



Bloor West Village Neighbourhood: Preliminary Character Guidelines

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Neighbourhood Character Guidelines are increasingly becoming important for neighbourhoods and planning officials as there has been a concern of redevelopment to existing infrastructure not being cohesive with the community and existing environment. This final report is the culmination of a semester-long project completed by a group of Ryerson University students for the Bloor West Village Residents Association (BWVRA). The purpose of this project was to analyze the prevalent characteristics within the Bloor West Village neighbourhood and determine how these characteristics give the community a sense of place. As a result, a set of key design objectives and guidelines will be recommended to residents and planning officials that can be applied for future developments in order to promote cohesiveness throughout the neighbourhood.

This report sets out the role of neighbourhood character guidelines and how they can be used to influence and preserve the general characteristics of the neighbourhood. The study area and the surrounding context will also be analysed in coordination with planning policies such as the Official Plan and Longbranch Neighbourhood guidelines are looked at- with the coordination of zoning by-laws to determine the existing conditions.

This report will address and examine the character of the neighbourhood through defined neighbourhood categories commonly found within Bloor West Village. These categories are defined as: Existing Conditions, Streetscape, Built Form, and Building Elements. Within these four classifications are characteristics that help define the neighbourhood character and is regarded as prevalent throughout Bloor West Village. These characteristics are analyzed and a set of key design recommendations will be addressed in order to propose adjustments that would be in keeping of the overall character of the neighbourhood. Overall key design guidelines include the usage of compatible materials and consistent design factors that conform with the surrounding residential infrastructure. Usage of appropriate designs such as roofing styles, building materiality and placement of windows that are consistent with surrounding houses are also important in order to keep the conformity of the overall character.

The criteria set for prioritized elements within the neighbourhood will then be used as an underlying framework that will assist with the recommendations proposed in this report and act as a template for the overview of neighbourhood characteristics in the future. These design recommendations will help residents and planning officials alike to create changes in the neighbourhood that promote cohesiveness throughout the community. The priorities of residents living with the study area will also be analysed along with an outline of the existing conditions within the Bloor West Village. Furthermore, this document will serve as a tool that will help residents to enforce this template on their own or with coordination from planning professionals.

1. INTRODUCTION

Section 1.1: Introduction to Neighbourhood

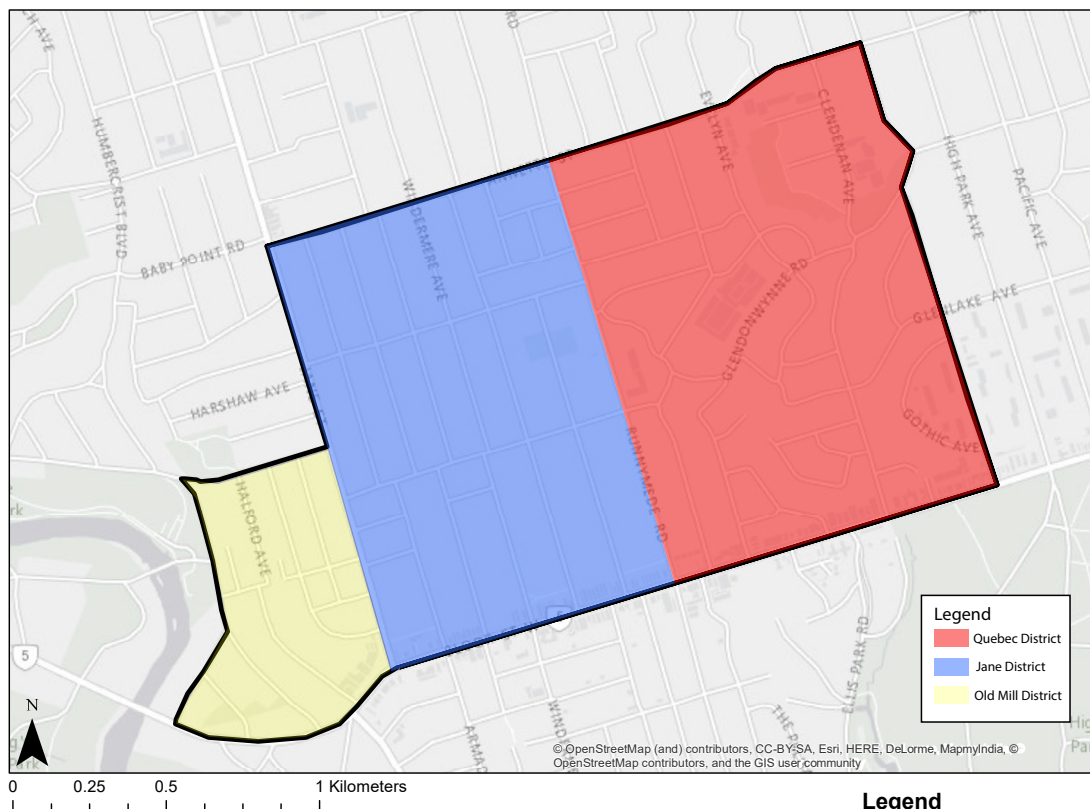
1.1.1 About the Client

The Bloor West Village Residents Association (BWVRA) is a residents' association comprising of neighbours that live within the Bloor West Village area. This association was created in 2004 and addresses concerns about developments along Bloor Street West, neighbourhood safety, environmental preservation and relationships with their locally-elected public officials. The BWVRA has played a key role in transforming and enhancing the Bloor West Village- and in recent years had helped foster the unique character in the local community. The BWVRA has reached out to Ryerson to work together in order to design Neighbourhood Character Guidelines that will provide an evaluation tool for prioritizing what neighbourhood characteristics are important to the public and how to keep the 'sense of place' throughout the community.

1.1.2 About the Study Area

The Bloor West Village is considered to be one of the oldest neighbourhoods in Toronto, just north of the Bloor West Village BIA which is the first Business Improvement Area (BIA) in the world. The study area is bordered by Bloor Street to the south, Quebec Avenue to the east, Annette Street to the north, and Jane Street to the west. Within the study site, there are several institutions, with the majority of them being middle schools and high schools, which are surrounded by low density, single/semi detached dwellings. Avenues such as Jane Street and Bloor Street will be excluded from this report as its purpose is to outline guidelines that focus on residential land uses within the neighbourhood rather than commercial land uses.

Map 1.1a shows a map of Bloor West Village and the 3 districts the team divided the site into for analyzing potential unique characteristics of an individual district.



Map 1.1a: Bloor West Village Study Districts

Legend
 — Site Boudary

1.1.3 Heritage Significance

The Bloor West Village is among Toronto's most historic neighborhoods and within its boundaries contains elements that reflect the evolution of Toronto. In the 1850's the area now known as the Bloor West Village was the property of Lieutenant Colonel William Smith Durie, the first commanding officer of the Queens Owns Rifles, where the street that ran through his estate is now known as Durie Street. The architecture of the residences that are seen within the Bloor West Village were built in the early 20th century, which have contributed to the neighbourhood's historical prominence. Architectural styles such as the Tudor Revival, Craftsman Architecture and Edwardian are the predominant styles found within the area and has resulted in the overall character. One major feature that is dominant throughout the architectural styles is the usage of peaked and gabled roofs. There is significance in the mature trees as they were apart of the forest that occupied the area prior to residential development.

The Bloor West village neighborhood was identified in the City of Toronto's Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Study, as being a high priority for a HCD study due to the significant renovation and development pressure that threatened to impact the neighborhood's historic built fabric and character. The overall objective of the Heritage Conservation District plan is to protect and conserve the heritage value of the neighborhood, and to provide an understanding of the district's historic, social and cultural value as well as its physical character. The HCD Plan seeks to guide and manage change over time while maintaining its most valuable heritage attributes to ensure that those features are valued and protected to current and future generations.

Section 1.2: Character Guidelines

1.2.1 What is Neighbourhood Character?

Neighbourhood character is the combination of elements within a neighbourhood that give it a distinctive character and a sense of place. Both private and public realms contribute to the overall character of a neighbourhood and these features may or may not be obvious as each neighbourhood is unique. Neighbourhood character can be separated into different categories that help define the essential characteristics of the neighbourhood, including physical dwelling features and property characteristics.

1.2.2 What are Character Guidelines?

The physical characteristics of a neighbourhood are one of the key elements that make up the overall neighbourhood character and due to constant social change, there has been a consensus between residents about keeping with the general physical character of their neighbourhoods. As each neighbourhood is unique, residents need to be provided with tools and a 'How-To' manual that outlines the processes that they and other community groups can follow in order to ensure that future changes in the neighbourhood are appropriate and in keeping with the distinctive character of their neighbourhood. Neighbourhood character guidelines can also serve as a template for ensuring that future developments are undertaken in a manner that is sensitive, gradual and generally consistent with the existing physical character of the neighbourhood.

1.2.3 Relevant Planning Policies and Zoning

PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT

The Provincial Policy Statement provides general policies that help guide future residential development, however it mentions few guidelines on how to maintain the characteristics of current residential neighbourhoods. These policies are mentioned under Section 1.4 of the document where it states that planning authorities must be able to “accommodate residential growth for a minimum of 10 years through residential intensification and redevelopment” while including a mix of housing types and densities (Ontario, 2014). It also states that development of new housing should take place at locations where adequate levels of infrastructure and public service facilities already exist or that will be available once the proposed development is complete to support current and future public demand. Furthermore, densities that accommodate for new housing that efficiently uses land, resources, infrastructure and public service facilities must be promoted to “support the use of active transportation and transit in areas where it exists or is to be developed” (Ontario, 2014).

In relation to guidelines about new development that maintains neighbourhood characteristics, the Provincial Policy Statement includes one related policy which falls under Section 1.7 Long-Term Economic Prosperity. Subsection 1.7.1 d) that states the following:

Long-term economic prosperity should be supported by encouraging a sense of place, by promoting well-designed built form and cultural planning, and by conserving features that help define character, including built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes.

This subsection of the PPS relates to the Bloor West Village neighbourhood as it has thrived economically likely in part due to its unique characteristics in terms of design, built form, and historical significance. This creates a positive environment which has and continues to attract residents to the neighbourhood. Alterations to these characteristics can disrupt the neighbourhood and thus makes it important for new developments or redevelopments to follow the footsteps of previous development in terms of design, setbacks, height, and more.

MINOR VARIANCE

The 1990 Planning Act provides a tool that allows homeowners to exceed the established requirements as set out in zoning by-laws. This tool called a minor variance, allows for constituents to differ from requirements set out by the zoning by-laws. The process occurs through the Committee of Adjustment who determines whether these adjustments are minor enough to marginally affect the direction as set out by the current established policy. To determine whether these changes are acceptable, Section 45 of the Planning act can be used that outlines 4 tests.

If the proposed change(s) to development is(are) to pass all 4 of these tests, they accepted as minor variances and development is allowed to go through. These tests are:

1. Is the application minor in nature?
2. Is it appropriate and desirable development for the area?
3. Is it in keeping with the purpose and intent of the Zoning By-law?
4. Is it in keeping with the purpose and intent of the Official Plan?

CITY OF TORONTO OFFICIAL PLAN

Chapter 4 of the Official Plan: Land Use Designations, addresses the preservation of the existing physical character of neighbourhoods (Section 4.1). The City has identified four land use designations that shall be used to help protect and reinforce the existing character of these areas. They are: Neighbourhoods, Apartment Neighbourhoods, Parks & Open Space Areas, and Utility Corridors. Chapter 4 outlines that the development criteria for neighbourhoods should be established so that physical changes to neighbourhoods are sensitive, gradual and generally fit with the existing physical character.

The key objective identified is that new developments must respect and reinforce the general physical patterns in a neighbourhood. This objective is supported by the following policies in section 4.1 of the plan:

5. Development in established Neighbourhoods will respect and reinforce the existing physical character of the neighbourhood, including in particular:
 - a) Patterns of streets, blocks and lanes, parks and public building sites;
 - b) Size and configuration of lots;
 - c) Heights, massing, scale and dwelling type of nearby residential properties
 - d) Prevailing building type(s);
 - e) Setbacks of buildings from the street or streets;
 - f) Prevailing patterns of rear and side yard setbacks and landscaped open space;
 - g) Continuation of special landscape or built-form features that contribute to the unique physical character of a neighbourhood; and
 - h) Conservation of heritage buildings, structures and landscapes.

No changes will be made through rezoning, minor variance, consent or other public action that are out of keeping with the physical character of the neighbourhood. The prevailing building type will be the predominant form of development in the neighbourhoods.
8. Zoning bylaws will contain numerical site standards for matters such as building type and height, density, lot sizes, lot depths, lot frontages, parking, building setbacks from lot lines, landscaped open space and any other performance standards to ensure that new development will be compatible with the physical character of established residential neighbourhoods.

The Official Plan establishes goals and policies related to the built-form and aesthetics of residential development; the guidelines will advance the criteria of the plan by identifying specific and unique characteristics of the neighbourhood as they relate to neighbourhood history, lot size characteristics, and prevailing streetscapes and building types. The Neighbourhood Character Guidelines for the Bloor West Village will take into account the criteria set out in policy number 5 of section 4.1 as well as the zoning bylaw standards that will be discussed below.

ZONING BYLAW

The City of Toronto Zoning By-Law 569-2013 identifies the site area almost entirely zoned as Residential (R) or Residential Detached (RD) with some exceptions to areas zoned as Open Space (OR). Within these areas are minor exceptions, almost all pertaining to more than a single dwelling within a single residential building.

Specifically pertaining to residences and physical characteristics, the residences are required to have the following parameters:

Residential (R) (Shown in Figure 2.2a)

PERMITTED USES: DWELLING UNITS AND PARKS

FLOOR SPACE INDEX: 0.6

MAXIMUM HEIGHT: 10M

MAXIMUM BUILDING DEPTH: 19M

MINIMUM FRONT YARD SETBACK: 6M

MINIMUM REAR YARD SETBACK: 7.5M

MINIMUM SIDE YARD SETBACK: 0.9 M

MINIMUM LOT FRONTAGE: 6M

MINIMUM LOT AREA: 180 M²

FRONT YARD LANDSCAPING: 50% must be landscaped (75% of which must be soft landscaped)

Separated by Jane St (RD to East and R to the West)

Residential Detached (RD) (Shown in Figure 2.2b)

PERMITTED USES: Detached House

FLOOR SPACE INDEX: 0.4

MAXIMUM HEIGHT: 11M OR 3 Storeys

MAXIMUM BUILDING DEPTH: 19M

MAXIMUM BUILDING LENGTH: 17M

MINIMUM FRONT YARD SETBACK: 6M

MINIMUM REAR YARD SETBACK: 7.5M

MINIMUM SIDE YARD SETBACK: 0.9 M

MINIMUM LOT FRONTAGE: 12M

MINIMUM LOT AREA: 370 M²

FRONT YARD LANDSCAPING: 50% must be landscaped (75% of which must be soft landscaped)

Refer to Appendix for Zoning Map.

