
4.0 GUIDELINES FOR ALTERATIONS, ADDITIONS AND NEW CONSTRUCTION

4.1 Introduction

The character of the Trafalgar Road District relies on its historical development as a distinctive residential area. Most residential construction took place over a number of years, primarily after the 1860s to the 1950s. The Trafalgar Road District is, in part, characterized by a variety of architectural styles, lot sizes, position of buildings on the lots and building materials.

The neighbourhood reflects a stable stock of single family residential buildings although there has been some pressure to convert to commercial units with the accompanying demands for parking and upgrading of existing structures. Redevelopment of the building stock, i.e., remodeling and enlarging existing houses; and, demolition of an existing house and construction of a new building, is evident. There is some limited potential for minor infilling.

Physical change that may be expected to occur within the Trafalgar Road District can be categorized by:

- alterations and additions to existing structures;
- new construction, either through infill or redevelopment; and,
- public works.

Often exterior alterations to buildings are undertaken to update the appearance of a house; to add additional living space; and to minimize the exterior maintenance of the house. Each of these actions produces a different effect on the exterior appearance of a heritage building. Cumulatively these actions can remove all traces of the earlier building.

An important objective in the following guidelines is to encourage change that is in keeping with and respects the existing building form.

The guidelines should be read:

- in conjunction with advice on building conservation found in Section 3; and,
- as a prerequisite for the consideration of permit applications under Part V, Section 43 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

The guidelines are organized to respond to those who are directly responsible for change in the district, namely:

- owners of heritage properties;
- owners of non-heritage properties;
- owners of infill lots; and,
- public officials undertaking public work projects.

Sub-section 4.2 and 4.3 provides specific guidance for changes to heritage buildings with a view to retaining distinguishing features and fabric.

Sub-section 4.4 is intended for the owners of properties within the district that are not considered of heritage value.

Sub-sections 4.5 and 4.6 address the integration of new construction and public works into the district.

A note of caution is advised in the purpose, use and application of these design guidelines. The guidelines are intended to provide a *general framework* for considering the minimum standard of appropriate change within the district. They must be considered an aid to consistent decision making rather than a specific formula for designing a new building, addition or architectural feature.

4.2. Alterations to heritage buildings and sites

Within the Trafalgar Road Heritage Conservation District, 118 buildings are considered to have been constructed prior to 1952 and therefore of varying degrees of heritage value and interest. It is the intent of this plan that these existing heritage structures be retained. The demolition of buildings is discouraged. Likewise the moving of heritage features is not promoted. It is recommended that changes to heritage properties be undertaken in the context of these guidelines.

The term **alteration** is used in a comprehensive sense to apply to any work undertaken to a property such as repairs, rehabilitation, restoration and additions. Alteration activities can be regulated under the *Ontario Building Code* although maintenance and some repairs and replacements are exempt.

4.2.1 Guiding Principles

Design features of the building and site and historic building materials should be maintained and enhanced.

Any plans or actions involving a heritage property should be based upon a clear understanding of the particular problem with the building or site. They should be based on a sound literature research and physical evidence provided by the building fabric.

Contemplated work should be truthful both historically and architecturally. Beware of over-enthusiasm: replacing too much; cleaning too well; or making an inappropriate historic appearance.

“Quick fix” and “magic remedies” should be avoided as at best they may be simply ineffectual and at worst may cause irreparable damage to a significant building.

4.2.2 Features and spaces around buildings

Maintain traditional views of property by avoiding the masking or hiding of prominent building features with new additions.

Ensure that front lawns, tree plantings, hedges and fences are maintained.

Keep parking areas and outbuildings including garages and utilities such as heat pumps and satellite dishes to the side or rear as traditional service areas.

Continue historic means of access: drives, paths and doorways. Encourage required new entrances to be installed on secondary elevations. Where external staircases are proposed they should be located at the rear.

Maintain proper site drainage in any work so that water does not collect or drain towards foundations.

4.2.3 Existing Building Fabric

Attempt to repair rather than replace.

Base all designs for replacement or restoration of former features on dependable documentary evidence, where available.

When undertaking repairs, replacement or restoration, use the same materials as the original, whenever possible.

New or repair work should not confuse the historic character of an area by creating an impression of greater age or of a different region or even country. Do not obscure signs of age or irregularities found in older work.

