



MID-RISE GUIDELINES

Urban Design Guidance for the Site Planning and Design
of Mid-Rise Buildings in Milton

May, 2018

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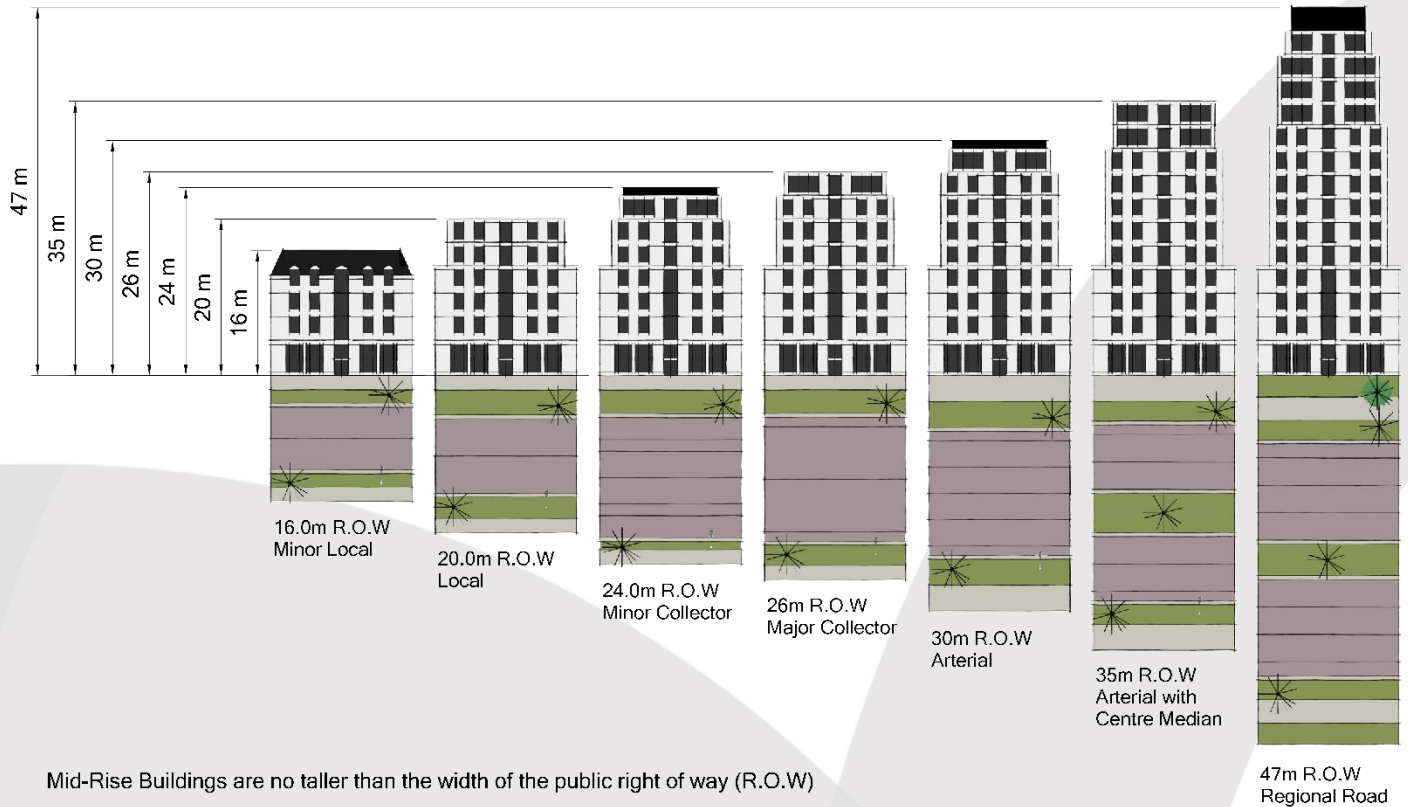
1.0 INTRODUCTION



The human-scaled, mid-rise building can be a way to achieve appropriate, transit-supporting densities without overwhelming the surrounding context.

1.1 What is a Mid-Rise Building?

A mid-rise building has a vertical built form that is moderately taller than single family homes or horizontal multiple housing. The scale and height of a mid-rise building should be appropriate and proportionate to the street(s) on which it is situated and the surrounding context. Typically, a mid-rise building is no taller than the width of the right-of-way (i.e. road + sidewalks).



In Milton, right of way widths range between 16.0m (local) and 35.0m (arterials) or 47.0m (Regional Roads). A building 35m high would be approximately 11 storeys tall and a 47m building would be about 14 or 15 storeys. Yet for Milton, a building of 9 storeys in height would likely be regarded as high-rise. For this reason, the site specific context will be important in determining whether a building should be regarded as low, mid or high-rise. For high-rise buildings, please refer to the Tall Building Design Guidelines companion document. These Mid-Rise Guidelines will usually apply wherever a building is between 4 and 8 storeys (inclusive) in height. The guidelines do not apply to certain forms of multiple residential buildings up to 4 storeys in height such as stacked and back to back townhomes.

