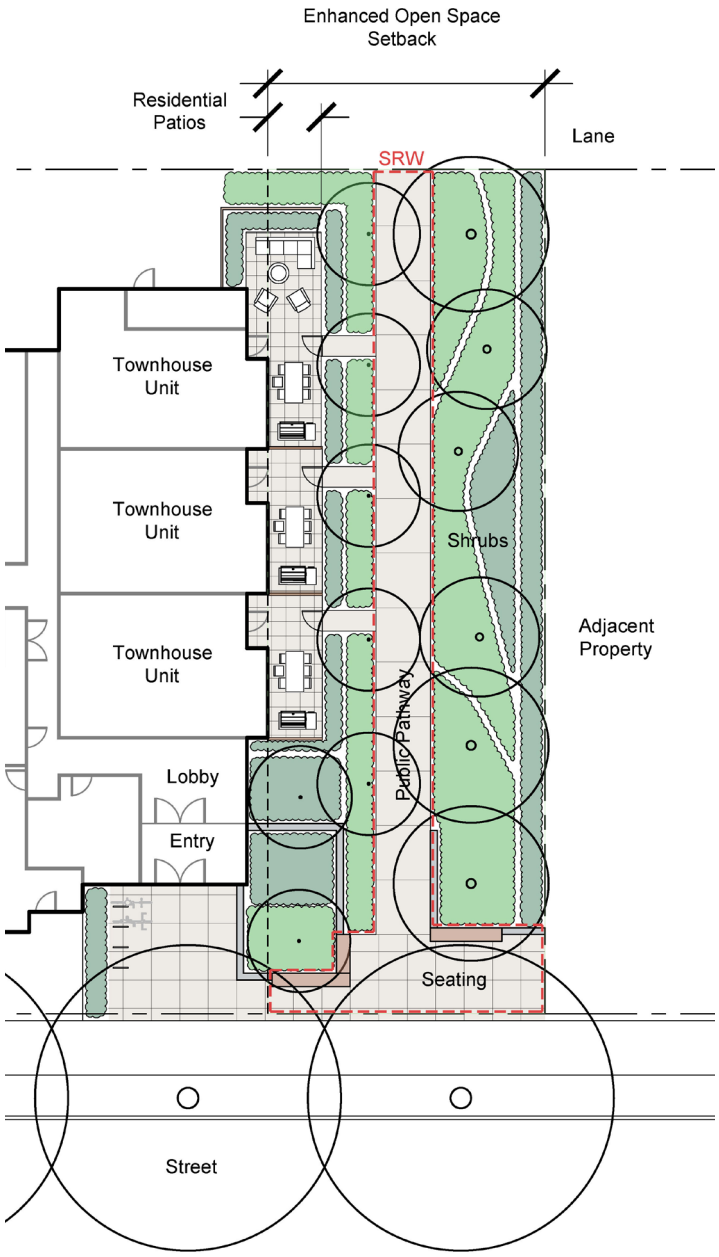


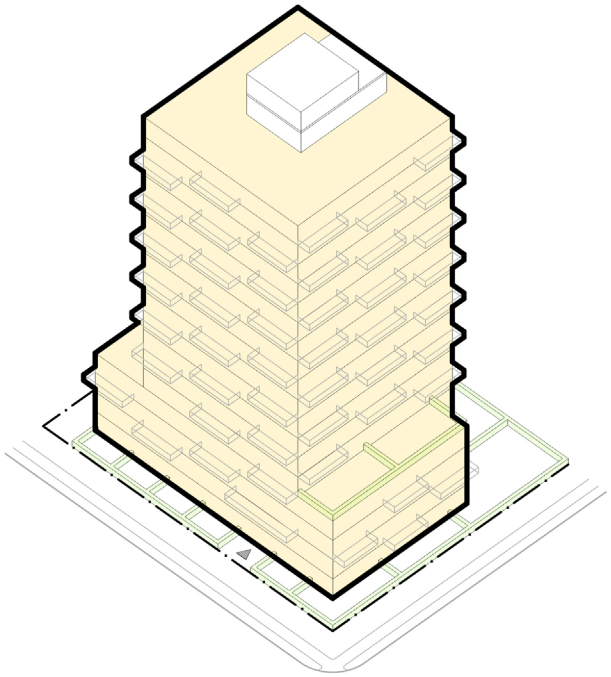
Figure 23. Mid-block EOSS and POPS in a residential development.

5.2.9 Development Scenarios

This section provides a brief introduction to the expected Residential Tower typologies and elaborates on various development scenarios. Below are two suggested baseline typologies. Other innovative typologies may be considered relative to the intent of the relevant rezoning policy and all applicable Council policies and guidelines.

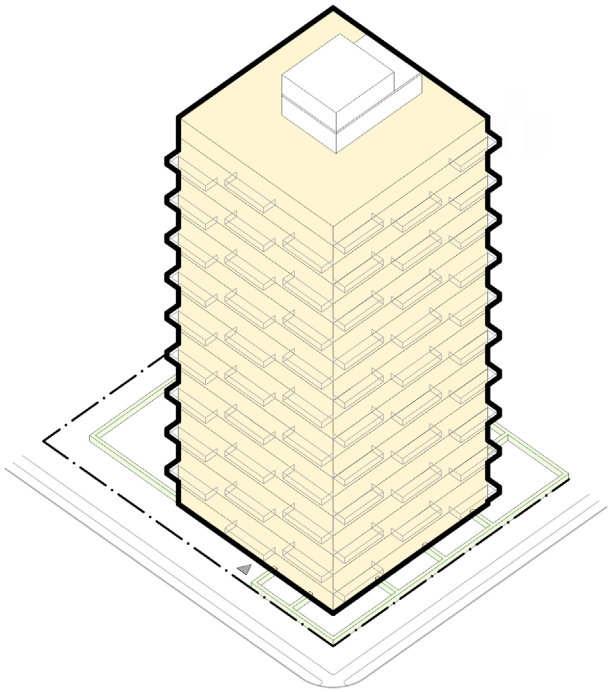
Tower On Podium

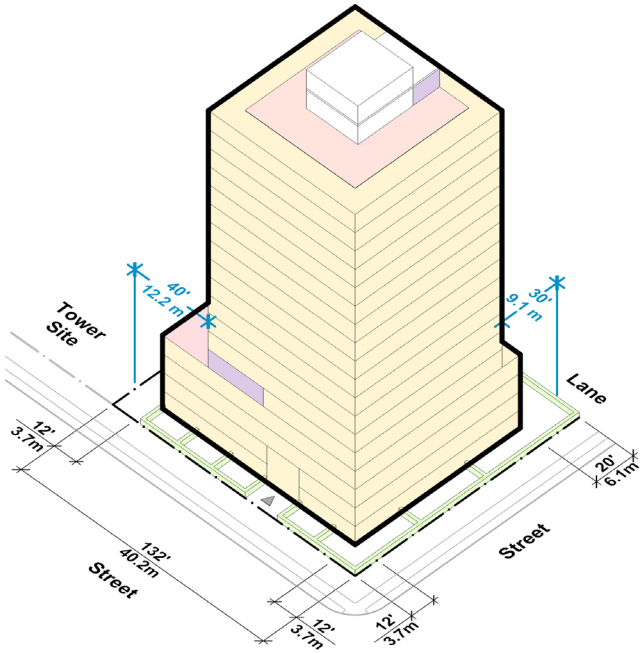
Towers on podiums include a 4-storey base along the main frontage, with a tower rising above it. This typology aims to create a vibrant street edge with inviting private outdoor spaces for each ground-level unit, while also providing outdoor areas on the podium level.



Tower In Open Space

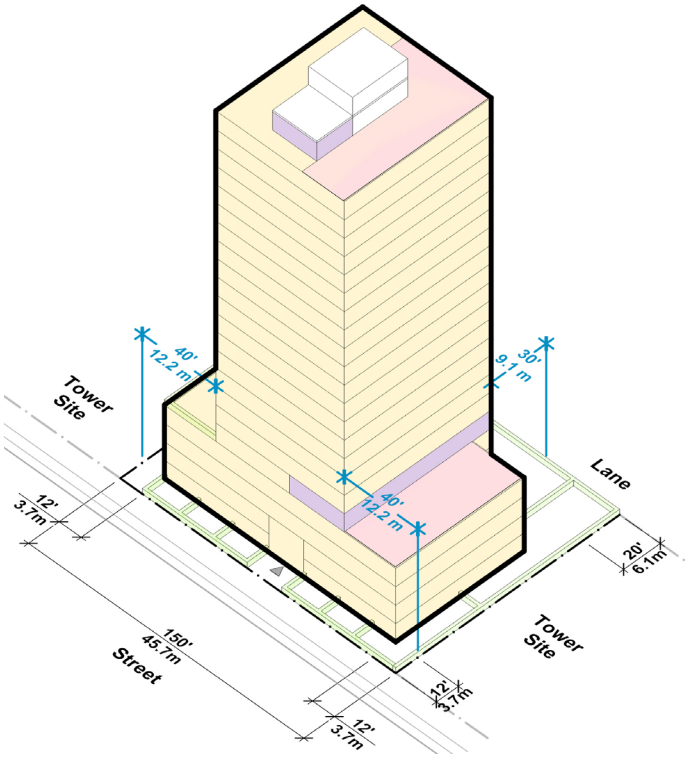
Towers in open space offer residents larger, usable shared open spaces at ground level while also creating an active and visually appealing street edge.





Corner Development

Corner sites present a unique opportunity for residential towers to activate both the fronting and flanking streets, enhancing the public realm and creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment. Their dual frontage also allows for smaller site frontages while maintaining tower separation and sensitive transitions to adjacent properties.



Mid-Block Development

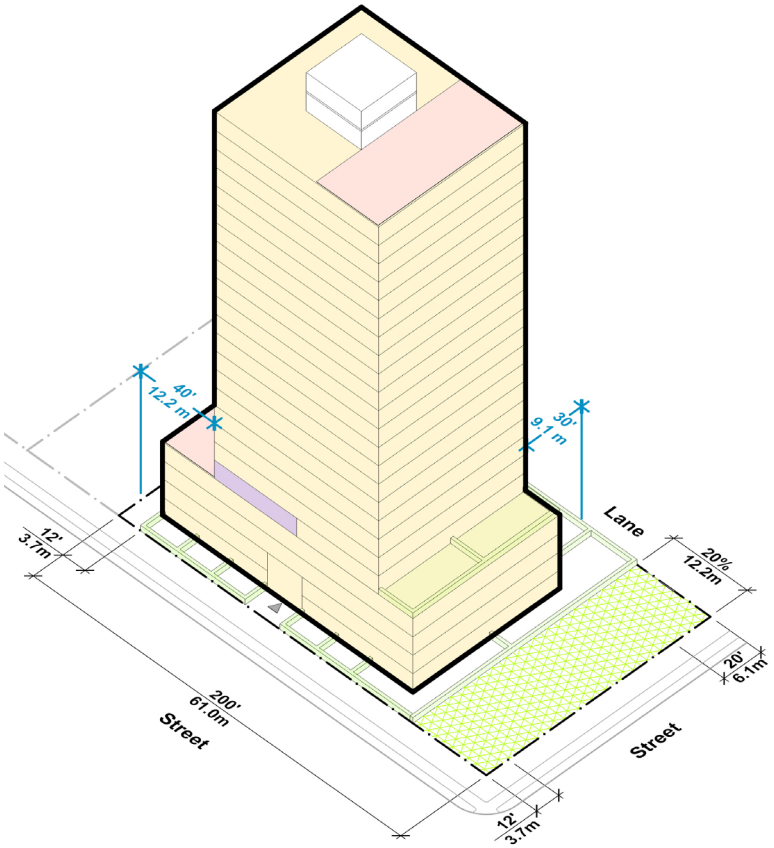
Mid-block sites integrate into existing residential neighbourhoods while maintaining tower separation and sensitive transitions to adjacent properties.

Residential Indoor Amenity Outdoor Amenity

Large Site Frontage

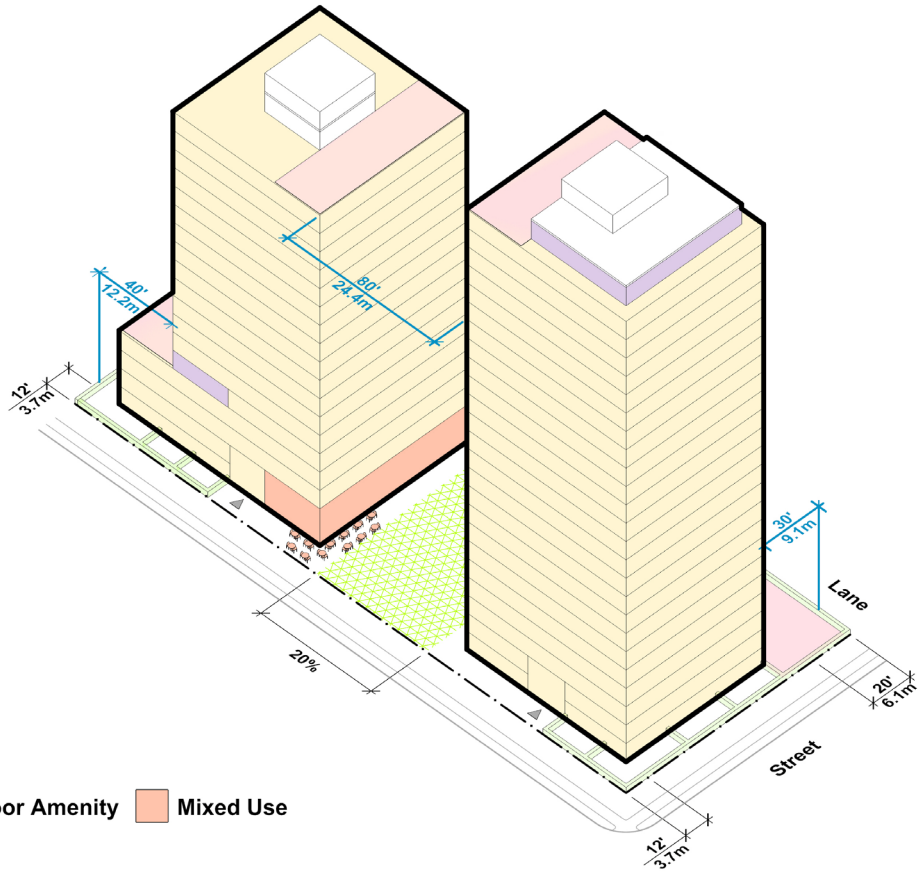
Frontage greater than 60.7 m (199 ft.)

Sites with a frontage greater than 60.7 m (199 ft.) that can accommodate one tower, deliver Enhanced Open Space Setback (EOSS) and Privately Owned Public Space (POPS) along the exterior side property line on corner sites, or along either interior side property line on mid-block sites. See Section 5.2.8 EOSS, POPS and Mid-Block Connections for design guidance.



Multiple Tower Sites: Frontage greater than 90.5 m (297 ft.)

Multiple tower sites typically have a frontage greater than or equal to 90.5 m (297 ft.), and deliver Enhanced Open Space Setback (EOSS) and *Privately Owned Public Space (POPS)* in between towers at grade to break up the expanse of the building and to facilitate required *tower separation*. See Section 5.2.8 EOSS, POPS and Mid-Block Connections for design guidance.

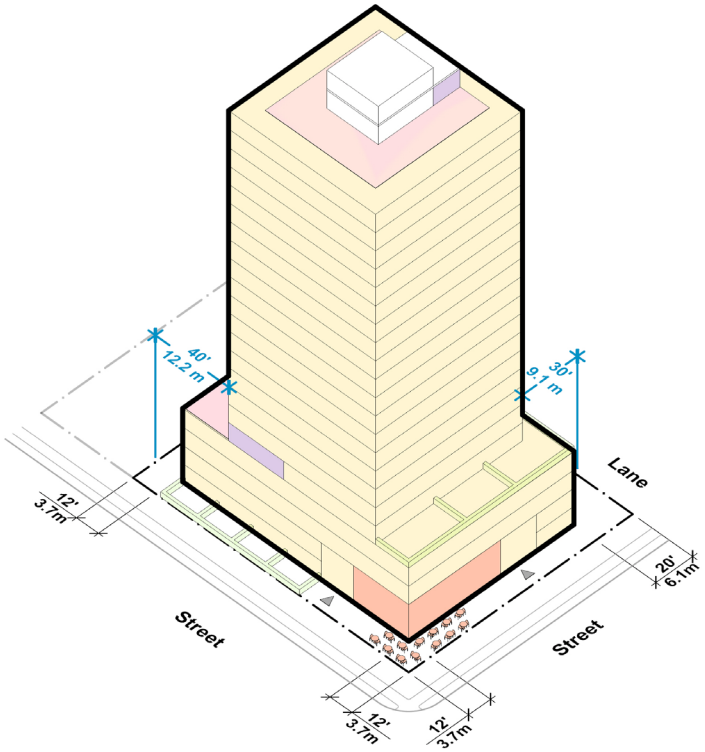


Residential | Indoor Amenity | Outdoor Amenity | Mixed Use

Mixed-Use Residential

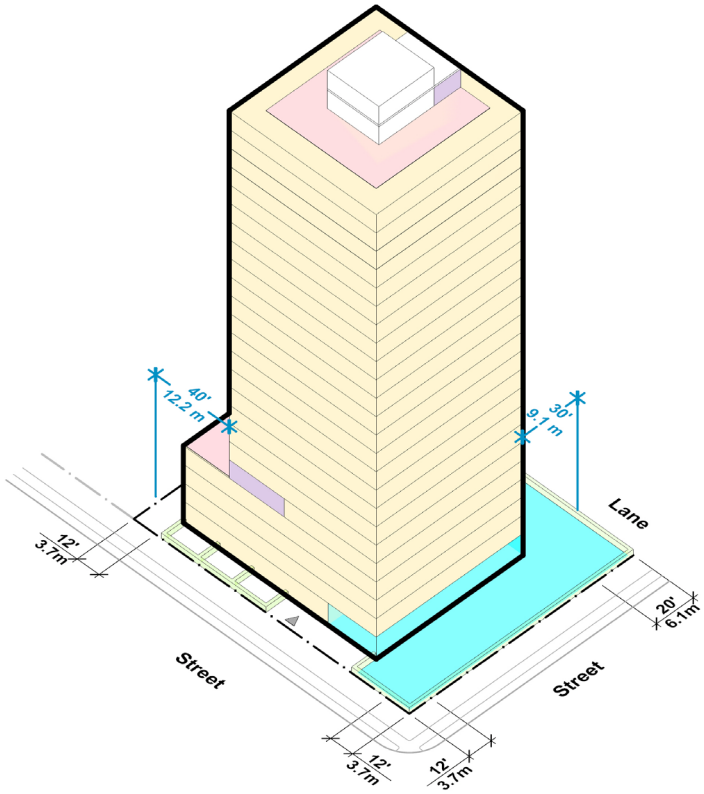
Mixed-use Residential Tower

Where retail, service, and office uses are integrated into mixed-use residential buildings, it enhances access to daily necessities and to support local economic growth through job creation.



