

City of Mississauga

Corporate Report



Date: August 30, 2016

To: Chair and Members of Planning and Development Committee

From: Edward R. Sajecki, Commissioner of Planning and Building

Originator's file:
CD.06 HOR

Meeting date:
2016/09/19

Subject

Horizontal Multiple Dwellings - Urban Design Guidelines (All Wards)

File: CD.06 HOR

Recommendation

1. That the report titled "Horizontal Multiple Dwellings – Urban Design Guidelines (All Wards)", dated August 30, 2016, from the Commissioner of Planning and Building, be received for information.
2. That urban design guidelines for horizontal multiple dwellings be prepared by staff to be brought forward to a future Planning and Development Committee Meeting for Council endorsement.
3. That staff review the current zoning terminology and **RM8** and **RM9** zone regulations for horizontal multiple dwellings and determine if amendments to the by-law are required.

Report Highlights

- The Planning and Building Department is receiving an increasing number of development applications that include horizontal multiple dwellings
- This form of housing has a number of positive qualities, but also presents a number of challenges if not designed well
- Urban design guidelines are proposed to assist landowners, applicants, the development industry and the public by outlining the framework and urban design principles to ensure the highest quality of development and compatibility with the surrounding neighbourhood
- A review of current **RM8** and **RM9** zone regulations and zoning terminology for horizontal multiple dwellings is recommended to determine if amendments are required.

Background

Given that the City is at the end of its greenfield development phase, new growth is being accommodated through infilling and redevelopment. Conventional forms of housing including, detached and semi-detached homes and traditional townhouses are becoming less common as the development industry proposes more compact and transit supportive development patterns that use land, resources, infrastructure and community services more efficiently.

Horizontal multiple dwellings (herein referred to as "HMDs") are becoming more popular throughout the GTA. The Planning and Building Department has seen an increase in the number of development applications proposing this form of housing. Currently there are 12 active development applications and 9 preliminary meetings/inquiries for potential applications (see Appendix 1).

Although HMDs have a number of positive qualities, several issues have emerged among recent applications. These issues impact site layout and building design, as well as compatibility with adjacent properties and land uses. Urban design guidelines specific to this form of housing should be developed to establish a design expectation for landowners, applicants, the development industry and the public, to ensure the highest quality of development and to meet the City of Mississauga's minimum standards of development. The purpose of this report is to inform Planning and Development Committee of some of the issues that are arising in a number of development applications currently under review and to recommend that a detailed set of design guidelines be prepared to address these issues and other design related matters.

Comments

The term Horizontal Multiple Dwelling is unique to the City of Mississauga and applies to those housing types commonly referred to as stacked townhouses, back-to-back townhouses and back-to-back stacked townhouses. Historically, the term has been used to describe unique forms of housing that do not fit into one of the other conventional built forms defined in the Zoning By-law (i.e. Detached Dwelling, Semi-Detached Dwelling, Duplex Dwelling, Townhouse Dwelling, Apartment Dwelling, etc.). Zoning By-law 0225-2007 defines Horizontal Multiple Dwelling as:

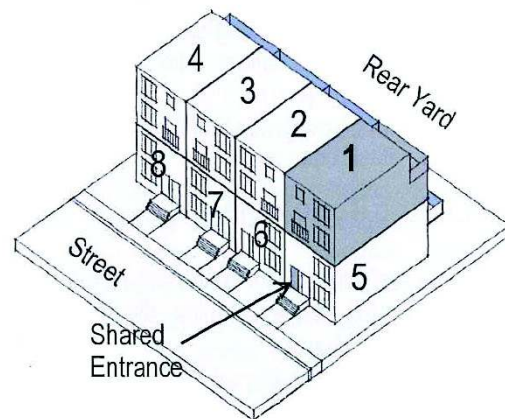


Figure 1 - Stacked Townhouses

A building, other than a townhouse dwelling, or apartment dwelling, not exceeding four (4) storeys in height, containing more than three (3) attached dwelling units that are divided horizontally and/or vertically, each with an entrance that is independent or through a common vestibule.

This form of housing is not new to Mississauga. Also known as walk-up apartments, garden flats, maisonettes and skylight apartments, a number of these types of developments are located throughout the City (see Appendices 2 and 3). Some have been more successful than others, which in most cases is attributed to good design and property maintenance.

