

**<sup>1</sup> SECTION 24 – DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR LARGE COMMERCIAL AND RETAIL DEVELOPMENTS**

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## **INTRODUCTION & PROCEDURE**

The City of Dundas adopted Section 24 to enact these guidelines as a means of guiding the development of large commercial and retail establishments through the PUD process and to provide clear expectations to mitigate negative impacts associated with large developments.

These guidelines are a response to dissatisfaction with corporate chain marketing strategy dictating design that is indifferent to local identity and interests. The main goal is to encourage development that contributes to Dundas as a unique place by reflecting its physical character and adding to it in appropriate ways.

Large retail developments depend on high visibility from major public streets. In turn, their design determines much of the character and attractiveness of major streetscapes in the city. The marketing interests of many corporations, even with strong image-making design by professional designers, can be potentially detrimental to community aspirations and sense of place when they result in massive individual developments that do not contribute to or integrate with the city in a positive way.

Dundas already has performance standards and requirements as specified in Section 4 of the Zoning Code that promote solutions to general issues concerning commercial development. The purpose of these guidelines for large commercial development is to augment those existing performance standards with more specific interpretations that apply to the design of large commercial-retail store developments.

These guidelines require a basic level of architectural variety, compatible scale, pedestrian and bicycle access, and mitigation of negative impacts. The guidelines are by no means intended to limit creativity; it is the City's hope that they will serve as a useful tool for design professionals engaged in designing a site within the "Dundas" context. They are placed within the framework of the existing Zoning Code to communicate the importance the City places on these site design policies.

The following guidelines are intended to be used as a design aid by developers proposing large commercial developments in community and regional shopping centers and as an evaluation tool by the City staff and the Planning Commission in their review processes. These guidelines apply to all projects where a proposed building (or group of buildings) exceeds 80,000 square feet. These guidelines are to be used in conjunction with existing performance standards (Section 4) of the Zoning Code.

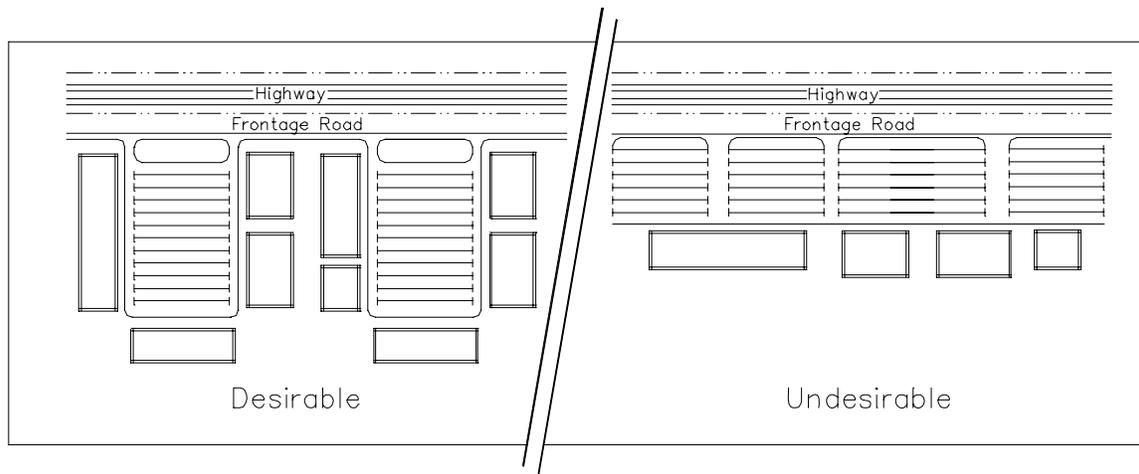
**ARTICLE I. SITE DESIGN AND RELATIONSHIP  
TO SURROUNDING COMMUNITY**

**1. Site Design**

**INTENT:** To create efficient, attractive, inviting spaces that complement public right-of-way as well as adjacent private uses. Spaces that draw the eye and the user deeper into the site are encouraged to avoid shallow “strip” development.

