

Development Application Guideline

Terms of Reference – Urban Design Study



Description

An Urban Design Study is a document that outlines the form and functional characteristics of a building, as well as the interactions between buildings, streets, open space, landscape elements, and the surrounding built form of a new development proposal and how they contribute to an individual's "sense of place". The Urban Design Study shall highlight how the proposed development's design is guided and informed by good urban design practices, in addition to how the design is in compliance with the goals and objectives defined by the Official Plan (see Appendix A of the Terms of Reference document) and the City's various urban design guideline documents. The Urban Design Study must describe and justify the rationale for the submitted design and provide specific and measurable directions for the proposed development to achieve these goals. The Study should not simply be an argument for a preferred development scheme or design, but an explanation of why the proposed development represents the optimum design solution from an aesthetic and functional perspective. This Terms of Reference document is intended to be applied in conjunction with all other applicable guidelines, such as the City of Kingston's Site Plan Control Guideline and the City of Kingston's Subdivision Development Guideline and Technical Standards.

Rationale

An Urban Design Study may be required in order to review such matters as the arrangement and design of the buildings, compatibility with adjacent land uses, accessibility and safety, function and design of the building and its adjacent streetscapes and public spaces, as well as mitigation of negative impacts on the surrounding area. Furthermore, the Urban Design Study should demonstrate that the functional needs of the users of the site will be met over the long term. The Study provides a context for coordinated incremental development of a larger area, which includes elements such as streetscape and park design, while evaluating the individual conformity of a proposed development to the larger area.

When Required

An Urban Design Study may be required for:

- Zoning By-law Amendments
- Plan of Subdivision

- Plan of Condominium
- Official Plan Amendments
- Site Plan Control
- Or any other development application deemed appropriate by Council or delegate
- Proposed developments within identified areas of the City, such as Centres and Corridors, as well as specific policy areas such as the North Block Central Business District, Downtown and Harbour Area, Williamsville Main Street, and any other areas outlined in the Official Plan.

Applicable Legislation

Section 2 of the Planning Act outlines matters of provincial interest to which all approval authorities shall have regard for in making a decision. Item (r) of Section 2 states that approval authorities shall have regard for:

- (r) the promotion of built form that,
 - (i) is well designed,
 - (ii) encourages a sense of place, and
 - (iii) provides for public spaces that are of high quality, safe, accessible, attractive and vibrant.

The Planning Act gives Council the authority to request other information or material that it deems necessary in order to evaluate and make a decision on a proposed planning application.

Section 9.12.3 of the City's Official Plan contains a list of additional information (such as an Urban Design Study) which may be required upon request.

Section 1.7 d) of the Provincial Policy Statement outlines the importance of well-designed spaces that recognizes, values, and supports the aspects of the built environment which contribute to an area's sense of place:

- d) encouraging a sense of place, by promoting well-designed built form and cultural planning, and by conserving features that help define character, including built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes;

Qualified Persons

An Urban Design Study should be completed by an urban designer, licensed architect and/or a registered professional planner with experience in urban design.

Required Contents

1. Introduction & Site Context

1.1. Provide an introduction to the proposed development that includes a vision statement which describes the mission for the function, look and feel of the proposal.

1.1.1. This may include any relevant urban design principles that guided the design process (e.g. sense of place, walkability, varied housing types, accessible open spaces, environmentally sustainable development, active transportation, cultural heritage, etc.).

1.2. An analysis of the local and regional/community context of the site should be conducted and may include:

- Natural features and topography
- Built form character of the surrounding area
- Lot fabric of the surrounding area, including land uses
- Street and block pattern of the area
- Transportation networks including vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, transit and accessible networks
- Relationship to public open spaces, parks, and public amenities
- Identification of any major landmarks, gateways, and views and vistas to or from the site
- Linkages or connections to important or interesting features
- Relevant historical context
- Maps, plans, photographs and conceptual drawings are encouraged

2. Policy and Regulatory Context

2.1. Provide a summary and analysis of relevant Provincial and City documents and policies, including a description of how the proposal accounts for and implements the urban design principles and strategies established in:

- The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)
- The City of Kingston's Official Plan
- The City of Kingston's Zoning By-law
- Any applicable urban design guidelines or secondary plans

3. Design Considerations & Concept Plan

3.1. This section should highlight how the established urban design principles have guided the design of the site through the use of written descriptions, concept plans and drawings, diagrams, 3D models, and photographs that explain how the proposal addresses the following design considerations:

3.1.1. Site Design

Provide a description of the site's design elements and include any relevant plans or drawings, which may include:

