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**BRICK
BLOCK
STONE**

PROGRESSIVE POLICIES IN BUILT FORM AND URBAN DESIGN

Policy Excerpts from Ontario Municipalities
Raising the Bar on the Built Environment



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INTRODUCTION

How This Document Supports Progressive Planning Policies

Within the last 10 years, amendments to the Planning Act and the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) have placed new legislative powers in the hands of municipalities that enable planners to exercise more control over the exterior built form of communities.

Municipalities across Ontario have taken different approaches to implementing Urban Design Guidelines and enabling Official Plan language into their design policies. Province-wide, Ontario is a patchwork of design policies at various levels of strength and force. While certain steps must be taken to enable the powers outlined by the Act and by the PPS, these steps have not been taken uniformly, and while some municipalities share occasional common practices, determining a best practice is difficult because language varies widely from planning department to planning department.

This document, provided by Masonry Works, provides a number of case studies in Urban Design policies intended to serve as examples of progressive language used across Ontario to inform plan-

ning decisions around the Urban Design function.

This is an evolving document and we encourage municipalities to propose progressive design policies and language in the establishment of strong rules for exterior form and urban design. By establishing a set of progressive Urban Design and built form language, the steps taken to build more enduring, more climate-resilient communities from the exterior cladding on out can become best practices for the Province of Ontario.

The current form of this document is an updated draft, intended for discussion purposes only. We invite your comments and additions to this briefing. As well, if we have included your municipality, we ask that you review this draft document for accuracy and reply with any clarifications or corrections as required.

We look forward to your responses, and to developing this document further as we share a fruitful relationship with Ontario's municipal experts in the realm of Urban Design.



LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Planning Act's Framework

In 2006, changes to the Planning Act allowed municipalities greater control over the exterior design of structures provided a proper legislative framework exists at the municipal level to enable these powers. These powers were retained and affirmed following the recent review of the Act by the Ford government.

Recent policy moves by the Province have placed emphasis on speeding the approval process for new development. Based on feedback received by the Province, one of the best ways to hasten this process is to ensure that Urban Design policies are clear and unambiguous. Ambiguity is a major cause of delay in the approval process. However, the Planning Act empowers setting clear design expectations for developers to follow.

Section 41 of the Act contains the following:

(4) No person shall undertake any development in an area designated under subsection (2) unless the council of the municipality or, where a referral has been made under subsection (12), the Municipal Board has approved one or both, as the council may determine, of the following:

1. Plans showing the location of all buildings and structures to be erected and showing the location of all facilities and works to be provided in conjunction therewith and of all facilities and works required under clause (7) (a), including facilities designed to have regard for accessibility for persons with disabilities.

2. Drawings showing plan, elevation and cross-section views for each building to be erected, except a building to be used for residential purposes containing less than twenty-five dwelling units, which drawings are sufficient to display,

(a) the massing and conceptual design of the proposed building;

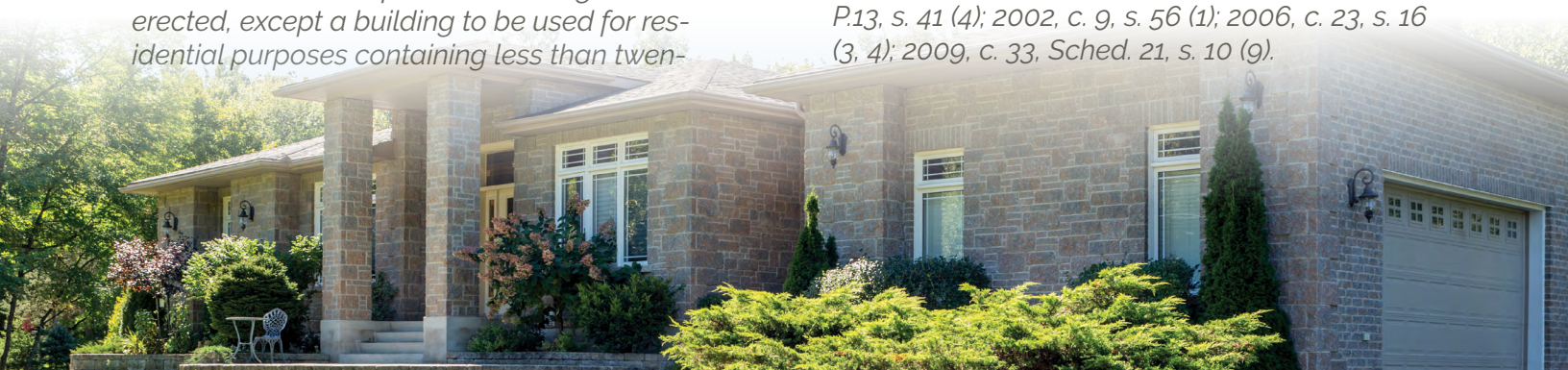
(b) the relationship of the proposed building to adjacent buildings, streets, and exterior areas to which members of the public have access;

(c) the provision of interior walkways, stairs, elevators and escalators to which members of the public have access from streets, open spaces and interior walkways in adjacent buildings;

(d) matters relating to exterior design, including without limitation the character, scale, appearance and design features of buildings, and their sustainable design, but only to the extent that it is a matter of exterior design, if an official plan and a by-law passed under subsection (2) that both contain provisions relating to such matters are in effect in the municipality;

(e) the sustainable design elements on any adjoining highway under a municipality's jurisdiction, including without limitation trees, shrubs, hedges, plantings or other ground cover, permeable paving materials, street furniture, curb ramps, waste and recycling containers and bicycle parking facilities, if an official plan and a by-law passed under subsection (2) that both contain provisions relating to such matters are in effect in the municipality; and

(f) facilities designed to have regard for accessibility for persons with disabilities. R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, s. 41 (4); 2002, c. 9, s. 56 (1); 2006, c. 23, s. 16 (3, 4); 2009, c. 33, Sched. 21, s. 10 (9).