Do not violate symmetry or other important features of architectural design, particularly on the main elevation(s).

Do not move heritage structures.

4.2.4 Roofs

Decorative roof features and original roofing materials should be retained, conserved and if appropriate, restored.

Ensure that vents, skylights and other new roof elements are sympathetic in material and that they are discretely placed out of general view from the street and public rights-of-way.

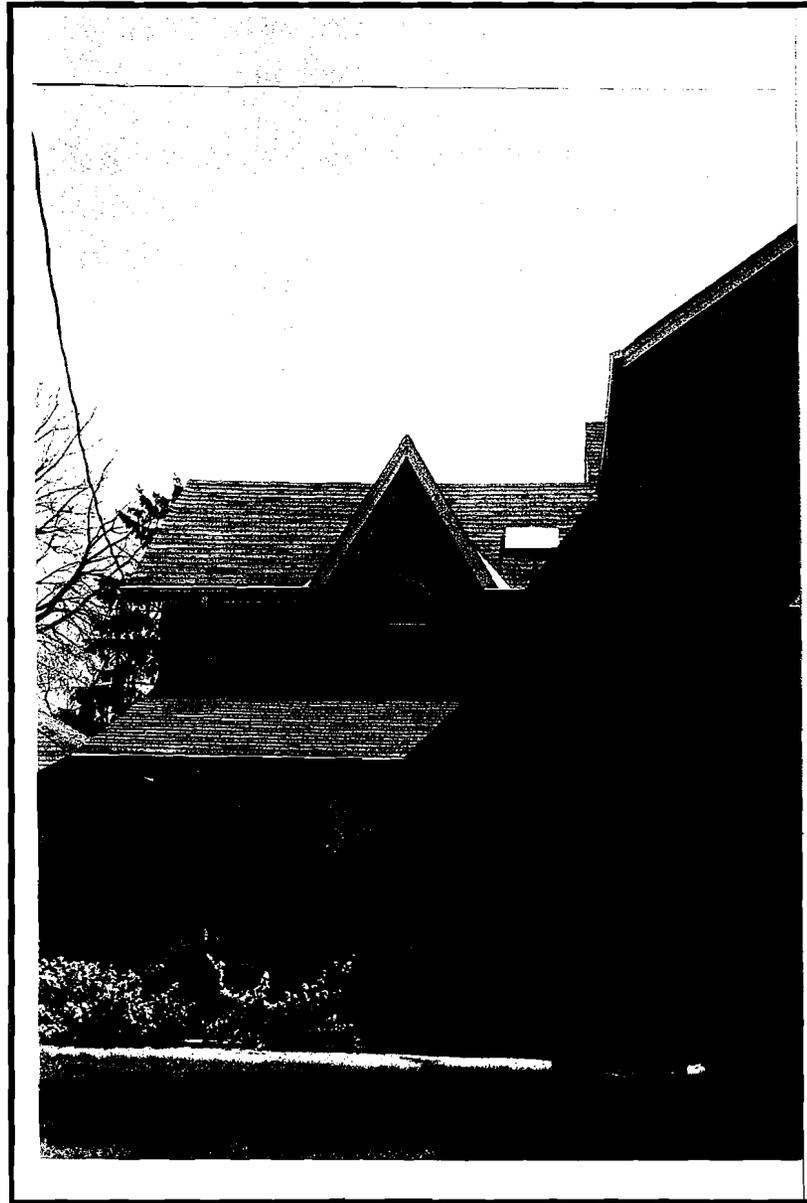
4.2.5 Foundations and Walls

Protect original wall surfaces from cleaning methods that may permanently alter or damage the appearance of the surface or give a “falsely” new look to the building, for example, sandblasting, strong liquid chemical solutions and high pressure water cleaning.

Avoid application of new surfaces or new coatings that alter the appearance of the original material, especially where they are substitutes for masonry repairs. This may include the application of waterproof and water repellent coatings, paint, aluminum or vinyl siding and stucco.



Avoid alterations, such as the application of new wall claddings that may damage underlying heritage building fabric.



New roof vents, skylights, solar panels, satellite dishes and dormers should be located inconspicuously away from public view.

4.2.6 Windows

Protect and maintain original window openings as well as their distinguishing features such as materials, frame, surrounds, shutters, sash, muntins, glazing and paint colour.

