



URBAN DESIGN AND BUILT FORM GUIDELINES FOR PICKERING VILLAGE

Submitted by

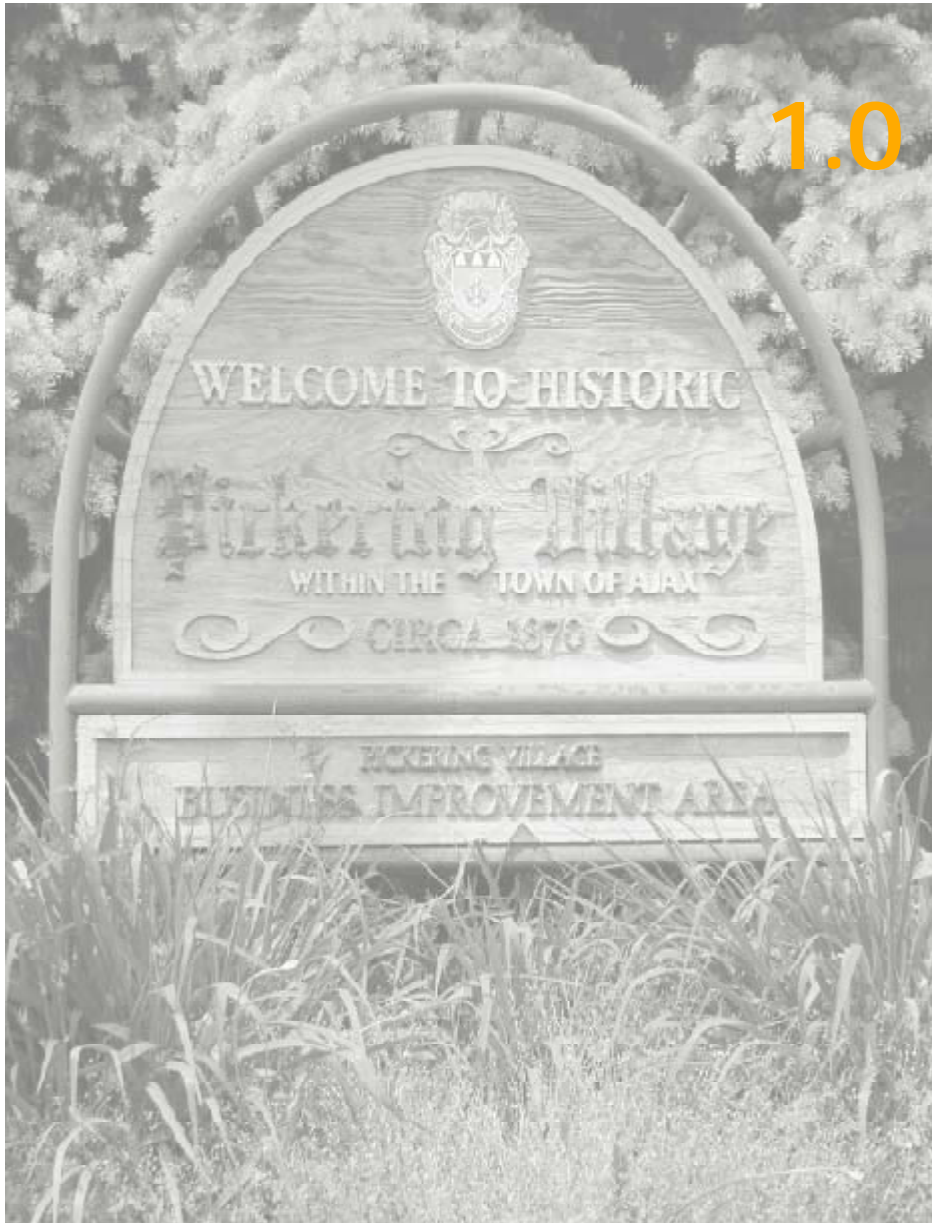
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INTRODUCTION

The Town of Ajax initiated the Pickering Village Land Use Planning and Urban Design Study to establish a long-term vision and plan for improving this historically significant part of Ajax. Pickering Village is envisioned to become a vibrant community with mixed uses in house form structures on Kingston Road, a revitalized historic commercial and retail “main street” on Old Kingston Road, and new mixed-use, mid-rise development at Kingston Road & Church Street that is sensitive to its surroundings. Church Street will remain as a stable residential corridor with opportunities for an appropriate level of mixed residential/service commercial development in house form structure.

These Urban Design Guidelines are a companion to the document entitled “*Recommendations on A Community Improvement Plan for Pickering Village*” (*The Recommendations*), the central document for the study.

The purpose of these urban design guidelines is to help development applicants to understand the built form vision for Pickering Village. The guidelines are intended to be used as an aid during the preparation of development plans.

There are several aspects of planning and urban design that need to be considered when addressing development in the study area. All sites consist of two facets: the public realm and the private realm. Each facet has an impact on the other in terms of performance. The public realm includes streetscape, open space, parks, streets, traffic, pedestrian and bicycle trails and linkages. The private realm deals with private property and development.

Public realm improvements can be planned and implemented by the municipality or region, although the timing of improvements may be tied to adjacent private sector development. However, changes to the economic base of an area are really triggered by new development and land use changes in the private realm. These changes are entirely dependent on the landowners, the existing businesses, and the real estate market.

In the context of Pickering Village, urban design can be used to increase activity in the area, strengthen its’ heritage character, and foster a unity which makes the Village an identifiable area within the broader community. To these ends, design guidelines have been developed to serve as standards that will set the tone of local improvements and new development in the area.

Specifically, these urban guidelines translate the vision for Pickering Village into standards meant to shape change in both the public realm and the private realm. They will help stakeholders in the community to champion the vision and use them as a test for any development application that requires a public planning process. They will also help municipal staff in evaluating development proposals regarding conformity to the vision, and in working to improve the public realm in conjunction with new development.

Once adopted by Council, adherence to these guidelines will be a consideration in the approval of all public and private development initiatives in the Pickering Village, through the Town’s capital improvement and site plan control planning process.