Exclusions from site plan control

(4.1) The following matters relating to buildings described in paragraph 2 of subsection (4) are not subject to site plan control:

- 1. Interior design.*
- 2. The layout of interior areas, excluding interior walkways, stairs, elevators and escalators referred to in subparagraph 2 (c) of subsection (4).*
- 3. The manner of construction and standards for construction. 2006, c. 23, s. 16 (5).*

Drawings for residential buildings

(5) Despite the exception provided in paragraph 2 of subsection (4), the council of the municipality may require the drawings mentioned therein for a building to be used for residential purposes containing less than twenty-five dwelling units if the proposed building is to be located in an area specifically designated in the official plan mentioned in subsection (2) as an area wherein such drawings may be required. R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, s. 41 (5)

These changes, enacted in 2006, allow municipalities to approve or deny building applications based on a range of criteria, including approving or disallowing development based on "matters relating to exterior design." This includes the "character, scale, appearance and design features" of structures, "without limitation." The exterior cladding material is a design feature. Exterior cladding is a primary determinant of exterior design character and appearance and falls within the scope of the Act, giving the municipality a significant degree of new input over the exterior appearance of a structure.

As well, Subsection 5 grants municipalities the ability to require drawings for small residential dwellings, provided the Official Plan specifically designates an area "wherein such drawings may be required." Adding this enabling language to the Official Plan allows municipalities to set Urban Design Guidelines for built form for small residential.

Subsection 5 of the Act gives municipalities the authority to extend Site Plan Control to small residential dwellings provided a suitable by-law is in place.



UNAMBIGUOUS POLICY LANGUAGE

Speeding Up Development Approvals Through Specificity

In 2019, the Ford Government undertook a review of the Planning Act with an eye to speeding up development approvals, particularly focusing on affordable housing. This review ultimately set new timelines for approval processes, while retaining the existing power of municipalities to implement strong Design Guidelines through processes such as Site Plan and Architectural Control.

One of the issues emerging from this review was the subject of what causes delays in the approval process. According to a 2013 Bousfields-Altus study, the bulk of these delays (58.8%) are attributable to bureaucratic issues: Time lost circulating an application between city departments, slow response times and disagreements between different departments and agencies.

A key source of slowdown the report identified concerning design issues was that of ambiguity. Bousfields-Altus recommended the following:

In order to reduce subjectivity and provide additional clarity in the process, it is our opinion that official plan policies relating to exterior design should be directed towards achieving clearly expressed and specific design objectives as opposed to providing a general policy permission to review exterior design without any stated parameters or objectives. This would provide a clearer understanding for applicants of the expectations of the exterior design review process as well as providing additional predictability and objectivity in the process.

Consider the following two examples of design policies:

EXAMPLE A:

(The Town will) encourage, by all means possible, the aesthetic and physical improvement of the Downtown.

EXAMPLE B:

All buildings should be finished with prominently natural and durable materials such as stone and brick. Generally, replica materials such as pre-cast concrete panels made to look like stone or brick are not recommended within the first 3 storeys of a building within signature areas, i.e. along Gordon Street and within the older built-up area.

Example A - a policy from the Official Plan of a town in Southwestern Ontario - is open to interpretation and debate. What constitutes improved aesthetics? What must a developer do to satisfy this policy? Is there a bar that the Town expects to be met?

Example B - a policy from Guelph's guidelines for mid-rise and townhouse guidelines - is not open to interpretation. The primary building materials are brick and stone. Pre-cast replicas are discouraged. Developers know what they must do to meet the City's objectives.

Masonry Works recommends clear, specific and unambiguous design policies to help speed the approval process along.



DESIGN AND THE PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT

How Good Design Aligns With Provincial Priorities

While the Provincial Policy Statement has received a number of updates, many of its principles have remained consistent. The PPS speaks not only to big-picture land-use planning issues, but to the importance of design as a lever to achieve sustainability, economic prosperity and climate resiliency.

According to the PPS, "Appropriate development standards should be promoted which facilitate intensification, redevelopment and compact form, while avoiding or mitigating risks to public health and safety." Masonry can contribute strongly to these objectives.

The PPS includes the following guidance:

1.7.1. Long-term economic prosperity should be supported by:

d. maintaining and, where possible, enhancing the vitality and viability of downtowns and mainstreets;

e. encouraging a sense of place, by promoting well-designed built form and cultural planning, and by conserving features that help define character,

j. promoting energy conservation and providing opportunities for increased energy supply;

k. minimizing negative impacts from a changing climate and considering the ecological benefits provided by nature

...