In recent years, HMDs have become increasingly popular for a number of reasons. These include:

- Increased densities in a low-rise form of housing
- A sensitive way to transition between low-density and high-density built forms
- Diversity of housing choices to meet different needs and preferences
- Less expensive construction methods and reduced maintenance fees allow for a more affordable form of housing
- Grade related housing, with a front door directly to the outside
- Profitable for the development industry

As densities increase and developments become more compact it can be challenging to balance functional requirements with good site design. As a result, a number of common issues have emerged among recent development applications for this form of housing (see Appendix 4). These include:

Exposed Parking Structures

To avoid extensive excavation for underground parking structures, parking is proposed in the first level of buildings. This raises the finished floor elevation of the first habitable storey, resulting in an increased number of stairs into units and an undesirable pedestrian experience. Excessive stairs are not age-friendly or universally accessible and can be hazardous if not well maintained and during winter months.

Grading and Retaining Walls

Existing site grades are being modified such that numerous retaining walls are required. This is a concern for a number of reasons; including safety, maintenance, site circulation and aesthetics.

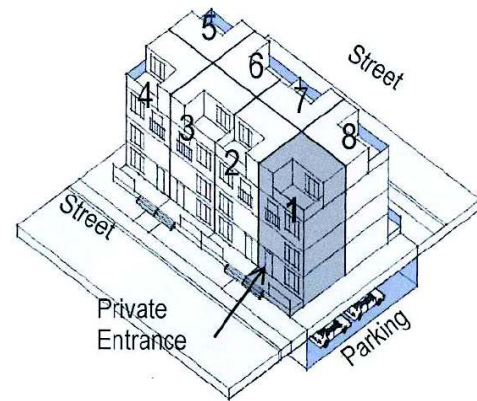


Figure 2 - Back-to-back Townhouses

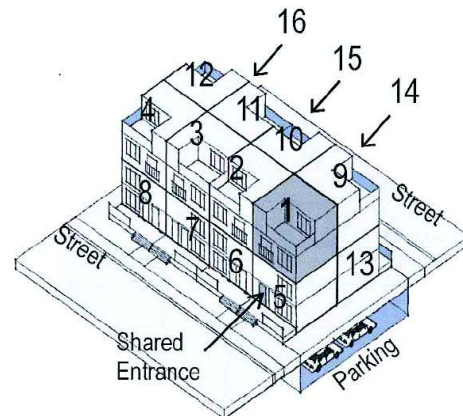


Figure 3 - Back-to-back Stacked Townhouses

Common Amenity Area

Residential developments, with the exception of freehold developments, are required to provide common outdoor on-site amenity areas. Insufficient and in some cases no common on-site amenity area is proposed, resulting in no communal gathering space and requiring residents to travel off-site for active and passive recreation.

Below Grade Units

An increasing number of below grade units are being proposed. Lack of sunlight, fresh air and usable private amenity space are some of the issues with below grade units.

Compliance with Zoning Standards

Zoning By-law 0225-2007 permits Horizontal Multiple Dwellings in the **RM8** (Horizontal Multiple Dwellings with 4 to 6 Dwelling Units) and **RM9** (Horizontal Multiple Dwellings with more than 6 Dwelling Units) zones. Modifications to the **RM8** and **RM9** zone standards to accommodate development proposals are common; including reduced building setbacks, reduced landscape buffers, increased building heights and increased encroachments into required yards. Rationales for proposed changes to the zone standards are not being provided. Changes to zone standards effect site design, create overlook and privacy issues, limit the amount of landscaping, and often result in unacceptable impacts on adjacent properties.

Building Height

HMDs typically range in height from 3 to 4 storeys. An increasing number of development applications are proposing 5 or more storeys to accommodate exposed first level parking structures or below grade units. Additionally, the majority of development applications are proposing roof top patios to compensate for the limited amenity area on-site. This causes compatibility concerns due to buildings being 2 to 3 storeys taller than buildings on adjacent properties and can result in privacy and overlook issues, as well as shadowing if not well designed.

Waste Collection and Storage

Waste collection and storage areas are being proposed in visible locations, abutting dwelling units and blocking parking spaces. If not appropriately designed these areas can cause noise and odour issues, generate unsightly views and become a safety concern.

Adequate Parking

Reduced parking rates are common and in some cases no visitor parking is proposed, which can result in on-street parking issues and parking on adjacent properties.

Reduced Landscape Area

Rather than providing wider landscape buffers to allow for gradual changes in grading, space is so restricted that retaining walls are required to achieve grade changes in less area. These reduced landscape areas and buffers also limit the amount of space available for planting and vegetation on-site.

