

CITY OF HAMILTON SITE PLAN GUIDELINES



Hamilton

September, 2003

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Table of Contents

1.0	INTRODUCTION	1.1
1.1	Purpose and Intended Use	1.2
1.2	Site Development Objectives	1.3
1.3	Site Plan Approval Process	1.4
1.4	How to Use the Guidelines.....	1.5
2.0	SITE CONTEXT AND PUBLIC SPACE CONSIDERATIONS	2.1
2.1	Introduction	2.1
2.2	Built Form, Public Realm and Streetscape.....	2.1
2.3	Natural Environment	2.12
2.4	Heritage Resources.....	2.21
2.5	Safety and Security.....	2.27
2.6	Barrier-Free Design and Urban Braille	2.33
2.7	Public Art	2.39
3.0	SITE DESIGN	3.1
3.1	Introduction	3.1
3.2	Site Circulation.....	3.1
3.3	Landscape Design.....	3.16
3.4	Waste Management Services.....	3.28
3.5	Loading, Storage and Utility Areas	3.32
3.6	Grading.....	3.36
3.7	Stormwater Management.....	3.38
3.8	Noise Attenuation.....	3.42
3.9	Lighting	3.43
3.10	Signage	3.49
4.0	BUILDING DESIGN	4.1
4.1	Introduction	4.1
4.2	Neighbourhood Features	4.1
4.3	Microclimate Design	4.2
4.4	Massing and Building Design	4.6
4.5	Skyline and Rooftops	4.10
4.6	Design of Buildings on Infill Sites	4.12
5.0	AREAS OF SPECIAL CHARACTER	5.1
6.0	SPECIFIC BUILDING TYPES	6.1
6.1	Introduction	6.1
6.2	Business Parks and Industrial Buildings	6.1
6.3	Drive-through Restaurants and Other Facilities.....	6.9
6.4	Multiple Unit – Residential	6.13
7.0	GLOSSARY OF URBAN DESIGN AND SITE PLANNING TERMS	7.1



Hamilton

CITY OF HAMILTON SITE PLAN GUIDELINES

TABLE OF APPENDICES

1. City of Hamilton Submission Requirements for Site Plan Control
2. City of Hamilton Letter of Credit Policy
3. Downtown Hamilton Development Permit Area
4. Site Plan Contact Information
5. Site Plan Control Process Flow Chart
6. Conservation Authority Jurisdiction Boundaries
7. Woodland Conservation By-law No. R00-054
8. Tree Preservation Details
9. Notice of Intent to Cut, Burn or Destroy Tree Application
10. Barrier Free Signage (Provincial Standards)
11. City of Hamilton Urban Braille System
12. City of Hamilton Barrier Free Design Guidelines (Excerpts)
13. Visibility Triangle Requirements
14. Recommended Planting Applications
15. Preferred Street Tree Species
16. City of Hamilton Tree Policies
17. Planting and Paving Details
18. Fencing Details
19. City of Hamilton Waste Management By-law (Draft)
20. Waste Enclosure Details
21. City of Hamilton Waste Collection Design Standards for New Developments and Redevelopments
22. City of Hamilton Landscape and Grading Plan Requirements
23. City of Hamilton By-law for Prohibiting and Regulating the Alteration of Property Grades, the Placing or Dumping of Fill, and the Removal of Topsoil
24. Ministry of the Environment, Noise Assessment Criteria in Land Use Planning: Requirements, Procedures and Implementation, LU-131

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Intended Use

Purpose

The City of Hamilton has prepared this site plan guidelines document to encourage a high quality of building and site design across the City and to assist applicants with the site plan approval process. The City wishes to ensure that new development is accessible, safe and functional, and to integrate new development with existing natural features and surrounding built form.

The purpose of this document is to indicate the City's design preferences and expectations for site development through a series of design guidelines. A broad range of topics are addressed in this document to ensure that all aspects of a proposed development are considered in the site design process. The design guidelines are intended to be flexible, and provide participants general guidance for the site planning process. All new development is required to comply with the Zoning By-law regulations applying to the property.

These guidelines will assist designers, developers and builders as well as the public agencies which are involved in the site plan application review process. The guidelines will provide clarity for the development process, and ensure that all developments are mutually supportive of Hamilton's desire to create an attractive, livable and functional community.

This document also contains the various technical standards that the City requires all construction to meet. The standards must be included, where applicable, on all site plan drawings.

1.2 Site Development Objectives

Cities are built piece by piece over a long period of time. Hamilton has objectives for the type of city it wishes to be. Hamilton wishes to be an attractive, livable, functional and environmentally conscious community. It is important for each development project to strive to achieve the City's objectives through its design.

New development should implement the following general design objectives:

- Promote livability through pedestrian scale development and land use compatibility.
- Encourage environmental sustainability by retaining ecologically important features, integrating landscaping and reducing stormwater runoff.
- Promote accessibility through safe and efficient pedestrian and vehicular circulation, and accommodate people with a range of abilities and impairments.
- Achieve high quality building design which enhances the public realm and creates an attractive streetscape.
- Create a sense of place by preserving significant heritage features and community character, protecting important views, improving the streetscape, and creating community landmarks.

