

Barton-Kenilworth Commercial Corridor Study

Façade Improvement Grant Program Urban Design Guidelines



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Goals and Objectives

Goals:

1. To promote the commercial revitalization of the Barton - Kenilworth Commercial Corridors by encouraging building façade improvements that will contribute to vibrant commercial streets.
2. To assist in the rehabilitation and ongoing preservation of the Barton – Kenilworth Commercial Corridors to ensure that they will contribute positively to the local neighbourhoods and communities.

Objectives:

1. Encourage private investment in the visual improvement of the commercial corridors,
2. Provide a catalyst for others to improve their buildings and storefronts,
3. Reduce vacancies in storefronts and upper floors,
4. Strengthen and/or restore the original character of historic buildings,
5. Encourage creativity and diversity in the design of building façades and storefronts, and;
6. Enhance streetscape appearances.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.2 Use of the Guidelines

These Guidelines were prepared in order to encourage high quality façade improvement projects along the Barton and Kenilworth Corridors. The City wishes to ensure that applicants of the *Façade Improvement Grant Program* create building façades which contribute to a vibrant streetscape. This is a companion document that should be read with the *City's Barton and Kenilworth Commercial Corridors – Final Recommendations Report* (July 30, 2014).

The purpose of this document is to outline the City's design preferences and expectations for façade improvements through a series of urban design guidelines. It is a tool for applicants to use when re-designing a building façade. The design guidance in this document will be used by staff to evaluate applications for the *Façade Improvement Grant Program*.

Façade improvements should enhance the existing building and be an aesthetic contribution to the streetscape. Any remaining historic materials and features should be retained and restored, where feasible. The introduction of new materials and features should be compatible with and sympathetic to the heritage character of the building and surroundings. When considering the restoration of a façade, applicants should research historical images of the building and neighbourhood. Applicants are encouraged to consult with Heritage Planning staff in the Planning and Economic Development Department.

Since buildings are unique, not all guidelines will apply to each project. The guidelines are intended to be flexible, in order to allow for creativity and do not prescribe a particular architectural style.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.3 Barton and Kenilworth Commercial Corridors

The Barton and Kenilworth Commercial Corridors are traditional commercial and mixed-use streets with buildings that range from one storey to multiple storeys. Typically, buildings are located close to the street line forming a distinct street wall that frames the streetscape. Many of the buildings have elements typical of traditional storefronts which consist of large windows and entrances, canopies, overhangs, signage boards, upper floors with windows overlooking the street and distinct roof lines or cornice elements. These elements create visually interesting buildings that enliven and enhance the streetscape while storefronts help businesses to display their wares, and make activities such as shopping and strolling an enjoyable event.

Non-traditional commercial buildings that were designed to be set back from the street and auto-oriented such as strips plazas, may not have incorporated traditional storefront elements associated with good Urban Design practices. Renovations to old or new buildings can incorporate façade components and accents that contribute to the creation of a vibrant, lively, and successful streetscape lined by well-designed façades.



Figure 1: Study Area

- Barton Street E. (between James St and Ottawa St)
- Kenilworth Avenue N. (between Main St and Barton St)
- Study area includes buildings and parcels directly fronting onto the Barton and Kenilworth corridors

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.4 Financial Incentive Programs

Programs currently available for Barton / Kenilworth Commercial Corridors:

- Commercial Corridor Housing Loan and Grant Program
- Commercial Façade Property Improvement Grant Program
- Hamilton Community Heritage Fund Loan Program
- Hamilton Heritage Property Grant Program
- Hamilton Tax Increment Grant Program
- Office Tenancy Assistance Program
- ERASE programs

Programs recommended for Barton / Kenilworth Commercial Corridors:

- *Arts Component Grant (*Barton Village BIA only)
- Barton - Kenilworth Building Improvement Grant Program
- Barton - Kenilworth Tax Increment Grant Program
- Planning and Building Fees Rebate Program

All financial incentives are subject to funding availability. Financial incentives are not retroactive. Applications to programs must be submitted prior to commencement of any work. In order to qualify for financial incentives, development shall conform to Official Plan policies and comply with all Provincial and Municipal codes and regulations. For more information, please contact:

Hazel Milsome, Co-ordinator of Urban Renewal Incentives

City of Hamilton, Planning & Economic Development Dept.

