



APPENDIX C

# FORM AND CHARACTER

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AREA  
REGULATORY GUIDELINES

# INTERPRETATION OF THESE GUIDELINES

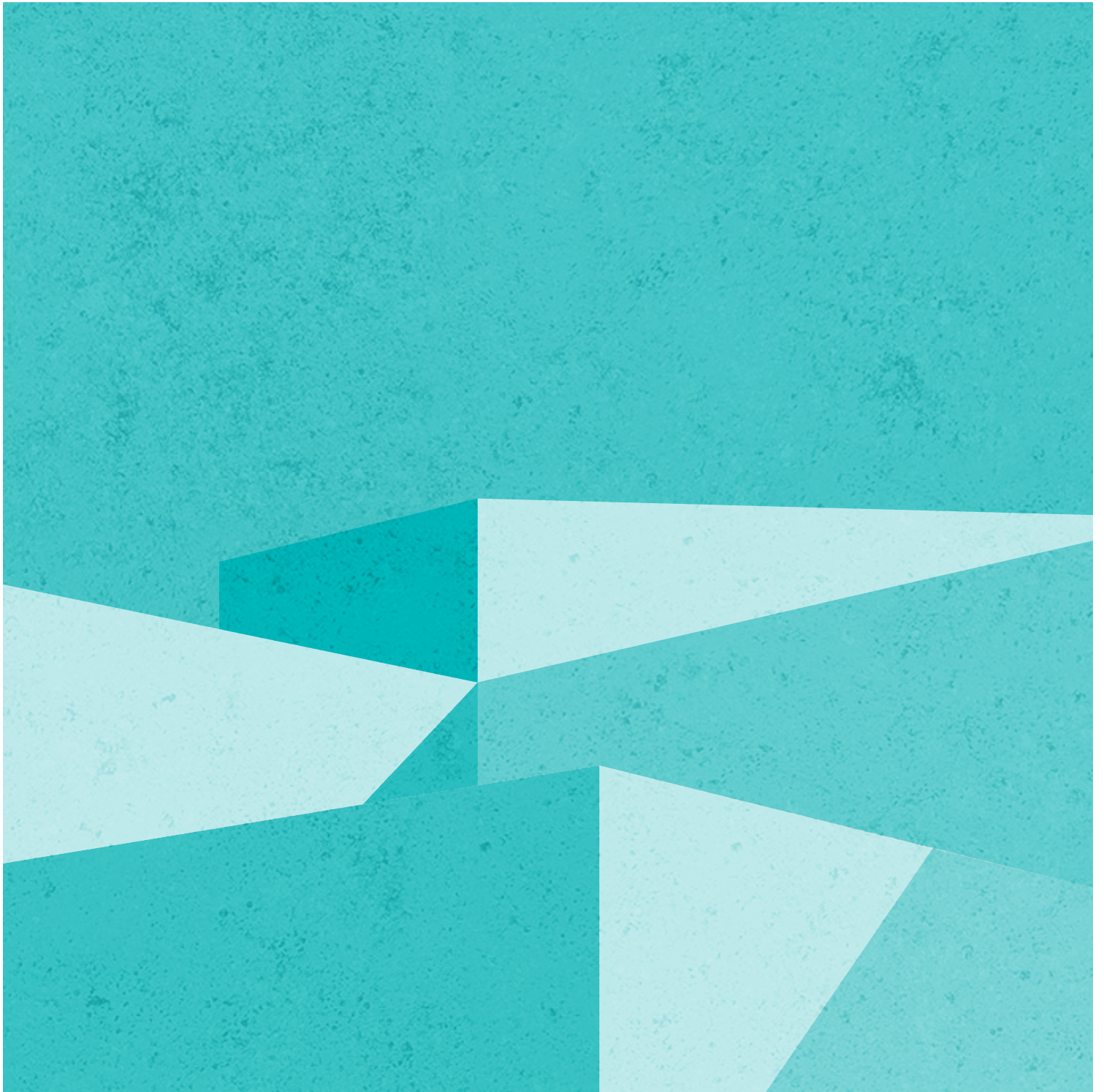
This document identifies the Form and Character Development Permit Areas and outlines the associated exemptions and guidelines.

The primary goal of the Development Permit Guidelines is to ensure that new development contributes positively to the surrounding community and aligns with the overall intent of the guidelines. The interpretation of specific guidelines should be discussed in detail with the City of Vernon. Not all developments will be able to meet every objective or recommendation in the guidelines. The relevance and application of individual guidelines will depend on the specific characteristics of the site and the scope of the proposed work.

Applicants are encouraged to connect and collaborate with City of Vernon staff early in the process to determine whether a Development Permit is required, the scale of Development Permit required, which guidelines apply, and whether other permit approvals, policies, or bylaws may apply to their project.

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# **INTRODUCTION**

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Regulation

Per Section 488(1) of the *Local Government Act*, the Form and Character Development Permit Area has been designated for the following purposes:

- (e) form and character of intensive residential development;
- (f) form and character of commercial, industrial, or multi-family residential development;
- (h) energy conservation;
- (i) water conservation; and
- (j) reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

These purposes align with Vernon's Official Community Plan and support high quality, sustainable, and context-sensitive development across a range of future land use types.

## 1.2 Development Approval Information

In addition to the requirements outlined in the City of Vernon's Development Application Procedure Bylaw, the City may require the submission of supporting studies or reports to inform the review of any development permit application, in accordance with Section 484 of the *Local Government Act*.

These additional requirements may include one or more of the following:

- Archaeological Impact Assessment
- Construction Management Plan
- Environmental Assessment
- Functional Servicing Report
- Geotechnical Study
- Parking Demand Analysis
- Shadow Study
- Site Access and Servicing Plan
- Stormwater Management Study
- Traffic Impact Assessment
- Transportation Demand Measures
- Tree Inventory and Assessment
- Wildfire Hazard Assessment
- Other studies as deemed necessary

## 1.3 Scope and Coverage

Unless exempted (see [Sections 1.5](#)), a development permit addressing design guidelines must be approved for all properties that are, or will become zoned for, multiple-unit residential, commercial or industrial; or zoned for institutional or comprehensive development containing multiple-unit residential, commercial or industrial uses, before:

- construction of, addition to, or alteration of a building or structure; or
- a building permit authorizing the works will be issued.

See [Map 6.4](#).

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Applicants are required to apply for development permits that address the form and character of individual buildings, even after receiving a general development for the site layout of a comprehensive or phased development project.

## 1.4 Objectives

In support of Vernon's Official Community Plan and [Transportation Plan](#), these guidelines are intended to achieve the following overarching objectives:

- 1 Communicate the design expectations for residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed-use projects.
- 2 Facilitate the fair and consistent application of design objectives.
- 3 To foster balanced, high quality, and sustainable design that encourages community togetherness, social inclusion, and a safe, accessible and welcoming [public realm](#).
- 4 To promote energy conservation, water conservation, and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through sustainable design considerations.

Incorporating these guidelines into a project's design will encourage the creation of contextual and compatible architecture, high quality pedestrian realms, and sustainable and resilient design, and will contribute to placemaking and design excellence in Vernon.

## 1.5 Exemptions

A Form and Character Permit will not be required for:

- Residential developments with 4 or fewer dwelling units per site.
- An addition or alteration to an existing principal or accessory building which will not be visible from an adjacent public street or laneway, adjacent park, or adjacent residential property with existing structures that are two storeys in height or less, and does not require approval from a provincial ministry.
- Construction, addition, or alteration not to exceed 35 m<sup>2</sup> for a single-storey principal or accessory structure.
- Construction, addition, or alteration not to exceed 50 m<sup>2</sup> for a two-storey principal or accessory structure.
- Replacement, alteration, or addition to a principal or accessory building such as new siding, roofing, doors, trim, awnings, paint colours, or windows where it does not negatively impact the overall form and character of the building and existing trees, amenity space, or access provisions.
- Interior renovations.
- Replacement of a building that has been destroyed by natural causes, provided that the replacement building is identical to the original in both form and character.
- Other scenarios as determined by the City where the exemption could be waived in the public interest (e.g. supportive housing, cultural initiatives, provincial agencies).

## 1.6 Minor Development Permit

A minor form and character development permit may be considered for:

- Signs.
- Landscape and parking alterations such as adding EV chargers to a site.
- Other scenarios as determined by the Director of Planning and Community Services.

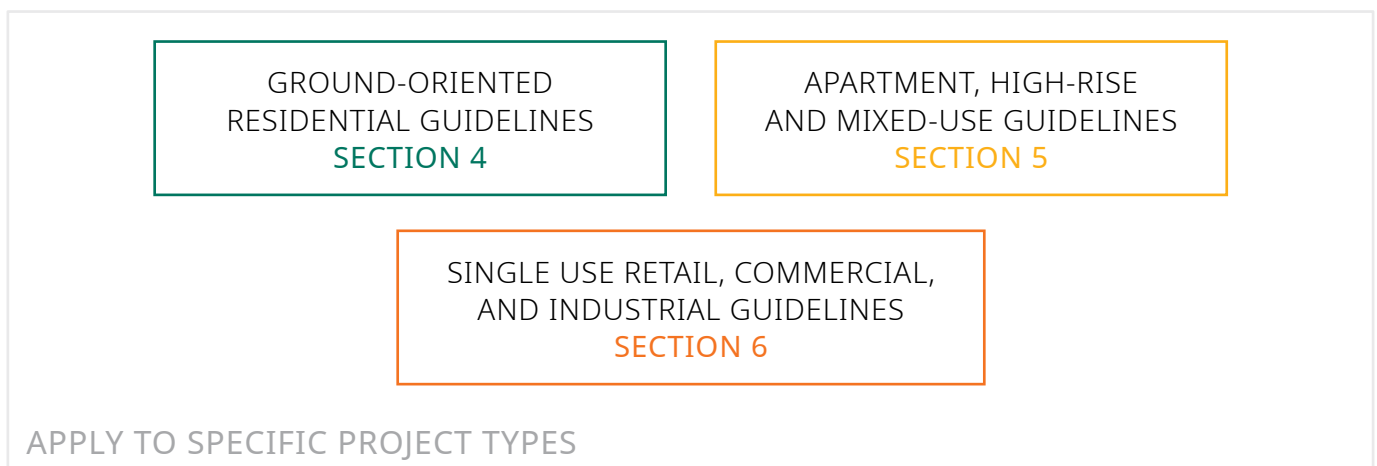
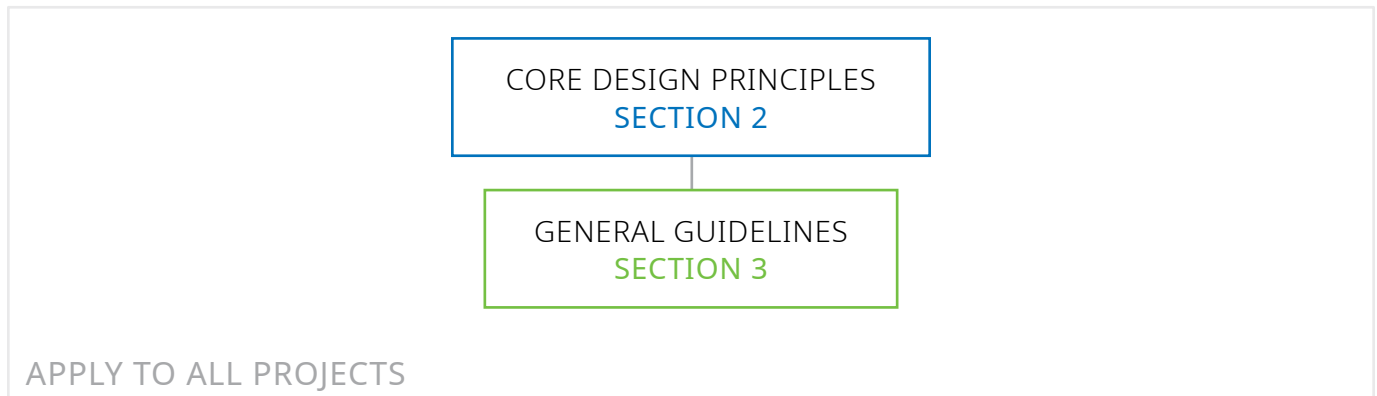
## 1.7 Regulatory Flexibility

Varying other bylaw requirements (e.g. building setbacks or site coverage) may be considered as part of a form and character development permit where it can facilitate development that aligns with the objectives and guidelines of the Form and Character DPA, such as preserving and working with natural features.

## 1.8 Organization of the Form and Character Guidelines

The form and character guidelines outlined in this document provide design guidance that is broadly applicable to all areas of Vernon. The guidelines are organized in the following way (see below):

- The Core Design Principles ([Section 2](#)) apply to all projects and provide the overarching principles for supporting social inclusion, accessibility, and unique and high quality design in Vernon.
- The General Guidelines ([Section 3](#)) apply to all projects and provide key guidelines that support the Core Design Principles.
- The typology-specific guidelines ([Section 4](#)) for residential and mixed-use projects apply to relevant projects (e.g. **ground-oriented residential**) and provide more detailed form and character guidance for these typologies.
- The typology-specific guidelines for retail, commercial, and industrial projects apply to relevant projects and provide additional design consideration and guidance.



## 1.9 How to Use These Guidelines

The guidelines are structured similarly in all typology sections to enhance usability. Key design objectives are presented as design intent statements at the beginning of each section. Each intent statement is followed by a series of guidelines that can be used to achieve the intent.

Each section includes:

- A guideline topic subheading (e.g. Site Design and Planning).
- A design intent statement that states the goal of the guidelines.
- The guidelines that outline strategies for achieving the design intent.
- Supportive illustrations and photos that demonstrate guideline concepts.

GROUND-ORIENTED RESIDENTIAL GUIDELINES

### GROUND-ORIENTED RESIDENTIAL GUIDELINES

In Vernon, "Ground-oriented Residential" refers to intensive residential developments (over 5 units) located near or adjacent to existing single-family homes in gentle density neighbourhoods, and in Urban and Village Centres. This housing type is characterized by shared walls with neighbouring units and direct, ground-level access to streets and open spaces.