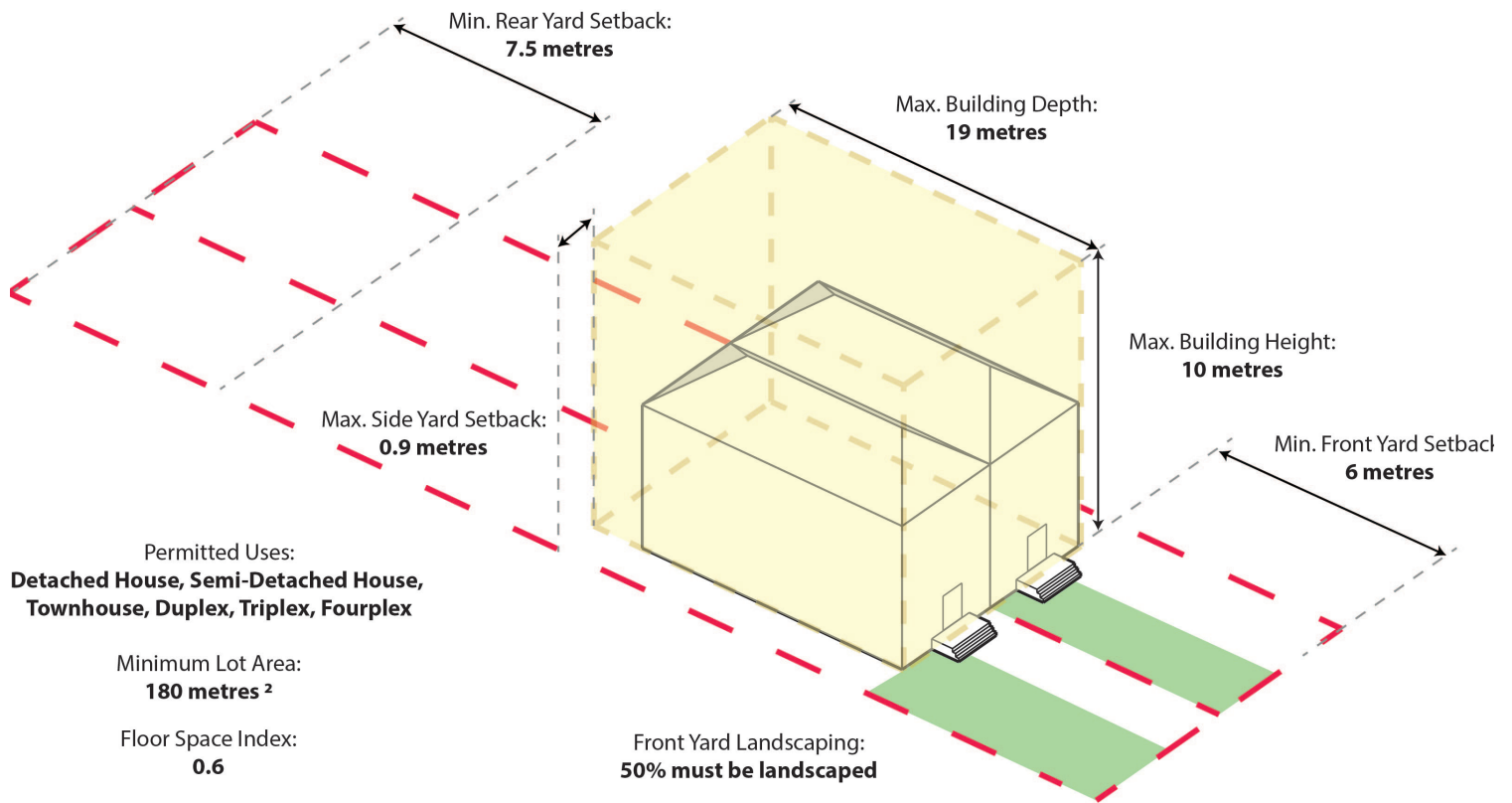


Figure 1.2a: Residential (R) Zoning Requirements

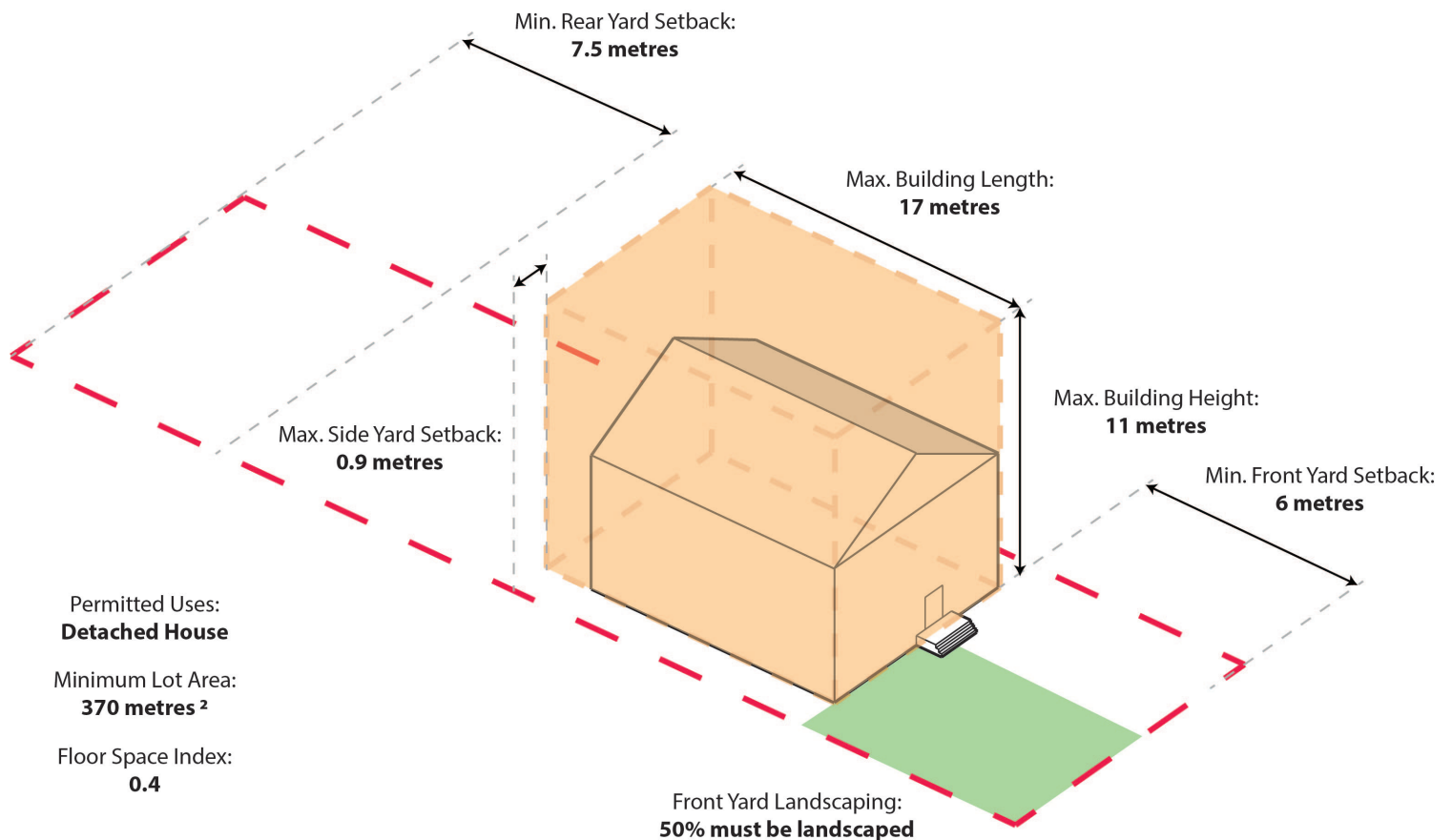


Figure 1.2b Residential Detached (RD) Zoning Requirements

1.2.4 Community Consultation

Over a period of two weeks from October 2nd, 2017 to October 13th, 2017, a survey was conducted through the Bloor West Village Residents Association (BWVRA). The survey was administered to the BWVRA email list and provided a link to a 15 question survey that identified surveyee information and determined their opinions about new developments in the Bloor West Village.

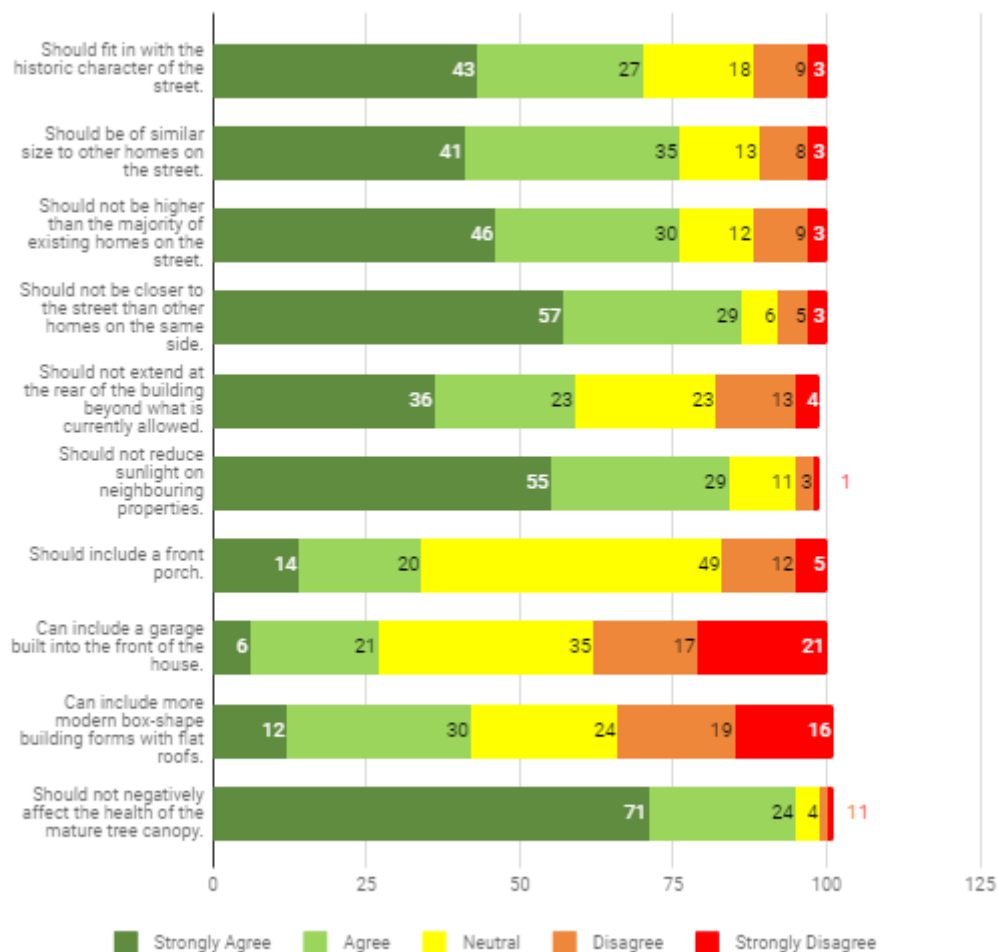
During the process, the survey was able to identify several key themes that many residents feel attribute to the community and character of the neighbourhood. Many of these themes revolved around the size of new developments and how these new developments affect the streetscape. In particular, 86% of surveyed residents noted that they agreed that houses located within the neighbourhood should remain relatively equidistant from the street. Likewise, 93% of residents agreed that new developments should not damage the mature tree canopy in the neighbourhood. In contrast the survey also showed preferences from residents that displayed indifference to trends and characteristics such as front porches, in which 49% of residents surveyed selected to remain neutral.

The BWVRA survey provided a great initial understanding of how the neighbourhood perceived new developments and which features they felt were important to them. The 48% response rate of a total of 703 residents on the email list, implies that the community maintains a strong opinion in preserving such local characteristics that help keep Bloor West Village vibrant, prosperous and connected. This coincides with the policy objectives as outlined in the official plan as such a strong response rate and community presence clearly indicates that the BWV is an ideal location for neighbourhood character guidelines.

Although the survey provided a strong understanding of the local communities opinions and objectives, the survey has many opportunities to become a stronger means of quantitative data. It is important to provide surveyees with a better understanding of the background and context behind the survey. This in turn should help community members understand how the questions and responses apply to the proposed Bloor West Village Character Guidelines. This should help reduce contradictions in responses and help specifically identify the most important characteristics and threats to the BWV. Likewise when creating questions, it would be beneficial to provide visuals as a means to support the surveys questions and responses in order to make it clear how different features impact developments and the local character of the community.

Likewise, the survey process, although already successful, should be amended to better collect the opinions and preferences of over 15,000 residents living within the neighbourhood. It is in the best interest of everyone to collect the information in a widespread and more equitable manner as it would give all stakeholders an option to actively participate in discussions about the neighbourhood character guidelines. In turn, a more in-depth survey should be created for the future as it would help both the BWVRA and the city refine what the community identifies as part of their culture and character. To do so, an empirical and quantitative method is recommended in order to yield results that would be easily understandable for both planning officials and residents alike.

How much do you agree with the following statements on new development?



2. CHARACTER ANALYSIS & GUIDELINES

Section 2.1 District Profiles

The following section outlines the prevailing character of the individual districts within Bloor West Village. It will outline the key elements that contribute to its character as well as the preferred character to be preserved. Following the development of these district profiles, key design objectives were created to determine what elements the character guidelines, in the next sections, should address.

Despite differences in character that exist among the districts, the preferred character for each district is supported by the following:

- Maintaining appropriate heights, facade elements, and building materials
- Ensuring setbacks and datum lines are consistent to maintain the rhythm on the street
- Maintaining existing trees and existing landscaping for both aesthetic, environmental, and privacy purposes



2.1.1 OLD MILL DISTRICT PROFILE



Prevailing Neighbourhood Character

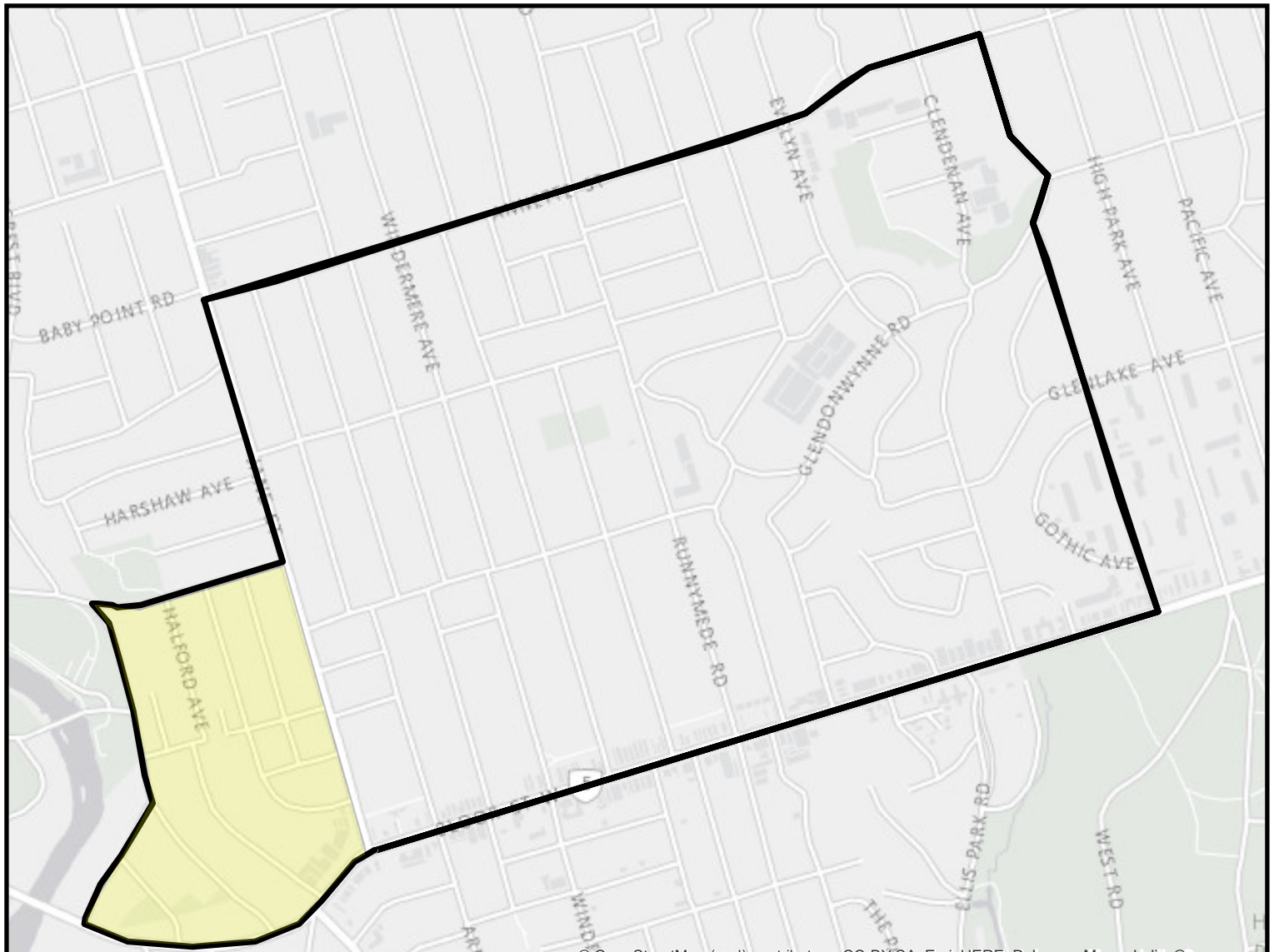
Two story brick dwellings on larger lots compared to rest of neighbourhood with significant landscaping and mature vegetation. Dwelling design is relatively simple and features such as walk up front entries, porches, casement windows, and pitched roofs are common. Front yard parking is predominant and side and rear yard parking is also common. Sufficient separation between dwellings permits rear yard access and visual access to natural features.