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Tel: 905-546-2424 Ext. 2755, Email: Hazel.Milsome@hamilton.ca

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.5 Agreements, Approvals, Permits and Fees

Prior to embarking upon a project, it is recommended that the Owner / Project Manager consult with the City of Hamilton staff to address any potential agreements, approvals, permits and fees that may be applicable to their property. Certain alterations and additions to commercial buildings, storefronts or streetscapes may require that the Owner enter into an agreement, obtain a planning approval and / or obtain a building permit from the City of Hamilton including the payment of fees. These requirements also have associated fees. Some typical requirements include but are not limited to:

Planning Approvals (Development Planning, Heritage and Urban Design Division, Planning & Economic Development Dept)

- Site Plan Approval may be required for some projects, depending upon the scope of the project

Zoning permissions (Building Division / Planning & Economic Development Dept)

- Minor Variances may be required, depending on the current zoning of the property and the scope of the proposed project

Building Permits (Building Division / Planning & Economic Development Dept)

- Works related to additions and alterations of existing façades, installation of awnings, canopies, screens and re-location of rooftop mechanical units may require a Building Permit

Encroachment Agreements (Geomatics & Corridor Division / Public Works Dept)

- Physical encroachments onto City lands (such as the municipal right-of-way) will require an Encroachment Agreement

2.0 FAÇADE COMPONENTS

2.1 The Commercial Façade

Business owners recognize the important role that a building façade plays in creating a positive first impression of the business. The commercial façade also contributes to the character of the local neighbourhood. Important physical and visual characteristics which a façade should provide are:

- Relationship to adjacent facades to create a sense of containment along the street to form an outdoor “wall” or “room”
- Well-proportioned and oriented to enhance the pedestrian experience
- Support for sidewalk activities such as window shopping
- Composed of high quality building materials and architectural details

The commercial façade is typically comprised of the main parts:

- Ground Floor
- Upper Floors
- Roof line

A discussion of each of these elements is contained within this chapter.



2.0 FAÇADE COMPONENTS

2.2 Ground Floor

The ground floor is the area of the façade that will be experienced by pedestrians and customers of the business. Traditionally, the storefront consists of: base panel, display windows, main entrance, transom windows, columns, pilasters, sign boards and a cornice line. Although some of these elements may not be found on newer buildings, several of these elements should be represented on the commercial façade.

Façades should typically include the following:

1. Ample glazing to provide views into the building during day and night. Pedestrians and passersby are more likely to enter a building when they can see the activity and goods within
2. Emphasis of the main entrance or entrances into the business
3. Ground floor heights are typically taller than upper floors
4. Signage board incorporated into façade
5. Decorative lighting
6. Accessories such as awnings or canopies
7. Accents such as hanging baskets, seasonal décor, flags



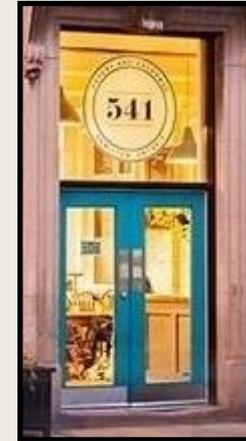
2.0 FAÇADE COMPONENTS

2.3 Entrances

Entrances should be oriented to the street and be highly visible, in order to navigate pedestrians from the public boulevard into the building.