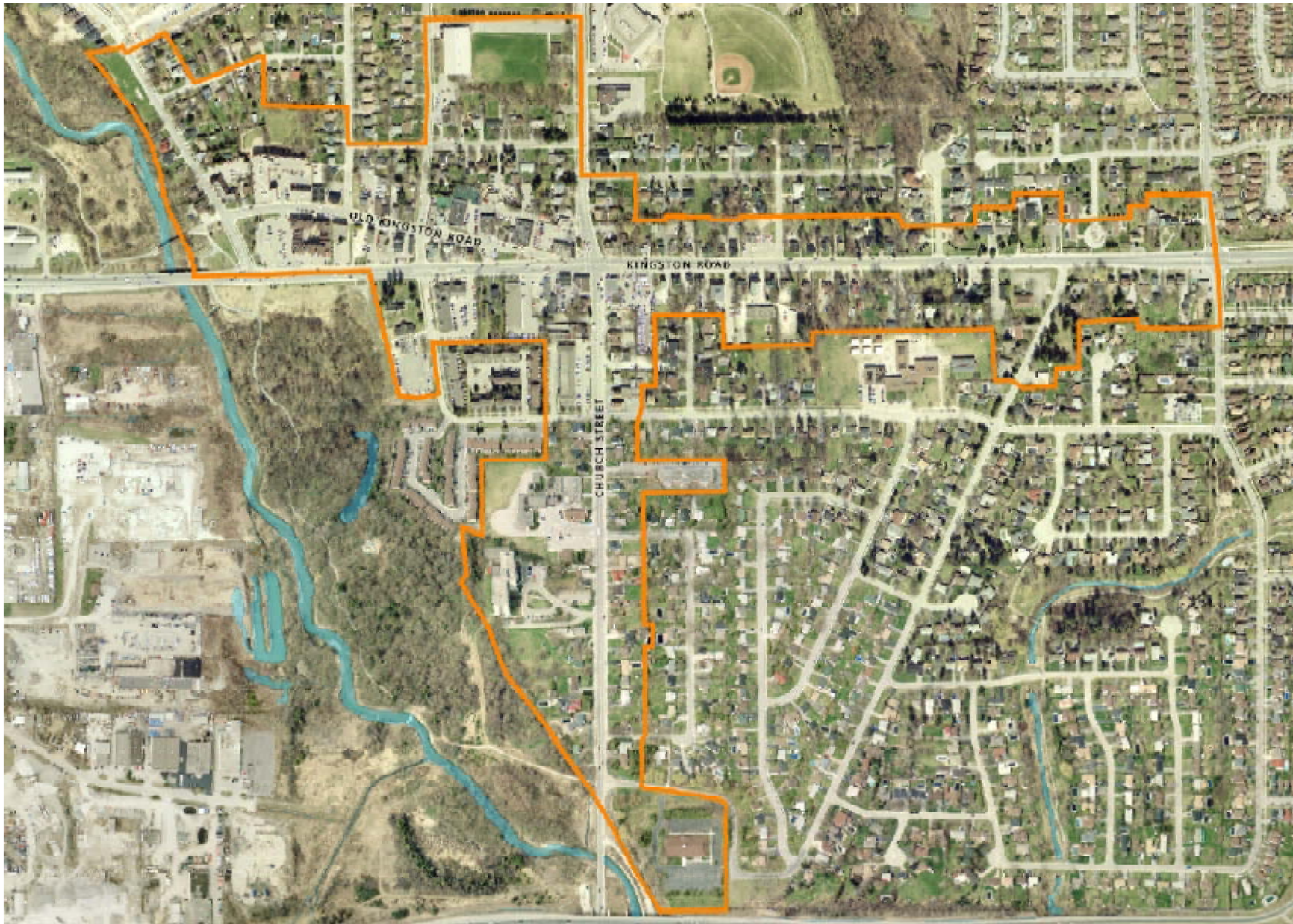
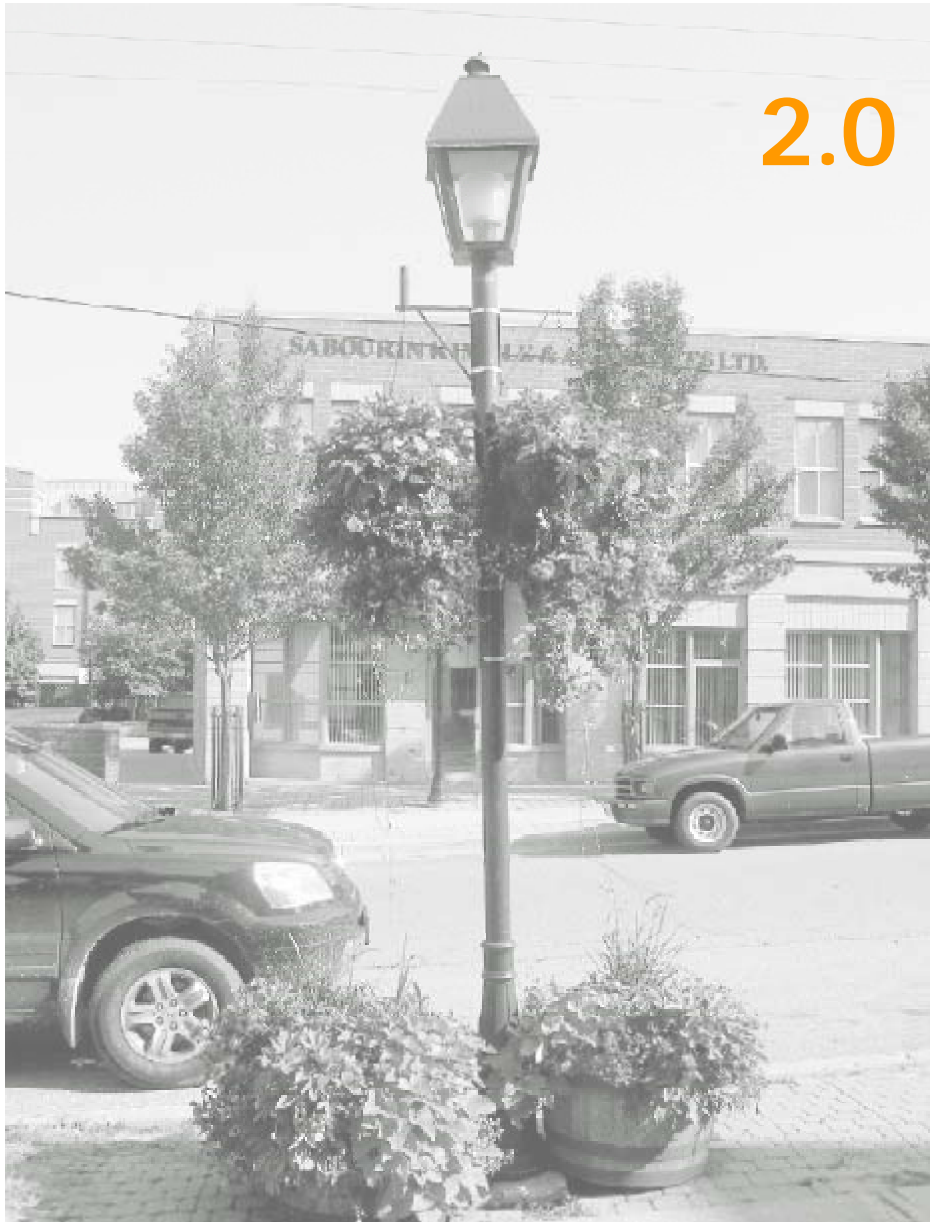


Fig. 1.1: Aerial Photo of Study Area





2.0

PUBLIC REALM DESIGN GUIDELINES

General Design Guidelines **2.1**

Streetscape Design Guidelines **2.2**

Street Furniture **2.2.1**

Lighting **2.2.2**

Pavement **2.2.3**

Planting **2.2.4**

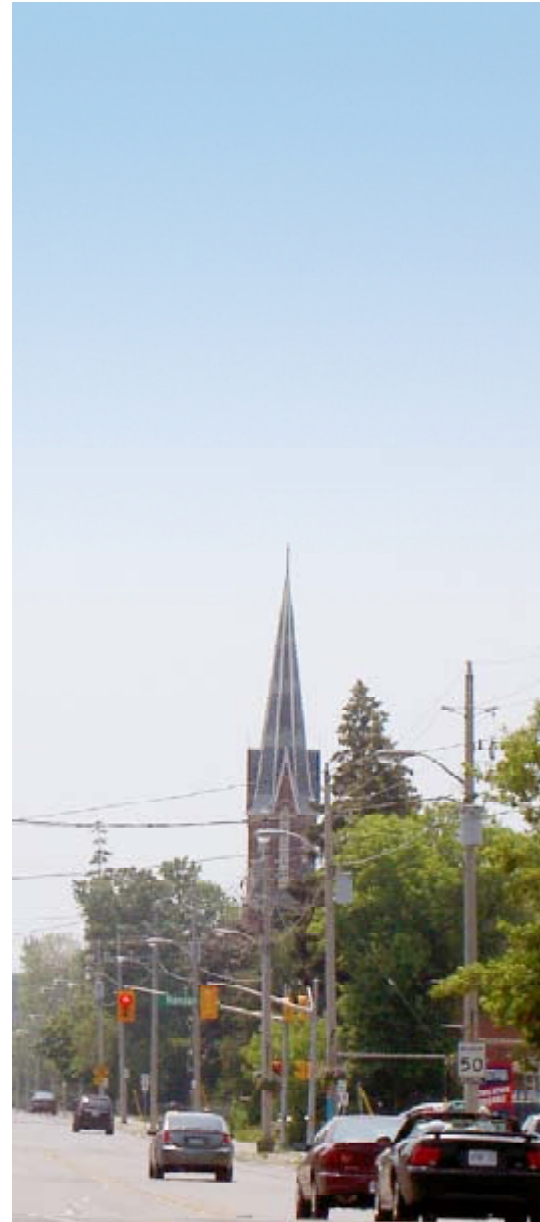
Signage **2.2.5**

Public Art **2.2.6**

Utilities **2.2.7**

2.1 General Design Guidelines

- Use streetscape elements such as trees, benches, signage, and lighting to support active pedestrian uses and to reinforce the character and identity of each segment of the Pickering Village Heritage Walk proposed in *The Recommendations* (Figure 2.1).
- Preserve, establish and highlight views from public streets and spaces to existing and future landmarks by:
 - Prohibiting intrusion of building development into view corridors (particularly looking south down Church St. South) toward St. Francis De Sales Church which is a major existing landmark on Church Street South;
 - Framing important views of natural and man-made landmarks including looking for opportunities to open new views of landmark buildings and features.
- Treat sidewalks and paths as unifying elements throughout Pickering Village.
- Treat transit stops as important public places by focusing improvements on bus stops at or near important pedestrian crossings.
- As new development occurs, access points across sidewalks should be minimized and consolidated with other adjoining access points as well as coordinating with other improvements to the sidewalk environment. The access man-



Photos: North & South View Corridors Toward St. Francis De Sales Church Should be Protected