Key Characteristics	Descriptions
LOTS	Lots were established pre-amalgamation in line with the former Town of York Official Plan and Zoning By-Law. Blocks are oriented east-west and lot size increases as the blocks extend from Jane Street. Steep topography along Halford Avenue.
HEIGHT & MASSING	
Building Height	Raised 2 storey dwellings with some dormers. Some with ground floor heights a storey above grade.
Building Depth	Maximum building depth currently permitted is 19m. Dwellings range from 7 to 25 metres deep. Buildings with the greatest depth are located along Riverside Drive. Many dwellings have rear yard garages.
Ground Floor Height	Predominance of raised dwellings establishes front entrances and ground floor heights modestly above grade. Generally similar ground floor height and datums.
BUILDING ELEMENTS	
Facade	Facades are relatively simple. Some dwellings have balusters and roof brackets. Sidelighting common for front doors, some are arched. Staircases leading to the front entryway and porches are predominant.
Front Entrance Design	Front entrance design varies but generally is compatible and reinforces the street rhythm. Front entrances are generally raised, or stepped.
Materiality	Brick is the predominant material although many dwellings incorporate multiple materials that are chromatically compatible, such as stone and stucco neutral and compatible in colour.
DRIVEWAYS & GARAGES	Front parking and asphalt driveways are predominant. Side and rear yard parking also common with some permeable pavers.
SETBACKS & LANDSCAPE	Gardens and modest sized grassed front lawns common, in addition to key entry features. Deep setbacks along Old Mill Drive and Riverside Drive provide large grassed front lawns. Mature trees and vegetation incorporated into front yard landscaping. Lots are generally not enclosed.
SPECIAL FEATURES	Mature trees are found in the public right-of-way and on private property. Mature trees are commonly incorporated into the front yard landscaping.



Preferred Character Statement

Larger lots in this district in proximity to Old Mill should not be subdivided. Front lawns should maintain landscaping and the connection to the street.



2.1.2 JANE DISTRICT PROFILE



Prevailing Neighbourhood Character

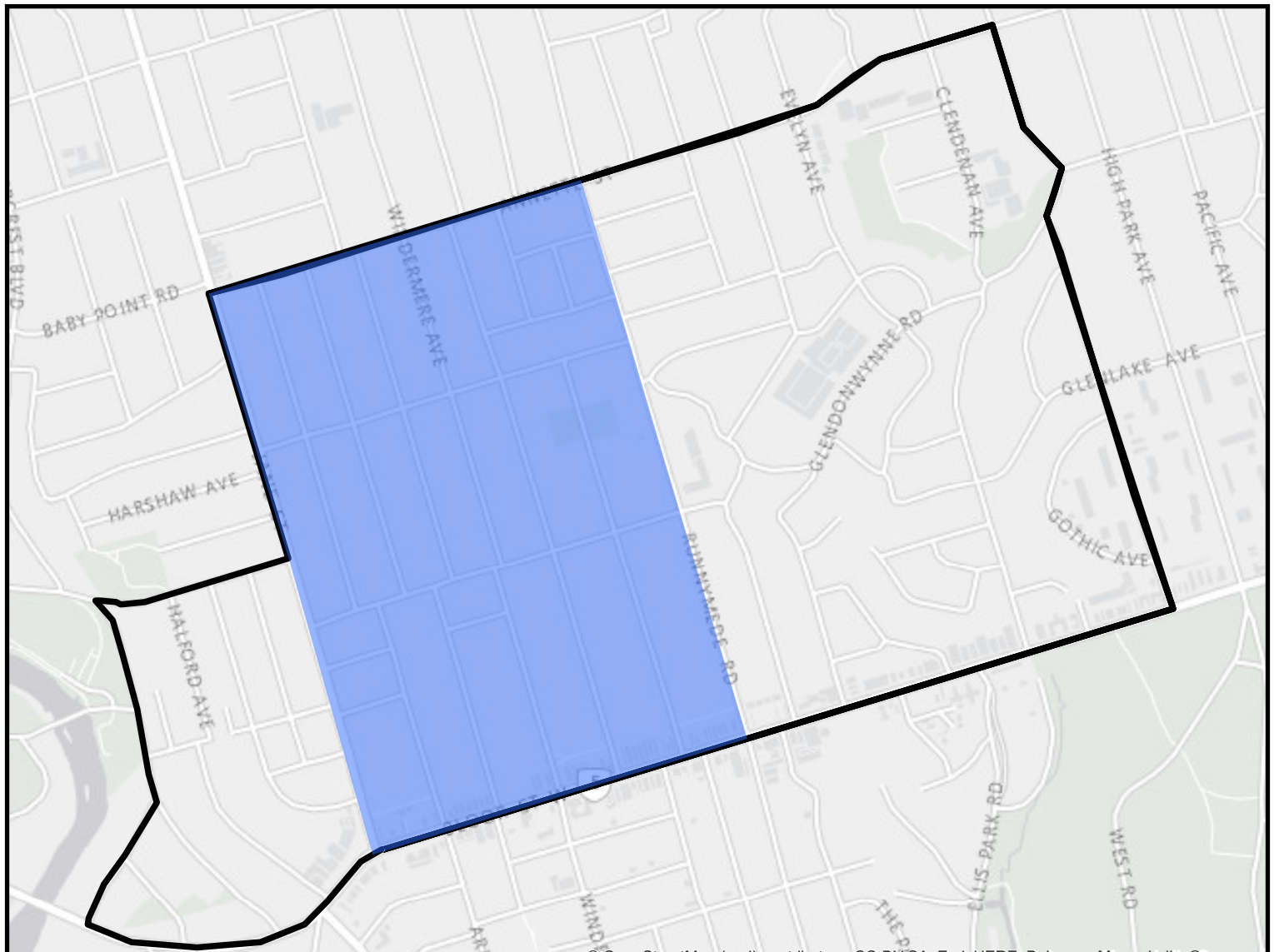
Two story brick dwellings that are generally 15 metres deep. Dwellings are setback consistently at the front and the rear which establishes a rhythm along the street and limits issues of overlook in the rear yard, where detached garages are predominantly located for parking. Dwelling facades are typically articulated with front entryways including porches, and also windows.

Key Characteristics	Descriptions
LOTS	Blocks are oriented east-west. Lot sizes range from 30-50 meters. Lot size increases moving east toward Runnymede from Jane Street.
HEIGHT & MASSING	
Building Height	Raised 2 storey dwellings with dormers common. Some 3 storey dwellings both at grade and raised.
Building Depth	Zoning regulations permits a maximum building depth of 19m. Dwellings are generally 15 meters deep. Rear parking predominant and the majority of lots have detached garages in the rear yard.
Ground Floor Height	Predominance of raised dwellings establishes front entrances and ground floor heights modestly above grade. Generally similar ground floor height and datums.
BUILDING ELEMENTS	
Facade	Facades generally consist of protruding porches and windows, and front doors with sidelighting. Front entryways and windows are a predominant features of the facade.
Front Entrance Design	Front entrances are generally raised with front steps. Majority of dwellings have enclosed porches with front garages.
Materiality	Brick is the predominant material although multiple materials that are chromatically compatible, such as stone and stucco, which are neutral and compatible in colour, are often incorporated into the dwelling design.
DRIVEWAYS & GARAGES	Side and rear yard parking is predominant and the majority of lots have detached garages in the rear yard. Driveways are commonly asphalt.
SETBACKS & LANDSCAPE	Entryway features, gardens, and grass lawns are common. There is a trend of increasing hardscape which reduces greenscape and surface permeability. Hedging and shrubs are most commonly used to establish the perception of enclosure, however retaining walls and fencing are also used sparingly.
SPECIAL FEATURES	Mature trees are found in the public right-of-way and on private property. Mature trees are commonly incorporated into the front yard landscaping. Fencing is used to establish a perception of separation between dwellings and adjacent open spaces Some driveways are located adjacent to the open space to increase the degree of separation and privacy.



Preferred Character Statement

The uniformity of building depth and setbacks found throughout this district should be maintained. Garages should be located at the rear, or the side.



2.1.3 QUEBEC DISTRICT PROFILE



Prevailing Neighbourhood Character

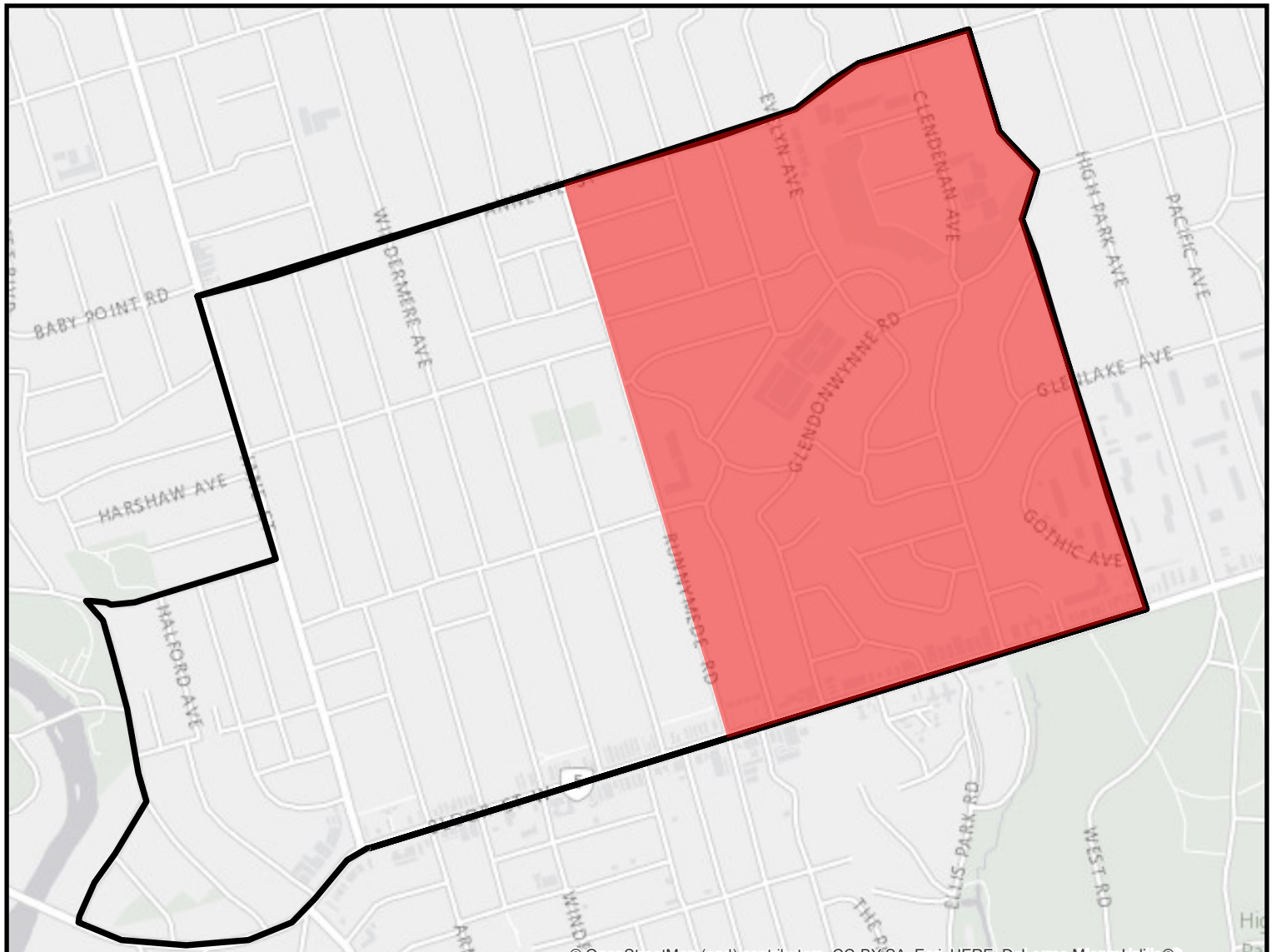
Two story brick dwellings with dormers and porches. Pitched and gabled roof styles predominant in addition to casement windows. Variety of front yard landscaping including mature landscaping that contributes to privacy. Consistent setbacks in front and rear yards enable privacy and access and establish an exceptional rhythm.

Key Characteristics	Descriptions
LOTS	Small residential lots and larger institutional lots. Blocks oriented both north-south and east-west. Steep topography along Glendonwyne Road.
HEIGHT & MASSING	
Building Height	Raised 2 storey dwellings with some dormers and some full 3 storey dwellings.
Building Depth	Maximum building depth permitted is 19m. Typically dwellings are 12-16m deep and are not built to the maximum permitted depth. Rear yards are generous and detached garages are located at the rear of many lots. Issues of overlook limited.
Ground Floor Height	Predominance of raised dwellings establish front entrances and ground floor heights modestly above grade, but emphasize the overall perceived height of buildings, entrance, and front facade design. Similar ground floor height and datums. The connection between dwellings and streets
BUILDING ELEMENTS	
Facade	The majority of dwellings have relatively simple facades, although ornamentation and classical moldings are not uncommon and are characteristic of the areas history. Some dwellings consist of pediments, and in some instances eaves and roof brackets. Staircases and railings leading to the front door are the most prominent facade element.
Front Entrance Design	Front entrance design varies but generally is compatible and reinforces the street rhythm. Front entrances are generally raised, or stepped, and the majority of dwellings have porches, some with enclosed entries. Garages are not typically a feature of front entrance design.
Materiality	The majority of dwellings are brick and many incorporate multiple materials such as stone or siding that are also textured. Stucco is a material commonly used for new dwellings and is smooth in contrast to the traditional materiality.
DRIVEWAYS & GARAGES	Side/rear parking is predominant. Some instances of below grade and front parking. Driveways are generally narrow and most often asphalt although permeable pavers are not uncommon.
SETBACKS & LANDSCAPE	Entryway features, gardens, and grass lawns are common. Hedging and shrubs are most commonly used to establish the perception of enclosure, however retaining walls and fencing are also used sparingly.
HERITAGE	There are 8 listings on the Toronto Heritage Property Register.



Preferred Character Statement

Heritage of existing dwellings should be recognized and protected through the Heritage Registrar and Heritage Act. New construction should keep in mind and compliment historical design aspects notably within this district.

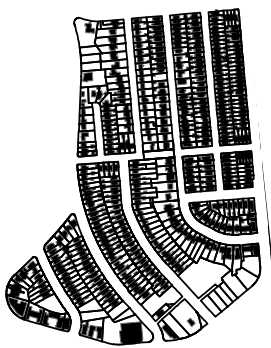


Section 2.2 Neighbourhood Configuration

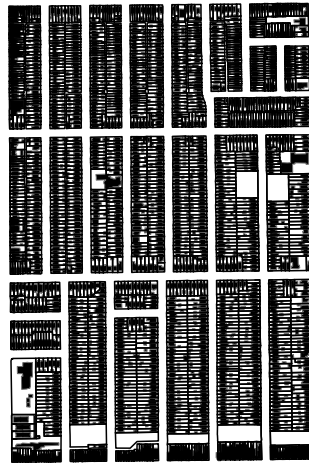
The following section explores the various street patterns throughout Bloor West Village and states guidelines on lot severances to maintain the distinct characteristics within the neighbourhood. The guidelines will consider existing setback bylaws and policies and look at how these policies must be taken into consideration.

2.2.1 Patterns

Throughout Bloor West Village, street patterns vary depending on which district you are analyzing. In the Old Mill district, most of the streets have a grid-like pattern, with some irregular curvilinear streets. Between Jane and Runnymede streets are an oblong grid pattern running North/South and East/West, Between Runnymede and Quebec streets, many of the streets are curvilinear due to the topography of the site. These distinct street patterns sets out whether the lot sizes are consistent. The Old Mill district and Quebec district have unique lot sizes whereas the Jane district has more uniform lots due to the grid street pattern. The topography of the site plays an important role in understanding the street and lotting patterns. Lot dimensions are fairly standard within Bloor-West Village, however, if lot severing does occur it is important to maintain its character.



Old Mill District:
Curvilinear Lot Pattern



Jane District: Grid Lot Pattern



Quebec District: Curvilinear
Lot Pattern

2.2.2 Topography

OLD MILL DISTRICT: This district is downward sloping towards the Humber River to the east of the site. This downward sloping feature is the reason for the irregular curvilinear streets. There are also large pockets of vegetation within the district as well as strategically designed trails to maneuver within the district.