Modifications to the size or shape of window openings, removal of muntins, installation of snap-in muntins, replacement with sealed units or covering of trim with metal or other material is discouraged.

Avoid removing or blocking up windows that are important to the architectural character of the building.

New windows should be installed sensitively, in an area that is inconspicuous. New window design that is compatible with the original in terms of proportions, rhythm and scale is encouraged; however, the new should not attempt to replicate the original in terms of historical details.

4.2.7 Entrances

Protect and maintain entrances and porches especially on principal elevations where they are often key elements in defining the character of the building. Retain the historic means of access.

Avoid the removal of porches. Conserve important features such as doors, glazing, lighting, steps, balustrades and door surrounds.

Restoration of a missing porch should be based upon accurate research using both pictorial and physical evidence. Where documentation does not exist, the design and construction of a new entrance or porch compatible with the character of the building is preferred over a conjectural design of the original.

Where new entrances are required, they should be installed on secondary elevations.

4.3 Additions to heritage buildings and sites

There is evidence in the district that buildings have been added to over the years. Often an addition is needed to update a structure for a particular, contemporary need that may result from:

- the opportunity to update mechanical services of an existing building;
- the expansion of living space for a growing family or a specialized activity; and,
- economic constraints that make acquisition costs of a new property impossible, but make an addition or re-building of an older structure feasible.

Additions even more than alterations, can have a profound influence on the aesthetic architectural qualities of an heritage building. A key objective in the design of an addition is to ensure that the completed structure adds to or enhances the history of the building and does not devalue it.

A balance is sought between the new and old or more specifically, a relationship of harmony. While good design is important it will only be as good as the tradespeople who put it in place. Good quality craftsmanship is vital to the overall success of the project.

There are two important points to be considered when building an addition to a heritage building:

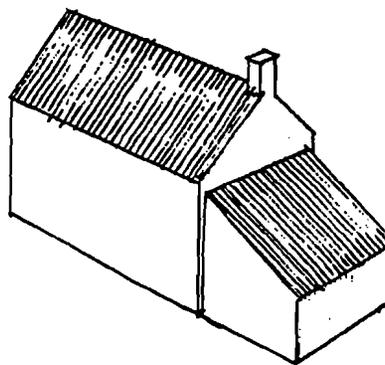
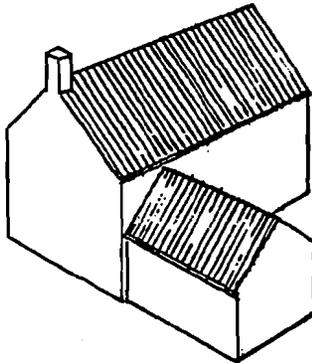
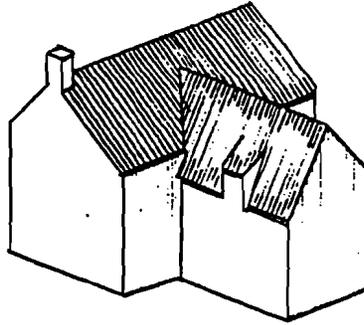
- 1) try to visualize the impact of the structure from the street or at a pedestrian level; and,
- 2) design new additions from the outside in.

Finally, new additions should be constructed in a way that:

- they are clearly differentiated from original historical fabric and compatible with the historic fabric; and,
- the continued protection of distinguishing architectural features is ensured and they do not radically change, damage; obscure, destroy or detract from such features.

4.3.1 Location

- 1) Exterior additions, including garages, balconies and greenhouses are encouraged to be located at the rear or on an inconspicuous side of the building, limited in size and scale to complement the existing building and neighbouring property. Additions at the rear should always be slightly lower than the existing roof line and stepped in at the sides in order not to overpower or dominate the existing heritage building and the view from the street. Additions so constructed will also tend to be more neighbourly to adjoining property owners.
- 2) Multi-storey exterior additions are best set back as deeply as possible from the existing front wall plane in order to be as unobtrusive as possible in the streetscape.
- 3) Additions to structures with symmetrical facades should avoid creating imbalance and asymmetrical arrangements in building form.