Housing types include:

- Single Detached Dwellings, Duplex, triplex, fourplex
- House plex
- Rowhousing
- Townhouses
- Stacked Townhouses

**Section Title / Building Typology**

#### KEY GUIDELINES

1. Frame streets and open spaces positively, using design elements like landscaping, gates, and thoughtful articulation to enhance the rhythm and connection between buildings and the street.
2. Design buildings to connect with the street and public realm. Avoid walled or gated developments that are visually or physically cut off. Use low fencing, landscaping, or other permeable edges to support visibility, safety, and social interaction.
3. Orient unit entries towards the street with a visible and accessible design, including a semi-private transition zone between public and private spaces, which enhances safety and social interaction while offering privacy.
4. Design buildings to fit with the surrounding environment through thoughtful building form, orientation, and integration with natural features.
5. For projects with multiple buildings, design the site with spaces between buildings to allow for view corridors, pedestrian through connections, and amenity spaces.
6. Provide safe, comfortable, and convenient on-site pedestrian circulation and access points, mitigating the impacts of vehicular circulation and servicing.

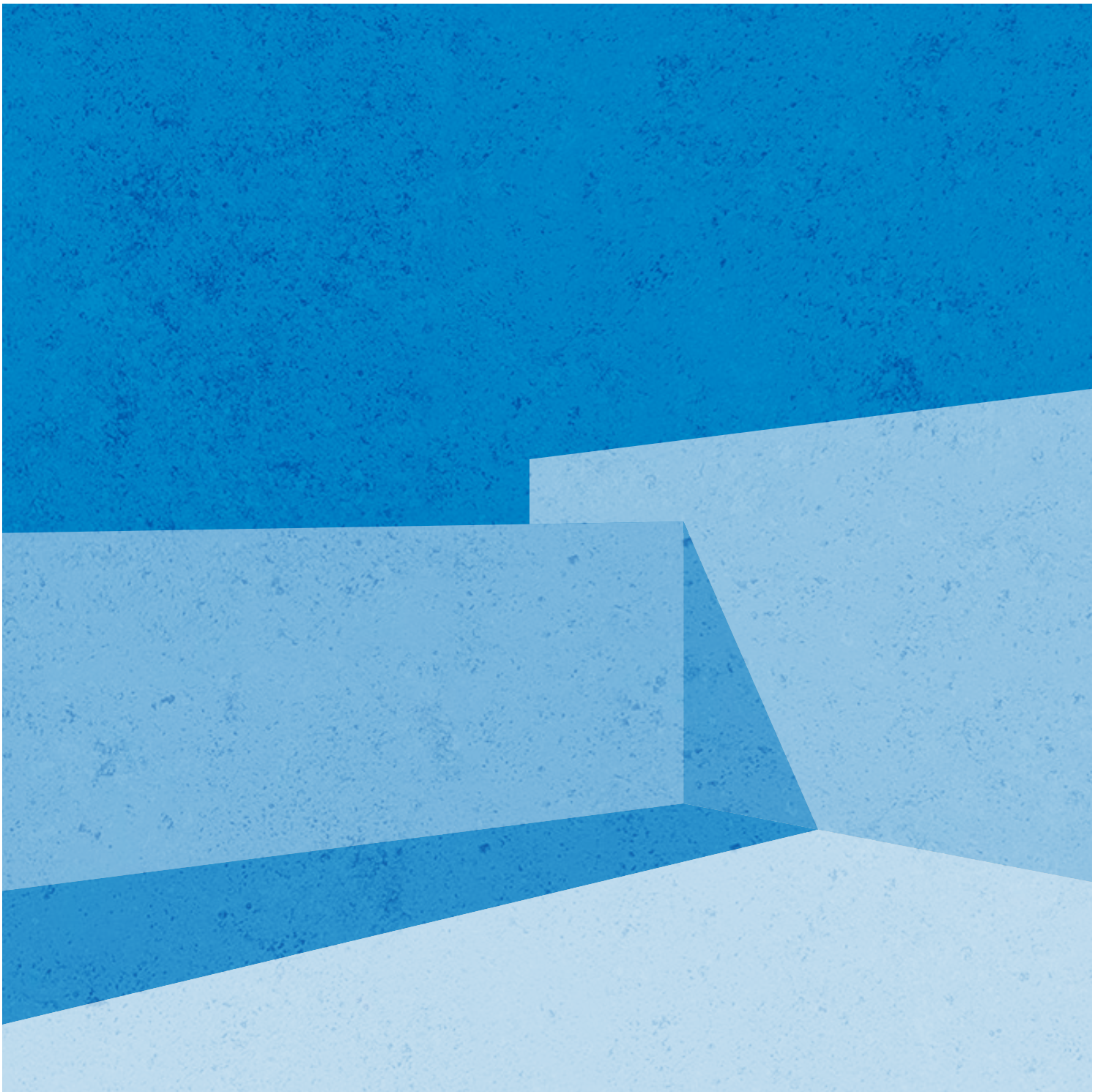
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**Feature Image**

Demonstrating the key guidelines.

**Key Guidelines**

The key design outcomes that projects should achieve.



**02**

**CORE DESIGN  
PRINCIPLES**

# CORE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Urban design is the thoughtful planning and design of suburbs, towns, and cities at various scales — from the macro scale (such as urban structure, land use, and infrastructure) to the micro scale (including architectural character, landscaping, and lighting). Successful urban design is defined by the relationship between public and private spaces and how well new development integrates with the existing community, planned future community, and natural environment. Creating pedestrian-friendly, human-scaled streets, buildings, and public spaces is essential for fostering a functional, attractive, and vibrant community.

The Core Design Principles below apply to all development projects in Vernon.

## 1. Foster Inclusive and Social Streetscapes

Design public and semi-public spaces to promote social interaction, accessibility, and community connection. Prioritize features like pedestrian-friendly frontages and visual distinction between buildings to support all-age environments and placemaking.



## 2. Support Attainable and Cost-Efficient Communities

Ensure developments allow for affordability by minimizing costly architectural requirements. Avoid unnecessary building features that add complexity without enhancing livability.



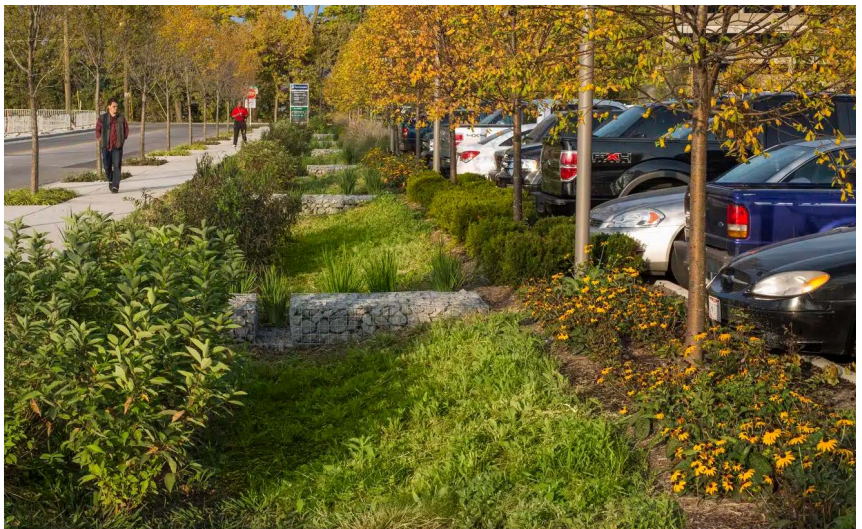
### 3. Preserve and Work With Natural Features

Protect site-specific ecological assets such as wetlands, rock outcrops, and mature trees. Design buildings to respond to natural topography, respecting existing grade and landscape character.



### 4. Design for Climate Resilience

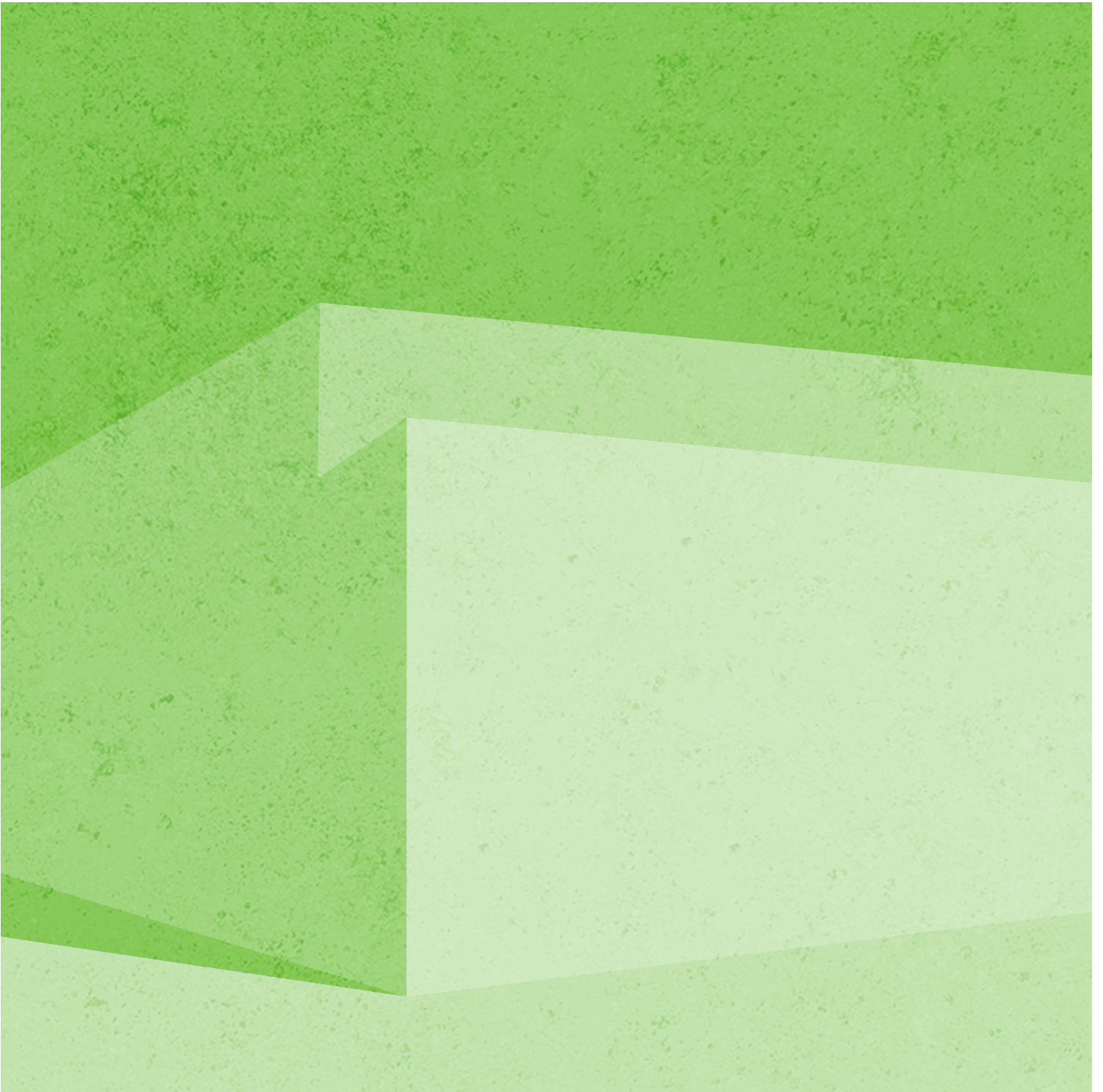
Incorporate high-performance building practices, emphasize nature-based stormwater and landscape solutions, and utilize native species. Focus on environments for people and reduce the dominance of surface parking.



### 5. People-first Planning and Design

Design sites and circulation patterns to enhance pedestrian experience and safety. Limit vehicle access from primary roads, favouring laneways or secondary streets, and integrate clear, connected pedestrian pathways on site.





**03**

**GENERAL DESIGN  
GUIDELINES**

# GENERAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

The General Guidelines capture the key design strategies and elements that should be addressed in all new residential and mixed-use projects in Vernon. They are premised

on achieving the objective in [Section 1](#), Core Design Principles in [Section 2](#), and establishing the basis for the more detailed typology-specific guidelines in [Sections 4 to 6](#).



## KEY GUIDELINES



- 1 Create active, engaging **street frontages** by orienting buildings, windows, entrances, and street-level uses toward the street, minimizing the distance between building and sidewalk (or property line), balancing privacy with social interaction and connection.
- 2 Design open spaces to be attractive, engaging, and functional to their intended use, incorporating features such as high quality and drought tolerant plantings, gathering areas, and play features.
- 3 Use cohesive building design and durable materials to enhance livability, reflect local character, and create a strong sense of identity. Incorporate unique and colourful elements to aid in wayfinding on site and across neighbourhoods.
- 4 Focus on pedestrian comfort, safety, and aesthetics while integrating access and parking in a way that supports a people-friendly environment.
- 5 Preserve and highlight natural features like trees, slopes, creeks, ravines, wetlands, and rock outcrops.
- 6 Design sites to retain and treat stormwater on site using green infrastructure practices such as rain gardens, bioswales, and permeable paving.

## 3.1 Guidelines

### 3.1.1 Site Planning

#### *Design Intent*

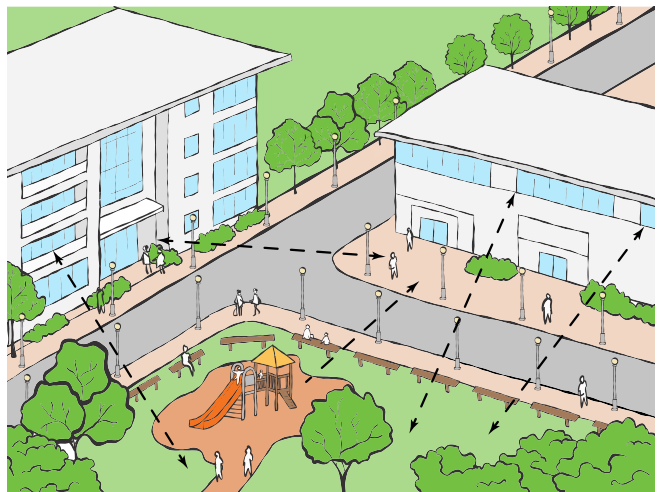
Site buildings to respond sensitively to topography and environmental features, enhance privacy, livability, safety and accessibility, and increase connectivity to the surrounding open space network.