JANE DISTRICT: This district has one distinct elevation throughout which is the reason for the uniform grid pattern streets.

QUEBEC DISTRICT: The elevations vary within the Quebec District. Where the topography is the same elevation as the Jane District, the streets are predominantly grid pattern. On Clendenan Avenue, the elevation is approximately 10-15 meters lower than the Jane District and the northern portion of Quebec District. This is the reason for the curvilinear street patterns.

Key Design Objectives

1. Lot Severing: If a lot is severed, the new lot should have consistent dimensions with the adjacent properties.

2. Solid Lotting Pattern: Depending on which district you are in, the lot shape should maintain consistent with surrounding properties and creating a similar building footprint.

Summary of Zoning Regulations

Lot severances are possible, however- the new lot must meet the required minimum lot area and lot frontage. The existing buildings must also meet the minimum setbacks from the proposed lot lines as well.

Intent of Zoning

The intent of the zoning by-law is to achieve consistency throughout the neighbourhood. Both existing and proposed lots must meet the minimum requirements of the zoning regulations in order to keep the characteristics of the neighbourhood intact.

Proposed Character Guidelines

Conform with minimum requirements in the zoning by-law to avoid creating any outliers in the neighbourhood.

Build the size of buildings to a similar scale to adjacent properties.

Use datum storey lines in relation to the scale of adjacent buildings to achieve appropriate transitions in height

Section 2.3 Height & Massing

2.3.1 Building Height

The predominant number of storeys found within the Bloor West Village are 2 storey dwellings. However, many of the houses have increased or plan to increase their height to 3 storeys by submitting applications to the Committee of Adjustment. This influx of 3 storey dwellings is now one of the dominant physical characteristics of the neighbourhood, particularly within the Jane district making 2 and 3 storey dwellings a common feature of the area.

Key Design Objectives

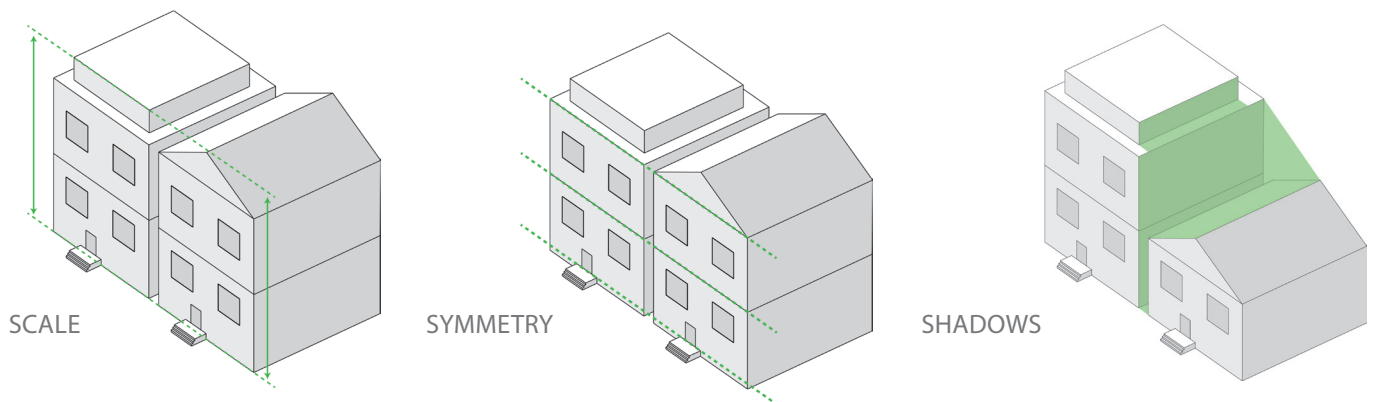
1. **Scale:** Retain a similar scale between new and old buildings in the neighbourhood.
2. **Symmetry:** To minimize the perceived scale of new buildings, consideration should be made for existing datum storey lines.
3. **Shadows:** Building height should be sensitive to the shadows it casts on neighbouring properties. It should ensure it does not block daylight on adjacent properties as much as possible.

Summary of Zoning Regulations

Building height varies from 1 storey bungalows to 2 and 3 storey detached and semi-detached dwellings. The zoning bylaw regulates areas zoned as Residential (R) to have a maximum height of 10 metres and areas zoned as Residential Detached (RD) to have a maximum height of 11 metres or 3 storeys.

Intent of Zoning

The intent of the height restriction is to ensure that a similar scale between new and old buildings is achieved. It is important that building height is compatible with adjacent properties. Height should be evaluated on its relationship and symmetry to neighbouring buildings.



Proposed Character Guidelines

Use datum storey lines in relation to the scale of adjacent buildings to achieve appropriate transitions in height.

Use appropriate roof design for upper storeys, such as dormers and peaked roofs, to minimize perceived scale of new buildings and to minimize shadow impacts on neighbouring properties.



Figure 2.3a: Incompatible Datum Lines



Figure 2.3b: Compatible Datum Lines and Scale

2.3.2 Building Depth

Many of the houses within Bloor West Village have building depths consistent with the zoning bylaw. However, many of the houses have increased or plan to increase their depth by submitting applications to the Committee of Adjustment to increase floor area in their homes. Varying building depths can cause shadowing and privacy issues among dwellings.

Key Design Objectives

1. **Shadows:** Minimize shadowing on adjacent properties.
2. **Setbacks:** Setbacks consistent with zoning bylaw to minimize impacts on neighbouring dwellings.
3. **Windows:** Window scale and placement to reduce overlook and privacy issues.

Summary of Zoning Regulations

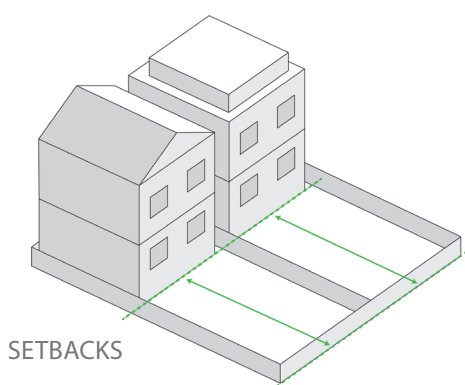
The zoning bylaw regulates that areas in a Residential (R) zone and Residential Detached (RD) zone shall have a maximum building depth of 19 metres.

Intent of Zoning

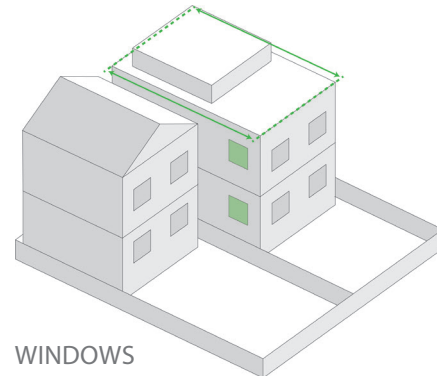
The intent of the bylaw is to restrict the depth of buildings to minimize shadowing and privacy impacts on neighbouring dwellings. Building depth should be evaluated on its compatibility with adjacent properties that may or may not have varying depths and minimize shadowing and overlook.



SHADOWS



SETBACKS



WINDOWS

Proposed Character Guidelines

Use stepped storey design for additions and new buildings to minimize impact of massing, shadowing and varying building depths among adjacent buildings.

Reduce overlook on neighbouring properties through appropriate sizing and placement of rear and side windows and balconies.

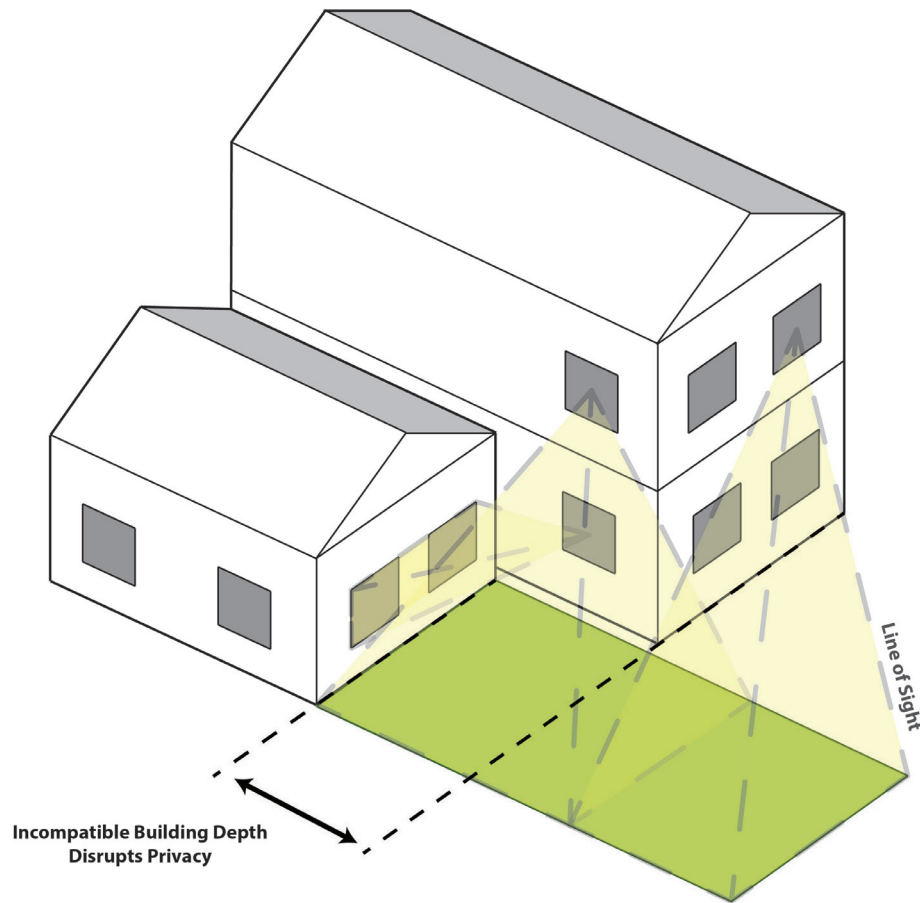


Figure 2.3c: Building Depth Incompatible Window Placement and Privacy

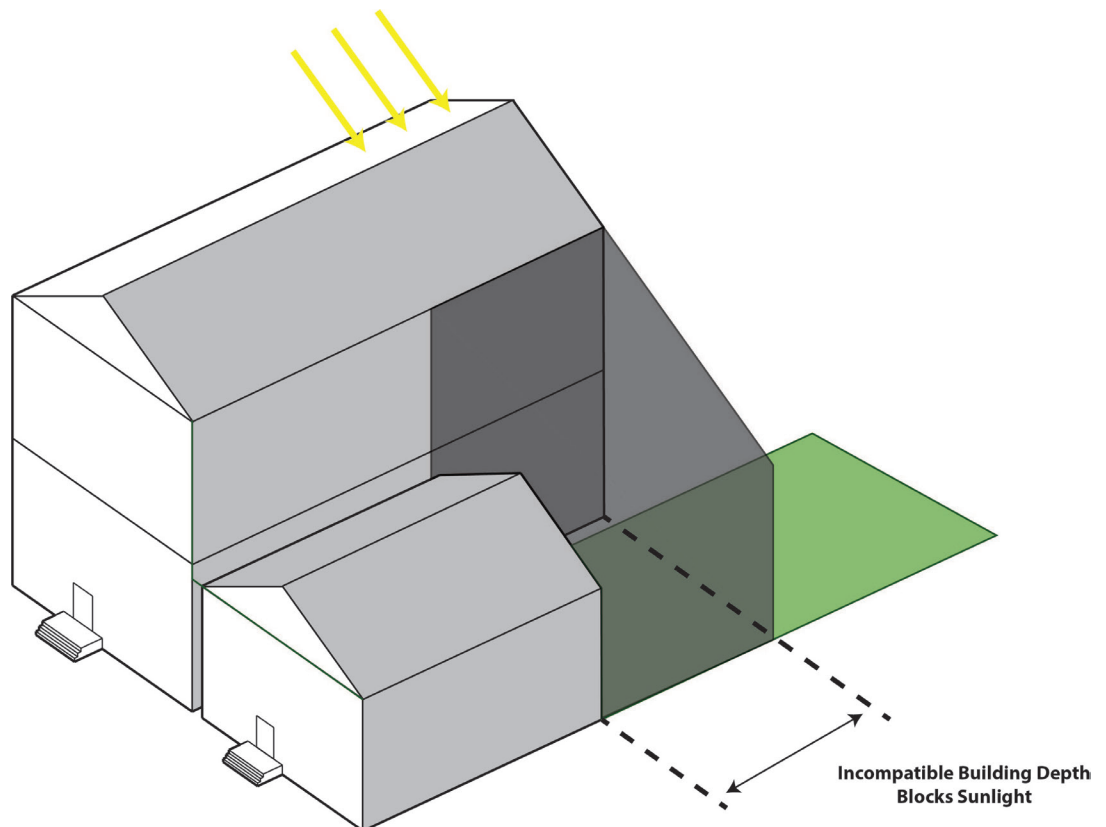


Figure 2.3d: Building Depth Incompatible Shadowing

2.3.3 Ground Floor Height

Ground floor height affects the symmetry of a street. Raised first floors with an integral garage affect the datum lines of street therefore impacts the overall character of the neighbourhood. Many houses have ground floor first floors with parking in the rear or side yard. Depending on topography, houses may have steps leading up to them with a street-level porch.

Key Design Objectives

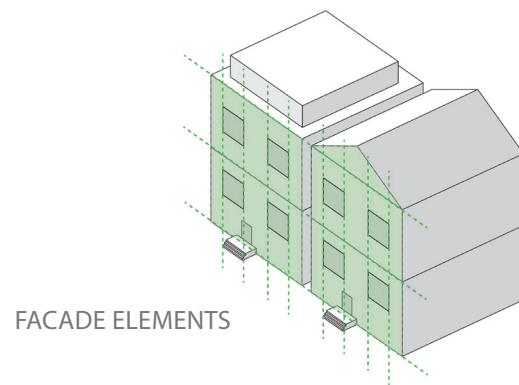
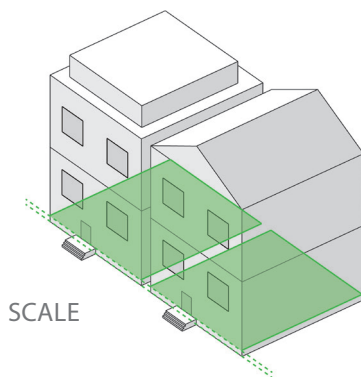
1. **Scale:** Retain visual datum of ground floor.
2. **Facade Elements:** Thoughtful window, door, and porch placement and design that maintains the symmetry of ground floor height with adjacent buildings.

Summary of Zoning Regulations

In a Residential (R) and Residential Detached (RD) zone, the minimum height of the first floor must be 1.2 metres above established grade for semi-detached and detached dwellings.

Intent of Zoning

The intent of the zoning regulations is to preserve the relationship of the house and the street. Some houses in the neighbourhood have raised first floors with an integral garage underneath which alters the perceived scale of the building as well as affects the building's connection to the street. The minimum height of the first floor also ensures consistency of the streetscape in the neighbourhood.



Proposed Character Guidelines

Use appropriate placement of windows and doors that are consistent with the existing datum storey lines on the street.

Incorporate consistent design and height of any porches with the existing datum storey lines on the street.

Have ground floor heights as close to grade as possible and consistent with adjacent dwellings.



Figure 2.3e: Incompatible Ground Floor Height and Datum Lines



Figure 2.3f: Incompatible Ground Floor Height and Garage

Section 2.4 Building Elements

2.4.1 Facade

A significant facade feature is roof typology. There are two roof types that are principally found throughout the neighbourhood. They are peaked roofs and gable roofs- and both reflect the predominant architectural styles of Edwardian, Tudor Revival and Craftsman Architecture styles. Many of the houses were built in the 1920s and feature simple rectangular windows which contribute to the symmetry of the houses found in the area.