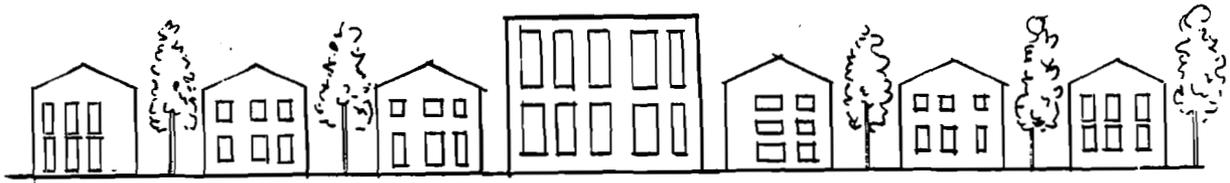


Encourage additions to the rear of the property in a form that does not over power the original heritage building:

Upper: One and one half storey addition to rear of property.

Middle: Single storey addition to one side at rear of building.

Lower: Lean to addition at rear gable end.



Avoid new infill that disrupts the rhythm of existing buildings, spaces and plantings.



New infill construction should be neither excessively higher nor lower than adjoining properties or the predominant building height along the street

4.3.2 Design

- 1) New additions are best designed in a manner that distinguishes between old and new; and that avoids duplicating the exact style of the existing heritage building or imitating a particular historical style or period of architecture.
- 2) Contemporary design for additions is appropriate when such additions do not destroy significant architectural, historical or cultural material and when the design is compatible with mass, ratio of solids to voids, colour, material, and character of the property, neighbourhood or environment.
- 3) New additions should be designed in such a manner that the essential form and integrity of the existing building would be unimpaired if the addition were removed in the future.
- 4) Additions are encouraged to be located at the rear or on an inconspicuous side of the building, limited in size and scale to complement the existing building and neighbouring properties. Keep the height and bulk of the new addition smaller than the existing building.
- 5) Additions are encouraged to not add to the height or roof of an existing historical building as changes to the roofline alter the character of a building significantly.
- 6) Additions to structures with symmetrical facades should avoid creating imbalance and asymmetrical in building form.
- 7) Pay close attention to the junction of the old and new ensuring a sound visual as well as functional connection.

4.4 Alterations to Non-heritage Buildings

Work undertaken to these structures should respect the overall character of the district and be sensitive to the neighbouring historic buildings.

Any subsequent new construction in the area achieved through infill or redevelopment should also be subject to these guidelines for alterations.

The term **alteration** is used in a comprehensive sense to apply to any work undertaken to a property such as repairs, rehabilitation, restoration and additions. Alteration activities can be regulated under the *Ontario Building Code* although maintenance and some repairs and replacements are exempt.

The following should be considered in the design and placement of alterations including additions to existing buildings:

- 1) Non-heritage buildings should not attempt to create a sense of being “old” by using historic forms and features that would be inappropriate on a new building such as snap-in muntins, shutters and decorative window surrounds.
- 2) Locate skylights, roof vents and dormers to the rear and side, away from the main elevation.
- 3) Locate new garages and parking spaces in unobtrusive areas, normally to the rear and side yards.
- 4) Additions should be sensitive to the character of its neighbours in size and height.
- 5) Upper storey additions should not be out of scale with neighbours. Maintain the predominant roof profiles and configuration of adjacent buildings.

4.5 New building construction

The introduction of new buildings into the Trafalgar Road district is part of the continuing changes that may be experienced by any community. New development, if permitted by the Official Plan and Zoning By-law, should be compatible with the character of the adjoining properties and the streetscape. The new building should be designed to look appropriate and to be compatible in the midst of the established neighbourhood. Its appearance must be sensitive to the character of its neighbours.

The construction of new buildings should be confined to the construction of buildings on vacant lots. While not prohibited by the *Ontario Heritage Act*, the demolition of existing heritage buildings and redevelopment of the sites with new structures is actively discouraged within the district. Private Members Bill 82 (An act respecting the Town of Oakville) requires approval of a building permit prior to the granting of a demolition permit. Property owners are encouraged to work with existing buildings, altering and adding to them in a sympathetic manner rather than demolishing and building anew.

The following guidelines for new construction are intended to provide a framework for *compatible* development. They are not intended to be a detailed prescription for each new building. This should enable property owners to design creatively with a general context for future built form.