**GUIDELINES:**

- a. All buildings and parking should be visibly organized by a clear design concept.
- b. Buildings should be placed with the long dimension perpendicular to highway or street frontage. The end of the building should be placed close to the highway or street with room for one to two rows of parking, perimeter landscaping and public sidewalks.
- c. The long dimension of the primary parking area should be placed perpendicular to the highway or street.



## **2. Multiple Stores/Structures**

**INTENT:** The presence of multiple stores/structures gives a center a stronger community character and appearance by creating variety, breaking up large expanses of building or parking lots, and expanding the range of the site's activities. Architecture, landscaping and window displays of such stores/structures should be used to contribute to the visual interest of the site. The standards presented in this section are directed toward those situations where additional, smaller buildings and stores, with separate, exterior customer entrances are located in the principal buildings or scattered throughout the site.

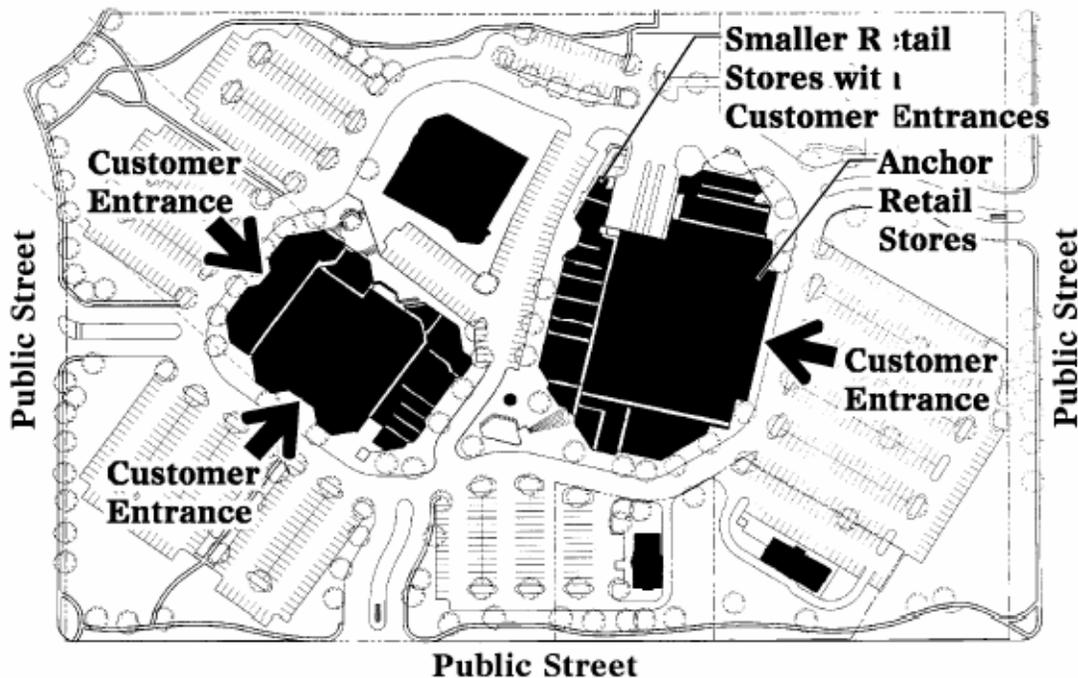
**GUIDELINES:** Any parcel containing a building of more than 80,000 square feet shall include at least one of the following approaches to adding variety to the site.

- a. Liner Stores. Smaller stores must occupy at least 50% of any façade facing a public street.
- b. Individual or building clusters. Multi-tenant or individual buildings housing commercial businesses shall be mixed into the parking lot or along the perimeter of the property.

### 3. Entrances

**INTENT:** Large retail buildings should feature multiple entrances. Multiple building entrances reduce walking distances from cars, facilitate pedestrian and bicycle access from public sidewalks, and provide convenience where certain entrances offer access to individual stores, or identified departments of a store. Multiple entrances also mitigate the effect of the unbroken walls and neglected areas that often characterize building facades that face bordering land uses.