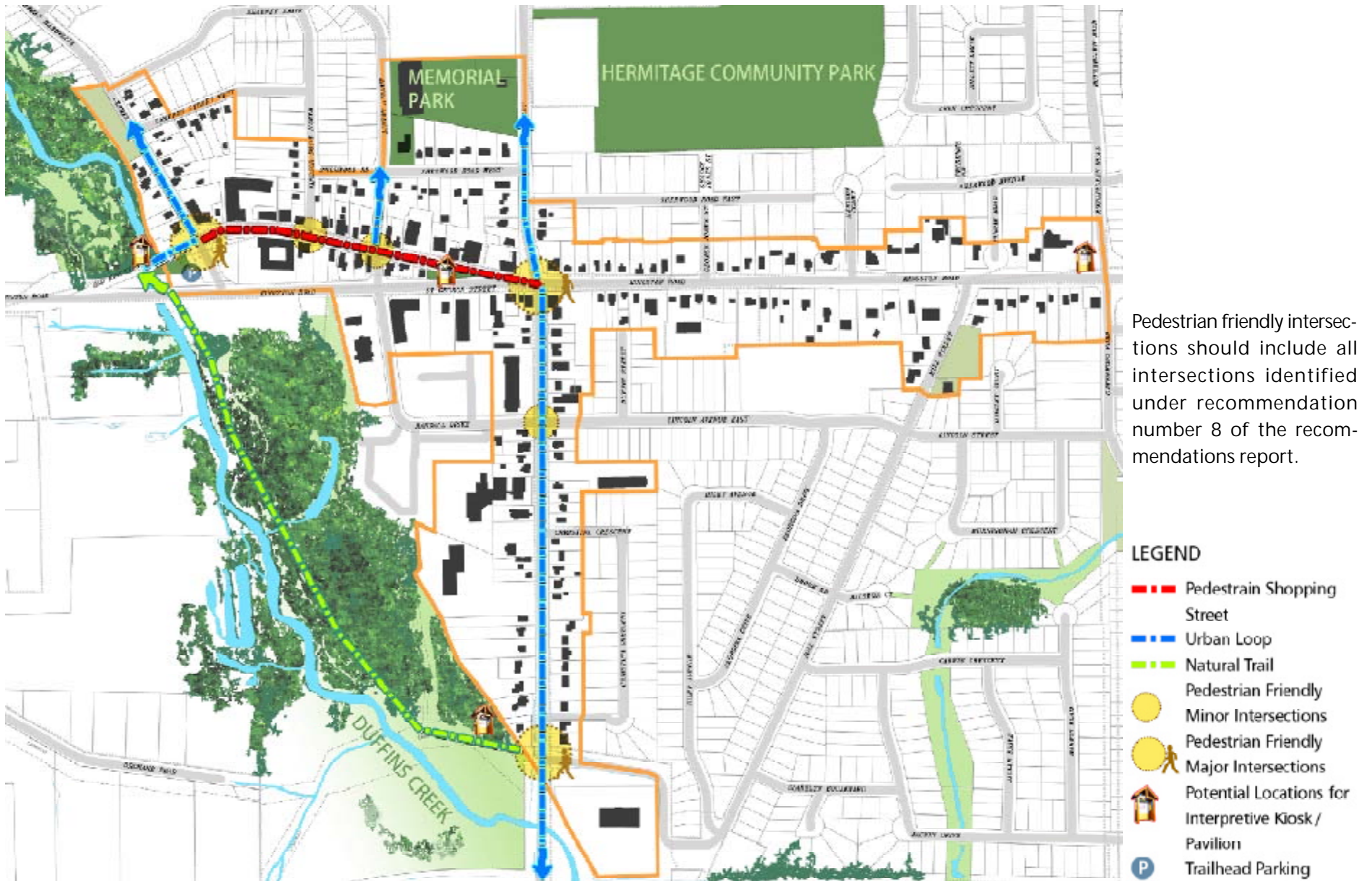


Figure 2.1: Pickering Village Heritage Walk Proposed in *The Recommendations*, N.T.S.

agement strategy proposed in *The Recommendations* (See Figure 2.1 of *The Recommendations*) is intended in part to achieve this goal, and reduce points of potential vehicular/ pedestrian conflict along sidewalks.

- Retain existing streetscape elements, and protect landscape elements of historical significance.
- Encourage sidewalk dining along Old Kingston Road while maintaining a clear passage for pedestrians.
- Use landscaping to further define and contain public space by using street trees, for example, to delineate the proposed pedestrian plaza as shown in Figure 2.2.



Photos: Existing Street Elements of Historical Significance Should be Protected



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Photos: Examples of Public Spaces Well Defined by Landscape

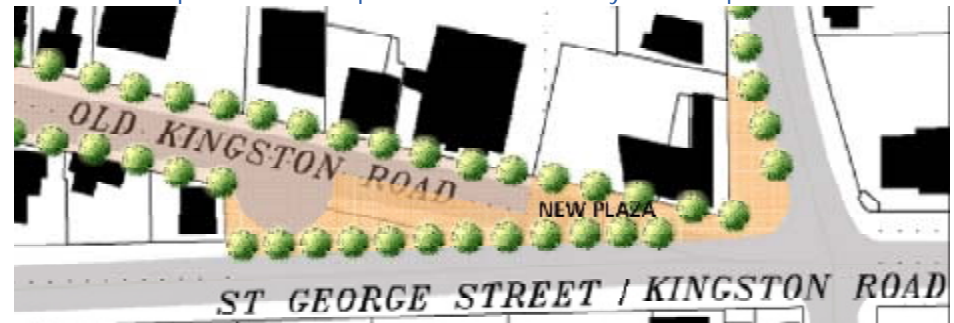


Figure 2.2: Use Landscape to Delineate the New Plaza, N.T.S.



Figure 2.3: Illustrated Sidewalk Improvement on Old Kingston Road



Photo: Existing Condition

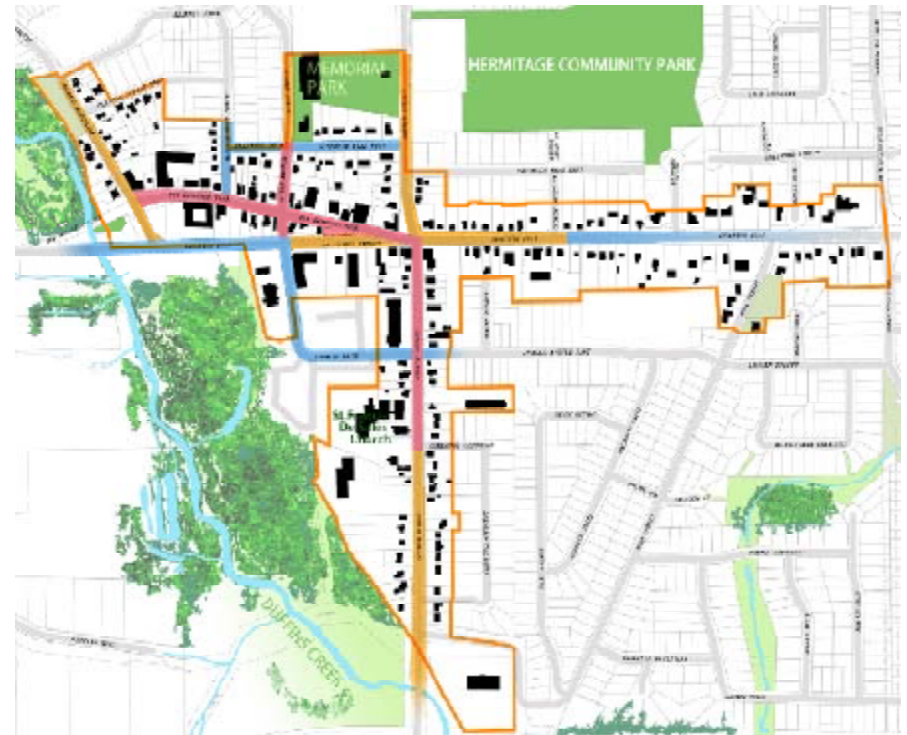
2.2 Streetscape Design Guidelines

The general guidelines described in Section 2.1 are established to create a “pedestrian friendly” public realm within Pickering Village. This section defines in more detail guidelines for the various elements that make up the streetscape. The application of these guidelines should bring cohesion and continuity to Pickering Village, which are not found at present. The design, location and maintenance of the streetscape elements should complement the architectural style of the community and give Pickering Village a distinctive identity.

The Recommendations propose using streetscape elements at three levels of intensity, which further indicates the hierarchy of the public realm within Pickering Village. The intended areas for the following described streetscape elements are identified by three colour squares that represent different intensity areas, as shown in Figure 2.4.

The streetscape elements are organized into the following seven categories:

- Street Furniture
- Lighting
- Paving
- Planting
- Signage
- Public Art
- Utilities



- Maximum intensity of streetscape improvement area (Level 1)
- Medium intensity of streetscape improvement area (Level 2)
- Minimum intensity of streetscape improvement area (Level 3)

Figure 2.4: Streetscape Improvement Intensity Proposed in *The Recommendations*

2.2.1 Street Furniture

Benches

Intended area: ■ ■

- In general, benches should be placed on the sidewalk to provide rest areas along the street. The benches should be situated out of the line of major pedestrian circulation patterns in order to avoid any potential conflicts;
- The bench design should emphasize comfort, simplicity of form and detail, ease of maintenance, durability of finish, and resistance to vandalism;
- The seating surface of the benches could be either metal or wood. The benches should have arm rests that will assist the disabled and elderly while deterring loitering and lying down;
- Benches should be at least 1.8 metres long to seat 2 strangers or 3 friends comfortably.