Child Day Care Facility

A child day care facility may be integrated into new tower developments to contribute to the delivery and renewal of childcare infrastructure and support equitable access to quality childcare.



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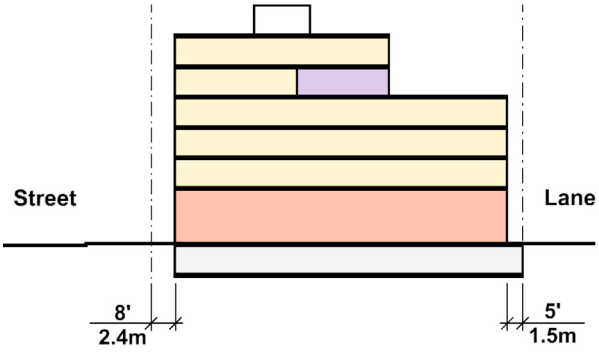
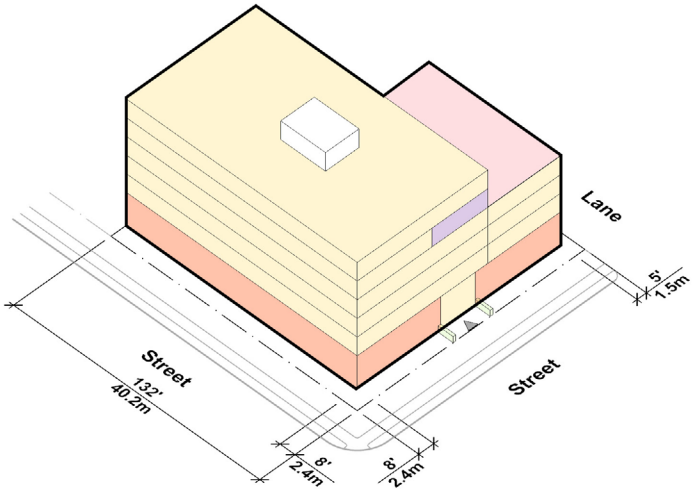
5.3 Mixed-Use Low-Rise

Mixed-use *low-rise buildings* include required commercial at grade. Form of development should follow the C-2 District Schedule and associated design guidelines. They are not subject to the Standards and Guidelines in this document.



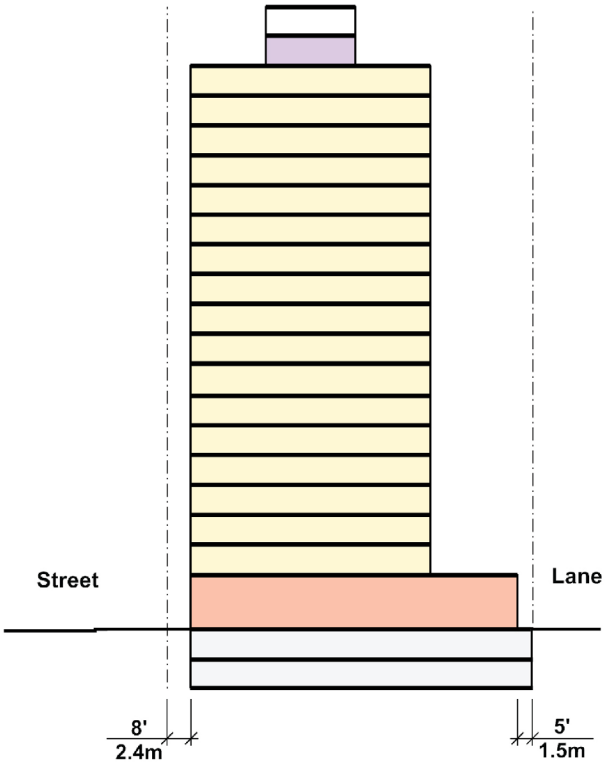


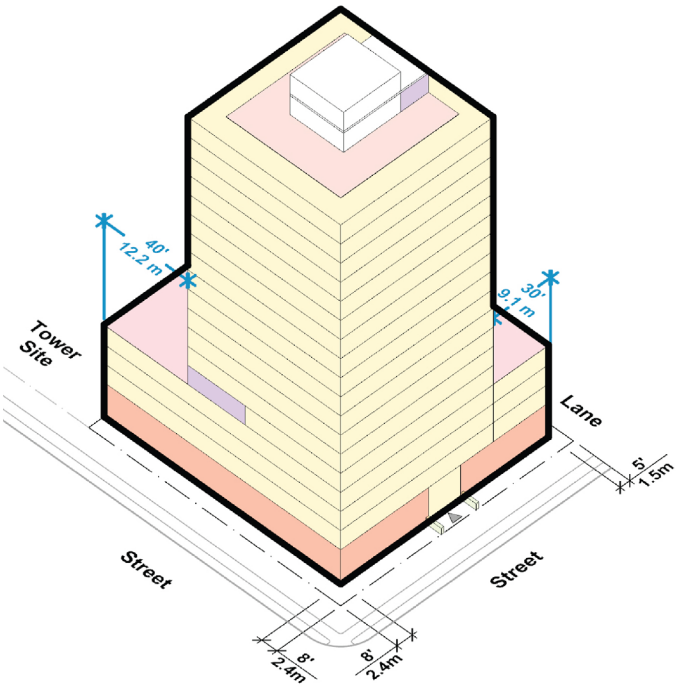
Residential | Indoor Amenity | Outdoor Amenity | Commercial | Parking

MATCHSTICK

5.4 Mixed-Use Tower

Mixed-use towers include required commercial at grade and support commercial streets and/or districts that are welcoming and enjoyable places for people to experience. They will provide an appropriate street scale and pedestrian interest/comfort.





- Residential
- Indoor Amenity
- Outdoor Amenity
- Commercial
- Parking

Table 5: Summary of Key Mixed-Use Tower Standards

		Standards	Section Reference
Site (minimum)	Site Area	Corner: 1,348 m² (14,520 sq. ft.) Mid-block: 1,532 m² (16,500 sq. ft.)	DDG 5.4.1 Density and Site Requirements
	Site Frontage	Corner: 40.0 m (132 ft.) Mid-block: 45.7 m (150 ft.)	
	Site Depth	33.5 m (110 ft.).	
Building Height (maximum)	Overall	Varies	DDG 5.4.3 Podiums and Building Height
	Podium	15.2 m (50 ft.) - 4 storeys	
Residential Podium Depth (maximum)		22.9 m (75 ft.) For alignment with tower: 24.4 m (80 ft.)	
Yards (minimum)	Front Yard	2.5 m (8 ft.)	DDG 5.4.4 Yards
	Exterior Side Yard	3.7 m (12 ft.)	
	Side Yard	Not required	
	Rear Yard	9.1 m (5 ft.)	
Tower Setbacks (minimum)	Front Property Line	2.5 m (8 ft.)	DDG 5.2.3 Tower Setbacks and Separation
	Exterior Side Property Line	3.7 m (12 ft.)	
	Side Property Line	12.2 m (40 ft.)	
	Rear Property Line	9.1 m (30 ft.)	
Tower Separation (minimum)		Minimum tower separation: • Residential to Residential: 24.4 m (80 ft.) • Residential to Hotel: 24.4 m (80 ft.) • Residential to Commercial (except hotel): 18.3 m (60 ft.)	
Tower Floorplate	Floorplate area (Maximum)	Varies	DDG 5.2.4 Tower Floor Plates
	Dimension (Maximum)	29.0 m (95 ft.)	
Underground Setbacks	Front Property Line	2.5 m (8 ft.)	DDG 5.4.5 Underground Setbacks
	Exterior Property Line	3.7 m (12 ft.)	
Amenity (minimum)	Indoor Amenity	Minimum 1.2 m² of space per dwelling unit	DDG 2.4 Indoor and Outdoor Amenity
	Outdoor Amenity	Minimum 2.0 m² of space per dwelling unit	
Private Open Space		Minimum 4.5 m² (48.4 sq. ft.) per dwelling unit	DDG 2.5 Balconies, Patios and Roofdecks
Dwelling Unit Design	Unit Depth	10.7 - 12.2 m (35 - 40 ft.) if single aspect with exterior wall	DDG 2.3 Dwelling Unit Design
	Floor-to-floor height	2.7 - 3.3 m (9 - 11 ft.)	
Commercial Ground Floor	Weather Protection	Mounted between 2.7-4.9 m (9-16 ft.) Depth-to-height ratio of 7:10	DDG 3.1 Weather Protection
	Floor-to-floor height (Preferred)	4.6 - 5.5 m (15 - 18 ft.)	DDG 3.3 Commercial Ground Floor
	Unit frontage (maximum)	15.3 m (50 ft.) on high-streets with the exception of grocery stores or other anchor retail uses.	

5.4.1 Density and Site Requirements

Intent: Align building scale with surrounding context by tailoring site requirements to the allowable density, ensuring setbacks, yards, and other parameters are met.

The Rupert and Renfrew Station Area Plan outlines the maximum allowable density along with the associated site requirements, including minimum site area and frontage, as summarized in Table 5.

Standards

5.4.1.1 The minimum frontage for a mixed-use tower development is typically 40.2 m (132 ft.) for corner sites and 45.7 m (150 ft.) for mid-block sites.

5.4.1.2 Mixed-use tower sites should have a lot depth of at least 33.5 m (110 ft.) after dedications. Shallower sites may be considered if they meet or exceed design expectations.

Guidelines

5.4.1.3 Where a development site is not accessible from a lane or street at the rear of the site, land dedications may be necessary for provision of a future lane.

5.4.1.4 In cases where a lane dedication is required as a condition of a development approval, yards and setbacks are measured from the ultimate property line which is the property line after accounting for dedications; whereas, the allowable density is based on the site area before dedications.

5.4.2 Tower Parameters

For guidance on tower parameters see:

- 5.2.3 Tower Setbacks and Separation
- 5.2.4 Tower Floor Plates

5.4.3 Podiums and Building Height

Intent: Ensure a smoother transition between towers and lower-scale buildings, enhance the pedestrian experience, and preserve solar access.

Maximum building heights vary by policy area and can be found in the Rupert and Renfrew Station Area Plan.

Standards

5.4.3.1 Podium heights of up to 4 storeys (approximately 15.2 m (50 ft.)) should be provided to create a consistent street wall that is compatible with existing neighbourhood character and preserves solar access across the street.

5.4.3.2 Podium heights of up to 6 storeys (approximately 21.3 m (70 ft.)) may be considered for non-profit or government-initiated projects with non-market housing.

5.4.3.3 Podium width should not exceed 60.7 m (199 ft.). Where podium width exceeds 45.7 m (150 ft.) their visual impact should be mitigated by breaking up the *facade* through visual breaks and articulation.

5.4.3.4 Residential podium depth should not exceed 22.8 m (75 ft.), except for the portion of the podium beneath the tower element. Residential podium depth may be increased to approximately 24.4 m (80 ft.) for the entire podium to facilitate tower and podium alignment, provided unit depths do not exceed 12.2 m (40 ft.) for units that have one aspect with exterior wall.

Guidelines

5.4.3.5 Standard buildings on typical assemblies will not need the maximum building height to achieve the maximum floor space ratio. Increases in density and/or floor-to-floor heights to reach the maximum building height are not supported.

5.4.4 Yards

Intent: Accommodate widened sidewalk zones to support comfortable and vibrant streets for public life at commercial frontages, enhance the lane interface, and help maintain privacy between buildings.

Standards

5.4.4.1 Mixed-use tower developments should follow the minimum yards below:

a) Front yard: 2.5 m (8 ft.)

b) Exterior side yard: 3.7 m (12 ft.)

c) Side yard: not required

d) Rear yard: 9.1 m (5 ft.)

Guidelines

5.4.4.2 The front yard is intended as both a setback and "build-to" line for non-residential uses. Flexibility is intended to allow for cornices, overhangs, and bays at the upper storeys.

5.4.4.3 The front and exterior side yard are intended to accommodate engineering asks (dedication or statutory rights-of-way) for sidewalk zone widening as well as space for high value street tree retention. A decrease in the front and/or exterior side yards may be considered where there is no engineering ask for sidewalk widening, and/or the setback does not accommodate high value street tree retention.

5.4.4.4 An increased front yard may be considered:

a) for features benefiting public life such as plazas, planting, seating and retail patios.

b) to permit a transition to a larger neighbouring front yard.

c) to accommodate building articulation and balconies.

5.4.4.5 Side yard setbacks are generally not required; however, a 3.7 m (12 ft.) interior side yard should be provided for sites adjacent to R zoned sites, without an intervening lane, that do not have a rezoning policy requiring at-grade commercial.

5.4.5 Underground Setbacks

Intent: Setting underground structures back from the property line for mixed use towers is intended to:

a) support retention of high value street trees; and

b) accommodate Green Rainwater Infrastructure (GRI) in public rights-of-way.

Standards

5.4.5.1 Where underground parking is provided, it should be set back 2.5 m (8 ft.) from the front property line and 3.7 m (12 ft.) from the exterior side property line.

Guidelines

5.4.5.2 A decrease in the underground setback may be considered where it would not support retention of high value street trees or GRI in the public right-of-way or where it would result in a parkade depth of less than 33.5 m (110 ft.).

Sidewalk zone (typically 5.5 m)
Green Rainwater Infrastructure (GRI)
GRI Setback
Root Protection Area

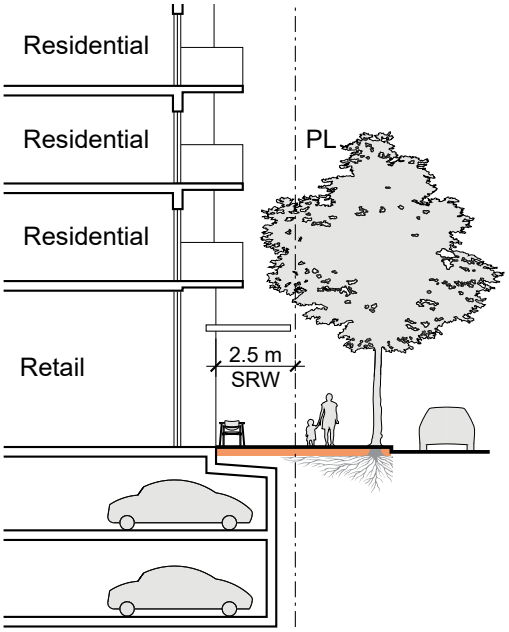


Figure 24. Underground parking setbacks may be decreased where they do not support high value street tree retention or GRI in the public right-of way.

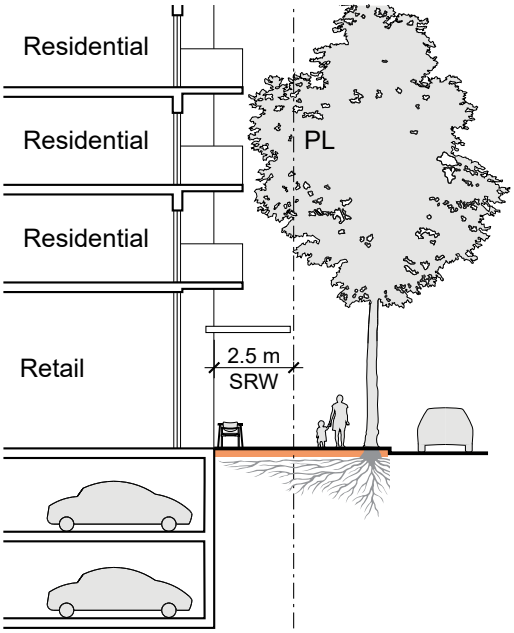


Figure 25. The front yard is intended to accommodate a statutory right-of-way for sidewalk widening. Underground parkades are set back to retain existing high value street trees.

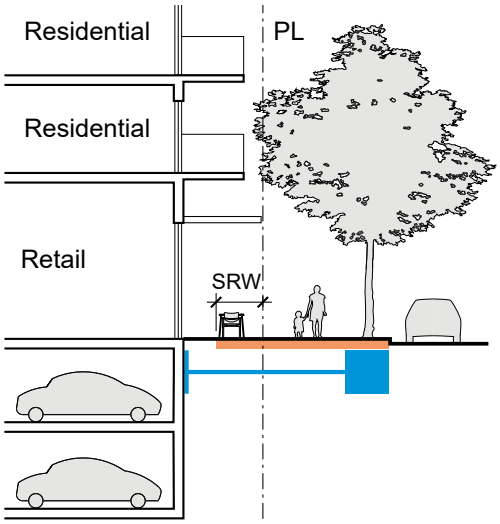


Figure 26. The front yard accommodates a statutory right-of-way for sidewalk widening and underground parkades are set back to accommodate GRI in the public right-of-way.

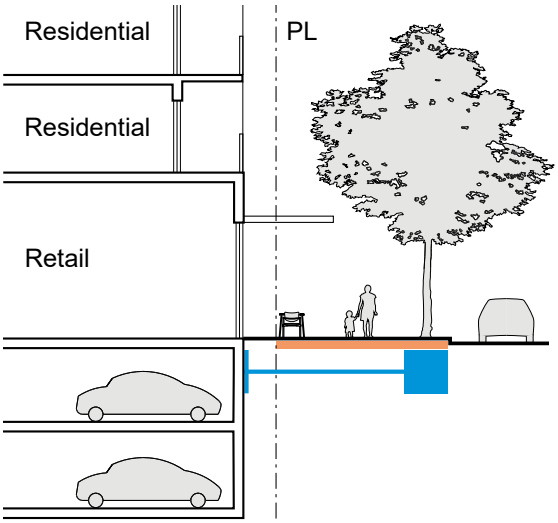


Figure 27. A decreased front yard may be considered where the sidewalk zone is already accommodated in the public street right-of-way (with or without dedication) and GRI setbacks are maintained.

5.4.6 Privately Owned Public Space

Intent: Create inviting public open spaces in mixed use areas to benefit the occupants of the building, but also residents and workers in the neighbouring areas.

Standards

5.4.6.1 Sites with a frontage exceeding 60.7 m (199 ft.) should provide a Privately Owned Public Space (POPS), secured through a statutory right-of-way, equal to approximately 20% of the site area.

Guidelines

5.4.6.2 More than one POPS on site may be appropriate where at least one space of a minimum size of 300 m2 (3,230 sq. ft.) and a mid-block connection is desired.

5.4.6.3 POPS should generally have a proportion of 1:1 or 1:2 length to width to create comfortable, usable public spaces.

5.4.6.4 For non-profit or government-initiated projects with non-market housing, the design expectations in this section should be interpreted with flexibility to accommodate project needs.

