



**DRAFT DESIGN GUIDELINES**  
Town of Erin Community Improvement Plan

**JUNE 2018**





## 7.0 Design Guidelines

### 7.1 Purpose

The Town of Erin prides itself on its natural beauty, riverfront, rich built and cultural heritage, small town feel of its villages, unique character, entrepreneurial spirit and sense of community. Building on these assets, the Design Guidelines have been prepared as a supporting document to the Town of Erin CIP to guide the design of enhancements to the existing building stock, new developments, and the built environment. Though primarily directed towards the private sector, these guidelines may also be considered and/or adopted for public realm improvements so that consistency can be achieved in style, form, materials, etc. with private realm initiatives, and especially coordination within the public-private interface areas. It should also be noted that design improvements to private properties will have a significant positive impact on the look and feel of the public realm, therefore enhancing the pedestrian experience of the area.

These Design Guidelines are meant to help guide architectural, landscape and general improvements to buildings, properties, and streets within the CIPA, specifically within the Erin Village and Hillsburgh Sub-Areas, and aim to enhance the desired local character and aesthetics of each community. The Design Guidelines are intended to complement and assist the Financial Incentive Programs enabled by this CIP as a flexible guide for design and development. The purpose of the guidelines is to help support well-designed projects that are small in scale, pedestrian oriented and contribute to a vibrant and memorable urban environment.

Design Guidelines are:

- A flexible tool for CIPA design and development. They are not strict “policies” or “regulations” and not meant to restrict design.
- Wide-ranging, or general, and are recommended to be a target goal for all projects.
- Suggested guidelines – not a required checklist meant to be applied in all cases.

### 7.2 How to Use the Design Guidelines

The Design Guidelines are intended to present the Town’s design expectations for the preparation and review of development proposals that are located within the villages of Erin and Hillsburgh, and have submitted an application for the Financial Incentive Programs offered in the Town of Erin CIP. They are meant to be used by all participants involved in the planning and design process, including:

- a) Property owners and developers when planning and designing their projects and developments;
- b) Property and business owners when preparing applications for Financial Incentive Programs available under the Town of Erin CIP;
- c) The Town of Erin when:
  - i. Reviewing applications for planning and development approvals within the Erin Village and Hillsburgh Sub-Areas;
  - ii. Evaluating applications for Financial Incentive Programs; and

- iii. Undertaking streetscape improvement projects and other public realm improvement projects throughout the Erin Village and Hillsburgh Sub-Areas.

The Design Guidelines are meant to provide design guidance, with the understanding that they are to be applied on a case-by-case basis and are not meant to be a “checklist”. While their application is flexible, all new developments and all improvements to existing properties and buildings are to be consistent with all the design principles. The Design Guidelines are not meant to be read as “policies” or “regulations”, but rather are to be used as a flexible guidance tool during the planning and design process and will be applied in a flexible fashion so as to not restrict creativity in design.

The Town may apply the Design Guidelines to any development proposals within the village areas of Erin and Hillsburgh.

### 7.3 Design Principles

A set of design principles form the foundation for these Design Guidelines. The design principles offer general, higher level guidance for new developments and property and building improvements within the Erin Village and Hillsburgh Sub-Areas, while providing a framework for the more specific design guidelines to follow in Section 7.4. The design principles are:

1. Scale and Compatibility: new developments and improvements to existing buildings that reinforce and complement the scale of the existing built fabric in terms of building height, massing and orientation, while maintaining key views and remaining sensitive to built and natural heritage assets.
2. Character and Sense of Place: new developments and improvements to existing buildings that are designed to complement and contribute to the existing character, architectural styles and natural settings (i.e. the Grand and Credit Rivers) within and adjacent to the Erin Village and Hillsburgh Sub-Areas, in order to create a unified sense of place.
3. Beautiful Downtowns Based on Best Practices: new developments and improvements to existing buildings that are designed with reference to built form and architectural best practices for similar areas within the CIPA to create visually appealing downtown environments that are unique and memorable.
4. A Well-Connected and Pedestrian Friendly Environment: new developments and site improvements that are designed with strong connections to the surrounding community, including pedestrian, vehicular and waterfront linkages. Connections that prioritize pedestrians first, and that are safe, comfortable and enjoyable for pedestrians.
5. An Attractive and Vibrant Streetscape: new developments and improvements to existing buildings that add to the vitality of downtown streetscapes through active ground floor uses, welcoming and street facing entrances, and visually engaging storefronts.
6. A Green Community: new developments and site improvements that heighten the level of “greenness” of the community through an enhanced tree canopy, landscaping additions and new planters that complement the natural and built environment.

7. A Sustainable Community: new developments and improvements to existing sites and buildings that are designed to incorporate sustainable and energy-efficient practices and initiatives through the design of buildings and the layout of sites.