- Urban structure and general built form

- Street and block pattern, including connectivity
- Placement of buildings and orientation
- Vehicular, pedestrian, and cycling access and circulation
- Accessibility features
- Location of parking, driveways, ramps, and drop-off areas
- Access to public transit
- Landscaping elements
- Location of servicing areas such as loading, storage, garbage, utilities, etc.
- Walkability and pedestrian comfort and safety
- Street furniture location and details

3.1.2. Massing

Provide a description and concept plan of the site's massing, scale, and compatibility with the surrounding area that may include:

- Building height and massing
- Compatibility with built form in surrounding area
- Shadow impacts including a sun / shadow analysis or full Shadow Impact Study if necessary
- Building setbacks and setbacks from adjacent properties and the street

3.1.3. Building and Architectural Design

Provide a brief description and relevant drawings or plans including 3D renderings of the building and architectural design elements of the site which, if the element is present, should include:

- Building typology
- Roof treatment
- Location of garage, utilities, and mechanical equipment
- Location of entrances and exits
- Architectural expression and style
- Materials and colour palette
- Lighting and signage
- Shadow impacts and accessibility to sunlight
- Floor plate shape and design
- Base, middle, and top of buildings (if applicable)
- Massing articulation

Tip: If possible, include the original digital files of any 3D renderings. This will provide City staff the opportunity to understand the broader context of the proposal, check for accuracy, and provide feedback and suggestions on the rendering.

3.1.4. Public Realm

Provide a description of the public realm elements of the proposed development, which may include concept plans and drawings to aid in describing the following features:

- Streetscape elements and landscaping
- Public plazas and semipublic spaces
- Public walkways and mid-block connections
- Linkages to open spaces within and outside the site
- Cycling routes and Greenway systems
- Screening elements and fencing
- Landscaped buffers and parking islands
- Gateways and entrances
- Public art

3.1.5. Sustainable Elements

Identify any elements of the proposed design that contributes to the environmental sustainability of the site and community as whole. These may include:

- LEED certification or other similar sustainable initiatives
- Carbon emission and waste reduction strategies
- Design features or programs intended to increase water and energy efficiency, such as green roofs, solar panels, permeable pavement, car sharing, etc.

3.1.6. Heritage

Heritage buildings and landscapes on the site should be preserved, enhanced and incorporated into the design where feasible in accordance with the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The following should be considered:

- Analysis of the heritage character and heritage attributes of the site
- Compatibility of the proposed design with existing heritage features
- A strategy for how the important heritage details, materials, landscape features and architectural patterns will be reinforced and preserved in the design
- A Heritage Impact Statement may be required

4. Conclusion

- 4.1. Provide a brief conclusion of the urban design study and proposed development that may include any other pertinent information related to the implementation of the design.

Submission Requirements

All development applications and accompanying studies and reports should be submitted through the City of Kingston's **DASH Development and Services Hub** which can be accessed online at: [City of Kingston DASH](#)

Additional Comments and Information

For additional information, please contact the City of Kingston Planning, Building and Licensing Services Department at:

1211 John Counter Boulevard, Kingston

613-546-4291 ext. 3180

planning@cityofkingston.ca

See the City of Kingston's urban design guidelines for design criteria and best practice recommendations: [urban design guidelines](#)

Appendix A: City of Kingston Official Plan Policies Regarding Urban Design

Urban Design Elements	Intent	Official Plan Policies
Cohesive Streetscape	Maintain the character and identity of the street and its relationship to the community.	2.6.2.(b); 2.6.3.(a); 2.6.5.(c,d); 2.7.1.; 4.6.6; 8.5.(a); 8.6(d); 8.10.(c); 8.11.2.;
Shadowing	Prevent loss of sunlight to surrounding uses caused by tall buildings.	2.7.3. (a); 3.3.B.2.(e); 8.9.(c); 8.10.(g);
Street Pattern	Providing walkable, efficient, and transit supportive road networks.	8.6.(d);
Landscaping	Creating an attractive and compatible environment.	2.6.5.(c,d); 2.7.4.(e); 2.7.6.(b); 8.5.(e); 8.10.(a); 9.5.26.;
Accessibility	Promote access for everyone regardless of physical ability.	2.3.18.; 8.3.(e); 8.4(a); 8.6(c);
Walkability and Active Transportation	Providing options for active transportation and ensuring a pedestrian oriented human scale.	2.4.1.(c); 2.6.3.(d); 2.7.6.(f); 4.6.4.; 4.6.5.; 8.3.(e); 8.4.(d); 8.5.(a); 8.10(a)
Public Transit Access	Providing access to transit as a means of reducing automobile usage.	2.4.1.(c); 2.6.3.(d); 2.7.6.(d); 4.6.2.; 4.6.3.; 4.6.14.; 8.2.(f);
Building Massing and Height	Achieving compatible built form with the surrounding area.	2.6.5.(d); 2.7.4.(b); 2.7.6.(a,c); 8.5.(a); 8.6.(a,d);
Heritage Compatibility	Maintaining the integrity of significant heritage resources.	2.9.3.(a); 7.1.10.; 8.2.(g); 8.3.(g); 8.5.(g); 8.6.(b);
Architectural Expression	Achieving compatibility with a predominant architectural style.	2.6.3.(a); 2.6.5.(d); 8.6.(d);
Public Spaces	Ensuring comfortable and attractive	3.3.9.(f); 8.5.(b,f);