1.2 Preferred Locations for Mid-Rise Buildings

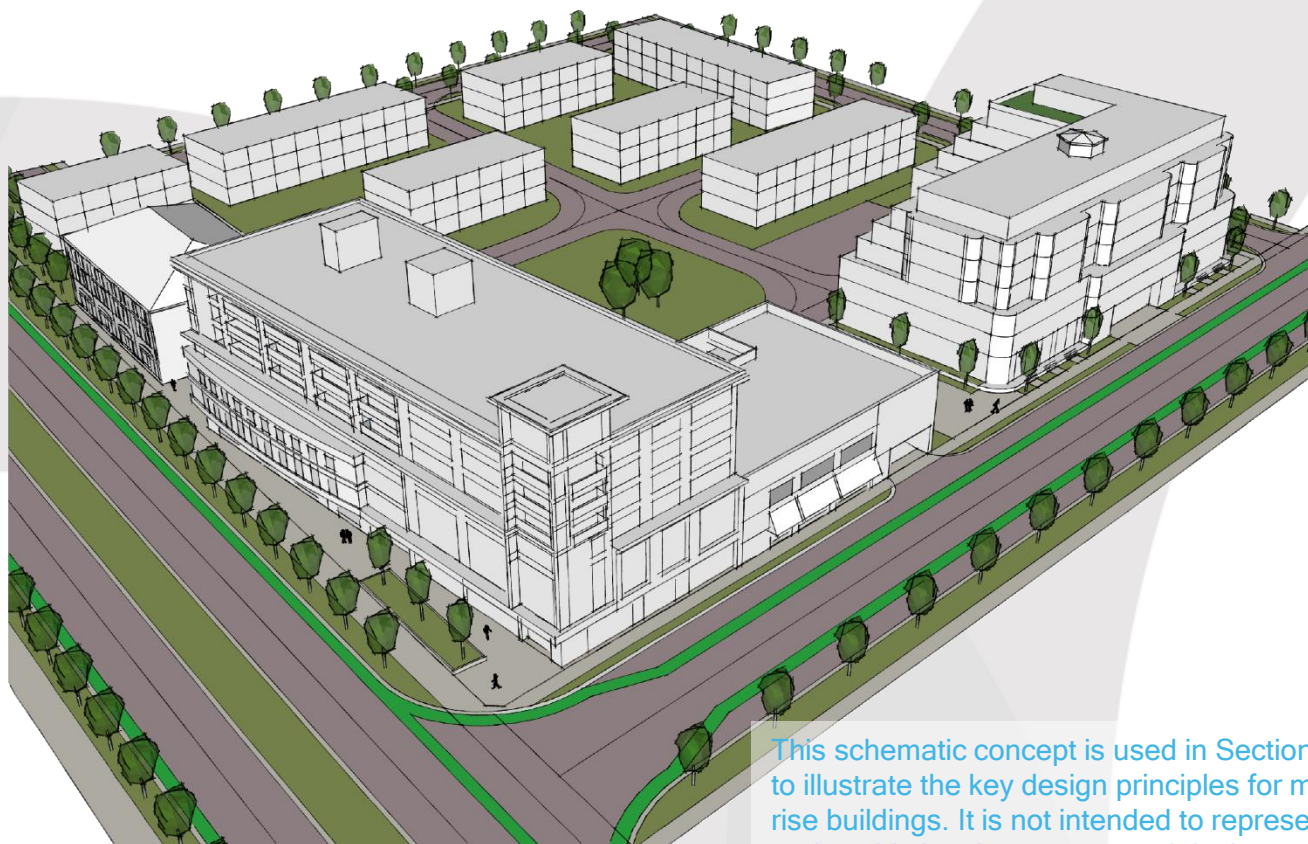
Milton is required to place increasing emphasis on promoting intensification in urban areas. Mid-rise buildings can play an important role in accommodating growth along key main streets, and areas with existing infrastructure, including transit, retail, and community services, while protecting the character and amenity of established neighbourhoods. It is anticipated that mid-rise buildings will be established mostly within the Urban Growth Centre, the Secondary Mixed Use Nodes and Intensification Corridors and the Milton Education Village.



1.3 Purpose of the Mid-Rise Design Guidelines

By clarifying the Town's expectations for the design of mid-rise buildings, it is intended that the guidelines should assist with the interpretation of Official Plan policies and provide a clear design direction for development proposals. These guidelines should be considered by developers preparing proposals for mid-rise buildings in Milton at the outset. They will be used by Town of Milton staff to provide pre-application advice and during the review of development applications for mid-rise buildings. The guidelines will also be a resource for the preparation of Area Specific Plans and design guidance. Implementation of the guidelines should also take into account and have proper regard to other relevant objectives, policies, standards, regulations and best practices as applicable.