1.8.1. Planning authorities shall support energy conservation and efficiency, improved air quality, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and preparing for the impacts of a changing climate through land use and development patterns which:

f. promote design and orientation which maximizes energy efficiency and conservation, and considers the mitigating effects of vegetation and green infrastructure

Durable, well-designed exterior cladding materials, such as masonry, maintains a sense of place over the long term and positively contributes to a community's built form in all types of residential and commercial development. Much of Ontario's built heritage consists of masonry buildings, demonstrating its exceptional longevity and contribution to a community's enduring character.

The longevity of masonry buildings, too, allows for future consideration for adaptive re-use, adding a renewed dimension to a community's built form, as seen in many Ontario heritage buildings today.

The durability of masonry products ensures they can withstand the extreme wind, precipitation, cold and heat events associated with climate change.



RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES

Masonry Works's Positions for High-Quality Built Form

Our recommended policies for Urban Design are as follows:

The entire municipality shall be subject to site plan control with the exception of agricultural development.

Building materials should be chosen for their functional and aesthetic quality, sustainability, ease of maintenance, long-term durability, and match with the cultural heritage of the overall community.

Street-facing facades should be of the highest design quality. Materials used for the front facade should be carried around the building where any facades are exposed to the neighbouring/public view at the side or rear.

Facing materials consisting of high quality, natural materials, particularly masonry, should be used wherever possible. Side and rear facades should have a design and materials standard equal to the front facade treatment.

Use the same detail and design consideration on all sides of the building. Materials should turn corners to extend beyond the facade.

Site designs that conserve energy will be encouraged. Energy conservation will be addressed at the development application stage and during the preparation of building and site designs. Buildings

should be designed, oriented, constructed and landscaped to minimize interior heat loss and to capture and retain solar heat energy in the winter and to minimize solar heat penetration in the summer. The use of natural materials, particularly masonry, in the construction of buildings is strongly encouraged both as structural elements due to their thermal mass properties and as exterior facing for buildings due to their environmental sustainability.

Use brick and stone as the primary cladding materials. Other materials, such as stucco, wood, metal, decorative concrete or glass may be considered based on design merit and when used in combination with the primary materials.

Implementation Options:

Specify the use of Site Plan Control for all residential dwellings under 25 units. (Ideal for infill development)

Require that all new Plans of Subdivision include a Control Architect and supplemental Architectural Control Guidelines, including brick and stone masonry as primary building materials. (Ideal for subdivisions)

Implement Urban Design Guidelines for new development within all new Community Improvement Plans. (Ideal for downtown neighbourhoods and areas of special interest)



GUELPH 2018

A Model for Urban Design Standards

POLICIES IN BRIEF:

- Policies express a set of clear design expectations for developers and staff
- Clear statements of what constitutes appropriate building materials for mid-rise and townhouse development in greenfields
- Clear guidance on the treatment of side and rear facades, and an expectation of architectural treatment similar to the front facade
- Strong commitment to a high quality of architectural design

In 2018, Guelph developed a new series of Urban Design Guidelines for Midrise and Townhouse buildings.

Part of the philosophy informing Guelph's mid-rise standards is an interest in setting "clear design expectations." The guidelines are aimed at setting clear, easy-to-understand rules for city staff, developers and the general public. This dovetails with input received by the Provincial Government through 2019, in which developers noted that ambiguity is a major slowdown in the development process.

Guelph considers it essential for an Urban Design Brief to be submitted, demonstrating compliance with their built form standards. These standards address both infill and greenfield development. Developers must justify their deviations from the City's built form standards, and those deviations may be accepted or rejected at the discretion of City staff.

Beyond providing guidance for matters such as siting, massing, landscaping and parking, the design manual goes into detail about what the City expects for built form. In particular, it says the following for mid-rise design policy:

1. A range of materials for façade design are encouraged to promote visual diversity in texture and colour, reflecting varied built form materials used within Guelph, including brick and stone.

...

4. All buildings should be finished with promi-

nently natural and durable materials such as stone and brick. Generally, replica materials such as pre-cast concrete panels made to look like stone or brick are not recommended within the first 3 storeys of a building within signature areas, i.e. along Gordon Street and within the older built-up area.

5. Primary building elevations (those that interact with a main street frontage) should feature a high-quality of design, and may include canopy structures and arcades.

6. Secondary building elevations (those that do not face a public street) should complement the primary building façade through a similar level of design.

This is an example of what Masonry Works considers a best practice. The language lays out for developers that there are primary building materials expected on all faces of the structure, without dictating architectural style or specific massing. In this way, a balance is struck between clarity and creativity: The designer can still exercise creative vision, provided that vision is congruent with the Municipality's broader view on the character of the neighbourhood and of high-quality built form.

Guelph carries this language over into their treatment of design standards for townhouses. For this type of dwelling, the City makes a point of noting not only which materials are preferred, but which are discouraged.

1. A range of high-quality materials for façade design are encouraged to promote visual diversity in texture and colour, reflecting varied built form materials used within Guelph, including brick and stone. The use of large areas of vinyl and EIFS are strongly discouraged.

By singling out EIFS and vinyl siding and discouraging their use, Guelph identifies materials which it deems to be unsuitable for building frontage. These materials age and deteriorate quickly and require maintenance more quickly than other building materials.