#### *Guidelines*

- a. Site and design buildings to fit the natural and unique features of the site, protecting mature trees, rock outcrops, and other ecological areas, and make the most of irregular shapes, corners, views, and open spaces (see [Figure 1](#)).
- b. Site outdoor spaces to provide shelter from wind and weather and to let in sunlight throughout the year while considering shade structures or trees for extreme heat.
- c. Apply [Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design \(CPTED\)](#) principles to enhance public safety (see [Figure 2](#)).
  - i. Design outdoor areas so people can see and be seen, day or night.
  - ii. Use fences, landscaping, and design cues to show where private property begins and public space ends.
  - iii. Place windows, doors, and balconies so they look onto streets or walkways, helping people naturally watch over the area.
  - iv. Design sites so there are no hidden corners, dead ends, or empty spots that feel unsafe or attract problems.
  - v. Keep landscaping, lighting, and buildings in good condition to show that spaces are cared for and monitored.



*Figure 1: Site and design buildings to fit the natural and unique features of the site.*



*Figure 2: Crime prevention through environmental design principles.*

- d. For development adjacent to the rail corridor, incorporate site planning and design strategies to mitigate nuisances such as vibration, noise, and dust. Strategies may include appropriate fencing, acoustic barriers, enhanced insulation, window specifications, and other mitigation measures.

**Relationship to Grade**

- e. Design buildings to adapt to up-slope and down-slope conditions relative to the street by (see [Figure 3](#)):
  - i. Stepping structures along the slope and locating entrances at each step, where possible.
  - ii. Using landscaped terracing to create functional open spaces.
  - iii. Incorporating under-building parking and screening service areas within the slope.
  - iv. Positioning buildings to maximize key views.
  - v. Minimizing large retaining walls and integrating terraced landscaping when necessary.
  - vi. Avoiding significant grade alterations.
  - vii. Using foundations of buildings for retaining slopes.

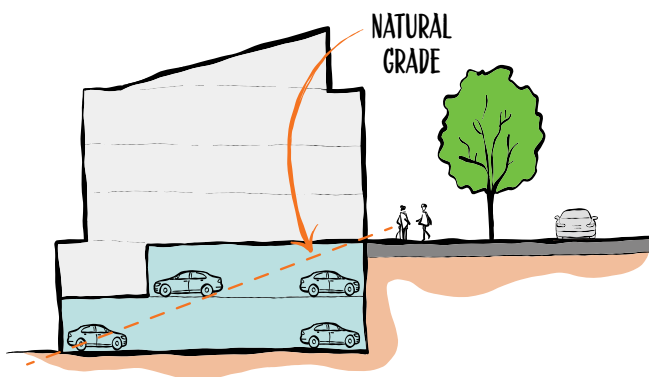


Figure 3: Design buildings to adapt to up-slope and down-slope conditions relative to the street.

**Connectivity**

- f. Design internal streets, sidewalks, and pathways to connect seamlessly with existing and planned transit, bicycle, and pedestrian networks (see [Figure 4](#)).
- i. Include mid-block connections with ground-floor shops and services to offer weather protection and pedestrian comfort.
- ii. Integrate low-maintenance traffic calming measures, such as parking bays, curb extensions, textured surfaces, and raised crosswalks.
- g. Apply **universal accessibility** principles to key areas, including building entrances, sidewalks, plazas, mid-block connections, lanes, and courtyards, using appropriate materials, ramps, stairs, wayfinding, and lighting.

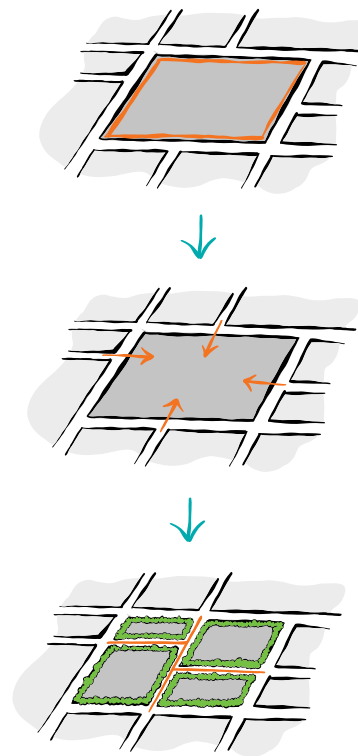


Figure 4: Design internal streets, sidewalks, and pathways to connect seamlessly with existing and planned transit, bicycle, and pedestrian networks.

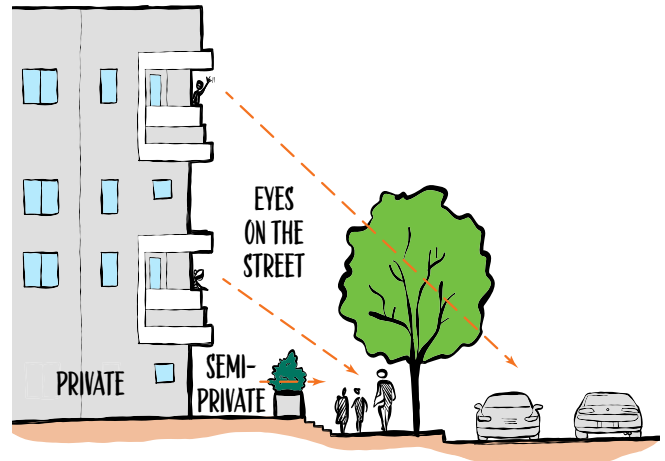
### 3.1.2 Street-Facing Design

#### Design Intent

Site and design buildings to enhance and activate streets and public open spaces.

#### Guidelines

- a. Orient primary building **facades** and main entrances toward the street or open space to define the street edge, encourage activity, and ensure direct sightlines from the street (see [Figure 5](#)).
- b. Encourage frequent commercial storefronts in mixed-use buildings to create visual interest for pedestrians.
- c. Provide well defined main residential entrances to assist with wayfinding through architectural treatment, colour, or unique signage.
- d. On corner lots, design buildings to face and activate both streets, with consistent **facade** treatment and entrances that engage each frontage (see [Figure 6](#)).

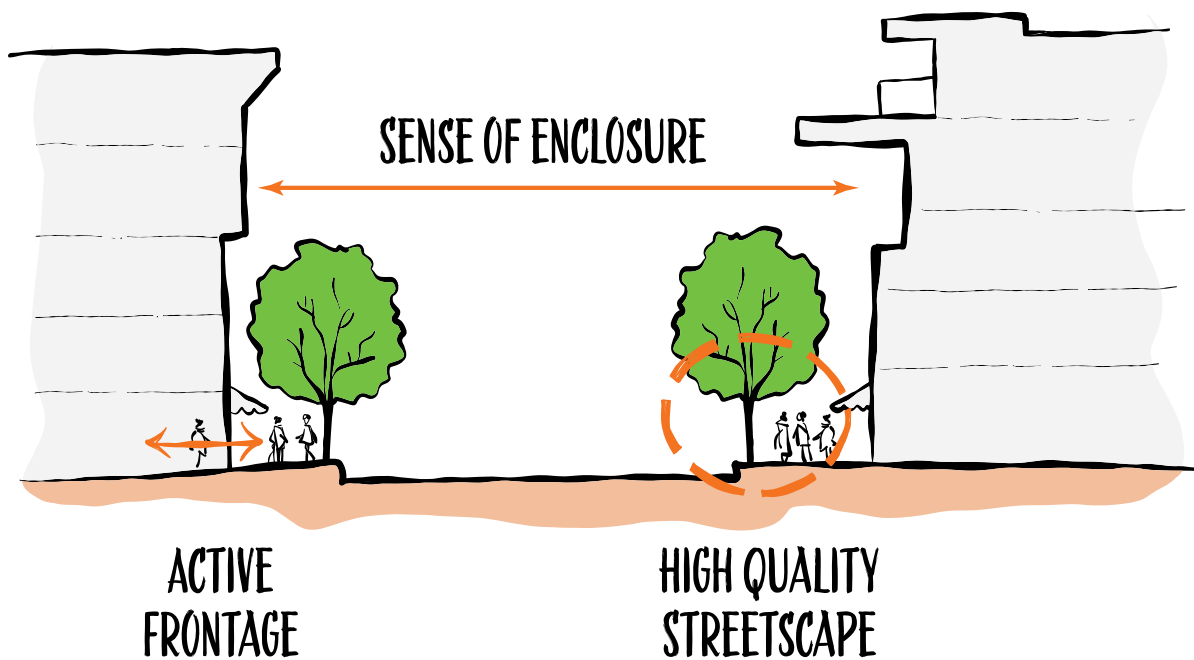


*Figure 5: Orient primary building facades and main entrances toward the street or open space to define the street edge, encourage activity, and ensure direct sightlines from the street.*



*Figure 6: On corner lots, design buildings to face and activate both streets, with consistent facade treatment and entrances that engage each frontage.*

- e. Minimize the distance between the building and the sidewalks (or property line) and maintain a consistent **street wall** height that is generally two to three storeys to reinforce street definition, and create an inviting atmosphere and a sense of enclosure for pedestrians (see [Figure 7](#)).
- f. Locate windows, balconies, and street-level uses to create active frontages and natural surveillance with additional glazing and articulation on primary building **facades**.
- i. Avoid sliding patio doors as the main entrance of a dwelling unit.
- g. Design all street- and public-facing **facades** to include windows, articulation, or other architectural features that provide visual interest and natural surveillance. Avoid blank or inactive walls that diminish the pedestrian experience.
- h. Use building setbacks and frontage changes to create sunny, sheltered spaces that feel comfortable for walking, sitting, and outdoor uses year-round.
- i. Ensure commercial entrances connect smoothly to the sidewalk, with level access that works year-round and stays safe in snow and ice.



*Figure 7: Reinforce street definition, create an inviting atmosphere and a sense of enclosure for pedestrians.*

### 3.1.3 Building Size and Shape

#### Design Intent

Ensure buildings complement the existing neighbourhood and provide a context-sensitive transition in scale to existing and future buildings, parks, and open spaces.

#### Guidelines

- a. Transition building heights gradually from taller to shorter structures within and around the site, considering future land use directions and policies (see [Figure 8](#)).
  - i. Place taller buildings on the north side of streets to prevent excessive shadowing on sidewalks, patios, and outdoor areas.
  - ii. Vary building heights along the block to help lower ground-level wind speeds.
- b. Arrange buildings and outdoor spaces to maximize sun exposure while considering shade or trees for extreme heat.
- c. Design buildings to create a consistent rhythm along the street, using techniques like recessed entries, balconies, material changes, and slight **facade** projections or recesses.
  - i. Reduce the perceived mass of large buildings by incorporating visual breaks in **facades**.
- d. Step back upper storeys and arrange building massing to (see [Figure 9](#)).
  - i. Minimize shadowing on adjacent buildings, sidewalks, plazas, and open spaces.
  - ii. Maximize sunlight for outdoor spaces of ground-floor units and street trees.
  - iii. Create a pedestrian-scaled **street wall** and massing.

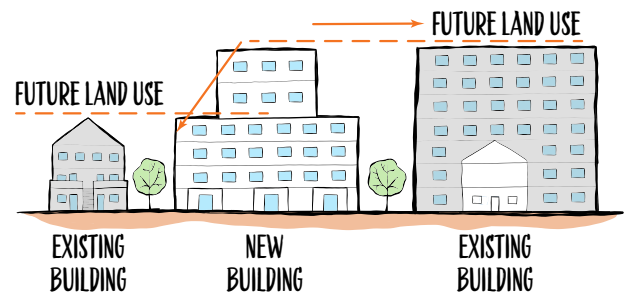


Figure 8: Transition building heights gradually from taller to shorter structures within and around the site, considering future land use directions and policies.



Figure 9: Step back upper storeys and arrange building massing.

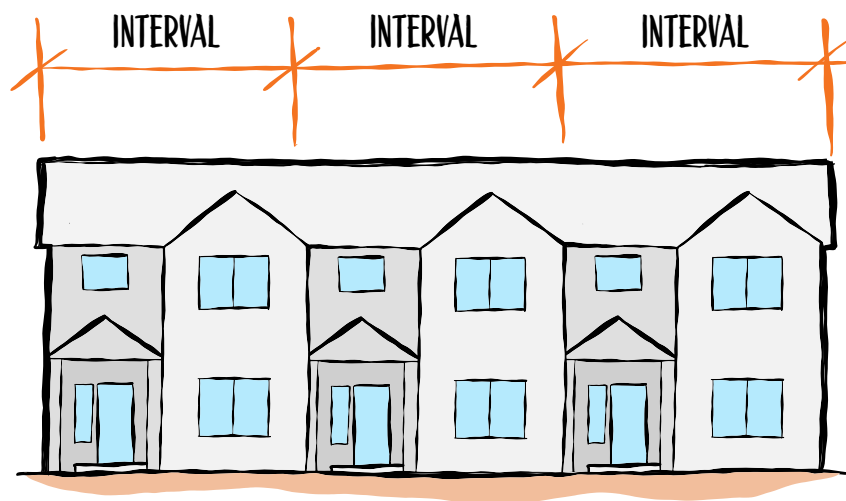
### 3.1.4 Building Form and Materials

#### **Design Intent**

Enhance livability, visual interest, identity, wayfinding, and sense of place through thoughtful building form, architectural composition, and material selection.

#### **Guidelines**

- a. Create a unified architectural concept that incorporates variations in **facade** treatments while considering the impact of massing and articulation on energy performance (see [Section 3.2](#)). Strategies may include (see [Figure 10](#)):
  - i. Articulating **facades** by stepping back or extending portions to create intervals or breaks.
  - ii. Repeating window patterns on each stepped-back or extended section.
  - iii. Adding elements like porches, patios, decks, covered entries, balconies, or bay windows to each interval.
  - iv. Varying the roofline with dormers, stepped roofs, gables, or other elements to reinforce each interval.
  - v. Using colour to provide accents and distinction for building elements and to assist with wayfinding.
- b. Design buildings to ensure adequate visual privacy for adjacent residential properties by positioning windows and balconies to minimize direct sightlines into neighbouring units and provide protection from light trespass and noise.
- c. Design buildings so that they create **human scale** and interest and ensure their form and architectural style reflect their internal function and use.