## 7.4 Design Guidelines

The following guidelines apply to the Erin Village and Hillsburgh Sub-Areas, and provide direction on:

- The Built Environment
- Façade Design
- Streetscapes and the Public Realm
- Parking and Access
- The Public/Private Domain Partnership

### 7.4.1 The Built Environment

Guidelines for the built environment generally relate to building height, orientation, setbacks, and frontages. These guidelines will be used as performance criteria in the review of development approvals.

*Objective: to develop and enhance the built environment while encouraging pedestrian activity and respecting local character and history.*

#### Building Heights

- Building heights should be compatible with and not exceed neighbouring building heights.
- Taller buildings may be encouraged at strategic locations such as corner sites and other landmark or gateway sites to enhance the prominence of these locations.
- Minimum floor-to-ceiling heights should be 4.5 metres for at-grade commercial and retail use and 3 metres for residential uses on upper storeys.

#### Building Orientation

- Buildings should be oriented to frame the street edge and to create a continuous street wall.
- Buildings at corner locations should be sited to address the intersection and for enhanced visibility, with consideration given to both street frontages.
- Buildings should front directly onto public streets and other public spaces, in order to clearly define the public realm and create an attractive and safe pedestrian environment.

### Building Setbacks

- Buildings should be setback to align with the existing street wall.
- In general, the the minimum setback allowance should be in accordance with the Town of Erin Zoning By-law and should be adhered to so that buildings are located as close to the street as possible to reinforce the street edge and provide a comfortable pedestrian environment.
- Where more generous setbacks are appropriate, the space should be used for landscaped areas, additional street tree planting, amenity areas, seating, display areas or sidewalk cafés and patios.
- Parking spaces should not be located in the front yard setback space, or within the exterior side yard space on corner lots.

### Building Frontages

- Main building entrances should face the street and should be clearly defined and easily identifiable.
- Front entrances of stores, offices, etc. should permit barrier-free access and universal accessibility, including both visual and physical accessibility.
- Building frontages should not be visually obscured as per the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design.
- Buildings fronting onto main streets should have active uses at grade, such as commercial, retail or office uses.
- Ground floor façades should be highly transparent, including transparent windows and entrance doors, to establish a strong visual connection between the street and the interior of active ground floor uses.

### Building Sides

- Spaces between buildings (such as alleyways) should be well-lit and enhanced through decorative signage, decorative paving, and public art.
- The sides of buildings should be considered as signage and mural locations.
- The aesthetics of building sides can also be improved with creative lighting techniques and well-designed finishes, material, and colour selections.

### Continuous Façades

- Building façades should be continuous in downtown areas to create a consistent street wall and maximize the enclosure of the street.
- Façade rhythm may be established along a street wall through architectural articulation, including the use of fenestration, bands, columns, and other repeated elements.
- A rhythm of fine-grain and narrow shop frontages should be established.

### 7.4.2 Façade Design

Guidelines for façade design generally relate to restoration of heritage features, building materials and colours, architectural ornamentation, signage and shopfront design. These guidelines will be used as performance criteria in the review of development approvals.

Objective: *to celebrate local history and respect historic character, provide visual harmony, within the downtown areas, and create a lively, vibrant and friendly atmosphere for residents and visitors.*

#### Façade Restoration

- Existing façades should be repaired, restored and maintained to reveal their original heritage character and features. Original stonework and brickwork should be preserved wherever possible.
- Restoration may include the sensitive replacement of original building features to match the original features as accurately as possible.

#### Infill Design

- New building styles should be complementary to the traditional building stock, either through a traditional style that reflects the character of the area, or a more contemporary style that sets heritage buildings apart through a defined contrast.
- New buildings should reflect the scale and massing of the existing building stock, as well as the façade proportions, rhythm and building materials.

#### Façade Materials

- Building materials should reflect and complement the existing materials in the area and should be high quality, durable and easily maintained.
- The materials selected should be consistent for a building's façade and any walls that are publicly visible.
- Recommended building materials include brick, stone, wood, glass and concrete.
- One or two of these materials should be selected as base materials and may be complemented by a wider range of accent materials.

#### Façade Colours

- Colours which display the individuality of a building and business while complementing the traditional building character are encouraged.
- A façade should incorporate one or two base colours, which may be complemented by a wider range of accent colours that highlight architectural features and signage.
- The colours selected should be consistent for a building's façade and any walls that are publicly visible.

## Architectural Detailing

- Architectural features and decorative elements such as shutters, cornices, awnings, building projections, distinctive roof features, etc. which add visual interest are encouraged on all buildings.
- Additional architectural treatment is encouraged for corner sites and landmark buildings to enhance the visual prominence of these buildings and their locations.
- The ground floor should be articulated in a manner that distinguishes it from upper storeys, for example, through canopies, awnings, lighting and signage.
- Blank walls should not be permitted on any building fronting a street.
- Mechanical equipment should be screened from view.