Bicycle Racks

Intended areas: ■ ■

- Bicycle racks should be provided at a variety of public destinations such as schools, libraries, places of worship, shopping areas, and public parks;
- The size and holding capacities will vary according to location, and the placement must allow adequate clearance space within the public right-of-way.
- While bicycle racks may vary in size, they should be similar in design and colour with other street furniture;
- Bicycle racks should be strong and located where bicycles will not impede pedestrian flow;



Bollards

Intended area: ■

- Bollards should be provided on Old Kingston Road and at the intersection of Church Street and Kingston Road for greater pedestrian safety. Similarly, future improvement to Church Street South between Kingston Road and the northern leg of Christina Crescent should incorporate bollards to provide definition to pedestrian areas;
- Bollard design should be compatible with other street furniture;
- Bollards should be:
 - Tall enough to discourage vehicles;
 - Small enough to be unobtrusive;
 - Solid for durability and stability, and
 - Slim in appearance to complement their surroundings.



Trash Receptacles

Intended areas: ■ ■

- Trash receptacles should be provided along the proposed Heritage Walk to help maintain clean streets. Similarly, routes such as Church Street North and Linton Avenue used by students of Pickering High School to access Old Kingston Road should be populated with trash receptacles;
- Trash receptacles should be located with priority given to corners and mailbox locations;
- Trash receptacles should be durable and aesthetic, with similar design style as other street furniture.



2.2.2 Lighting

Pedestrian Lighting

Intended areas: ■ ■

- Pedestrian scale lighting should be stylistically compatible with street furniture and architectural styles;
- Pedestrian scale lighting should be located at the mid- point between street lights, on both sides of the street, to reinforce the pedestrian scale of the street and even out illumination between the taller street lights;
- Use light fixtures of durable materials to discourage vandalism;
- Provide illumination levels and lighting sources that minimize areas or points of glare while providing adequate levels of light for safety and security;

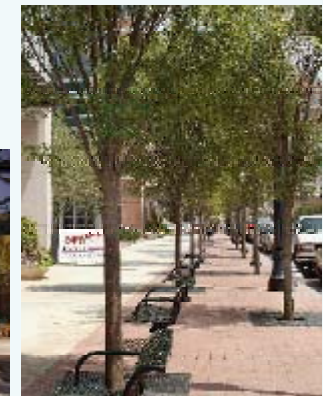


2.2.3 Pavement

Special Paving Treatment

Intended area: ■

- Use special paving treatment on Old Kingston Road to give distinctive accents to this unique area;
- Accent paving should be used to highlight special areas, sidewalk edges, and to define pedestrian crossings;
- Special paving treatment should be consistent throughout the core area in order to maintain a sense of continuity.



2.2.4 Planting

Street Trees

Intended areas: ■ ■ ■

- Existing trees within the public right-of-way should be retained and protected;
- Allow sufficient room for tree canopies to grow and develop without conflict with other building or sidewalk elements;
- Street trees should be spaced 8 - 10 metres apart;
- Street trees should be selected for durability in an urban environment, and height of the tree canopies should protect sightlines along the street for both motorists and pedestrians. Further, tree selection along boulevards containing hydro poles should ensure the height of the mature canopy will not interfere with the height of the hydro lines;
- Street tree planting along Kingston Road would have to be located in the front yard of private properties due to the fact that it is a major arterial road with a narrow right-of-way. This should be done upon conversion or other improvements to these properties, with an agreement for access to perform tree maintenance.

Hanging Baskets

Intended areas: ■ ■

- Hanging baskets are encouraged and may be attached to building facades with suitable attachment brackets, or to light standards.



Tree Grates

Intended area: ■

- Tree grates should be decorative as well as durable and easy to maintain;
- Tree grates should be designed to eliminate pedestrian hazard by minimizing size of grating holes and preventing tree roots from lifting grates over a period of time;
- Tree grates should be adjustable, with knockout rings to allow for future tree growth;
- Tree grates should provide root protection and an appropriate environment to allow the root system to flourish and ensure good tree growth.

2.2.5 Signage

Way Finding Signage

Intended areas: ■ ■

- Provide a coordinated signage system that reflects the distinctive character of special areas;
- Materials and designs should be clear and simple to be easily read and quickly understood by pedestrians or motorists;
- Pedestrian scaled signage should be placed at heights that can be easily seen from the sidewalk;
- Coordinate light fixture design with graphics and signage;
- Colours of signage should respond to the setting and enhance the community without overpowering the street-scape design.



Banners

Intended areas: ■ ■ ■

- Banners are encouraged throughout Pickering Village to promote and reinforce community character;
- Banners can be installed permanently, or as seasonal and temporary forms of signage;
- Banners can be used to identify festivals or seasonal activities that may be of interest to local citizens and visitors;
- Banners may be incorporated into light fixtures and should be considered as part of the design. Graphics should be consistently displayed;
- Banners can be hung on utility poles along Kingston Road.

2.2.6 Public Art

Public Art

Intended area: ■

- Public art should be incorporated into the proposed Plaza with considerations for visual access and establishing prominence for the art work;
- Property owners are encouraged to provide outdoor public art;
- Encourage works of public art that celebrate local history and culture;
- Integrate works of public art into new development projects.



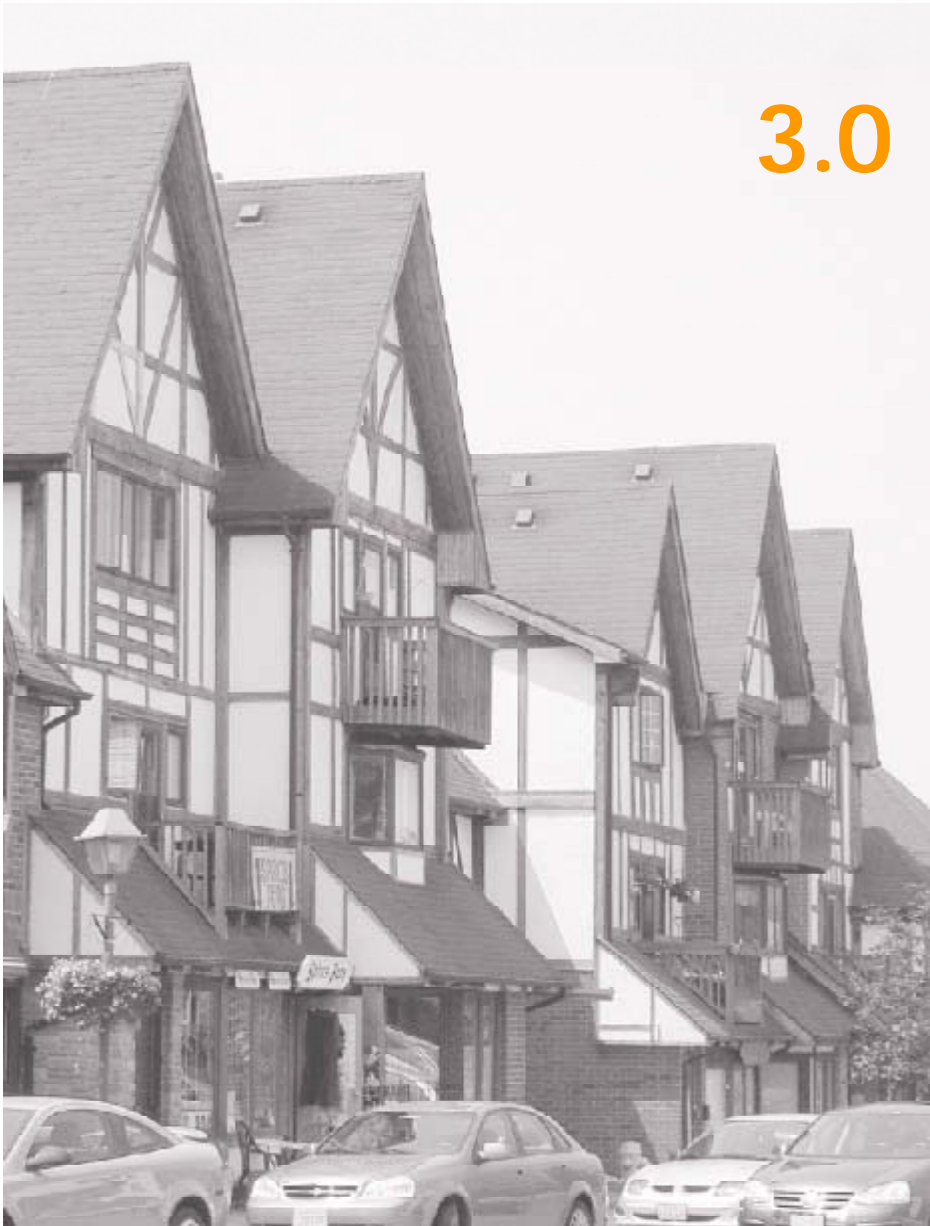
2.2.7 Utilities

Consideration shall be given to the location of utilities within the public rights of way as well as on private property. Utilities shall be clustered or grouped where possible to minimize visual impact.

All large, above-ground utility infrastructure is to be located and designed to be compatible with its surroundings.

The Town will encourage utility providers to consider innovative methods of containing utility services on or within street-scape features such as gateways, lamp posts, transit shelters, etc., when determining appropriate locations for large utility equipment and utility cluster sites.

Wherever possible, existing overhead hydro lines along Old Kingston Road, Church Street and Kingston Road should be buried underground or relocated to a less obtrusive area. Utility providers are encouraged to bury utility lines in common trenches.