Key Design Objectives

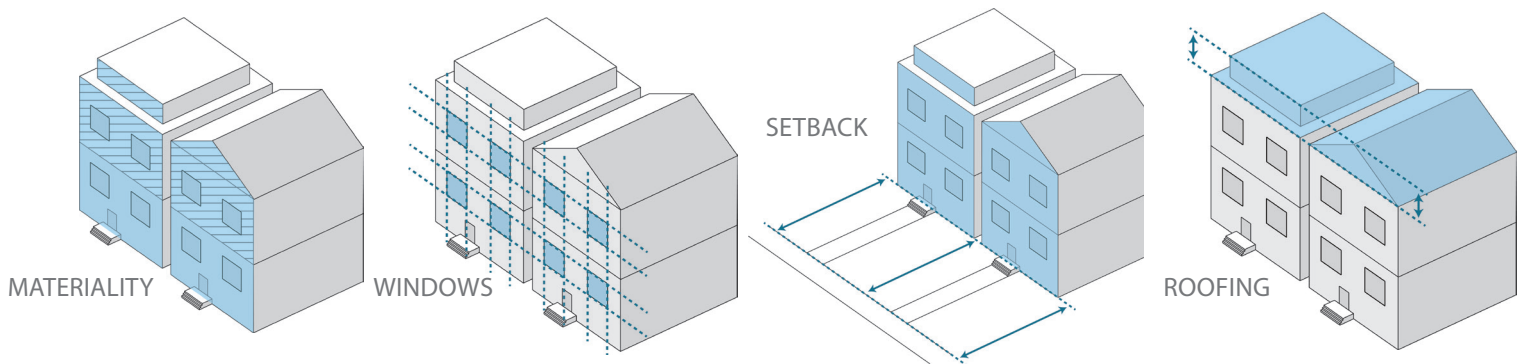
1. **Materiality:** Ensure similar and compatible materials are used in the neighbourhood.
2. **Windows:** New buildings should be sensitive to existing window shape and scale.
3. **Setback:** Setbacks should be as consistent as possible to integrate the facade of new and old buildings.
4. **Roofing:** Ensure roof style is consistent with datum storey lines.

Summary of Zoning Regulations

The front yard setback of a building affects the location of the building frontages. The zoning bylaw regulates that areas within a Residential (R) zone and within a Residential Detached (RD) zone shall be a minimum of 6 metres.

Intent of Zoning

The intent of the regulation above is to create a consistent streetscape that is sensitive to the rhythm of the street. It is important that buildings are in-line as best as possible to fit with the existing streetscape. Other elements not accounted for in the zoning regulations should also be considered in evaluating the compatibility of a building's facade including materiality, roof style, and window shape and scale.



Proposed Character Guidelines

Use compatible materials and colours such as light coloured vinyl siding, plaster, and red brick.

Consider the simple rectangular windows of the older buildings in the neighbourhood through appropriate sizing and placement of windows that are compatible with datum storey lines.

Preserve the rhythm of the street through setbacks that are consistent with the specific street.

Use roof styles such as peaked roofs and gable roofs are consistent with the existing character of the neighbourhood. Flat roofs can be used but must be consistent with datum storey lines.

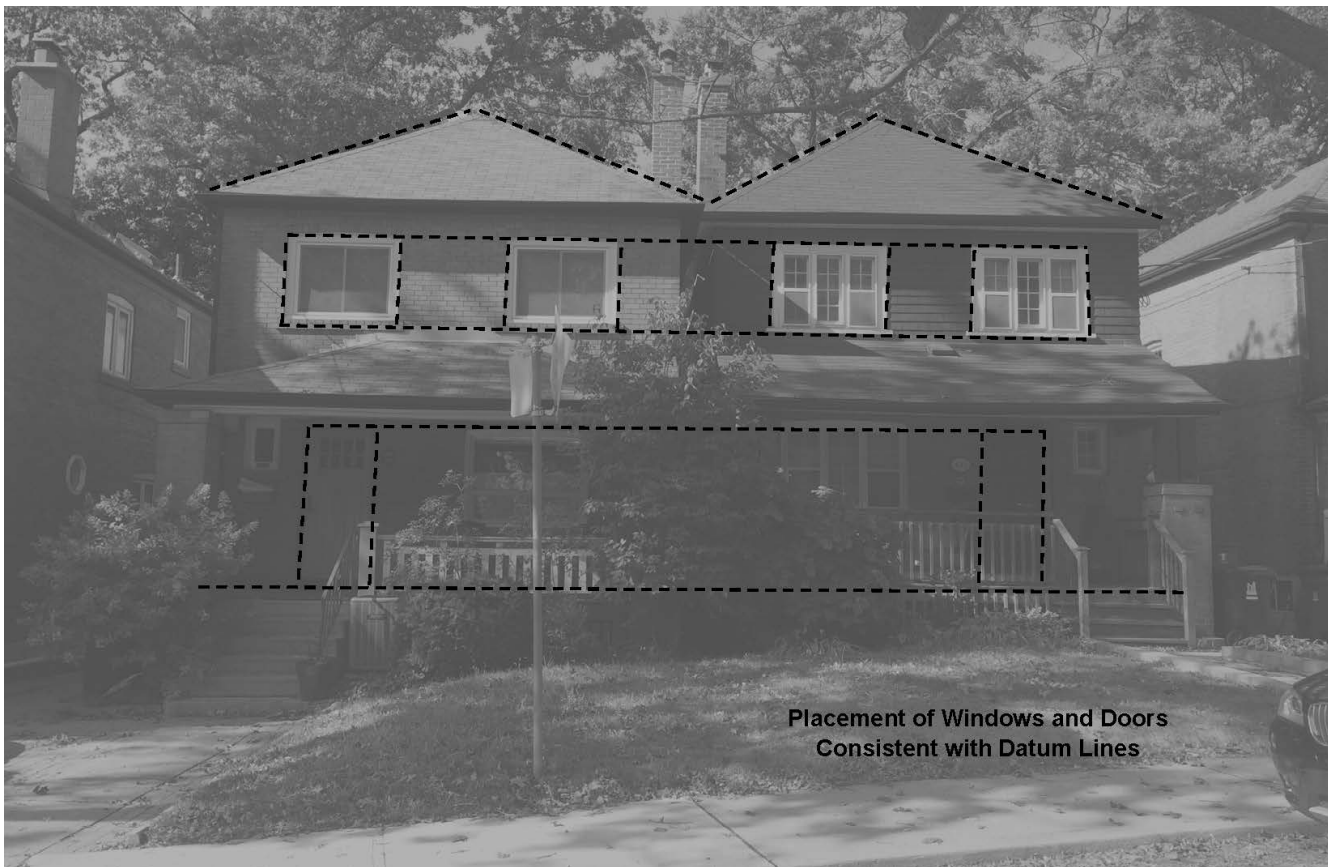


Figure 2.4a: Compatible placement of windows and doors.



Figure 2.4b: Incompatible Building Face and Setback

2.4.2 Front Entrance Design

The majority of the houses were built around the 1920s with similar architectural style. This gives the neighbourhood a strong sense of place and is a key element in defining the prevailing physical character. Many houses have steps leading up to them as well as a large street-level porch. Some porches have been enclosed which has become a distinctive trait of the area. Another notable trait is having off-centre front doors, often done to increase symmetry with front entrance to driveway ratios.

Summary of Zoning Regulations

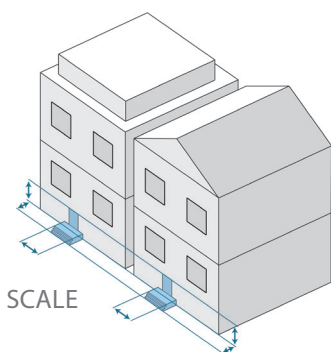
The zoning bylaw does not directly regulate the design of front entrance design. However, the design is influenced by the ground floor height. In a Residential (R) and Residential Detached (RD) zone the minimum height of the first floor must be 1.2 metres above established grade for semi-detached and detached dwellings.

Intent of Zoning

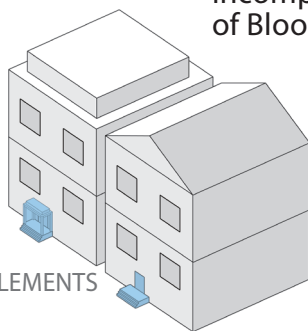
The intent of the zoning regulations is to preserve the relationship of the house and the street. Some houses in the neighbourhood have raised first floors with an integral garage underneath which alters the perceived scale of the building as well as affects the building's connection to the street. The minimum height of the first floor also ensures consistency of the streetscape in the neighbourhood. Part of the character of the neighbourhood are entrances that are close to grade with varying design elements such as open and enclosed porches, flush entrances, and some steps leading up to the entrance. Houses with raised above grade entrances with or without integral garages underneath are incompatible and not a part of the prevailing character of Bloor West Village.

Key Design Objectives

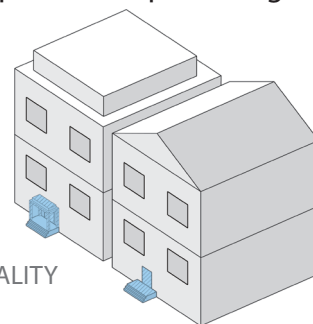
1. **Scale:** Maintain consistency in front entrance element's height and overall size including railings, pillars, and enclosures.
2. **Facade Elements:** Thoughtful placement of doors and windows that maintains the streetscape balance.
3. **Materiality:** Ensure similar and compatible materials are used in the neighbourhood.



SCALE



FACADE ELEMENTS



MATERIALITY

Proposed Character Guidelines

Size front entrances to be proportionate to lot size and adjacent houses so it does not dominate the facade.

Contributing to the animation of the street and sense of community through use of open porches is encouraged.

Use appropriate placement of windows and doors that are consistent with the existing datum storey lines on the street.

Use compatible materials and colours such as red brick and pressure treated wood.



Figure 2.4c: Incompatible Scale of Front Entrance Design



Figure 2.4d: Compatible Scale of Front Entrance Design

2.4.3 Materiality

The 3 common building materials used throughout many of the original buildings within the neighbourhood include: brick (typically red in colour), vinyl siding, and plaster. Many of the houses also use a combination of brick on the first storey and vinyl siding on the second storey.

Key Design Objectives

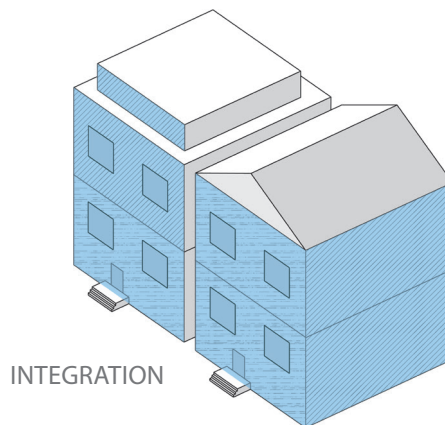
1. **Integration:** Use the same or similar and compatible construction materials as original houses in the neighbourhood.
2. **Colour:** Use colours that follow or integrate well with the existing colour palette of the neighbourhood.

Summary of Zoning Regulations

There are no zoning regulations related to materiality. The design guidelines should be used to inform material design decisions to ensure proper integration with the existing prevailing character.

Intent of Zoning

The materiality design guidelines are intended to advise homeowners, builders, architects, designers, and others, on the compatible materials for development with the Bloor West Village. It is to ensure seamless integration of new and old buildings while maintaining the prevailing character.



Proposed Character Guidelines

Using red brick, light coloured vinyl siding, and plaster is encouraged. Other materials may be deemed compatible based on similarity with the above and colour palette.

Using other materials, such as stone, should be compatible in size to the brick used throughout the neighbourhood.

Select colour choices that are sensitive to the colour palette of the street and of similar tone.

Section 2.5 Driveways & Garages

Garages throughout Bloor-West Village are not a common building element, as the buildings date back to the early 1900s, therefore were not a predominant structure. However, with owners having the desire for a garage, many houses have constructed garages in the rear of the site. In addition, with new builds- garages are being constructed within the house. Below-grade garages are no longer permitted in Toronto's zoning by-law, which results in the garages of new construction increasing the height of the first floor. Since garages are not included in the Gross Floor Area (GFA) of the building, this results in the first floor height being increased. This changes the scaling of the street and the datum story lines as they do not line up with the surrounding residential infrastructure.

Summary of Zoning Regulations

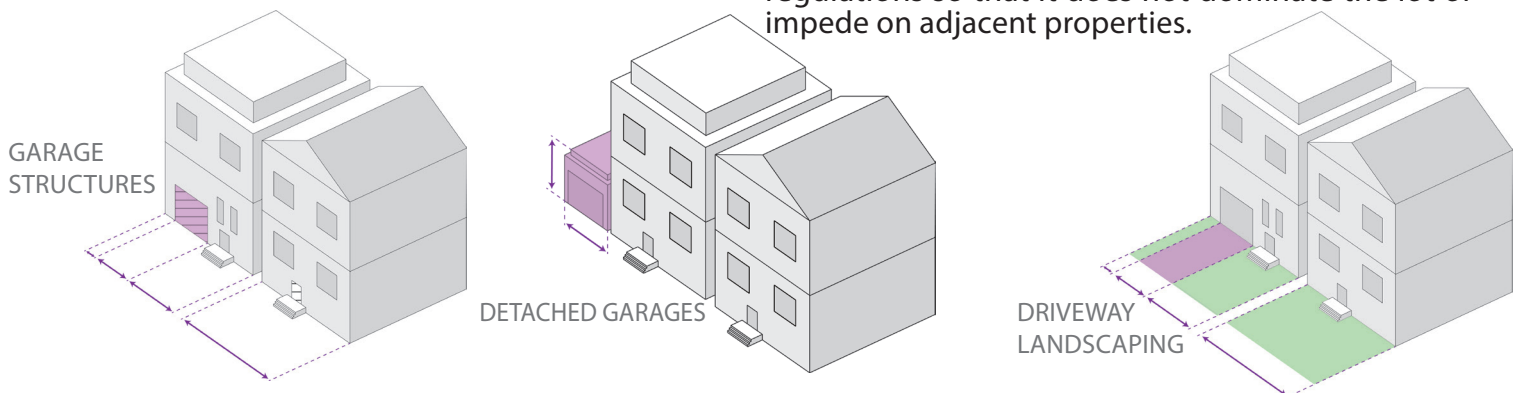
Key Design Objectives

1. **Integral Garages:** Discourage construction of garages where possible
2. **Garage Structures:** Determine appropriate height and width in relation to adjacent properties. Garages being the dominant element of the entire facade is discouraged and it is encouraged to use materials which are consistent with the rest of the structure.
3. **Detached Garages:** must not exceed what is allowed in the current zoning by-laws
4. **Driveway Landscaping:** Use of soft landscaping to maximize visual appeal, and use permeable materials to encourage natural run-off.

The minimum required rear yard setback and side yard setback for ancillary buildings or structures is 0.3m on residential lots. No portion of the ancillary structure can be closer than 6.0m to the residential building. In addition, the maximum height of the structure is 3.0m and maximum ground floor area of 5.0 meters squared. For parking within the residential structure, the width of vehicle entrances through the front main wall must be minimum 6m and below grade garages are not permitted within the zoning by-law.

Intent of Zoning

The intent of the zoning regulations are to ensure consistent and properly constructed parking and driveways throughout Bloor-West Village. In addition, they must not dominate the front facade from inappropriate size or placement and meet the minimum requirements to accommodate a vehicle. Detached garages also must follow the zoning by-laws regulations so that it does not dominate the lot or impede on adjacent properties.



Proposed Character Guidelines

Use datum storey lines in relation to the scale of adjacent buildings to achieve appropriate placement of garage.

Consider landscaping in order to maintain a positive visual presence.

Garage structures should not be taller than the height of the front door, located at grade and not dominate the building facade.

Detached garage structures must be built in compliance with the zoning by-law.