- Provide an entrance that is appropriate for the architectural style and scale of the building
- Maintain, enhance, or increase the main entrance by including framing elements and architectural accents
- Provide a substantial amount of windows (i.e. glazing) in order to provide visibility into the building
- Provide weather protection, where possible in the form of a canopy or awning
- Where possible, provide barrier-free access at the main entrance. Refer to the City's *Barrier-Free Design Guidelines, Version 1.1 (2006)*.

Note: Entrances must comply with the Ontario Building Code.



2.0 FAÇADE COMPONENTS

2.4 Windows (Glazing)

Windows create social interaction with the streetscape by allowing interiors to be seen by pedestrians.

- Provide windows that are appropriate for the architectural style and scale of the building
- The retention and restoration of historic windows and storefronts rather than replacement is encouraged. For more information, refer to the *City's Municipal Heritage Committee's Guidelines on Conserving Original Windows in Heritage Buildings* (Dec. 09, 2014)
- Maintain/enhance the amount of display windows on the ground floor
- If replacing windows, maintain the original proportions of window openings
- Maximize amount of transparent glazing, while minimizing opaque materials such as mirrored glass, tinted glass, window film or glass block
- If security features are required, incorporate design into overall façade
- Use storefront space to display the products and services that are offered by the business
- Avoid using windows for excessive signage or advertising materials

Note: Certain types of windows / glazing (e.g. bay windows, projecting windows) must comply with the City's Zoning By-Law: Section 18(c)(vi), Encroachments on Yards.



2.0 FAÇADE COMPONENTS

2.5 Upper Floors

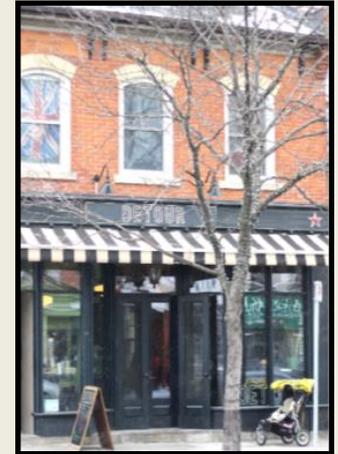
Upper floors are characterized by solid walls with regularly spaced windows and decorative features. The window pattern creates a balance with the storefront and unity with the other façades along the street.

Upper floors should complement the architectural style and materials of the ground floor. Typically, upper floors will consist of less window area than the ground floor.

Façades should typically include the following:

- Maintain the size of existing windows. Where possible enlarge window openings if there is architectural merit and if there is a need for more light within the interiors.
- Avoid signage on upper stories, unless occupied by commercial units
- Maintain the upper façade's decorative features such as window sills and lintels
- Use high quality building materials
- Use colours that complement the overall façade
- Introduce awnings to upper floor windows

Note: Additions and alterations to existing façades may require a Building Permit.



2.0 FAÇADE COMPONENTS

2.6 Roof Line

The roof line frames the composition of the façade. It is characterized by such elements as: decorative cornice lines, pitched roof or a parapet wall. It is visible by pedestrians and motorists from varying distances.

- Create a roof line that is appropriate for the architectural style and scale of the building
- Provide an appropriate design element along the roofline, in order to frame the composition of the façade
- The retention and restoration of historic architectural elements such as cornice lines and mouldings are encouraged. Avoid covering over historic elements
- Consider the roof lines of adjacent buildings in the composition of the building's roof line
- Ensure that rooftop mechanical equipment is situated where it is not visible from the public realm



2.0 FAÇADE COMPONENTS

2.7 Scale, Proportion and Rhythm

The scale, proportion and rhythm of a façade is related to both the function and use of the building as well as the building's architectural design and style. There are many “rules of thumb” associated with these design elements and also regional and cultural patterns.

A well-designed façade maintains the balance between all sections of the façade so that no one section dominates the others. An architectural sense of visual harmony is created when the various components and accent features comprising the façade work together.