While these Mid-Rise Guidelines present a number of key design principles, not all will apply equally in all circumstances. The specific site context must be analysed to inform the application and relevance of particular guidelines and to evaluate the appropriate scale, height, important views and other situational challenges and opportunities. Proposals for mid-rise buildings shall be supported by an Urban Design Brief. The Urban Design Brief shall establish the contextual relationship of the proposed development to adjacent buildings, streets and areas. (For further information see the Town's Development Application Guidelines for Urban Design Briefs.) Mid-rise buildings will often require detailed analysis of sun-shadow, historic and architectural character, transportation, accessibility, community safety and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, services and the planned function of the area.



This schematic concept is used in Section 2.0 to illustrate the key design principles for mid-rise buildings. It is not intended to represent a real world situation or an actual design response.

1.4 Guiding Principles: Opportunities and Challenges

Some of the opportunities and challenges associated with mid-rise buildings suggest a number of guiding principles and influences for site planning and design:-



OPPORTUNITIES

INTENSIFICATION

A mid-rise building form can accommodate sustainable growth - new homes, shops, jobs and community facilities close to transit - all within the established block structure and neighbourhood context.

URBAN REVITALISATION

Mid-rise building forms can breathe new life into urban places; increasing the range of housing options for students and young people seeking their first home, as well as empty nesters looking to downsize; and strengthening local amenities such as banks, coffee shops, pharmacies, clinics and daycare.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION, TRANSIT AND NEW MOBILITY

Mid-rise buildings with mixed uses, required parking and amenities, located close to transit & community services can help to reduce dependence on private automobiles.

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

Wood frame, hybrid and modular mid-rise building forms incorporating innovative technologies, such as green roofs and renewable energy can contribute to a sustainable future.

PUBLIC SPACE

Mid-rise buildings can free up open space for other uses, such as parks or plazas, by fitting more homes on a smaller building footprint. Where appropriate, larger setbacks and recessed ground floors may accommodate wider sidewalks with awnings and canopies for pedestrian weather protection, plantings, street furniture, public art and patio dining.



CHALLENGES

RELATIONSHIP TO THE STREET

The front facades of mid-rise buildings form a "street wall" that physically encloses the street as an 'outdoor room' or defined space. Appropriate setbacks, step backs and commensurate façade heights and lengths are required to create this sense of enclosure and feelings of comfort, while letting the sunlight in and opening views of the sky from the street.

TRANSITION TO SURROUNDINGS

By definition, mid-rise buildings are lower than towers but taller than single family homes. Mid-rise buildings can integrate harmoniously with their surroundings provided that the massing and scale of the building carefully transitions to adjacent low-rise neighbourhoods.

GRADE-RELATED USES

In mixed use areas, in busy pedestrian areas and at major intersections, mid-rise buildings with retail, commercial and community services along the street frontage encourage sustainable lifestyles by allowing people to easily live, work, and play in the same locality. In newer subdivisions, where market demand to support commercial activity within walking distance may not yet exist, the ground floor should be easily adaptable to accommodate the possibility of introducing grade-related activities over time.

TRAFFIC AND PARKING

Large expanses of surface parking create an unsightly and hostile living environment. Integral above or below grade parking structures can lessen the impact. Innovative approaches to traffic demand management and parking efficiencies may be explored through a Traffic Impact Study and Parking Justification Report.



Credit: Town of Milton



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Credit: Town of Milton



Credit: Town of Milton



Credit: Town of Milton

Precedent examples of mid-rise building design



2.0 MID-RISE BUILDING DESIGN



Credit: Town of Milton

The guidelines for the design of mid-rise buildings address the position, scale and massing of the building in relation to the street interface, the transition to adjacent buildings and neighbourhoods, and the integration of parking and of open space.



Credit: Town of Milton



Credit: Town of Milton



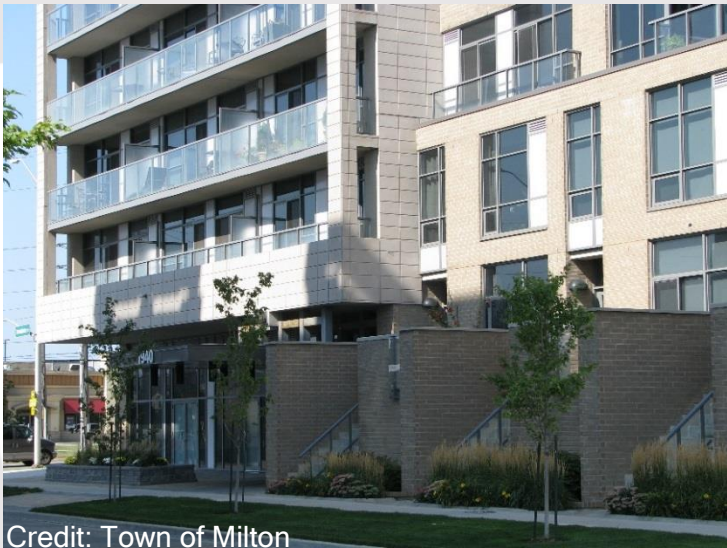
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Precedent examples of street interface