The plan goes on to encourage architectural variation within development blocks "to reduce sameness in design." Again, this illustrates how to walk the line between architectural creativity and a material vision for the character of a community. The guidelines effectively illustrate how Guelph sees the built character while still leaving developers and homebuilders a free hand to create unique touches through architectural styles, articulation and other issues.

Here, as with mid-rise dwellings, Guelph continues its focus on ensuring equal treatment for all facades of a given structure.

5. Primary building elevations (those that contain the principal building entrance) should feature a high level of façade articulation.

6. Secondary building elevations (those that do not feature the principal building entrance) should complement the primary building façade through a similar level of design.

7. Townhouses located on corner sites should be designed to have 2 primary facades with an equal level of articulation on each street oriented façade.

The plan document provides a few other considerations for Guelph. They include provision for requiring Urban Design Briefs which show a contextual plan, illustrating how a proposed development fits into a given neighbourhood.

The manual also recommends Guelph consider implementing city-wide Urban Design Awards, recognizing successful mid-rise and townhouse development within the community.

Overall, these guidelines are an example of what municipalities can do within the bounds of the Planning Act, and they are supported by policies from the Official Plan.

Guelph fully cites Section 41 of the Planning Act in the Site Plan Control section of its Official Plan, as well as explicitly citing their intention to use it to ensure that Urban Design Guidelines are applied. The plan empowers council to establish aesthetic design guidelines and explicitly gives them the option to ask for drawings for low-density residential dwellings. Guelph also requires Plans of Subdivision to be consistent with the design standards and notes that subdivision agreements will be used to maintain "acceptable standards of development."

Strong Urban Design Guidelines along these lines are functional when paired with Official Plan language empowering their use, through Section 41 of the Act. Guelph succeeds on both of those fronts. It is, in effect, a model for how to do built form design standards well.

BURLINGTON 2019

Strong Focus on Mid-Rise Development

POLICIES IN BRIEF:

- Focus on built form for higher densities
- Clear articulation of both preferred building materials and materials discouraged due to their poor maintenance qualities
- Preference for a mix of glazing and higher-mass materials to clad the towers of mid-rises and tall buildings
- Preference for materials that age well

Burlington approved a series of guidelines for Mid-Rise Buildings in 2019. These guidelines continue Burlington's strong approach to Urban Design, laying out standards for mid-rise development in the City.

Burlington's new guidelines apply city-wide, wherever mid-rise building forms are permitted by the Official Plan. The City states that the guidelines are intended to provide guidance to developers and architects in the design of such buildings, noting that City staff will use them as a tool for reviewing and evaluating development applications. They will also be used for City-initiated projects.

Aside from covering massing and transitions, these guidelines speak to the expected materiality of mid-rise buildings. They divide such structures up and address materiality separately for the podium and for the tower section of the building.

1) The lower building should be constructed with the highest quality of architectural design and materials.

...

4) Materials should reflect their intended use and complement the established physical character of the streetscape where appropriate. Do not use materials that mimic other materials (e.g. stucco made to look like stone) or which deteriorate quickly. The use of EIFS and stucco is strongly discouraged.

5) The use of 'heavy' materials such as brick, stone, and metal should be used within the lower building to anchor the building. Other natural and sustainable materials such as wood is strongly encouraged.

6) Façade design should use architectural elements as well as materials to define unique components within the building and to create vertical and horizontal articulation.

7) In general, use quality materials that are long lasting, can be easily maintained, and wear well with age. Whenever possible, source local and/or recycled materials with a low embodied energy.

This policy language is abundant with strong, progressive language.

Not only does Burlington tell developers explicitly what language should be used for the lower levels of a mid-rise structure, they are also very clear about what materials should not be used - namely, materials which deteriorate quickly. This reflects the experiences of some municipalities with lower qualities of materials, which, when not properly maintained, can degrade both property values and the character of a given neighbourhood or district.

Burlington's guidelines consider the tower separately from the podium of the building, recognizing the need for different building materials and styles there. The City lays out the following policies:

1) The upper building should be constructed with the highest quality of architectural design and materials and complement the lower building façades.

2) In general, lighter materials such as glass are encouraged in the design of the upper storeys to minimize perceived mass. Heavier materials such as metal, brick, or stone may be used to define unique components within the building elevations and to create vertical and horizontal articulation (Fig 3.3).

Not only do these policies visually distinguish the podium from the tower, they strike a balance between the use of glazing and the use of heavier materials such as masonry to characterize the upper half of the structure.

This approach is congruent with good practices not only in terms of character and form, but energy management. It has been shown that the use of extensive glazing in taller buildings can significantly increase energy consumption. A study of high-rise towers found that energy savings of 15% can be achieved by changing the window-to-wall configuration to include a combination of masonry and glazing. These savings are approximately 10% for office towers. This principle can be easily carried over to mid-rise structures, and Burlington's guidelines demonstrate a model example of how this can be achieved.

Burlington does not only use these policies for mid-rise buildings. They recur in the City's guidelines for tall buildings, as well.

WHITBY 2016-17

Above and Beyond the Planning Act

POLICIES IN BRIEF:

- West Whitby Secondary Plan: Strong, decisive language regarding building materials carried around the structure for low-rise and mid-rise buildings
- New OP empowers the Municipality to force developers to exceed the Planning Act
- Developers may be required to fund their own block plans and design studies
- Commitment to developing a city-wide Urban Design Manual

Whitby approved a new Official Plan in late 2016 and early 2017.

