# INTRODUCTION

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Introduction

The design guidelines described in the following sections of this report present a significant challenge for the City of London. Although these guidelines have been prepared with the assistance of consultants, it will be the continuing responsibility of the City, the BIA, civic leaders, and private businesspeople and developers to pursue their implementation.

The City has taken the first and most important step in this process. In May, 1991, Council approved the Downtown Design Study Report. This Report, incorporating both the Urban Design Concept and the Downtown Design Guidelines, has been produced as two documents; the Urban Design Concept, which describes the design opportunities for Downtown London, and the Downtown Design Guidelines, which outline the City’s preferences with respect to Downtown design and development. An important aspect of the urban design guidelines for Downtown is the implementation process, which is described in detail in the Implementation section of this report. The text describes the administrative framework whereby the Guidelines may be implemented.

This step alone will not in itself insure the immediate creation of design “masterpieces” in Downtown London. As was stated during early discussions with the Downtown Steering Committee, “good design cannot be legislated”. Today, the process of Downtown development is too complex for any single designer, City planner, or municipal government to impose a single “design vision” on each and every Downtown project.

This is in fact not the intent of design guidelines. Design guidelines, unlike mandatory controls governing building height, setbacks, etc. are expressions of design preferences and dislikes. Since compliance with design guidelines is voluntary, they must “lead by example”, rather than by force of law. In this context, the purpose of design guidelines is threefold, but straightforward:

* Discourage development and design treatments that are considered to be detrimental to the functional success and visual quality of Downtown.
• Encourage development and design treatments that are considered to be beneficial to the functional success and visual quality of Downtown.

• Allow flexibility for individual design creativity and innovation.

Since the definition of "good" and "bad" design will always be a subjective determination, and one that evolves over time, the implementation of design guidelines will to a great extent be the result of informal, and often intuitive negotiations and decisions regarding specific designs and projects. The proposed implementation process provides a rational, replicable procedure within which this informal aspect of implementation can occur. It must be recognized that the City will have both successes and failures in this process.

Why should the City be involved in the design of Downtown projects?

The following report represents the culmination of a number of studies and years of effort by the City Administration and Planning and Development Department to identify and implement a process whereby the City can become an active participant in the design of Downtown. The design guidelines approach as described herein is the approach that was identified by the City as the most desirable way to meet this objective. It is however, not the maximum level of intervention that might be pursued. Other cities have gone beyond the step of encouraging good design into approaches for direct governmental intervention in the development process itself. Today, many cities are involved in promoting development, participating financially and administratively in joint public-private development projects, and procuring local, provincial, and federal monies for a variety of civic projects. More and more cities are recognizing that they must take a stronger leadership role in the whole process of Downtown development, from basic funding questions to detailed design matters if they wish to insure the continued success of their Downtown areas.

In addition, other communities have recognized that good design can have important "spin-off" benefits. Good design and an attractive setting can be viewed as an important element
in maintaining and enhancing the Downtown's role as an "attraction" and destination for shopping, entertainment and recreational activities. In addition, it can be argued that an attractive downtown can act as an incentive to encourage people to consider opportunities for "in-town" living.

The City of London is at the beginning of its participation in, and direction of Downtown development. The adoption and use of design guidelines is an appropriate first step taken by many cities in their efforts to maintain the vitality of their Downtown areas. The adoption of the design guidelines by the City "sets the course" toward a leadership position by the City in the Downtown decision-making process. This is a significant step forward that represents the combined efforts of the City's business community, its administrative staff, and its civic leaders.
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Building Envelope

Introduction

The overall shape and perception of downtown areas is in a large part determined by the height, density and scale of development. As described in the inventory of existing conditions prepared in the first step of this study, the majority of existing buildings in Downtown are small in scale and low in height. It has been estimated that only 20% of the buildings within the Downtown study area are over four stories tall. This reflects the small lot sizes and older three and four story construction that still exists in Downtown. The result is that Downtown London today retains to a great extent the scale of a small town.

This pattern is part of the underlying character and appeal of London, and that which distinguishes it from the high density, large scale urban environments of cities like Toronto and Montreal. It has been stated that the pleasant scale and character of London is at least in-part responsible for the recent economic growth of Downtown, and the City as a whole. It is also many people’s perception that the scale and character of the small, older buildings is Downtown London’s most important asset.

Tall, large-scale buildings also exist in the Downtown, notably the City Centre towers at the corner of Wellington and Dundas Streets. One London Place, currently under construction, will be the newest large building constructed in Downtown. These structures, along with recently constructed buildings north of Dundas Street and west of Richmond Street, have begun to change the scale of Downtown. As a result, parts of Downtown London have a distinct “big city” feeling.