5.4.6.5 See Sections 1.3, 4.2 and 4.3 for additional guidance on the placement and design of these spaces.

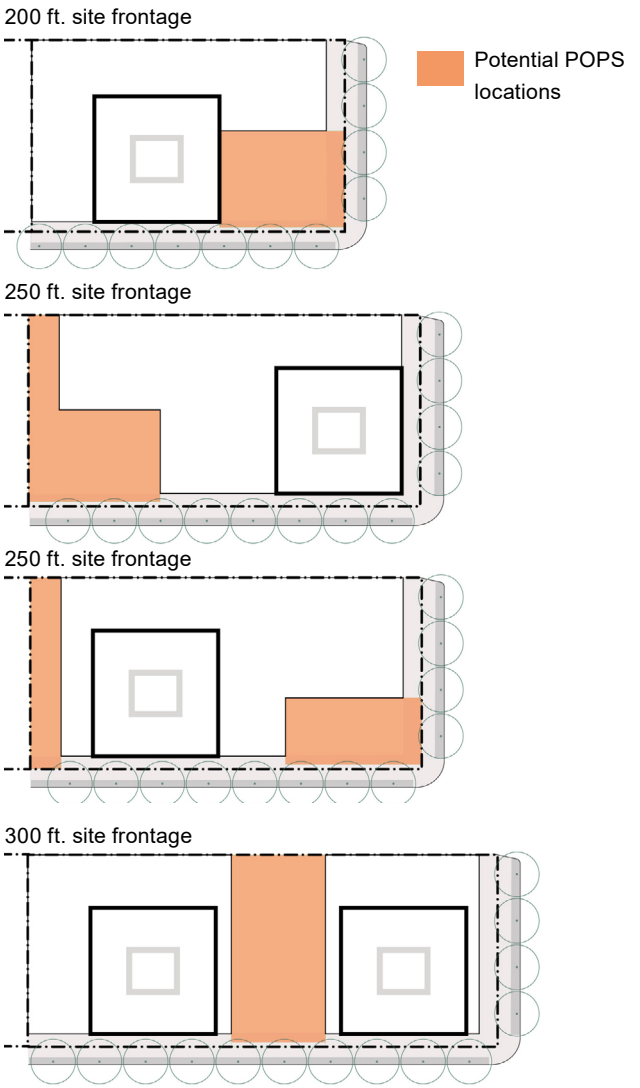


Figure 28. Illustration of potential POPS configurations on various Mixed-use Tower sites.

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IRONWORKS
7

5.5 Mixed Employment / Light Industrial

Mixed Employment/Light Industrial developments will expand, intensify and modernize employment areas while providing flexibility to ensure buildings can adapt to changing economic and production trends.

The following guidelines should be read in conjunction with the relevant District Schedules, By-laws, Council policies and guidelines, especially the City's Industrial Spaces Guidelines.

Table 6: Summary of Key Mixed Employment/Light Industrial Standards

		Standards	Section Reference
Building Height (maximum)	Overall	Varies	DDG 5.5.1 Building Height
	Podium	24.4 m (80 ft.) - 4 storeys	DDG 5.5.1 Building Height
	Side Yard	**(a)** Adjoins a site located in any RM district, without the intervention of a lane:1.5 m (5 ft.) **(b)** Adjoins a site located in any R1, RT or RA district, without the intervention of a lane:0.9 m (3 ft.) **(c)** Does not adjoin a site located in an R district: not required	District Schedules, Zoning and Development Bylaw Schedule C
	Rear Yard	3.1 m (10 ft.)	
Tower Separation (minimum)		Minimum tower separation: • Commercial to Commercial: 15.2 m (50 ft.) • Residential to Commercial (except hotel): 18.3 m (60 ft.) • Residential to Commercial (hotel): 24.4 m (80 ft.)	DDG 5.2.3 Tower Setbacks and Separation
Tower Floorplate Area (Maximum)		1,390 m² (15,000 sq. ft.)	

5.5.1 Height and Massing

Maximum building heights vary by policy area and can be found in the relevant rezoning policy or District Schedule.

5.5.1.1 Podium elements are permissible up to 4 storeys (24.4 m (80 ft.)).

5.5.1.2 High ceilings are encouraged to accommodate a variety of industrial and non-industrial uses on the same floor.

5.5.1.3 Buildings should consider vertical stacking of industrial and non-industrial uses.

5.5.1.4 Buildings should avoid generic “Big Box” designs that exhibit little facade interests and transparency to the street.

5.5.2 Tower Parameters

5.5.2.1 Tower size and placement should demonstrate a minimum *tower separation* between existing towers and potential future towers as follows:

a) Commercial to Commercial: 15.2 m (50 ft.)

b) Residential to Commercial (except hotel): 18.3 m (60 ft.)

c) Residential to Commercial (hotel): 24.4 m (80 ft.)

5.5.2.1 Maximum tower floor plates should be: 1,390 m² (15,000 sq. ft.)

5.5.3 Building Interface

5.5.3.1 Where feasible, provide engaging and active uses at grade. Emphasize attractive, well-functioning and welcoming frontages that showcase workspaces. Strategies include visually permeable frontages, openable window walls or roll-up doors that introduce opportunities for outdoor workspaces. See Section 3.3 Commercial Ground Floor for additional design guidance on the interface between the public realm and commercial ground floor uses.

5.5.4 Outdoor Spaces

5.5.4.1 Refer to the relevant Public Realm Plan or Framework for guidance on the location of mid-block connections and Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS).

5.5.4.2 See Section 4.2 and Section 4.3 for further design guidance on mid-block connections and POPS.

5.5.4.3 Where provided, POPS should be located alongside active ground floor retail or commercial edges.

5.5.4.4 Consider providing indoor and outdoor amenity spaces on the rooftops or podiums of industrial and mixed-employment buildings to allow for a range of activities and amenities to support health workspaces.

5.5.5 Access and Servicing

5.5.5.1 Consider opportunities for shared driveways or parking facilities with adjacent properties to maximize pedestrian safety and minimize impervious surfaces.

5.5.5.2 Main building entries should be clearly identifiable, transparent and accessible from the street level.

5.5.5.3 If the building has industrial and non-industrial uses, each use should have its separate and distinctive entrance.

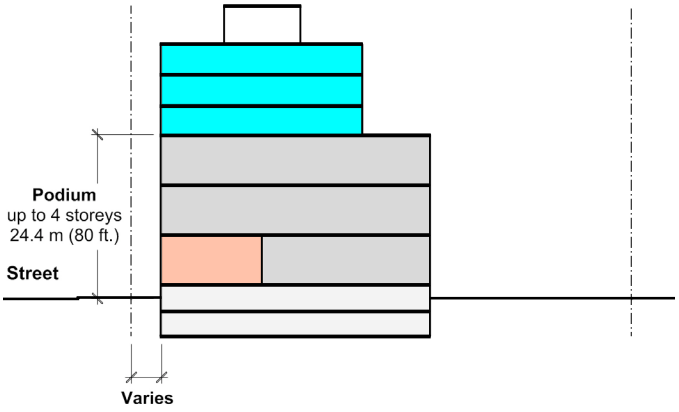
5.5.5.4 If mixed-employment buildings contain industrial and non-industrial uses, a separate freight elevator and a separate dedicated passenger elevator should be provided.

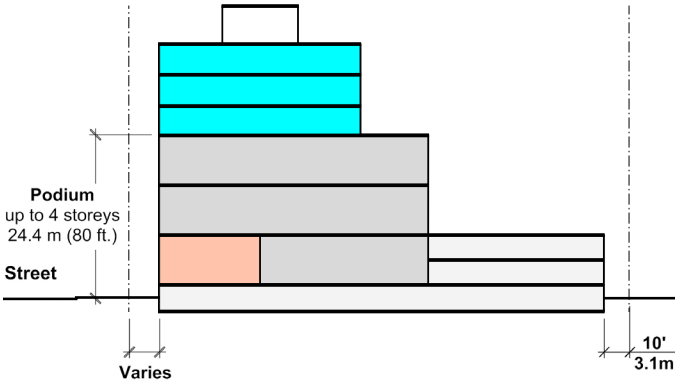
5.5.6 Development Scenarios

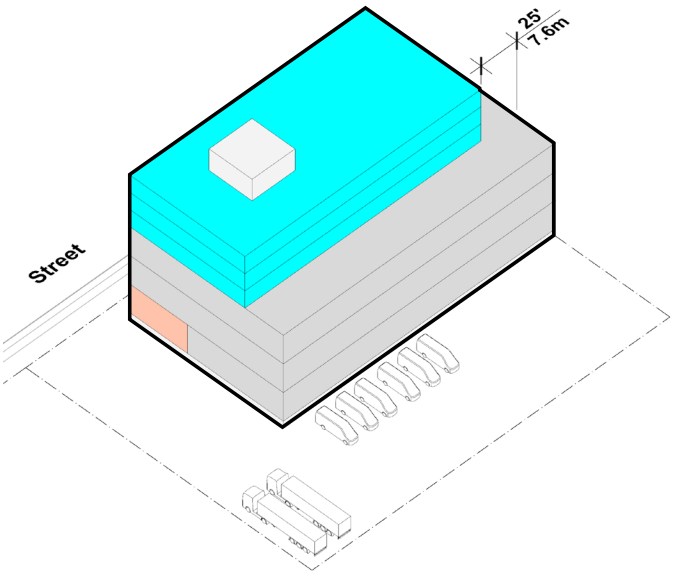
This section provides a brief introduction to several expected mixed employment and light industrial building typologies. These typologies are provided as high-level suggestions, with the expected typology for each site likely to be unique given the wide variety of parcel sizes, physical and environmental constraints, and adjacencies.

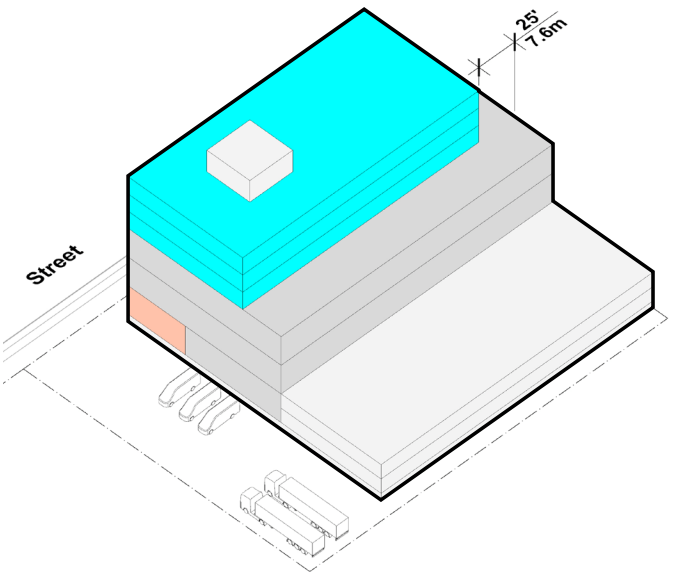
Low-Rise Light Industrial

Built form should follow the I-2 district schedule, with additional requirements for flood construction levels (FCL) and restriction on underground parking for sites within a Groundwater Protection Area. The development scenario to the left illustrates a low-rise light industrial building typology with underground parking while the development scenario to the right illustrates a low-rise light industrial building typology with structured above-grade parking.





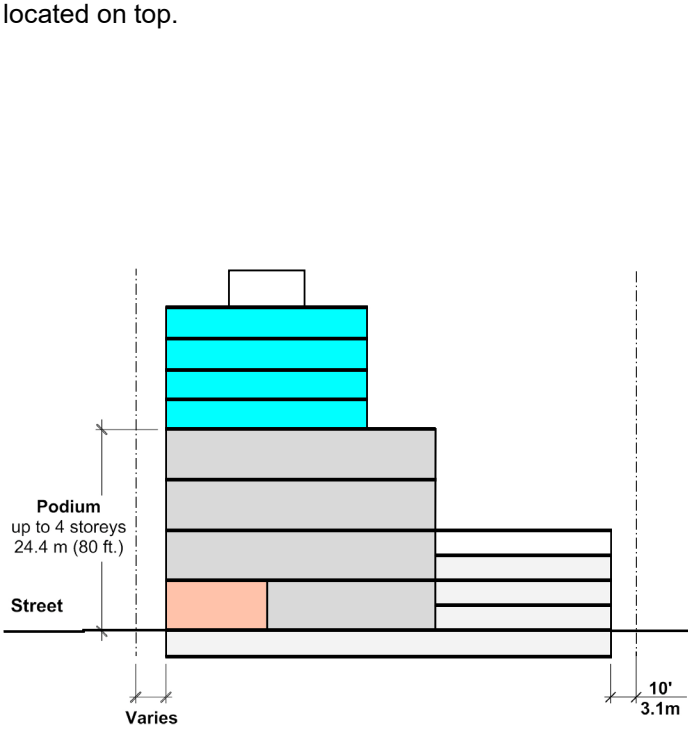


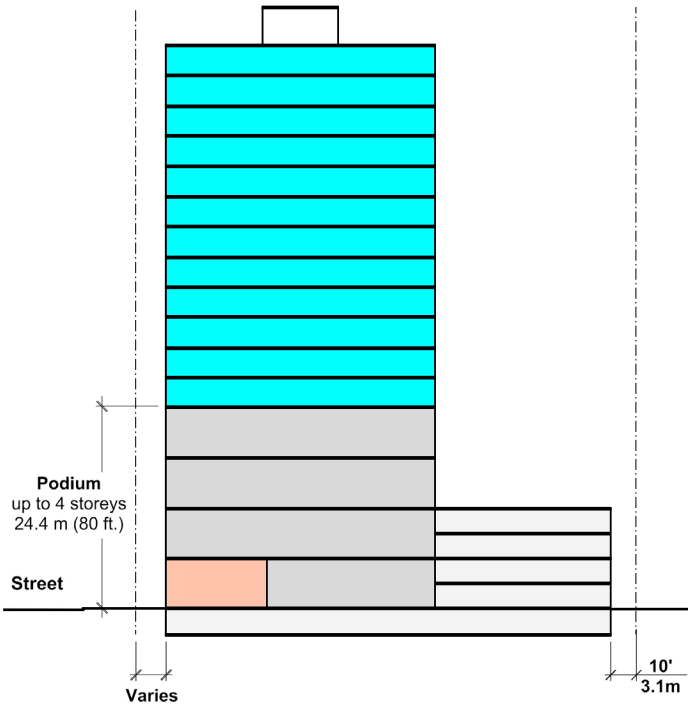


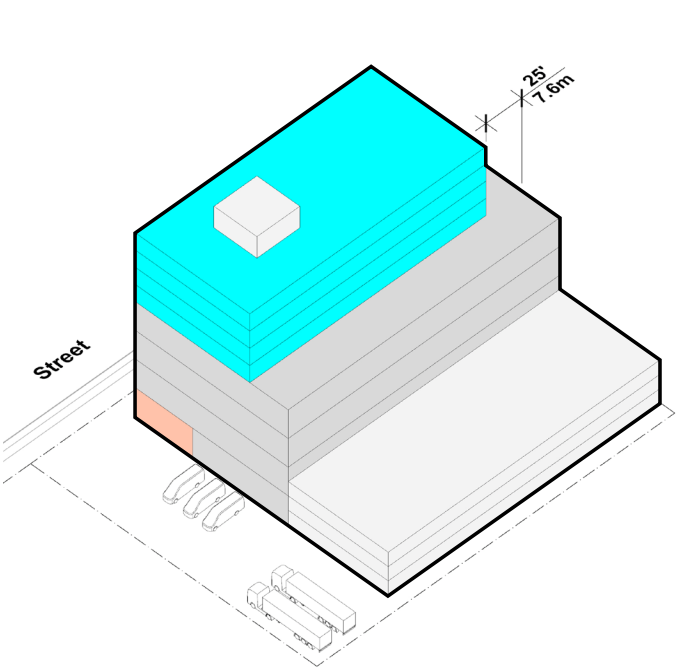
Office | Light Industrial | Commercial | Parking

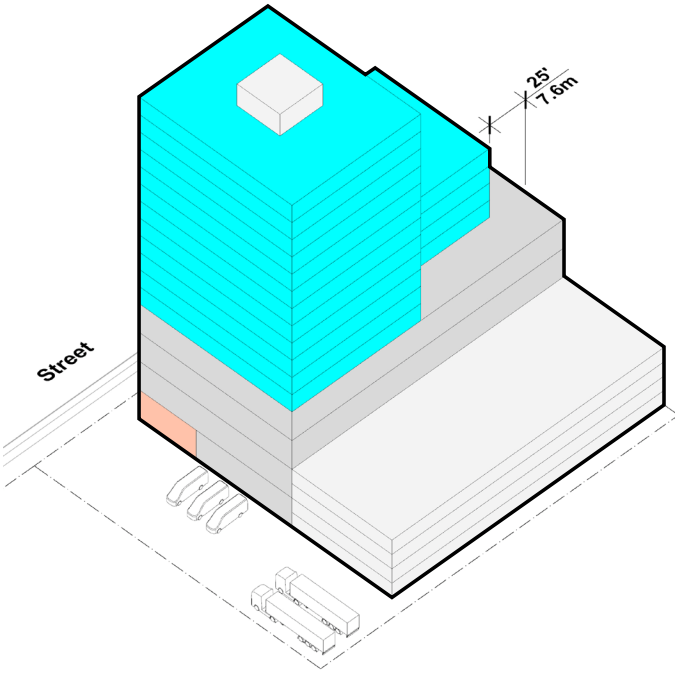
Mid- to High-Rise Light Industrial and Mixed-Employment

Light industrial and retail (including large-format retail) to be provided in the podium, while office uses can be located on top.









Office Light Industrial Commercial Parking

5.6 Groundwater Protection Area

Groundwater Protection Areas (GPAs) designate specific parcels where underground structures, such as parkades, are restricted. The following section provides design guidance and illustrates development options for **residential and mixed-use** sites within a Groundwater Protection Area. While development will generally follow the relevant Building Type standards and guidelines, the GPA-specific guidelines below will take precedence where applicable.

5.6.1 Groundwater Protection Area Guidelines

Guidelines

5.6.1.1 Up to two levels of structured above-grade parking may be integrated at the rear of the building. The number of above-grade parking levels is measured from the street.

5.6.1.2 Additional building height (up to one storey) may be considered to compensate for residential floor area displaced by above-grade structured parking.

5.6.1.3 Active uses, with a minimum recommended depth of 9.1 m (30 ft.), should be located on the ground floor facing the street to ensure an active and engaging interface that visually connects to the street. On corner sites, active uses should be located on the ground floor along both street frontages.

5.6.1.4 Structured above-grade parking should adhere to the same side yards as the main building, while the rear yard may be reduced to a minimum of 1.5 m (5 ft). Yards should be heavily landscaped to help mitigate the visual impact of structured above-grade parking.

5.6.1.5 Ground floor commercial uses have a minimum floor-to-floor height of 4.6 m (15 ft.). A reduction may be considered to support ramping to above grade parking levels.

5.6.1.6 Facade treatments for above-grade parking levels should minimize light pollution particularly when adjacent to residential land uses. This may require full enclosure of above-grade parking.

5.6.1.7 Blank walls associated with above-grade parking are often unavoidable and should be mitigated through screening, landscaping, public art, special materials, or other solutions to make them more visually interesting.

5.6.1.8 Parkade rooftops should be prioritized for uses that would otherwise have been provided at grade such as private outdoor space, common outdoor amenity space, and landscaping.