2.1 Street Interface



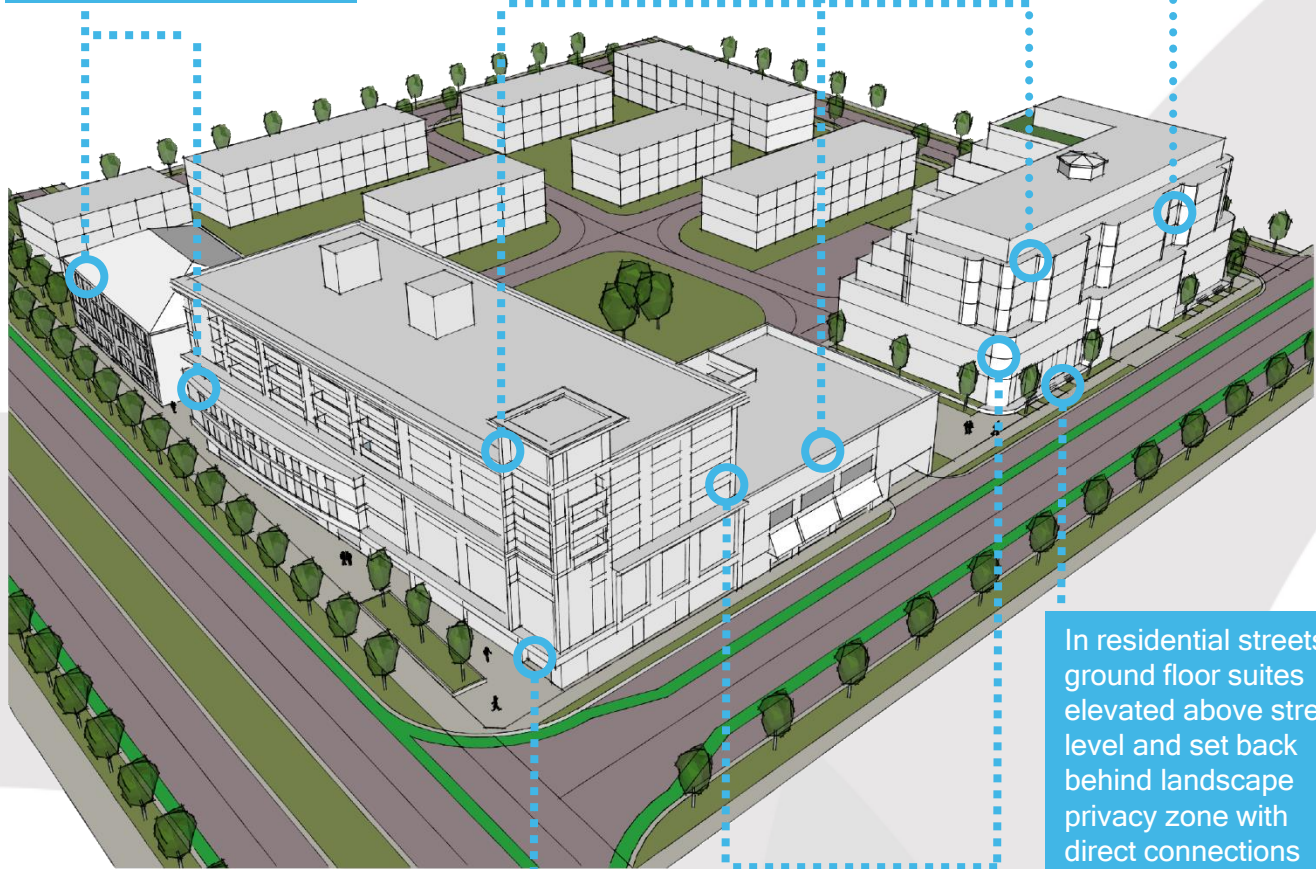
The interface between the mid-rise building and the surrounding streets and public spaces has the greatest impact on how pedestrians interact with the building and how the building fits within the street level environment. Architectural features, materials and transparency create visual interest for passers-by.

STREET INTERFACE

Design and placement sympathetic to the scale, rhythm and proportions of adjacent heritage buildings. This helps to maintain a locally distinctive character at street level.

Maximum and minimum street-wall heights proportionate to the right of way width, with a front angular plane. This creates an appropriate sense of enclosure and feelings of comfort for pedestrians, while allowing sufficient sunlight to reach the opposite sidewalk.

Articulation of the street-wall façade to accommodate entries, balconies and foundation planting.



3
In mixed use locations, active uses at the street edge with clearly identifiable entries, a high degree of transparency and weather protection for pedestrians.