Broadly, Whitby is an advanced user of tools such as Architectural Control. The Municipality has also committed in the new Plan to developing a city-wide Urban Design Manual. However, existing planning tools in place within Whitby's body of planning policy are strong and noteworthy, particularly the use of Secondary Plans to delineate appropriate building materials - and their appropriate use - for certain types of dwellings.

One of the strengths of Whitby's planning policies is in the Secondary Planning area. In particular, the West Whitby Secondary Plan demonstrates strong language regarding the standard expected for exterior building materials.

The predominant wall cladding material throughout West Whitby will be masonry (brick and stone). Other materials may be permitted, in consultation with the Control Architect and the Town, based upon suitability, quality and durability.

The use of vinyl siding as a main cladding material is generally discouraged within the community due to its tendency to require a higher degree of homeowner maintenance.

The use of accent materials such as stone, stucco, precast, cement-fibre siding, vinyl siding, prefinished shakes/shingles or prefinished panelling is encouraged where consistent with

the architectural style of the dwelling. Its use should be complementary to the primary cladding materials.

Where stucco is proposed as a main wall material it shall be used in conjunction with a masonry base.

Main wall cladding material should be consistent on all elevations of the dwelling; no false fronting is permitted (i.e. brick on front elevation with siding on rear elevations). Exceptions to this may be permitted where an upgraded stone façade, stucco façade or stone plinth is incorporated into the design and the side and rear walls have brick. These features should return along the side walls a minimum of 1200mm from the front of the dwelling or to a logical stopping point such as an opening, downspout or change in plane.

These guidelines also note that, while building materials should be carried around to all elevations of the dwelling unit, they may be "simplified" on faces of the building not exposed to public view.

For mid-rises and high-rises, the guidelines also provide some guidance as to the use of appropriate building materials, noting that "wall cladding materials may include brick, stone, glass, curtain wall or metal panels" and encouraging the use of "other accent materials" so long as they suit the primary building material. For these buildings, the main wall cladding material should be carried around the building.

Also notable is this requirement:

Development to be resilient to climate change and weather related events;

A step new to Whitby's Draft OP is the requirement for developers to undertake Area-Specific or Corridor Studies, which may speak to matters of urban design.

10.1.5.1. The Municipality may prepare, or require the preparation of, at the expense of the proponent, area specific studies or corridor studies for the purposes of providing land use or urban design plans and policies to guide new development and redevelopment in a coordinated and comprehensive manner.

...

10.1.5.2. Area specific studies or corridor studies may be implemented through amendments to the Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law, subdivision approval or site plan approval processes, or the adoption of urban design guidelines and/or concepts/plans.

This is a powerful piece of policy which gives Whitby the power to demand that the developer conduct certain studies before development of an area or corridor goes forward, including those related to Urban Design Guidelines. This can be used to implement Architectural Control.

Whitby also gives itself powerful tools to demand that developers exceed the standards of the Planning Act before approval is ever granted for a project.

10.1.14.2. The Municipality requires that applicants for Official Plan Amendments, Zoning By-law Amendments, Plans of Subdivision, Plans of Condominium, and Site Plans, provide certain information or material that the Municipality considers it may need, or as required by the Region of Durham or other relevant agencies, in addition to the Planning Act Requirements.

10.1.14.3. Information or material that may be required, or determined by the Municipality in consultation with other government agencies and following consultation with the applicant in order to deem a development application complete may include, but is not limited to, the following:

...

Design Considerations: Site Plan; Building Elevations; Landscape Plans/Analysis; Open Space and Parks Plan; Urban Design Study; Urban Design Plan; Comprehensive Block Plan; Sun/Shadow Study; Lighting Plan; Wind Study; Refuse/Recyclable Storage and Pick-up Plan; View/Vista Study, Bird Mitigation Study.

...

10.1.14.5 All required reports and technical studies shall be prepared by qualified professional consultants retained by and at the expense of the proponent and in accordance with any applicable Terms of Reference or specifications by the Municipality, Durham Region or other public agency. The Municipality will review all reports and studies and may also require a peer review by an appropriate public agency or by a qualified professional consultant retained by the Municipality at the proponent's expense.

These guidelines put the onus on the developer to ensure a high standard of Urban Design even before the development starts. With an Urban Design Manual in place across the municipality, Whitby will have a powerful toolbox at its disposal to ensure developers not only meet a minimum standard, but build on that standard with specific studies like Comprehensive Block Plans and Urban Design Plans before a brick is ever laid.

CORNWALL 2016

Bold Statements of Principle

POLICIES IN BRIEF:

- Multiple references to building materials carried around the building included within the Official Plan
- Strong statements of principles for Urban Design in new section on design policy, many of them establishing a strong preference for specific building materials
- Commitment to the use of Site Plan Control for design matters concerning residential dwellings
- Statement of principle emphasizing energy-efficient building materials not only for exterior cladding, but as structural elements capable of temperature regulation – sustainability and other factors emphasized

Cornwall is currently – as of Summer 2016 – in the process of updating its Official Plan. A draft Official Plan was issued in January 2016, containing strengthened language around Urban Design and exterior form which is broadly in line with best practices and represents some of the most robust language in Official Plans seen in Ontario.

