



Urban Design Brief

Study Description:

An Urban Design Brief is a comprehensive document which may include urban design vision, principles, objectives, guidelines, and strategies for a development proposal. An Urban Design Brief may be approved/adopted or endorsed by Council in support of a development application, and may be implemented through site specific Official Plan Policies or Zoning By-law Regulations. It will be used to assess the merits of a development application against design standards as defined by City policies and guidelines, and analyzes how the proposal responds to site conditions and neighbourhood context through built form and site design. The Brief will supplement and reinforce existing design policies with site-specific design guidelines for the proposed development. The Urban Design Brief should use graphics, images and text to explore a concept and explain why a proposed development represents the **optimum design solution**. The Brief should not simply be a reflection of, or argument for a preferred development scheme.

Purpose:

The purpose of this Terms of Reference ("TOR") is to establish clear expectations and requirements for the preparation of an Urban Design Brief submitted to the City of Kitchener. Compliance with these guidelines will help to expedite review times and mitigate the need for further revisions and submissions. Failure to satisfy the requirements set out in this TOR may result in an application being deemed incomplete. If an application is deemed incomplete it will be returned to the applicant to satisfy the necessary submission requirements.

When is it Required:

An Urban Design Brief may be required for the following Planning Act applications:

- Official Plan Amendment
- Zoning By-law Amendment
- Draft Plan of Subdivision or Draft Plan of Vacant Land Condominium
- Site Plan Control
- Other planning application, as determined by the City.

The need for an Urban Design Brief as part of a complete application will be identified as part of the pre-application consultation review. In the instance where a planning application being advanced does not have a mandatory pre-application consultation process (e.g., Committee of Adjustment applications), the applicant is encouraged to contact the City's Planning Division to discuss the nature of the proposal and to determine if an Urban Design Brief is required.

The City of Kitchener has also developed an Urban Design Scorecard. This is an urban design evaluation tool that may be required together with or in lieu of an Urban Design Brief in some instances. This will be identified by staff through the Pre-Submission Consultation. An Urban Design Scorecard will be completed by an owner/applicant to demonstrate how a development application implements the *City's Urban Design Manual*.

Qualified Person:

An Urban Design Brief shall be prepared by an Urban Designer who is a qualified and competent professional in good standing in one of the following disciplines:

- Urban Design
- Registered Planner (RPP/MCIP)
- Licensed Architect (OAA)
- Landscape Architect (OALA)

The report must identify and be signed by the author(s) and, where prepared under the direction of a qualified professional, the signature of the reviewer of the report. As noted in the 'Report Contents', the Urban Design Brief introduction is to include the qualifications of who is preparing the report. The qualified professional that has signed the report shall take professional responsibility for its contents and the accuracy of the information contained therein.

Applicable Legislation:

The authority to require or request information or material to evaluate and make a decision on proposed planning applications is provided by the Ontario *Planning Act* and City of Kitchener Official Plan Section 17.E.10 ("Complete Application Requirements"). This Terms of Reference document is to be applied in conjunction with all applicable regulations, by-laws, and guidelines, including the City of Kitchener's *Urban Design Manual* and *Development Manual*.

Study Requirements:

This TOR document sets out the minimum requirements that must be included in an Urban Design Brief. More specific scoping may be identified by staff during the pre-submission consultation process. It is expected that the Urban Design Brief will be highly visual with the extensive use of graphics to demonstrate how the proposed development responds to the existing and planned context.

The Urban Design Brief is required to analyse not just the site, but also the community context of the site and the policy framework within which it exists and provide initial urban design ideas and corresponding design objectives. From this analysis, options are to be provided, along with a recommended design solution for the site and project.

Report Contents:

A. Introduction:

A high-level overview of the proposal as well as the purpose of the subject land-use planning application. The following should be included:

- Ownership/applicant information
- Name and qualifications of who is preparing the Brief
- The address and extent of the study area.
- A high-level overview of the development proposal and development application.

B. Design Vision and Objectives:

Provide a design vision that describes the overall intent and design objectives of the proposed development. Address how the design approach for the proposed development will integrate into the local existing and planned context and responds to applicable design policies, standards, and guidelines. Consider the approach

to accessibility, connectivity, sustainability, active transportation, public realm, culture, heritage, open space, and architectural quality. Emphasis should be placed on how examining the unique aspects of the site and its local context informed the design approach.