Utilities and Servicing

Applicants are waiting until late in the process to design and locate utilities and servicing. Poorly designed electrical and gas meters, transformers, air conditioning units, mechanical equipment and other servicing features reduce the usable landscape area, create an unattractive condition and can impact how the site functions. Since most of the site is used for buildings, parking and driveways, there is little opportunity to develop creative solutions to correct these issues at a later stage in the development process.

Unit Size and Storage

Although appealing to different demographics, HMDs are particularly popular among young families since they are an affordable form of grade-related housing. Unfortunately, unit sizes are small and provide little storage space. Unlike apartment buildings that offer storage lockers for large items like bicycles and strollers, space in HMDs is confined such that bulky items are stored on patios, porches and in parking spaces. Therefore, while HMDs are attractive for young families they may not adequately address their needs.

Property Management and Maintenance

Good property management is critical to the long term maintenance and upkeep of multiple unit residential developments, including HMDs. This is often overlooked during the development process as the responsibility is ultimately passed onto the condominium corporation and unit owners. To keep maintenance fees low, developers are not proposing full-time on-site property management, which is a concern given the number of units in these types of developments. It is therefore important that developments are thoughtfully designed from the outset to minimize costly maintenance issues in the future.

Financial Impact

Not applicable.

Conclusion

Although HMDs offer many advantages, a number of issues have emerged among recent development applications for this form of housing. Urban design guidelines should be prepared to establish a design expectation for landowners, applicants, the development industry and the public to ensure the highest quality of development and compatibility with site conditions and the surrounding neighbourhood. Development applications will be evaluated using these urban design guidelines, as well as the policies of Mississauga Official Plan, Zoning By-law regulations and other Council endorsed documents.

In addition to the guidelines, a review of the existing **RM8** and **RM9** zone regulations and zoning terminology is proposed in order to determine if changes to the Zoning By-law are appropriate.

Attachments

Appendix 1: Proposed Developments with Horizontal Multiple Dwellings

Appendix 2: Photos of Existing Horizontal Multiple Dwellings

Appendix 3: Existing Developments with Horizontal Multiple Dwellings

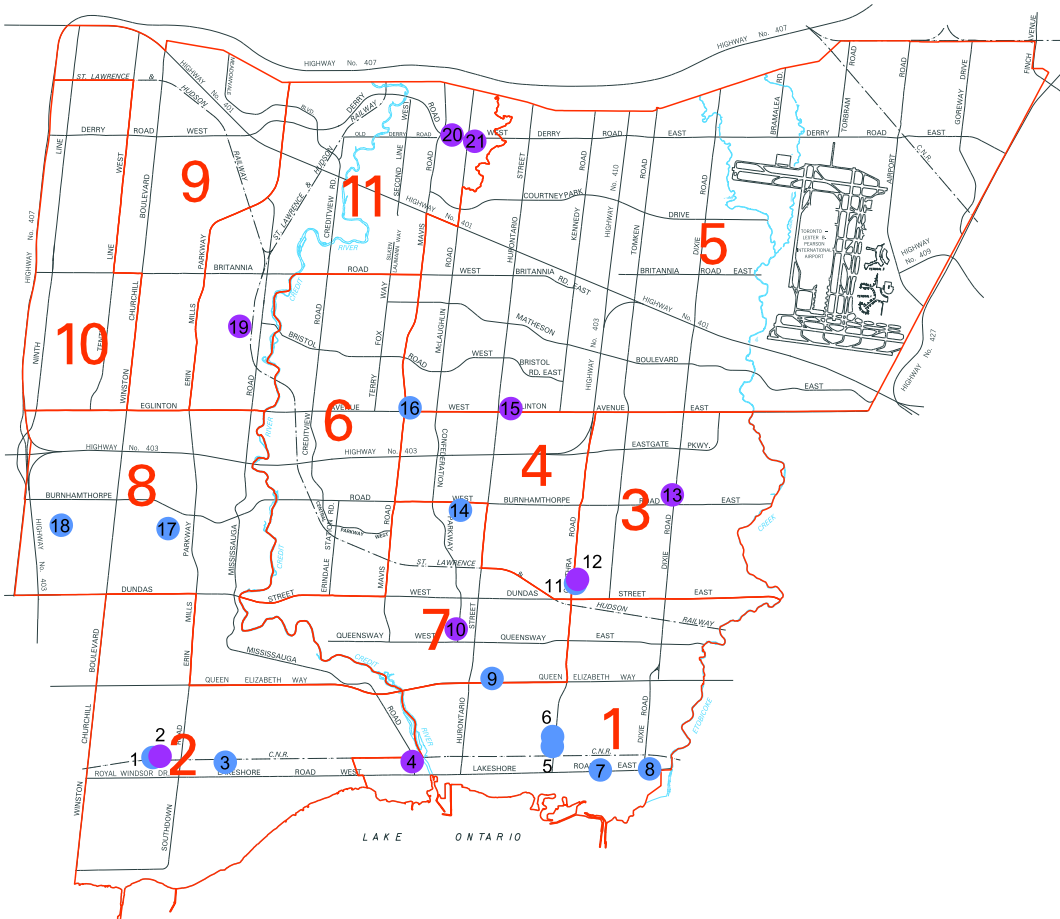
Appendix 4: Photos of Design Issues in Existing Developments



