Appendix A

Tall Buildings Guidelines
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## 2.0 Site Character and Local Context

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1.0 Introduction

Intent of This Document

The Downtown Hamilton Tall Building Guidelines is a reference document that guides the design of tall buildings within Hamilton's Downtown. These guidelines set clear expectations and best practices that may be relied upon in the evaluation of applications. The Guidelines are a document that can evolve and be reviewed as the Downtown evolves over time.

Study Area

The Guidelines apply to the Hamilton Downtown Secondary Plan boundaries as identified in the City of Hamilton Official Plan (illustrated in Figure 1, to the left).

Background

The Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan “outlines a vision of Hamilton’s downtown that is ‘vibrant’ with ‘human scale streetscapes offering comfort’. It also aims to ‘redirect our gaze from the urban core to the surrounding neighbourhoods, the waterfront and the escarpment’. Recent work by City staff resulted in an inventory of heritage buildings that add to the Downtown’s character and liveability. This vision, together with a renewed development interest in tall buildings in Hamilton’s core will, over time, fundamentally change the shape of the Downtown.

As part of the current review of the Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan, Planning staff at the City of Hamilton identified the need for guidelines surrounding the development of tall buildings within Hamilton’s Downtown. The existing Secondary Plan includes height limits, but also permits exceptions where certain criteria (sun, shade or wind impacts on public spaces) are mitigated. Initiated in 2014, the Downtown Hamilton Tall Buildings Study (the Study) was developed in conjunction with the Secondary Plan Review, and acts as input into the final update of the Secondary Plan. The Study establishes a planning framework that will guide where tall buildings are appropriate, provide clarity around how these mitigation strategies are to be implemented and evaluated, and include specific design guidance around tall building height, fit and relationship to context.

Related Studies

The Guidelines are to be read in conjunction with related documents, including but not limited to:

- Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan (2016)
- Hamilton Downtown Built Heritage Inventory (2014)
- James Street North Mobility Hub Study (2014)
- Urban Hamilton Official Plan (2013)
- City of Hamilton Cultural Plan (2013)
- Pedestrian Master Plan (2012)
- John Rebecca Park Master Plan (2012)
- Clean & Green Hamilton Strategy (2012)
- Gore Park Master Plan (2010)
- York Boulevard Streetscape Master Plan (2010)
- City of Hamilton Public Art Master Plan (2009)
- Downtown Transportation Master Plan (2008)
- The King Street West Streetscape Master Plan (2004)
- Downtown Mobility Streets Master Plan (Bay Street, James Street, John Street, Hunter Street) (2003)
Downtown Hamilton Tall Buildings Guidelines is the product of a broader study process, as documented in the Downtown Hamilton Tall Buildings Background Study and should therefore be read and used in conjunction with its companion document.

Key Considerations

As part of the Study, the following considerations are addressed:

- **What is Tall?** – The definition of “tall buildings” within the Hamilton context, which are buildings that are generally 12 storeys or greater.

- **Unique Context** – The study considers unique aspects of Hamilton’s downtown with regards to tall buildings, specifically: topography, natural heritage (Niagara Escarpment) views (from the Escarpment and/or Harbour), parcel size, and key transit corridors/hubs.

- **Context and Fit** – The guidelines define appropriate locations, heights and relationships for tall buildings and consider the Site Character Area and the varying contexts of the surrounding neighbourhoods.

- **Climatic Consideration** – The cumulative impacts of sun, shade and wind are addressed, with criteria that are to be used for their evaluation.

- **Heritage Buildings** – The protection of, and relationship to heritage buildings are addressed by the guidelines. Additionally, specific guidelines related to land assembly in this context are provided.

- **Open Space** – The relationship of tall buildings to existing open spaces is addressed.

- **Conformance with Zoning** – The new guidelines will be aligned with the zoning by-law.

As summarized in the accompanying diagram, in order for a landowner and/or developer to determine if they are able to develop a tall building on their property, and the applicability of the Downtown Hamilton Tall Buildings Guidelines, the subject site would first need to be assessed in terms of site character and local context, lot dimensions and other relevant metrics, including adjacent street right-of-way width. If it is determined that the development of a tall building is possible, the Guidelines provides the performance measures upon which the siting and design of the building(s) should meet, and would be analyzed against through the City review process.
Tall Buildings Study

SITE ASSESSMENT

1. Identify Lot Dimensions: Width, Depth, Height Limit, R.O.W.

BUILDING TYPES

2. Establish Potential Building Types: Lowrise, Midrise, Point Tower Or Hybrid

SITE CHARACTER & LOCAL CONTEXT

3. Locate Your Property And Identify The Site Character Area

BUILDING ARTICULATION

4. Articulate Building Design: Facade, Tower Placement & Separations

CONTEXTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

5. Establish Relationship To Local Context: Heritage, Parks, Transit

GENERAL GUIDELINES

6. Articulate Streetscape Design, Weather Protection And Public Art
Site Assessment and Building Types

As per the Secondary Plan, building types and heights are categorized as follows: Low-rise (2-4 storeys), Mid-rise (6 to 8 storeys) and High-rise (12+ storeys). The following matrix identifies how site frontage and lot depth are one factor which informs the potential number of storeys, height and building type. In the matrix we breakout a High-rise building as a Point Tower (singular tall building) and Hybrid (more than one tall building on a low-rise base or podium).

Refer to the Tall Buildings Study Section 3.0 for further details regarding building types, including required frontage, depth, adjacent street right-of-way (R.O.W.), number of storeys, maximum height (m), and precedent images.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FRONTAGE</th>
<th>LOT DEPTH</th>
<th># STOREYS</th>
<th>HEIGHT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 - 30m</td>
<td>20 - 90m</td>
<td>4 - 6 str (max)</td>
<td>22m (max)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30m + (min)</td>
<td>32.6m - 44.6m (min.)</td>
<td>6 - 12 str (max)</td>
<td>19.5m - 34.5m (max)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35m + (min)</td>
<td>45.5m + (min)</td>
<td>12+ str</td>
<td>35m +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80m + (min)</td>
<td>80m + (min)</td>
<td>12+ str</td>
<td>35m +</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **LOW-RISE INFILL**
- **MID-RISE**
- **POINT TOWER**
- **HYBRID**
Site Character and Local Context

Character Areas
The Guidelines are organized around Character Areas (Section 2.1) which are organized based on common land uses, building typologies and interfaces with adjacent public realm (e.g. streetscape or park) contributing to their unique identities. Descriptions of the Character Areas and their Priorities are described in this section.

Character Area Priorities
The delivery of a vibrant, mixed use Downtown requires the articulation of priorities and elements that require special attention. This should respond to the unique context and vision for each of the Character Areas within the Downtown, and include priorities, as identified through the study consultation. The visual direction for each of the Character Areas are illustrated in the following pages and demonstrate key elements that need to be considered as redevelopment occurs within each Character Area of the Downtown, including: vision for each character area, built form qualities and public realm interface, priorities/ key considerations and urban design strategies (e.g. consistent street wall, street interface, transitional frontage, setbacks to complete the pedestrian boulevard, active facades, etc.)

Neighbourhoods
The balance of the Downtown Area not identified as one of the first six Character Areas is categorized as Neighbourhood. While they may contain a mix of uses, including retail and commercial uses, the predominant land use is residential.

Neighbourhood Areas are still subject to the Tall Buildings Guidelines, so long as a tall building is deemed as an appropriate building type based on the site assessment process.
2.0 Site Character and Local Context

Locate Your Property And Identify The Site Character Area

SITE CHARACTER & LOCAL CONTEXT

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2.1 Character Area Framework

The Character Area Framework describes the predominant character and appropriate built form for different areas of the Downtown. Buildings within the Character Areas generally share common building typologies and interfaces with the public realm.

The Character Areas were defined with input from City Staff, the Technical Advisory Committee, the Design Review Panel and the Community Liaison Committee, and include:

- Prime Retail Streets - James St. & King St.
- Downtown Core (Civic Precinct)
- The Gore
- Main St. Corridor
- York Blvd.
- John / Rebecca
- Neighbourhoods
- Existing Parks

This section describes the predominant character of each Area and summarizes the existing zoning category, range of property depths and heights, and the range of ground and upper floor heights.

As part of the process of determining whether a site is appropriate for a tall building, in addition to the process of site assessment and establishing building type, the property should be located in terms of which Character Area it resides in to understand design priorities and parameters for development.