However, not all new, large development projects have followed this pattern. Galleria London, one of the largest recent development projects in terms of square footage, has maintained the three and four story height of adjacent structures.
Other recent projects have incorporated tall, large-scale building elements, and combined them with low, smaller-scale building elements. The Xerox building at the northwest corner of Richmond and Dufferin includes a highrise tower and a single story retail building along Richmond Street. The setback of the highrise building in this project, combined with architectural definition of individual "storefronts", allows the existing scale of Richmond Row to be maintained along the frontage of the project.

Although there will always be disagreement regarding the architectural merits of new large developments, they are a key part of the "economic engine" that will keep Downtown London a vibrant, busy, "living" place. The existing three and four story older buildings are also a part of the economic and physical resources of Downtown. Where redevelopment of these structures is not possible or appropriate for economic reasons, other ways must be found to improve and "adaptively reuse" the existing structures so that they will continue to contribute to the overall economic vitality of Downtown.

The manner in which new development, redevelopment, and adaptive reuse projects are designed is the subject of the following guidelines. It is the premise of these guidelines that the critical element of the overall design success of a particular project, and Downtown as a whole, is the way in which buildings relate to the street-level pedestrian environment. It is the condition, character and quality of the street-level environment that is often the first and most lasting impression of a place. This is particularly true in many of the "picturesque" cities of Europe.

The Official Plan incorporates several policies indicating the City's desire to influence the overall form of building development, that is, the building envelope. These policies are:

- **The form and design of new development should complement any significant natural features such as river valleys, ravines, wooded areas and parklands that form part of, or are located adjacent to, the site.**

- **To the extent feasible, new development should minimize the obstruction of views of**
natural features and landmarks.

- The massing and conceptual design of new development should provide for continuity and harmony in architectural style and adjacent uses which have a distinctive and attractive visual identity or which are recognized as being of architectural or historical significance.

During the course of the Downtown Design Study, the following objectives have been proposed, which support the policies of the Official Plan:

- Future development in the Downtown Shopping District should retain the three to four story scale at the streetline that presently exists.

- The design of future Downtown buildings should reflect the special visual, functional, and cultural significance of the Dundas and Richmond Street shopping areas.

- The design of future Downtown buildings should enhance the open space and landscape linkages between the Downtown Shopping Area and the important park and open spaces at Victoria Park and the Forks of the Thames.

- The design of future Downtown buildings should enhance the spatial enclosure of the important park and open spaces at Victoria Park and the Forks of the Thames.

- Future land uses in the northeastern and southeastern perimeters of the Downtown Shopping Area should provide a transitional use and scale of development between the nearby commercial and residential areas.

The following guidelines therefore suggest ways in which new development, redevelopment, and adaptive reuse can be accomplished, and retain the lively small-scale Downtown street-level environment that is so much a part of Downtown London's present character. These guidelines address the basic elements of the Building Envelope: height, setbacks and
orientation. Guidelines for the relationship of the building to the street address the issue of building scale.

**Building Height Guidelines**

While the overall height of new development in the Downtown is of some concern, it is the perception of building height from the sidewalk that is most important to the pedestrian. In order to create and maintain a pleasant pedestrian environment in the Downtown, it is desirable to retain the scale and perception of spatial enclosure that currently exists along the majority of streets in the Downtown.

The relationship of buildings to open spaces is also important in Downtown. Two major amenity areas and open spaces, Victoria Park and the Forks of the Thames, form boundaries of the Downtown area. Enclosure and appropriate scale are important design elements that can help to frame these open spaces. The following guidelines are intended to reinforce the scale and sense of enclosure along Downtown streets and open spaces.

- **With the exception of development along York Street, new development along streets within the Downtown is encouraged to retain a three to four story height at the building line.**

- **The draft zoning By-Law proposes a 15 metre height limit at the building line along Dundas and Richmond Streets in the DA1 zone. Where permitted height limits on other streets are greater than the existing building heights, it is encouraged that new buildings be constructed with heights between 14 and 18 metres (45 and 59 feet) at the building line. Above these heights, it is encouraged that buildings be setback from the building line as described in the Building Setback Guidelines.**

- **Where new buildings will abut existing structures at the building line, it is encouraged that the new structure exactly match the adjacent building height, or provide a clearly visible and readily apparent offset in height so as to maintain the visual integrity of the existing structure.**
Building Setback Guidelines

The building setbacks referred to in these guidelines are equivalent to the yard requirements referred to in the Draft Zoning By-Law, which are defined as the horizontal distance between the property line and the nearest main wall of the building or structure on the lot. With the exception of those portions of buildings in the DA1 zone greater than 15 metres in height fronting on Dundas and Richmond Streets in the Downtown Shopping Area, there are no front yard requirements in the Downtown DA zones.