- The Scale or size of a façade should be evaluated when determining the design of façade components such as: windows, entrances, datum lines and roof lines
- The proportions of the façade should ensure that each façade element works with one another to form a unified design
- The rhythm of a façade addresses the scale and proportions of façade components as a composition



2.0 FAÇADE COMPONENTS

2.8 Articulation

Providing changes in plane along a façade can create visual interest. This can be achieved in a variety of ways such as:

- Provide a change in plane when adding additional floors to an existing façade so as to set back the addition
- Provide a change of plane when trying to match the roofline of an adjacent building so as to reinforce the existing street wall height
- Introduce changes in plane along the ground floor when creating a colonnade for the purpose of creating a patio
- Consider changes in plane when trying to break up a long façade so as to create the appearance of multiple smaller buildings.
- Create changes in plane when designing roof terraces and balcony recesses



3.0 FAÇADE ACCESSORIES AND ACCENTS

3.1 Building Materials and Colours

Building materials should be durable and of a high quality. Typical materials include: stone, brick, wood, metal and glass. Building colours should consist of a palette that is derived from existing building materials.

- Where appropriate, retain the original materials and architectural elements of the façade
- Historic masonry (e.g. brick, stone) should be repointed with appropriate mortar, rather than being clad over
- Previously unpainted historic masonry should not be painted
- Provide at least two building materials and two colours on the façade
- Avoid the use of vinyl and aluminum siding
- Use durable materials along the base of façade (i.e. stone, masonry and not EIFS / stucco)
- Less durable materials (such as EIFS / stucco) should only be used as an accent, and not at ground level
- Proprietary colours should be limited to signage panels



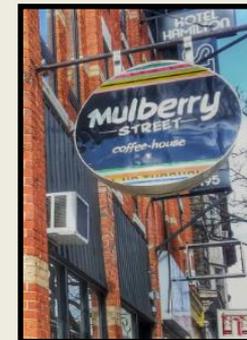
3.0 FAÇADE ACCESSORIES AND ACCENTS

3.2 Signage

Signage identifies the business while providing artistic expression and branding. The most common type of signage is the fascia sign. This sign is typically installed above the storefront windows and entrances. It may or may not span the length of the façade. Some other sign types include: perpendicular signs (aka “shingles”), signage on awnings and window decals.

- Install permanent signage that complements the style of the building and the storefront elements
- Avoid concealing window space or architectural details
- Avoid excessive quantities of signs; consider using a fascia sign plus window decals at pedestrian height
- Use durable high quality materials
- Integrate lighting design with signage

Note: All signage must conform to the City's Sign By-Laws.



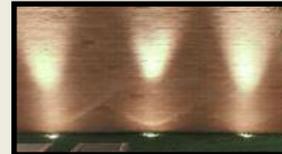
3.0 FAÇADE ACCESSORIES AND ACCENTS

3.3 Lighting

Lighting creates different moods and feelings and contributes to public safety. Lighting may be attached to the façade as a light fixture or incorporated into signage. It can be installed under soffits as down-lighting, or installed at the base of the façade for up-lighting.

- Incorporate a lighting design that complements the style and proportions of the façade
- Use a coordinated group of light fixtures to create visual interest
- Provide lighting at the building entrance, as required by the Ontario Building Code
- Use white light sources whenever possible, to permit greater colour recognition
- Use cut-off fixtures where required, to prevent light trespass and to achieve night sky compliance

Note: All lighting must conform to the City's By-Laws.



3.0 FAÇADE ACCESSORIES AND ACCENTS

3.4 Awnings and Canopies

Awnings and canopies create articulation of the façade while providing weather protection for pedestrians.

- Provide awnings / canopies that are appropriate for the architectural style and scale of the building
- Consider the rhythm of existing awnings / canopies of adjacent buildings
- Retention and restoration of historic awnings is encouraged
- Avoid concealing architectural elements
- Materials and colours should complement the façade
- Use high quality materials (e.g. metal, glass, wood, durable fabric)
- For fabric canopies, avoid the use of shiny materials
- Incorporate hardware and attaching methods into design of awning / canopy
- Maintain a minimum clearance of 2.4 m from the bottom of the structure to finished grade



Note: Awnings and canopies may require a Building Permit. Awnings, canopies and projections must comply with the City's Zoning By-Law(s): Section 18(c)(vi), Encroachments on Yards.