Relevant Reference Documents:
- Hamilton Downtown Built Heritage Inventory (2014)
- Downtown Heritage Character Zone Design Guidelines
The Site Assessment Matrix builds on the Building Type analysis that was conducted as part of the Tall Buildings Study. The Matrix (shown to the right) brings the Character Area analysis together with the Building Type analysis to identify which building type(s) are generally appropriate for each of the Character Areas. For example, based on the properties and features within the Prime Retail Character Area, low-rise infill and mid-rise are generally appropriate building types. In the John/Rebecca Character Area, based on the properties and features here, mid-rise, point tower and hybrid building types are generally appropriate.
<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOW-RISE INFILL</td>
<td>○</td>
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<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MID-RISE</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
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<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POINT TOWER</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HYBRID</td>
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</table>
2.2 Prime Retail Streets - James St. & King St.

Prime Retail Streets represent the traditional commercial districts of Downtown Hamilton. Buildings along streets like James Street North and parts of King Street are typically 3-4 storeys tall and house a variety of shops that support the local economy and facilitate a vibrant street life. Preserving and enhancing this street life will be critical in these areas.

The vision for the Prime Retail Streets is to complete the streetwall and provide an uninterrupted building line at the street level through redevelopment and infill development along the corridor.

In order to retain the character of the area, new development shall meet the following design priorities:

a. New buildings shall match the streetwall height of existing buildings.
b. Any taller building masses shall be sufficiently stepped back from the street to avoid interference with the perceived massing of the street as a low-rise corridor.
c. New development shall not increase the average extent of shadows on sidewalks of commercial areas.
d. Buildings shall be built tight to the streetline and align with adjacent facades.
e. The articulation of facades shall retain the scale of the streetfront shops in its surroundings.
f. As per the Secondary Plan, ground floors will predominantly be occupied by street oriented commercial uses. Therefore, the ground floor frontage shall be clearly articulated in the massing of the facade, substantially glazed, with generous floor-to-floor heights and designed to accommodate signage.
g. Upper floors of buildings along King and James shall include a variety of uses (office commercial, residential and live/work arrangements) which will be reflected by the diversity in the facade.
h. New buildings shall use facade solutions compatible with existing materials: brick, stone, decorative treatments, etc.
i. No additional on-street parking will generally be granted; new development shall provide sufficient parking either underground or at the rear of the property.
j. Loading areas shall be located off of the retail street.
The existing zoning generally captures the City’s vision for the area in terms of heights, land use, etc. Nonetheless, deeper lots potentially offer an opportunity for infill with taller buildings, provided that their presence enhances the Character Area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Zoning</th>
<th>Downtown Prime Retail Streets (D2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property Depth</td>
<td>20m - 97m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Width</td>
<td>4m - 80m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Height</td>
<td>3 - 4 storeys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground Floor Height</td>
<td>3.6m (min) - 4.5m (max)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Floor Height</td>
<td>3.0m (min) - 4.0m (max)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The map below classifies the parcels along James Street according to property width, which reveals the fine-grain scale and characteristic of ownership typical of commercial streets. Consequently, the development activity expected in a retail street is generally modest in scale.
2.3 Downtown Core (Civic Precinct)

The Downtown Core (Civic Precinct) is already home to some of Hamilton’s tallest buildings, and the best place for new tall buildings. The Civic Precinct is a highly suitable area for intensification, as it is already well connected to transit and served by multiple facilities: City Hall, the Theatre, Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton Public Library and Market, FirstOntario Centre, the Convention Centre, and Jackson Square. The design of towers will need to limit the impact of shade and wind.

The vision for the Downtown Core is to activate the pedestrian realm through the intensification of the area, which shall allow for improvements and expansion of the open space network.

In order to have a positive impact in the pedestrian realm, new development shall meet the following design priorities:

a. All development shall focus on the street.

b. New buildings shall be built to the street line; additional setbacks may be permitted with the purpose of accommodating useful and well-integrated amenities and landscaping.

c. Active uses shall be located at grade, including retail, entertainment uses, and amenity areas.

d. Development at the Jackson Square Complex shall redesign the blank building façades and reorient the complex toward the surrounding streets.

e. Outdoor amenity areas associated to new development shall be coordinated with and compliment the existing open space network.

f. Setbacks, stepbacks, recesses, canopies, and other massing techniques shall be employed in order to limit the impact of shade and wind onto pedestrian spaces.

g. New tall buildings shall be spaced apart from existing towers to avoid wind funnels, and oriented in such way that will not compromise the privacy of their neighbours.

h. Surface parking shall not be allowed.

i. Loading areas shall be consolidated and centralized underground, where possible.
While the existing zoning allows for heights between 6 and 15 storeys, the Downtown Secondary Plan also allows for exceptions to the height limit where certain impacts (shade and wind) are mitigated. Some zones of the Downtown Core Character Area have sufficient space available to mitigate the impact of shadow and wind, and therefore may be suitable for additional height than what is currently permitted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Existing Zoning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Downtown Central Business District (D1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Depth</td>
<td>60m - 120m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Width</td>
<td>60m - 160m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Height</td>
<td>6 - 25 storeys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground Floor Height</td>
<td>3.6m (min) - 4.5m (max)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Floor Height</td>
<td>3.0m (min) - 4.0m (max)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The map to the left highlights the location of taller buildings within the character area, which reveals a cluster along King St and East of MacNab St. The blocks in this character area are large enough that new tall buildings could be added without conflicting with the existing ones.
2.4 The Gore

As Downtown Hamilton's primary open space, the Gore requires special attention. The blocks surrounding the Gore already include some tall buildings, but also include 'gaps' that will likely be developed over time. Identifying the appropriate heights for new buildings around the Gore will be a critical task.

The vision for the Gore is to maintain and emphasize its architectural heritage character while retaining and enhancing the public open space attributes of Gore Park.

In order to retain the character of the area, new development shall meet the following design priorities:

a. Buildings shall retain the traditional building line; limited façade articulation may be permitted to allow for sheltered areas and patios at ground level.

b. New buildings shall align to the site lot line to avoid gaps in the streetwall.

c. New buildings shall be consistent with traditional streetwall height of three to six storeys.

d. Upper storeys may be allowed if sufficiently set back so that no additional shadows or wind impacts result from them.

e. Traditional materials of stone, wood, and brick shall be used; other materials may be allowed provided that they are visually harmonious with adjacent buildings.

f. The articulation of the facade of new buildings shall reflect or complement the traditional patterns of fenestration in adjacent buildings.

g. All buildings shall incorporate ground level pedestrian access; access for loading shall occur at the rear.

h. The ground floor frontage shall be strongly connected to the street and designed to accommodate signage that will respect the architectural integrity of the building.
The existing zoning permits a wide range of heights within the Character Area. However, the Downtown Secondary Plan establishes conditions and constraints over the permitted heights in order to ensure that if maximum heights are pursued, the new development conforms with the City’s vision for the Gore.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Zoning</th>
<th>Downtown Prime Retail Streets (D2); Open Space (P4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property Depth</td>
<td>40m - 88m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Width</td>
<td>5m - 60m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Height</td>
<td>3 - 4 storeys to 14 storeys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground Floor Height</td>
<td>3.6m (min) - 4.5m (max)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Floor Height</td>
<td>3.0m (min) - 4.0m (max)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The maps to the right compare the boundary of the character area to the heritage property inventory, which confirm that the majority of the properties at the perimeter of the park have heritage significance. Therefore, any new development proposed in proximity to the park will have to be carefully considered.
2.5 Main Street Corridor

The Main Street Corridor is already home to a mix of tall buildings. The wider street and easy access could accommodate a mix of mid-rise and tall buildings.

The vision for the Main Street Corridor is to strengthen Main Street's image as a primary residential and commercial avenue within the Downtown.

In order to retain the character of the area, new development shall meet the following design priorities:

a. Buildings shall contribute to the creation of public open space along the street through appropriately located amenity areas that contribute to the pedestrian environment on Main Street.

b. Generally, new development should be mid-rise in height in order to maintain a pedestrian scale along the street. Taller buildings may be permitted if massed in such a manner that additional height will not result in any adverse shadow or wind impacts on the public sidewalks.

c. Any development between James Street and Catharine Street shall enhance the character of several prominent sites, including the John Sopinka Courthouse and Prince's Square:
   - Corner sites adjacent to the Courthouse Square are to be built to the street line to frame and define this important public space, and to address impacts on existing or proposed public transit stops.
   - The height of new buildings directly adjacent to or facing the Courthouse Square will not exceed the height of the existing John Sopinka Courthouse at the street level, and minimize any sun, shadow, or wind impacts on the Courthouse Square and adjoining Gore area.