Many municipalities choose to sublet out discussion of appropriate exterior cladding materials into standalone Urban Design Guidelines. While this is good practice and widely followed in Ontario, Cornwall takes a step further by establishing strong statements of principle emphasizing both appropriate building materials and the best means to deploy them, ensconcing this language within the Official Plan document itself. This approach leaves no doubt as to the intentions of City planners and ensures that the City will have greater policy leverage in enforcing Urban Design standards.

One of the new additions in Cornwall's Draft OP is a new Section 9, focused on Urban Design. Among their statements of principles is the principal wish to "Establish Built Form and Architecture that is compatible with existing conditions." As section 9.2.3 of the plan, it reads as follows:

It becomes important for a city like Cornwall, with a rich history and culture, to ensure that any development, redevelopment and intensification are responsive to the existing conditions.

New and renewed/repurposed built form should be context sensitive to ensure that the City of Cornwall retains its unique sense of place. For example, building materials should be chosen for their functional and aesthetic quality, sustainability, ease of maintenance, long-term durability, and match with the cultural heritage of the overall community. Such is the case with the use of brick, stone and engineered stone as preferred types of cladding materials. Other materials, such as stucco, wood, metal, decorative concrete or glass for example may be considered based on design merit and possibly when used in combination with such preferred materials.

Establishing appropriate built form and architecture can be achieved in many ways. Building heights, for example, should have a smooth transition to adjacent existing built form, in turn protecting the existing stable neighbourhood. Development, redevelopment and intensification through the provision of a mix of densities, and encouraging higher density close to major street intersections, can be achieved through moderately scaled building varying in height. This built form scale responds well to the existing built fabric as well as local market demands. It also promotes liveability through pedestrian scaled development. In addition, an effective design practice is to use the same or compatible detail and design consideration on all sides of the building. Materials should turn corners to extend

beyond the façade. Avoid exposed edges that may cause a jarring material change and artificial appearance.

This statement of principles is far more granular than many municipalities tend towards in their Official Plan language, but it also delineates a clear, unambiguous vision for what constitutes ideal built form in the City of Cornwall. It clearly presents developers with a vision of what the City is looking for in terms of context. Often, clauses in Official Plans calling for buildings to be "compatible with adjacent development" do not give a sense of what compatibility actually looks like, leaving it open to interpretation, and consequently to less appealing forms of development. The language demonstrated here removes ambiguity by outlining which building materials are preferred and how they should be used.

Fifth among Cornwall's priorities is to Create Healthy Communities and Sustainability through Urban Design. Their statement of principle here includes the following paragraph:

Technology will also play an important role in promoting and evolving sustainable design practices. All efforts should be made to study and update measures for sustainable urban design practices within the Official Plan. For example, site designs that conserve energy will be encouraged. Energy conservation will be analyzed at the development application stage and during the preparation of building and site designs. Buildings should preferably be designed, oriented, constructed and landscaped to minimize interior heat loss and to capture and retain solar heat energy in the winter and to minimize solar heat penetration in the summer. The use of natural materials, particularly masonry, in the construction of buildings is strongly encouraged both as structural elements due to their thermal mass properties and as exterior facing for buildings due to their environmental sustainability.

Section 9.5 of the plan contains more detailed guidance for built form for commercial properties. Among the policies noted there is this bullet:

xi) Building massing and detailing at retail unit entrances should be designed to emphasize the entry. This can include but is not limited to increased height, use of architectural projections, change in the roofline, or material changes to increase transparency. Street facing facades should have the highest design quality. Materials used for the front façade should be carried around the building where any facades are exposed to the neighbouring/public view at the side or rear.

The language provides policy weight to the municipality's stated interest of ensuring that high-quality building materials are carried around to all sides of the structure. For residential dwellings, meanwhile, "use of tools such as Site Plan Control is encouraged" in order to maintain a diversity of housing types and a strong visual perspective while sustaining a vibrant city.

The establishment of this language directly within the draft Official Plan allows Cornwall to use future Urban Design Guidelines as a very strong guideline, backed by robust Official Plan principles which strongly delineate what constitutes the sort of built form Council and the City's planning department consider suitable.

CLARINGTON 2016

Sustainability and Strong Design

POLICIES IN BRIEF:

- New emphasis on sustainability through a set of Green Development Guidelines
- General Architectural Design Guidelines outlining expectations for various types of development and required studies
- Language considering noise impacts, sustainability and appropriate use of building materials
- Requirement for developers to adhere to Urban Design Guidelines that are in place

In 2016, Clarington passed new changes to its Official Plan which make some major changes to the existing document.

While Clarington was already making use of General Architectural Design Guidelines, new to the amended OP is a focus on sustainability. One of the major additions is a large new section on Green Development, calling on developers to incorporate green technologies and sustainable design features intended to address the impacts of climate change. Developments must now be applied for along with a Sustainability Report demonstrating how the project meets the sustainability guidelines.

Clarington will seek to address climate change and become a more sustainable community that minimizes the consumption of energy, water, and other resources and reduces the impacts on the natural environment. To this end, the Municipality will:

b) promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the adaptation of buildings and infrastructure to be more resilient to the potential adverse environmental impacts of climate change;

...