Note: Consult with the City's Geomatics and Corridor Management Section, Engineering Services Division, Public Works Department with respect to potential requirements for an Encroachment Agreement.

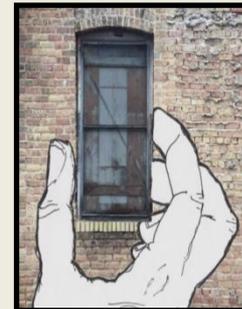
3.0 FAÇADE ACCESSORIES AND ACCENTS

3.5 Art in Public Places

The use of art on a façade is another way of enlivening the building and enhancing the pedestrian experience. It contributes to the aesthetics of the building, and the individuality of the business. There are many types of art that can be installed on a façade: murals, banners, architectural features, sculpture, bas-relief and light installations.

Ensure that any art installation complies with the OBC and Municipal By-Laws. Some art installations may be required to comply with the City's *Public Art Program*. For further information, refer to the *City's Public Art Master Plan*, or contact the Public Art Program Manager, Planning & Economic Development Department.

A grant is available for the art component of the *BIA Commercial Property Improvement Grant Program*. This program is available within the Barton Village Business Improvement Area. The matching grant to a maximum of \$10,000 may be available for artfully designed façade improvements or art pieces placed on private property that are visible to the public. For more information, contact Urban Renewal Staff, Planning & Economic Development Department.



3.0 FAÇADE ACCESSORIES AND ACCENTS

3.6 Rooftop Units and Utilities

Rooftop mechanical units and utilities that are visible on or above the façade can detract from the aesthetics of the building by causing visual clutter.

- Position rooftop mechanical units so that they are not visible from the public realm
- For rooftop units that cannot be re-located or set back from the front elevation, use one of the following screening methods:
 - Create a roof line that screens the view of the units (e.g. parapet wall, false hip roof, etc.)
 - Install architectural screening material around the unit that is compatible in colour, material, scale and style to the building façade
- Attempt to locate utilities (gas lines, gas meters, hydro lines, hydro meters, telecom infrastructure) on side elevations
- If utilities must be located on the façade, then ensure that they are visually screened from view

Note: Architectural screens may require a Building Permit.



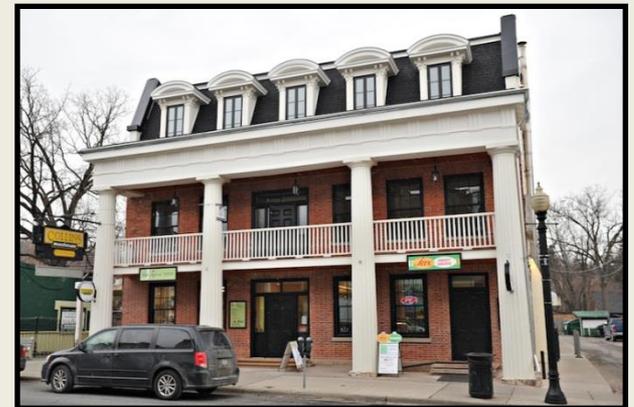
3.0 FAÇADE ACCESSORIES AND ACCENTS

3.7 Loading Doors and Loading Areas

Where possible, loading doors and loading areas should be located along side or rear elevations. For loading doors that cannot be re-located from the façade, the following design principles should apply:

- Loading doors should be compatible with the style of the main entrance and windows of the façade
- Use spandrel glass or film on the door to visually screen loading area

Note: Location of Loading doors and Loading Areas must comply with the City's Zoning By-Laws.