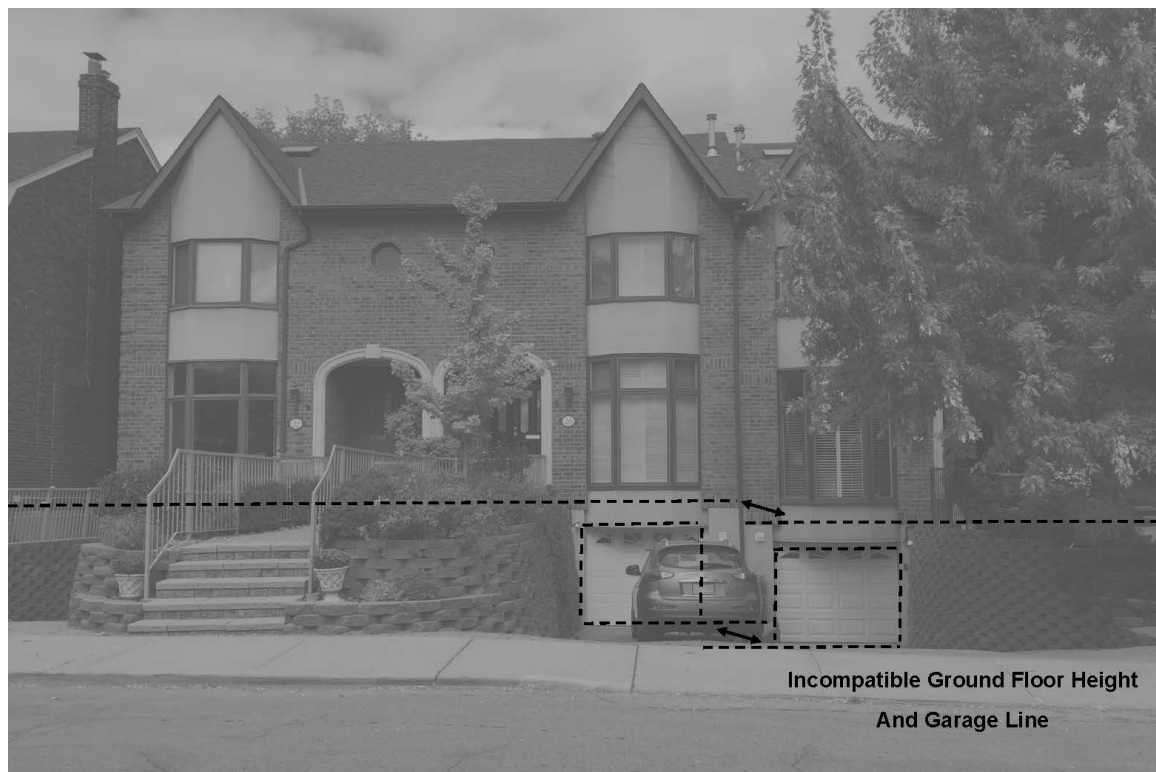


Figure 2.5a: Incompatible Garage Line

Section 2.6 Setbacks & Landscaping

2.6.1 Setbacks

Throughout the Bloor West Village, shallow front yard setbacks and narrow side yard setbacks are a common feature between most buildings. The shallow front yards typically include grass or further landscaped yards with a mature tree which is characteristic of the forest that existed on the site prior to the neighbourhood development.

Key Design Objectives

1. **Streetscape:** Create a streetscape that allows for the appropriate amount of landscaping and sightlines to the facade.
2. **Privacy:** maintain minimum side and rear yard setbacks to ensure sufficient privacy with neighbouring buildings.

Summary of Zoning Regulations

The following zoning regulations apply for the setbacks of houses in Residential (R) and Residential Detached (RD) zones:

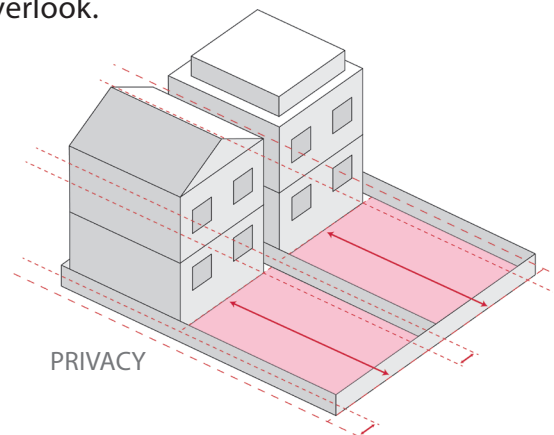
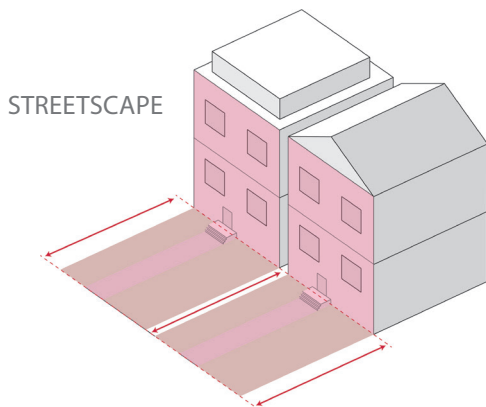
Minimum Front Yard Setback: 6m

Minimum Rear Yard Setback: 7.5m

Minimum Side Yard Setback: 0.9 m

Intent of Zoning

The intent of the zoning regulations is to preserve the relationship of the house and the street, as well as the house and neighbouring houses. Minimum front yard setbacks are intended to create a continuous streetscape that allows for the appropriate landscaping and facade elements to be incorporated to enhance the connection of the house to the street. The intent of minimum side yard setbacks is to allow for vehicle and pedestrian access to the front and rear yards of the dwelling. Rear yard setbacks are to regulate distances between properties to limit the impacts of shadowing and overlook.



Proposed Character Guidelines

Have front yard setbacks that conform with rest of street to ensure adequate space for landscaping and facade elements. Reduced front yard setbacks affect the rhythm of the street and the perception of building scale.

Have rear and side yard setbacks that conform with rest zoning bylaw to reduce shadowing and overlook. Reduced side and rear yard setbacks does not conform with the overall character of the neighbourhood.



Figure 2.6a: Incompatible front yard setbacks

2.6.2 Landscaping

The area flourishes with well maintained landscapes and mature street trees, which represent the historical forest located on the site prior to residential development. The Humber River is adjacent to the site with a downward slope leading down to it, just west of the Old Mill district. This results in portions of the site having a steep decline which has been used for the construction of creative pedestrian walkways and landscapes. There are two public open spaces within the site. One is Lessard Park which is located in the western section of the site and the other is Ravina Gardens Park which is located in the eastern section of the site, within the Quebec district. Common elements of vegetation throughout the neighbourhood are: bushes, shrubs, and small gardens. Many houses also have stone barriers surrounding their front yard gardens. Mature street trees are located all over the neighbourhood and results in a strong environment-friendly neighbourhood. Most houses have a mature tree located in their front yard, or share one with their neighbour.

Summary of Zoning Regulations

Key Design Objectives

1. **Vegetation:** Planting of vegetation, flora and fauna species in coordination with existing conditions and in keeping with the surrounding environment
2. **Stormwater Management:** Ensure side yards are landscaped to ensure on-site stormwater management.
3. **Native Species:** Use of native species to preserve the health of the surrounding environment and

The following zoning regulations apply for the setbacks of houses in Residential (R) and Residential Detached (RD) zones:

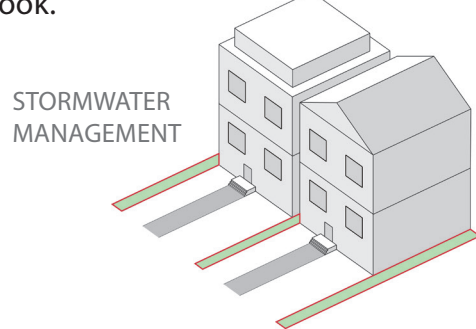
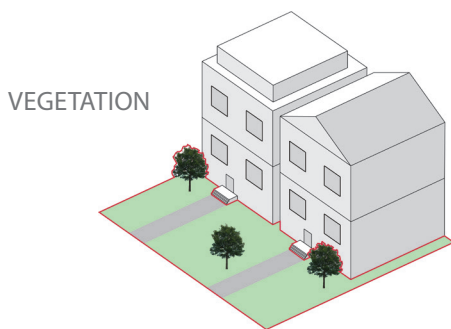
Minimum Front Yard Setback: 6m

Minimum Rear Yard Setback: 7.5m

Minimum Side Yard Setback: 0.9 m

Intent of Zoning

The intent of the zoning regulations is to preserve the relationship of the house and the street, as well as the house and neighbouring houses. Minimum front yard setbacks are intended to create a continuous streetscape that allows for the appropriate landscaping and facade elements to be incorporated to enhance the connection of the house to the street. The intent of minimum side yard setbacks is to allow for vehicle and pedestrian access to the front and rear yards of the dwelling. Rear yard setbacks are to regulate distances between properties to limit the impacts of shadowing and overlook.



Proposed Character Guidelines

Landscaping shall be, at a minimum- in conformity with the zoning regulations to reduce surface runoff and the heat island effect.

Discourage removal of mature trees as they are historically significant and apart of the character of Bloor West Village.

Incorporate the landscaping of side yards to help with onsite stormwater management.

Encourage use of grass and gardens in front yards as it shall be considered to be in keeping with the neighbourhood character.



Figure 2.6b: Compatible Landscaping



Figure 2.6c: Incompatible Landscaping

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this project was to test the City of Toronto Neighbourhood Character Guidelines Draft Manual & Template by applying them to the Bloor West Village neighbourhood. This report provides preliminary insight to the established neighbourhood character and potential guidelines to address change that is occurring. The findings and recommendations outlined in this report should serve as a reference for further analysis and community engagement. This will enable the development of refined neighbourhood and district specific character guidelines for the three sub-areas, that are representative and credible. To advance the work that has been completed to date, the following next steps should be taken:

1. Additional and extensive community consultation, including outreach to those who are not on the residents association email list or engaged in the community.
2. Additional survey(s) distributed via numerous means to build on existing survey results.
3. Further investigation and refinement of district profiles including prevailing character, preferred character statements, and district specific guidelines.
4. Roundtable discussions, workshops, and walking tours to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the community's perception of the prevailing character, the guidelines that should be established, and how new builds can be designed to improve compatibility with existing dwellings.

In addition, the team recommends the following:

- Specific recommendations under subsections of Chapter 2 in this report should be taken into consideration when refining and finalizing the draft neighbourhood guidelines.
- Formal public meetings should be held throughout the process of additional research, refinement and finalization of draft guidelines, similar to statutory Planning Act requirements.
- City Councillor Sarah Doucette should continue to be involved in the process, as well as others with an understanding of planning processes, and those with connections at the city.
- The document presented to council should follow the structure and concepts of the guidelines in this report and official planning documents.
- The document presented to council should outline the process taken to engage the community and how the credibility of the guidelines was ensured.
- Guidelines developed should have clear planning rationale in order to be supported at the Committee of Adjustment and/or the Ontario Municipal Board.

The above next steps and recommendations will establish an increasingly comprehensive document that will eventually be presented to city council. Overall, it's necessary to have as many members of the community engaged throughout the process of developing draft character guidelines. This ensures a stronger understanding of the community's values and ultimately will create more informed and appropriate guidelines. This will likely reduce the degree of refinements required by city staff and thus contribute to the likelihood of the document being considered. It is important to highlight that preserving Toronto's built and cultural heritage is deeply embedded within the Toronto Official Plan and many new developments are not compatible with the present built and cultural heritage. This underlying city value and the culmination of these efforts will aim to ensure that new developments in the neighbourhood do not continue to threaten the prevailing character of Bloor West Village.

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APPENDIX

Case Studies

The following section outlines the City of Toronto Manual of Neighbourhood Character Guidelines and the Long Branch Neighbourhood Character Guidelines. These documents have been analyzed to inform the character guidelines that will be created for Bloor West Village.

City of Toronto Manual of Neighbourhood Character Guidelines

The City of Toronto Planning Division is developing a Neighbourhood Guidelines Template and “How-To” manual in collaboration with SvN, who was hired as the lead planning consultant for the project. The documents being prepared are intended to enable community groups, with the help of professionals, to preserve the existing prevailing character in neighbourhoods throughout the City, while allowing a degree of architectural and design flexibility. These guidelines will establish an evaluation tool for residents, developers, and local councils to assess the compatibility and consistency of development proposals in various neighbourhoods, that both conform to the Zoning By-Law, and that go to the Committee of Adjustment seeking relief from zoning regulations. The Template for Neighbourhood Guidelines will ensure that communities develop tailored design criteria in a consistent format, thereby ensuring that the guidelines can be consolidated into a comprehensive document in the future.

In 2016 the neighbourhoods of Long Branch in Etobicoke, and Willowdale in North York, were selected for Pilot Projects to test the City-Wide Template and Manual in draft form. These areas were chosen for Pilot Projects because they are undergoing a considerable amount of change and thus presented an obvious need to promptly develop neighbourhood specific guidelines. These community needs also presented the opportunity for the City to gain valuable insight related to the use, clarity, and effectiveness of the Template and Manual being produced. The City, including local councillors and SvN, have been working with community residents over the past year to undertake this work for each pilot area with the guidance of the draft documents. These studies will inform necessary adjustments to the content of the City documents for their final publication. Generally, these Pilot Projects followed the same structure including an analysis of opportunities and constraints, identification of vision and objectives, and preparation of tailored guidelines. To date, there has been greater progress made in developing the character guidelines for the Long Branch neighbourhood in Etobicoke.

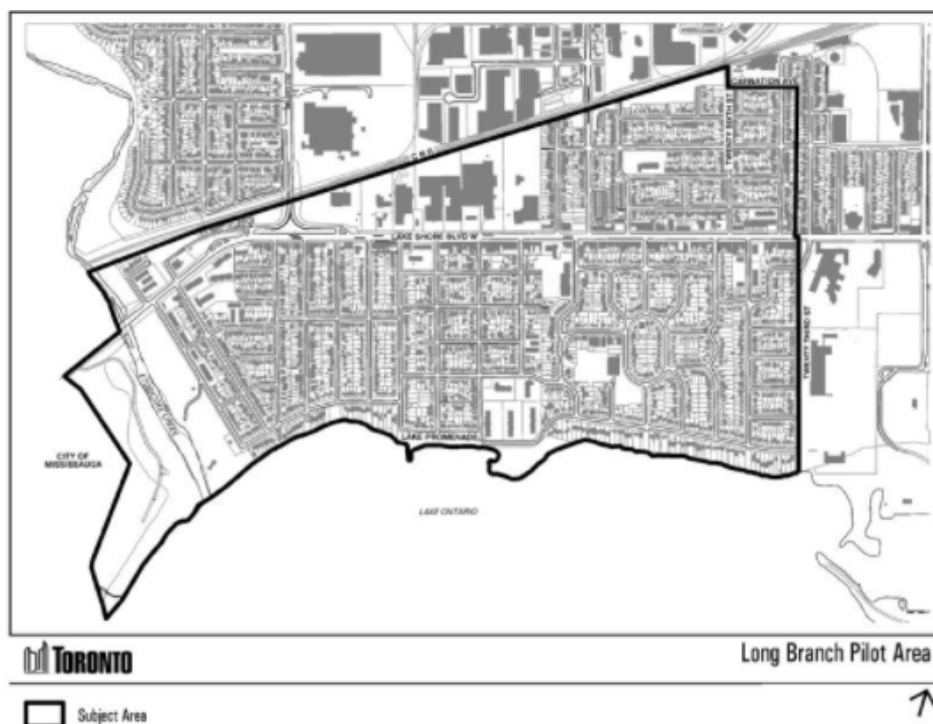


2.1.2 Long Branch Neighbourhood Character Guidelines

The Long Branch neighbourhood is situated in Etobicoke along Lake Ontario. The project began with an analysis of the neighbourhoods opportunities and constraints and identification of the collective vision and objectives. Following this initial stage of the project, an analysis of the neighbourhood character began with considerations for the criteria laid out in the section of the Official Plan relating to Neighbourhoods. In various workshops residents of the community were asked to share their opinions on the defining characteristics of the neighbourhood and the priorities required to ensure the character is preserved. Residents were also asked what elements and considerations they are willing to compromise on given that change in the neighbourhood cannot be outright denied and the guidelines are intended to be flexible. New developments may take on a new form or aesthetic however maintaining the key attributes of the built form that exists ensures compatibility and consistency of new development with the prevailing character. This study has echoed that the neighbourhoods history, streetscape, mass & scale, and building elements & design are key considerations of neighbourhood character and the development of specific guidelines. The latter includes layouts of streets, building typologies, landscape features & front yards, front entrances, parking & driveways, setbacks, lot coverage & height, materiality, facade elements, and architectural styles, all of which combine to establish a unique neighbourhood character. Residents were asked to reflect on these conditions and the feedback received was used to establish a comprehensive understanding of the prevailing neighbourhood character and its most critical components. The draft guidelines that have been published include three sections notably, the introduction, character analysis, and objectives in regard to character.

Background documents, including reports and presentations, and the draft guidelines for the Long Branch neighbourhood have been reviewed extensively to gather insight on the process and criteria used to come about the guidelines in their current form. The research and findings obtained from the Long Branch study have significantly informed the components and process of our analysis and the scope of considerations appropriate to develop such guidelines. Although a Template and Manual are being produced, the project lead admits it's been less of a "fill in the blank" process than expected and pilot projects in Long Branch and Willowdale have emerged differently.