**GUIDELINES:** At least two (2) sides of a large retail establishment shall feature customer entrances. This standard may be met on one side by the presence of “liner” stores. The two (2) required sides shall be those planned to have the highest level of public pedestrian activity, and one (1) of the sides shall be that which most directly faces a street with pedestrian access. The other of the two (2) sides may face a second street with pedestrian access, and/or a main parking lot area. All entrances shall be architecturally prominent and clearly visible from the abutting public street. Movie theaters are exempt from this requirement.

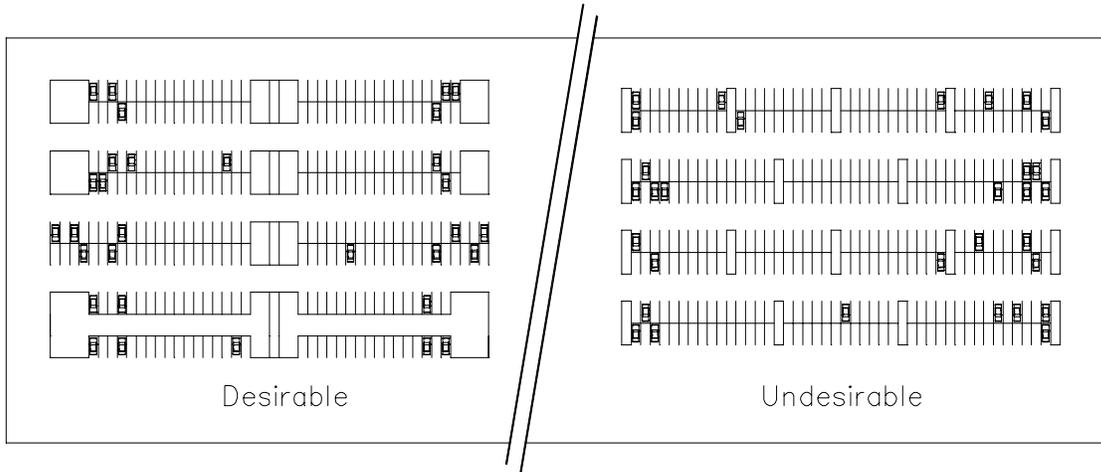


#### 4. Parking Lot Design

**INTENT:** Parking areas should provide safe, convenient, and efficient access. They should be distributed around large buildings in order to shorten the distance to other buildings and public sidewalks and to reduce the overall scale of the paved surface. If buildings are located closer to streets; the scale of the complex is reduced, pedestrian traffic is encouraged, and architectural details take on added importance.

##### **GUIDELINES:**

- a. Parking lot location. No more than fifty (50) percent of the off-street parking area for the lot, tract or area of land devoted to the large retail establishment shall be located between the front facade of the large retail establishment and the abutting streets (the "Front Parking Area").
- b. Curbed islands of no less than six hundred (600) square feet shall be allowed in parking lots in lieu of several smaller islands.