Main Street is not envisioned by the Secondary Plan as particularly height-consistent along its full length, but rather by segments. Despite this condition, both sides of the street should be similar in height. Taller buildings are allowed within the Development Permit Area. For the balance of the corridor, it is unlikely that any building taller than 12 storeys can be accommodated without casting substantial shadows onto the public street, based on the limited average depth of properties.
Right: The John Sopinka Courthouse, key feature of the The Courts Development Permit Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property Depth</th>
<th>40m - 85m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property Width</td>
<td>8m - 95m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Height</td>
<td>6 - 8 storeys to 43 storeys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground Floor Height</td>
<td>3.6m (min) - 4.5m (max)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Floor Height</td>
<td>3.0m (min) - 4.0m (max)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.6 York Boulevard Corridor

As a gateway into the Downtown, the York Boulevard area could offer opportunities for redevelopment.

The vision for the York Boulevard Corridor is to create a strong streetwall that will emphasize the character of the corridor as a primary access to the Downtown.

In order to retain the character of the area, new development shall meet the following design priorities:

a. All new buildings will be built to the street line. Additional setbacks may be permitted to accommodate amenities and additional open space.

b. Surface parking will not abut York Boulevard.

c. Street-oriented uses and at-grade retail will be accommodated at the ground floor, particularly along the north side of the street in order to maximize access to sunlight.

d. All new housing fronting onto local streets will be limited to low-density uses

While the Secondary Plan establishes maximum heights of 4 to 8 storeys, the size of some of the lots may provide an opportunity to fit taller buildings and should be supplemented with additional open space, as well as be designed to create a gateway feature.
Right: According to OPA No. 175, a utility plant for the generation and transmission of heat, steam and electricity is permitted on the lands located at 130 York Boulevard (refer to Schedule “L-9” of the Downtown Secondary Plan).

### Existing Zoning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property Depth</th>
<th>Downtown Mixed Use (D3); Downtown Multiple Res. Zone (D6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property Width</td>
<td>23m - 170m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Height</td>
<td>3 - 4 storeys to 14 storeys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground Floor Height</td>
<td>3.6m (min) - 4.5m (max)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Floor Height</td>
<td>3.0m (min) - 4.0m (max)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.7 John Street / Rebecca Street

The parking lots around John and Rebecca Streets offer rare opportunities to develop full blocks of the Downtown. These blocks could house larger uses like community facilities or supermarkets that are integrated with a mix of building types, including tall buildings, townhouses and mid-rise buildings.

The vision for John Street / Rebecca Street is to feature street-oriented buildings that restore the traditional character of the Downtown area.

In order to retain the character of the area, new development shall meet the following design priorities:

a. Surface parking will be relocated at the rear of buildings, with access through a consolidated driveway system.

b. The height of new buildings and additions should be low-to-mid-rise in order to maintain a pedestrian scale along the public streets. Certain higher-intensity and taller buildings may be permitted only if the height is massed as to achieve a harmonious relationship with adjoining buildings, public spaces, and any planned development.

c. The facade of larger buildings will be designed with particular attention to detail and ensure that its articulation evoke the 8-20 m wide rhythm of the traditional downtown buildings.

d. Signage will be designed and located to be compatible with a residential environment.
Right: A new park named John Rebecca Urban Park will be developed at the core of the Character Area (image from presentation at Municipal Urban Designers Roundtable, October 28, 2011). The built form envisioned surrounding the park is mid-rise in order to maximize sunlight to the park.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Zoning</th>
<th>Downtown Mixed Use (D3); Open Space (P4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property Depth</td>
<td>20m - 95m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Width</td>
<td>6m - 100m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Height</td>
<td>6 - 8 storeys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground Floor Height</td>
<td>3.6m (min) - 4.5m (max)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Floor Height</td>
<td>3.0m (min) - 4.0m (max)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.8 Neighbourhoods

The balance of the Downtown Area not identified as one of the first six Character Areas is categorized as Neighbourhood. While Neighbourhood Areas may contain a mix of uses, including retail and commercial uses, the predominant land use is residential.

The vision for Neighbourhoods within the Downtown area is to support intensification while being consistent with the character of each area, whether low density, medium density or mixed use development (refer to Secondary Plan 6.1.6.3).

In order to retain the character of the area, new development shall meet the following design priorities:

a. Intensification and infill projects will be consistent in design with the grid street pattern and architectural character of the adjacent area.

b. Retention and adaptive reuse of existing heritage and industrial buildings for residential use is a priority within the Downtown.

Generally, the Secondary Plan allows for up to 4 storeys within the Neighbourhood Area. Nonetheless, tall buildings may be permitted, so long as the building meets the site selection criteria identified within the Tall Buildings Study and abide by the performance standards as outlined in the Guidelines.
3.0 Contextual Considerations

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3.6 Views and Landmarks ............................................ 68
3.1 Heritage Conservation

The shape and form of Tall Buildings should respond to and respect Hamilton’s existing rich architectural legacy, as represented in the stock of heritage buildings and districts.

The Urban Hamilton Official Plan Appendix F identifies elements of designated heritage significance (see map to the left). Additionally, the Downtown Built Heritage Inventory (completed in 2014) identifies a long list of heritage properties including recommended, registered and designated buildings, many of them within the study area (refer to Section 2.3 of the Study).

In addition to the properties already identified in these documents, it is highly encouraged to maintain or adapt any existing building element of architectural value that could reinforce the history and character of the property.

a. Building bases should respect the grain and scale of the surrounding historic fabric;
b. When an existing building is adapted / incorporated into the base of a tall building, the size and shape of the original window openings and entrances should be maintained;
c. Symmetry features of original design and construction should be maintained;
d. Vertical and / or horizontal demarcation devices should be maintained where possible;
e. New buildings should demonstrate similar proportions and massing of adjacent heritage structures and continue the rhythm of the traditional street façade; further, the streetscape rhythm may be maintained and defined by respecting the existing historic vertical fabric, horizontal bays and materiality;
f. Tall buildings should not visually impede the setting or view of listed / designated heritage buildings, including the concentration of heritage buildings around the Gore.

Relevant Reference Documents:
- Hamilton Downtown Built Heritage Inventory (2014)
- Urban Hamilton Official Plan (2013)
Encourage:

- reference of the historic character attributes of surrounding buildings

Avoid:

- siting tall buildings to impede the setting or view of heritage buildings and/or districts
3.2 Neighbourhood Transition

The location, shape and form of Tall Buildings should respond to the surrounding neighbourhood context.

To ensure that new development is sensitive to and compatible with the existing or planned low-rise residential neighbourhoods, tall buildings should be designed to transition in scale towards existing or planned low-rise residential and existing or planned park. Tall buildings should be designed to:

a. limit the maximum height, including mechanical units, balconies, railings, overhangs and other projections, and employ measures such as the use of setbacks, stepbacks and building articulation to minimize shadow impact on properties;

b. transition to the height of adjacent, existing residential development. The portion of the building base adjacent to the low-rise residential building should not exceed the height of the adjacent development;

c. the tower portion of a building should be set back by a minimum 20m excluding balconies from the property line adjacent to stable residential neighbourhood to mitigate shadow impact and protect privacy and overlook;

d. be massed to fit within the 45 degree angular plane taken from the rear property line, where tall building sites are adjacent to a rear yard of a low-rise residential building.

Relevant Reference Documents:
- Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan (2016)
Encourage:

- transition in scale towards residential neighbourhoods

Avoid:

- shadow impact on residential neighbourhoods
3.3 Parks and Open Spaces

Tall Buildings within Downtown Hamilton should support the creation of a robust public realm network, including parks, streets and plazas.

Park space within Hamilton’s Downtown is currently limited and care must be taken to mitigate any potential negative impacts from tall buildings on these spaces. As tall buildings are developed, opportunities to supplement the open space network is encouraged.

Schools and their yards are key components of the Downtown’s open space network. Shade, overlook and other impacts on these spaces need to be carefully considered and mitigated.

a. Tall buildings should be oriented and massed to minimize shadow impacts on parks, open spaces and school yards at all times of the day;

b. No new shadows may be cast between 10 am and 4pm on June 21st on major parks with historic and cultural significance, such as Gore Park;

c. Shadows from proposed development should allow for full sun on June 21st and December 21st at least half the time on school yards, playgrounds, sitting areas, patios and other similar programs;

d. Tall buildings should be sited and designed to protect views and facilitate connections to parks and open spaces.