## Shopfront Signage

- Signage should be located and designed to reflect the heritage character of the streetscape, while allowing for the creativity of individual businesses. Diversity in storefront signage should be encouraged to create shopfronts with “personality”.
- Artistic expression and imagination are encouraged.
- Fascia signs, window signs and signs hanging perpendicular to the building façade should be the primary types of signage used. Sidewalk retailing and sandwich board signs are also encouraged to create vibrancy and interest along the streetscape.
- Signage should be attractive, durable, easy to read and complementary to the overall façade design.
- Sign scale should be in proportion with the building and should reflect the pedestrian scale of the streetscape.
- Signs should be located outside the pedestrian right-of-way and, when located over pedestrian areas, should have a minimum clearance of 2.4 metres from grade.
- Signage should not obscure windows, doors or architectural features.
- Signs should be externally lit. Back-lit or neon signs are discouraged.
- All Signage should be in accordance with the Town of Erin Sign By-law.

## Shopfront Awnings and Canopies

- Awnings and canopies are encouraged above shopfronts to add to the pedestrian experience and comfort of the public realm, for weather protection and shelter, additional signage opportunities and aesthetic appeal for a façade.
- Awnings and canopies should span the façade’s windows and doors rather than the entire shopfront.
- The design, shape, colour and material selected for awnings and canopies should be complementary to the design of the building’s façade, and should reflect the character of the context.

- Signage should be located on the valence of the awning.
- Awnings should not obscure windows, entrances or architectural elements on a façade, or impede views down a street.
- Retractable awnings should be used to provide for seasonal use as needed. Precautions should be taken in the design to make sure when the snow sheds off the awning it does not fall within pedestrian walkways.

### Shopfront Lighting

- Creative exterior lighting is encouraged to promote vibrant streetscapes at night, promote pedestrian traffic and enhance the safety of the pedestrian experience.

### 7.4.3 Streetscapes and the Public Realm

Guidelines for streetscapes and the public realm generally relate to walkability, pedestrian safety, connectivity, wayfinding, street furniture, landscaping, public art, lighting, gateways, public open spaces and amenity spaces. These guidelines will be used as performance criteria in the review of development approvals.

*Objective: to create accessible, safe, active, aesthetically pleasing, vibrant and pedestrian friendly streets and a public realm that is welcoming, livable and encourages community gathering.*

### Walkability

- Building entrances, sidewalks and crosswalks should be barrier-free and accessible.
- Crosswalks should be implemented at key intersections to facilitate safe pedestrian crossings. Decorative paving should be used to clearly distinguish the pedestrian priority zone.
- A uniform walking surface should be maintained on pedestrian sidewalks. Variations in pavement material and texture should be complementary to the architecture, uniform in surface to the sidewalk, and may be used to differentiate building entrances from the public right-of-way. Examples include coloured or stamped concrete and interlocking concrete pavers.
- All sidewalks should be designed to a minimum width of 1.5 metres, where 2 metres is preferable.

### Street Furniture

- Streetscape elements, such as street furniture, refuse and recycling containers, newspaper boxes, should be coordinated, clustered and not impede paths of travel.
- Street furniture should reflect a common theme and recognizable design, and should reflect the character of the area and the design of buildings.



### Street Landscaping

- Existing street trees and planting beds should be retained and maintained where possible.
- Street trees should be provided on main streets within the CIPA to develop a strong mature canopy over time and create a healthy and attractive streetscape environment.
- Hanging baskets, seasonal planters and other landscape features which add warmth and visual interest to the streetscape should be installed and maintained.
- Tree and shrub species should be native, low-maintenance, salt tolerant, and should provide seasonal interest.
- Trees and landscaping should not obscure views and sightlines.

### Lighting

- Existing lighting features should be upgraded and maintained.
- Decorative and pedestrian-scaled lighting should be used to enhance the streetscape experience, to animate streetscapes at night, and for safety and pedestrian comfort.
- Spotlighting and decorative lighting should be used to highlight landscape and architectural features, landmark buildings and signage.
- Lighting should be designed using energy efficient sources and to avoid light pollution, spillover and glare.

### Signage and Wayfinding

- Coordinated directional signage should be provided throughout the CIPA to improve accessibility and wayfinding for residents and visitors.
- Signage and wayfinding should be designed to be similar to the overall theme of the streetscape and architectural character of buildings, and should be creative.
- Signage style and design should reflect the local character of the community, including local site-specific history.
- Signage and wayfinding should be designed for clarity and visibility.
- Sign colour, font colour, font size and style must be legible. Designers should consult local by-laws and provincial regulations for further information and requirements.
- Where possible, information should be consolidated on one panel or post.
- Signs should not be blocked by vegetation.
- Signage placement should anticipate snow pile up in the winter months and be located to be legible where possible on an annual basis.