2
A pedestrian perception step-back above the building base or podium. This ensures a consistent podium height proportionate to the right of way width, while the overall building height does not overwhelm the pedestrian experience on the sidewalk.

4
In residential streets, ground floor suites elevated above street level and set back behind landscape privacy zone with direct connections from the sidewalk to individual entrances.

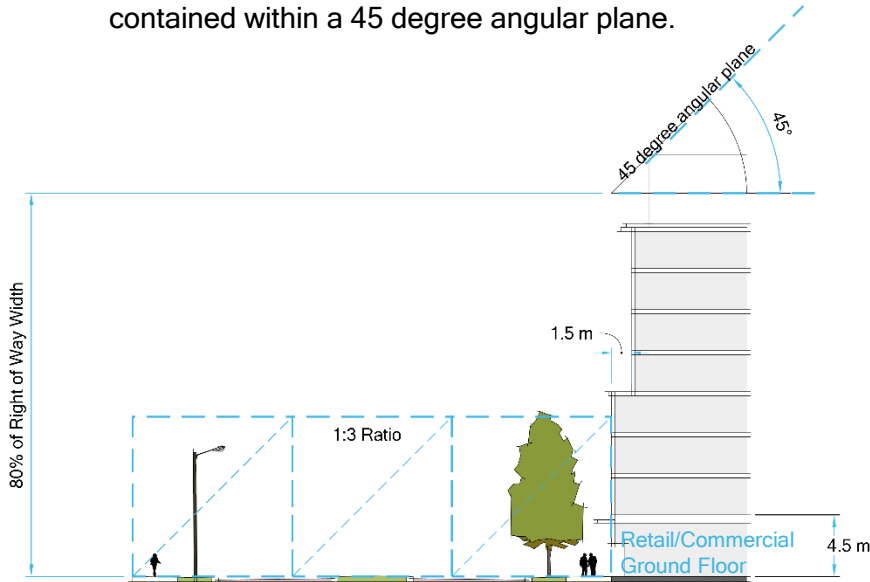
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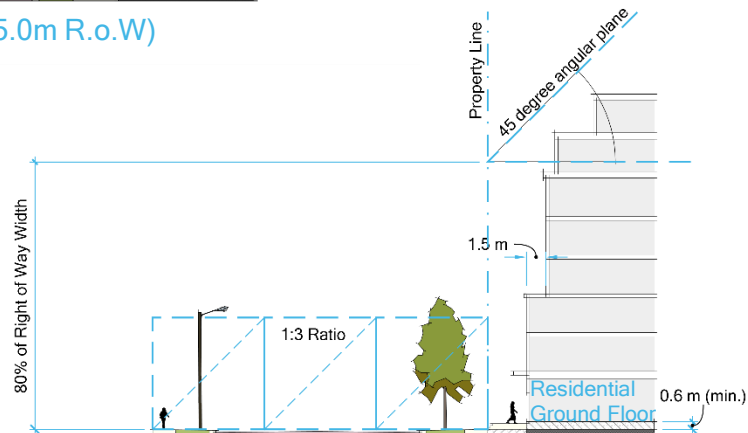
STREET INTERFACE NOTES

1 The minimum height of the building base or podium is 1/3 of the right of way width. The maximum height of the podium is 4 storeys.

The maximum street-wall height is 80% of the street right of way width. Above the maximum street-wall height, the building is stepped back from the property-line so that the massing is contained within a 45 degree angular plane.



Typical Mixed Use Cross Section (35.0m R.o.W)



Typical Residential Cross Section (26.0m R.o.W)

2 The front façade steps back 1.5m above the podium.

3 In mixed use locations, higher floor to floor heights (normally 4.5m) allow for use flexibility and adaptation. Where possible, at least 60% of the street frontage should be active uses. In corner conditions, the active frontage should wrap the corner, occupying at least 9.0m of the flanking street frontage.

4 In residential streets, ground floor suites are set back from the street edge and the ground floor is elevated a minimum of 0.6m above the sidewalk level.



Credit: Town of Milton



Credit: Town of Milton



Credit: Town of Milton



Credit: Town of Milton



Credit: Town of Milton



Credit: City of Toronto

Precedent examples of transition to neighbourhood context

2.2 Transition to Neighbourhood Context



A sensitive and gentle transition in scale to the adjacent neighbourhood, especially low-rise dwellings and back yards, heritage buildings, and public open spaces, enables a mid-rise building to nestle comfortably within its surroundings.