Urban Design Elements	Intent	Official Plan Policies
	public gathering areas.	8.10.(a,b);
Linkages and Circulation	Providing appropriate and efficient movement of persons.	2.6.5.(f); 2.7.4.(f); 4.6.5.; 8.10.(a,b,g);
Parking	Maintaining adequate parking for all modes of transportation.	2.5.13; 2.7.6.(f); 3.3.9.(d); 3.4.C.7.; 8.10.(a); 10A.3.; 10B.12.;
Gateways and Views	Protecting and showcasing important landmarks and views.	8.5.(c); 8.8.; 8.9.; 8.11.; 8.11.1.; 10B.6.3; 10.C.8.12; 10D.9.(h,i); 10E.1.1.; 10E.1.9.;
Public Art & Culture	Promoting arts and culture in public spaces.	8.2.(h); 8.6.(e);
Sustainable Design	Pushing for environmentally sustainable development.	2.1.; 2.4.1.; 3.3.4.; 8.2.(e); 8.3.(f); 8.6.(c); 9.1.1.; 9.5.25.(k); 9.5.32.(i); 9.5.34.(d,e); 9.7.2.1.(b); 10D.1.2.(d); 10D.10.6.(a,b,c); 10E.1.2.(g); 10E.1.23.; 10F.1.(g); 10F.10.3.
Lighting	Providing a safe, attractive environment for the public.	2.7.4.(g); 3.4.18.(b,f,l); 3.4F.5.; 3.4F.6.(c); 3.4G.5.(c); 3.4G.8.(e); 3.5.8.(g,h); 3.6.17.(p); 3.11.4.(d); 4.6.61.; 8.4.(b), 8.10.(a); 9.8.5.(e); 10B.2.11.(f); 10B.3.7.; 10B.3.14.(h); 10B.6.3.; 10B.13.1.; 10C.3.26.(f); 10C.5.1.; 10C.8.12.; 10C.9.3.(f); 10D.9.(h); 10E.1.14.(e);

Urban Design Elements	Intent	Official Plan Policies
Materials and Colour	Using attractive and appropriate design that complements established development.	2.7; 3.3.7.(b); 3.3.9.(a); 3.4.C.13.(d); 3.6.17.(i); 8.6.(d); 3.17.14.(c,d); 3.17.17.(b); 6.2.1.(b); 7.3.C.8.(e); 7.3.D.1.(e,f); 8.4.(e); 8.6.(a); 9.5.34.(e); 10D.9.(h); 10E.1.26.; 10F.3.9.(c); 10F.6.8.;
Safety	Creating spaces that are safe and enjoyable.	Section 1.4 Universal Design Principles; 2.7.2; 2.7.3(h); 2.7.6.(f); 2.10.2; 2.10.3; 3.3.14; 3.3.15; 3.4.18(f); Section 5; 8.4.(b,c,e,f); 10E.1.16.(e);
Built Form Compatibility	Ensuring all elements of built form are compatible and appropriate with prevailing pattern of development in the area.	2.2.5; 2.6.3.(a,d); 2.6.5.(d); 2.7; 8.3.(b); 8.5.(d); 8.6.(d); 8.8.(b); 8.10.(c,d); 10F.3.9.(b); 10F.3.14.(b); 10F.3.18.(b); 10F.4.9.(b); 10F.6.14.;
Screening and Buffering	Mitigating undue adverse effects to abutting land uses.	2.6.5.(e); 2.7.4.(c); 3.3.9.(g); 3.6.17.(k); 3.16.4.(g); 8.5.(e,h);