### Public Art

- Public art should be featured in permanent or temporary installations.
- Murals should be provided on publicly visible side or rear building walls for visual interest and to enhance the sense of community.
- A mural and banner program should be created with local artists where artwork is unique to the Town and profiled free of sponsorship logos.

### Outdoor Amenity Spaces

- Outdoor spaces with spill-out space from businesses, such as sidewalk cafés and patios, are encouraged as they help to animate the street.
- Spill-out spaces should be located along the street sidewalk edge or within the spaces between buildings.
- These spaces should relate to the street and be open to public view.
- Sidewalk cafés and patios should be designed and located so as not to impede pedestrian movement.
- Decorative fencing and patio furniture should be used to add excitement to the streetscape and which complements the design of the building.

### Parks and Open Spaces

- Parks and open spaces contribute to a healthy and sustainable urban environment and public realm, and should provide focal points for social interaction, recreation and community events.
- Parks should be designed to cater to all age groups, and should be flexible enough to accommodate day-to-day use and spontaneous activity such as markets.
- Parks and open spaces should be enhanced through decorative street furniture and paving, places to sit, hard and soft landscaping, tree planting, and public art.
- Pedestrian-scaled lighting should be provided to create a comfortable and safe environment.
- Parks and open spaces should be highly visible and easily accessible from streets.
- Where possible, parks and open spaces should be framed by development and active ground floor uses to animate the space.

#### 7.4.4 Parking and Access

Guidelines for parking and access generally relate to the design and functionality of on- and off-street parking and access driveways. These guidelines will be used as performance criteria in the review of development approvals.

Objective: *to provide suitable parking and driveway options while reducing traffic speed and visual dominance.*

##### Parking Lot Location

- Parking should be designed and located to minimize its impact on the streetscape and public realm, and should not abut the public right-of-way to ensure that sidewalks and building façades effectively define the street edge.
- New front street parking and driveways are discouraged. Parking will not be permitted between the public realm and the building face or within front yard setback areas.
- Side yard parking may be considered where site constraints are significant, but is generally discouraged.
- Rear yard parking, or encouraging patrons to park in designated parking lots, is preferred.
- Where possible, parking areas should be coordinated between multiple properties to maximize connectivity, improve traffic flow and increase the efficiency of parking.

##### Parking Lot Design

- Surface parking lots should be designed for pedestrian safety and comfort, for example, through the provision of pedestrian-scaled lighting, walkways, trees and landscaping, and wayfinding signage.
- Parking lots should be designed according to the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design.
- Pedestrian routes through parking areas should be wide enough to accommodate comfortable travel and should be clearly differentiated from the remainder of the parking area with texture, material, colour changes or markings.
- Where existing parking areas are adjacent to the sidewalk, a landscaped buffer should be located between parked vehicles and the sidewalk to enhance pedestrian safety and to screen the visual impact of surface parking.
- Planting strips and landscaped traffic islands should also be provided within lots to break up the expanse of hard surface.
- Bicycle parking and racks should be provided in locations that are close to building entrances but situated to avoid any conflicts for movement along pedestrian routes.

## Access

- Where possible, access to parking areas should be provided from side streets and rear lanes.
- Access to parking areas should be defined through clearly designated entrances and exits.
- Lots should be organized to minimize the number of potential pedestrian-vehicle movement conflicts.

### 7.4.5 Public Private Domain Partnership

From a design perspective, there is an inseparable interface between the quality and design language of private properties with the public realm of sidewalks, streetscapes, roads, and connectivity in general, including universal accessibility. In Erin, the waterfront, trails, and rivers must also be considered.

Eligible applicants should be encouraged to work with the Town to coordinate efforts to improve the exterior appearance of their property with any municipal improvement plan.

Objective: *unify the efforts between the public and private domains in key areas where a working partnership is ideal.*

### The Public Private Domain

- A choice of comfortable outdoor spaces for pedestrians for walking, sitting or outdoor eating should be created.
- Seating areas day and night should be defined with design elements such as ornamental fencing, unique paving and/or lit bollards.
- Social interactions and public surveillance of businesses should be encouraged through face-to-face seating.
- Relaxed and shaded outdoor dining spaces for shops and restaurants should be created.
- A safe pedestrian experience should be promoted at all hours with appropriately scaled lighting.
- Alley/laneways, rear building spaces, and waterfronts that have a public view should be enhanced with façade treatments, landscaping, lighting, etc.
- Relaxed and shaded outdoor dining spaces for shops and restaurants should be created.
- A safe pedestrian experience should be promoted at all hours with appropriately scaled lighting.