

Toronto Tall Building Design Guidelines (May 2013)

“GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Tall Building Design Guidelines do not determine where tall buildings are permitted. Rather, the Guidelines assist with the implementation of Official Plan policy to help ensure that tall buildings, where they are permitted, “fit within their context and minimize their local impacts.”

The Guidelines primarily illustrate how the public realm and built form policy objectives of the Official Plan can be achieved within a tall building development and within the area surrounding a tall building site. The Guidelines provide specific and often measurable directions related to the following guiding principles:

- promote architectural and urban design excellence, sustainability, innovation, longevity, and creative expression with visionary design, high-quality materials, and leading-edge construction methods;
- promote harmonious fit and compatibility with the existing and planned context, emphasizing relationships to lower-scale buildings, parks and open space;
- conserve and integrate adjacent and on-site heritage properties so that new tall buildings are sympathetic to, and compatible with, the heritage property;
- consider relationships to other tall buildings, including the cumulative effect of multiple towers on sunlight, comfort, and quality in the public realm;
- create a safe, comfortable, accessible, vibrant, and attractive public realm and pedestrian environment;
- minimize shadowing and wind impacts, and protect sunlight and sky view, for streets, parks, public and private open space, and neighbouring properties;
- respond appropriately to prominent sites, important views from the public realm, and the shape of the skyline to reinforce the structure and image of the city; and
- ensure high-quality living and working conditions, including access to public and private open space, interior daylighting, natural ventilation, and privacy for building occupants.

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“HERITAGE CONSERVATION

The City of Toronto values its heritage properties and requires that they be protected and that new development conserve the integrity of their cultural heritage value, attributes, and character, consistent with accepted principles of good heritage conservation (see Appendix A: Heritage Conservation Principles). Not every property is suitable for tall building development as a result of constraints imposed by its size or by the fact that such development may be incompatible with conserving heritage properties on or adjacent to a development site or within a Heritage Conservation District.

Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs) are special areas dense with heritage properties and a unique historic character. The character and values of HCDs will be conserved to ensure that their significance is not diminished by incremental or sweeping change.

There will also be heritage properties that can work in harmony with new development. In these cases, development should strive for the long term protection, integration, and re-use of heritage properties. Heritage properties should be used to inform the scale and contextual treatment of the new development. If well-designed and sited in appropriate locations, tall buildings can make a positive contribution within historical settings.

Tall building development proposals containing heritage properties on or adjacent to the development site are required to provide a Heritage Impact Assessment as part of the application review process, to evaluate the impact the proposed development or site alteration will have on the heritage property and to recommend an overall approach to conservation of these resources and mitigate negative impact upon them.”

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