Objectives

1.3 Site Plan Approval Process

The purpose of the site plan approval process is to provide a review of site, building and landscape features to ensure that an appropriate development solution is achieved, and one which is attractive and functional for its users.

Applicability

Site plan approval is a type of development control authorized under Section 41 of The Planning Act, R.S.O., 1990 c.P. 13 and exercised by municipalities. Generally, the following types of development are subject to full site plan approval:

- Industrial;
- Commercial;
- Institutional; and,
- Multiple residential.

Please refer to the Site Plan Control By-laws of the former municipalities now comprising the City of Hamilton to determine the specific forms of development that require site plan approval, and for special exemptions.

Review Process

The site plan approval process is administered by the Planning and Development Department. The site plan process allows City staff to review and approve the following items as prescribed under the *Planning Act*:

- Building and site design;
- Building massing;
- The relationship of the proposal to surrounding land uses;
- Driveways, curbing and traffic direction signs;
- Loading and parking facilities;
- Emergency vehicle routes;
- All pedestrian accesses, such as walkways and ramps, and their proposed surfacing;
- Landscaping for the site and for the protection of adjoining lands;
- Grading and servicing; and
- Need for road widenings.

1.4 Site Plan Submission Requirements

1.5 How to Use the Guidelines

The Site Plan Guidelines are intended to provide guidance to development projects that are subject to site plan approval. These guidelines convey the City's preferences and expectations for site and building development. There is flexibility in the use of these guidelines and the City recognizes the need to co-operatively achieve both municipal objectives and private development requirements.

Guideline Sections This document is organized into seven sections described below.

Section 1 provides the introduction to this document, including the purpose and intended use, identifies the City's primary development objectives, review the City's site plan approval process and submission requirements, and describes how to use this document.

Section 2 addresses site context and public space considerations for new development projects. Topics include public realm and streets, neighbourhood character, heritage conservation, and safety and security. All development projects should have regard to these guidelines.

Section 3 builds on the foundation of public space design to address specific site planning components. Specific functional areas addressed include site circulation, landscape design, grading, parking and loading, lighting, signage and stormwater management.

Section 4 contains direction for building design. Hamilton does not prescribe architectural styles but does provide guidance on relating new buildings to existing neighbourhoods, building mass and rooflines.

Section 5 provides information on areas of special character. Throughout Hamilton there are areas such as heritage conservation districts, historic town centres and the Niagara Escarpment which requires special attention to ensure that new development respects the character of these areas.

Section 6 deals with specific building types that have inherent form and functional characteristics which need to be considered at the site design stage. The guidelines for specific buildings should be reviewed in conjunction with the general design considerations. Guidelines have been prepared for the following types of development:

- Business park and industrial buildings
- Drive through restaurants and other facilities
- Multi-residential (apartments, street townhouses, cluster townhouses)

Section 7 contains the glossary of terms.

Section 8 includes the Appendices. The appendices contain specific references identified throughout this document, such as technical standards, maps, zoning requirements, by-laws and application forms.

Each Section contains numerous plan topics. Each topic includes a rationale section which explains the general development issues and design objectives. The rationale is followed by the design guidelines, and includes diagrams and photos to illustrate specific guidelines. The graphics illustrate possible ways to achieve specific guidelines but are not intended to be the only design solution.

The City has a series of technical standards for implementation and construction. These standards will be used on all drawings and in construction. The key standards are referenced following the guidelines with a full listing of all applicable standards for that topic included in the appendices. Other applicable information, such as references documents and submission requirements, are noted throughout each section.

Hamilton is a large community geographically. It incorporates the former Hamilton urban area, a number of towns which surround the main urban area and the surrounding rural areas.

These guidelines have been created primarily to deal with urban development. They do however, have some applicability for rural and hamlet developments.

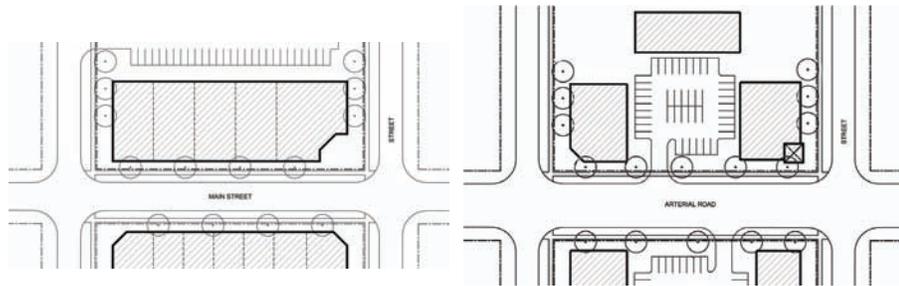
Guideline Topics

Urban/Rural Areas

Guideline Application

Consultation with City staff can clarify the appropriate approach for rural development applications.

The general intent of the City is to create a high quality built environment with an emphasis on the public street space as is discussed in Section 2 of this document. How these guidelines will apply will vary by activity and location across the city. The sketches below, for example, illustrate development possibilities along major roads in different parts of the City with different relationships of buildings to the street.



The intent and direction of the guidelines as they apply to each project and its neighbourhood should be discussed with City staff to determine the key public objectives given the context and characteristics of the project.

There may also be circumstances where specific guidelines may be in conflict with each other. City staff can clarify and provide direction on which principles should take precedence.