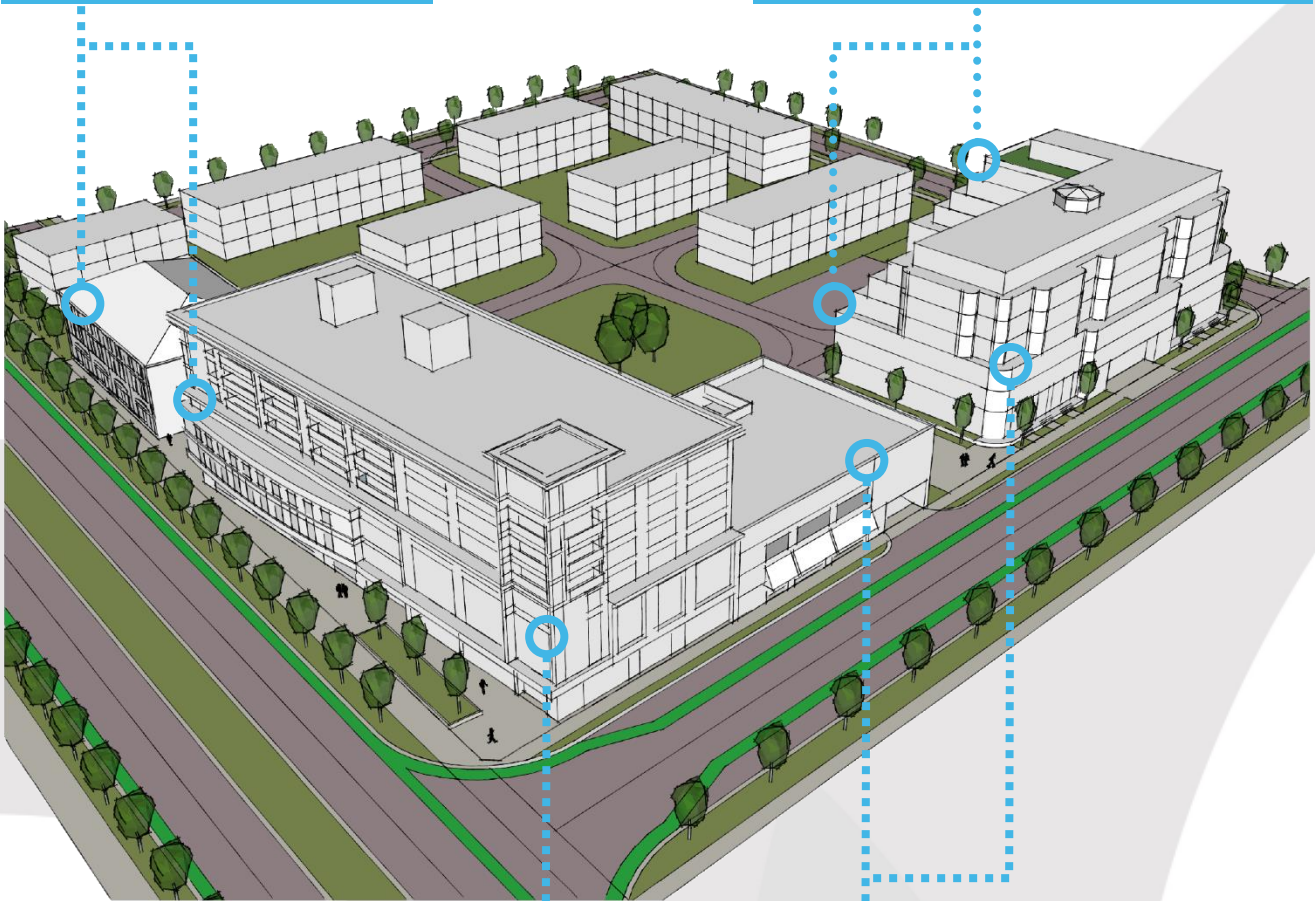
TRANSITION TO NEIGHBOURHOOD CONTEXT

3

Cornice line matches adjacent heritage buildings. This ensures that the new building will blend with the established scale of heritage resources.

1

Building step-backs within a rear or side angular plane. This provides a gradual transition in scale from the mid-rise building down to low-rise buildings and publicly accessible open space.