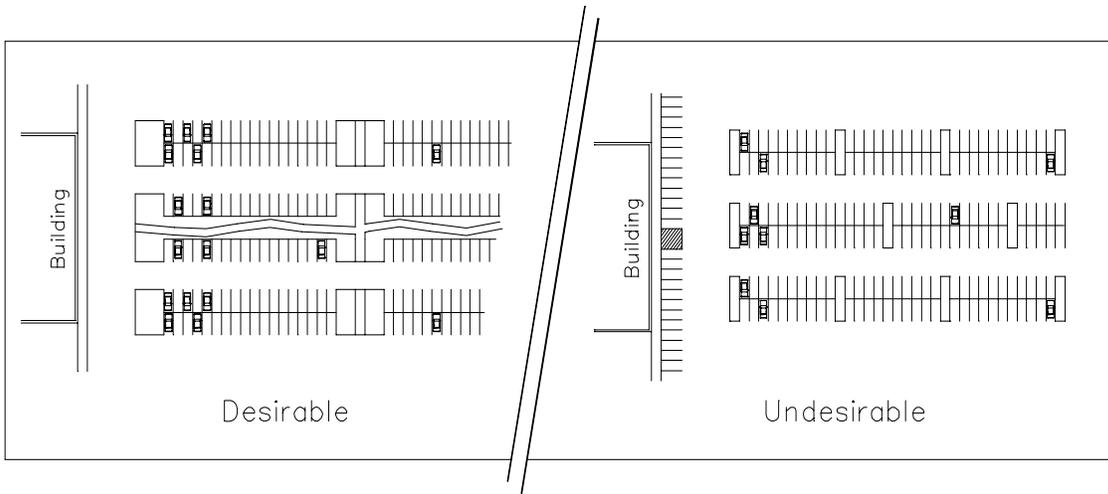
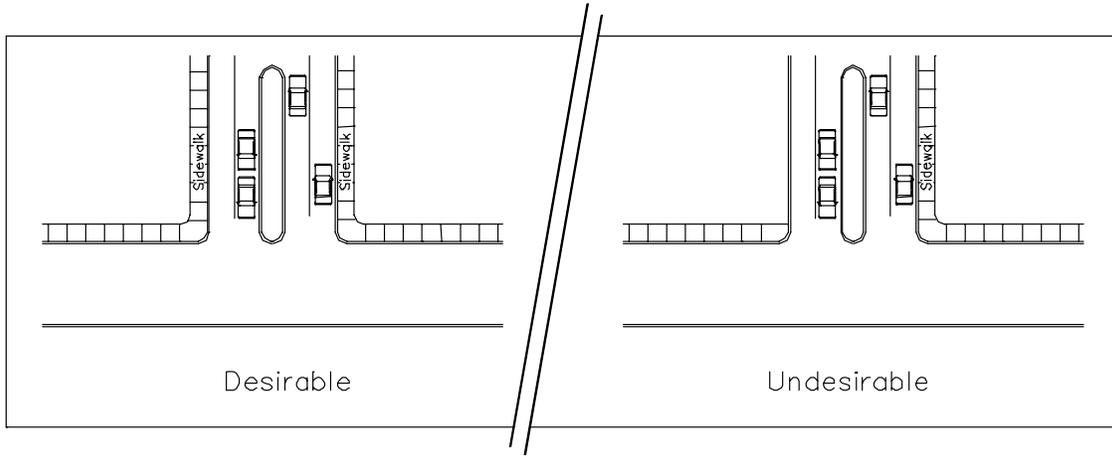
- c. A landscaped perimeter or buffer strip of at least ten (10) feet wide shall be provided between all parking areas, the public sidewalk or street and property lines in accordance with the performance standards in Section 4 of the Zoning Code.

## 5. Pedestrian and Bike Circulation

**INTENT:** Pedestrian and bike accessibility better connects auto-oriented developments to the surrounding community, reducing traffic impacts and enabling the development to be better integrated into the community. This section sets forth standards for public sidewalks and internal pedestrian and bicycle circulation systems that can provide user-friendly pedestrian access as well as pedestrian safety, shelter, and convenience within the center grounds.

### **GUIDELINES:**

- a. Sidewalks shall be included on both sides of a major entrance. Sidewalks shall continue through the development to connect with the primary entrances for all buildings.
- b. Bike storage facilities shall be provided at the rate of one bike for every 20 vehicle parking spaces in visible and sheltered locations near entrance doors.
- c. Trail connections shall be made in coordination with the City's Park and Trail plan.
- d. Sidewalks at least 8 feet in width shall be provided along all sides of the lot that abut a public street.
- e. Continuous internal pedestrian walkways, no less than 8 feet in width, shall be provided from the public sidewalk or right-of-way to the principal customer entrance of all principal buildings on the site. At a minimum, walkways shall connect focal points of pedestrian activity such as, but not limited to, transit stops, street crossings, building and store entry points, and shall feature adjoining landscaped areas that include trees, shrubs, benches, flower beds, ground covers, or other such materials for no less than 50 percent of their length. The number of internal street crossings shall be minimized.
- f. Sidewalks, no less than 8 feet in width, shall be provided along the full length of the building along any facade featuring a customer entrance, and along any facade abutting public parking areas. Such sidewalks shall be located at least six (6) feet from the facade of the building to provide planting beds for foundation landscaping, except where features such as arcades or entryways are part of the facade.
- g. Internal pedestrian walkways provided in conformance with Part (e.) above shall provide weather protection features such as awnings or arcades within 30 feet of all customer entrances.
- h. All internal pedestrian walkways shall be distinguished from driving surfaces through the use of durable, low maintenance surface materials such as pavers, bricks, or scored concrete to enhance pedestrian safety and comfort, as well as the attractiveness of the walkways.
- i. Wherever designated by the City Park and Trail plan, accommodations (easements) for public trails shall be provided to coordinate with the Park and Trail Plan.