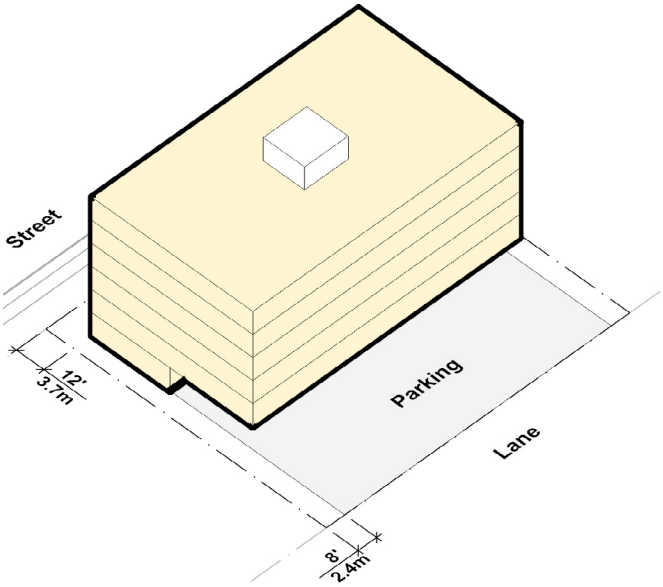
5.6.1.9 Where Mezzanine Bike Parking typologies are pursued, additional floor-to-floor height may be provided at ground level to accommodate a mezzanine level for bicycle parking.

5.6.1.10 Where site slopes present challenges for parkade ramping and efficiency, multiple parkade access points along the lane may be considered.

5.6.2 Development Scenarios

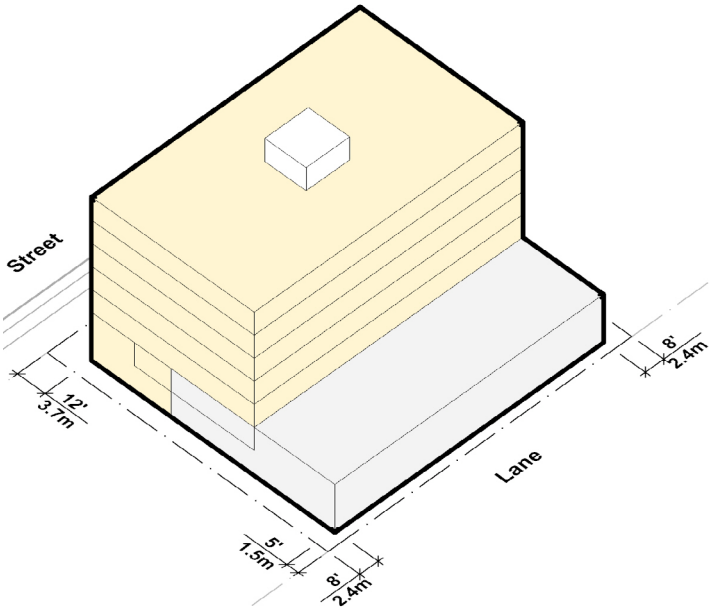
Groundwater Protection Area Residential Low-Rise

Form of development will generally follow the standards and guidelines in Section 5.1 Residential Low-Rise, except where the Groundwater Protection Area guidelines in Section 5.6.1 take precedence. There are two typical above grade parking building typologies for low-rise residential apartments in the Groundwater Protection Area: tuck-under and bike mezzanine.



Tuck Under Parking

This typology extends at grade vehicle parking under the building to maximize surface parking efficiency. In this configuration bike parking can be provided at grade or can be integrated into the allowable building envelope.

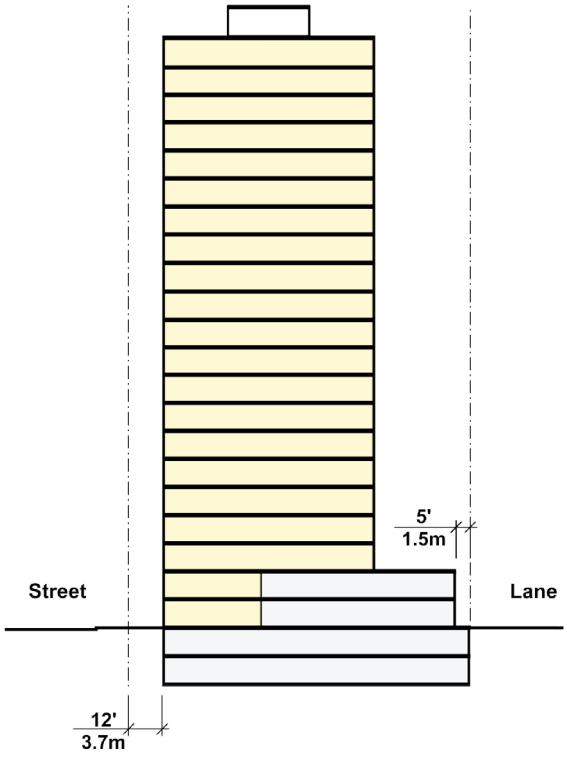


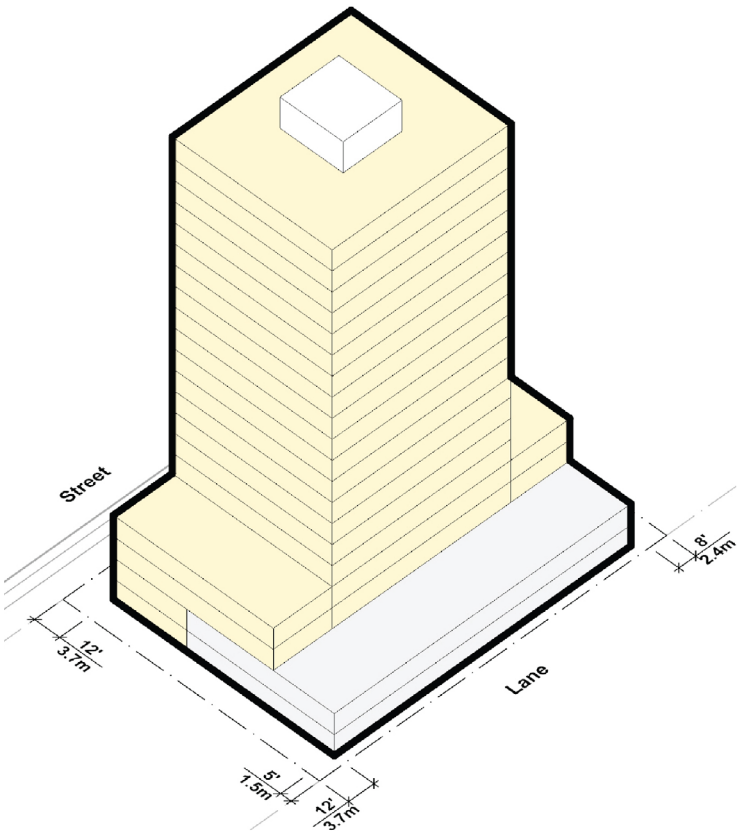
Mezzanine Bike Parking

This typology elevates bicycle parking to an intermediate floor, optimizing ground-level space for efficient parking. The mezzanine can be integrated into the structured at-grade parking, providing access for cyclists through ramps or elevators.

Groundwater Protection Area Residential Tower

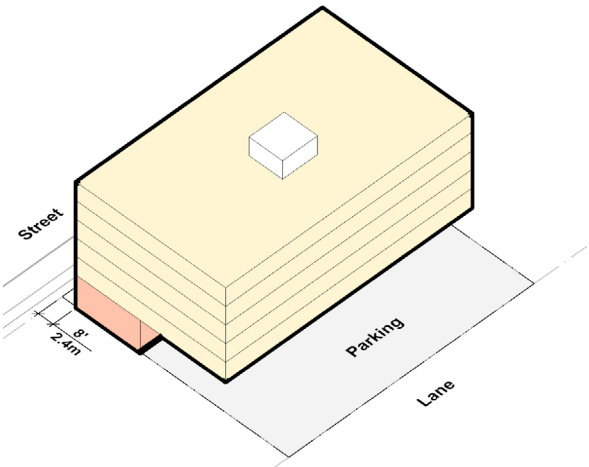
Form of development will generally follow the standards and guidelines in Section 5.2 Residential Tower, except where the Groundwater Protection Area guidelines in Section 5.6.1 take precedence.





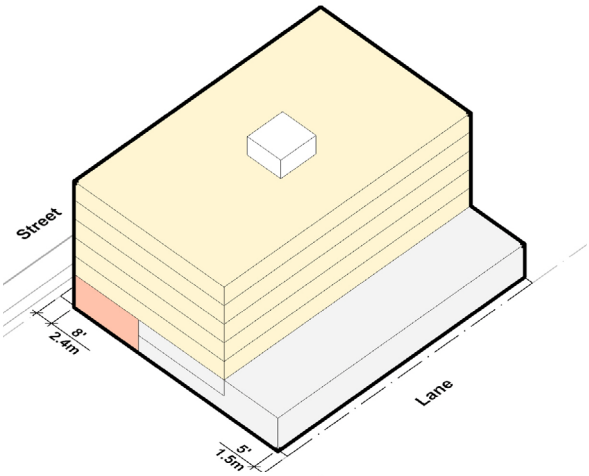
Groundwater Protection Area Mixed-use Low-Rise

Form of development will follow the C-2 District Schedule and associated design guidelines, except where the Groundwater Protection Area guidelines in Section 5.6.1 take precedence. There are three typical above grade parking building typologies for mixed-use low-rise buildings.



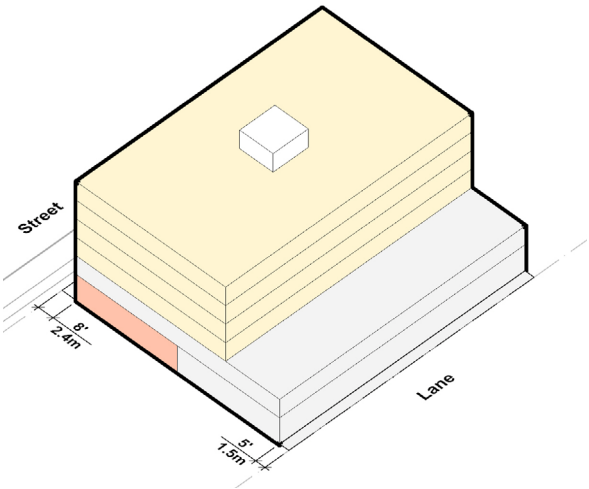
Tuck Under Parking

Extends at grade vehicle parking under the building to maximize surface parking efficiency.



Mezzanine Bike Parking

Elevates bicycle parking to an intermediate floor, optimizing ground-level space for efficient parking.



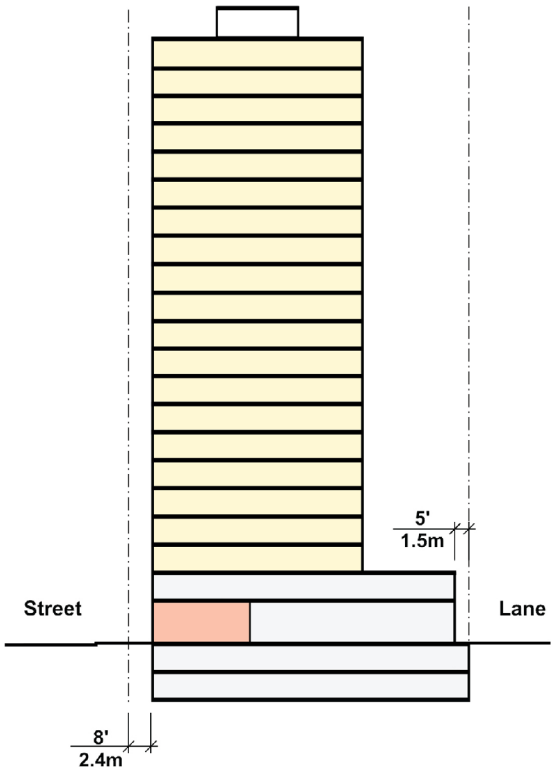
Structured Above Grade

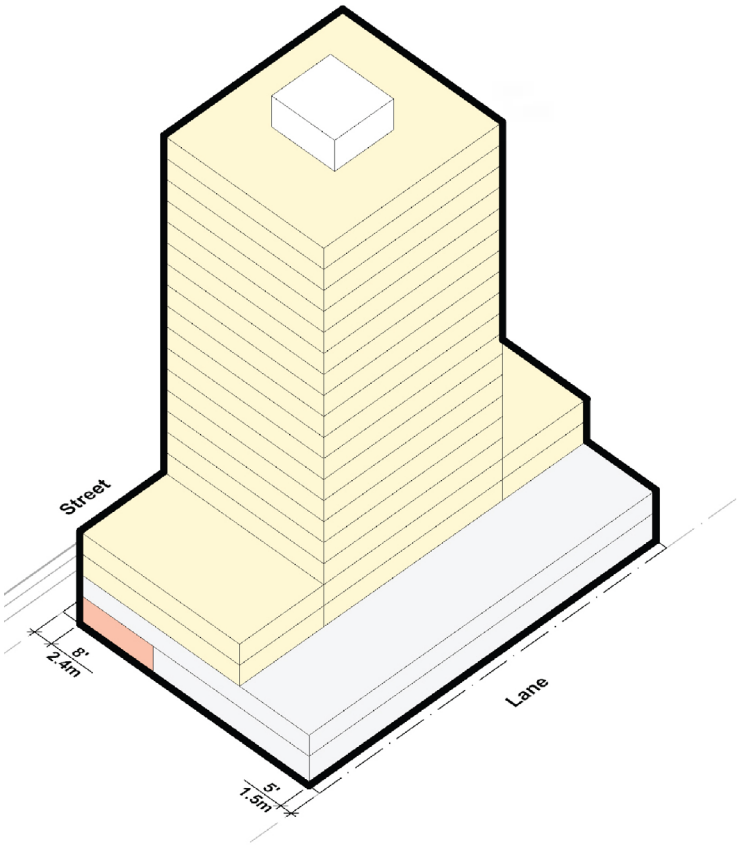
5.6.3 Provides elevated parking level

that extend to the front of the building, while maintaining active ground commercial uses

Groundwater Protection Area Mixed-use Tower

Form of development will generally follow the standards and guidelines in Section 5.4 Mixed-use Tower, except where the Groundwater Protection Area guidelines in Section 5.6.1 take precedence.





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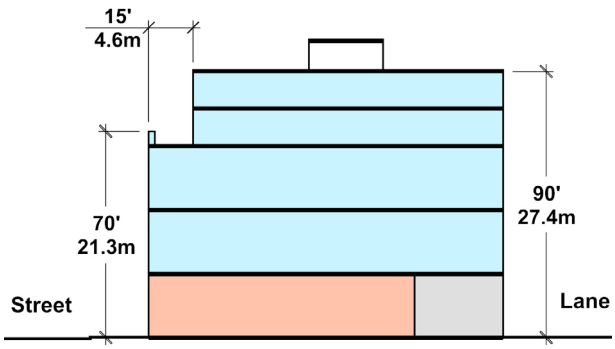
5.7 Heritage Low-Rise

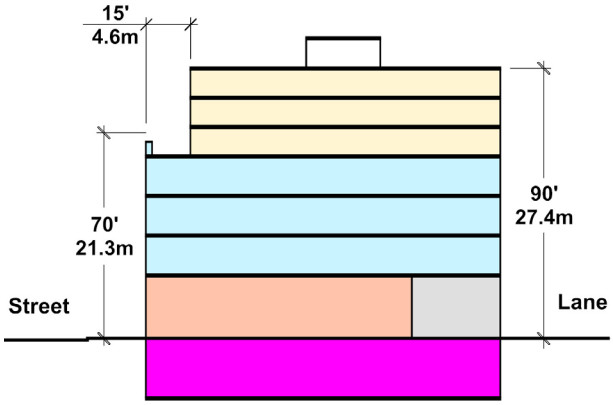
The Heritage Low-Rise typology refers to the conservation and improvement of a heritage property of a low-rise building form. This typically includes up to 2 storey rooftop addition to the heritage building.

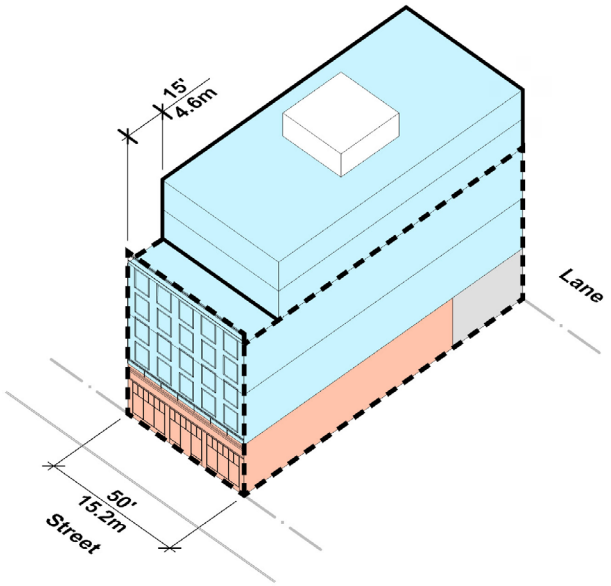
New low rise buildings or additions to a heritage property should maintain the historic sawtooth streetscape profile and relate to character-defining elements of the adjacent heritage properties, particularly their scale, massing, and historic form of development.

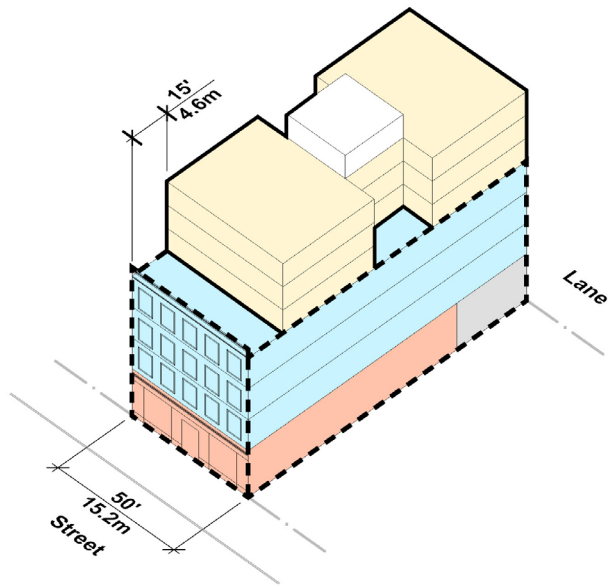
Rooftop additions should be set back. New structures should be designed to prioritize conservation and structural retention of an existing heritage property. Streetwall heights are limited to 21.3 m (70 ft.) to reflect the historic pattern of development.

Low rise development options are for sites that do not pursue a tower form. Form of development should follow the Downtown ODP.









Residential | Commercial: Hotel and/or Office | Commercial: Retail | Cultural Space | Parking | Heritage

5.8 Heritage Tower

The Heritage Tower typology refers to the conservation and improvement of a heritage property of a tower building form, which could include more than 2 storey rooftop addition to the heritage building.