2

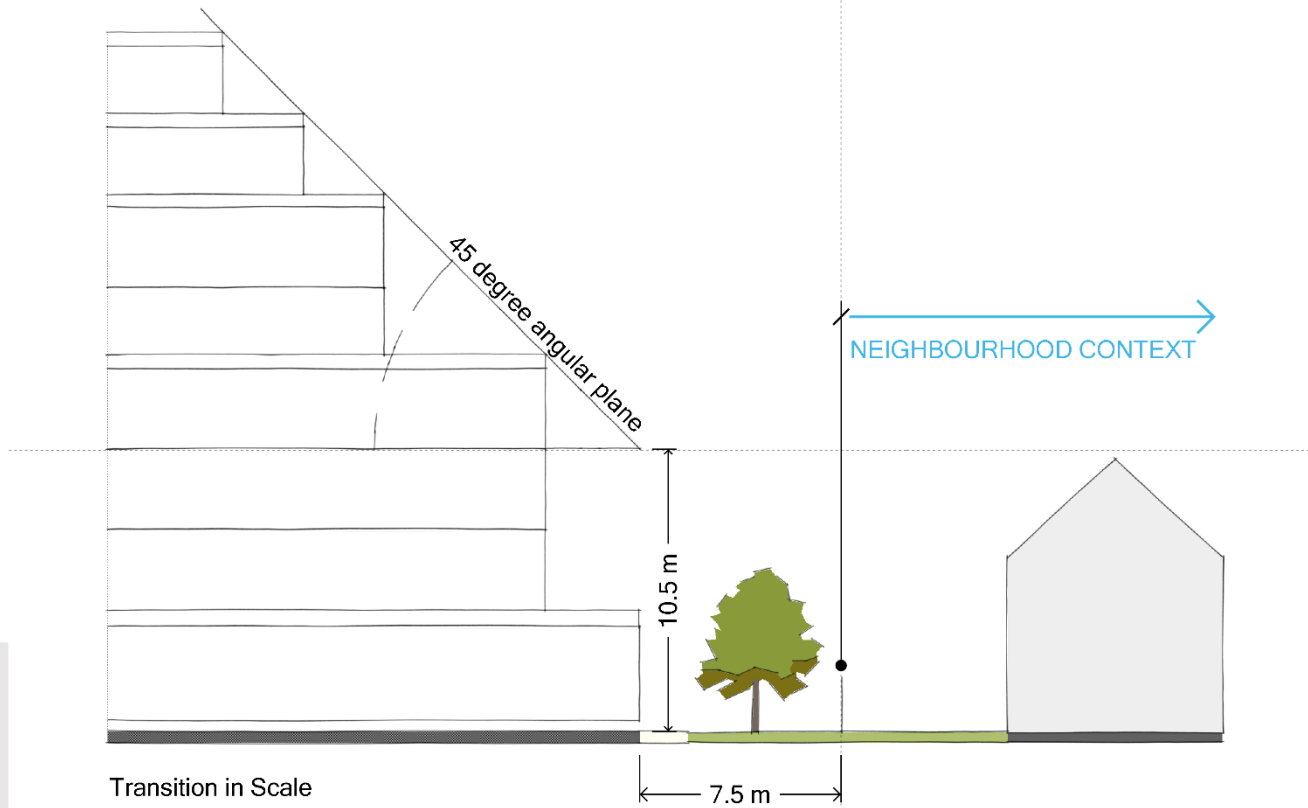
Building height and massing concentrated at the corner location and furthest away from adjacent low-rise uses.

Continuity of the street-wall height is maintained through flankage extensions or wing walls that extend the façade of the building.

TRANSITION TO NEIGHBOURHOOD CONTEXT NOTES

1

To provide a transition in scale from a mid-rise building down to lower scale areas, such as low-rise residential neighbourhoods, a 45 degree angular plane will be taken from a height of 10.5m above a 7.5 m set back from the property line



2

At corner sites, the height guidelines that apply to the higher order right of way shall apply to the first 20m of frontage along the lower order right of way frontage. Corner sites are excepted from the step-back requirements within 7.5m of the corner property lines, in order to permit the greater architectural emphasis and massing of the building at the corner.

3

Established landmarks and heritage features often serve as important cultural reference points to be conserved and respected. On blocks where heritage buildings are to be retained, a step-back should be provided to match the cornice line of the existing building that will be retained on the block. Infill buildings in a Character Area should maintain a consistent cornice line by establishing a “datum line” or an average of the neighbouring cornice lines. The cornice line should be accented with an appropriate architectural detail and step-back to help articulate the façade and to emphasize the consistency of the street-wall height.