## 6. Back Sides

**INTENT:** The rear or sides of buildings often present an unattractive view of blank walls, loading areas, storage areas, HVAC units, garbage receptacles, and other such features. Architectural and landscaping features should mitigate these impacts.

**GUIDELINES:** The minimum setback for any building facade shall be thirty five (35) feet from the nearest property line. Where the back or side facade faces adjacent residential uses, an earthen berm containing landscape material according to standards in Section 4 shall be provided.

## 7. Outdoor Storage, Trash Collection, and Loading Areas

**INTENT:** Loading areas and outdoor storage areas exert visual and noise impacts on surrounding neighborhoods. These areas, when visible from adjoining properties and/or public streets, should be screened, recessed or enclosed. While screens and recesses can effectively mitigate these impacts, the selection of inappropriate screening materials can exacerbate the problem. Appropriate locations for loading and outdoor storage areas include areas between buildings, where more than one building is located on a site and such buildings are not more than 40 feet apart, or on those sides of buildings that do not have customer entrances.

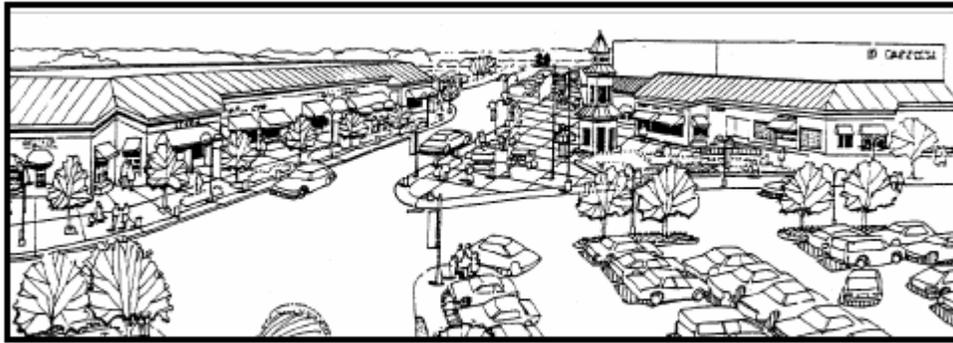
### **GUIDELINES:**

- a. Areas for outdoor storage, truck parking, trash collection or compaction, loading, or other such uses shall not be visible from adjacent properties or public right-of-way.
- b. No areas for outdoor storage, trash collection or compaction, loading, or other such uses shall be located within 35 feet of any public street, public sidewalk, or internal pedestrian way.
- c. Loading docks, truck parking, outdoor storage, utility meters, HVAC equipment, trash collection, trash compaction, and other service functions shall be incorporated into the overall design of the building and the landscaping so that the visual and acoustic impacts of these functions are fully contained and out of view from adjacent properties and public streets, and no attention is attracted to the functions by the use of screening materials that are different from or inferior to the principal materials of the building and landscape.
- d. Non-enclosed areas for the storage and sale of seasonal inventory shall be permanently defined and screened with walls and/or fences. Materials, colors, and design of screening walls and/or fences and the cover shall conform to those used as predominant materials and colors on the building. If such areas are to be covered, then the covering shall conform to those used as predominant materials and colors on the building.
- e. Landscape screening shall meet the standards of Section 4 of the Zoning Code.

## 8. Central Features and Community Spaces

**INTENT:** Buildings should offer attractive and inviting pedestrian scale features, spaces, and amenities. Entrances and parking lots should be configured to be functional and inviting with walkways conveniently tied to logical destinations. Bus stops and drop-off/pick-up points should be considered as integral parts of the configuration. Pedestrian ways should be anchored by special design features such as towers, arcades, porticos, pedestrian light fixtures, bollards, planter walls, and other architectural elements that define circulation ways and outdoor spaces. Examples of outdoor spaces are plazas, patios, courtyards, and window shopping areas. The features and spaces should enhance the building and the center as integral parts of the community fabric.