C. Site Conditions and Neighbourhood Contextual Analysis:

Demonstrate an understanding of the site and surrounding conditions within a 250-500 metre radius of the site, with an emphasis on how the development proposal responds to context. It is expected that the following will be addressed through the use of text and graphics.

- Site location, area, and boundary;
- Topography, natural features, cultural heritage features, existing constraints, etc.
- Neighbourhood structure including street network, neighbourhood pattern, public amenities, landmarks, gateways, and view corridors;
- Transportation networks including vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit; and
- Surrounding land uses including built form, character and cultural heritage features.

D. Proposed Development

Provide a written and graphic communication of the proposed development and include plans, graphics and precedent/inspiration images that clearly illustrate the proposed design intention and accurately reflect the scale and character of the development. Please include the following plans and discussion (these may be scoped by staff through the pre-submission consultation).

- Master Plan (for large sites or staged developments)
- Proposed Site Plan or Plan of Subdivision
- Architectural Site Plans
 - Floor plates with dimensions, demonstrating building step backs from the podium to the tower and other floor/typical floor plans
 - Building cross-sections should include accurate grading information and full right-of-ways to analyze how the building and site grading relate to the existing context. Proposals for medium and high-rise buildings should include an angular plane analysis.
- Building Design Plans
 - Elevation drawings and 3D Renderings in colour for all publicly visible facades, including anticipated building materials and colours.
 - Sustainability & Green Building Design Plans
 - Discussion should include:
 - Building massing including height, step-backs, floorplates, separation distances, building placement, and orientation;
 - On corner or through lots, address how the building(s) will address multiple street edges;
 - In the context of low-rise adjacencies, address building transitions, and privacy mitigation;
 - For tall buildings, discussion should include reference to the:
 - Tall Building Design Guidelines (Urban Design Manual – Part A – Section 9)
 - Strategic Growth Area policies and zoning (where applicable)

- Provide an analysis of building impacts to views, sunlight, wind, and microclimatic comfort. If these are provided in separate Shadow Analysis or Wind Study then reference to that document should be made in this section.
 - Provide a discussion of how the architectural treatment:
 - has been established
 - how it responds to and/or reflects its local context,
 - how the design treatment at-grade enhances the pedestrian experience,
 - where applicable, how does the building addresses corners and intersections.
- Access, Circulation, Trails and Parking
 - Plan should include:
 - vehicular, pedestrian, cycling, fire routes and truck movements (garbage/loading)
 - public and private road networks, pedestrian circulation routes, linkages, trails, mid-block connections, courtyards, privately owned public spaces (POPS), etc. emergency access, and service routes.
 - Discussion should include how the proposed circulation network integrates with existing transportation patterns, how the various modes of transportation have been incorporated, and how they interface with the public realm. If a Transportation Impact Study or Parking Justification Study has been completed then reference to that document may be made in this section.
- Open Space, Landscape and Amenity Space
 - Plans should include:
 - Delineation of general areas for trees (demonstrating soil volumes), planting and green space, designated amenity spaces (ie. play areas, community gardens, forecourts, patios, etc.), landscape buffers, landscape structures and parkland conveyances (if required), plazas, courtyards, privately owned public spaces (POPS) landscape buffers, landscape structures, seating, mailboxes, and parkland conveyances (if required);
 - Show any public art (may include special lighting, street furniture etc.) For any proposed urban squares or similar features such as plazas and/or courtyards, include information on their design elements and materials.
 - Discussion should include how the proposed open spaces, landscaping and amenity spaces integrates with existing facilities and systems, how they will meet the needs of residents, and how they interface with the public realm.
- Public Realm & Streetscape Design
 - Plan should include:
 - delineation of the pedestrian realm and at-grade conditions along all public frontages including proposed building placement, entrances, known/proposed utility locations (including gas), and the proposed landscaping, hardscaping, tree plantings (including soil cells), art, light, and signage;
 - linkages, trails, mid-block connections, courtyards, privately owned public spaces (POPS), etc
 - Discussion should articulate how the interface between the public and private realm will contribute to creating attractive and functional streetscapes.
- Heritage

Describe how designated cultural heritage resources on or adjacent to the site will be protected, conserved, enhanced, and integrated. Include details such as massing, materiality, fenestration, and landscape. If details of the above are contained in a Heritage Impact Assessment then reference to that document should be made in this section.