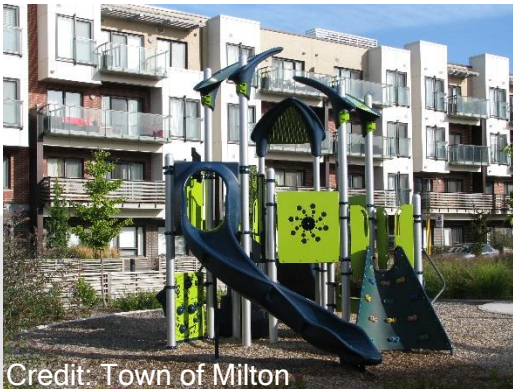
Credit: Town of Milton



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2.3 Open Space and Parking



Credit: Town of Milton

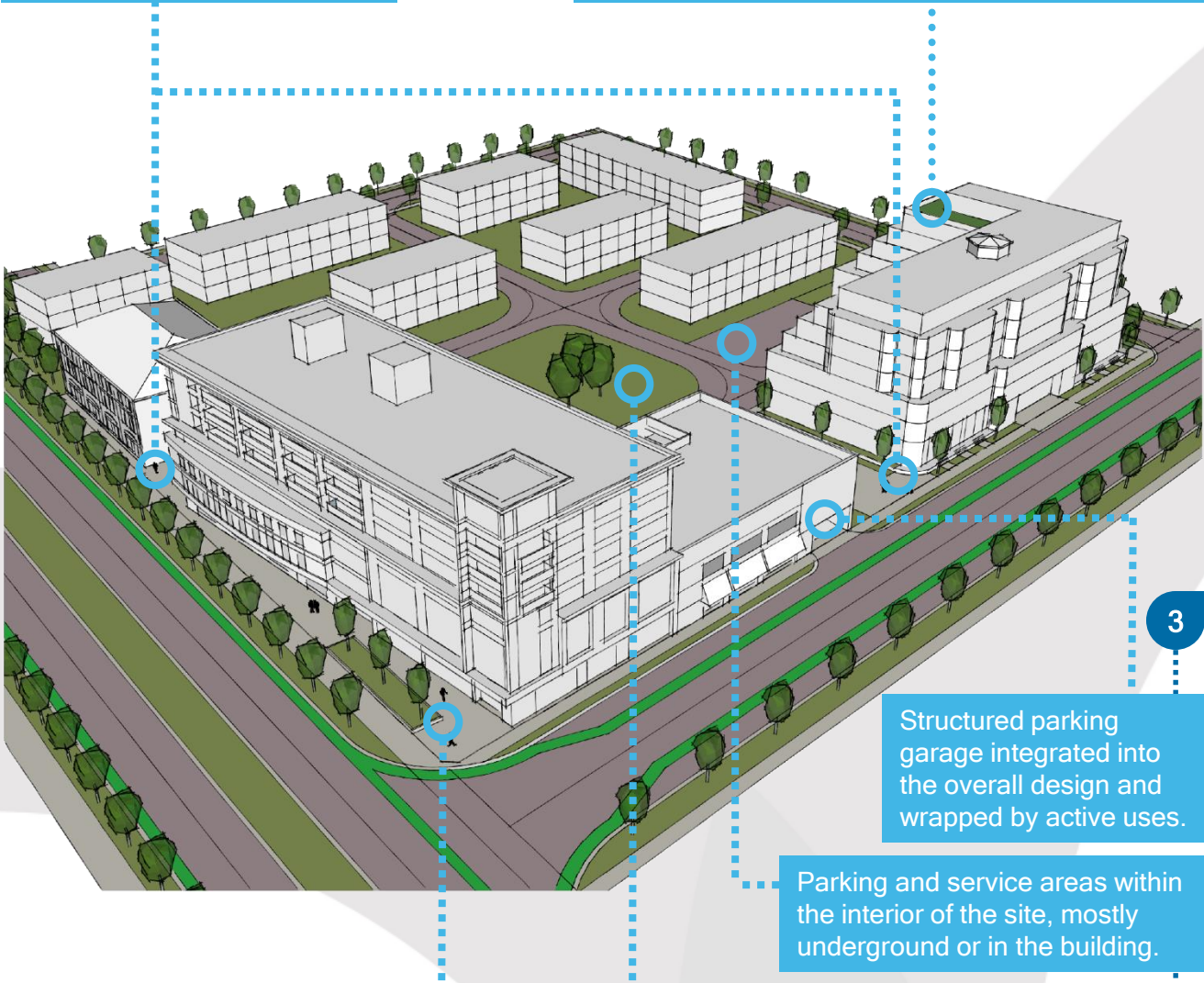
A well-designed and integrated sequence of open space creates a livable and pedestrian friendly environment. Parking and service areas should be subordinate and mostly concealed within the building or below ground.

OPEN SPACE AND PARKING

2

Publicly accessible mid-block connections to maximize pedestrian permeability

Green roofs provide opportunities for communal outdoor amenity space and environmental innovations such as rainwater harvesting.



3

Structured parking garage integrated into the overall design and wrapped by active uses.

Parking and service areas within the interior of the site, mostly underground or in the building.

Plazas, enhanced boulevards and pedestrian amenities at corner sites; designed to encourage pedestrian activity, public art, sidewalk cafes etc.,.

Publicly accessible private open space, such as parkettes or pocket parks.

4

1

OPEN SPACE AND PARKING NOTES

- 1 Buildings at “gateway” locations should provide additional street corner building set-backs to create a small open space with a minimum of 25 square metres for pedestrian circulation, gathering place, small patio, public art and/or other place making functions.



Credit: Town of Milton

- 2 Mid-block pedestrian connections with or without vehicle access should be provided where block lengths exceed 90m.
- 3 Where an above grade structured parking garage fronts onto a Regional or Arterial Road, the parking garage should be fully wrapped to the height of the parking structure by habitable accommodation (commercial and/or residential) on all floors to a depth of at 9.0 metres from the forward most face of the building or, except in mixed use locations, by tiered landscaping.

Where a structured parking garage fronts a Collector or Local Road, the street level frontage should incorporate active uses to a depth of at least 7.5m for 60% of the building façade length and to a minimum floor to floor height of 4.5m.

- 4 Surface parking areas should generally be limited to barrier-free parking, visitor parking, drop-off zones and loading/unloading.