**GUIDELINES:** Each retail establishment larger than 80,000 square feet shall contribute to the establishment or enhancement of community and public spaces by providing at least two of the following: patio/seating area, pedestrian plaza with benches, transportation center, window shopping walkway, outdoor playground area, kiosk area, water feature, clock tower, or other such deliberately shaped area and/or a focal feature or amenity that, in the judgment of the Planning Commission, adequately enhances such community and public spaces. Any such areas shall have direct access to the public sidewalk network and such features shall not be constructed of materials that are inferior to the principal materials of the building and landscape.



Example of a center with numerous special features and community spaces.

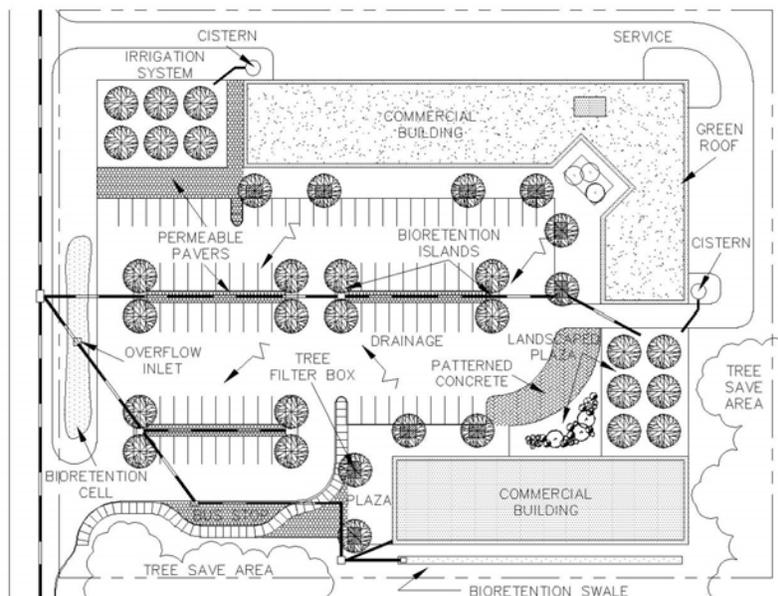
## 9. Low Impact Development

**INTENT:** Low impact development (LID) is a comprehensive approach rather than a technique. The idea behind LID is to develop a site so that post-development runoff conditions mimic or imitate pre-settlement runoff. The premise of LID is that stormwater is an asset and necessary element in the natural environment and it should not be managed for “disposal.” The approach emphasizes the integration of site design and planning techniques in order to design the built environment so that it remains a functioning part of an ecosystem, rather than existing apart from it. Specifically, LID aims to:

- Preserve Open Space and Minimize Land Disturbance;
- Protect Natural Systems and Processes (drainage ways, vegetation, soils, and sensitive areas);
- Reexamine the Use and Sizing of Traditional Site Infrastructure (lots, streets, curbs, gutters, sidewalks) and Customize Site Design to Each Site;
- Incorporate Natural Site Elements (wetlands, stream corridors, mature forests) as design elements; and
- Decentralize and Micromanage Storm Water at its Source.

**GUIDELINES:** Each establishment larger than 80,000 square feet shall contribute to the enhancement of the community, environment and public spaces by infiltrating stormwater onsite to the greatest possible extent. Low Impact Development strategies to be considered but are not limited to:

- a. Reduced street width
- b. Use of pervious pavements
- c. Use of bio-retention/rainwater gardens and/or infiltration swales along roads and parking lots and within parking lots
- d. Amending/restoring soils to increase infiltration
- e. Preserve existing vegetation
- f. Constructing wetlands for stormwater treatment
- g. Disconnecting impervious surfaces
- h. Installing green roofs