4.5.1 General Principles

As any proposed building will be a new structure within the district, it is anticipated that the structure should look new and not pretend to be historic by replicating or copying older facades. Do not mimic historic details that have no relevance in contemporary construction such as shutters and multi-paned sash.

The general factors that govern the visual relationships between an infill building and its neighbours: height, width, proportion, relationship to the street, roof forms, composition, proportion of openings, materials and colour, should be studied carefully and used as a basis for new construction.

4.5.2 New building height

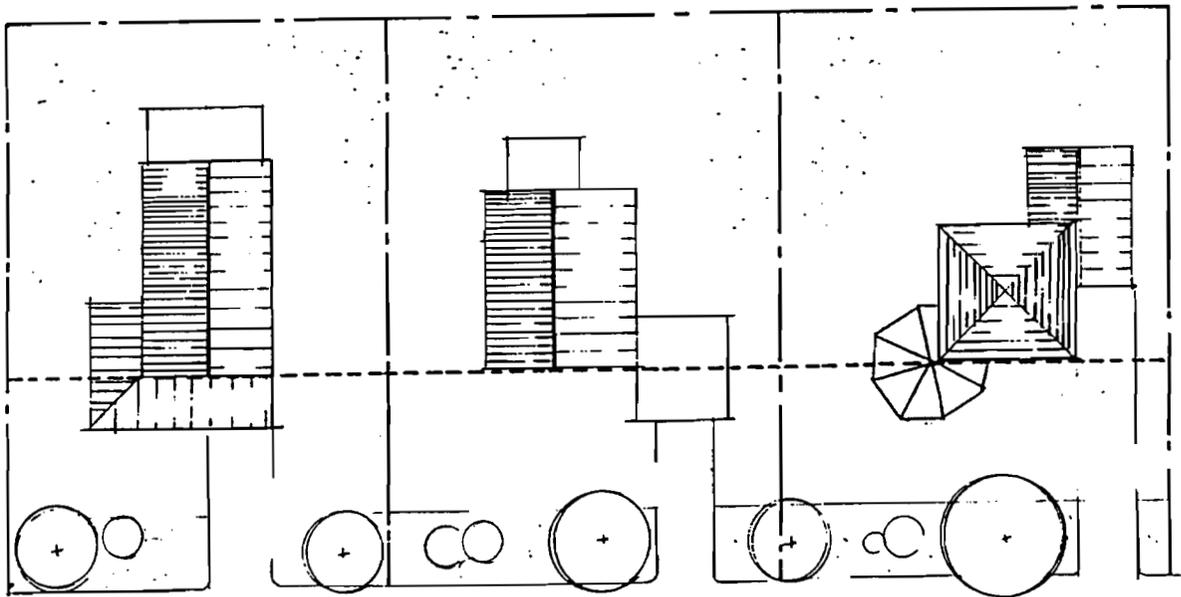
One-and-a-half to two storey structures are the most dominant in the district. Building height of new structures should generally maintain the building height of adjacent properties and the immediate streetscape and should be neither noticeably higher nor lower. In areas of varied building height new development must respect adjacent buildings by being neither excessively higher nor lower.

4.5.3 Width

The majority of the buildings in the district are single detached dwellings of varying width dependent upon the lot size and stylistic derivation. Building width of new structures should maintain the building width and side yard spaces of adjacent properties and the immediate streetscape thus preserving the existing building and space rhythms within the streetscape.

4.5.4 Proportion

Proportion relates to the association of height to width. The structures in the Trafalgar Road district are generally oriented vertically, i.e., the height is greater than the width. New residential infill should maintain the proportions of neighbouring properties.



Avoid radical alteration or additions to the front facades of buildings such as large verandahs, double garages or sunrooms.

4.5.5 Relationship to the Street

There are a variety of residential building forms in various styles and arrangements within the district. There is no one predominant building line or setback that distinguishes the district. New residential infill should maintain the existing setbacks of adjacent properties. In locations where there is significant variation in setbacks, infill development should generally avoid excessive setback from or projection in front of a building line drawn from the mid-point of adjacent building facades.

The majority of the buildings in the district are aligned to a grid established by the street pattern. Two exceptions include: 279 Lawson Street which once faced onto Trafalgar Road; and 180 Allan Street which faces Sumner Avenue but has Allan Street address. New buildings should therefore, be located with the main facade parallel to the roadway. In the case of corner lots, orientation of the principal elevation to the more major street is generally preferred.