5.5.3 – The Municipality will implement a Green Development Program. The Green Development Program will:

b) address sustainable development practices, including the sustainable design and climate change mitigation and adaptation measures outlined in this Plan; and

c) be used to assist in evaluating development applications.

5.5.4 – Development proposals shall incorporate sustainable design practices and standards such as green infrastructure and green building design features to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change.

5.5.5 – To encourage development that exceeds the minimum standards outlined in the Green Development Program, the Municipality in collaboration with utilities and other key agencies, will explore incentive programs designed to reward sustainable design and development. This may include giving priority to processing development applications which exceeds the minimum standards.

Clarington supports these guidelines by developing new language with respect to built form. The expectations of the Municipality when it comes to sustainable form and a high built standard increased with this Plan, and the new language gives the Municipality more stated policy strength when the time comes to enforce these documents, especially for new developments.

New development and redevelopment in established neighbourhoods will be designed to:

b) have an appropriate built form and design as determined through a comprehensive Secondary Planning processes having regard for consistency with overall community character. ...

c) demonstrate compliance with the municipality's General Architectural Design Guidelines or any neighbourhood specific Architectural Design Guidelines;

e) consider noise impacts from various noise sources by using effective methods of sound attenuation;

g) achieve sustainable, attractive buildings, landscaping and streetscapes;

i) utilize appropriate exterior materials to achieve a cohesive urban design and a consistent sense of place.

These policies are reflected somewhat in new requirements added to development proposed within an existing neighbourhood:

c) Adhere to all relevant Urban Design Guidelines and expectations for high-quality exterior architectural design and sustainable building materials.

Clarington also improved its preamble by beefing up its statement regarding the priority given to Urban Design. In particular, the Municipality added references to architectural design as well as urban design, emphasizing the importance of excellence in built form. Emphasizing this fact in the preamble puts it effectively "front and centre" and establishes Clarington's intentions towards high-quality architecture right away.

The Municipality of Clarington is committed to excellence in the design of public spaces and in the design of public and private buildings, and in achieving greater sustainability through

community, site and building design practices. Urban and architectural design provides the context for the way in which people interact with the built environment – streets, blocks, buildings, landscaping, and open spaces. Good, sustainable urban and architectural design creates a comfortable environment for residents and establishes a positive image for our community. Sustainable design contributes to community and environmental health, a high quality of life, and climate change mitigation and preparedness.

Clarington maintains a document for General Architectural Design Guidelines. This document was last updated in 2011. Under these rules, infill sites and small groups of housing will require an Urban Design Brief, while full-on subdivisions need a Community Design Plan outlining a cohesive vision for built form in the area. That includes architectural themes and variations on the stock guidelines.

Clarington's guidelines feature high-detail notes on how to use masonry to support front steps and frame covered main entries. They also mention the "false facade" effect - namely, the use of lower-quality building materials on the sides and rear of a home, leaving the front facade to act almost as a Hollywood set piece - and "encourage" the use of consistent main wall cladding on all sides of a building to avoid this.

Clarington's guidelines ask builders to go into detail when they use masonry, encouraging styles like quoining, soldier coursing, pilasters, et cetera. The document goes into very fine detail on this topic, including how far masonry detailing must protrude from the wall base.

NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE 2016-17

Maintaining Community Look and Feel

POLICIES IN BRIEF:

- Specific Design Guidelines addressing the built character of various communities within NOTL
- OP language lays out expectations that design standards will be complied with
- Commitment to develop Community Design Guidelines for each urban area within the community as well as some countryside uses
- Intent to use Site Plan Control to implement the Community Design Guidelines
- Architectural Review as part of the Site Plan Control process, including addressing the built form

Niagara-on-the-Lake has recently wrapped up its Official Plan Review, with draft Plans currently out for review and consultation. The review is currently at the third draft phase.

As a municipality with a heavy heritage feel and a long, rich history, NOTL uses its planning policies robustly to ensure that the look and feel is maintained in each of its various hamlets and villages. The Town has addressed this by developing Community Design Guidelines for each community within Niagara-on-the-Lake. These guidelines speak not only to siting and zoning matters as well as uses and density, but they also address built form. These Guidelines tend to use language similar to those the Town uses for the village of St. Davids:

Part of the character of St. Davids' architecture is due to the natural local building materials used in construction as shown on this page: red brick, uncut stone, painted and natural wood siding. These high-quality materials should be used in new construction, both commercial and residential, to knit the new communities to the existing village and give St. Davids a unified character. The tradition of building with a wide variety of natural materials should be continued so that new development is linked to the existing Village without necessarily replicating styles and design.

Some Secondary Plans are also in place, including a long one for the village of Queenston which calls for building materials "similar to those in the village,

including clapboard siding, stone and clay brick." Exterior stucco as the main cladding is not encouraged on commercial structures. In residential areas, paved stone or old brick walkways are also encouraged.

In tune with these strong standards for community areas, NOTL's draft OP also toughened up the standards the Town employs for Site Plan Control, and clarified how it will be used.