3.0

PRIVATE REALM BUILT FORM DESIGN GUIDELINES

Development Context: Potential Sites **3.1**

Existing Built Form **3.2**

Built Form Design Guidelines **3.3**

Old Kingston Road **3.3.1**

Kingston Road / Church Street **3.3.2**

Kingston Road East of Church Street **3.3.3**

Church Street South of Randall Drive **3.3.4**

Except for two existing apartment buildings on Church Street south of Randall Drive, the study area is dominated by low rise buildings. Most buildings are house form structures, reflecting the residential character of this community in an earlier era.

Several of these existing house form buildings along Kingston Road, Old Kingston Road, and Church Street, have been converted to non-residential uses, primarily commercial and professional services uses. Several buildings are listed and/or designated buildings under the Ontario Heritage Act, with an additional “wish list” of buildings having been identified by the Heritage Advisory Committee. Most of the original single-family lots remain. Conversions, renovations and additions have been the main development activity in the area.

Newer buildings are generally concentrated along Old Kingston Road and Kingston Road from Elizabeth Street to Church Street. Church Street south of Kingston Road has a newer plaza, a school and apartment buildings. Newer buildings in the study area exhibit a range of land uses from schools and institutional to commercial, mixed-use and residential. None of the new buildings are out of scale with the area. The sole high-rise apartment building on Church Street is set well back from the street and has minimal impact on the immediate streetscape. Large-scale new development is the exception rather than the rule, and is based on land assembly.

3.1 Development Context: Potential Sites

- A graphic analysis of potential sites is illustrated in Figure 3.1. This diagram also shows the percentage of total frontages proposed for commercial, institutional, mixed and residential uses.
- The lots with the greatest potential for land assembly and development are those closest to the Kingston Road/Church Street intersection, and surrounded by commercial development, excluding the designated heritage buildings.
- Residential lots on Kingston Road, east of George Jones Street, which are adjoining commercial or non-residential uses, are more likely to be converted and renovated, rather than being assembled for development.
- Other residential lots further south on Church Street south of Randall Drive, or on Kingston Road toward Mill Street are less likely to undergo major changes in land use or built form.

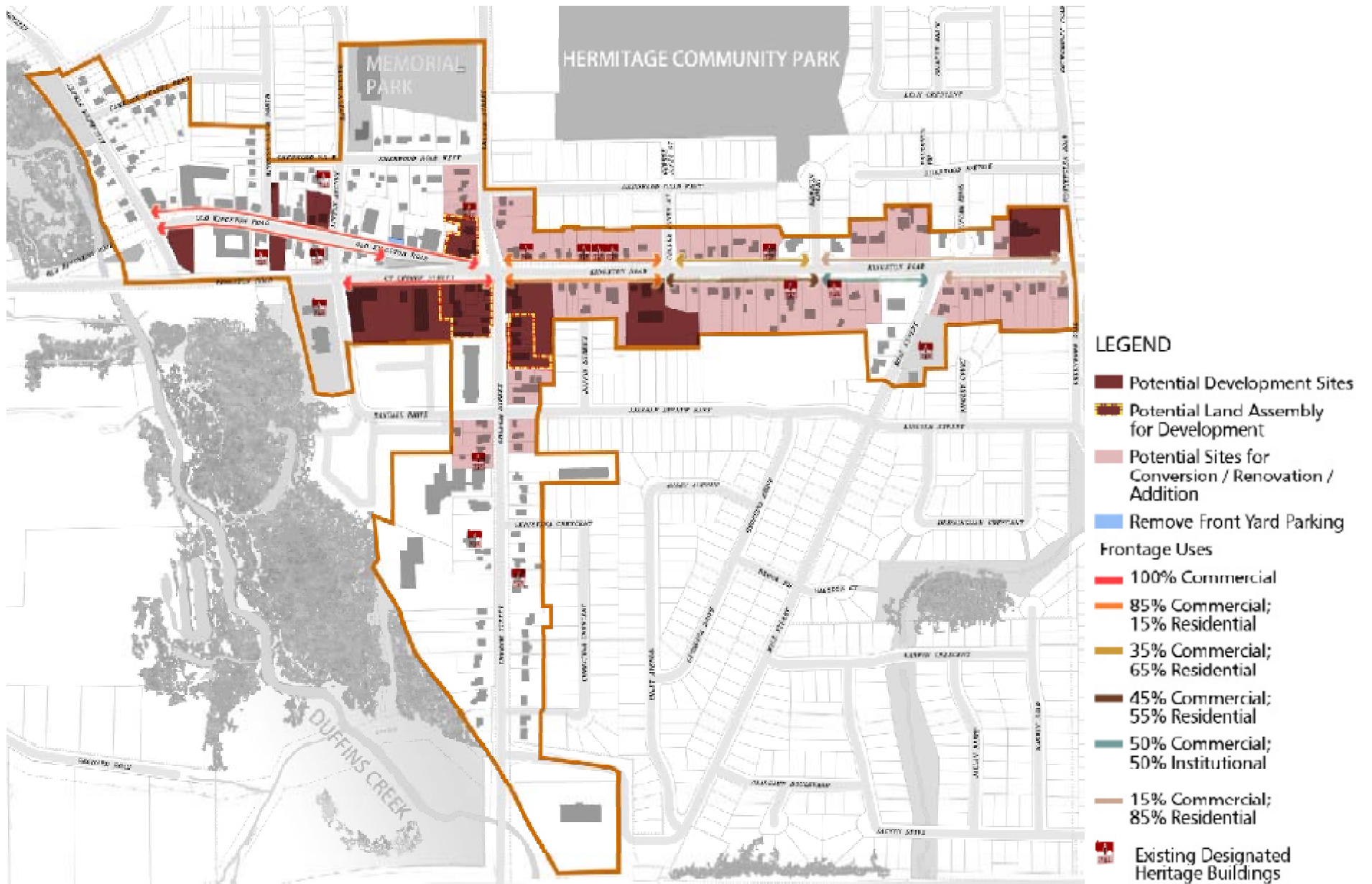


Figure 3.1: Potential Development Sites and Frontage Use, N.T.S.

3.2 Existing Built Form

- The built form in the study area is comprised significantly of single detached dwellings - most retain residential uses but there have been a number of conversions to commercial uses, predominantly along Kingston Road, east of Church Street. Purpose-built commercial buildings and mixed-used buildings are also evident throughout the area, but specifically along Kingston Road, west of Church Street and along Church Street itself.
- Old Kingston Road from Elizabeth Street to Church Street currently features a mixture of low-rise buildings which have been mostly converted to professional service uses.
- Major newer developments on Old Kingston Road include the commercial building at Elizabeth Street, the 4 storey residential development and office building to the east of Elizabeth Street (Unity Village), and the 25 year old mixed-use building on the opposite (south) side, i.e. the “Courtyard”.
- The majority of buildings on Kingston Road east of Church Street are single detached dwellings representing the street’s previous role as a mainly residential enclave.
- Properties on Kingston Road west of Church Street represent a departure in built form and land use from those to the east side. The properties closest to the Church Street intersection reflect the streetfront rhythm of Old Kingston Road, but the building form changes for lots continuing



Right: Mixed-use courtyard building constructed in the early 1980s (the “Courtyard”)



Above: Buildings on the north side of Old Kingston Road



Above: Heritage buildings



Left: Four storey apartment building constructed in 1995 (Unity Village)

Photos: Existing Built Form on Old Kingston Road



Photos: Existing Residential Houses on Kingston Road



Above: St. Francis de Sales Church
Right: Stable residential area
Bottom: Commercial use in house form structure



Above: 12 Storey apartment building on the west side of Church Street, south of Kingston Road



Photos: Existing Built Form on Church Street



westward. Larger lots prevail, with two sites reflecting newer construction to accommodate multi-unit commercial buildings.

- Along Church Street, commercial uses are prevalent closer to the Kingston Road intersection, residential uses in single detached house-form buildings dominate the southern portion of the street. The exception is the mixed-use apartment building with office uses at grade directly south of the St. Francis de Sales Church. Commercial uses are largely accommodated in converted commercial buildings and the Church Street Marketplace (a two-storey mixed-use building completed in the late 1970s), at the corner of Randall Drive.
- The St. Francis de Sales Church is a significant landmark in the study area, its steeple visible from the Kingston Road / Church Street intersection and from Highway 401.
- While the majority of buildings on Church Street are 1-2 storey high, two apartment buildings exceed the 'norm' along the street - a five story apartment building at 66 Church Street South and a 12 storey mixed-use building at 92 Church Street South.