Relevant Reference Documents:
• Gore Park Master Plan (2010)
• John Rebecca Park Master Plan (2012)
Encourage:

- supplementing the open space network through publicly accessible and/or public open spaces

Avoid:

- shade, overlook and other impacts on parks and open spaces, including schools and their yards
3.4 Vibrant Streets

New buildings will bring people that will contribute to Downtown’s growth and vitality. With intensification, streets are increasingly important as public realm spaces.

Tall buildings should be designed with active frontages, where there is an active visual engagement between the street and ground floors of buildings. An active frontage is achieved when the facade of a building opens towards the streets (entrances, glazing, etc.) and may be assisted by the location of the active uses at grade (retail, common areas, etc.)

a. Along main retail streets, including James Street and King Street, ground floors of tall buildings should be designed to facilitate an active interface with the street through the use of: clear glazing, multiple entrances, generous ground floor heights, and be generally flush with the sidewalk;

b. In areas where there are no active uses at grade, the articulation of the facade shall provide an active frontage through the use of: fenestration, grade related units, architectural articulation, canopies, etc.

c. Residential and mixed use development should locate common areas and amenities at-grade to provide animation and overlook on the street;

d. Where residential units are at-grade, they should be designed to provide overlook onto and address the street; however, privacy may be maintained through the use of a 1.5 to 3.0 m setback from the property line, low landscape buffer, and/or grade separation to the unit entrance;

e. Building entrances should be emphasized as a focal point of a building’s facade and be placed in highly visible locations where they have the ability to animate a longer stretch of street;

f. The location of driveways should be limited off of primary streets. Loading and servicing are not permitted off of primary streets.

g. Tall buildings should be oriented and massed to minimize shadow impacts on the public realm at all times of the day; it should be demonstrated that the full width of the sidewalk in the context of the development shall receive at least 5 hours of light on September 21st.
Encourage:

- street – related commercial and retail uses that provide multiple points of interaction between the building interior and public realm.

Avoid:

- large scale commercial uses; private indoor amenities; lobbies and blank walls
Angular Planes

Angular planes are a tool that serve several purposes: to ensure adequate access to sun and sky from the streets; to define the built form envelope to maintain and define the character of a street; and, to mitigate pedestrian perception and experience of taller buildings at street level.

For the Gore and Prime Retail Streets Character Areas, the front and rear angular plane of 45 degrees is to be taken from the property line across the street and/or from the rear property line. This, together with the application of other performance measures within the Guidelines, indicates the maximum height of a potential building.

The table to the right provides a summary of the future ROW widths (as identified in the Official Plan) for Downtown streets. Most Downtown Streets fall within three right-of-way categories: 15.24 m, 20.12 m and 26.22 m.

The application of the 45 degree angular plane, in combination with the three predominant right-of-way widths informs the maximum heights that may accommodated across those specific Character Areas.

The following diagrams illustrate the built form parameters within the three predominant right-of-way streets, indicating maximum heights according to adjacent right-of-way and property depth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>Future Right-of-Way Width</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cannon Street</td>
<td>Queen Street</td>
<td>Wellington Street</td>
<td>26.22 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline Street</td>
<td>Main Street</td>
<td>King Street</td>
<td>20.12 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferguson Avenue</td>
<td>Jackson Street</td>
<td>Main Street</td>
<td>20.12 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Street</td>
<td>Hess Street</td>
<td>Bay Street</td>
<td>15.24 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hughson Street</td>
<td>Rebecca Street</td>
<td>Cannon Street</td>
<td>20.12 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter Street</td>
<td>Queen Street</td>
<td>Wellington Street</td>
<td>20.12 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson Street</td>
<td>James Street</td>
<td>Wellington Street</td>
<td>15.24 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Street</td>
<td>King William Street</td>
<td>Cannon Street</td>
<td>26.22 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King William Street</td>
<td>James Street</td>
<td>John Street</td>
<td>widen 3m from south side only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Street</td>
<td>Queen Street</td>
<td>Wellington Street</td>
<td>26.22 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Street</td>
<td>King Street</td>
<td>King William Street</td>
<td>15.24 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen Street</td>
<td>King Street</td>
<td>Cannon Street</td>
<td>26.22 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca Street</td>
<td>John Street</td>
<td>Wellington Street</td>
<td>20.12 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Street</td>
<td>Main Street</td>
<td>King Street</td>
<td>15.24 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walnut Street</td>
<td>Jackson Street</td>
<td>Main Street</td>
<td>15.24 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson Street</td>
<td>James Street</td>
<td>Wellington Street</td>
<td>26.22 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellington Street</td>
<td>Hunter Street</td>
<td>Cannon Street</td>
<td>26.22 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York Boulevard</td>
<td>Queen Street</td>
<td>James Street</td>
<td>26.22 m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Building envelope for properties fronting a 26.22 m right-of-way street:

Min Required Setback

Min Required Property Depth
Building envelope for properties fronting a 20.12 m right-of-way street:
Building envelope for properties fronting a 15.24 m right-of-way street:
3.5 Transit Proximity

As Downtown Hamilton is identified as a Mobility (Gateway) Hub with major investments in transit infrastructure, the location of Tall Buildings should be informed by Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Guidelines. It is strongly encouraged to introduce mixed uses and increased density within 400m of transit station areas.

A Mobility Hub is a key node in the regional transportation system where two or more rapid transit lines intersect and can support significant passenger and employment activity. These areas are envisioned to become major multi-modal transit centres with vibrant mixed uses including retail, residential, office, and cultural amenities.

Hamilton is home to two Mobility Hubs that connect to the broader GTHA areas, including the Hunter Go Station and the newly built James St. North (West Harbour) GO Station. The James St. North Mobility Hub Study identifies maximum heights of up to 4-6 storeys along the James St. North corridor and encourages intensification through low-impact density development within close proximity to transit stops.

The BLAST rapid transit system is a network of five proposed lines that were identified as priority transit areas in the 2007 Transportation Master Plan and Metrolinx's The Big Move. The BLAST initiative aims to provide better connectivity throughout the City of Hamilton within the next 25 years in order to accommodate anticipated population growth. The two lines in the BLAST network that impact Downtown are the B Line (Main/King corridor, between Eastgate Square and McMaster University) and the A Line (James/Upper James Corridor between King Street and Rymal Road).

- Integrate public transit stop amenities (benches, shelters) within the site and building design;
- Corner site developments around existing and proposed transit stops present an opportunity for corner plazas; the building massing at lower levels of tall buildings should frame and define the public space as well as invite pedestrian use;
- Tall buildings should incorporate active frontages with clear glazing at grade to serve transit users;
- Tall buildings should provide barrier-free and universal access between buildings and station areas, where applicable - refer to City’s Urban Braille System Guidelines;
- Tall buildings should include retail development along King Street and James Street North/South to service transit users;
- Unique tall buildings and design is encouraged to act as focal points along transit lines;
- Buildings along transit lines are highly visible and susceptible to become landmarks; it is highly encouraged to maximize the remarkable scale and singular materials of tall buildings to produce a unique design that will act as a focal point in the street.

Relevant Reference Documents:
- James Street North Mobility Hub Study (2014)
Encourage:

- integration of transit facilities and amenities with the design of the building and/or open spaces
- active frontages along transit spines

Avoid:

- crowding or impeding access to transit facilities, including station stops
3.6 Views and Landmarks

Tall Buildings within Downtown Hamilton should respond to the city’s unique topography and landscape, including the Escarpment and the Waterfront.

- Tall buildings should be located in a fashion that preserves key views and termini to and from the Downtown;
- Tall buildings shall contribute to an interesting skyline and be sufficiently spaced apart to minimize the loss of sky views;
- The silhouette of important landmark buildings should be protected, and the view corridor leading to them should remain legible;
- Tower step backs should be increased to preserve the view to an important local landmark;
- Views of the Escarpment should be preserved.

The development of tall buildings should provide connectivity to streets and public spaces, and orient windows, entrances, balconies, and other building elements to surrounding points of interest. The Secondary Plan (6.1.11.1f) identifies the following views:

- Views of Gore Park from King Street, James Street, Hughson Street, and Catharine Street;
- Views of Hamilton Harbour and the Niagara Escarpment from James Street;
- Views of the Niagara Escarpment from Bay Street, Catharine Street, and Wellington Street;
- The continuous linear path of Ferguson Avenue;
- Views on Hughson Street, from Gore Park, terminating at the TH&B Station; and,
- Main Street between Bay Street and MacNab Street.