Edward R. Sajecki

Commissioner of Planning and Building

Prepared by: Ashlee Rivet, Development Planner

**LEGEND:**

- Development Application in Process
- Preliminary Meeting / Inquiry
- Ward Boundary

SITES:

- 1 2210 & 2230 Bromsgrove Rd
- 2 2200 Bromsgrove Rd
- 3 1101-1125 Clarkson Rd N
- 4 11 Queen St W
- 5 1174-1206 Cawthra Rd
- 6 650 Atwater Ave
- 7 1041 Lakeshore Rd E
- 8 1407 Lakeshore Rd E
- 9 2024 & 2040 Camilla Rd
- 10 150 Paisley Blvd W
- 11 3111 & 3123 Cawthra Rd
- 12 3141 Cawthra Rd
- 13 4064, 4070 & 4078 Dixie Rd
- 14 180-190 Webb Dr
- 15 91 Eglinton Ave E
- 16 732, 784 Eglinton Ave W & 4920 Mavis Rd
- 17 2277 South Millway
- 18 3355 The Collegeway
- 19 80 Thomas St
- 20 611 Derry Rd W
- 21 390 Derry Rd W

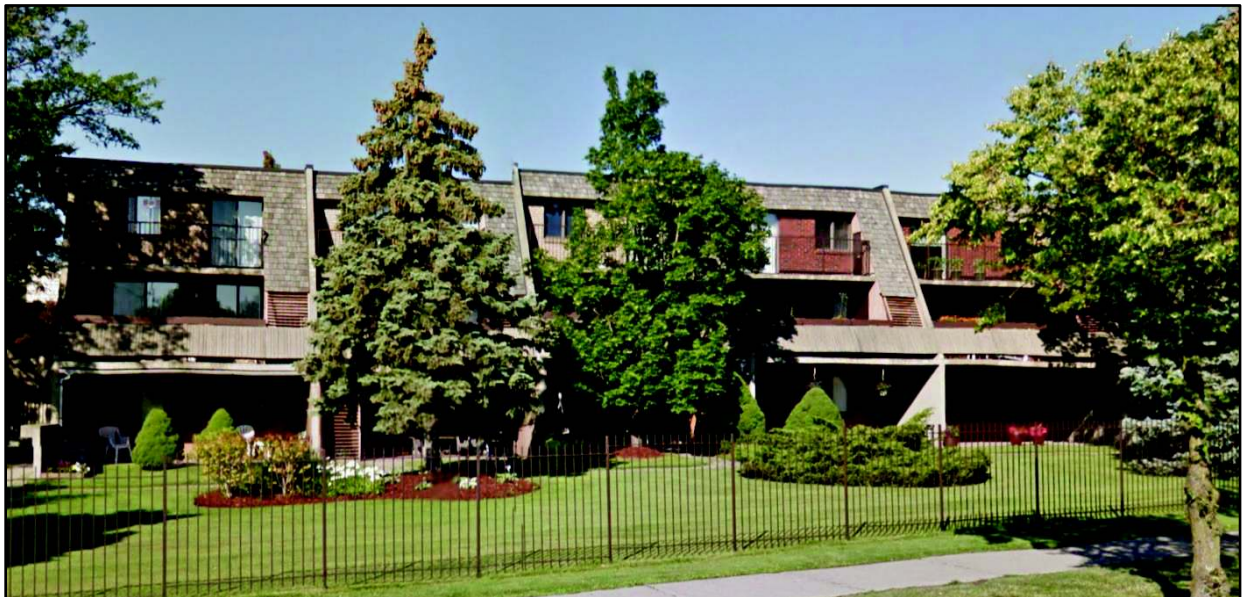
SUBJECT: Proposed Developments with Horizontal Multiple Dwellings

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Photos of Existing Horizontal Multiple Dwellings