3.3 Built Form Design Guidelines

3.3.1 Old Kingston Road

- Sites with potential for development include the municipally owned site at the northeast corner of Elizabeth Street and Kingston Road, currently used as a parking lot and for garbage storage; the vacant lot at the northeast corner of Windsor Drive and Old Kingston Road; the building and parking lot on the south side of Old Kingston Road at the view terminus of Windsor Drive; the northwest corner of Linton Avenue and Old Kingston Road; and the corner properties at Old Kingston Road and Church Street, as shown in Figure 3.2.
- While not on Kingston Road, the municipal seniors' centre, arena, and community centre located along Linton Avenue and Sherwood Road West are only a short block along Linton Avenue north of Old Kingston Road. This municipal site should be considered for revitalization and the provision of improved arts and cultural services and facilities.
- As shown in Figure 3.2, the municipally owned site at the northeast corner of Elizabeth Street and Kingston Road should have a landmark building that acts as a view terminus from the Duffins Creek Bridge and as the western entrance to Ajax.



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Photos: Examples of Appropriate Built Form on Old Kingston Road



Figure 3.2: Diagram Showing Urban Design Characters on Old Kingston Road



- Any future building at the northeast corner of Old Kingston Road and Windsor Drive should complete the street wall character along Old Kingston Road.
- Any new building on the current parking lot site facing the south end of Windsor Drive should act as the view terminus from Windsor Drive.
- Any new building at the northwest corner of Linton Avenue and Old Kingston Road should reinforce the important pedestrian link along Linton Avenue from Old Kingston Road to the municipally-owned facility surrounding Memorial Park.
- New buildings along Old Kingston Road should follow the average setbacks of existing building on either side, See Figure 3.3.
- The redevelopment of these sites should generally maintain the current zoning height of 12.5 metres. However, they should respect existing adjacent buildings and have a stepback above the height of the existing buildings, as shown in Figure 3.4.

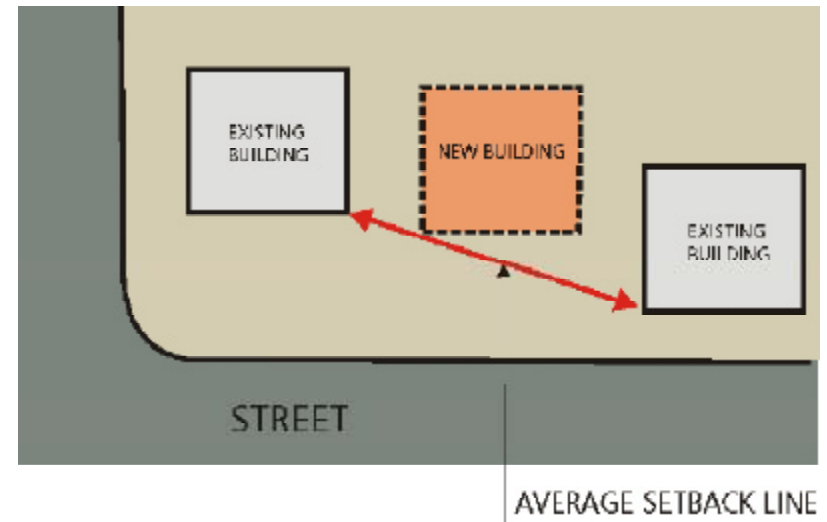


Figure 3.3: Average Setback Line Demonstration Diagram, N.T.S.

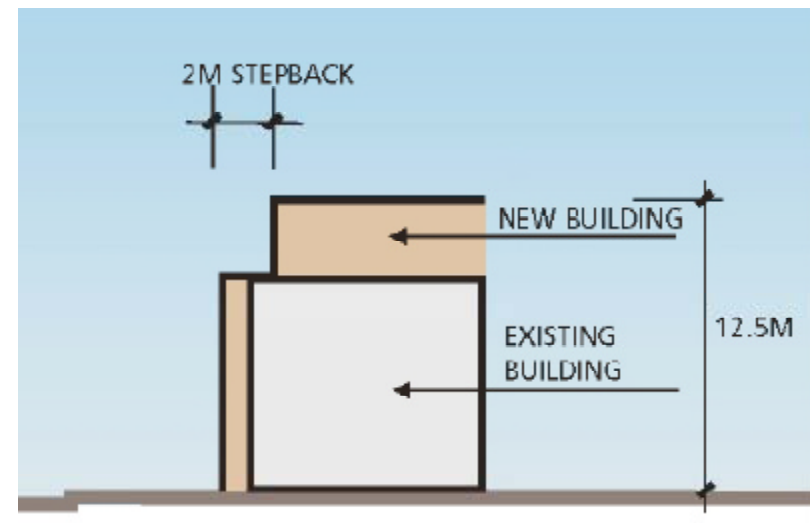


Figure 3.4: New Building Stepback Demonstration Diagram, N.T.S.

3.3.2 Kingston Road / Church Street

- There are two large development blocks in this area. The larger block, and the one with greater development potential, extends along the south side of Kingston Road, from Randall Drive to Church Street. The second site is located at the southeast corner of Kingston Road and Church Street, and extends southwards almost down to Lincoln Street. These sites are identified in Figure 3.1.
- These blocks are recommended for mixed uses and an increase in the height limit from 12.5 metres to 20 metres. Each block has different characteristics and is discussed separately.

Western Site

- The western site features the longest and deepest land parcels, and the least amount of constraints for development, with an overall size of approximately 200 metres by 90 metres, or almost 2 ha.
- The western parcels are the easiest to develop and can proceed independently, although it is recommended that they be consolidated to allow for an integrated form of development. Due to their smaller size, the eastern properties at the intersection of Kingston Road and Church Street should undergo a land assembly process prior to redevelopment.



Photo: Existing Condition at the Southeast Corner of Kingston Rd / Church St.

- These properties should have access easement agreements put in place prior to redevelopment. The easement is shown in Figure 3.5.
- Figure 3.5 shows the minimum setback of 5 metres and maximum setback of 7 metres along Kingston Road, and maximum setback of 9 metres from Church Street, all measured from the property line. The buildings along these frontages should have a minimum streetwall requirement of 75% of frontage.
- The 7 metre minimum setback requirement along Church Street should be applied to allow for a clear view corridor along Church Street to the steeple of St. Frances de Sales Church.
- Figure 3.6 illustrates the height and setback zones.
- The height limit of 20 metres should extend only 40 metres in depth from the Church Street and Kingston Road property lines. Beyond that, the height zones decrease to 15 metres for the next 20 metres, and to 10 metres for the final 20 metres. No buildings are encouraged south of this limit in order to protect the privacy of the townhouse development to the south, as shown in Figure 3.7.
- Figure 3.7 also shows an additional requirement of a fence and landscaped buffer zone of 3 metres along the south property line.

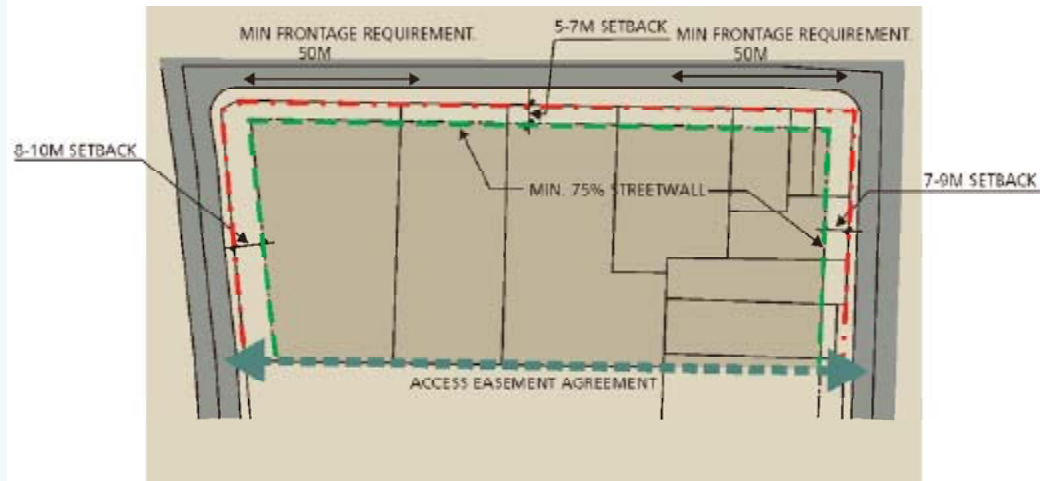


Figure 3.5: Setback & Streetwall Requirements Diagram, N.T.S.

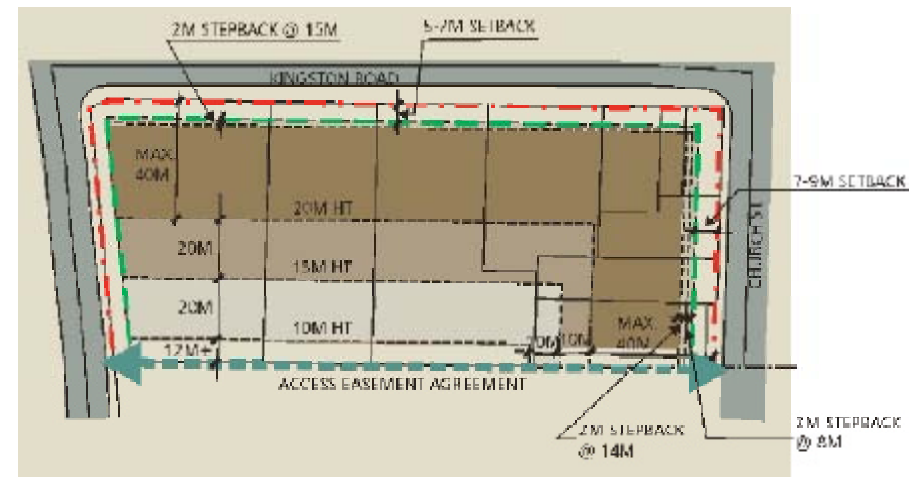


Figure 3.6: Height & Stepback Zones Diagram, N.T.S.