Relevant Reference Documents:
- Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan (2016)
Encourage:

- Protection of views and vistas to the Escarpment, Harbour and Gore Park
- Protection of views and vistas to landmark buildings

Avoid:

- Building heights taller than the height of the Escarpment

*TO LOCATE VIEWS, REFER TO SECTION 2.12 AND 2.13 OF THE STUDY REPORT.*
4.0 Building Articulation

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ARTICULATE BUILDING DESIGN: FACADE, TOWER PLACEMENT & SEPARATIONS
4.1 Anatomy of a Tall Building

Tall building are those whose height exceeds the right-of-way of the adjacent street and generally exhibits some element of slenderness in relation to its context.

Parts of a Tall Building

While the design of tall buildings has extensively evolved since their birth in the late 19th century\(^1\), it is currently widely accepted as a best practice that tall buildings in an urban context shall generally consist of three integrated parts: **building base**\(^2\), **building tower** and **tower top**.

The articulation of the massing in these three distinctive parts allows the building to address three separate scales: the building base responds to the pedestrian realm, the building tower to the adjacent built context, and the tower top to the skyline.

The following sections offers specific guidelines on how to design each of its parts.

\(^1\) The ‘tower in the park’ typology, popularized in the 1960s and into the 1970s, lacked a building base or tower top, and was massed as a slab rather than a point tower. It ceased to be used due to recurring issues with overcasting shadows, lack of presence into the street, safety, and underuse of surrounding green space.

\(^2\) also known as ‘podium’

Exceptions

a. On corner lots, at gateways, or within a view terminus, the building’s middle may extend down to the ground level without a distinct building base, as a means of enhancing the architecture expression and singularity. The extent of the area without base shall nonetheless be kept to a minimum and be designed to mitigate the impact of wind at the pedestrian level.

b. For shorter tall buildings and depending on the location, the tower top might not be visible and could therefore not be necessary.

c. Other exceptions to this form may be considered on a site-specific basis, provided that the overall intent of the Official Plan is met.
4.2 Site Organization and Building Base

4.2.1 Building Base Placement & Setbacks

Tall building bases should complement the existing street wall height and character. Strategic setbacks are permitted for building entrances, covered walkways or to create architectural interest.

Placement

a. Building bases should generally be placed parallel to the property line and/or centreline of the street, in a fashion that brings uniformity to the built form and frame the street;
b. The façades of the building base should align with adjacent building facades and align with the existing street wall; if there is none, a new street wall should be designed in coordination with adjacent blocks.
c. In the Lister Block area, buildings should be sited along the front property line in order to provide an uninterrupted building line;
d. In The Gore area, buildings should be sited along the front property line to provide a consistent frame for Gore Park and to retain the traditional building line;
e. Along Prime Retail Streets including James Street and King Street (east of Catharine Street and west of Bay Street) buildings will maintain the traditional building line to provide a continuous edge at the street level.

Setbacks

f. Maximum setbacks from a street line are permitted as follows (in accordance with Zoning By-Law 05-200):
   • 2.0 metres for the first storey, except where a visibility triangle shall be provided for a driveway access;
   • 0.5 metres for the second and third storeys;
   • 6.0 metres for that portion of a building providing an access driveway to a garage.
g. Greater setbacks may be required if the existing building line does not provide sufficient space for pedestrians - refer to section 5.2.
h. Setbacks from the property line are permitted to accommodate building entrances, covered walkways or an enhanced pedestrian environment;
i. Greater setbacks may be permitted in order to accommodate additional public realm, including open space, cafes and other amenities. It is recommended in areas with high pedestrian activity, particularly for buildings fronting on King Street and Bay Street (Civic Cultural Area), Main Street corridor and The Gore. This space should complement the public realm within the adjacent public right-of-way.
j. In The Gore area, buildings will be constructed to the side lot line in order to maintain the sense of enclosure and avoid gaps in the streetscape.

1/ Refer to 2.3 Hamilton Tall Building Study for specific location

Relevant Reference Documents:
• Zoning By-Law 05-200
• Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan (2016)

2/ Driveway and Corner Visibility Triangles as defined by ‘Hamilton Fence By-law’
Avoid:

- freestanding towers without a base or relation to the street

Encourage:

- building bases that provide an uninterrupted building line
- relate with adjacent buildings and the public realm

Precedent: High Line West, Los Angeles (Image credits: PSL Architects)

Precedent: The Verve Condo, Toronto (image credits: Burka Architects Inc)

THE FACADES OF THE BUILDING BASE SHOULD ALIGN WITH ADJACENT BUILDING FACADES

BUILDING BASE SET BACK FROM PROPERTY LINE TO ACCOMMODATE PEDESTRIAN AMENITIES AND IMPROVEMENTS TO PUBLIC REALM
4.2.2 Building Base Height and Scale

Building bases should fit harmoniously within the existing street and neighbourhood context, by respecting the scale and proportions of adjacent uses, including existing streets, parks and open spaces.

Building Base

a. Façade height should reflect the existing adjacent building façade height but not be lower than 7.5 m for any portion of a building along a streetline;

b. Maximum building base height at the streetline should be equal to the width of the ROW to ensure sunlight access to the sidewalk across the street;

c. For corner sites, where buildings have multiple street frontages, the scale and form of the building base should respond to each facing condition;

d. Along main retail streets, including James Street and King Street, the minimum height of a building base should be 3 - 4 storeys in keeping with the built form typology of the street.

Floor-to-Floor Height

e. Higher floor-to-floor heights are encouraged on the ground floors to accommodate flexible uses such as commercial, office or institutional uses over time;

f. Minimum floor-to-floor height for grade-related retail floors should be 4.5m;

g. Minimum width of the ground floor façade shall be equal to 75% or more of the measurement of the front lot line.

h. A minimum of 75% of the front façade of the building shall align with the front lot line at the ground level.

Relevant Reference Documents:

- Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan (2016)
Avoid:

- **base heights** that exceed the height of the right-of-way

Encourage:

- **building base heights** that are in keeping with the scale of adjacent buildings and uses
- **higher ground floor heights** to accommodate a range of uses over time

Precedent: Salvation Army Headquarters, London (image credits: Adrian Pingstone)

Precedent: Woodsworth College, Toronto (image credits: regionalArchitects)
4.2.3 Building Entrances

Primary building entrances should front onto public streets, should be clearly visible and accessible from adjacent sidewalks. Entrance features are a focal point in a building’s façade and should be prominent to distinguish its relation to the rest of the building while complementing the overall building articulation.

a. For Prime Retail Streets provide a direct, accessible entrance to each ground floor retail unit;
b. For larger tenancies, divide the façade into narrower bays to include multiple secondary entrances;
c. For corner lots, animate both sidewalks with the main building entrance;
d. Weather protection features such as canopies and awnings should be incorporated within the overall design of the building;
e. Entrances to multi-residential and office complexes should maximize the height of the ground floor to create welcoming entry points into the lobby area;
f. Transparent glazing should be used in lobbies to enhance visibility, surveillance, and activity at the ground level;
g. Where residential uses are located above at-grade commercial/retail uses, a separate entrance should be provided, clearly differentiated from entrances to commercial/retail units.

Relevant Reference Documents:
- Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan (2016)
Encourage:

- building entrances that are clearly visible and universally accessible from the public sidewalk
- use of glass for transparency

Avoid:

- raised entrances above 1.0m from the ground level
- using materials that obstruct views into commercial and mixed use buildings
4.2.4 Façade Articulation

Building bases should be articulated with high-quality design elements and materials that fit the surrounding character area and neighbouring buildings as well as enhance the public realm. Building façades should be complementary to the overall design of the building.

a. No blank walls permitted along street frontages;

b. A minimum of 25% and a maximum of 40% of the façade of the second and third storeys shall be composed of windows;

c. Residential facades should be massed volumetrically (projections, setbacks and overhangs) to create an engaging and continuous interface with the street;

d. Throughout the Downtown no building face along a public street shall generally be longer than 70m; buildings over 40m in length shall break up their perceived mass with articulation and/or changes in materials;

e. Balconies should be recessed and/or integrated into the building façade and be contained within the angular plane. Projected balconies may be used on building corners to emphasize the corner, but shall not project beyond the primary street wall;

f. For main retail streets, including James Street and King Street:
   i. a minimum of 60% of the area of the ground floor façade shall be comprised of clear glazed windows;
   ii. window and door frames should be comprised of clear glazed transoms and sidelights; doors with at least 50% clear glazing, and a sill up to 0.6m in height are permitted to be included in the calculation of the clear glazed area whereas signage and opaque/spandrel glazing shall not be included in the calculation of the clear glazed area;
   iii. avoid balconies for the first 3 storeys and provide recessed balconies for 3-6 storeys;

g. For buildings within heritage areas, including The Gore and Lister Block:
   i. maintain and/or reference the architectural heritage character, incorporating original facades and component materials (e.g. stone, wood, or brick);
   ii. Other materials may be utilized so long as they are complementary to adjacent buildings;
   iii. Facades should complement the traditional patterns of fenestration, masonry units and decorative elements.