4.0 SITE SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

4.1 Corner Sites

Corner buildings are visually prominent, therefore, all street elevations should be given a similar design treatment.

- Locate main entrance as close to intersection as possible
- Utilize the same building materials and colours on both elevations
- Avoid blank walls. Where this cannot be avoided, use architectural details, wall murals or art installations to visually break up the building mass
- Maximize window areas on each façade
- Where vision glass cannot be used, install spandrel (i.e. opaque) glass



4.0 SITE SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

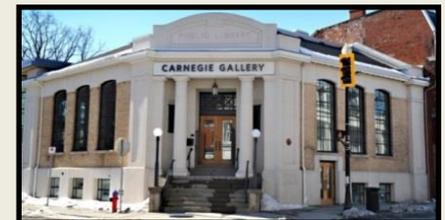
4.2 Heritage Buildings and Adaptive Re-Use

The City encourages the conservation of built heritage resources. Built heritage contributes to a community's character and provides a link to the neighbourhood's past.

The retention and restoration of historic windows and storefronts rather than replacement is encouraged. For more information, refer to the *City's Municipal Heritage Committee's Guidelines on Conserving Original Windows in Heritage Buildings (09-12-2014)*.

For additional documents regarding the restoration of historic façades, please contact Cultural Heritage Planning staff in the Planning & Economic Development Department.

Note: Some heritage structures may be required to comply with both Municipal and Provincial legislation regarding heritage buildings, including the issuance of a Heritage permit.



4.0 SITE SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

4.3 Outdoor Patios for Restaurants

Outdoor dining/ seating areas for restaurants and cafes enhance the streetscape by infusing it with activity. The City has several design guidelines with the respect to the design of these spaces. Please refer to: *City of Hamilton's Coordinated Street Furniture Guidelines*.

- Ensure that the seating does not encroach upon sidewalk
- Maintain a direct, clear path to the main entrance
- Where sliding windows or articulated overhead doors are proposed, ensure that historic elements and materials are not removed; ensure that openings read like a storefront when close
- Use high quality materials for sliding windows and articulated overhead doors

Note: Outdoor patios and/or seating areas for dining establishments may require Site Plan Approval and must comply with Municipal By-Law: Section 18(11) in By-law 6593. Consult with the City's Building Division, Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Note: Encroachment Agreements may be required. Consult with the City's Geomatics and Corridor Management Section, Engineering Services Division, Public Works Department .



4.0 SITE SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

4.4 Landscaping

Providing landscape elements (i.e. plant material) contributes to the unique style of the façade. Landscaping also enhances the pedestrian experience. Although space may be limited and growing conditions constrained, there are several ways to provide landscaping in an urban setting:

- Plants in containers (e.g. planters, flower pots, window boxes)
- Hanging baskets on brackets
- Climbing plants (i.e. annuals, vines, broadleaf evergreens)
- Green walls / vertical landscapes
- Indoor plants displayed within storefront windows



4.0 SITE SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

4.5 Accessibility

The City encourages the creation of spaces that are universally accessible, in order to accommodate people with different ranges of abilities. For additional guidance on designing for Accessibility, refer to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*, the *Ontario Building Code*; and the City of Hamilton's *Barrier-Free Design Guidelines, Version 1.1 (2006)*.

- Where possible, building entrances should be accessible
- Other accessibility factors include the provision of:
 - A barrier-free path from the municipal sidewalk to the front entrance
 - Adequate lighting
 - International symbols of accessibility
 - Fonts and text sizes of signage at a legible scale and height for those using mobility devices, and for those with visual impairments



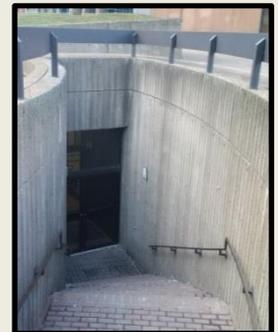
4.0 SITE SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

4.6 Public Safety (CPTED)

The safe design of a street and its' building façades increases pedestrian comfort, safety and the success of the neighbourhood. *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* (CPTED) is a series of design strategies which strive to reduce opportunities for crime based upon the design of safe environments. Some of the principles include:

- Natural Surveillance
- Electronic Surveillance
- Access control of sites and buildings
- Removal of entrapment areas and dead ends
- Territorial reinforcement
- Lighting
- Target hardening

When including safety features on a façade, ensure that the design, materials and colours are incorporated into the overall composition.