- **Sustainability**

Describe what building and landscaping approaches or technologies are being used to reduce the building's environmental impact. If details are contained in an Energy Strategy or Sustainability Statement, then reference to that document should be made in this section.

E. Analysis of Urban Design Policies and Guidelines

Provide a high-level overview and analysis of how the proposed development implements relevant urban design policies found in applicable documents including:

- City of Kitchener Official Plan, including Secondary Plans
- Zoning By-law, particularly built form regulations
- City of Kitchener Urban Design Manual with specific reference to applicable guidelines in Parts A (City Wide Guidelines) & Part B (Supplementary Guidelines).

It is expected that this section will not be a comprehensive regurgitation of policy but a brief overview that focuses on applicable policies and implementation. Where the proposed development is *not* in alignment with the policy framework, clear rationale and justification must be provided and supported by proposed means of mitigation and / or compensation. This analysis should be separate content from that found in a Planning Justification Report.

For new neighbourhoods proposed by Plan of Subdivision please include an analysis of how the proposed development aligns with urban design policies of any applicable Secondary Plan, Community Plan, Part A - Section 4 of Urban Design Manual (New Neighbourhoods), and Urban Design Policies contained in Section 11 of the Official Plan.

F. Implementation Measures

This section must include recommendations that translate the design vision and objectives into recommended site specific zoning regulations, and design guidelines and standards to be used at subsequent Planning applications stages for implementation. Design guidelines may diagrams and images, and should provide direction in areas including but not limited to the following:

- site organization, orientation of uses, and site functions including building placement, parking location and site circulation, pedestrian and cycling facilities, lighting and landscaping, etc.
- building typology should be provided and include details of overall and ground floor height, massing, active uses/facades, architectural features, setbacks, step-backs and angular plane, materials and building articulation.
- public open space, privately owned-publicly accessible open space and private amenity spaces including rooftop spaces, sustainable design elements and green infrastructure, character, composition, size, location, connectivity and access.
- compatibility between the site and surrounding lands, buildings and natural and cultural heritage resources, and also between different areas within the site.

Additional Information

1. If City staff consider the submitted Urban Design Brief to be incomplete, unsatisfactory, inconsistent, insufficient, authored by an unqualified individual, or if it fails to satisfy the requirements set out in this TOR in any other manner, the associated development application may be deemed incomplete and returned to the applicant.
2. Deeming an application complete does not guarantee that the contents of the study are acceptable to City staff and/or that the application will be approved.
3. If an Urban Design Brief is not requested at the time of Pre-Submission Consultation, this does not preclude the City from requesting an Urban Design Brief at a later stage. Once an application has been deemed “complete”, the City may require additional information, reports, and/or studies following a more detailed review to assess the implications of an application for approval.
4. The City of Kitchener is committed to complying with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). In our everyday work with businesses institutions, and community partners we anticipate the same commitment to AODA compliance. Therefore, report must be AODA compliant and must meet the current provincial standard for compliance.
5. The City reserves the right to request an updated study, or an addendum thereto, should staff determine that changes in the development proposal or changes to legislation warrant further/modified planning analysis.
6. City staff reserve the right to require a peer review of submitted materials by an appropriate agency or qualified professional, the cost of which will be borne by the applicant.
7. Documents and all related information submitted to the City as part of a complete development application are considered public documents once submitted.
8. The Urban Design Brief shall be submitted in conjunction with the applicable development application(s), unless otherwise agreed to by the City.
9. This Terms of Reference document is intended to be used for guideline purposes only, and will be used to provide technical direction throughout the planning and development process. Completion of a report in alignment with the requirements of this Terms of Reference will not guarantee approval of the development application in question.
10. This TOR is relevant at the time of publishing and will be updated as necessary to reflect current policy, best practices, and accepted standards. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure the report is prepared in accordance with the most recent version of the TOR issued by the City.