Outside of Toronto and within Ontario, there has also been an initiative to develop unique character guidelines to preserve the existing conditions and character of neighbourhoods in Ottawa. The criteria used to identify neighbourhood character in Ottawa mimics that which has been identified in Toronto and used to inform the City-Wide Template, Manual, and Pilot Projects currently underway. In addition, similar projects are prevalent in Australia and South Wales internationally.



Committee of Adjustment Applications

This section will outline and analyze a selection of Committee of Adjustment minor variance applications found within the Bloor West Village Study Area. The objective is to highlight any trends in the decisions made by the committee and any impacts they may have on the character of the area. There are currently 12 recent Committee of Adjustment minor variance applications within the Bloor West Village. A summary chart of all 12 applications can be found in Appendix A of this document. Below is a select set of applications examples which are exemplary of the trends in applications found within the neighbourhood.

Enclosed Front Porch:

Enclosing the front porch of dwellings is a common trend found within the Bloor West Village. People are looking to expand their floor area without major renovations and enclosing the porch has been a recurrent choice. The dwelling on the left of Figure 4.1 has a proposal to enclose the existing front porch altering the front lot line from 7.32m to 5.17m.

On the right is a photo of a similar styled semi-detached house with an enclosed front porch. As identified in the Background Character Analysis, enclosed porches are a trend seen throughout the Bloor West Village. They typically occur as a minor variance allowing homeowners to increase their floor area through quick and inexpensive renovations. Enclosing the porch changes the front lot line measurements, however it does not change the perception of the distance of the house from the sidewalk.



Figure 4.1: Enclosed Front Porch Application

Third Storey Addition:

Another way for people to expand their floor area is by adding a third storey to their house. The addition of third storeys to houses is also a common trend for minor variance applications. The dwelling on the left of Figure 4.2 has a minor variance application submitted for the addition of a third storey within the Jane District.

The photo on the right is a dwelling that underwent a third storey addition within the same district. As identified in section 2.5, 3 storey houses are becoming more common within the Bloor West Village. There are also certain characteristics of a 3 storey house that increase its ability to fit in with the character of the neighbourhood. The peaked roof and third floor are designed to extend down to be in line with the neighbouring 2 storey homes. These lines help the house integrate better into the existing street aesthetic.



Figure 4.2: Third Storey Addition Application

Figure 4.3 depicts the proposed 3 storey addition for the dwelling. Similar to the example on the right of Figure 4.2, the addition is designed so that the third storey and roof are in-line with the two storey neighbouring homes. In this case, the 3 storey application could integrate well into Bloor West Village.



Figure 4.3: Proposed 3 Storey Addition

Set Back Changes:

Many residents feel that minor changes and exterior updates are necessary to adapt to modern needs and lifestyles. As such, many of these renovations involve reconfiguring the physical structure of a building and ultimately altering the building outline. These changes can be done by applying for minor variances to alter setbacks as outlined in the local bylaw.

As seen in the conceptual plans in Figure 4.4 and Figure 4.5, 482 Armdale Avenue proposes renovations resulting in a single story addition, rear deck and covered front porch. These changes include 3 variations to existing bylaws, pertaining to minor front yard set-back changes, density and landscaping. In this case, the existing by-law permits a minimum front setback of 5.36m (currently non-conforming) and the applicant seeks to change it to 3.36m.

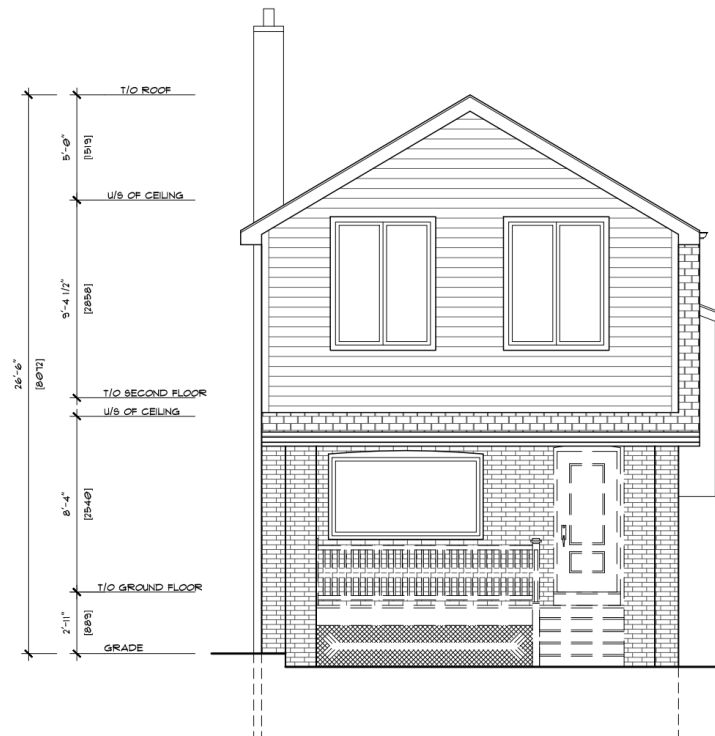


Figure 4.4: Conceptual Plan

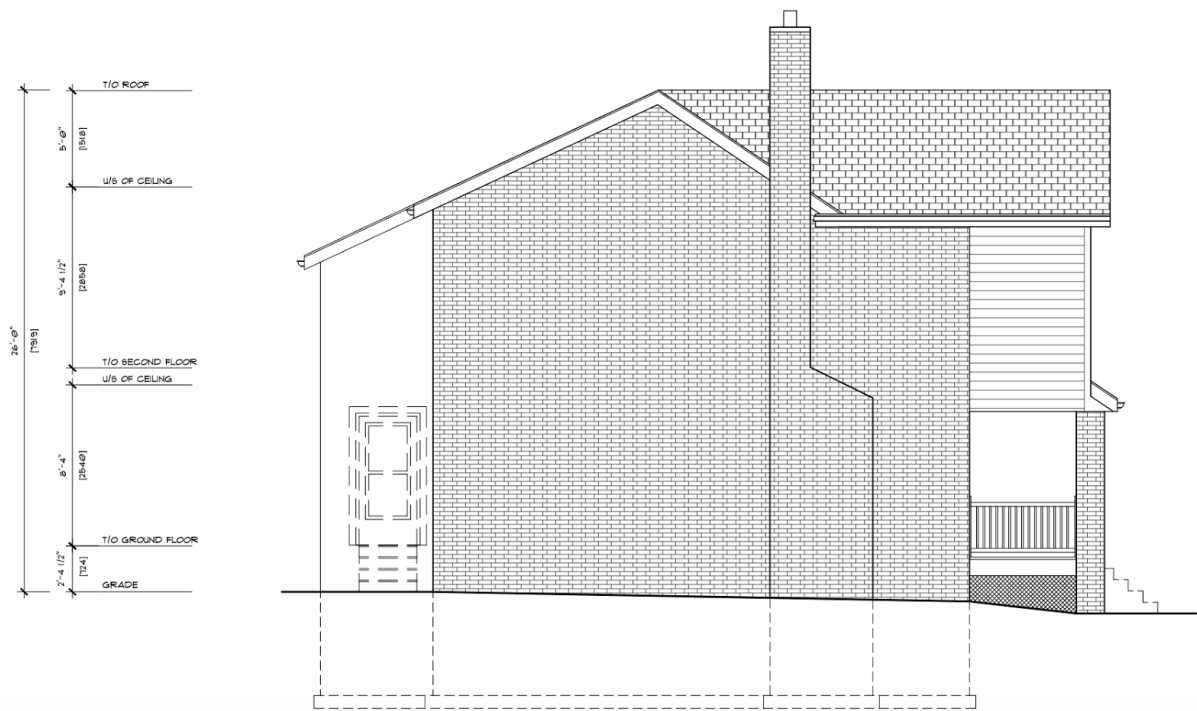


Figure 4.5: Conceptual Plan

Demolition and Construction

As the Bloor West Village neighbourhood was generally constructed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, many homeowners are seeking to modernize their places of residence. This often results in residents pursuing to completely demolish a present structure and build a completely new home.

Figure 4.6 shows the proposed plan for 25 Evelyn Crescent. Based on its Committee of Adjustment application, the plan intends to demolish an existing 2 storey residence and replace it with an updated 2 storey residence. The new structure could have significant physical changes as it will be built from the ground up, which may also alter the character of the street. In this specific case, the application presents a total of 9 variations to existing bylaws. These bylaw changes are predominantly pertaining to the reduction of soft landscaping, density (measured in FSI) and minor reduction in setbacks.

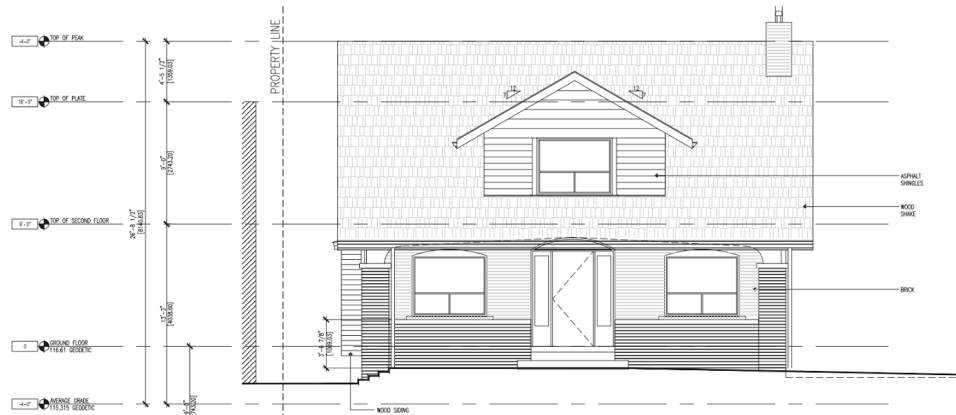


Figure 4.6: Demolition and Construction Application

Density Change:

Due to lifestyle changes over the years, many homeowners and families are seeking homes with more room for their day to day lives. In pursuit of this additional space, many residents in the Bloor West Village wish to expand their homes, resulting in more density.

315 Beresford Ave is an example of a Committee of Adjustment application for the construction of a new detached dwelling with integral garage. As seen in Figure 4.7, the design seeks to dramatically increase usable space. The application presents 11 total minor variances such as significant changes to setbacks, building height, landscaping and changes in FSI. In this specific case, the by-law permits an FSI of 0.6, while the plans seek a density increase to 1.15.

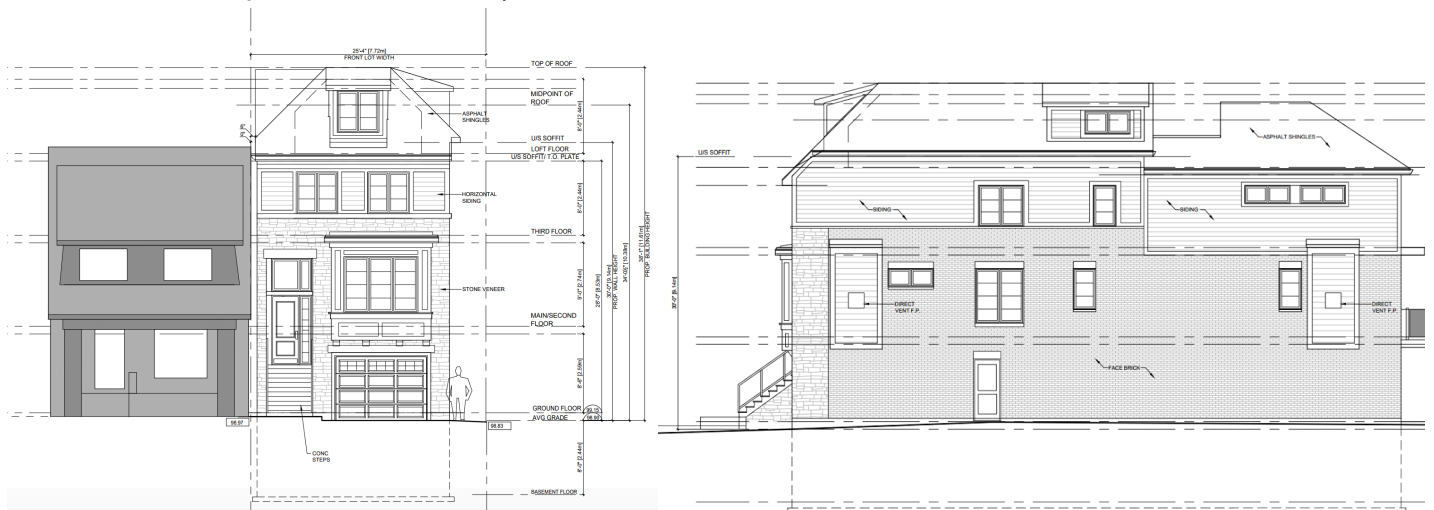
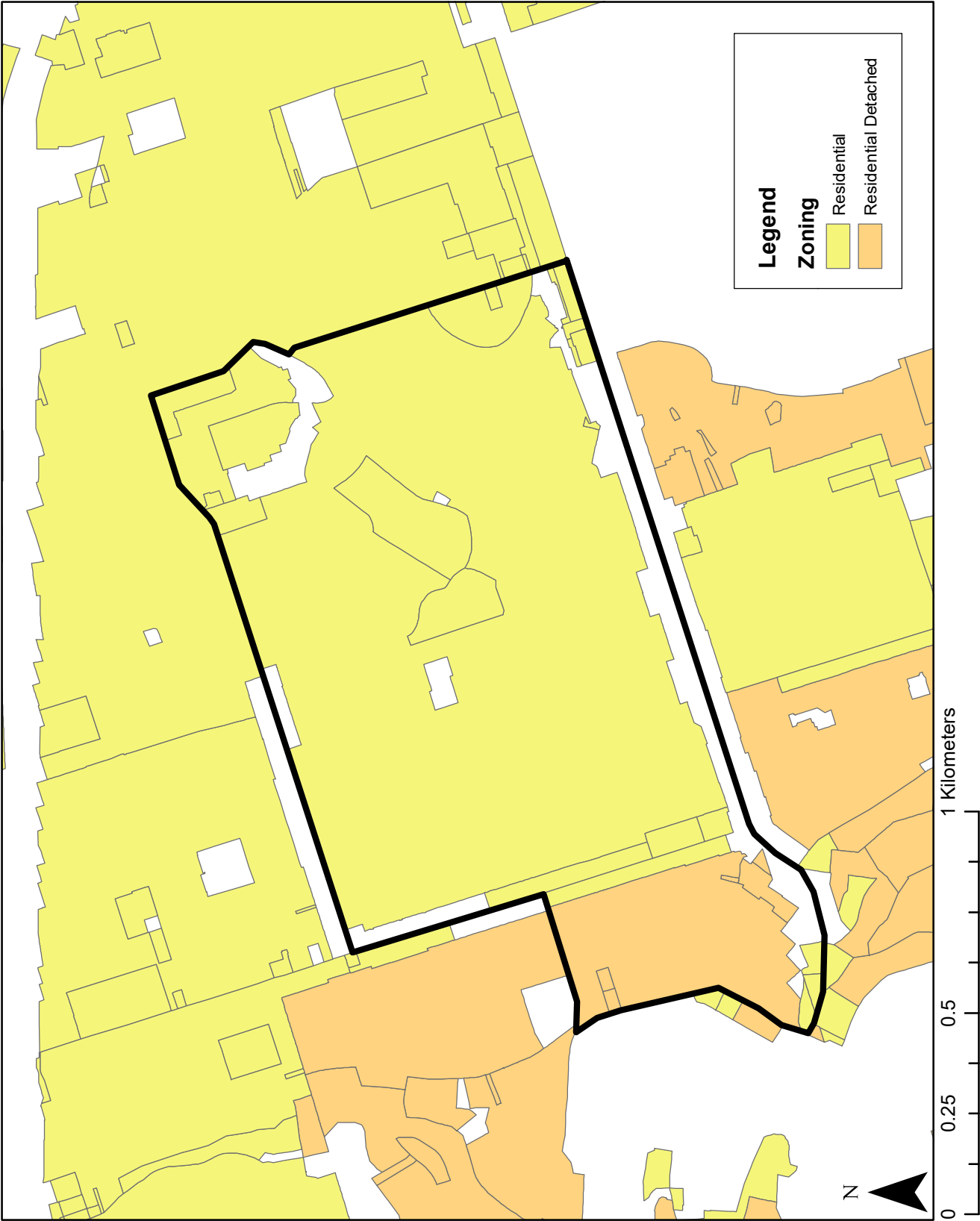