New high rise developments aim to add new opportunities for commercial, cultural space, and in some cases, housing. New high-rise structures on sites occupied by a heritage property should consider heritage conservation and structural retention levels of the heritage property.

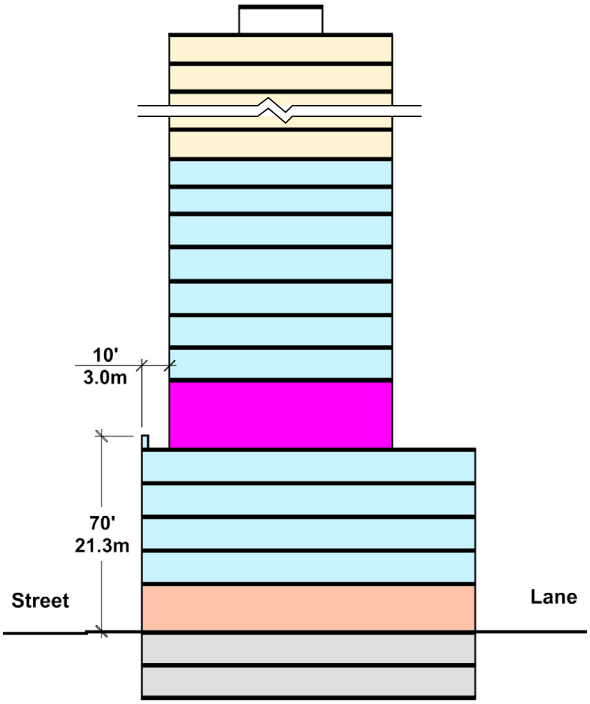
Form of development should follow the Granville Street Plan.

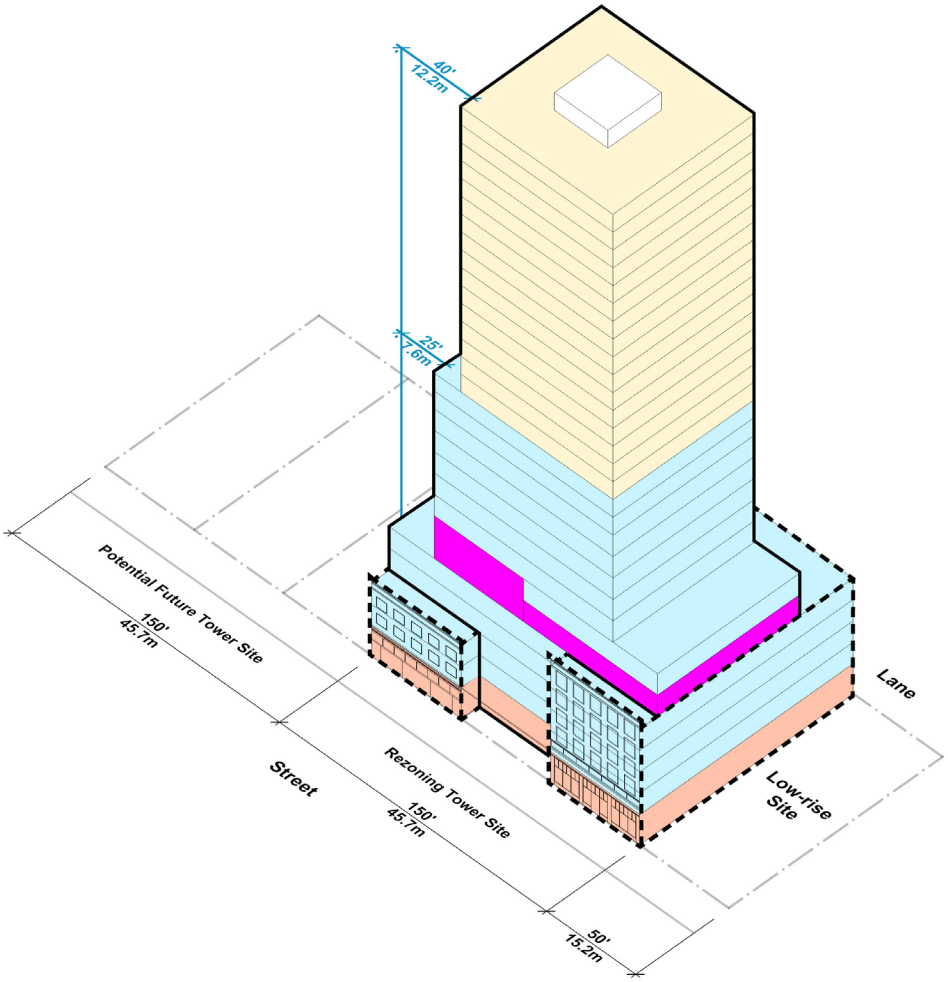
Table 7: Summary of Built Heritage High Rise Tower Standards

Standards			Reference
Site (minimum)	Site Frontage	Corner: 38.1 m (125 ft.) Mid-block: 45.7 m (150 ft.)	Downtown Rezoning Policy
Building Height (maximum)	Overall	Varies	Downtown Rezoning Policy
	Podium	21.3 m (70 ft.)	
Upper Level Setbacks (minimum)	Front Property Line	3.0 m (10 ft.)	
Tower Separation (minimum)		Minimum tower separation: • Commercial to Commercial (including hotel): 15.2 m (50 ft.) • Residential to Commercial (including hotel): 18.3 m (60 ft.) • Residential to Residential: 24.4 m (80 ft.)	DDG 5.2.3 Tower Setbacks and Separation
Amenity (minimum)	Indoor Amenity	Minimum 1.2 m^2 of space per dwelling unit	DDG 2.4 Indoor and Outdoor Amenity
	Outdoor Amenity	Minimum 2.0 m^2 of space per dwelling unit	
Private Open Space		Minimum 4.5 m^2 (48.4 sq. ft.) per dwelling unit	DDG 2.5 Balconies and Patios

Mid-Block Development

Mid-block sites maintain *tower separation* and accommodate sensitive transitions to adjacent properties.

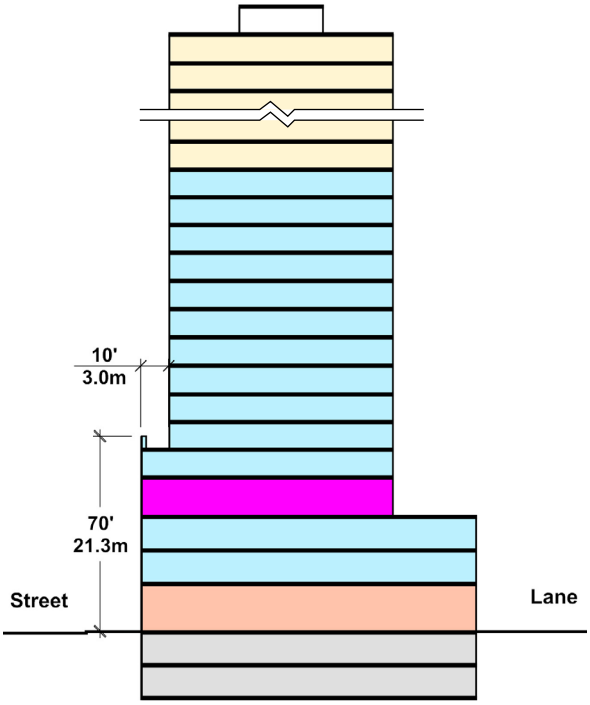


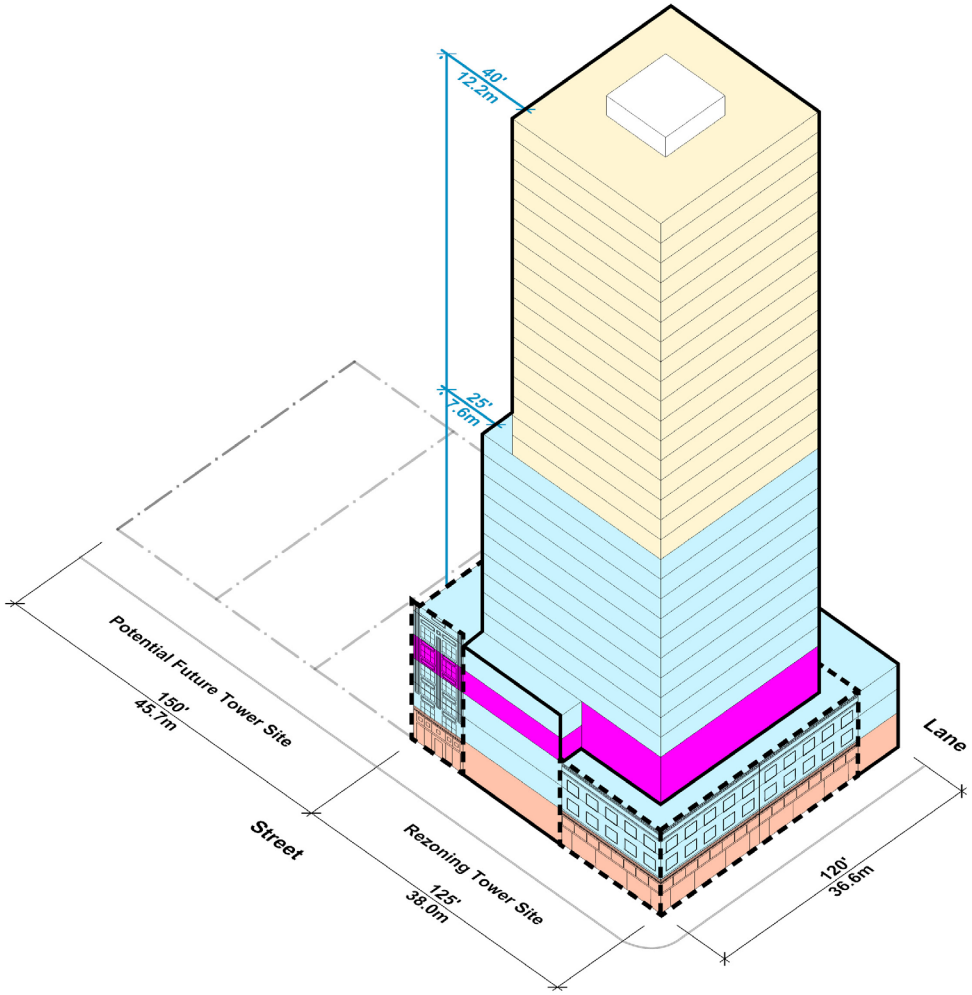


Residential | Commercial: Hotel and/or Office | Commercial: Retail | Cultural Space | Parking | Heritage

Corner Development

Corner sites present a unique opportunity for activating both the fronting and flanking streets, enhancing the public realm and creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment.





Residential | Commercial: Hotel and/or Office | Commercial: Retail | Cultural Space | Parking | Heritage

C. SPECIAL DESIGN DISTRICTS

Granville Street

Special Design District Guidelines

CITY OF VANCOUVER

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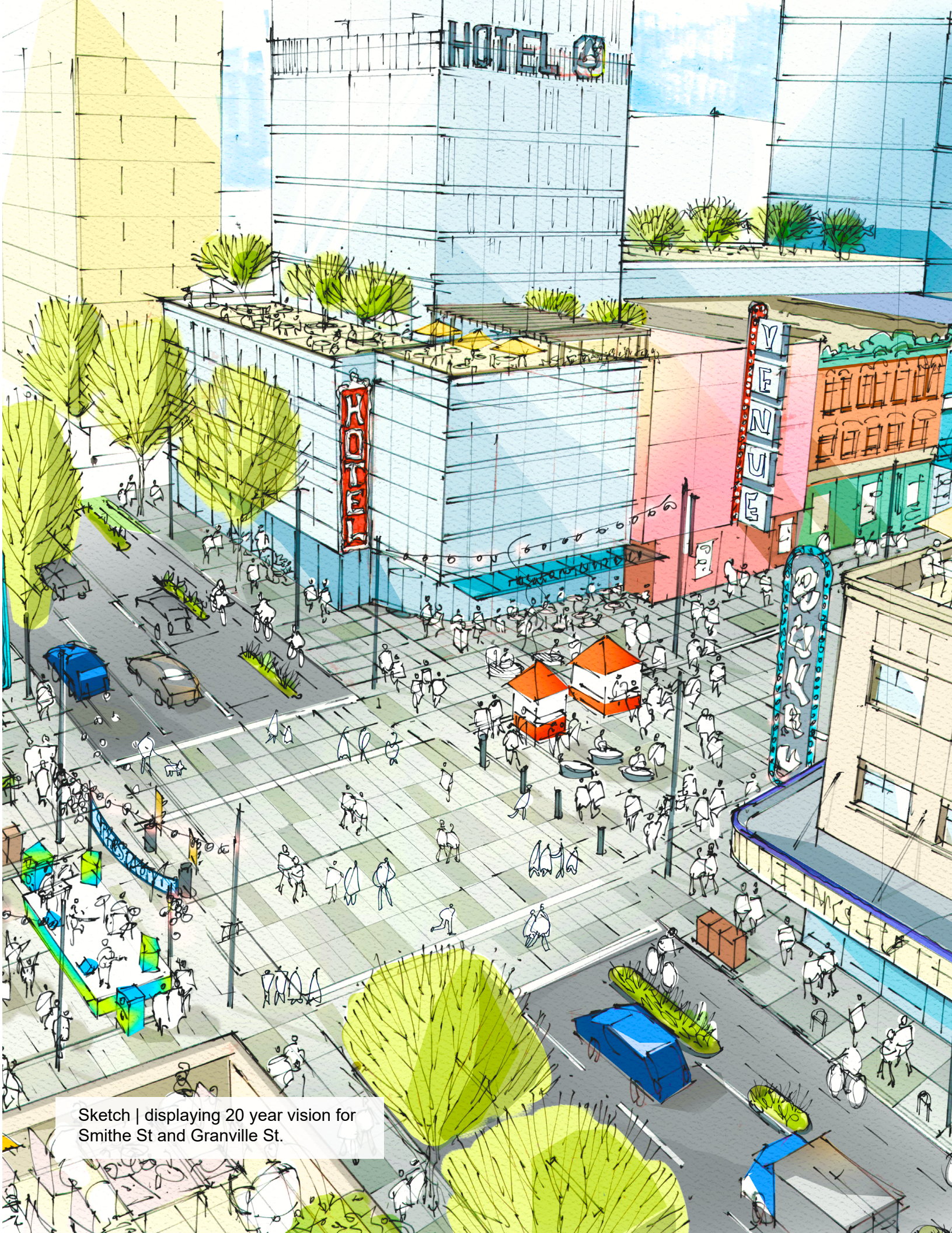


Sketch | displaying 20 year vision for Smithe St and Granville St.

Introduction

Granville Street Entertainment District

Vision

Located in the heart of downtown, Granville Street will be transformed into a welcoming, safe, diverse and vibrant entertainment district. It will come alive with activity day and night, all year round, evolving into a premier cultural destination for live performances, dining, civic life and celebrations.

Granville Street Context

Due to the historical development patterns in Downtown, the area around Granville Street is densely populated with high-rise buildings that were not originally designed to accommodate or anticipate future towers along the Granville corridor.

Therefore, new projects must take this unique context into account while employing design strategies that satisfy the Granville Street Special Design District Guidelines and demonstrate that they reasonably mitigates development limitations on adjacent properties.

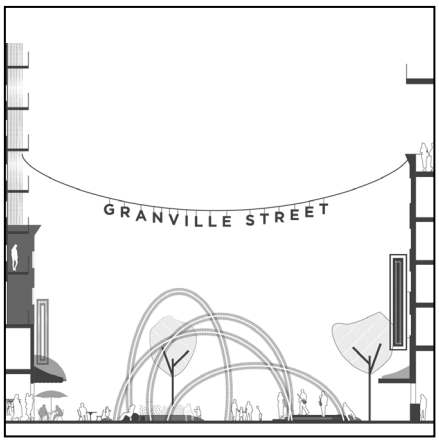
Why Good Design Matters

Granville Street's attractiveness to businesses, residents and visitors is in large part derived from the unique design of its buildings, the streets, and features like the large neon signs and marquees. Capturing and enhancing these foundational design elements should help shape a distinct design district that strengthens its character and solidifies its role as the city's cultural and entertainment hub.

The Design and Development Guidelines, including the area-specific guidance provided by the Granville Street Special Design District Guidelines (the 'Granville Guidelines'), sets minimum standards and raises expectations of design quality for development in the area.

The Granville Guidelines aim to influence development on Granville Street by focusing on the key components of design that contribute to a lively and successful street and experience of the area. A particular emphasis is placed on how buildings respond to their specific context, and contribute to Granville Street's vibrancy, economy and urban quality for decades to come.

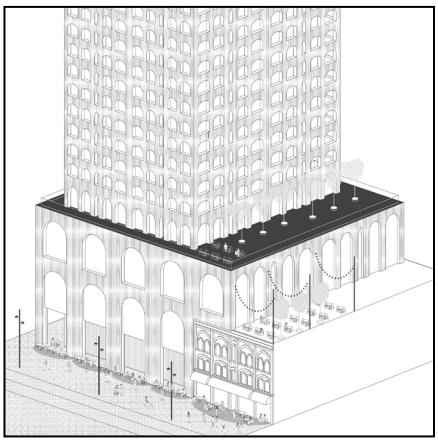
Principles



Introduction

Development within the Granville Street Entertainment District should align with the intent of the design principles.

The design response should address aspects of all principles, rather than selecting some, to ensure a comprehensive contribution to the overarching vision.

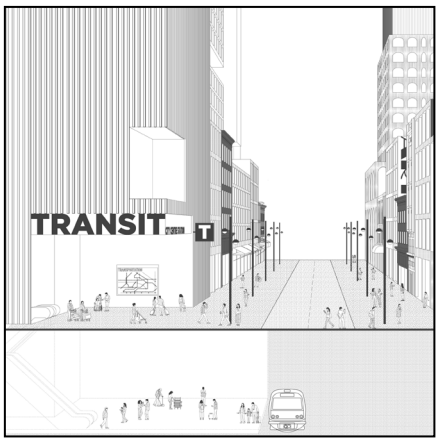


24/7 destination where people play, stay, work and live. Where culture, performance, and creativity are celebrated.

Granville Street should be a vibrant, 24/7 destination that blends living, working, tourism, and entertainment. Flexible spaces, year-round events, and a focus on culture and diversity will create an inclusive, energetic hub day and night.

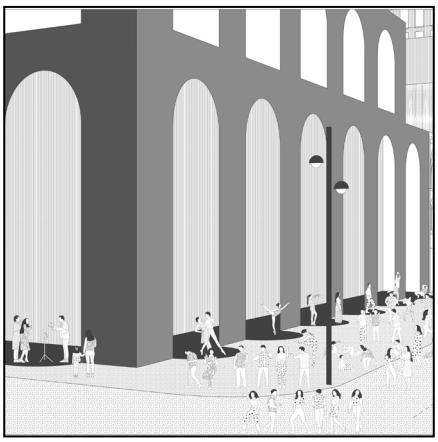
A curated fusion of heritage and innovation are celebrated.

