neighbourhood context

character

**Neighbourhood character:** the collection and pattern of various elements – streets, buildings, trees, infrastructure, open spaces and historic resources – which give a neighborhood its distinct identity.

A proposed dwelling should be compatible with and contribute to the visual continuity of the neighbourhood patterns:

- dominant architectural styles and forms;
- building elements and materials; and
- landscaping and other distinguishing features.

A proposed dwelling should fit with the character of the site and the immediate surroundings, while creating a visually seamless transition with the adjacent and nearby dwellings.

scale

**Scale:** the size of a building and its component parts in comparison with neighbouring dwellings.

A proposed dwelling is considered to be ‘in scale’ with the neighbourhood when:

- the size, form and proportions are compatible with the neighbours;
- the architectural elements are applied with similar proportions; and
- the size and form are at a human scale to create a pleasant and comfortable environment.

A proposed dwelling that is larger than houses in the immediate vicinity can be divided into smaller elements to be more compatible with the massing and details of the neighbourhood pattern.
neighbourhood context

front yards

Front yard: the area that extends across the full width of the lot between the front property line and front façade of the dwelling.

The front yard treatment should contribute to the continuous ‘green edge’ that is characteristic of the neighbourhood. This green edge typically:

• creates a hierarchy of spaces from public to semi-public to private;
• incorporates a rich variety of landscape elements – trees, shrubs, hedges, soft ground cover, planting beds, low decorative fencing, etc.;
• is defined by the regular setback of dwellings;
• is framed by outdoor living spaces that foster greater social interaction; and
• contains limited interruptions by significant building projections and expansive driveways.

rear yards

Rear yard: the area that extends across the full width of the lot between the rear property line and rear façade of the dwelling.

The rear yard area is defined by the established dwelling setback pattern of surrounding properties. Maintaining the pattern can result in creating quality private amenity area(s) and preserving privacy.

A proposed dwelling which projects beyond the established rear yard setback should avoid overlook and minimize undesirable impacts on rear yard privacy by:

• the careful placement of windows, doors, decks and balconies;
• avoiding second storey decks and balconies; and
• providing screening with dense landscaping and fencing.
architectural context

height and massing

**Height**: the measurement between established grade and peak of the roof of a building.

**Massing**: the three-dimensional form of a building.

A proposed dwelling should incorporate a gradual transition in height with adjacent buildings by stepping down a portion of the proposed dwelling and/or increasing the space between the dwellings.

The prominence of the proposed dwelling height can be minimized by:

- stepping back higher portions of the façade;
- integrating different building materials on the upper storey façade;
- incorporating upper storey living spaces within the roof structure; and
- avoiding two-storey architectural elements that are not human in scale.

A proposed dwelling, which is larger than existing dwellings, can be compatible and achieve visual harmony with its surroundings by:

- replicating the proportions of the dominant structures within the neighbourhood;
- ‘breaking down’ the large form into smaller architectural elements by providing variety in wall projections and recesses, roof forms, heights, porch or balcony additions, etc.; and
- incorporating single-storey building elements adjacent to lower height dwelling to achieve an appropriate transition.

In a neighbourhood dominated by bungalows, the second-storey living space are incorporated in the roof structure.

Elements – the porches – help to visually break down the two-storey structure.

De-emphasize the overall height and massing of the structure by using the attic space and breaking the roof forms into smaller components.

This house fits well into the neighbourhood as the massing is broken into smaller elements, including wall projections, a porch and balcony, and change in materials.

Single-storey element provides an appropriate transition between the adjacent bungalow to the two-storey structure.

Two-storey built form is placed where taller structures exist.

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architectural context

primary façade

**Primary façade:** the façade that faces the street and contains the main entrance.

The primary façade of a proposed dwelling should be well-articulated and oriented towards the street. It should incorporate:

- architectural elements that are human-scaled and compatible with surrounding dwellings;
- a highly-visible primary entrance, including a porch or verandah (if appropriate for the neighbourhood);
- interior living spaces along the front façade of the dwelling;
- an attached garage that is flush with or recessed behind the front façade; and
- an extension of the articulation on other facades that face side streets or public spaces.

elements and materials

**Architectural elements:** the components and details that together create the style of a building.

**Building materials:** materials used for constructing a building exterior.

A proposed dwelling should complement the well-established and dominant architectural styles within the neighbourhood by incorporating:

- architectural elements that are both functionally and stylistically authentic and at a human scale;
- ample windows on all facades to maximize light and views;
- door and window openings that are proportionate with the façade; and
- durable, high quality materials that are compatible with the materials found on dwellings within the neighbourhood.
architectural context

attached garages

**Attached garages:** an enclosed parking area integrated into the main dwelling structure.

Minimize the prominence of the garage and surface parking area on the property frontage by locating the garage in the rear or side yard.

If a garage is located on the front façade, it should be incorporated into the overall design and form to reduce the visual impact, and be designed:

- to complement the scale and style of the dwelling;
- flush with or recessed behind the front façade of the dwelling;
- with a porch or trellis that blends the garage with the façade;
- with neutral/subdued colours and glazed panels in the overhead door(s); and
- with two separate overhead doors for double car garages.

accessory buildings

**Accessory structures:** free-standing buildings not connected to the main dwelling – typically detached garages, carports, cabanas, gazebos, play structures and storage structures.

Proposed accessory structures should only be located in the rear or side yard to reduce the prominence on the property and the established streetscape.

The design and siting of these accessory structures should:

- be compatible with the quality, style, form, materials and colours of the primary dwelling; and
- incorporate façade articulation on all facades that are adjacent to or highly visible from a street or public space.
landscaping

**Landscaping**: an activity that modifies the visible features of an area of land, including simple to complex arrangements of living elements, natural elements, and human elements.

All established landscaping should be retained by designing around these features. Where the removal of healthy mature trees cannot be avoided, replacement trees are required.

The proposed landscaping should:
- incorporate as many healthy mature trees and significant features as possible;
- maintain existing grades, especially along shared property lines;
- reflect the dominant character and layout of landscaping in the neighbourhood;
- create pleasant micro-climate conditions (shade summer sun and screen winter winds); and
- incorporate rainwater harvesting for irrigation and other sustainable features.

driveways

**Hard surface**: an area paved or covered with a permanent, durable material to create a suitable surface for vehicles and pedestrians.

The front yard of a proposed dwelling should be dominated by soft landscaping and not by expansive driveways and paved areas.

Driveways should incorporate:
- minimal amounts of paved area and a minimal width,
- permeable paving materials for managing water run-off – unit pavers, slab pavers, grasscrete pavers, and wheel strips;
- a pedestrian walkway, with materials that differentiate it from the driveway surface; and
- be positioned directly in front of the garage door(s).