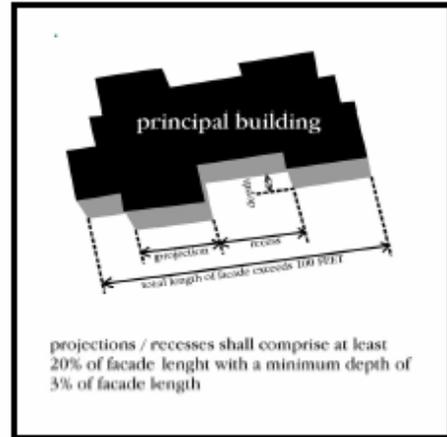
## ARTICLE II. BUILDING CHARACTER

### 1. Facades and Exterior Walls

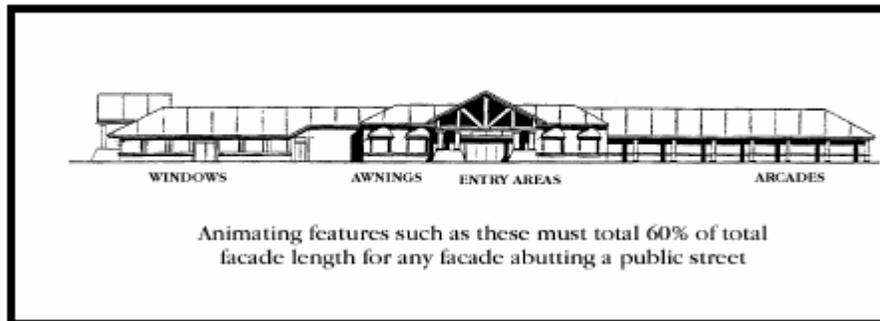
**INTENT:** Facades should be articulated to reduce the massive scale and the uniform, impersonal appearances of large retail buildings and provide visual interest that will be consistent with the community's identity, character and scale. The intent is to encourage a more human scale that Dundas residents will be able to identify with their community.

#### GUIDELINES:

- a. Any facade greater than 100 feet in length, measured horizontally, shall incorporate wall plane projections or recesses having a depth of at least 3% of the length of the facade and extending at least 20 percent of the length of the facade. No uninterrupted length of any facade shall exceed 100 horizontal feet.



- b. Ground floor facades that face public streets shall have arcades, display windows, entry areas, awnings, or other such features along no less than 60 percent of their horizontal length.

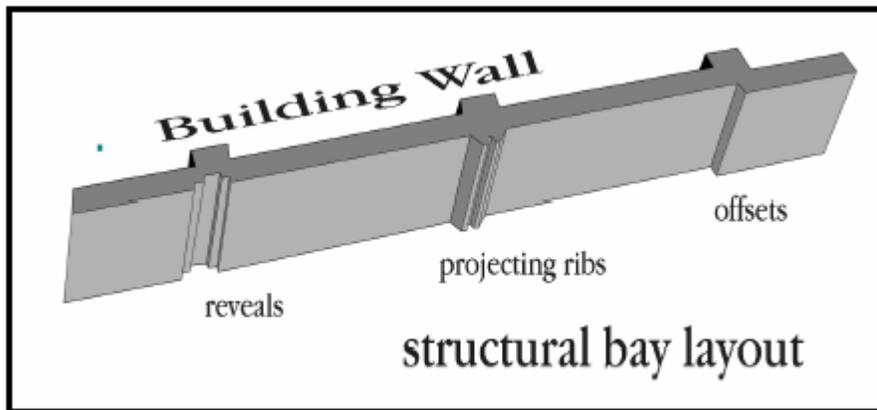


## 2. Detail Features and Local Character

**INTENT:** Buildings should have architectural features and patterns that provide visual interest, at the scale of the pedestrian, reduce massive aesthetic effects, and recognize local character. The elements in the following standard should be integral parts of the building fabric, and not superficially applied trim or graphics, or paint.

### GUIDELINES:

- a. Any building facade must include a repeating pattern that shall include no less than three of the elements listed below. At least one of these elements shall repeat horizontally. All elements shall repeat at intervals of no more than thirty (30) feet, either horizontally or vertically.
  - Color change.
  - Texture change.
  - Material module change.
  - Expression of architectural or structural bay through a change in plane no less than 12 inches in width, such as an offset, reveal, or projecting rib.



Expression of Architectural or Structural Bay.