*Figure 10: Create a unified architectural concept that incorporates variations in facade treatments.*

## Materials

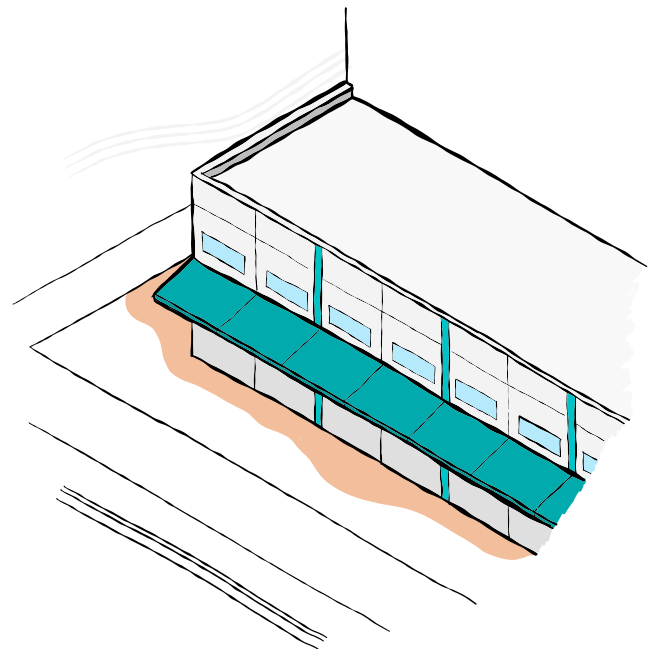
- d. Incorporate high quality, natural materials like wood, stone, and masonry into building facades, while maintaining FireSmart principles (see [Figure 11](#)).
- i. Where possible, use materials that complement and harmonize with the colours and tones of the natural landscape, and use accent colours to provide distinction and assist with wayfinding.
- ii. Highlight the natural beauty of timber by exposing structural elements such as beams, columns, and ceilings where possible.
- iii. Consider using innovative, recyclable, renewable, or building materials that feature new technology for durability, longevity, and reduced environmental impact.



*Figure 11: Incorporate high quality, natural materials like wood, stone, and masonry into building facades, while maintaining FireSmart principles.*

## Weather Protection

- e. Provide continuous weather protection along building frontages wherever possible, including over main entrances, ramps, and stairs (e.g. canopies and arcades that shield from wind, snow, and ice). Weather protection may extend over the public sidewalk or project into a setback, provided it is in accordance with Zoning Bylaw regulations. (see [Figure 12](#)).
- f. Design roofs to safely handle snow and ice by preventing buildup over entrances and pathways, maximizing sunlight into buildings and outdoor areas, and using durable materials like metal roofing with snow guards to manage shedding.
- g. Incorporate **barrier-free design** principles, considering seasonal conditions like snow or ice accumulation.



*Figure 12: Provide continuous weather protection along building frontages wherever possible.*

## Signage

- h. Use pedestrian-oriented signage such as projecting signs, awning or canopy signs, and window signs (see [Figure 13](#)).
- i. Design signage to support building identity and improve wayfinding by:
  - i. Illuminating signage after sunset and adjust brightness as the sky darkens.
  - ii. Using clear fonts and contrasting colours to enhance visibility and visual appeal.
  - iii. Limiting the number, size, and placement of signs to reduce visual clutter and improve visibility.
- iv. Creating a comprehensive sign plan for buildings with multiple uses or tenants to create architectural cohesion.
- j. Design signage for home-based businesses and neighbourhood commercial uses to match the residential character in size, scale, and placement, with minimal lighting.
- k. Align signage on heritage buildings with the architectural style and detailing of the building (see [Figure 13](#)).
- l. Place commercial signage at street level to complement the [streetscape](#) and avoid upper-storey placement.
- m. Avoid large freestanding signs (or multiple), rooftop signs, inflatable signs, LED signs, flashing signs, moving signs, and audible signs.



*Figure 13: Use pedestrian-oriented signage and align signage on heritage buildings with the architectural style and detailing of the building.*

## Heritage

- n. Encourage retention and revitalization of heritage buildings by (see [Figure 14](#)):
  - i. Encouraging adaptive reuse of heritage buildings into community uses, multi-family, commercial, or mixed-use projects.
  - ii. Incorporating existing historical **facades** into new developments.
  - iii. Where heritage preservation or revitalization is not possible, incorporating materials or character elements from the original heritage building into the new development.
- o. Encourage adding residential density on underutilized areas of properties with existing heritage buildings that is designed to be (see [Figure 15](#)):
  - i. **Contemporary:** Reflecting the design themes of today, rather than mimicking fake heritage with modern materials.
  - ii. **Complementary:** Incorporating the heritage character of the property by designing complementary building elements such as matching roof pitches, similar window designs and **fenestration**, similar material and colour selection.
  - iii. **Subordinate:** The new build should be subordinate to the existing heritage building in terms of scale, massing, and height.
- p. Development on properties with heritage buildings should consider and follow the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*.

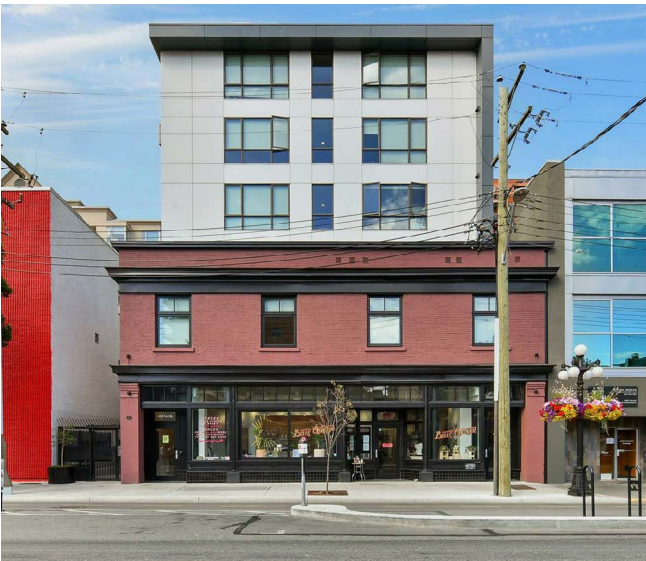


Figure 14: Encourage retention and revitalization of heritage buildings.



Figure 15: Encourage adding residential density on underutilized areas of properties with existing heritage buildings.

### 3.1.5 Access and Parking

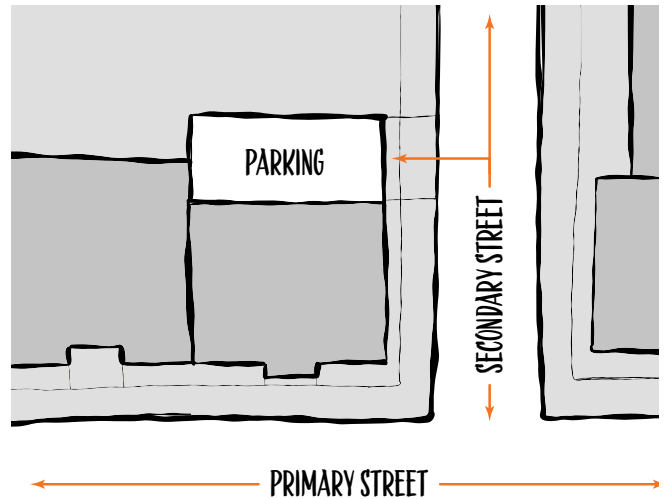
#### Design Intent

Ensure adequate servicing, vehicle access, and parking while minimizing negative impacts on the comfort, safety, and aesthetic quality of the public realm.

#### Guidelines

##### Site Servicing

- a. Locate 'back-of-house' functions (such as loading areas, garbage collection, utilities, and parking access) away from public view, accessed through a secondary street, and separate from pedestrian circulation routes (see [Figure 16](#)).
- b. Integrate mechanical equipment, vents, and service areas (e.g. garbage and recycling collection) into the building design, and screen these areas with durable, high quality finishes that complement the building's architectural style.
  - i. Clearly identify utility areas and pad-mounted transformers during the development permit stage.
- c. Place mechanical equipment, such as outdoor heat pump units, air conditioners, vents, and service areas, to minimize impacts on nearby residential buildings, avoiding placement near windows, doors, or outdoor living spaces.
- d. Design sites to safely and efficiently manage snow storage, meltwater, and winter maintenance while supporting walkability, aesthetics, and site circulation.
- e. Ensure snow storage does not compromise site drainage or safety, while directing meltwater away from entrances and pedestrian areas.



*Figure 16: Locate 'back-of-house' functions (such as loading areas, garbage collection, utilities, and parking access) away from public view and separate from pedestrian circulation routes.*

## Vehicle Parking

- f. Avoid placing off-street parking between a building's front facade and the fronting public street (see [Figure 17](#)).
- g. In general, prioritize off-street parking in the following order of preference:
  - i. Underground parking.
  - ii. Parking on a half-storey, where it can be integrated without negatively affecting the [street frontage](#) (see [Figure 18](#)).
  - iii. Above grade structured parking that is integrated into the building and wrapped with [active uses](#) such as commercial units or townhouses.
  - iv. Surface parking at the rear of the site that is, wherever possible, integrated into the building and accessed from a secondary street.
- h. Wrap parking structures with active frontages, incorporating architectural detailing, glazing, or ground-floor uses to avoid blank walls facing the street. Ensure parking frontages contribute to a safe and visually engaging [public realm](#) (see [Figure 18](#)).

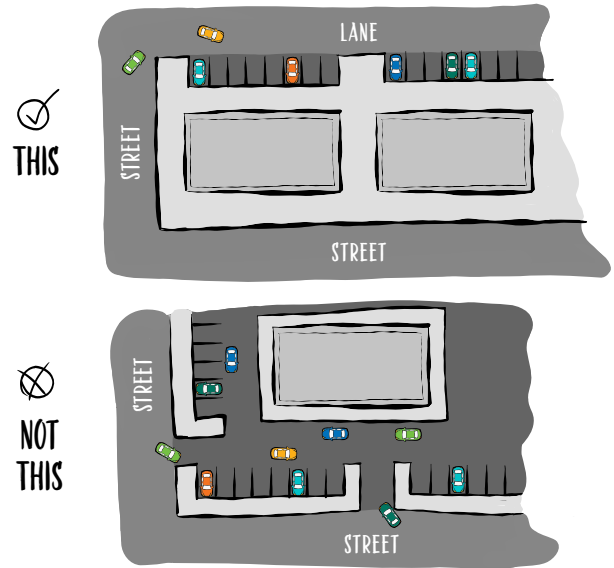


Figure 17: Avoid placing off-street parking between a building's front facade and the fronting public street.

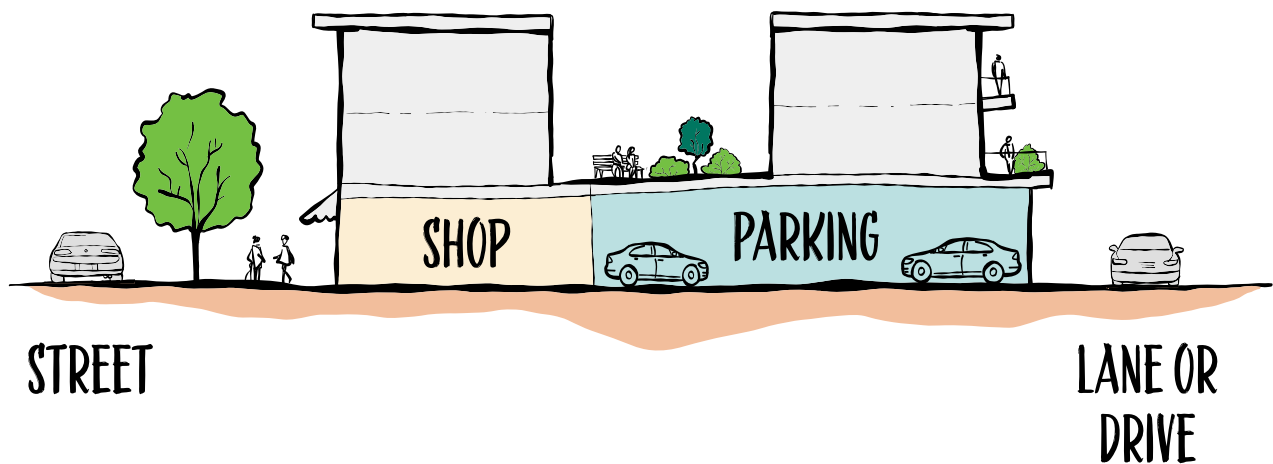


Figure 18: Wrap parking structures with active frontages to avoid blank walls facing the street.

- i. When publicly visible parking is necessary, use screening strategies such as (see [Figure 19](#)):
  - i. Landscaping and tree planting.
  - ii. Trellises.
  - iii. Grillwork with climbing vines.
  - iv. Other attractive, visually permeable screening options.
  - v. A buffer or setback to separate parking from adjacent residential uses.
- j. Minimize the negative impact of parking ramps and entrances by incorporating enclosures, screening, high quality finishes, sensitive lighting, and landscaping.
- k. Where required, locate accessible parking spaces within 30 m of a main entrance along a barrier-free path.
- l. For larger surface parking lots, incorporate green parking lot best practices, such as permeable surfacing, substantial tree cover and plantings (e.g. four to six trees per parking stall), landscaped islands, and landscape-based stormwater management (e.g. raingardens, swales) (see [Figure 20](#)).



*Figure 19: When publicly visible parking is necessary, use screening strategies.*



*Figure 20: Incorporate green parking lot best practices.*

## Bicycle Parking

- m. Provide bicycle parking in accessible on-site locations, including covered short-term parking and secure long-term parking.
- n. For short-term bicycle parking:
  - i. Locate parking near the main entrances for convenience and visibility (see [Figure 21](#)).
  - ii. Place bike parking in well-lit, covered, visible areas to deter theft and increase safety.
  - iii. Provide clear signage to help people find bike parking easily.
  - iv. Keep bike parking out of walkways by installing racks parallel to the building or walkway and ensure it blends with the site design while allowing for future expansion.
  - v. Use secure, easy-to-use racks that support the bike frame (e.g. inverted U or circle bike rack) and accommodate a variety of bicycle types (e.g. cargo bikes).
  - vi. Discourage the use of the loop wave style of bicycle rack.
- o. For long-term bicycle parking:
  - i. Locate parking in a secure, weather-protected area such as a locked room or locker with controlled access or surveillance, within one level of grade (see [Figure 22](#)).
  - ii. Ensure bike parking areas are easy to access without stairs or tight spaces.
  - iii. Balance space-efficient systems like double stacker racks with single racks or staggered wall mounted racks.
- p. For additional guidance on bicycle parking, refer to the *BC Active Transportation Design Guide*.