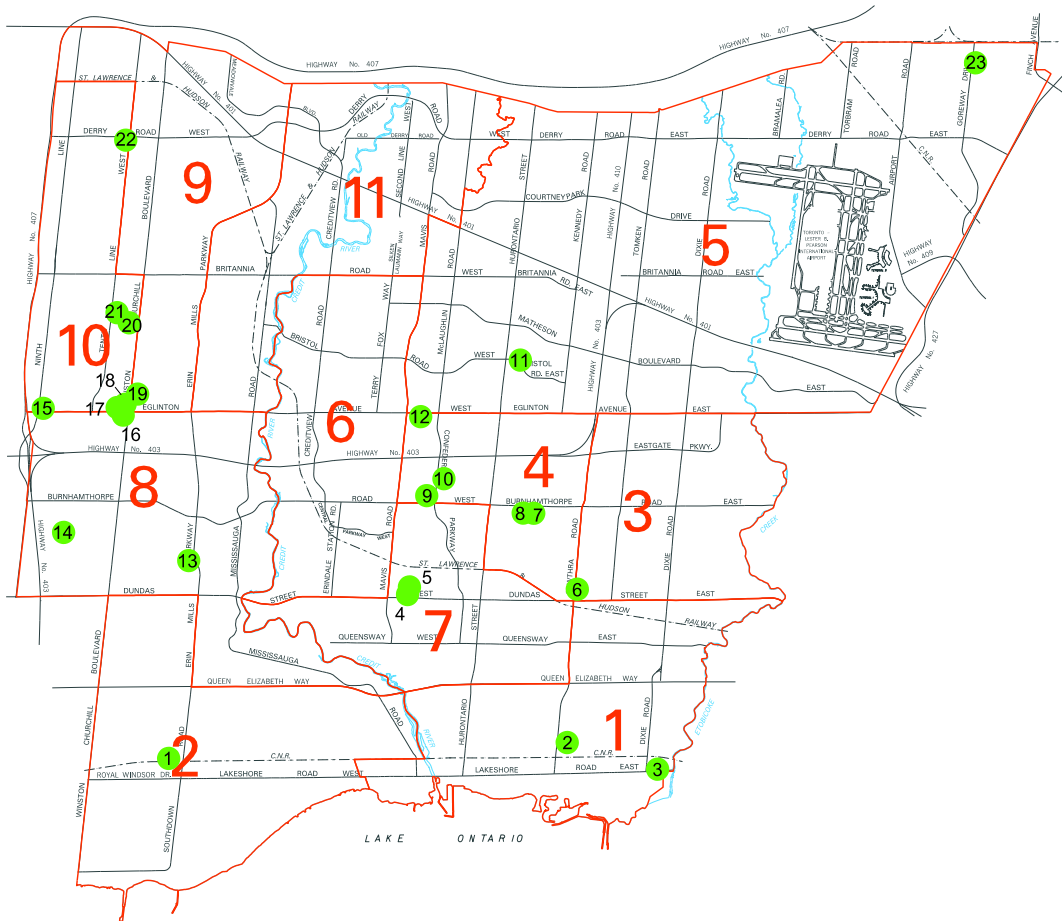








Source: Google Streetview 2016

**LEGEND:**

- Existing Development
- Ward Boundary

SITES:

- 1 2170 Bromsgrove Rd
- 2 1211-1241 Parkwest Pl
- 3 1439, 1451 Lakeshore Rd E & 1013, 1017 Deta Rd
- 4 600 Shoreline Dr
- 5 601 Shoreline Dr
- 6 3071-3083 Cawthra Rd
- 7 1250 Mississauga Valley Blvd
- 8 1330 Mississauga Valley Blvd
- 9 4010-4080 Parkside Village Dr
- 10 360-370 Square One Dr
- 11 45-85 & 99-119 Bristol Rd E
- 12 4620 Guildwood Way
- 13 2035 South Millway
- 14 3470 & 3480 Colonial Dr
- 15 5050 Intrepid Dr
- 16 4975 Southampton Dr
- 17 5005 Oscar Peterson Blvd
- 18 5090-5070 Harvard Rd & 3100-3190 Boxford Cres
- 19 2891 Rio Crt
- 20 3069 Thomas St
- 21 5700-5750 Tosca Dr, 3335-3395 Thomas St,
5725-5755 Tenth Line W & 3200-3250 Bentley Dr
- 22 6950 Tenth Line W
- 23 7555 Goreway Dr

SUBJECT: Existing Developments with Horizontal Multiple Dwellings

FILE NO: CD06.HOR



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Photos of Design Issues in Existing Developments