- b. Design elements, styles and motifs based on historic Dundas buildings shall be incorporated into the overall structure design.

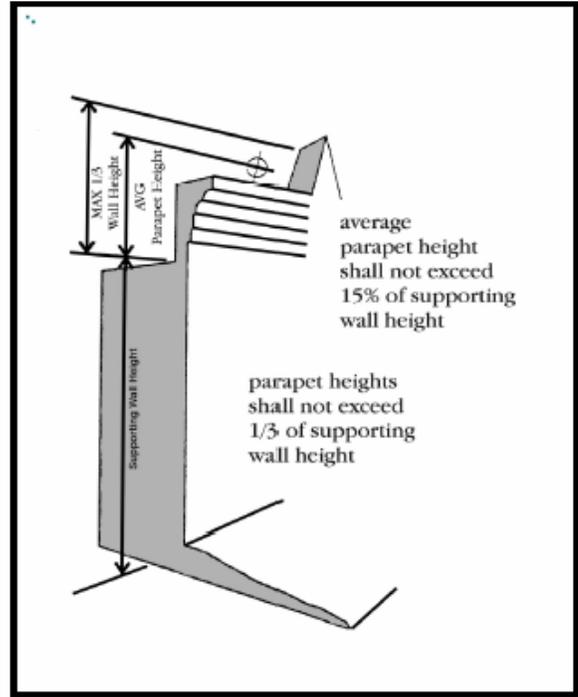


### 3. Roofs

**INTENT:** Variations in roof lines should be used to add interest to, and reduce the massive scale of, large buildings. Roof features should complement the character of adjoining neighborhoods.

**GUIDELINES:** Roofs shall have no less than two of the following features on any side:

- a. Parapets concealing flat roofs and rooftop equipment such as HVAC units from public view. The average height of such parapets shall not exceed 15% of the height of the supporting wall and such parapets shall not at any point exceed one-third of the height of the supporting wall. Such parapets shall feature three dimensional cornice treatment.
- b. Overhanging eaves, extending no less than 3 feet past the supporting walls.



Parapet Standards.

- c. Sloping roofs that do not exceed the average height of the supporting walls, with an average slope greater than or equal to 1 foot of vertical rise for every 3 feet of horizontal run and less than or equal to 1 foot of vertical rise for every 1 foot of horizontal run.
- d. Three or more roof slope planes.

#### **4. Materials and Colors**

**INTENT:** Exterior building materials and colors comprise a significant part of the visual impact of a building. Therefore, they should be aesthetically pleasing and compatible with materials and colors used in adjoining neighborhoods.

##### **GUIDELINES:**

- a. Predominant exterior building materials shall be high quality materials. These include, without limitation:
  - Brick
  - Wood
  - Stone
  - Tinted, textured, concrete masonry units
- b. Facade colors shall be low reflectance, subtle, neutral or earth tone colors. The use of high intensity colors, metallic colors, black or fluorescent colors are prohibited.
- c. Building trim and accent areas may feature brighter colors, including primary colors, but neon tubing shall not be an acceptable feature for building trim or accent areas.
- d. Predominant exterior building materials should not include the following:
  - Smooth-faced concrete block
  - Tilt-up concrete panels
  - Pre-fabricated steel panels

## 5. Entryways

**INTENT:** Entryway design elements and variations should give orientation and aesthetically pleasing character to the building. The standards identify desirable entryway design features.

### GUIDELINES:

- a. Each principal building on a site shall have clearly defined, highly visible customer entrances featuring no less than three of the following:
- canopies or porticos
  - overhangs
  - recesses/projections
  - arcades
  - raised corniced parapets over the door
  - peaked roof forms
  - arches
  - outdoor patios
  - display windows
  - architectural details such as tile work and moldings which are integrated into the building structure and design
  - integral planters or wing walls that incorporate landscaped areas and/or places for sitting

Where additional stores will be located in the principal building, each such store shall have at least one exterior customer entrance, which shall conform to the above requirements.

- b. Deciduous and/or ornamental trees are required near the front entrance of buildings. Deciduous trees shall be planted a minimum of twenty (20) feet and ornamental trees a minimum of fifteen (15) feet from the building(s).