Figure 21: Locate [short-term] bike parking near the main entrances for convenience and visibility.



Figure 22: Locate [long-term] bike parking in a secure, weather-protected area.

### 3.1.6 Landscapes and Outdoor Areas

#### **Design Intent**

Design internal streets, driveways, amenity areas, and open spaces to enhance visual interest, comfort, and safety for pedestrians, while also contributing positively to the urban tree canopy, urban ecology, habitat, and stormwater management.

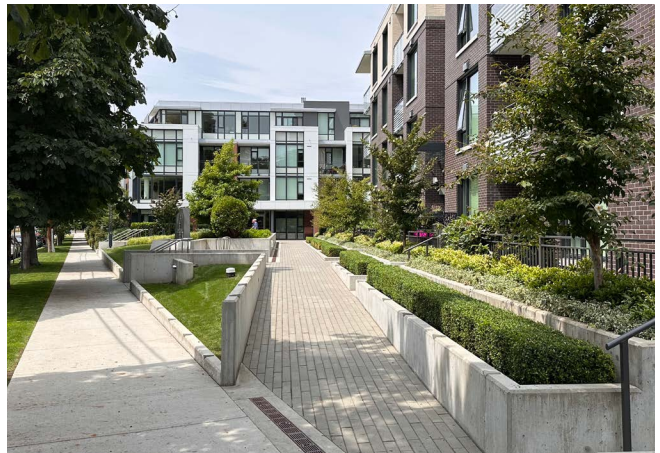
#### **Guidelines**

##### **General Landscape Planning**

- a. Design on-site open spaces to be attractive, engaging, and functional, using high quality, durable, and contemporary materials, colours, lighting, furniture, and signage (see [Figure 23](#)).
- b. Create multi-functional landscape elements, such as planting areas that capture and filter stormwater or interactive landscape features.
  - i. Incorporate permeable surfaces near roadways to naturally filter snowmelt and heavy rain.
- c. Use landscaping to create privacy buffers and define private, semi-private, shared, and public outdoor spaces (see [Figure 24](#)).
- d. Locate and design underground parkades, infrastructure, and services to maximize soil volumes for in-ground plantings.
- e. Position trees, shrubs, and other landscaping to maintain sightlines and prevent blocking of circulation routes and hydro lines as they mature.
- f. Ensure site planning supports favourable microclimate outcomes through strategies like:
  - i. Locating outdoor spaces to maximize sunlight year-round.



*Figure 23: Design on-site open spaces to be attractive, engaging, and functional, using high quality, durable, and contemporary materials, colours, lighting, furniture, and signage.*



*Figure 24: Use landscaping to create privacy buffers and define private, semi-private, shared, and public outdoor spaces.*

- ii. Using materials and colours that reduce heat absorption.
- iii. Planting both evergreen and deciduous trees to balance summer shading and winter solar access.
- iv. Using building mass, trees, and planting to buffer the wind.
- v. Using shade structures for amenity areas to provide respite from heat.

**Residential Private and Common Outdoor Spaces**

- g. Ensure all residential units have easy access to usable semi-private or **private outdoor amenity spaces**.
- h. Design shared outdoor spaces to be flexible and inviting, with landscaping, seating, and features like play areas or gardens that support both everyday use and community gathering.
- i. Design **ground-oriented private outdoor amenity spaces** to be:
  - i. Usable, with direct access from the unit, and sunlit.
  - ii. Equipped with railings or low-height fencing to provide distinction between public and private space while encouraging a positive interaction with the street.

- iii. Landscaped to soften the interface with the street or open spaces.
- j. Design **ground-oriented** residential front patios to (see [Figure 25](#)):
  - i. Provide an entrance to the unit.
  - ii. Be flush with the public sidewalk wherever possible. Where a raised condition is necessary, the height should be no more than 1.2 m above grade when adjacent to a public street, creating a semi-private transition zone while accommodating accessible units.
- k. Design private rooftop patios to (see [Figure 26](#)):
  - i. Minimize direct sightlines into neighbouring units.
  - ii. Include shade and weather protection to support year-round use.
  - iii. Reduce visual scale and impact by setting access back from the **building envelope** and primary facades.
  - iv. Incorporate shared access wherever possible.
- l. Design shared rooftop amenity spaces to be accessible to residents, ensuring a balance of amenity and privacy by:

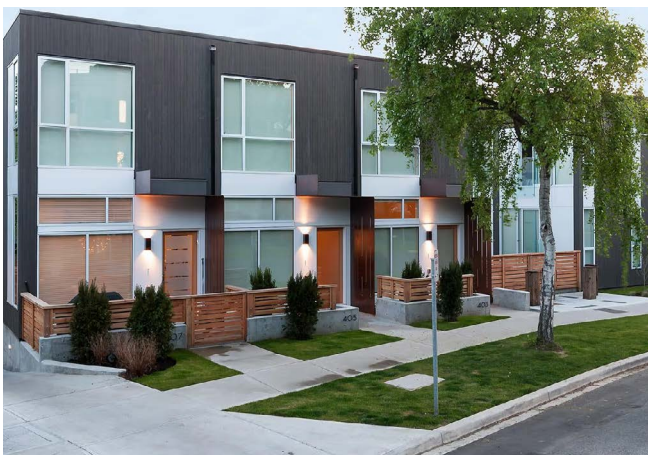


Figure 25: Ground-oriented residential front patio.

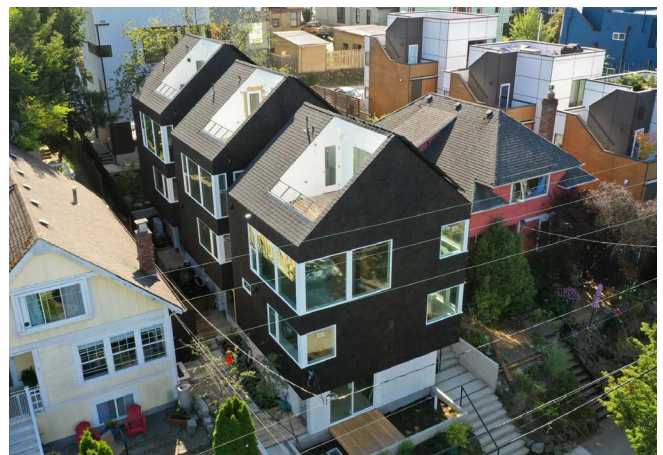


Figure 26: Private rooftop patio.

- i. Limiting sightlines from residential units overlooking outdoor amenity spaces through the use of pergolas or covered areas where privacy is desired.
- ii. Controlling sightlines from the outdoor amenity space into adjacent or nearby residential units by using fencing, landscaping, or architectural screening.
- m. Design internal roadways to serve as additional shared space (e.g. vehicle access, pedestrian and bicycle access, open space) using strategies such as (see [Figure 27](#)):



*Figure 27: Design internal roadways to serve as additional shared space.*

- i. High quality pavement materials (e.g. permeable pavers).
- ii. Usable spaces for sitting, gathering and playing.
- iii. On-site pedestrian circulation that is distinct, identified through paving pattern, from car circulation.
- n. Design internal courtyards to (see [Figure 28](#)):



*Figure 28: Internal courtyards.*

- i. Include amenities such as play areas, barbecues, communal gardens, dog runs, and seating where appropriate.
- ii. Provide a balance of hardscape and softscape areas to meet the needs of surrounding residents and other users.
- iii. Be easily accessible for all residents of the development.
- iv. Consider **CPTED** principles, with doors and windows oriented toward the courtyard to promote natural surveillance and safety.

## Publicly Accessible Spaces

- o. Integrate publicly accessible private spaces (e.g. private courtyards open to the public) with public open spaces to create seamless, continuous areas.
- p. Design public plazas and urban parks to:
  - i. Be located along a [street frontage](#).
  - ii. Include [active uses](#) at the ground level of the building facing the plaza or urban park.
  - iii. Be located in sunny, south-facing areas with considerations for shade structures or trees for heat protection.

## Landscaping & Planting Materials

- q. Use landscaping materials that soften development and enhance the [public realm](#) (see [Figure 29](#)).
- r. Plant native and/or drought-tolerant trees and plants that are well-suited to the local climate.
  - i. Choose trees for long-term durability, climate and soil suitability, and compatibility with climatic conditions.
  - ii. Select FireSmart plantings in accordance with the FireSmart BC *Fire-Resistant Plants Landscaping Hub*.

- iii. Consider the use of soil cells to ensure trees have adequate soil volumes in areas with paving or tight spaces.

## Stormwater Management & Water Usage

- s. Design sites to retain and treat stormwater on-site using green infrastructure practices such as rain gardens, bioswales, and permeable paving.
- t. Minimize water use for irrigation by incorporating strategies like:
  - i. Planting drought-tolerant tree and plant species that are resilient to future climate projections and enhance ecosystem services.
  - ii. Designing planting areas and tree pits to naturally capture rainwater and stormwater runoff.
  - iii. Reusing filtered stormwater to irrigate plants and trees.
- u. Design parking areas to maximize rainwater infiltration using permeable materials, such as paving blocks, permeable concrete, driveway planting strips, and rain gardens (see [Figure 30](#)).



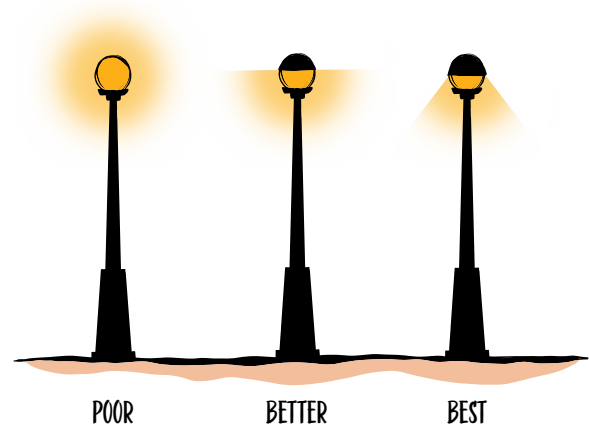
Figure 29: Use landscaping materials that soften development and enhance the public realm.



Figure 30: Design parking areas to maximize rainwater infiltration.

**Lighting and Wayfinding**

- v. Use exterior lighting to enhance building and landscape design while:
  - i. Minimizing light spill onto adjacent properties.
  - ii. Using full cut-off fixtures to reduce light pollution (see [Figure 31](#)).
  - iii. Using warm-colour temperature lighting while maintaining illumination levels that meet safety and visibility standards.
- w. Implement on-site wayfinding with attractive, appropriate signage for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists, using a cohesive set of design elements.



*Figure 31: Use full cut-off fixtures to reduce light pollution.*

**Public Art**

- x. Where applicable, integrate public art on-site to foster interest and activity.
- y. Ensure adequate building setbacks and space to enhance the pedestrian experience and visibility of public art installations.
- z. Place artwork in key pedestrian areas, such as courtyards, mid-block connections, lanes, and plazas (see [Figure 32](#)).



*Figure 32: Place artwork in key pedestrian areas, such as courtyards, mid-block connections, lanes, and plazas.*

**Fences**

- aa. Discourage the use of walls along public streets that negatively impact the **public realm**.
- ab. When fencing is proposed, use low-height, permeable materials (e.g. trellises, spaced wood or metal, chain link) to balance privacy and security while maintaining openness and visual connection to the public street (see [Figure 33](#)).
- ac. Decorative and distinctive pedestrian gates are encouraged to assist with placemaking and wayfinding.



*Figure 33: When fencing is proposed, use low-height, permeable materials.*

## 3.2 High-Performance Buildings

The BC Energy Step Code sets energy efficiency targets for new buildings while allowing designers to choose how to meet them.

- Lower Step Code levels can often be met with small design improvements that typically do not impact a building's form and appearance.
- Higher Step Code levels require designing for energy efficiency from the start, and strategies used may affect a building's form and appearance.

These guidelines aim to balance high-performance design with good urban design practices. For detailed strategies on mechanical design, air tightness, and envelope details that do not affect building form, refer to the *BC Energy Step Code Design Guide* by BC Housing. Landscaping can play a significant role in improving the efficiency of buildings, refer to [Section 3.1.6](#) for landscaping guidelines.

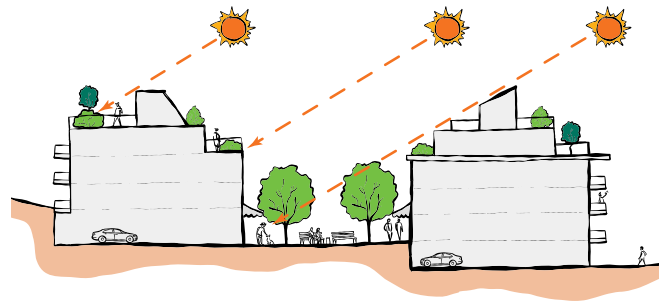
### **Design Intent**

Design buildings to reduce energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions, while maximizing occupant health and comfort and ensuring visual interest.

### **Guidelines**

#### **Passive Heating and Cooling Planning**

- a. Orient buildings to maximize solar access to streets and public spaces while also optimizing solar orientation for improved energy performance and occupant comfort (see [Figure 34](#)).



*Figure 34: Orient buildings to maximize solar access to streets and public spaces while also optimizing solar orientation for improved energy performance and occupant comfort.*

- b. Use exterior shading devices to block excess heat gains in summer and allow passive heat gains in winter. Considerations include (see [Figure 35](#)):
  - i. Prioritize shading on southern elevations.
  - ii. No shading needed on north-facing **facades**.
  - iii. Vertical fins for western-facing **facades** to block summer sun.