Ancillary buildings should be located towards the rear of the lot. Garages in particular should not be a dominant element of the main elevation. They are best located to the rear of the building or set back from the principal facade.

4.5.6 Roofs on new buildings

Roofs are an important visual feature in the district. The district is characterized by a variety of roof forms: front gable, side gable, cross gable, hip and truncated hip. Mansard and gambrel roofs are not commonly found on historic buildings in the district; therefore, these roof forms should be avoided. Flat or shallow pitch roofs should also be avoided in new construction.

Wooden shingles were the predominant historic roofing material in the district. The majority of the buildings now have asphalt shingle roofs. Wood or asphalt shingles would be appropriate for new construction within the district. The use of concrete, clay tile, slate, metal or composite roofs are discouraged.

Roof vents, solar panels, satellite dishes and skylights are best located to the rear of new buildings.

4.5.7 Composition

Despite the range of age and architectural styles of the buildings in the district, the structures maintain continuity because of the similarity in composition of architectural elements.

The buildings are characterized by a tripartite division of the main elevation: foundation, wall and roof.

A shallow foundation is frequently differentiated from the wall above by construction in stone. The plinth, to carry water away from the wall, provides a horizontal break between the foundation and the wall.

Above the foundation, the main entrance is generally located on the street elevation, above grade and connected by steps and path to the sidewalk. The entrance on the ground floor is balanced, either symmetrically or asymmetrically, by window openings. The second floor, when present, is characterized by a flow of windows across the wall. Upper balconies and porches are not typical elements on the main elevation of houses in the district.

The wall is set apart from the roof by the strong horizontal line of the eaves. The roof mass is often punctuated with dormers and chimneys.

New residential buildings should maintain the tripartite division of foundation, wall and roof and respect the typical architectural elements of the main facades.

4.5.8 Windows and entrances on new buildings

As a result of the rich diversity of mid-to-late nineteenth and twentieth century architectural styles represented in the district, a range of window and entrance types are evident.

While window openings are generous, the overall proportion is more wall than windows. Generally window openings are vertical format and rectangular. There are also numerous examples of segmental and round headed openings. The windows are arranged in a variety of ways, either individually, pairs, groups or composing a bay.

Examples of pointed arch and Palladian window openings, multi-pane upper sash, diamond shaped window panes and leaded coloured glass windows, and bullseye windows are also found in the district. These window types tend to accent particular architectural style as decorative elements.

New window designs are encouraged that generally reflect vertical and rectangular dimensions. On facades that face the street, windows should maintain proportions of neighbouring properties. Large, full-length, multi-storey or picture windows are best avoided.

Entrances are usually an important element of the principal elevation, frequently highlighted with architectural detailing such as door surrounds and porches and recessed or projected from the wall face for emphasis. Doors are solid or partially glazed, single or half-leaf double doors. Avoid full size double doors and large amounts of glazing. Maintain the importance of the entrance way on the main elevation.

4.5.9 Exterior cladding: materials and colours

Brick veneer, stucco cladding and a combination of these two materials are the most prevalent wall materials in the district. Wooden cladding is also represented, often in combination with stucco. There is one stone structure covered in stucco in the district. Wall materials of new construction should reflect the predominant traditional materials and their respective colours: brick (red) and stucco (light). Wood (clapboard) is also considered to be an acceptable walling material. Wooden shingles may also be considered acceptable when used on upper wall surfaces with stucco or as decorative features. Use of concrete or other masonry blocks, metal, synthetic sidings should be avoided.

Windows and doors in the area are predominantly painted wood. Avoid synthetic or metal clad window and door units and untreated or natural wood.

Stone foundations are appropriate for new construction; however, carefully selected and laid textured concrete or masonry blocks can provide a more economical alternative. Avoid using materials that were primarily utilized for wall construction such as bricks and do not parge or stucco the foundation wall.

4.6 Public Works

Public works in the district such as road and utility improvements undertaken by a variety of authorities: the Town of Oakville, the Regional Municipality of Halton, utility companies, and so on have the potential to cause disruption and damage to identified heritage features of the neighbourhood. Every effort should be made in both day-to-day operations and long term planning to minimize adverse effects to the heritage conservation district and its components.