The intent of Site Plan Approval is to improve the efficiency of land use and servicing, to protect adjacent land use and to encourage a more attractive form of development by:

- a) Improving the treatment of site plan details to maintain a consistent municipal standard in the proposed Site Plan Control Area;*
- b) Implementing community design guidelines and sustainable design features in both the public and private realm;*

Bullet B is new to the draft OP, as is the word "intent," which replaced "overall objective." These two changes strengthen the applicability of Site Plan Control in matters of design. A new clause was also added to the draft:

As part of the Site Plan Approval process, the Town will require an architectural review, which will include a review of the exterior design, character, scale, colour, building materials and design features of buildings.

This measure significantly broadens the powers NOTL has when it comes to approving projects through Site Plan Control, giving Town planners a great deal of input into the matters of exterior design identified in Section 41 of the Planning Act.

Through Site Plan Control, NOTL can implement the Community Design Guidelines, which the Town considers to be documents “used to focus attention on the quality, layout and design of built forms, landscapes and the public realm, and can be at a broad, community-wide scale, or at a very local, street-level scale.” Language within the OP emphasizes the valuable role played by such Guidelines in creating complete communities and contributing to a strong quality of life.

The draft OP adds language committing to using these tools widely:

6.1.1.5 - The Town will develop Community Design Guidelines for all or parts of each urban area, and for specific uses within the Protected Countryside. These guidelines may be implemented through the preparation and approval of Community Plans, Community Improvement Plans, Heritage District Plans, or through a Development Permit System. Community Design Guidelines may be adopted by the Town as free standing initiatives following a public review and may be incorporated into site plan approval or development approval standards.

6.1.1.6 - Development applications will comply with the provisions of any applicable Community Design Guidelines adopted by the Town.

Through these Guidelines, and the fulsome use of Site Plan Control and Architectural Review to enforce them, NOTL can cover every neighbourhood within the urban boundary with high design standards, maintaining the look and feel and sense of place upon which the community prides itself.

RUSSELL 2017-18

Design Policy, Directly in the OP

POLICIES IN BRIEF:

- West Whitby Secondary Plan: Strong, decisive language regarding building materials carried around the structure for low-rise and mid-rise buildings
- New OP empowers the Municipality to force developers to exceed the Planning Act
- Developers may be required to fund their own block plans and design studies
- Commitment to developing a city-wide Urban Design Manual

In many areas of Ontario, communities are closer in size and resource availability to the Township of Russell. The Township passed a new Official Plan in 2017-18, implementing new design policies within the OP itself.

The Official Plan provides in many places for the Township's focus on attractive built form. The Plan makes numerous references to exterior design and notes that promotion of a high quality of architectural design is a priority for them. This mirrors the approach taken in Cornwall, utilizing the OP as a vehicle for design and built form policy.

Russell makes clear early in their Official Plan document that developers will be expected to adhere to the Guidelines laid out for built form. The word "shall" is used here, making expectations clear and explicit.

The urban design principles outlined below are intended to assist those involved in development with an understanding of the important design elements within the Township of Russell. The principles are high-level in scope and recognize that development proposals should be given the flexibility to address design matters in different ways, allowing for creativity and dialogue, particularly since different design responses may be appropriate depending on the context of each area. In addition, the Township shall develop Urban Design Guidelines addressing specific settlement areas and uses. Development proponents shall implement the policies of this section as well as the detailed Urban Design policies

delineating the Township's policies for these specific areas and uses, where they apply.

The Plan goes on to lay out a series of design guidelines for the village areas which make up the Township. These include guidelines concerning both siting and streetscaping. However, they also include guidelines addressing materiality.

9. Primary exterior building materials used should be durable, natural materials that have low maintenance requirements and are climate resistant, particularly brick, stone, and engineered stone, with other materials used based on architectural merit and in combination with the preferred materials.

...

11. The character, materials, and architectural treatment of development within the Village of Russell shall be compatible with the unique heritage character of the Village. Innovative architectural treatments shall be considered based on design merit and compatibility with the Urban Design objectives of this plan and any applicable Urban Design Guidelines.

12. Development within the Village of Embrun shall contribute to the particular enhancement of the Village's built community character and convey a sense of permanence and resilience through high quality architectural design and building materials.

Russell provides guidance for its commercial park area's architectural design, as well:

36. Primary exterior building materials used should be durable, natural materials that have low maintenance requirements and are climate resistant, particularly brick, stone, and engineered stone, with other materials used based on architectural merit and in combination with the preferred materials.

c) Any sustainable design features to be incorporated, such as green or white roofs, permeable surfaces, etc.

Extending design considerations to commercial properties is an important step for municipalities to take. While the Planning Act defaults to certain exclusions for residential areas under Site Plan Control, the process by default incorporates commercial, industrial and institutional properties. It is, accordingly, very easy for municipalities to set standards for commercial properties, and doing so should be a standard. By implementing this policy language, Russell takes advantage of the Planning Act's powers over character.

Russell's OP also gives the Township the power to ask for a Design Brief showing how a proposed development conforms to the Urban Design Guidelines.

While Russell contains most of its Site Plan Control policies in a bylaw external to the OP, it outlines a few expectations around design:

4. Drawings provided to the Municipality in support of applications submitted for site plan approval under s.41 of the Planning Act are required to show exterior architectural details and design features related to the character, scale, appearance and design features of buildings, and their sustainable design. These may include:

a) Finish, texture, materials, patterns and colours of all building exteriors, including roofs and functional elements such as canopies and stairs;

b) Location, size, colour, and type of all building exterior signage and lighting; and