As Granville Street evolves, preserving its rich heritage while embracing bold, modern design will create a distinctive, balanced sense of place.



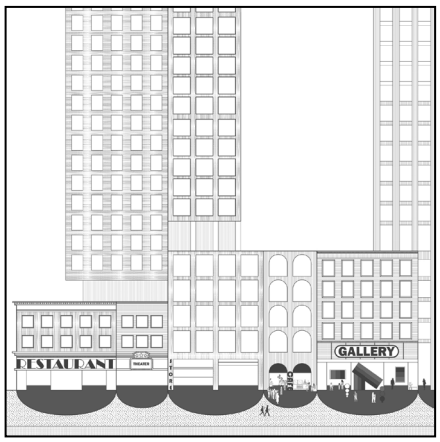
Welcoming, safe, inclusive, and equitable.

Granville Street should be designed with safety, inclusivity, and equity at its core. It should smoothly transition from a bustling daytime destination to a vibrant nighttime hub. Designs should prioritize universal accessibility by incorporating thoughtful lighting, clear sight lines and inclusive features. Places to pause will help ease congestion while preserving the lively energy that defines the street.



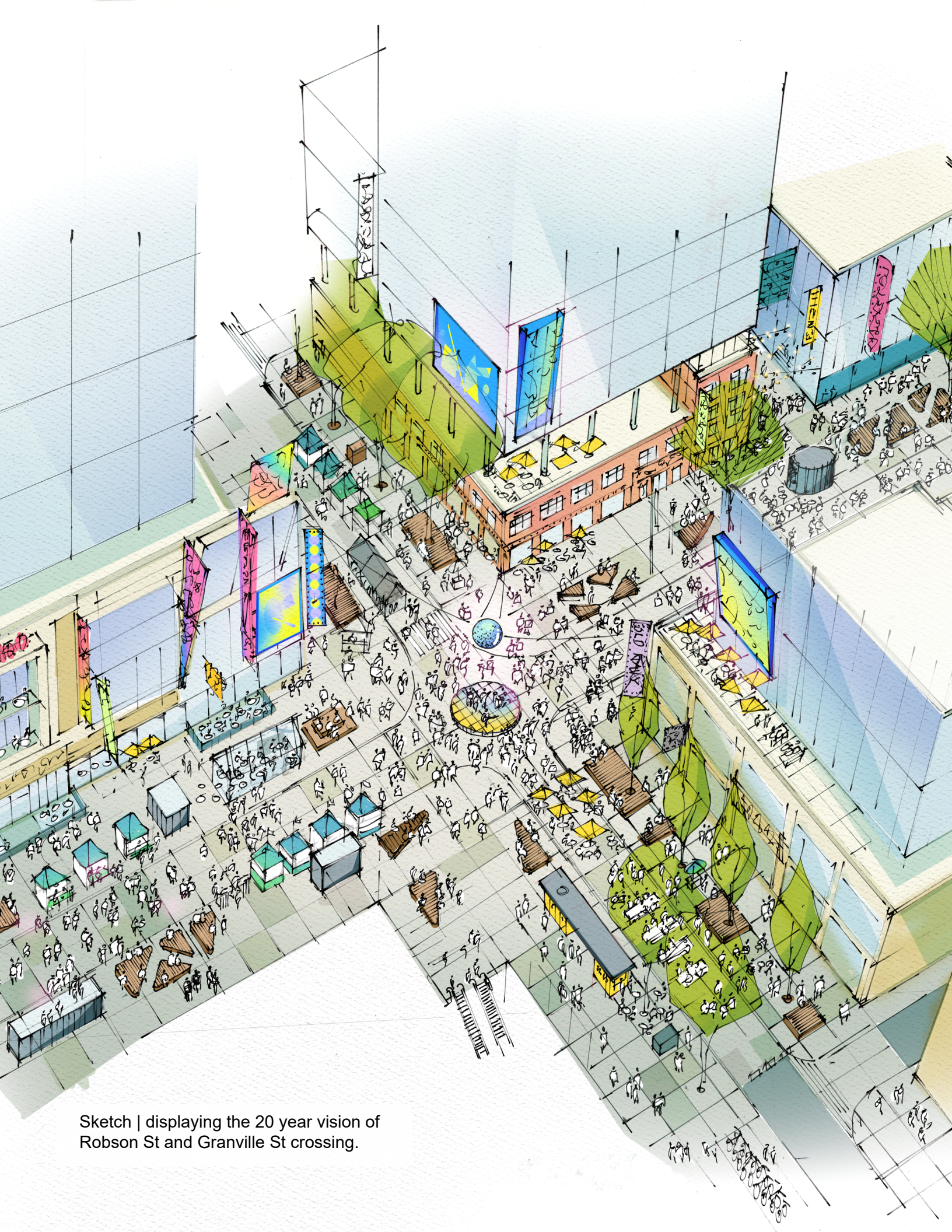
A venue for hosting large celebrations and a street filled with a generosity of daily public life.

Granville Street is a dynamic cultural hub in Downtown Vancouver, supporting both large events and everyday activities. Developments should create adaptable spaces and improve transit access while enhancing pedestrian flow with well-designed thoroughfares, queuing areas, and resting spots, all while maintaining the street's vibrant energy.



A mixture of large scale, high density buildings and fine grain human scale experiences.

Developments on Granville Street should balance high-density buildings and the intimate, human-scale experience that gives the street its distinct character. At street level, podiums should actively engage pedestrians, offering inviting spaces for shops, cafés and cultural activities. Above, building massing should rise thoughtfully, respecting the street's historic context and ensuring that taller structures complement rather than overshadow the finer grain of the streetscape.



Sketch | displaying the 20 year vision of Robson St and Granville St crossing.

1 URBAN STRUCTURE

Introduction

Special Character Area

The Special Character Area of Granville Street has significant heritage value, including, but not limited to:

- its importance to the cultural, artistic, and societal development of a variety of communities;
- its role as the heart of the region's entertainment district; and,
- its variety of existing buildings that compose its characteristic 'sawtooth' streetscape profile.

Future Pedestrianization

At the heart of the plan is a long-term move towards a year-round pedestrian zone along Granville Street that spans the downtown peninsula from Granville Bridge to Waterfront Station.

Intent

A **future year-round pedestrianized Granville Street** that:

- Upholds the heritage value of the area's arts and cultural venues and characteristic historic form, scale and massing of existing buildings.
- Reinforces its role within the larger transportation network and as a vital cultural corridor that connects to surrounding cultural hubs.
- Responds to the unique character of the each of the sub areas to deliver a high quality, safe, attractive and welcoming street.
- Creates flexible public spaces by supporting large gatherings, celebrations, and street performances and contributes to a dynamic urban environment.

Does the development reinforce the cultural heritage significance of Granville Street, and strengthen the public realm to support arts and cultural events 24/7?

1.1 Reinforce the historic character of Granville Street

Standards

[Gr 1.1.1] For site with a heritage property, heritage conservation with substantial structural retention and seismic upgrading is required. Façade-only retention is not considered heritage conservation.

[Gr 1.1.2] Rehabilitation of a heritage property through adaptive re-use is most effective when a compatible use is selected, whether by retaining the existing use or changing to the original or an alternative within the same category of uses.

[Gr 1.1.3] Any addition or new development adjacent to a heritage property must be physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to, and distinguishable from the heritage property.

[Gr 1.1.4] Contemporary buildings should reinforce the historic form, scale, and massing present in the eclectic historic streetscape of Granville Street, as related to all existing buildings, particularly heritage properties.

Guidelines

[Gr 1.1.5] Understand the historic construction, assemblies, and systems of a heritage property before intervening, recognizing their contribution to Granville Street's cultural heritage.

[Gr 1.1.6] Use a minimal intervention approach to protect and maintain the heritage property.

[Gr 1.1.7] When replacing missing or heavily deteriorated character-defining elements of a heritage property, restore them based on documentary evidence; if no evidence exists, reconstruct or redesign them in a historically compatible manner.

[Gr 1.1.8] Retention and rehabilitation of existing historic buildings other than heritage properties is encouraged but not required.

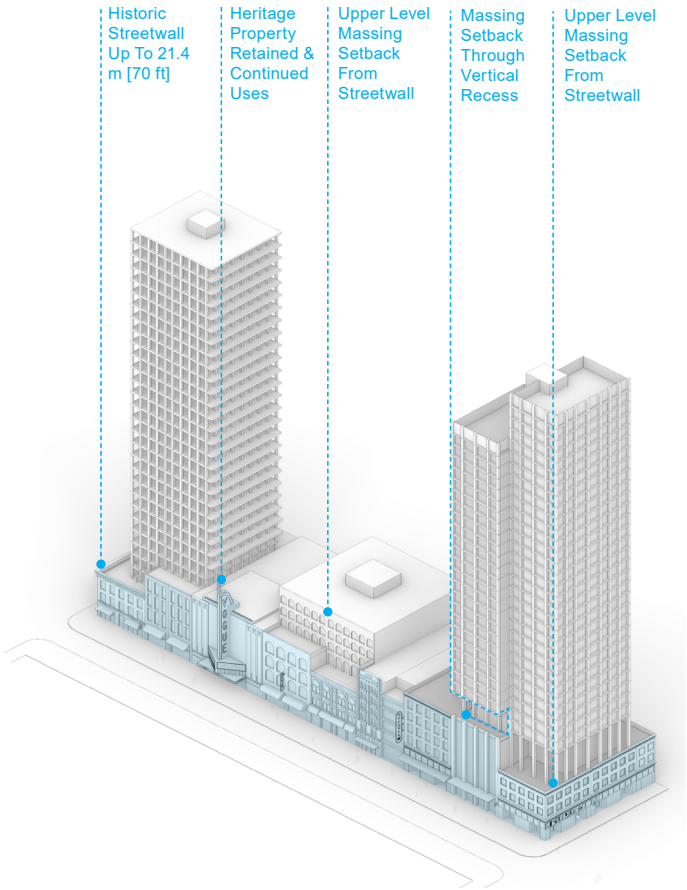
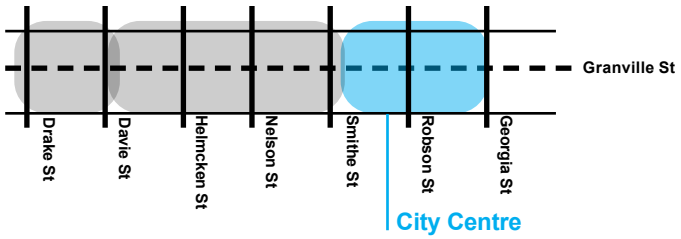


Figure 1: Highlighting strategies for preserving heritage properties, respecting historic form, and integrating contemporary design elements that complement Granville Street's cultural heritage and architectural integrity.

Image | Wythe Boutique Hotel Williamsburg, Brooklyn | New York



1.2 Mark the City Centre

Guidelines

[Gr1.2.1] New mixed-use residential developments on large sites should feature taller buildings that shape the city center's skyline.

[Gr1.2.2] Incorporate transit entries and connections into new developments to improve legibility and reinforce the area's role as a key transit hub.

[Gr1.2.3] Sites adjacent to the future public plaza at the intersection of Granville and Robson should be designed to support civic gatherings and celebrations.

[Gr1.2.4] Buildings at the intersection of Robson and Granville should incorporate large video screens into the design of the podium.

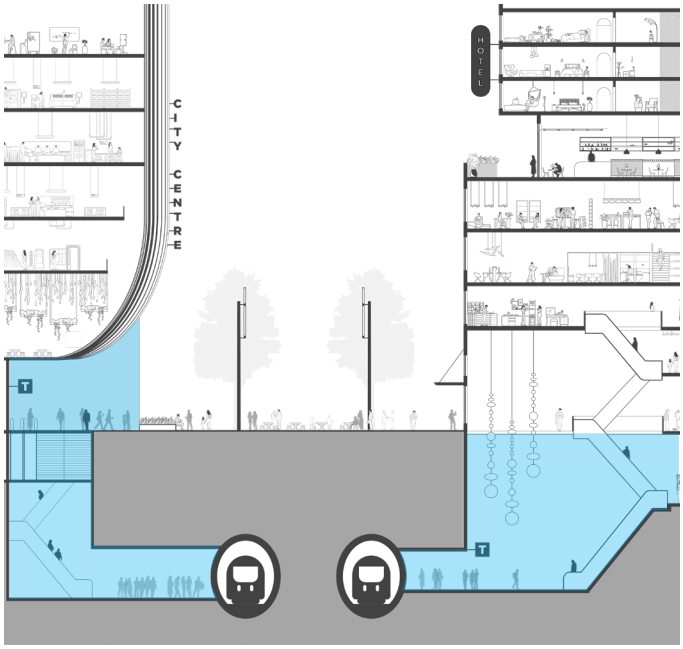
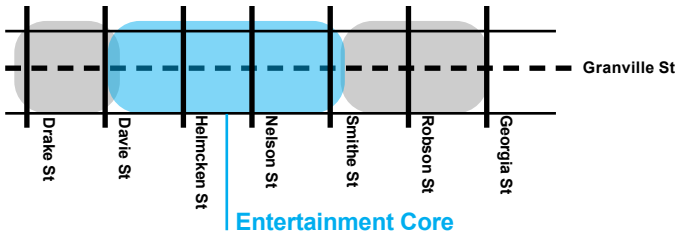


Figure 2: Section | illustrating design strategies for integrating transit connections into new developments, supporting cultural and civic gatherings at key intersections on Granville Street.

Image | The Fulton Centre | New York City



1.3 Define the Entertainment Core

Guidelines

[Gr1.3.1] Ground level uses should complement the entertainment focus of the street and future pedestrianization.

[Gr1.3.2] Ground level entrances to venues should be large and legible features of the streetscape.

[Gr1.3.3] Existing neon signage and marquees should be retained and incorporated into new development. See Section 4.1.

[Gr1.3.4] Development should integrate new neon signage to clearly identify cultural and entertainment venues and other important elements. See Section 4.1.

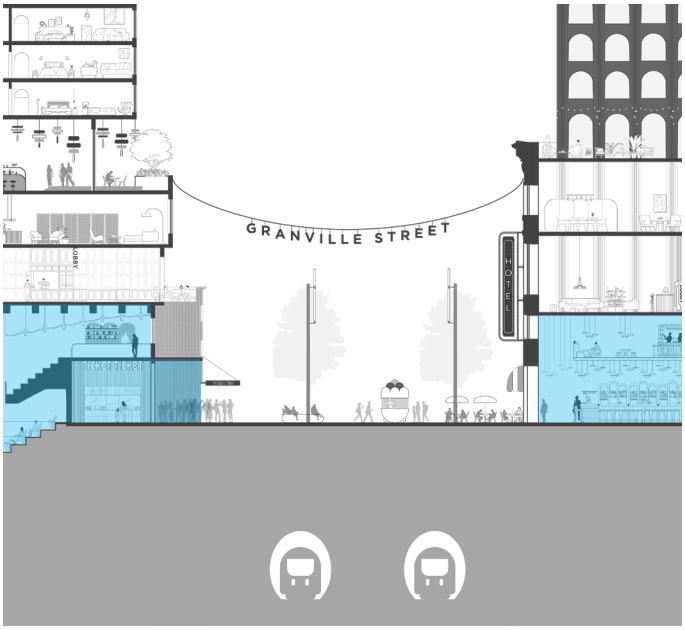
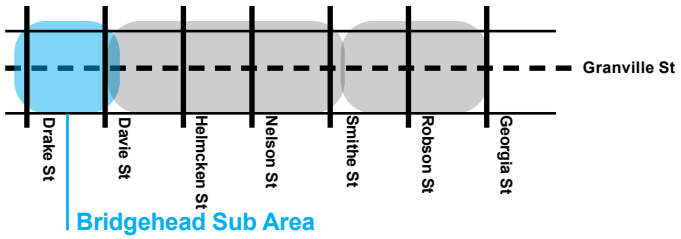


Figure 3: Section | showing strategies for vibrant ground-level uses, flexible performance spaces, and iconic neon signage to enhance Granville Street's entertainment atmosphere.

Image | Nashville's Honky Tonk Highway | Tennessee



1.4 Deliver a sociable and connected neighbourhood at the Bridgehead

Guidelines

[Gr1.4.1] Frontage improvements should prioritize creating a quieter commercial street experience that balances the area's active commercial aspects while transitioning to more peaceful residential zones.

[Gr1.4.2] To provide separation between the residential uses and the busy street level, the podium levels of mixed-use buildings should be designated for commercial uses.

[Gr1.4.3] Residential towers should be setback from the street with balconies and landscaped terraces incorporated into the building design.

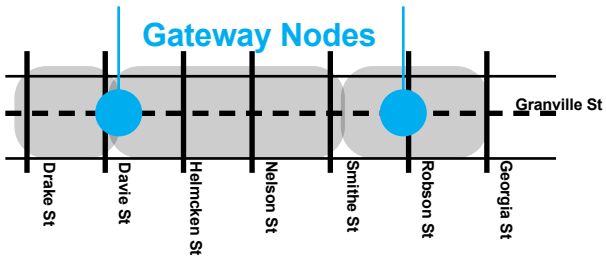
[Gr1.4.4] Common residential amenity terraces and courtyards above the podium (commercial zones) should be considered to provide quieter open spaces for residents.

Figure 4: Section | illustrating strategies for balancing active commercial areas with peaceful residential zones, including frontage improvements, noise shielding in mixed-use developments, and social interaction terraces above podiums for quieter, community-focused spaces.

Image | MO*town Track 8 | Amsterdam

1.5 Create distinctive nodes at key intersections

Guidelines



[Gr1.5.1] Design all parts of a corner development, including architectural treatments and programming, to reinforce the placemaking role of corners and intersections.

[Gr1.5.2] Reinforce through celebratory design the importance of the Gateway Nodes at Robson Street and Davie Street as symbolic entrances to Granville Street.

[Gr1.5.3] Provide additional activity at podium, parapet, balcony, or rooftop levels to enhance corner locations.

[Gr1.5.4] Corner buildings should be public-facing, supporting entertainment, food, beverage, cultural, and arts uses.

[Gr1.5.5] Provide space for patios and flexible programming at corner interfaces, with insets or relief to enhance pedestrian movement and public realm activities.

[Gr1.5.6] Avoid back-of-house and utility uses within 30.5 m (100 ft.) of intersection corners.

[Gr1.5.7] Include signature signage, lighting, and architectural elements at corner sites to anchor the block and create a pedestrian gateway.

Image | Jameson House | Vancouver

Sketch | displaying 20 year vision for Davie St and Granville St.

2 SITE LAYOUT & BUILDING PROGRAM

Introduction

The Site Layout & Building Program chapter addresses the configuration of spaces and building design to create a public realm that reflects the unique character of Granville Street. It emphasizes the integration of flexible, pedestrian-friendly connections, active frontages, and well-defined interfaces that enhance the vibrancy of the district while minimizing vehicular impact on the pedestrian experience.