………………

1/ Refer to 2.3 Hamilton Tall Building Study for specific location.

Relevant Reference Documents:
- Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan (2016)
Encourage:

- **façade articulation** and transparency is particularly important for buildings fronting streets, parks and open spaces
- **high quality** and **durable materials**

Avoid:

- **blank walls**
4.2.5 Public – Private Transitions

Transition between the building base and surrounding sidewalks and streets should reflect the nature of the building’s grade level uses. Appropriate setbacks and landscape treatment should be provided in order to create a smooth transition between the public and private realms.

Entrances
a. Provide barrier-free, universal access;
b. Align public entrances (commercial/retail uses; shared lobbies) flush with and accessible from public sidewalks;
c. Provide a setback of 2-3 m from the front property line for private entrances, ensuring that the combined total of the pedestrian clearway plus setback is minimum 5 m;
d. Grade separation (up to 0.9 m) may be utilized to further delineate the transition between public and private realms, so long as the unit is barrier-free and universally accessible from another access point;
e. Avoid use of retaining walls, exterior cases, or impermeable fences.

Setbacks
f. Setbacks from a public sidewalk or open space should be designed to complement and enhance the public realm;
g. Provide a 20m setback from property lines that are directly adjacent to stable residential areas.

Screening
h. Provide appropriate screening of private dwelling units with soft landscaping, while ensuring views to streets and open spaces are maintained for natural surveillance.

Relevant Reference Documents:
- Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan (2016)
SETBACKS AND LANDSCAPE TREATMENT PROVIDE TRANSITION BETWEEN THE STREET, PUBLIC SIDEWALK AND AT-GRADE RESIDENTIAL UNITS

GRADE AND DISTANCE SEPARATION PROVIDE DELINEATION BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPHERES

Encourage:

- **appropriate transitions defined** through setbacks, and landscape treatment

Avoid:

- **use of walls** or impermeable fences
4.2.6 Site Servicing, Access & Parking

Site servicing, loading, utilities, and parking should be located underground to minimize the visual and functional impact on the public realm. Access to servicing and parking should be provided from the rear of the building, ideally from a lane or a shared driveway.

a. Bike parking and amenities should be provided close to building entrances, should be protected from weather and visible from the building interior. Long term bicycle storage within the building is encouraged;

b. Garage, servicing and loading area entrances should be located at the rear of buildings and designed to limit interference with pedestrian and cyclist movement;

c. Where it is not possible to locate parking, servicing and loading off street-level, or at the rear of the building, high-quality architectural treatment and landscape design should be employed to screen such areas from public view. These areas should be appropriately lit, have clear access and egress points and while screened, maintain visibility for safety and security purposes;

d. Fences and other screening devices should not be taller than 1.5m and use a combination of materials, details and textures that bring delight to the passerby. Incorporating vegetation is highly encouraged;

e. Utilities such as mechanical and electrical equipment, elevator housing, and ventilation units should be screened from view and acoustically dampened.

Relevant Reference Documents:
- Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan (2016)
LANDSCAPE DESIGN AND TREATMENT OF A LEGIBLE, MULTI-USE SPACE FOR BOTH PEDESTRIAN AMENITY AND SERVICING ACCESS

Encourage:

- **loading, servicing, utilities and parking** located underground, and/or at the rear of a building, accessed from a lane or shared driveway

Avoid:

- **free-standing** ramps, loading areas, and garbage storage and collection areas

APPROPRIATELY LIT AND WELL-ARTICULATED FAÇADE FOR PARKING STRUCTURES FRONTING PUBLIC STREETS

ACTIVE USES AT GRADE

Precedent: Adelaide Wharf 5, London (image credits: Allford Hall Monaghan Morris Arch.)

Precedent: Menkes’ and Lifetime’s Four Seasons, Toronto (image credits: Craig White)

Precedent: Menkes’ and Lifetime’s Four Seasons, Toronto (image credits: Craig White)

Precedent: Menkes’ and Lifetime’s Four Seasons, Toronto (image credits: Craig White)

Precedent: Menkes’ and Lifetime’s Four Seasons, Toronto (image credits: Craig White)
4.2.7 Publicly Accessible Open Spaces

Publicly Accessible Open Spaces are spaces that are privately owned and maintained, but are accessible to the general public. They include open spaces such as forecourts, landscape setbacks, plazas, courtyards, urban gardens and walkways. These spaces are encouraged within tall building sites in order to complement and strengthen Hamilton’s existing open space network.

- Publicly Accessible Open Spaces should be defined by animated edges, active at-grade uses and should provide direct, universally accessible connections to public streets and open spaces;
- Spaces should be inviting and read as public spaces, encouraging year-round use;
- The siting, type, size and program for the open space should be determined on a site by site basis in order to respond to the site’s context, including the Character Area, and the supply and nature of other existing open spaces;
- Spaces should be directly connected with the public street network and facilitate connections to active transportation routes, transit and facilities, and community amenities and destinations;
- Spaces should have clear views to and from the adjacent buildings;
- Spaces should contribute to a greater level of pedestrian connectivity within the public realm and open space framework;
- Spaces should introduce soft landscape; where trees are introduced, sufficient soil volume should be provided to allow the growth of healthy trees;
- Clear definition and high-quality, appropriately scaled signage should be used to signal public access and use;
- Mid-block connections should include a pavement treatment welcoming to pedestrians, lighting and planting;
- Mid-block connections should be barrier free and visible from the sidewalk for easy access.

Relevant Reference Documents:
- City of Hamilton Public Art Master Plan (2015)
- Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan (2016)
Encourage:

- at grade open spaces that are visible from street level and maximize safety.

Avoid:

- spaces that are not easily accessible or visible from street level, such as sunken plazas, or interior courtyards.
4.2.8 Private Open Spaces

A range of shared and private outdoor amenity spaces should be provided throughout tall building sites at the ground, middle and top levels such as front yards, courtyards, terraces and accessible green roofs. Private open spaces should be designed to be safe, comfortable and accessible for all users, accommodate use throughout the year.

- Outdoor amenity space associated with major office or institutional developments should be publicly accessible;
- Amenity areas are intended for recreational purposes, and should be large enough to accommodate landscaping, patios, privacy areas, balconies, communal lounges, swimming pools, play areas and similar uses;
- Amenity areas should be visible and accessible from common areas;
- Amenity areas with elements such as awnings, fences, and railings should use high quality materials that do not obstruct the use of the open space;
- Private Open Spaces should be located and designed to maximize sunlight access during the day;
- Safety, comfort and the enjoyment of the space should be facilitated by the provision of landscaping, seating, lighting, public art, and weather protection elements;
- Accessible green roofs or usable amenity space at set back levels are encouraged.

Relevant Reference Documents:

- City of Hamilton Zoning By-Law 05-200
Encourage:

- **private open spaces** framed by and relate to surrounding buildings

Avoid:

- **token private open** space by ensuring the location, dimension, design and furnishing offer comfort and allow for flexible programming and use
4.2.9 Materials and detailing

The selection of building materials may have a great impact on the overall expression of both individual buildings and of a neighbourhood as a whole. Therefore, all materials shall be selected based on the following criteria: aesthetic, durability, energy efficiency, low environmental impact, and its overall quality.

a. Use beautiful, durable, high quality and sustainable materials;

b. Materials shall be appropriate to their use and locational context, as well as be complementary with the expressions of the street as a whole, particularly at the building base;

c. A variety of materials and colour palettes between blocks is encouraged to enhance visual interest along the street. Careful attention should be paid to the detailing, connection and juncture of the materials when it is being installed or implemented.

d. Materials for floors above the base may differ from the first floor materials, and use the contrast as a means of articulating the different parts of the building. Nonetheless, compatibility and transition between materials shall be considered as the rhythm and proportions of the lower floors shall be respected;

e. Towers shall have a “lighter” appearance in general, which may be achieved with material selection as well as tower top design - refer to section 4.4;

f. Side and rear façades shall include materials of equal quality to the front façade;

g. Materials that give the impression of low quality, inelegance or outdated shall be avoided or limited. This includes concrete blocks, residential-type metal siding, large quantities of highly reflective and mirror finishes for glazing, or finish effects that simulate another material.

h. Avoid monotonous use of materials and flat detailing.

i. Design the first 10-12m to adhere to Bird Friendly best practices.
Encourage:
- variety of materials that speak to the building context

Avoid:
- monotonous use of materials
4.3 Building Tower

4.3.1 Tower Floorplate Size and Shape

The size and shape of the tower floorplate relates to the height and placement of the tower in relation to site metrics including dimensions, required setbacks, stepbacks and separation distances. Tower floorplates should be limited to 750 square metres per floor as a best practice to limit shadow and facilitate views.