4.0 SITE SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

4.7 Converting Storefronts into Residential Units

Conversion of commercial spaces such as store fronts into residential units requires that several design criteria be addressed:

- The relationship of the façade to the streetscape
- Animation and aesthetics of the front façade with the residential use, including the type of building materials and window coverings
- The need for privacy and security for the residential use
- The provision of amenity/ buffer space along the streetscape

For more guidance on this subject, refer to Section 6.1 of the *Barton-Kenilworth Commercial Corridor Study (July 30, 2014)*.

PLEASE NOTE:

The City does not support the conversion of commercial units into residential units within lands designated as commercial uses along the Barton and Kenilworth commercial corridors. Any conversion of storefronts and/or commercial uses into residential units must comply with Municipal By-Laws. For more information, consult with the City's Zoning Section of the Building Division, Planning & Economic Development Dept.



4.0 SITE SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

4.7 Converting Storefronts into Residential Units

Windows

- Maintain the existing size of windows to allow light to enter the residential unit
- To create privacy at a storefront window, the following materials are encouraged:
 - window film,
 - fabric curtains, and/ or;
 - blinds and shutters
- For replacement windows, consider dividing large panes of glass into smaller units and making upper section of windows operable for ventilation
- Security bars (if required) should be decorative in nature and be incorporated into the overall design of the façade. Other security measures include safety glass and security film



4.0 SITE SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

4.7 Converting Storefronts into Residential Units (Continued)

Doors

- Main entrance door should be constructed of a solid material such as wood, which maintains a portion of windows at eye level
- Consider recessing the doorway to create a buffer space between the public boulevard and the residential unit, and to provide weather protection



Amenity Space

- Buffer spaces can be defined from the public boulevard through the use of low fencing, walls, planting beds or planters



5.0 RESOURCES

CITY OF HAMILTON WEB PAGES

Economic Development: www.investinhamilton.ca

City of Hamilton Main Page: www.hamilton.ca

Zoning By-Laws: [/city-planning/official-plan-zoning-by-law/zoning-by-law](http://city-planning/official-plan-zoning-by-law/zoning-by-law)

Building Permits: [/starting-small-business/permits-inspections/building-permits-small-businesses](http://starting-small-business/permits-inspections/building-permits-small-businesses)

Encroachment Agreements: [/home-property-and-development/property-gardens-trees/encroachment-agreements](http://home-property-and-development/property-gardens-trees/encroachment-agreements)

Coordinated Street Furniture Guidelines: [/develop-property/policies-guidelines/coordinated-street-furniture-guidelines](http://develop-property/policies-guidelines/coordinated-street-furniture-guidelines)

Public Art: [/attractions/culture/public-art](http://attractions/culture/public-art)

PROVINCIAL AGENCIES AND ASSOCIATIONS:

Accessibility for Ontarian with Disabilities (AODA): www.aoda.ca

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Ontario: <http://cptedontario.ca>

Ontario Association of Architects (OAA): www.oaa.on.ca

Ontario Association of Landscape Architects (OALA): www.oala.ca

Ontario Building Code (OBC): www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page7393.aspx

Ontario General Contractors Association (OGCA): <https://ogca.ca>

Ontario Heritage Trust: www.heritagetrust.on.ca/Home.asp

Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI): <http://ontarioplanners.ca>

Professional Engineers of Ontario (PEO): www.peo.on.ca