Figure 4.7: Density Change Application

**Committee of Adjustment Applications:
Bloor West Village**

Address	District	Status	Proposal and Reason	Existing Building Setbacks	Proposed Building Setbacks	Building Density (Existing to proposed, measured in FSI)	Landscape Changes
352 Clendenan Ave	Quebec	Prepare notice	Proposal to construct a detached rear yard garage	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes
25 Evelyn Cres	Quebec	Prepare notice	Demolition of existing 2-storey house and construction of proposed 2-storey house	- Front Line: 4.47m - Side Lot Line: 1.8m - Side Lot Line: 4.0m - Rear Lot Line: 0.8m	- Front Line: 4.47m - Side Lot Line: 1.8m - Side Lot Line: 4.0m - Rear Lot Line: 0.8m	0.6 to 0.749	Yes
2 Birchview Cres	Quebec	Hearing Scheduled	To construct a third storey addition, a new second storey rear platform and to add a third unit to the existing dwelling.	- Front Line: 3.89m - Side Lot Line: 0.43m - Side Lot Line: 0.61m - Rear Lot Line: 10.66m	- Front Line: 3.0m - Side Lot Line: 0.43m - Side Lot Line: 0.61m - Rear Lot Line: 10.66m	0.6 to 1.24 New Height: 10.37m	Yes
506 Beresford Ave	Jane	Hearing Scheduled	To construct a two-storey rear addition, a new rear deck and to enclose a portion of the front porch.	- Front Line: 4.65m - Side Lot Line: 0.46m - Side Lot Line: 0.0m - Rear Lot Line: 18.49m	- Front Line: 2.21m - Side Lot Line: 0.46m - Side Lot Line: 0.0m - Rear Lot Line: 13.31m	0.69 to 0.88	Yes
474 Beresford Ave	Jane	Approved	To construct a rear two-storey addition.	- Front Line: 5.09m - Side Lot Line: 0.0m - Side Lot Line: 0.43m - Rear Lot Line: 11.7m	- Front Line: 4.65m - Side Lot Line: 0.46m - Side Lot Line: 0.0m - Rear Lot Line: 10.47m	0.69 to 0.85	Yes
315 Beresford Ave	Jane	Hearing Scheduled & Scheduled TLAB Appeal	To construct a new detached dwelling with an integral garage.	- Front Line: 6.51m - Side Lot Line: 0.04m - Side Lot Line: 1.07m - Rear Lot Line: 26.4m	- Front Line: 6.52m - Side Lot Line: 0.15m - Side Lot Line: 1.21m - Rear Lot Line: 21.73m	0.69 to 1.11	Yes
301 Willard Ave	Jane	Hearing Scheduled	3 Storey rear addition with 3rd floor balcony and terrace and interior alterations	- Front Line: 6.63m - Side Lot Line: 1.07m - Side Lot Line: 0.13m - Rear Lot Line: 29.93m	- Front Lot Line: 6.63m - Side Lot Line: 1.07m - Side Lot Line: 0.13m - Rear Lot Line: 22.68m	0.6 to 0.77	Yes
482 Armadale Ave	Jane	Deferred	Interior Alterations, New Rear Deck, New Front Porch, Front Addition	- Front Line: 5.46m - Side Lot Line: 0.16m - Side Lot Line: 1.40m - Rear Lot Line: 17.55m	- Front Lot Line: 3.41m - Side Lot Line: 0.16m - Side Lot Line: 1.40m - Rear Lot Line: 17.55m	0.6 to 0.69	Yes
457 Armadale Ave	Jane	Approved	Enclose existing front porch.	- Front Line: 7.32m - Side Lot Line: 1.22m - Side Lot Line: 0m - Rear Lot Line: 12.21m	- Front Lot Line: 5.17m - Side Lot Line: 1.22m - Side Lot Line: 0m - Rear Lot Line: 12.21m	N/A	No
187 Jane St	Jane	Notice Prepared	Sever pair of existing semi-detached duplexes and convert each into triplex with additional 2 bedroom dwelling unit in existing attic with new dormers and rear exit stairs.	- Front Line: 0.36m - Side Lot Line: 0.63m - Side Lot Line: 0m - Rear Lot Line: 12.14	- Front Line: 0.36m - Side Lot Line: 0.63m - Side Lot Line: 0m - Rear Lot Line: 12.14	1.0 to 1.35	No
15 Nelles Ave	Jane	Hearing Scheduled & Scheduled TLAB Appeal	Partial 3rd storey addition over existing 2 storey home over the existing dwelling.	- Front Line: 4.635m - Side Lot Line: 0.56m - Side Lot Line: 0.02 - Rear Lot Line: 9.79	- Front Line: 4.635m - Side Lot Line: 0.56m - Side Lot Line: 0.02m - Rear Lot Line: 12.43m	0.6 to 0.96 New Height: 10.5m	Yes
65 Old Mill Dr	Old Mill	Tentatively Hearing Scheduled	Reconstruct deck on existing 1 storey at the rear.	- Front lot line: 7.03 - Side Lot Line: 0.44m - Side Lot Line: 1.22m - Rear Lot Line: 17.80m	- Front lot line: 7.03 - Side Lot Line: 0.44m - Side Lot Line: 1.22m - Rear Lot Line: 17.80m	N/A	No

Zoning Map



Background Character Analysis

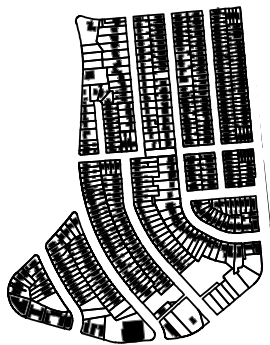
The following section outlines the neighbourhood character analysis for the Bloor West Village. It focuses on 4 main categories; Neighbourhood & Existing Conditions, Streetscape, Built Form, and Building Elements. Within these categories, lotting patterns, building typologies, massing, density, setbacks, open space and landscape features are addressed. This analysis will inform neighbourhood character guidelines that will provide residents, developers, and local councils with an evaluation tool to assess the compatibility and consistency of development proposals in various neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhood & Existing Conditions

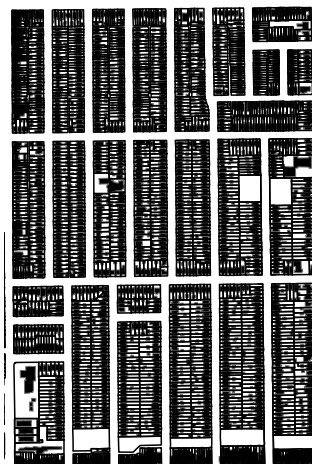
The character of a neighbourhood can be attributed to its history. The layouts of streets, lotting pattern, building typologies, and landscape features are influenced by the the foundation to which the neighbourhood was built. The existing conditions impact the degree to which new development can alter the existing landscape.

LAYOUT OF STREETS/LOTING PATTERN

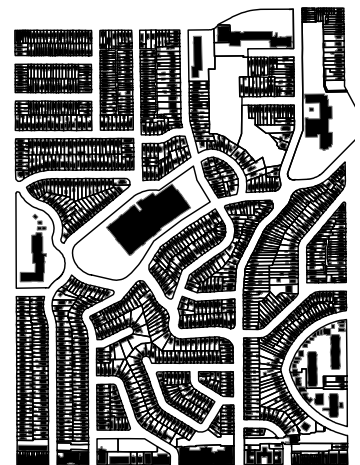
Throughout Bloor-West village, street patterns vary depending on which district you are in. In the Old Mill area, the majority of the streets are grid pattern, with some irregular curvilinear streets. Between Jane and Runnymede, streets are an oblong grid pattern running North/South and East/West meanwhile between Runnymede and Quebec, many of the streets are curvilinear to prevent motorists from taking them as shortcuts to dodge traffic on arterial roads. Traffic calming elements have also been implemented, which include curb extensions, speed bumps and stop signs. These distinct street patterns set out whether or not the lot sizes are consistent. The Old Mill district and Quebec district have unique lot sizes whereas the Jane district has more uniform lots because of the grid street pattern.



Old Mill District:
Curvilinear Lot Pattern



Jane District: Grid Lot Pattern



Quebec District: Curvilinear
Lot Pattern

BUILDING TYPOLOGIES

Bloor West Village is a residential neighbourhood and all buildings are residential with the exception of educational buildings. The majority of the buildings are single detached dwellings but rowhouses and semi-detached dwellings are also found throughout the neighbourhood, particularly in the Jane District.



Single Detached



Rowhouse



Semi-detached

LANDSCAPE FEATURES

The area is flourished with well maintained landscapes and mature street trees representing the historical forest located on the site prior to residential development. The Humber River is adjacent to the site with a downward slope leading down to it, just west of the Old Mill district. This results in portions of the site having a steep decline which has been used for the construction of creative pedestrian walkways and landscapes. There are two public open spaces within the site. One is Lessard Park which is located in the western section of the site and Ravina Gardens Park which is located in the eastern section of the site, within the Quebec district.



Mature trees are found on most front lawns.

Streetscape

Streetscape focuses on the physical attributes of the street and private property. Streetscape design reveals the street-level features that define the prevailing character of the neighbourhood. This can include, front entrance design, driveways, parking, and landscaping on front yards.

FRONT ENTRANCE DESIGN

The majority of the houses were built around the 1920s with similar architectural style, as will be discussed in Building Elements. This gives the neighbourhood a strong sense of place and is a key element in defining the prevailing physical character. Many houses have steps leading up to them as well as a large street-level porch. Some porches have been enclosed which has become a distinctive trait of the area. Another notable trait is having off-centre front doors, often done to increase symmetry with front entrance to driveway ratios.



Steps leading up to the house, front porches and off-centre front doors are all common elements of front entrance design in the neighbourhood.

PARKING AND DRIVEWAYS

Front yard residential garages are predominantly absent throughout the Bloor West Village. However, detached garages are common and are usually located in the rear of the property. Majority of the houses have a single car driveway and street parking is available.

LANDSCAPING & FRONT YARDS

Common elements of vegetation throughout the neighbourhood are bushes, shrubs, and small gardens. Many houses also have stone barriers surrounding their front yard gardens. Mature street trees are all over the neighbourhood and give it a strong sense of place. Most houses have a mature tree in their front yards or share one with their neighbour.



Front yard gardens, grass lawns, and stone barriers are traits found throughout the area.

Built Form

Built form describes the attributes of a building including its height, width, and relationship to its surroundings. The following characteristics are elements that are recurrent throughout the neighbourhood.

SETBACKS

Found throughout the Bloor West Village are shallow front yard setbacks and narrow side yard



SOILID & VOID, DENSITY & OPEN SPACE

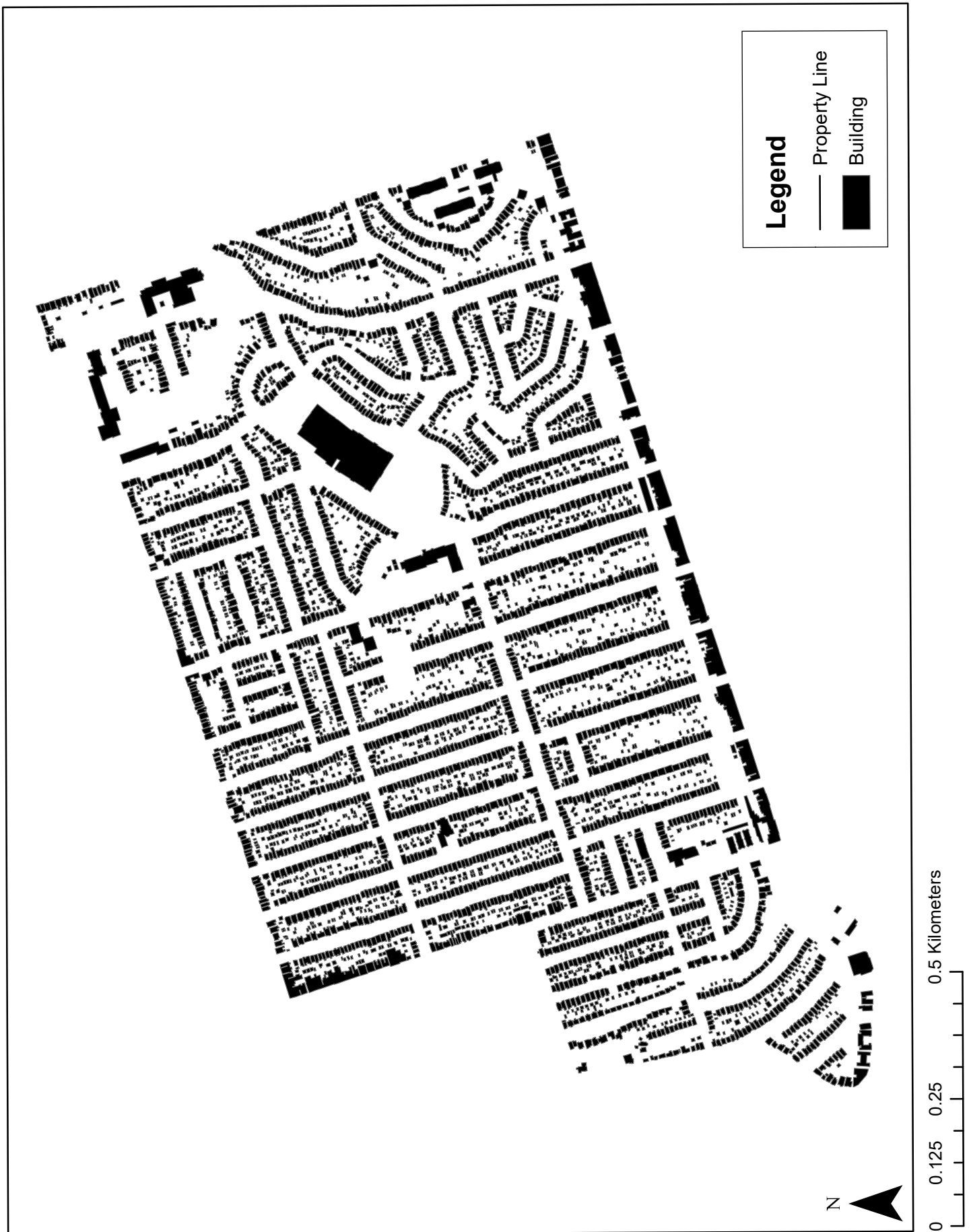
Many of the houses found throughout all 3 districts are symmetrical in terms of datum storey lines, front porch, window shape and size, and driveway. Furthermore, as shown in Map 4.1: Figure Ground, there are narrow separations between buildings with the largest surface area of open space being the backyards.

BUILDING HEIGHTS

The predominant number of storeys found within the Bloor West Village are 2 storey dwellings. However, many of the houses have increased or plan to increase their height to 3 storeys by submitting applications to the Committee of Adjustment. This influx of 3 storey dwellings is now one of the dominant physical characteristics of the neighbourhood, particularly within the Jane district making 2 and 3 storey dwellings a common feature of the area.



Datum Storey Lines



Map 4.1: Figure Ground

Building Elements

Building elements describe the physical attributes of a building including material, colour, and architectural styles. The use of common or compatible elements on buildings in the neighbourhood will contribute to the pedestrian feel and strengthen the overall character of the area.

MATERIALITY

The 3 common building materials used throughout many of the original buildings within the neighbourhood include; brick (typically red in colour), vinyl siding, and plaster. Many of the houses also use a combination of brick on the first storey and vinyl siding or plaster on the second storey.



Brick and Siding



Red Brick



Plaster and Brick

FACADE ELEMENTS

There are two roof types that are principally found throughout the neighbourhood. They are peaked roofs and gable roofs and reflect the predominant architectural styles that will be discussed next. Another facade element that contributes to the overall character of Bloor West Village are the window shapes. Many of the houses were built in the 1920s and feature simple rectangular windows which contribute to the symmetry of the houses found in the area.



Gable Roof



Peaked Roof



Rectangular Windows

ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

The Bloor West Village was developed in the 1920s and today exhibits 3 dominant architectural styles that impact its physical character. These are Craftsman, Edwardian, and Tudor Revival. The photos below depict examples of these architectural styles found in the neighbourhood.

Craftsman Architecture
1900-1930s



Edwardian Architecture
1900-1920s



Tudor Revival
1900-1940s

