

TORONTO STAFF REPORT

June 4, 2004

To: Planning and Transportation Committee
From: Commissioner of Urban Development Services
Subject: Urban Design Guidelines – Area-Based and Site Specific

Purpose:

This report presents for Council's endorsement the area-based and site-specific Urban Design Guidelines that are a companion document of the Official Plan. In addition, a consolidation of three former guidelines of this type are ready for inclusion into the companion document, as the Bloor-Yorkville/North Midtown Urban Design Guidelines.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Council:

- i) adopt the area-based and site-specific urban design guidelines contained in the Urban Design Guidelines companion document – Attachment (a);
- ii) adopt the Bloor-Yorkville/North Midtown Urban Design Guidelines – Attachment (b);
and
- iii) authorize staff to make such stylistic and technical changes as may be necessary to publish the Urban Design Guidelines companion document.

Background:

When City Council adopted the Official Plan in November 2002, it was anticipated that all relevant area-based and site-specific urban design guidelines previously approved by the former Councils would be compiled into a single document. This “companion” to the Plan should be

endorsed by Council within the period between the Plan's adoption and its coming into force to ensure that guidelines that were appended to or formed part of existing Plans "survived" the repeal of the former Plans. This exercise has now been completed, and all relevant area-based and site-specific design guidelines from across the amalgamated City have been consolidated in the document accompanying this report.

All existing area and site-specific guidelines have been reviewed in light of the urban design policies in the Official Plan. Where appropriate, these have been revised, edited and up-dated, however, in all cases the original intent of each guideline has been maintained. The resulting guidelines have been placed in a format consistent with the Official Plan.

The intent of this document is to consolidate previously existing area and site specific urban design guidelines for adoption by Council, giving them clear and uniform status under the new Official Plan. In the past, in rare instances, previous guidelines were included as policies within Secondary Plans. More frequently, guidelines were "appended" to Secondary Plans or site specific Official Plan Amendments, and as such were non-statutory. In most instances, guidelines were simply adopted or endorsed by Councils as stand-alone, non-statutory, guidelines. The area and site specific guidelines contained in the attached document are also not statutory, but will serve the critical function of providing detailed guidance and precision about the implementation of the Plan not achievable in policy.

Comments:

The implementation of the City's Official Plan will be accomplished using the full array of available planning tools. These tools will include implementation plans, strategies and guidelines dealing with various aspects of city-building. Urban design guidelines are an important example of this type of implementation document, providing design direction to City Staff in their review of development proposals.

Urban design guidelines can be classified into two basic types: area-based and site-specific guidelines, which are the subject of this report, and general or city-wide design guidelines.

The general or city-wide guidelines cover very general urban design matters such as, streetscape design, public safety, accessibility and general urban design principles. The former municipalities produced a variety of documents such as the Urban Design Handbook, which dealt with general issues, or other discrete urban design guidelines for issues such as gas stations, parking lots and large format retail. Since amalgamation, some of these documents have been seen to have city-wide application and have been used throughout the new city, where appropriate. These types of guidelines will continue to be reviewed and developed for their city-wide application, however they are not part of the current document. The development of these general guidelines will be a process involving considerable consultation with the public and appropriate stake-holders, culminating in Council's approval of the various component design guidelines.

There is, however, an immediate need to adopt the area-based and site-specific guidelines contained in the attached document. Council's adoption of the City's Official Plan was

accompanied by the simultaneous repeal of many of the pre-amalgamation secondary plans from the various former municipalities. Some of the design guidelines adopted in conjunction with these previous secondary plans remain valid and deal with highly specific aspects of potential future development. To ensure their continued survival under the new Plan once the repeal of the old plans comes into effect, these guidelines must be formally adopted by Council.

In addition, many of the various area-based and site-specific design guidelines, while endorsed by pre-amalgamation councils, were not appended to secondary plans. These are equally valid for continued application, as are the small number of guidelines which have been produced since amalgamation and their status should also be confirmed through adoption of the attached document.

Attachment (a) contains the area-based and site-specific guidelines recommended for adoption by Council. This document is intended to be used in conjunction with the Official Plan and the relevant site specific polices and/or secondary plans which pertain to the individual sites and areas. Each area-based or site-specific guideline can stand apart from the others, however they are consolidated in this format for convenience. They also will be available individually in electronic format.

Recent Work in the Greater Bloor-Yorkville Area

At its meeting of April 14-16 2003, Council directed staff to report on the implementation of consolidating the existing urban design guidelines for the three districts within Bloor-Yorkville area. This work has been completed incorporating and consolidating the following previous guidelines – North Midtown, Hayden Street and Sultan-St.Thomas. The consolidated Bloor-Yorkville/North Midtown Urban Design Guidelines now identify eight precincts and three corridors within the Bloor-Yorkville area, as well as the Yorkville-Hazelton Heritage Conservation District. Revised and updated photographs and illustrations have been included, to reflect changes in the Bloor-Yorkville area since the original guidelines were written. A draft of these guidelines has received stakeholder input. The new guidelines are ready for adoption and inclusion into the companion document as the Bloor-Yorkville/North Midtown Urban Design Guidelines - see Attachment (b).

The consolidation of the various Yorkville area guidelines has indicated that refinements to the Zoning Bylaw may be needed to safeguard the character of the area. These might include the imposition of angular planes and building setback requirements. These matters will be further reviewed and evaluated and if necessary, report back to Toronto South Community Council for its consideration.

Future Work on the Companion Document

The production of Urban Design Guidelines will be an on-going process, with new guidelines added and others removed, as development occurs and the Official Plan is implemented. The consolidation of all urban design guidelines from the pre-amalgamation municipalities has begun with this review of existing area-based and site-specific guidelines. The production of general and other city-wide guidelines will be completed in phases. At each stage, new guidelines will be brought forward for Council's adoption after public consultation.

The Urban Design Guidelines companion document will be produced in electronic format and made available on the City's web-site and as a CD. Hard copy versions will be produced in three-ring binders, with new guidelines added as available and obsolete guidelines removed.

Conclusion:

The attached documents consolidate previously existing area and site-specific urban design guidelines for adoption by Council, giving them clear and uniform status under the new Official Plan. All of the existing area and site-specific guidelines have been reviewed in light of the urban design policies in the Official Plan. Where appropriate, these have been revised, edited for consistency and up-dated, however, in all cases the original intent of each guideline has been maintained. The resulting guidelines have been placed in a format consistent with the Official Plan. The wealth of existing urban design documents will continue to be reviewed, revised and up-dated.

New sections of the Urban Design Guidelines companion document will be brought forward to Council upon completion. Until this work is completed, all existing urban design documents adopted by the former Municipal Councils will continue to be used in the development review and approval process.

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List of Attachments:

- (a) Urban Design Guidelines
- (b) The Bloor-Yorkville/North Midtown Urban Design Guidelines