**Building Size and Shape**

- c. Design buildings to improve energy efficiency by (see [Figure 36](#)):
  - i. Keeping building forms simple with fewer complex junctions to reduce heat loss.
  - ii. Applying **facade articulation** strategies that do not compromise the thermal envelope. For example, use simple changes in massing, colours, and textures to create visual interest.
- d. For larger buildings, aim for a 40% overall **window-to-wall ratio (WWR)** to improve energy efficiency by increasing insulated wall areas (see [Figure 37](#)):
  - i. Allow higher **WWR** at ground level to maintain transparency.
  - ii. Use a lower **WWR** on north-facing **facades** to minimize heat loss.

**Materials**

- e. Prioritize low embodied carbon building materials where possible.

**Balconies**

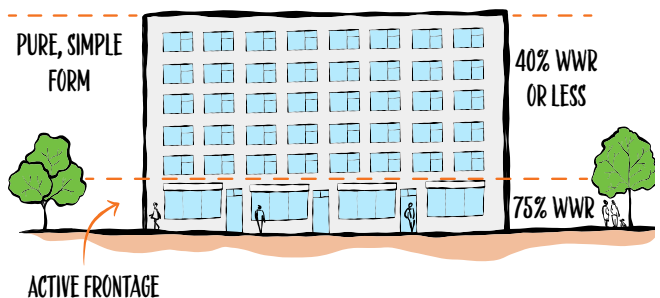
- f. Consider the use of high-performance balcony strategies to reduce **thermal bridging** potential, such as:
  - i. Exterior supported balconies.
  - ii. Bolt-on balconies.
  - iii. Inset balconies.
  - iv. Using structural thermal breaks for balcony connections.



*Figure 35: Use exterior shading devices to block excess heat gains in summer and allow passive heat gains in winter.*



*Figure 36: Design buildings to improve energy efficiency.*



*Figure 37: For larger buildings, aim for a 40% overall window-to-wall ratio (WWR) to improve energy efficiency by increasing insulated wall areas.*

### 3.3 Accessible and Adaptable Design

#### Design Intent

Promote inclusive, adaptable design in sites, buildings, and landscapes to ensure accessibility for all users, support a variety of uses over time, and contribute to vibrant, comfortable, and active neighbourhoods.

#### Guidelines

- a. Design buildings to be flexible and adaptable by accommodating a range of future uses and responding to both current and anticipated community conditions through thoughtful layout, flexible spaces with moveable partition walls, structural capacity, and service infrastructure.
- b. Ensure primary entrances are accessible, with weather protection, and usable by individuals with varying abilities (see [Figure 38](#)).
- c. Position benches, bike racks, bins, and other furnishings off to one side of accessible entryways and pathways.
- d. Ensure access ramps, exterior lifts, and related elements are visually integrated with the building design and site plan to avoid a disjointed appearance (see [Figure 39](#)).
- e. Keep pedestrian routes smooth and level to make them easier to use for people with mobility aids, strollers, and bikes.
- f. Ensure accessible exterior paths:
  - i. Minimum clear width of 1.8 m for mobility devices and service animals.
  - ii. Minimum headroom clearance of 2.1 m to avoid overhead obstacles.
  - iii. Firm, stable, and slip-resistant surfaces.
  - iv. Free of stairs or other barriers to mobility aids.
- g. Incorporate windows in the exterior walls of exit stairs and lobbies for daylighting.



*Figure 38: Ensure primary entrances are accessible, with weather protection, and usable by individuals with varying abilities.*



*Figure 39: Ensure access ramps, exterior lifts, and related elements are visually integrated with the building design and site plan to avoid a disjointed appearance.*

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# 04

## **GROUND-ORIENTED RESIDENTIAL GUIDELINES**

# GROUND-ORIENTED RESIDENTIAL GUIDELINES

In Vernon, Ground-Oriented Residential refers to intensive residential developments with 5 or more units, often located near or adjacent to single family homes, in Neighbourhoods, Village, and Urban Centres.

Housing types include:

- Single detached dwellings, duplex, triplex, fourplex
- House plex
- Rowhouses
- Townhouses
- Stacked townhouses.



## KEY GUIDELINES



- 1 Design buildings to connect with the street and **public realm**. Avoid walled or gated developments that are visually or physically cut off. Use low fencing, landscaping, or other permeable edges to support visibility, safety, and social interaction.
- 2 Orient unit entries towards the street with a visible and accessible design, including a semi-private transition zone between public and private spaces, which enhances safety and social interaction while offering privacy.
- 3 Provide safe, comfortable, and convenient on-site pedestrian circulation and access points, mitigating the impacts of vehicular circulation and servicing.
- 4 Design buildings to fit with the surrounding environment through thoughtful building form, orientation, and integration with natural features.
- 5 Frame streets and open spaces positively, using design elements like landscaping, gates, and thoughtful articulation to enhance the rhythm and connection between buildings and the street.
- 6 For projects with multiple buildings, design the site with spaces between buildings to allow for view corridors, pedestrian through-connections, and amenity spaces.

## 4.1 Guidelines

### Guidelines

In addition to the strategies outlined in the General Guidelines ([Section 3](#)):

### Site Planning

- a. Provide pedestrian pathways on-site to connect (see [Figure 40](#)):
  - i. Primary unit entrances to public sidewalks, transit stops, and amenity spaces.
  - ii. Visitor parking areas to building entrances.
  - iii. The site to adjacent pedestrian/trail/cycling networks (where applicable).
  - iv. Public sidewalks and open spaces to secondary buildings, amenity buildings, or storage entries (e.g. garage doors for bicycle storage, where applicable).
- b. Frame pedestrian through-connections with active edges, such as entrances, indoor amenity spaces, and windows facing the path or lane.
- c. Locate garbage, recycling, and organics storage away from public streets.
- d. Identify space for pad-mounted transformers, EV chargers, and other utility equipment at the design stage to ensure they are integrated into the overall site layout without compromising access, landscaping, or the **public realm**.
- e. Maintain adequate separation between facing buildings to promote privacy and reduce visual impact.



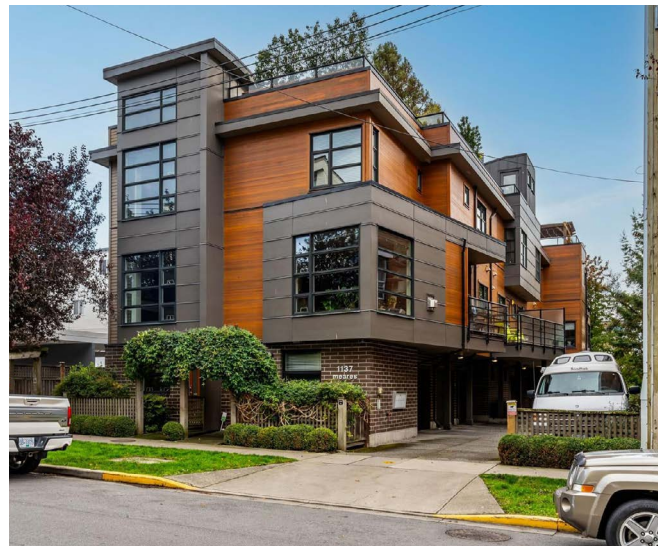
*Figure 40: Provide pedestrian pathways on-site and Frame pedestrian through-connections with active edges, such as entrances, indoor amenity spaces, and windows facing the path or lane.*

### Street-Facing Design

- f. In multi-building developments, treat all **street frontages** as “front yard” conditions by orienting front doors toward the street and using low fences or landscaping to create a welcoming, pedestrian-friendly edge.
- g. Design primary unit entrances to provide (see [Figure 41](#)):
  - i. A comfortable entry zone with space for steps, patios, or raised entrances.
  - ii. Provide a visible front door that is directly accessible from the street or pathway, and emphasize it with welcoming architectural features such as stoops, porches, shared landings, patios, recessed entries, or canopies.
  - iii. Create a clear transition from public to private space using features like grade changes, railings, planters, and semi-private outdoor areas that enhance safety and activate the street.
- h. For buildings oriented perpendicularly to the street, establish a strong street relationship with the end unit by (see [Figure 42](#)):
  - i. Ensuring the primary entry is directly accessible from the fronting street with a front door facing the street.
  - ii. Ensuring there is active living space facing the front street such as living room, den, or foyer.
  - iii. Positioning windows to face the street.
  - iv. Creating a front yard with landscaping or plantings along the entry path.
- i. Design buildings facing public parks to create a positive, active interface by:
  - i. Orienting primary entrances, windows, balconies, and usable outdoor spaces toward the park to enhance visibility, safety, and natural surveillance.
  - ii. Avoiding blank walls or inactive **facades** along park frontages.
  - iii. Establishing a front yard condition with landscaping and entry paths that are directly accessible from the park.



*Figure 41: Design primary unit entrances to provide, a comfortable entry zone, a visible front door, and a clear transition from public to private space.*



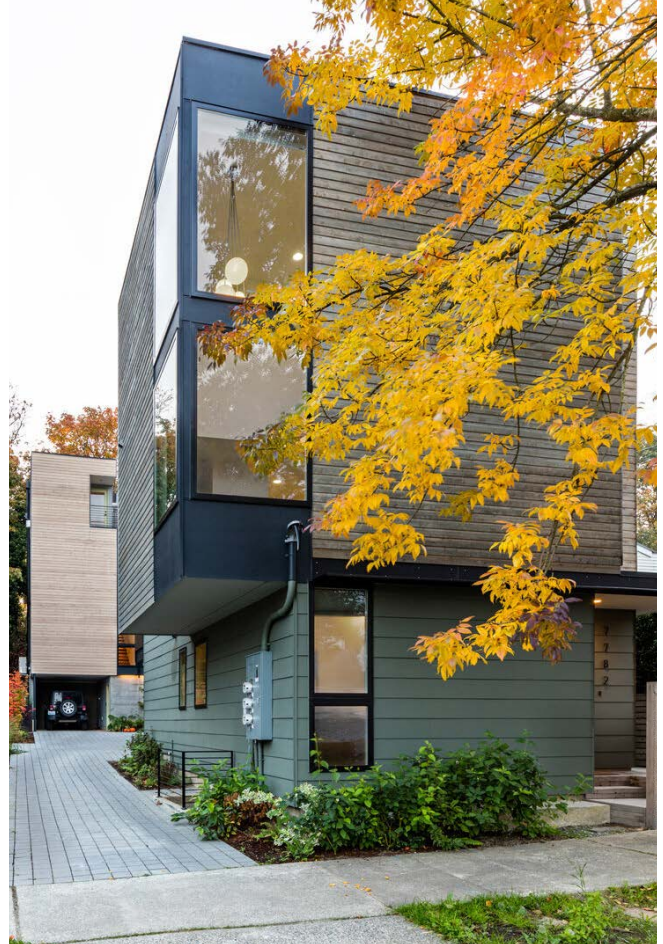
*Figure 42: For buildings oriented perpendicularly to the street, establish a strong street relationship with the end unit.*

## Building Size and Shape

- j. In larger townhouse developments, limit the number of connected units to a maximum of six before splitting into separate buildings.
- i. Use compatible changes in materials and colours to distinguish housing blocks.

## Access and Parking

- k. Prefer rear-access garages or integrated tuck-under parking for townhouses, keeping them out of pedestrian view (see [Figure 43](#)).
- l. Integrate front garages or driveway parking facing internal roads into the overall building design, using architectural detailing and recessing garage doors to reduce their visual impact.
- m. Ensure garages are set back from residential entries to maintain a clear sense of entry and prioritize pedestrian access and visibility.
- n. Maintain a landscape setback between driveways or drive aisles and shared property lines.
- o. Minimize the impact of headlights on building interiors by strategically locating access points and driveways.



*Figure 43: Prefer rear-access garages or integrated tuck-under parking for townhouses.*



**05**

**APARTMENT,  
HIGH-RISE, AND MIXED-  
USE GUIDELINES**

# APARTMENT, HIGH-RISE, AND MIXED-USE GUIDELINES

Apartment, high-rise, and mixed-use buildings may become common building types in Vernon in the future. Key design challenges include creating active street-facing uses and **ground-oriented** units, as well as reducing the bulk and massing of larger buildings while accommodating adequate parking. To address these issues, projects should prioritize a strong connection to the street with high quality design on the first one to three storeys, a clear front-to-back orientation and incorporate both vertical and horizontal articulation.

Building typologies include:

- Apartment buildings up to 12 storeys, including single stair egress apartments.
- Mixed-use and commercial buildings up to 12 storeys.
- High-rise apartment or mixed-use buildings 13 storeys or more.



## KEY GUIDELINES



- 1 In mixed-use projects, create engaging and human-scale features at ground level, such as frequent entrances, weather protection, and outdoor seating areas, oriented towards public spaces.
- 2 Break up building mass by incorporating simple vertical and horizontal **facade articulation**, such as stepbacks, insets, projections, and varying colours and textures.
- 3 Locate parking, loading areas, and service functions at the rear of buildings so they are not visible from the street and do not detract from the **public realm**.
- 4 In residential projects, provide individual entrances for ground-floor units and set buildings back from the street to create a semi-private transition zone that enhances livability.
- 5 Design podiums for a strong street presence with **active uses** at grade, generous height for the first storey, pedestrian-scaled articulation, and weather protection.
- 6 Set towers back from the front of podiums to reduce shadow, wind, and privacy impacts, and provide a pedestrian-scaled massing, ensuring adequate separation between towers to maintain livability.