Intent

A **Site layout** that:

- Reinforces the valued characteristics of the Granville street and delivers a well-defined public realm.
- Alleviates pedestrian congestion.

A **building program** that:

- Delivers safe and high-quality interfaces between the public and private realm.
- Maximizes activation of the public realm through integrated and flexible connections.
- Delivers a variety of uses at different levels to provide daytime and nighttime activity and entertainment.
- Promotes a strong physical and visual connection between cultural and entertainment uses within the building and the street, while designing flexible spaces for performance arts, live music, and other cultural activities.

Vehicle entries and building services that:

- Minimize impacts on the public realm.
- Do not undermine the attractiveness or safety of the pedestrian experience.

Does the configuration of the ground level spaces ensure a high-quality public realm that reflects a unique entertainment district?

2.1 Deliver a well-defined public realm

Guidelines

[Gr2.1.1] Building should be aligned to the street at ground level unless they provide a well defined publicly accessible open space.

[Gr2.1.2] New buildings may be set back to reinforce the form, scale and massing of existing heritage properties.

[Gr2.1.3] Setbacks for plazas should respond to the internal building program by managing pedestrian volumes and providing onsite room to queue for venues.

[Gr2.1.4] Where buildings are set back or blocks are broken, exposed walls should be used to provide art, lighting, etc., to enhance the experience.

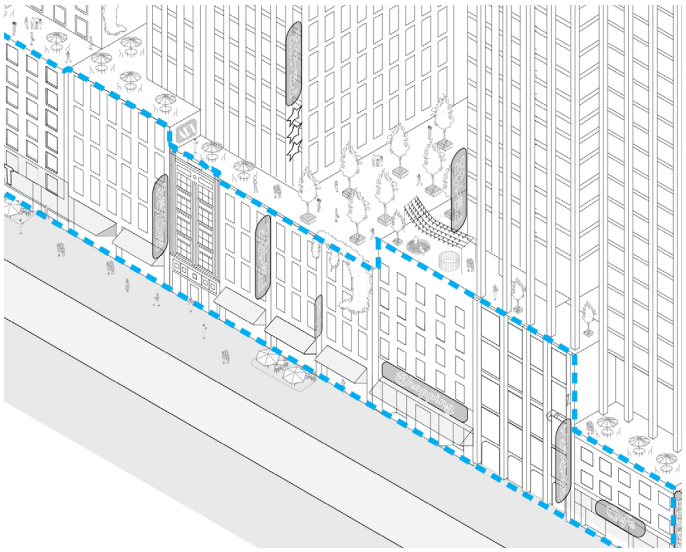


Figure 5: The streetwall is a key feature of Granville Street, defining the unique character of the historic district.

Image | Covent Garden | London

2.2 Locate and layer uses to support activity and entertainment day and night

Guidelines

[Gr2.2.1] Street frontages should be lined with activating uses that offer strong physical and visual connections, particularly at grade and upper podium levels.

[Gr2.2.2] Podium-rooftop patios, cultural spaces and event spaces should be visible from the street to maximize interaction with the public realm.

[Gr2.2.3] Entertainment uses should be located above the first storey or below ground to maximize daytime activity on the ground floors and street level.

[Gr2.2.4] Egress from venues should not adversely impact the continuity of the public realm and does not visually dominate street frontages.

[Gr2.2.5] Large floorplate tenancies should be sleeved with smaller tenancies at ground level.

[Gr2.2.6] Ground floor tenancies should be configured so that they do not rely on queuing in the public realm, except where this occurs on an on-site pedestrian connection.

[Gr2.2.7] Entrances should be located at corners or mid-block to maximize visibility, legibility and accessibility.

[Gr2.2.8] Consider operable facades to enhance public experience and increase transparency of interior program.

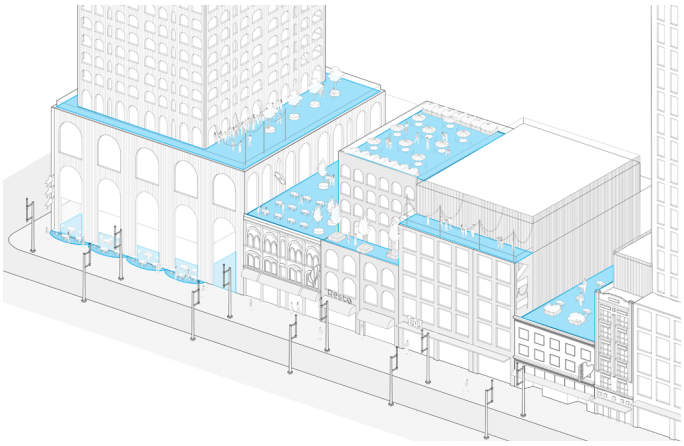


Figure 7: Roof decks can be used for crowd management in venues located on upper floors, such as clubs. Roof decks provide flexible space for queuing or gathering, helping manage pedestrian flow.

Image | Honky Tonk Central | Nashville

2.3 Thoughtfully integrate hotel and venue parking and passenger loading

Guidelines

[Gr2.3.1] Hotel vehicle entrances and passenger loading areas should be intuitive and legible.

[Gr2.3.2] Pedestrian entrances should be located along Granville Street with secondary entrances provided from laneways or mid-block connections, breezeways and arcades.

[Gr2.3.3] Designated vehicular loading zones should be provided to all developments from laneways or mid-block connections. Additional accessible loading spaces and parking should be considered.

[Gr2.3.4] Hotels and venues should provide clear service access, including hotel entries that wrap corners with laybys off the lane.

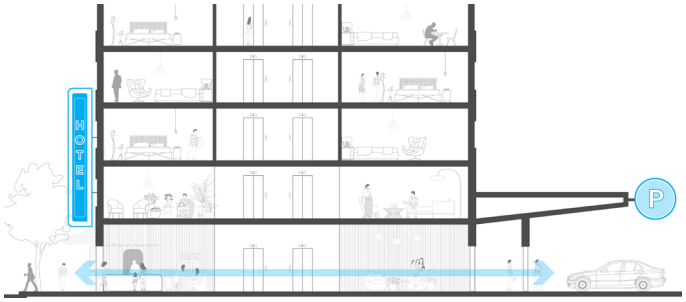


Figure 8: Hotel and building vehicular entries on parallel laneways to Granville, keeping the main street free of vehicles and ensuring a better pedestrian experience.

Image | One Burrard Place | Vancouver

Design Outcomes To Avoid

Image: Contemporary buildings should be visually and physically compatible with, subordinate to, and distinguishable from the heritage properties.

Image: Add variety through different sized CRU's and mix daytime & nightime uses to provide active frontage 24/7.

Image: Dead facades on blocks with high rise towers lead to empty streets and a public realm that is not activated.

Image: Inactive storefronts can result in unclean, vandalized conditions. Provide continuous ground floor activation along street.

Image: Platforms and lifts to be avoided where they gather unsafe spaces.

Image: All vehicle and servicing access should be provided from the laneway. No Loading / pick up / drop off on Granville Street.

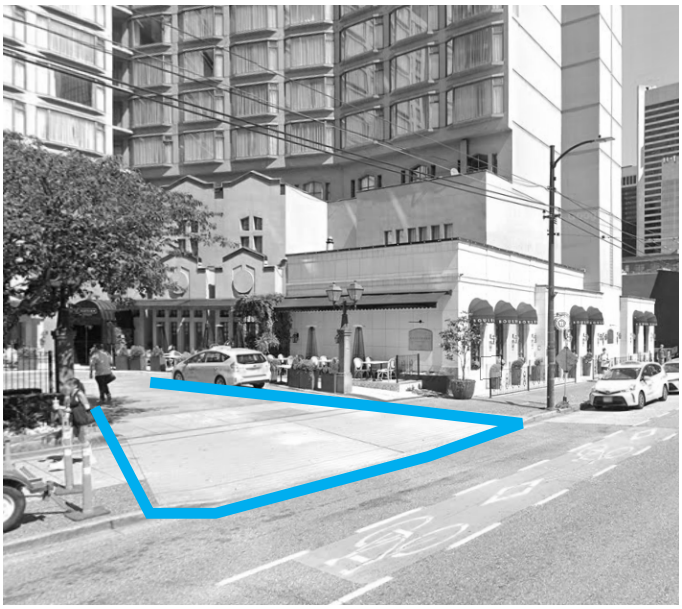


Image: Vehicle entries off Granville Street to be avoided. All vehicle and servicing access should be provided from the laneway.

Image: Dead rear elevation that discourages laneway activation.

Sketch | displaying 20 year vision for Davie St and Granville St.

3 STREETSCAPE & BUILDING MASS

Introduction

The building mass chapter relates to the three-dimensional form of a building, including its scale, height, proportions and composition.

Intent

Building mass that:

- Reinforces the fine grain and visual interest of the Granville streetscape.
- Adopts contemporary design that is physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to and distinguishable from existing heritage properties along Granville Street.
- Distinguishes between different buildings where a development comprises multiple buildings.
- Contributes architecturally distinct and interesting towers to the downtown skyline.

Street wall that:

- Adopts a variety of street wall heights to contribute to the traditional fine grain, vertical rhythm, and visual interest of the Granville streetscape.
- Creates an aesthetically interesting backdrop for the public realm.
- Frames a comfortable and attractive pedestrianized Granville Street.

Do the contemporary buildings contribute to the storytelling of the development pattern of Granville Street, and respect its cultural heritage?

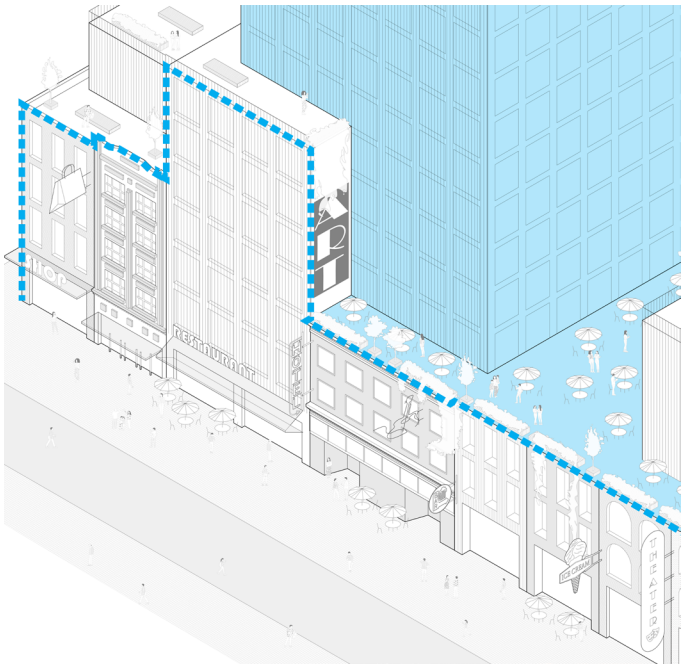


Figure 9 | showing massing which provides fine-grain vertical and horizontal rhythm. Variation provided across the street wall. Tower massing setback celebrates podium scale.

3.1: Reinforce a fine grain & vertical rhythm

Standards

[Gr3.1.1] Buildings with a street frontage greater than 22.9 m (75 ft.) should be broken into smaller vertical sections no wider than 15.2 m (50 ft.) to reflect the historic pattern of development.

[Gr3.1.2] The street wall height should not exceed 21.3 m (70 ft.).

i. Towers should be set back a minimum of 3 m (10 ft.) from Granville Street above the maximum street wall height.

ii. Tower podiums adjacent to an existing or future low-rise building site may be increased to 27.4 m (90 ft.) in height if all parts of the podium above the street wall height are set back a minimum of 3 m (10 ft.).

[Gr3.1.3] When integrating a contemporary building with a heritage building, it should be recessed to reinforce the integrity of the historic street wall by one or both of the following:

i. Horizontal: Locate the façade of the contemporary building no less than 3 m (10 ft.) from the heritage façade.

ii. Vertical: Locate the underside of the contemporary façade at least two storeys above the parapet of the heritage façade.

[Gr3.1.4] Towers or portions of towers that propose a vertical recess in place of a horizontal setback along Granville Street should not exceed 22.9m (75 ft.) in length.

Guidelines

[Gr3.1.5] Contemporary buildings should be designed to maintain and reinforce the historic sawtooth profile of the street wall.

[Gr3.1.6] Contemporary buildings should be taller than adjacent heritage properties.

[Gr3.1.7] Contemporary façades being integrated with or adjacent to a heritage property should be articulated to complement its existing vertical order, with consideration given to:

i. The scale, proportion and pattern of window and door openings.

ii. Cornice lines.

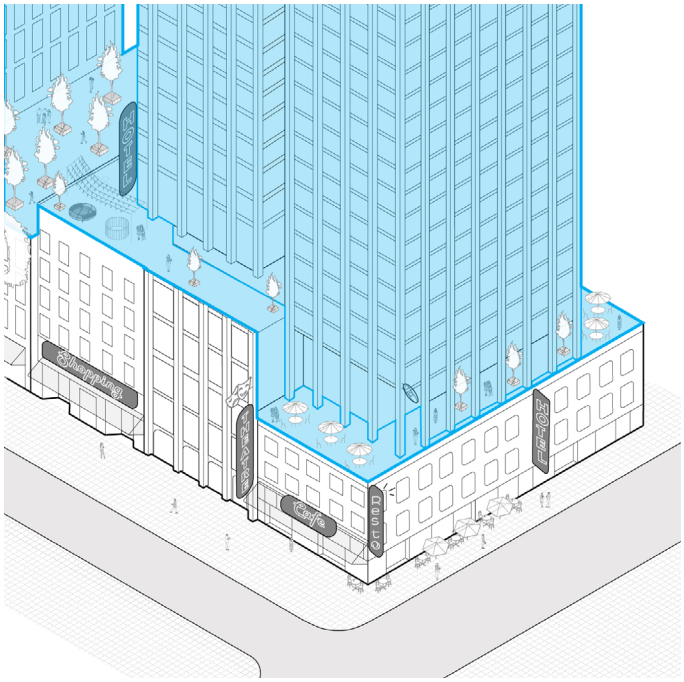


Figure 10: An illustration showing upper-level tower setbacks, including both horizontal setbacks and a vertical recess of the contemporary building from the heritage property.

Image | 325 Carrall Street Apartments| Vancouver

3.2: Create transitions between towers and low-rise heritage properties

Guidelines

[Gr3.2.1] Developments should include transitions in height, scale or prominence to a heritage property and avoid relying solely on surface treatments or decorative effects.

[Gr3.2.2] Existing heritage properties should be integrated into the podium design by providing roof deck patios visible from the street and adjacent buildings.

[Gr3.2.4] Taller buildings should consider how the historic pattern of development and fine grain module can be reflected in the tower expression.

[Gr3.2.5] Where a low podium is adjacent to a potential future development site, tower elements above the podium, up to a height of 27.4m (90 ft.), should consider façade treatments that anticipate future development.

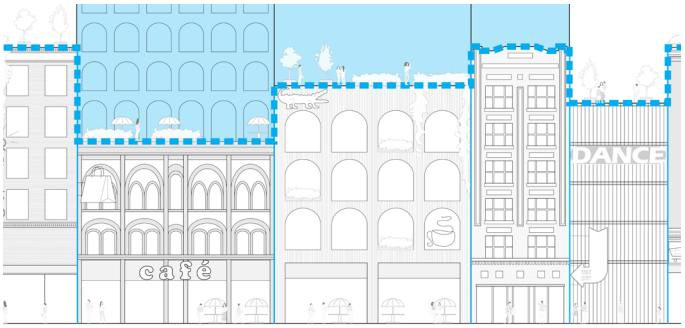


Figure 11: Elevation | illustrating façade expression along the street and the approach to differentiating between Heritage and Contemporary buildings.

Image | Queen Richmond Centre West | Toronto

3.3 Provide visual diversity

Guidelines

[Gr3.3.1] Development should adopt a diversity of forms, typologies and architectural language, within a cohesive design framework, on large site where a development comprises multiple buildings.

This might include:

i. Variety of materials, textures and finishes.
ii. Variety of facade design compositions.
iii. Variety of different architectural languages (e.g. modern with heritage)

[Gr3.3.2] Design with contemporary materials, methods and detailing to distinguish between the new and the heritage property in a manner that is physically and visually compatible.

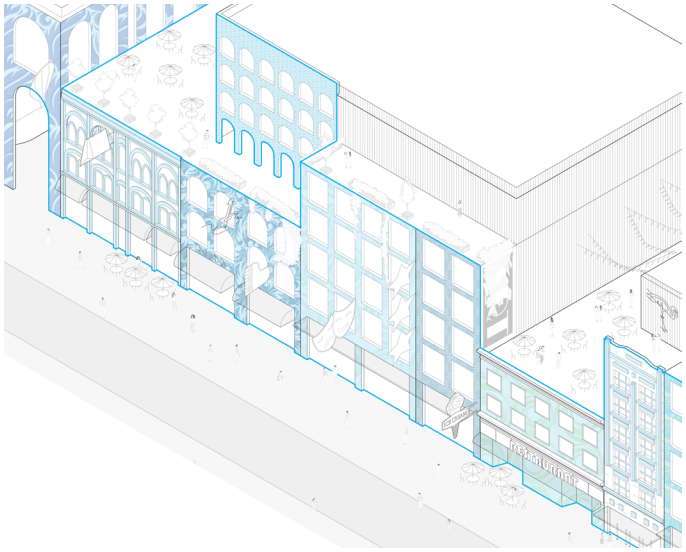


Figure 12: Illustrating how composition of build form, materiality, and expression should provide visual diversity.

Image | The Exchange Tower | Vancouver

Design Outcomes To Avoid

Image : Architectural variation should be provided, massing should be varied with set backs displaying the sawtooth concept.

Image : Provide visual differentiation between heritage and new buildings. Use high-quality materials.

Image : Blank walls to be avoided, either openings via balconies or set backs in the massing.

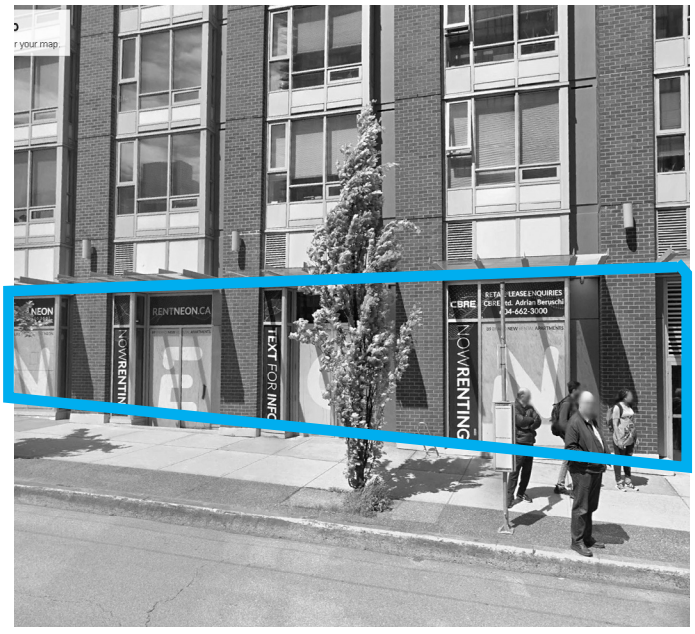


Image : Avoid large expanses of frontage without pedestrian entry along the main street.