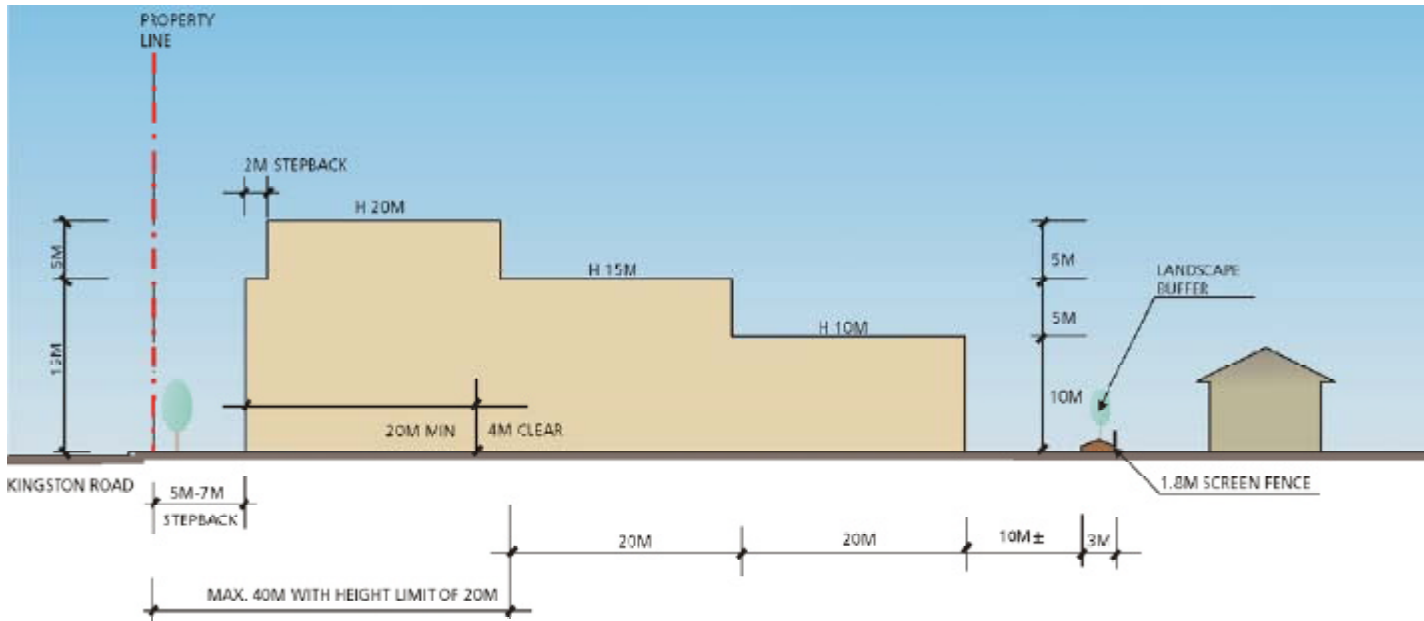


Figure 3.7: Section along Kingston Road Showing Height & Setback Zones, N.T.S.

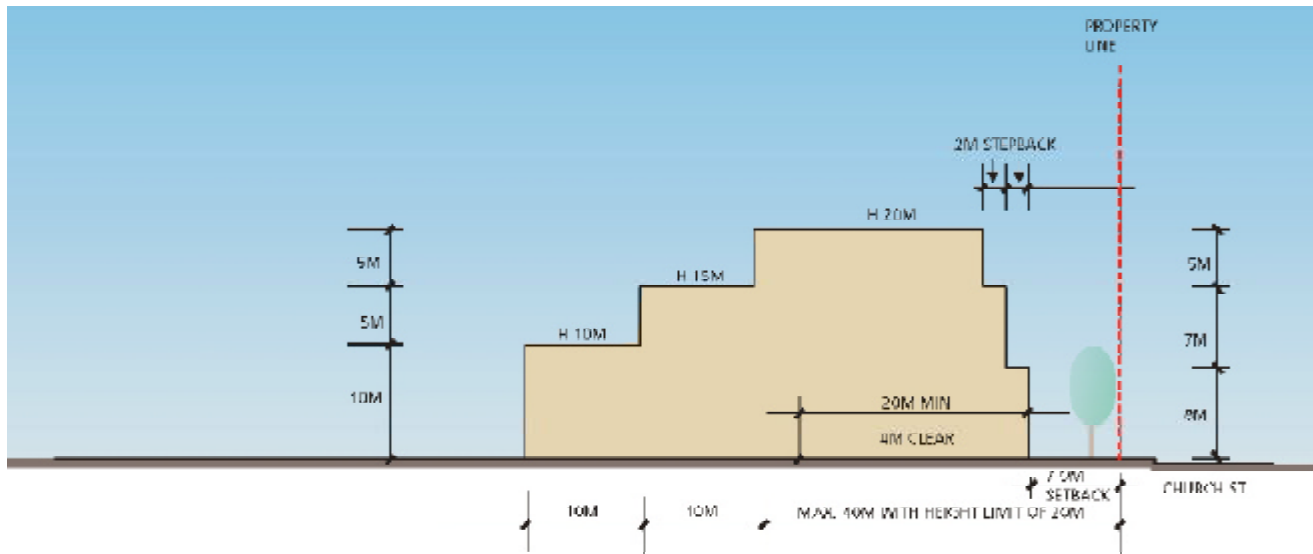


Figure 3.8: Section along Church Street Showing Height & Setback Zones, N.T.S.

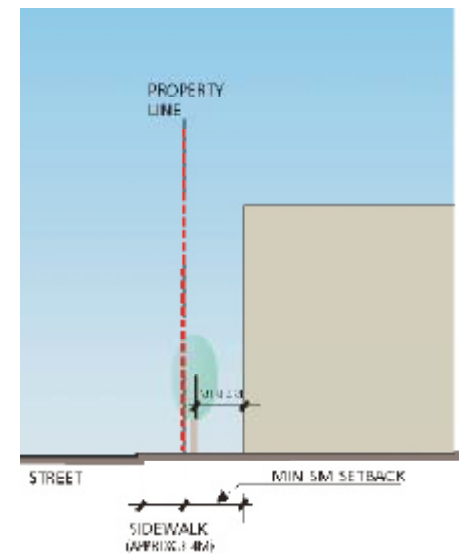


Figure 3.9: Street Tree in Front Yard

- As shown in Figure 3.8, the height zones along Church Street are similar, except that an additional setback zone of 8 metres is proposed in front, in order to allow a view corridor to the steeple of St. Frances de Sales Church to the south, and the 15 metre and 10 metre height zones are reduced to 10 metres depth each in order to maintain a distance from the townhouse development.
- The ground floor of buildings should have a minimum clear height of 4 metres for a depth of 20 metres or more to encourage and accommodate retail and commercial uses.
- Street trees along Kingston Road and Church Street should be planted in the front yard setback zones of private property, as shown in Figure 3.9. These trees and locations should be secured through site plan agreement, with a separate easement and maintenance agreement between the municipality and the landowners to ensure that these trees are maintained to municipal standards. Trees should be planted with sufficient soil volume and topsoil to the satisfaction of the municipality.

Eastern Site

- The eastern site has dimensions of about 150 metres by 65 metres, or almost 1ha in area. The site consists of one large property which contains an auto repair shop and used car sales; the remaining parcels are smaller lots with house form structures that have been converted to commercial uses.