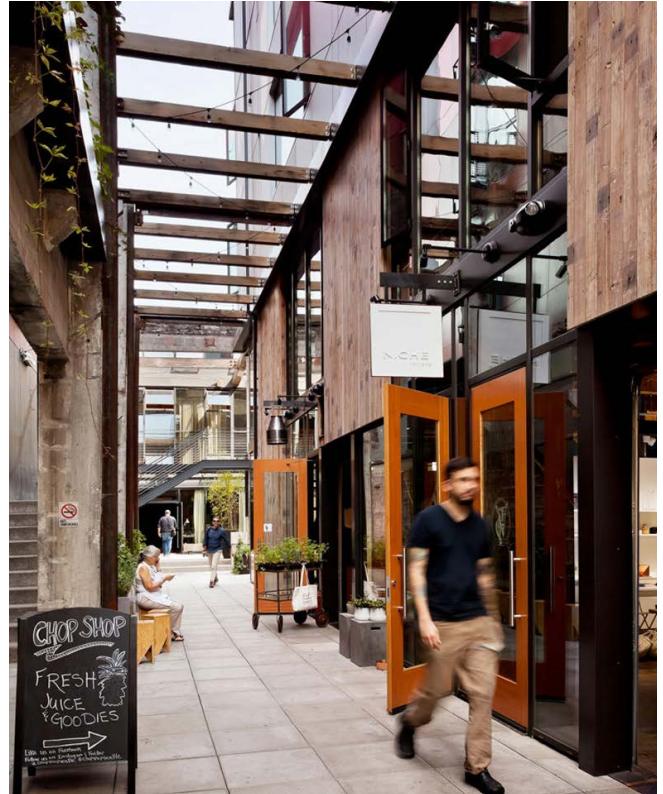
## 5.1 Guidelines

### Guidelines

In addition to the strategies outlined in the General Guidelines ([Section 3](#)):

### Site Planning

- a. Site buildings parallel to the street with a clear front-to-back orientation that connects public streets and open spaces to rear yards, parking, or courtyards:
  - i. Building fronts should frame and activate streets and open spaces, encouraging pedestrian activity.
  - ii. Building backs should be designed for private or shared outdoor spaces and access.
- b. Break up large buildings and sites with mid-block connections, ensuring they are publicly accessible when possible (see [Figure 44](#)):
  - i. Design ground floors adjacent to mid-block connections with entrances and windows facing these connections.



*Figure 44: Break up large buildings and sites with mid-block connections, ensuring they are publicly accessible.*

**Street-Facing Design**

- c. For corner sites and highly visible buildings, incorporate distinct architectural treatments like varying rooflines, articulated **facades**, larger windows, and pedestrian-friendly features such as awnings and canopies (see [Figure 45](#)).
- d. For commercial ground-floor mixed-use buildings:
  - i. Provide a continuous, active, and transparent retail frontage at grade to maintain a visual connection between the public and **private realms**.
  - ii. Encourage variations in setbacks, recessed entryways, wider sidewalks, and small plazas to support outdoor dining, retail displays, and other pedestrian-oriented uses that enhance vibrancy, walkability, and social interaction along mixed-use streets.
- iii. Commercial retail units have a minimum depth of 6 m.
- iv. Design small-format storefronts and frequent entrances to create visual interest, a walkable rhythm, and active street life.
- v. On sloping sites, ensure commercial frontages step with the grade.
- vi. Design signs to be pedestrian oriented and easy to read for someone walking by, such as projecting signs, under canopy signs, or other sign types that are perpendicular to the sidewalk rather than parallel.
- e. For residential ground-floor mixed-use buildings:
  - i. See Ground-oriented Residential Guidelines ([Section 4.1](#)) specific to that portion of the building.
- f. Set back ground-floor residential units more than commercial units, and clearly distinguish their entrances (see [Figure 46](#)).



Figure 45: Set back ground-floor residential units more than commercial units.



Figure 46: For corner sites and highly visible buildings, incorporate distinct architectural treatments.

### Building Size and Shape

- g. Residential building **facades** should have a maximum length of 70 m, with 40 m being preferred.
- h. Avoid designing residential buildings with a depth greater than 24 m.
- i. Buildings with **facades** more than 40 m in length should incorporate significant horizontal and vertical breaks in the **facade** and/or provide an urban plaza at grade.

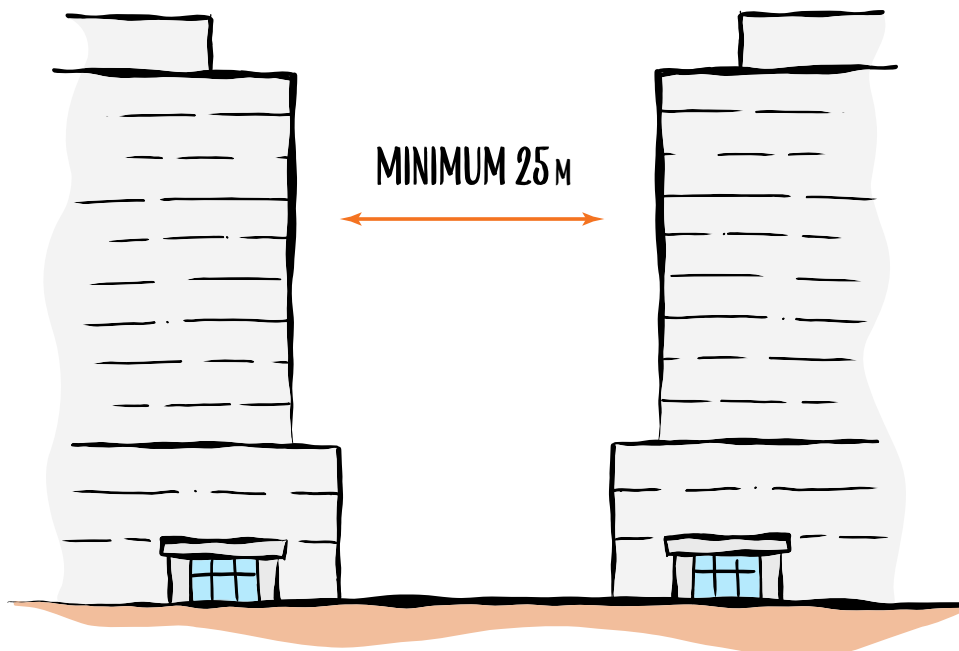
### Access and Parking

- j. Design 'back-of-house' uses (such as loading, garbage collection, and utilities) to minimize visual impacts and screen from view with materials and finishes compatible with the building, while integrating them into:

- i. Underground parking.
- ii. The architectural treatment of the building.
- iii. Enclosed or fully screened spaces at the rear of buildings or away from public streets and sidewalks.
- k. For buildings with ground-floor residential units, underground parking may be integrated up to one half-storey.

### High-Rise Buildings

- l. Locate towers strategically to minimize shadowing, wind impacts, and privacy concerns for adjacent properties, parks, and public spaces:
  - i. Space towers on the same site or block to have a minimum tower separation of 25 m measured balcony to balcony, with 30 m preferred to maintain open space and mountain views between buildings (see [Figure 47](#)).



*Figure 47: Space towers on the same site or block to have a minimum tower separation of 25 m measured balcony to balcony, with 30 m preferred to maintain open space and mountain views between buildings.*

- m. Where possible, design slender towers to minimize impacts on sunlight, privacy, views, and aesthetics.
- n. For buildings with podiums:
  - i. Design tall buildings with a distinct and cohesive podium, tower, and top, achieved through changes in articulation, materials, and step-backs.
  - ii. Design podiums with a scale and pattern that complements neighbouring buildings and differentiates it from the tower.
  - iii. Provide a minimum first-floor height of 4.5 m, limit podium heights to three storeys, and refer to the relevant guidelines for residential, commercial, or mixed-use buildings (see [Figure 48](#)).
  - iv. Set towers back from the podium or streetwall (see [Figure 49](#)).
    - 1. Maintain a consistent and context-sensitive streetwall height, particularly in areas with historical buildings.
- v. Design parking podiums to be wrapped with **active uses** such as commercial retail units, residential townhouses, or active indoor amenity areas.
- vi. Where parking is integrated into the podium, design podiums to contribute positively to the **public realm** on all visible levels, not just at grade, by:
  - 1. Activating the ground level with commercial or community uses that engage the street.
  - 2. Avoiding blank upper podium levels that rely solely on decorative cladding. Instead, incorporate articulation, open-air treatments or screening, windows, balconies, or other features that create depth and visual interest.
  - 3. Integrating greening strategies such as green walls, vertical planting systems, climbing vegetation, or landscaped setbacks to soften massing and improve environmental performance.
  - 4. Where possible, wrapping podiums with **active uses** or liner units, especially along key **street frontages** and adjacent open spaces.

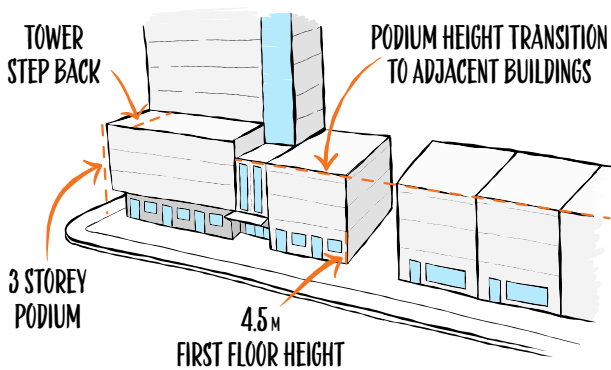


Figure 48: Provide a minimum first-floor height of 4.5m, limit podium heights to three storeys.

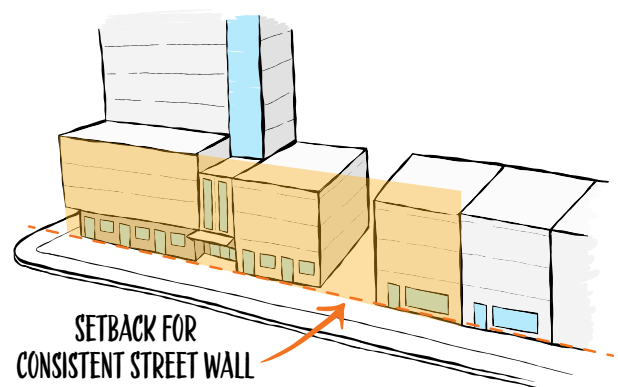


Figure 49: Set towers back from the podium or streetwall.

o. For building tower middles (see [Figure 50](#)):

- i. On sites with multiple towers, ensure variation in tower **facades** to maintain visual interest while achieving overall architectural cohesion.
- ii. Consider subtle design changes such as projections, colours, or windows on the tower middle to provide visual interest when viewed from hillsides around the city.
- iii. Design balconies to break up the building's mass and extend indoor living space, while considering privacy, comfort, and energy efficiency.
- iv. Encourage inset balconies to provide protection from wind and weather.

p. For building tower tops, design the top of tall buildings to distinguish it from the middle of the building and contribute positively to the skyline (see [Figure 51](#)):

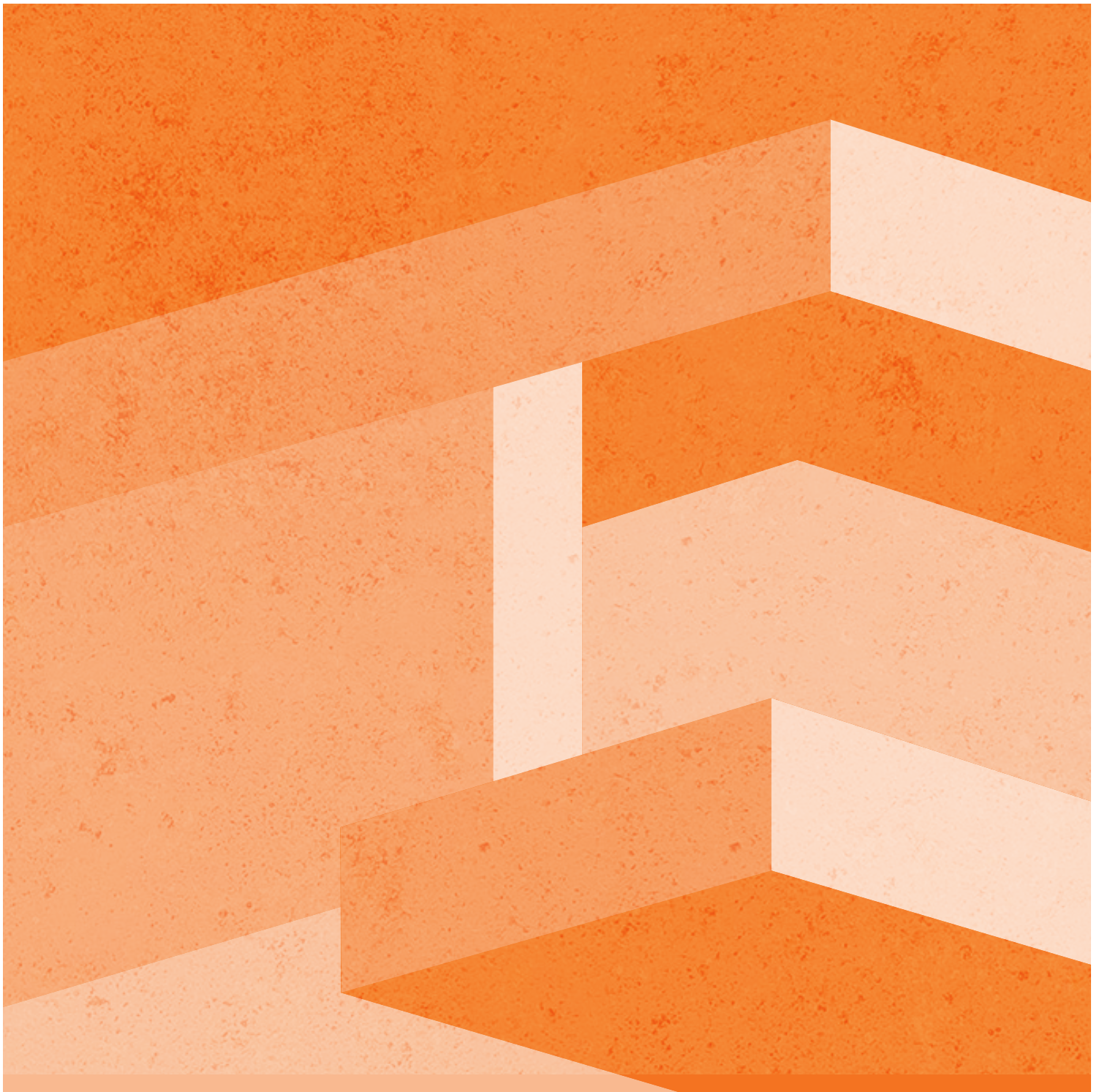
- i. Screen mechanical rooms and integrate rooftop amenity spaces and architectural lighting to define the top.
- ii. Consider setbacks on upper floors and features such as cornices to terminate the building and create a varied skyline.