Floorplate Size and Shape

a. The tower portion of tall buildings will be designed to create a memorable and iconic Downtown skyline;

b. The maximum gross floor area of the floor plate of the tower portion of a tall building proposed for residential purposes shall generally not exceed 750 square metres, excluding balconies. Larger floorplates may only be permitted where the other guidelines of this document can be met to the City’s satisfaction;

c. The maximum floorplate of the tower portion of major office and non-residential tall buildings will be evaluated in accordance with the applicable guidelines of this document to ensure impacts with respect to shadow, transition to adjacent uses, and the general scale are addressed.
Encourage:

- **maximum floor plate** size of 750 square metres for residential purposes
- **proportionate tower separation**, setbacks and stepbacks to tower floor plate size

Avoid:

- **casting shadows** and impeding sky views

**Frontage:** 35m+
**Depth:** 45m+
**R.O.W:** 20-27 m
**#of Storeys:** 12 str+
**Max. Height:** 35m+

**Hamilton Context:**

The Downtown Secondary Plan recommends that: The permitted height may be increased, above the normally permitted height, in accordance with Policy 6.1.5.9 through 6.1.5.11, provided the upper storeys are stepped back or terraced so as to achieve the following:

- The additional height above the normally permitted height shall not exceed the preferred sun access targets as prescribed in sections 3.3 and 3.4 of this document.
- The additional height should not result in a height and scale that dominates the landscape and skyline, including views from the Gore Park area.
- The additional height shall incorporate the use of reflective materials to minimize the scale and massing of the building.
4.3.2 Placement, Stepbacks & Separation Distances

Tall building towers should sited to minimize shadow and adverse wind impacts on adjacent properties and public spaces. Tall building towers should also be sited to provide sufficient privacy between the building and adjacent properties.

Placement

a. Towers should be arranged to minimize shadow and adverse wind impacts on adjacent properties and public spaces, including streets, parks and open spaces, and other shadow sensitive areas such as school yards and outdoor amenity areas;
b. Towers should be arranged to maintain sky views, including views from the Gore Park area.

Stepbacks

c. Towers should be stepped back a minimum of 3m from the building base along all streets;
d. Increased step back of 10m should be considered along Character Area streets;
e. Increased step back of 20m should be considered when a tall building incorporates a heritage building;
f. Increased tower setback should be considered to preserve the view to a local landmark.

Separation Distances

g. On larger sites that can accommodate more than one tower, sufficient separations between towers should be provided to allow for adequate light, views and privacy;
h. Offsetting and staggering towers is preferred to add variation and visual interest, to facilitate sunlight and sky views and mitigate wind impacts;
i. Towers should be separated by at least 25m with a minimum 12.5m setback from the side and rear property lines.
Encourage:
- minimizing shadow impacts and negative wind conditions
- maximizing access to sunlight and sky view

Avoid:
- narrow separation distances between small sites
- negative effects resulting from shadows, diminished sky views, wind effects, loss of privacy and limited daylight
4.3.3 Orientation and Articulation

Tower massing should be articulated to promote design excellence, improve energy efficiency and mitigate adverse wind and shadow effects.

**Overall Massing**

a. The tower portion of a tall building should be slender in form in order to reduce the overall perception of mass;

b. The tower portion of a tall building should be oriented to maximize building efficiency performance;

c. Each façade of the tower should respond to changes in solar orientation as well as respond to adjacent context;

d. Operable windows and high quality finishes should be included to promote natural ventilation and help reduce use of mechanical heating and cooling;

e. Tall building towers should be shaped to minimize microclimate impacts (wind effects; shadowing) on nearby areas.

**Balconies and Terraces**

f. Upper levels should be setback with balconies to create visual interest and overlook onto the public street;

g. Balconies should be a minimum 1.5m in depth;

h. Balconies and terraces should be designed as cohesive elements of the building, as described in section 4.2.4.e;

i. Along **Prime Retail Streets**, including James Street and King Street, projected balconies are discouraged as they may detract from the streetwall and impinge on the streetscape. balconies may be more appropriate;

j. Canopies, awnings and overhangs are encouraged to provide shade and weather protection as well as serve as decorative architectural features on a building’s facade. These elements should be provided at major building entrances.
Encourage:

- **landmark buildings of** distinctive articulation at prominent intersections, along important streets or at the termination of a view or vista, or at major public transit destinations.

Avoid:

- **balcony-to-balcony facing between** buildings either within a site or adjacent to a separate development.
4.4 Tower Top

Tower tops should be designed as a ‘fifth façade’, with a distinctive presence on Hamilton’s skyline. Due to their prominent scale, tower tops are generally visible from a far distance and should therefore be carefully designed with respect to height, location, and proximity to other tall buildings.

**Roof**

Hamilton’s skyline is particularly noticeable from the Escarpment, including lookout areas such as Sam Lawrence Park. This factor should be taken into consideration to ensure a harmonious integration between the built and natural environments.

a. Rooftop mechanical equipment should be sized and located and/or screened from view, in order to protect or enhance views of the Downtown from other buildings and the public street;

b. Rooftop mechanical equipment should be limited to no more than 50% of the area of the uppermost floor, and setbacks on all sides should be no less than 3 m from the edge of the floor below to ensure they are screened from view;

c. Mechanical penthouses as well as signage shall be well-integrated into the overall massing of the building and clad in materials that are consistent with the quality of the entire building;

d. Community outdoor space and green roofs are encouraged (refer to Private Open Spaces).

**Lighting**

e. Decorative lighting could be included within the tower design but over lighting or up lighting should be avoided;

f. The use of energy efficient fixtures (such as LEDs) and programmable fixtures which can be dimmed or turned off are encouraged.

**Design**

g. Design strategies should be employed to lighten tower top volumes and provide a termination to the continuous mid-volume of the tower;

h. The tower top should be integrated with the tower and building architecture;

i. Where located at a gateway intersection or terminating view, the tower top is encouraged to act as a recognizable landmark with signature features defining its importance.

**Height**

j. In addition to meeting the performance standards and guidelines contained within this document, the maximum tall building height within the Downtown should be no greater than the height of the Escarpment. Given that the elevation increases gradually towards the Escarpment, buildings may potentially be taller the farther away they are from the Escarpment (refer to sections 2.1 and 2.10 of the Study).

*Relevant Reference Documents:
  * Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan (2016)*
Encourage:

- use of energy efficient fixtures
- thoughtful design with attention to height, location, and proximity to other tall buildings

Avoid:

- designing a tower top that may negatively affect the amount of sunlight, shadows, and sky views
setback mechanical equipment

stepbacks reduce casting shadows and wind speed into the inner block

high rise buildings should setback and provide transition to the back in order to aid the integration of future buildings in adjacent lands

strong corners block wind for the inner block uses

tower tops should be designed to reduce the perceivable massing on higher levels and to contribute to an engaging skyline.

high-rise should always be setback from the street

stepbacks from key streets minimize shadows on boulevard

misaligned mid-block connections slow down wind at pedestrian level, while allowing for breeze

break in building massing should be provided every 80m as a minimum

break in perceived mass every 40m minimum
The Clean & Green Hamilton Strategy (2012) encourages native plant life and tree planting and other methods of maintaining and improving ecological integrity.
5.1 Streetscape and Landscape Design

High quality design and implementation of streetscape and landscape between and adjacent to tall buildings should be promoted to encourage a vibrant public realm.

The streetscape and landscape design associated with tall buildings can play a vital role in strengthening Hamilton’s public space network.