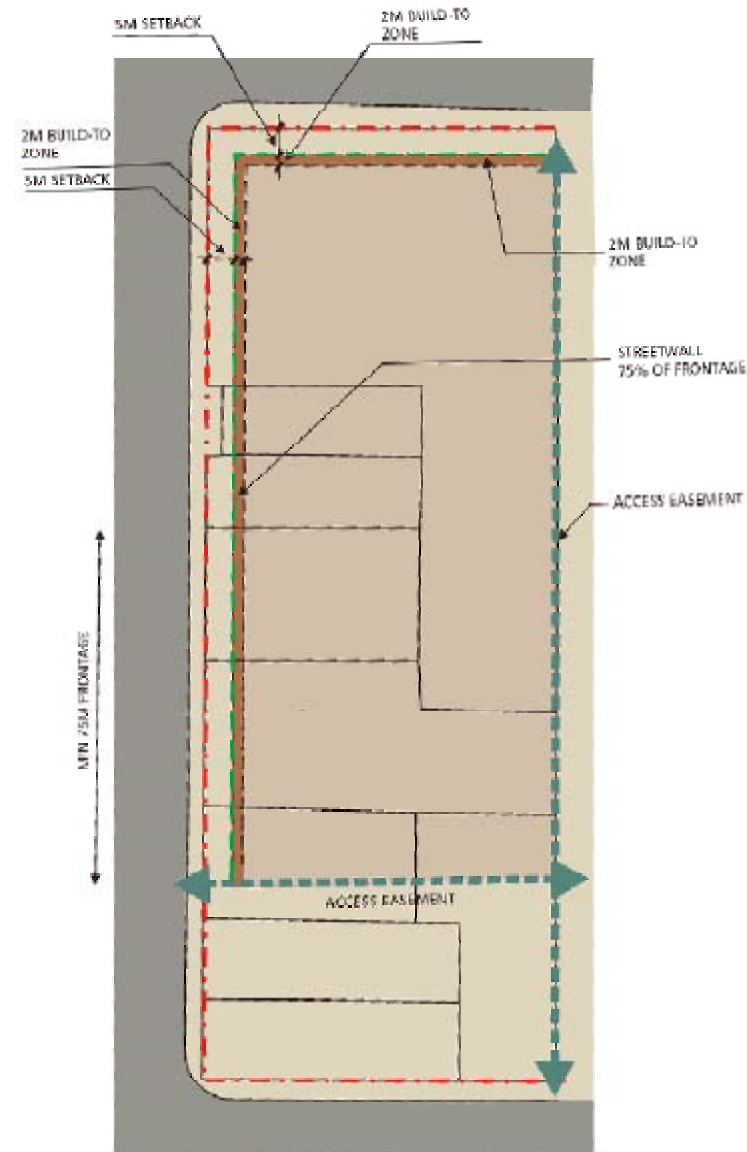


Figure 3.10: Setbacks, Streetwall, Potential Access Easements Diagram, N.T.S.

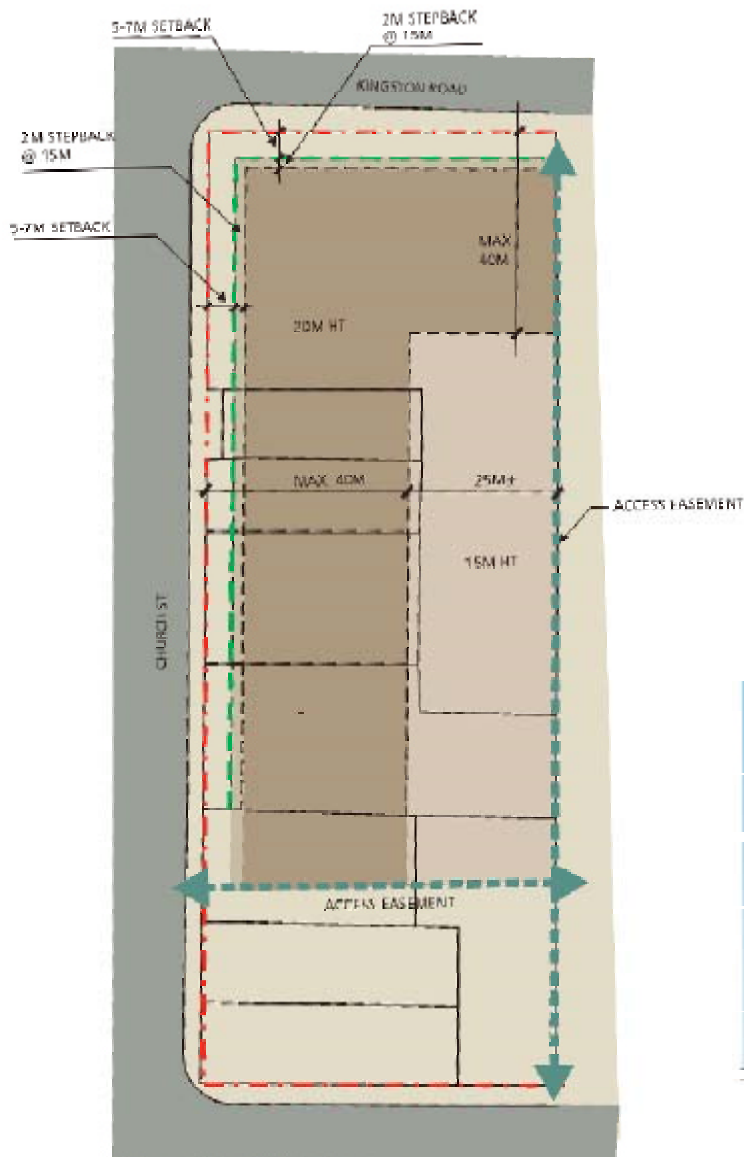


Figure 3.11: Height & Stepback Zones, N.T.S.

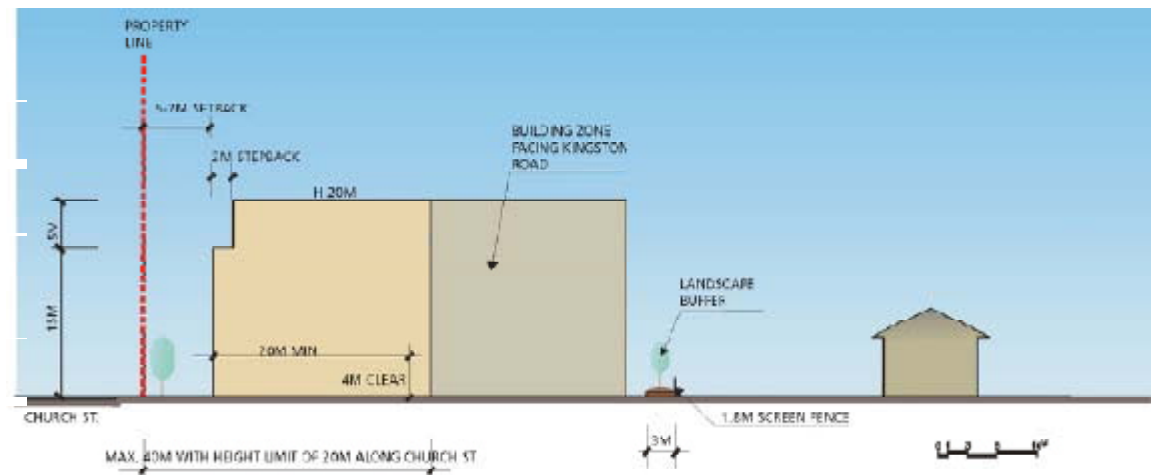


Figure 3.12: Section along Church Street Showing Height & Stepback, N.T.S.

- These individual properties are too small to effectively develop independently. Land assembly should be encouraged and development should only be allowed on parcels with a minimum frontage of 75 metres on Church Street.
- In addition, development should only be allowed to proceed after an access easement agreement has secured through all the properties as proposed in *The Recommendations*.
- The minimum setback of 5 metres, a build-to zone of 2 metres, and a streetwall requirement of minimum 75% of frontage are shown in Figure 3.10. Also illustrated are the minimum frontage requirements for development, and potential access easement locations.
- Figure 3.11 illustrates the height and setback zones for the site.
- The height limit of 20 metres should extend 40 metres in depth from Kingston Road and Church Street property lines. No buildings are encouraged east of the line from Church Street in order to protect the privacy of the rear yards of houses facing Duffin Street, as shown in Figure 3.12.
- Figure 3.12 also shows the building envelope for the site with height and setback zones. A landscape buffer zone of 3 metres is recommended along the east property line. The ground floor of buildings should have a minimum clear height of 4 metres for a minimum depth of 20 metres to accommodate retail and commercial uses. A general image of such development is shown in Figure 3.13 and Figure 3.14.



Figure 3.13: Northeast Bird's Eye View of Potential Development



Figure 3.14: Northwest Bird's Eye View of Potential Development



Photos: Examples of Mid-rise Buildings

3.3.3 Kingston Road East of Church Street

- The remainder of Kingston Road east of Church Street consists mainly of house form structures, many of which have been converted to non-residential uses through individual applications for variance.
- These properties should be allowed to convert to non-residential uses as-of-right, with performance criteria based on the type of use, and on the type of redevelopment being proposed.
- Conversions and minor additions should be required to consolidate driveways. Major additions and redevelopment should be required to enter into access easement agreements, and even conversions should be encouraged to participate in creating a continuous access easement as proposed in *The Recommendations*.
- Conversions of non-heritage buildings should maintain the character and details of the original house form structure. Heritage buildings have other, more stringent requirements.
- Additions should respect the existing house form structure and its height, massing and character. Where possible, additions should be located at the rear of the original building, or at the side but with a minimum 3 metre setback from the front façade in order to preserve the image of the original house from the street.

- Parking for all buildings, conversions, and additions, should be behind the front wall of the buildings.
- All conversions, additions and redevelopment should be required to plant streetscape trees front yard, with access and maintenance agreements, as shown in Figure 3.9.

3.3.4 Church Street South of Randall Drive

- This area is expected to remain as a stable low-rise, low-density residential neighbourhood.
- If there are any renovations, additions, or conversions, the properties should be encouraged to have shared or consolidated driveways in order to increase on-street parking.