Image : A deep setback to the carpark access door results in an undesirable space which feels unsafe at night and impacts the continuity of the pedestrian realm.

Image : Roof terraces should be activated with uses. Avoid inactive facades at ground level.

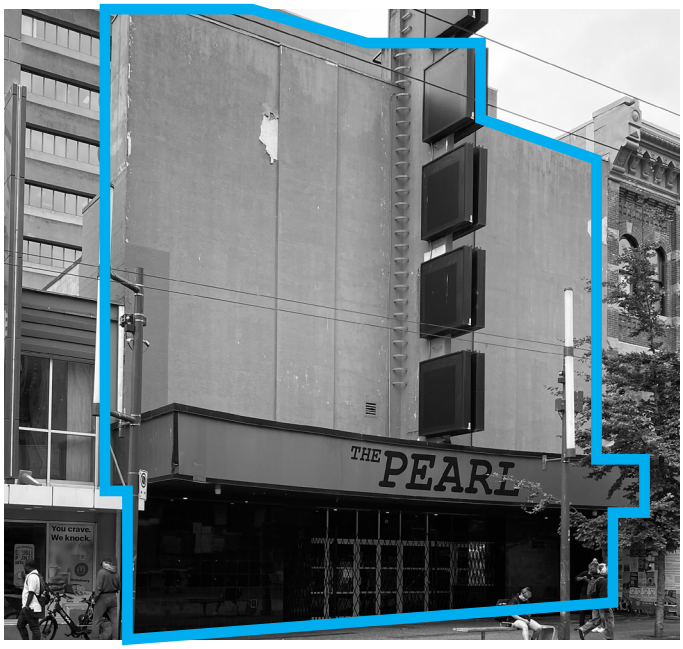
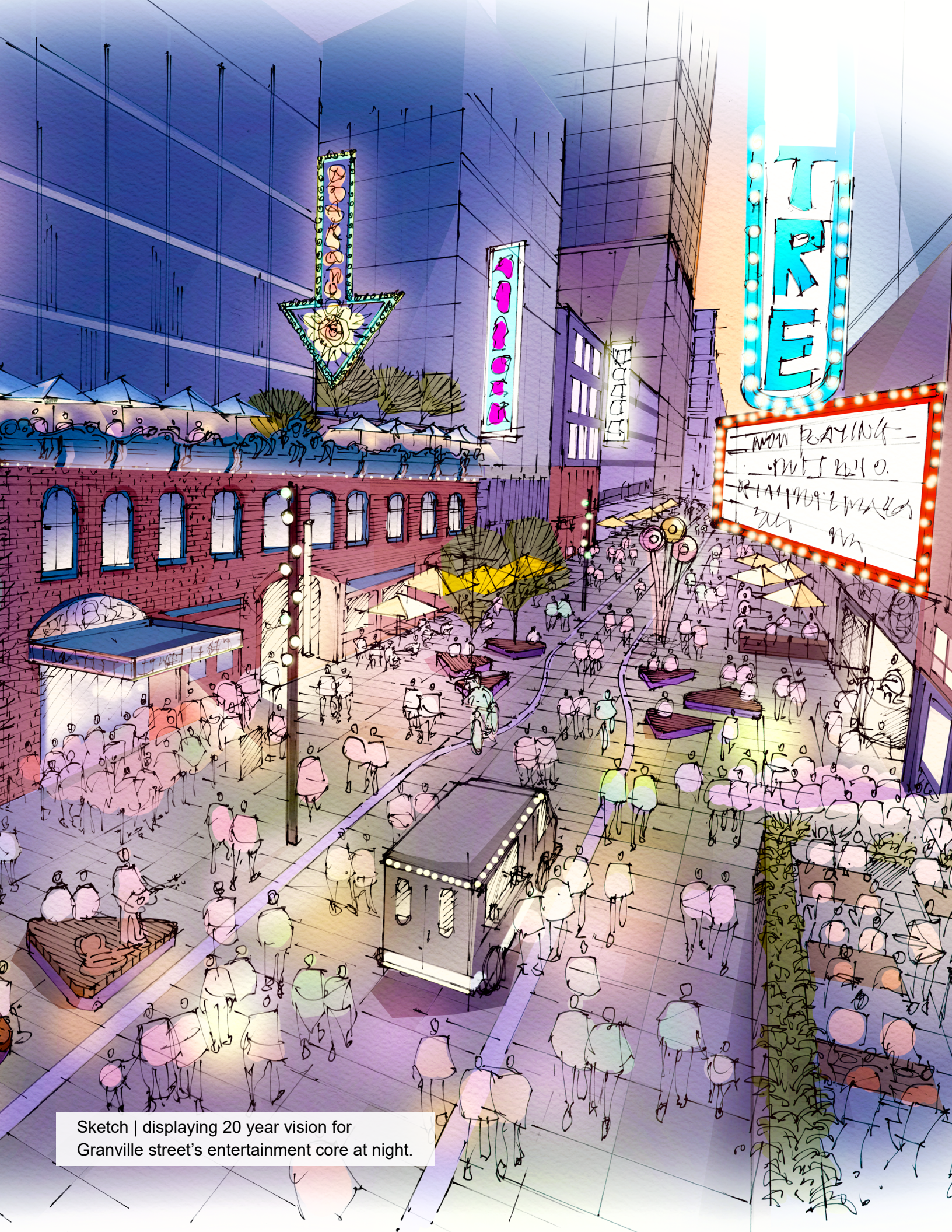


Image : Avoid blank walls, tinted, opaque or high reflectivity glass which obscures views between the public realm and building interior.

Image : Avoid long, narrow, dark, laneways and streets with large extent of inactive frontages, in order to promote safe and inclusive urban environments that are representative of all communities and genders.



Sketch | displaying 20 year vision for Granville street's entertainment core at night.

4 DESIGN DETAIL

Introduction

Design detail refers to the resolution of a contextually responsive building exterior that contributes to the quality of the public realm through its architectural expression, materials and finishes.

Intent

Exterior design that:

- Incorporates contemporary design detailing that complements the historic character of Granville Street.
- Retains the visual and physical integrity of the character-defining elements of a heritage property, primarily on the historic front façade.
- Establishes Granville Street as a destination for nighttime activities and entertainment.
- Responds to the distance at which the building is viewed and experienced from the public realm in the selection, scale and quality of design elements.

Do the architectural and urban design details reinforce the character-defining elements of Granville Street?

4.1: Reintroduce Neon Signage

Guidelines

[Gr4.1.1] Provide neon signage along Granville Street to highlight venues, cultural spaces, and businesses.

[Gr4.1.2] Neon signage should have visual precedence over other lighting.

[Gr4.1.3] Rehabilitation and/or restoration of existing neon signs should be based on archival documentation.

[Gr4.1.4] New neon signage should be designed in a contemporary manner that is compatible with the historic character of the area.

[Gr4.1.5] New neon signs should be located on or below the podium level and be visible from street level.

[Gr4.1.6] Neon signs should be a variety of scales with focus as an integrated architectural element i.e. not just a business logo (refer to 'Design Outcomes to Avoid' sections).

[Gr4.1.7] Neon signage should be provided at a minimum interval of every 7.6m (25 ft.) of street frontage along Granville Street between Davie Street and Robson Street intersections and vary in scale and sizes.

Figure 13: Illustrating how plentiful and creative neon signage play an intrinsic role in reinforcing the eclectic and electric character of the Granville Street entertainment district.

Image | Neon signage is integral to the identity of the Granville Street Entertainment District

4.2 Use digital screens at Granville and Robson

Guidelines

[Gr4.2.1] Digital screens should be positioned at the intersection of Granville Street and Robson Street to energize the entertainment district. Digital screens are not appropriate elsewhere on Granville Street.

[Gr4.2.2] Digital screens should be designed as an integrated component of the façade. The façade should be detailed to avoid the appearance of an inactive façade when the screen is turned off.

[Gr4.2.3] Screens should not detract from Granville streets neon signage identity.

[Gr4.2.4] Screens should be thoughtfully designed to minimize visibility from nearby residential buildings and strategically placed to support everyday programming that is adaptable for large events.

[Gr4.2.5] Screens should be in operation 24 hours a day but should be dimmed or concealed from view from nearby residential buildings after 10:00 pm.

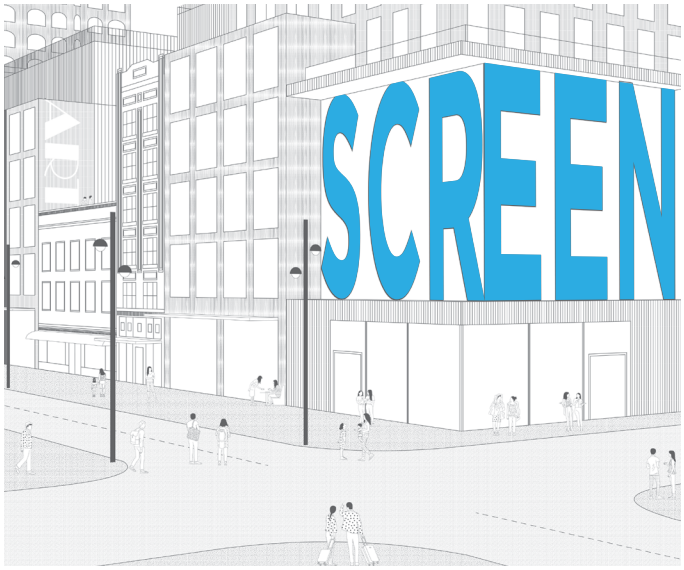


Figure 14: Illustrating how screens can be integrated into the commercial podium at the intersection of Granville and Robson.

Image | Piccadilly Circus | London

4.3 Maintain the Character-Defining Elements of Granville Street

Guidelines

[Gr4.3.1] Maintain the visual and physical integrity of existing heritage properties of various architectural styles.

[Gr4.3.2] Retain or restore the character-defining elements of the heritage property, primarily on the historic front façade, to establish pedestrian scale and rhythm.

Storefront Design

[Gr4.3.3] Retain or rehabilitate the storefront of a heritage property. Storefront assemblies historically include: three/four-point awning or canopy; minor cornice; sign band; large display windows with glazed transoms and closed bulkhead; and recessed entry doors with decorative tile, stone or terrazzo paving.

[Gr4.3.4] New storefront design should complement, not imitate, the storefronts of adjacent heritage properties in a contemporary manner.

Weather Protection

[Gr4.3.5] Encourage rehabilitation of heritage properties by reinstating awnings and canopies based on archival documentation.

[Gr4.3.6] Contemporary buildings should provide weather protection that add visual interest and contribute to the eclectic and electric identity of the area.

[Gr4.3.7] Weather protection depth should be designed to accommodate and visually express anticipated building use. For example:

i. Marque size weather-protection (increased height and depth for queuing), to be provided at major venues.
ii. Long-span canopy that covers patio area below.
iii. Landmark feature canopy for venues and hotels.

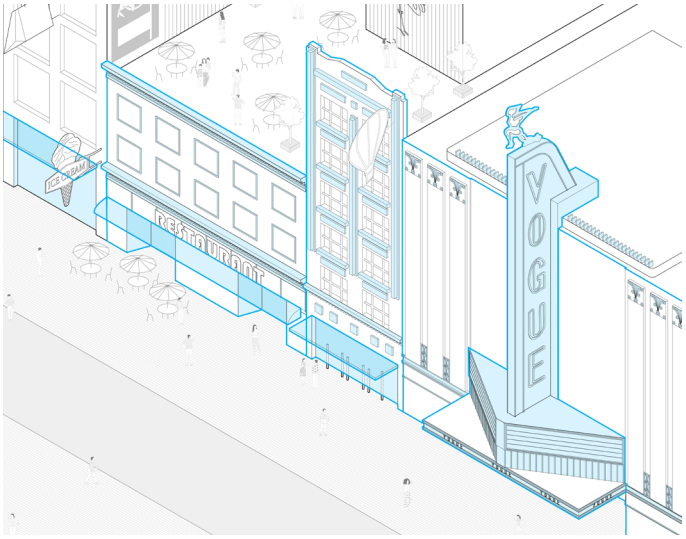


Figure 15: Expressing how unique storefronts and weather protection can add to the character of Granville Street.

4.4 Mitigate Noise for Sensitive Uses

Guidelines

[Gr4.4.1] New hotel and residential buildings should meet higher standards of acoustic performance and to maximize liveability and mitigate impacts from local events and entertainment noise including:

i. Triple glazed windows.
ii. Balcony design strategies (e.g. enclosed and/or retractable balconies).
iii. Air conditioning or other means to cool interior spaces that does not require window opening.
iv. Increased noise insulation.
v. Locating office space on lower building floors.
vi. Other innovative approaches to noise mitigation.
vii. An acoustic report (DP).

[Gr4.4.2] Locate office, hotel or other non-residential uses directly above and next to live performance venues or cabarets to provide a 'noise barrier' between residential uses and minimize noise impacts.

Image | Example of noise mitigation using a pocket park with greenery to create a haven from the busy street front. The water feature generates grey noise, masking surrounding sounds. Paley Park by Zion & Breen Associates, NYC.

Design Outcomes To Avoid

Image : Poor treatment of corner blocks with blank facades results in unsafe nooks.

Image : Low quality, non-illustrative neon signage.

Image : Corner interfaces should provide sufficient space to allow for patios and flexible programming at building edges. Poor use of rooftop and opaque facades should be avoided.

Image : Fencing to be avoided where set backs / open space are provided in corner blocks.

Image : Back of house and loading services to be avoided on Granville Street.

Image : Garage entrance for public parking to be integrated on upper floors to avoid resulting in unsafe spaces. Ground floor should have more active uses.

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- WEST 8
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- EOS

D. APPENDIX

REGULATORY AND POLICY REFERENCES

Without limitation, applicable Vancouver Council policies and guidelines for consideration include:

- Solar Access Guidelines for Areas Outside of Downtown
- Public Views Guidelines
- Housing Design and Technical Guidelines: City-owned social housing
- Bulk Storage and In-Suite Storage in Multiple Dwelling Residential Developments Bulletin
- Parking By-law 6059 and the Parking and Loading Design Supplement
- Relevant green building development by-laws, policies and guidelines
- Childcare Design Guidelines and Childcare Technical Guidelines
- Boulevard Gardening Guidelines
- Ecological Network, Blue-Green Systems Alignments, and relevant Public Realm Plans
- Garbage and Recycling Storage Facility Design Supplement

GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
Active Uses	Active uses include shops, cafés, community serving areas, lobbies, ground-oriented dwelling units or amenity spaces that engage people and bring life to an area. They encourage pedestrian activity, enhance safety, and create vibrant, inviting environments. Bicycle parking is not considered an active use.
Active Frontage	An active frontage is the part of a building's frontage that offers visual or physical access—such as windows or doors—to *active uses* within the interior of the building.
Blue-Green Systems	Blue green systems are networks of connected park-like streets that manage water and land in a way that is inspired by nature and designed to replicate natural functions and provide ecosystem services. These systems seek to protect the ecological, hydrological, and social values of the urban landscape and water cycle, and to provide resilient measures to address climate change and flood management, increase connectivity, and enhance access to nature.
Block Study	A diagrammatic study of the block surrounding a development parcel, measured from street-to-street, illustrating the likeliest future development pattern, including the proposed development. A block study should: **a)** Include a clear rationale that explains the overall block layout, **b)** Include existing contextual conditions (e.g. existing towers, active and approved applications), **c)** Show parameters for all sites (e.g. site frontages and depths, dedications, setbacks, etc.), **d)** Show tower separations and reasonably shaped tower floor plates with dimensions and floor areas. Applicants should demonstrate that adjacent properties can reach their maximum tower floor plates, **e)** Illustrate that surrounding developments can reasonably meet built-form expectations, and **f)** Consider additional requirements or constraints such as proximity to a unique area (e.g. a park or protected view).
Dedication	Dedication of land for road or lane widening can be a condition of development permit issuance or a rezoning application.
Facade	The exterior face or front of a building, often its most prominent or public-facing side.
Ground Oriented Units	Provide direct, physical access from the interior of the unit to at grade open spaces. They do not require access pathways from the public sidewalk.
High-Value Trees	Industry standard terminology provided from the arborist reports that is used to evaluate the value of the tree based on a series of factors (health, size, suitability) and where it doesn't interfere with the building envelope, largely determines if they suggest retention.
Inactive Uses	Inactive Uses: Building frontages or ground-floor spaces that do not engage with the public realm — such as blank walls, mechanical rooms, parking garages, or storage areas — and typically lack transparency, entrances, or visual interest for pedestrians.

Term	Definition
Low-Rise Building	Apartment containing more than 8 dwelling units, with a building height up to 23.0 m (75 ft. - 6 storeys), or up to 27.5 m (90 ft. - 8 storeys) where all residential floor area is developed as social housing.
Mass Timber Building	Refer to Section 2 of the Zoning and Development By-law.
Mid-block Connection	An exterior public pedestrian route at street level, generally providing a connection through a block to improve pedestrian access and ease of movement. Mid-block Connections referred to in these guidelines are located on private land but are open to the public, free of charge.
Minimum Site Frontage	The minimum total length of a parecl, or an assembly of parcels required for consideration as a tower site without the need for a discretionary decrease.
Non-Tower Site	Is defined as a site that meets one of the following criteria: **a)** A mid-block site with a frontage greater than 12.2 m (40 ft.) and less than 45.7 m (150 ft.) that cannot reasonably consolidate into an enabled frontage, or **b)** A corner site with a frontage less than 39.6 m (130 ft.)
Open Space	Open space includes Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS), Mid-block Connections, Outdoor Amenity Space, Private Open Space and other at-grade outdoor space for trees, planting and transitioning between uses.
Podium Level Massing	Podium level massing is considered to be any portion of a building below seven storeys (approximately 21.3 m (70 ft.)).
Privately-Owned Public Open Space (POPS)	Public spaces that are on private land but are open to the public, free of charge. They can include green spaces, plazas, play areas and other spaces.
Tower Developments	Any building over 6 storeys, approximately 21.3 m (70 ft.).
Tower Elements	Any portion of a building higher than six storeys up to a maximum of 21.3 m (70 ft.) in height. Enclosed rooftop amenities on a low-rise building or the podium of a mid-rise or high-rise building are excluded from the definition of a tower.
Tower Floorplate	The total gross floor area of a single level of a building, excluding podium levels. It includes all building elements within the enclosed envelope of tower elements such as elevator cores, storage, stairs, etc., but excludes balconies.
Tower Separations	Are measured from the outermost enclosed face of the building excluding balconies and architectural features/protrusions. Vertical circulation cores should comply with tower separation expectations.
Tower Site	A development parcel or assembly of parcels which meets the minimum site frontage and/or site area set out in Council-approved policies or by-laws to be considered for a tower development without the need for a discretionary decrease.

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