*Figure 50: Example of tower middle.*



*Figure 51: For building tower tops, design the top of tall buildings to distinguish it from the middle.*



**06**

**SINGLE USE RETAIL,  
COMMERCIAL, AND  
INDUSTRIAL GUIDELINES**

# SINGLE USE RETAIL, COMMERCIAL, AND INDUSTRIAL GUIDELINES

Single use retail, commercial, and industrial developments are often designed with easy access for motorists, featuring large surface parking lots that separate building entrances from public sidewalks and prioritize access for commercial vehicles. However, there are significant opportunities to improve both the design and functionality of these spaces. Enhancing the pedestrian environment once motorists exit their vehicles, improving landscaping to mitigate the visual and environmental impact of parking areas and buildings, and designing spaces that reduce negative impacts on neighbouring uses can all contribute to a more balanced and user-friendly development.

While not exempt from the General Guidelines in [Section 3](#), this section incorporates additional considerations for these forms of development and provides additional guidelines for key elements that may be present (e.g. large surface parking lots, large building footprints, vehicular-oriented access).

Building typologies include:

- Large-format single use commercial or retail.
- Small-scale single use commercial or retail.
- Commercial or retail “strip malls”.
- Industrial.



## 6.1 Guidelines

### Guidelines

In addition to the strategies outlined in the General Guidelines ([Section 3](#)):

### Site Planning

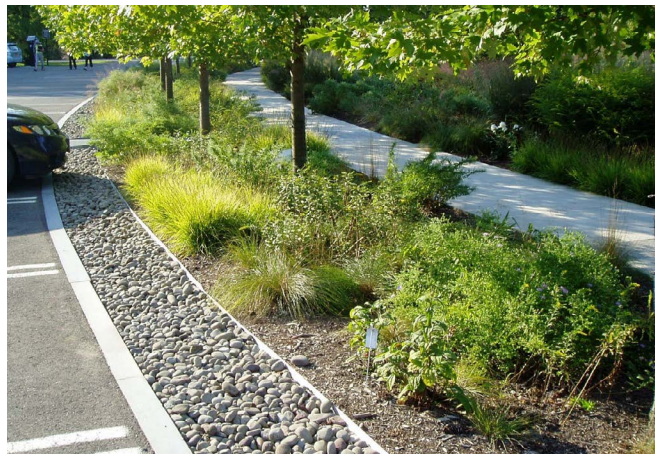
- a. Add abundant landscaping and trees along frontages and in parking areas to soften the appearance of lot boundaries.
- b. Provide separation between vehicular routes (particularly truck access/loading) and pedestrian routes on site to avoid conflict.
- c. Ensure there is direct, safe, continuous, and marked pedestrian access from public sidewalks and parking areas to building entrances (see [Figure 52](#)).
- d. Locate the office, reception, or sales component of the building closer to the street than the plant or warehouse component.

### Landscapes and Outdoor Areas

- e. Distribute trees and landscaping throughout the site to:
  - i. Define property boundaries along the street.
  - ii. Define internal roads, walkways, and open spaces.
  - iii. Improve the pedestrian experience.
  - iv. Screen parking, loading, service, garbage and recycling, and utility areas from view.
  - v. Provide shade, particularly in parking areas.
  - vi. Manage stormwater on site.
  - vii. Break up long rows of parking by replacing one parking stall with a canopy tree in a planter every four to six stalls.



*Figure 52: Ensure there is direct, safe, continuous, and marked pedestrian access from public sidewalks and parking areas to building entrances.*



*Figure 53: Provide on-site bio-retention facilities (e.g. bioswales, rain gardens) to collect, store, and filter stormwater from parking areas.*

- f. Provide on-site bio-retention facilities (e.g. bioswales, rain gardens) to collect, store, and filter stormwater from parking areas (see [Figure 53](#)).
- g. Use permeable materials, such as paving blocks or permeable concrete in parking areas or pedestrian pathways, to maximize rainwater infiltration.

### Access and Parking

- h. Where practical, link access drives and parking lots of adjacent properties to allow for the circulation of vehicles between sites.
- i. Where surface parking is unavoidable:
  - i. Locate main parking areas at the rear and/or side of the building, avoiding large parking areas between the building and the street (see [Figure 54](#)).
  - ii. Screen parking areas from the street using strategies such as tree planting, berming, low walls, decorative fencing, and drought tolerant and FireSmart hedging.
  - iii. Break parking areas into smaller blocks defined by landscaping to minimize the amount of paved areas.

- iv. Provide covered bicycle parking in visible and well-lit locations near building entrances and pedestrian walkways.
- v. Locate accessible parking as close to main entrances as possible.

### Building Form & Massing

- j. Create transparent frontages with visual access to the interior of stores or commercial spaces, and avoid the use of:
  - i. Materials such as blackout advertising panels.
  - ii. Dark and/or reflective glass.
  - iii. Roll down shutters or gates.
- k. Avoid orienting unarticulated **facades** to the street and use projections, recesses, plantings, awnings, colour and texture to reduce the visual size of any unglazed walls.
- l. Avoid turning the back of the building toward the public street, allowing for entrances directly from the public sidewalk with glazing that allows pedestrians and drivers to see into retail spaces during the day.
- m. Use different exterior materials to distinguish the warehouse or plant area from the office or sales area. Choose higher-quality or more detailed materials for the office or customer-facing parts of the building (see [Figure 55](#)).



*Figure 54: Locate main parking areas at the rear and/or side of the building, avoiding large parking areas between the building and the street*

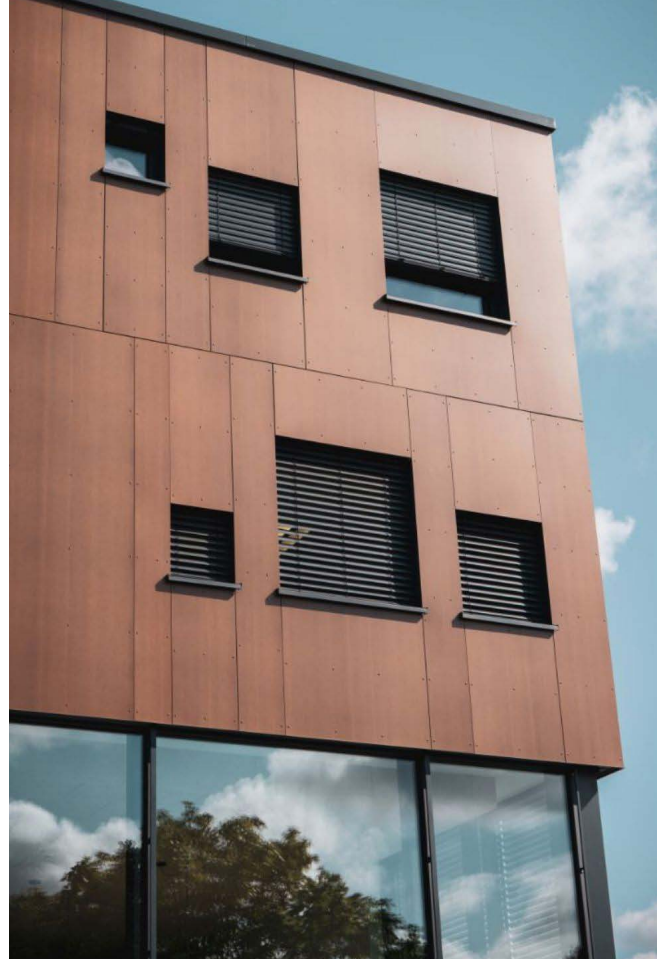


*Figure 55: Use different exterior materials to distinguish the warehouse or plant area from the office or sales area.*

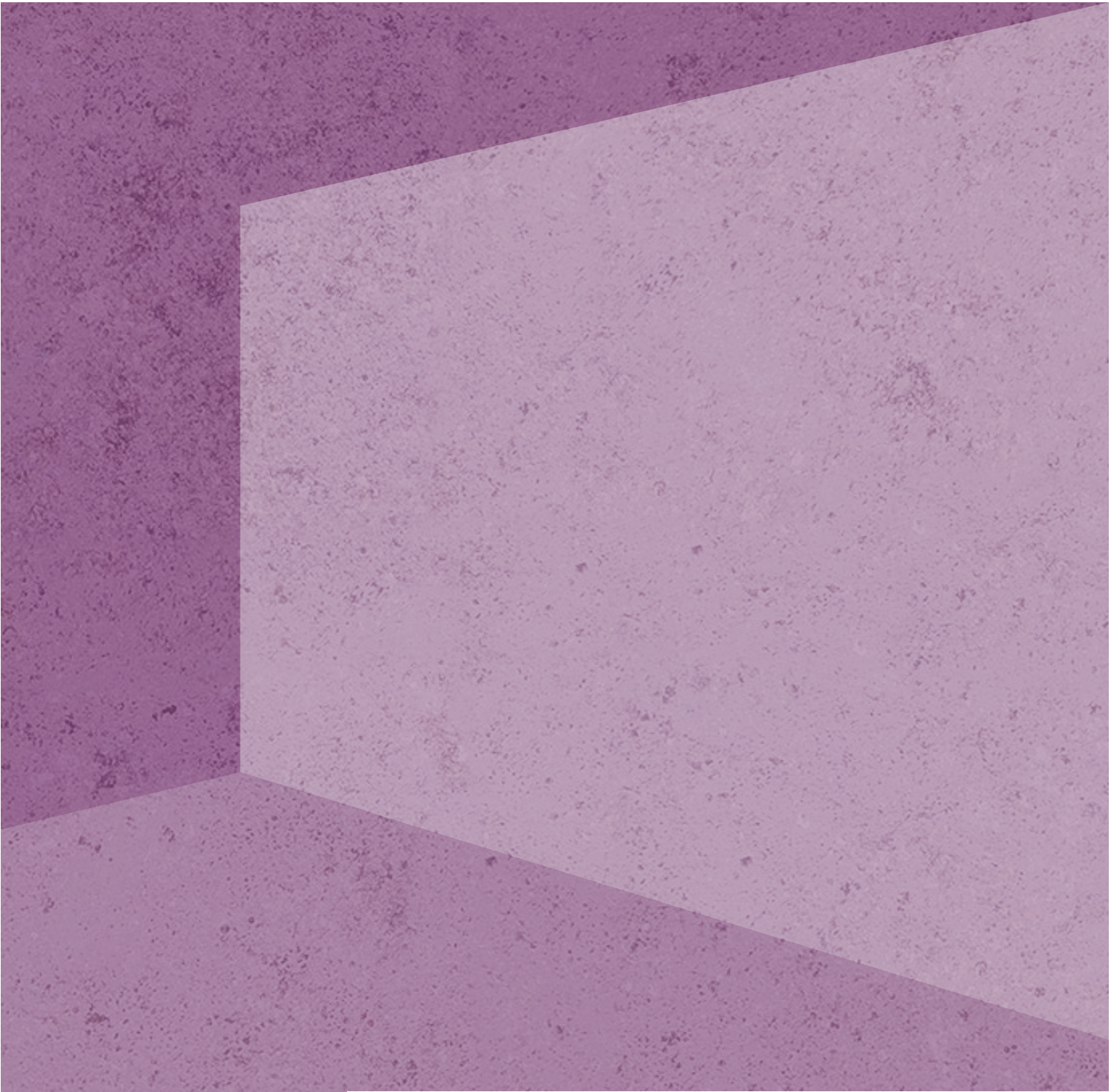
- n. Incorporate simple technologies for access to industrial and larger commercial buildings, such as bay door controls, air curtains, and dock seals to prevent heat loss in winter.

#### **Co-Existing With Residential**

- o. Building design should mitigate noise impacts by, for example, selecting wall siding (e.g. rockwool, acoustic concrete), and window materials that have strong sound insulation/absorption capacity (see [Figure 56](#)).
- p. Design multi-storey buildings (e.g. those that mix industrial and commercial or residential uses) to maintain and accommodate industrial uses on the ground floor by providing a first-floor height of 4.5 m.



*Figure 56: Building design should mitigate noise impacts by, for example, selecting wall, siding (e.g. rockwool, acoustic concrete), and window materials that have strong sound insulation/absorption capacity.*



**07**

**GLOSSARY**

## 7.1 Glossary

### Active Use

A use that generate many visits, in particular pedestrian visits, over an extended period of the day. Active uses may be shops, cafes, art galleries, community spaces, and other social uses.

### Barrier-free design

The design of buildings, spaces, and elements to be accessible and usable by all people, regardless of age, ability, or mobility.

### Building envelope (enclosure)

The elements that make up the outer shell of a building that separate indoor from outdoor spaces. A building's envelope prevents or controls the entry of heat, water, air, noise, and light from entering or leaving.

### Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

A group of strategies and concepts (including the design of buildings and landscaping) intended to reduce the fear of crime and opportunities to commit crimes.

### Facade articulation

Design elements, both horizontal and vertical, that help create an interesting and welcoming building elevation. These include building materials, special ground-floor design treatments, facade modulation, corner treatments, building setbacks for upper stories, and facade elements such as window treatments, building entries, and other architectural details.

### Facade

The exterior face of a building.

### Fenestration

The arrangement of windows and doors on the elevations of a building.

### Ground-oriented

A building that has direct access to the street or ground level with a front door facing the street and active, usable space at grade.

### Human scale

The use of architectural features, details, and site design elements that are human proportioned and clearly oriented toward pedestrian activity to allow people to feel comfortable using and approaching it.

### **Private open space / amenity space**

An open area or place that is privately owned and exclusively occupied, usually attached to a private dwelling or unit. Some privately owned open space can be made available for the public to access and use (“privately owned public space”).

### **Private realm**

Space owned by a private person or group and kept for their exclusive use.

### **Public realm**

Spaces that is open and freely accessible to everyone, of all ages and abilities. These spaces can include streets, laneways and roads, parks, public plazas, waterways and foreshores.

### **Street frontage**

Spaces where there is an active visual engagement between people in the street and those on the ground and upper floors of buildings.

### **Street wall**

The vertical elements of a building that defines the edge of the public street.

### **Streetscape**

The visual elements of a street, including the road, adjoining buildings, sidewalks, street furniture, trees, and open spaces, that combine to form the street’s character.

### **Thermal bridging**

The transfer of heat through materials and structures that interrupt a building’s continuous insulation layer, causing heat to escape the interior of the building to the outside air. Thermal bridges lower overall building energy efficiency.

### **Universal accessibility**

The ability of all users to safely negotiate spaces; a key factor in ensuring the usability of buildings and the public realm.

### **Window-to-wall ratio (WWR)**

The share of a building’s facade that is made up of glazing.