Landscape spaces may be located between the property line and the building line that function as an extension of the public boulevard, contributing to the widening of the sidewalk. Landscape spaces may also serve to integrate building entrances into the public realm. Localized setbacks may alleviate specific pinch points in the pedestrian boulevard and/or offset the mass of a tall building by offsetting the scale of building to pedestrian realm.

a. At-grade levels of the building fronting the landscape setback should address the street with the presence of building entrances and fenestration;

b. When grade-related units are facing a public street, a minimum 3m landscaped setback is recommended to protect privacy. Profuse vegetation, minor changes in elevation, short fences and porch structures may populate the space;

c. Landscape areas should clearly be designed as publicly accessible and no changes of elevation taller than 50 cm should be permitted;

d. Natural features and landscapes, such as existing trees, should be protected and maintained where possible;

e. In limited landscape areas, colourful flowers, grasses and shrubs are encouraged to highlight the presence of the landscape feature despite the constrained space;

f. If appropriate based on use and scale, accent lighting and seating should be provided;

g. Sufficient soil depth should be provided especially in areas where parking garages extend beyond the building façade at the underground level;

h. Permeable paving materials or appropriate storm water management systems (bioswales), should take preference over asphalt to increase site permeability and management of storm water runoff;

i. Conform with universal design standards - refer to City’s Urban Braille System Guidelines.

Relevant Reference Documents:

- Clean & Green Hamilton Strategy (2012)
- York Boulevard Streetscape Master Plan (2010); Downtown Mobility Streets Master Plan (Bay Street, James Street, John Street, Hunter Street) (2003); The King Street West Streetscape Master Plan (2004); Hughson Streetscape Master Plan (2003); and, King William Streetscape Master Plan (2003).
STORMWATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS INTEGRATED WITHIN STREETSCAPE DESIGN

Encourage:

- Landscape treatment for office and institutional buildings to improve the main entrance and provide amenity space and at residential buildings to provide a green buffer to increase the privacy of at-grade units

Avoid:

- blank walls or inactive uses at-grade
5.2 Sidewalk Zone

Adequate space should be provided between the building façade and street curbs in order to ensure the safety and comfort of pedestrians, as well as accommodate streetscape improvements and encourage grade related activities.

Sidewalks dimensions vary greatly in Hamilton’s Downtown for each of the Character Areas. Main retail streets such as James St. and King St. accommodate trees along the street curb. Main Street is deprived of street trees or landscaping within the Public Right of Way. Public sidewalks widths vary from minimum width contained between building facades built to the property line and the street curb.

As redevelopment proceeds in the Downtown, there is an opportunity to complement the existing sidewalks through:

a. Integrating design elements such as canopies and arcades to protect pedestrians from the elements (wind, rain, snow, sun);

b. Incorporating landscape treatment, including public art, furniture and planting;

c. Providing a barrier-free environment that facilitates flexible use of the space as a whole - refer to City’s Urban Braille System Guidelines;

d. The use of permeable pavement where possible;

e. Wider streets with high volume traffic should consider additional sidewalk width to improve and ensure pedestrian safety and comfort; additionally, it is recommended to locate elements to buffer pedestrians from the roadway, whether it is a tree zone, furniture zone or street parking - refer to City’s Coordinated Street Furniture Guidelines.

f. The desired condition is 2m width for the sidewalk zone, and 4m for the boulevard total.

Relevant Reference Documents:
- Downtown Transportation Master Plan (2011)
Encourage:

- Consideration of pedestrian movement and comfort in adjacent sidewalk zones
- Active at-grade uses or visually interesting facades to enhance the pedestrian experience

Avoid:

- Discontinuous frontage along pedestrian walkways
5.3 Pedestrian Weather Protection & Wind Effects

Tall buildings should minimize adverse wind effects on adjacent streets, parks and open spaces, as well as at building entrances and outdoor amenity areas.

a. Siting, massing orientation and articulation of the building base and tower can help mitigate adverse wind effects such as accelerated winds and down drafts;
b. Integrated design elements such as canopies, overhangs and arcades to protect pedestrians from the elements (wind, rain, snow, sun) are encouraged;
c. Permanent weather protection is encouraged particularly along commercial and mixed-use street frontages;
d. For canopies and overhangs, a maximum height of 6m and minimum width of 3m is preferred;
e. Consistency with pedestrian weather protection elements of neighbouring buildings is encouraged;
f. Where feasible, buildings should be oriented to take advantage of solar energy and minimize the effects of wind to create comfortable and inviting open spaces for a variety of seasons.
g. Wind targets shall meet the widely accepted Lawson Comfort Criteria. The massing of new buildings should be evaluated based on its resultant wind effects on adjacent open spaces and pedestrian areas. The combination of wind time and duration shall not exceed the standards set for the activities foreseen in each open space, based on the following thresholds:
   • Sitting: up to wind speed 3* if not exceeded more than 1% of the time**.
   • Standing/entrances: up to wind speed 3* if not exceeded more than 6% of the time**.
   • Leisure walking: up to wind speed 4* if not exceeded more than 4% of the time**.
   • Business walking: up to wind speed 5* if not exceeded more than 2% of the time**.
   • Roadway: up to wind speed 5* if not exceeded more than 6% of the time**.

* Beaufort Force scale, see table in next page
** Percentage of time that gust wind speeds exceed the sustained gust equivalent mean (GEM) wind speed.

Relevant Reference Documents:
- James Street North Mobility Hub Study (2014)
Encourage:

- Horizontal canopies on windward faces of building bases
- Landscaped base building roof areas can help reduce wind speeds at grade

Avoid:

- Tall, wide facades facing prevailing winds
Thresholds for Tolerable Conditions based on Lawson Beaufort Criteria:

- **0 Calm (0.0 - 0.1 m/s)**
- **1 Light Air (0.2 - 1.0 m/s)**
- **2 Light breeze (1.1 - 2.3 m/s)**
- **3 Gentle breeze (2.4 - 3.8 m/s)**
- **4 Moderate breeze (3.9 - 5.5 m/s)**
- **5 Fresh breeze (5.6 - 7.5 m/s)**
- **6 Strong breeze (7.6 - 9.7 m/s)**
- **7 Near gale (9.8 - 12.0 m/s)**
- **8 Gale (12.1 - 14.5 m/s)**

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* Beaufort Force scale, see table in next page
** Percentage of time that gust wind speeds exceed the sustained gust equivalent mean (GEM) wind speed
*** Wind speed measured at 175m height (m/s)
Massing principles to mitigate wind effects:

1. Wind at street level
   Up: Accelerated wind speeds create undesirable windward corners.
   Below: Tower that is setback from the base reduces undesirable downward wind flow.

2. Wind between buildings
   Up: A low building and a tall building may accelerate winds near windward corners.
   Below: Setback towers help mitigate against downward wind flows at grade.

3. Distance between towers
   Up: Wind funnels between two buildings located close to one another (wind canyon effect).
   Below: Setback towers spaced farther apart allows wind to move through more easily.
5.4 Public Art Integration

Opportunities for integrating public art into tall buildings sites should be encouraged in order to enhance the public realm and establish a relationship with Hamilton’s vibrant art scene.

Public art opportunities can include:

a. Freestanding or integrated Sculptures that marks a prominent corner, a view terminus or an entryway;

b. Landscape design elements such as water features, lighting, seating, walls;

c. Public art can be integrated within building elements such as facades, canopies, lighting, etc.;

d. Medium scale public art projects such as sculptural advertising columns to promote local business;

e. Processional work that serves as a defining gateway into the city’s core;

f. Temporary banner program to celebrate civic and cultural pride.

Future tall building developments in areas identified as opportunity sites by Hamilton’s Public Art Master Plan (2009) should address the Plan’s suggestions and recommendations:

- **King Williams Street** (James St. to Ferguson Ave) - Art Walk
- **James Street** - Escarpment to the Bay
- **York Blvd** - Dundurn St. to Bay St.
- **Hamilton City Hall**
- **Gore Park**

Relevant Reference Documents:

- City of Hamilton Public Art Master Plan (2009)
- Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan (2016)
- Transforming Hamilton Through Culture: The Cultural Plan (2013)
EXISTING HAMILTON PUBLIC ART PROJECTS

- Roll Out the Rail Carpet (2011)
- Timeline Siteline (2012)
- Migration (1992)

PUBLIC ART PIECE INTEGRATED AS DROP CEILING PANELS WITHIN MID-BLOCK PEDESTRIAN, CYCLIST AND VEHICULAR TRAFFIC

SEATING BLOCKS INTEGRATED WITHIN PUBLIC ART PIECE