Four types of building setbacks are addressed in the Guidelines:

- **minor setbacks at ground level**
- **ground level setbacks at landscape linkage streets**
- **ground level setbacks at Downtown “gateway” locations**
- **above ground-level setbacks**

The following guidelines for minor ground level setbacks are intended to provide a degree of continuity at the ground level building facades in the Downtown Shopping Area, while allowing flexibility for the design of private property improvements:

- **In general, it is preferred that buildings within the Downtown Shopping Area be built at or near the building line so as to maintain the visual continuity of the retail district, and the spatial enclosure of the street. A review of the University of Western Ontario wind study of Downtown suggests a possible correlation between increases in wind velocity and larger open spaces in the “urban fabric” of Downtown development.**

- **Minor ground level setbacks may be acceptable along individual building facades in order to provide covered pedestrian entrances, covered arcades for weather protection**
along shop windows, and to establish individual building identity. In general, these minor setbacks are encouraged to not exceed 3 metres (10 feet) in depth so as to maintain the general continuity of the street-level uses. As referred to in the guidelines for Building Setbacks, the term “at the building line” includes buildings designed with minor setbacks. (See Arcades for further guidelines on this type of structure).

- Although minor setbacks may be accommodated, it is preferred that ground level building facades on structures within the Downtown Shopping Area be designed to avoid “non-defensible” recesses.

- Where new structures abut an existing building facade, care should be taken to coordinate the locations of ground level building walls so as to enhance the continuity of the sidewalk and pedestrian movement patterns, and to avoid awkward discontinuities in the sidewalk.

- Plazas are considered to be spaces greater than 3 metres (10 feet) in depth and width, and are covered in a separate section of this report.

The following guideline is intended to enhance the visual linkages between the Downtown Shopping Area and the major open spaces at Victoria Park and the Forks of the Thames:

- On the following streets, it is encouraged that future buildings be set back from the property line, and a continuous landscaped yard area be provided along the street frontage. If provided, it is encouraged that these yard areas be a minimum of 3 metres (10 feet):

  Both sides of Queens Avenue, Dundas Street and King Street between Ridout Street and the Thames River.

  Both sides of Dufferin Avenue between Richmond Street and Ridout Street.
LEGEND
GROUND-LEVEL SETBACKS
LANDSCAPE GATEWAY
SETBACKS ENCOURAGED
LANDSCAPE LINKAGE
SETBACKS ENCOURAGED
ABOVE GROUND-LEVEL SETBACKS
BUILDING SETBACK
MANDATED IN ZONING BY LAW
BUILDING SETBACK
ENCOURAGED
BUILDING SETBACK
ENCOURAGED
BUILDING SETBACK
ENCOURAGED

BUILDING SETBACK GUIDELINES
The east side of Richmond Street between Queens Avenue and Dufferin Street.

Both sides of Clarence Street and Wellington Street between Queens Avenue and Dufferin Avenue.

The following guidelines are intended to establish landscaped gateways into Downtown:

- A continuous 10 metre (33 feet) landscaped setback area is encouraged to be provided in the following locations:

  On the south side of Dundas Street between Talbot and Ridout Streets
  On the east side of Ridout Street between King and Kent Streets
  On both sides of Wellington Street between York Street and the VIA tracks.
  On both sides of Wellington Street in the block immediately south of the VIA tracks

Such landscaped setbacks are encouraged to incorporate two rows of street trees running parallel to the curb line in order to create an appropriate landscaped emphasis in these locations.

- The City is encouraged to investigate the possibility of relocating existing on-street parking along both sides of Dundas Street between Wellington and Waterloo Streets, and to install landscaped sidewalk areas in its place. It is encouraged that two rows of trees be incorporated on each side of the street to establish this landscaped gateway.

- The City is encouraged to redesign the landscape treatment on the west side of the Dundas and Queens Avenue bridges over the Thames to create a landscaped gateway in Downtown in these locations.
The following above ground-level setbacks are interrelated with the guidelines encouraging three and four story building heights at the building line:

- Along the following streets, those portions of the buildings above the three to four story building height at the building line are encouraged to incorporate a minimum 2:1 stepback (1 metre stepback for each two metres of height) to the maximum permitted height:

  Along the north side of Dundas Street between Talbot and Ridout Streets
  Along the south side of King Street between Ridout and Thames Streets
  Along the east side of Thames Street between King and York Streets
  Along the south side of York Street between Thames Street and the Thames River.
  Along the Thames River between York Street and the railroad tracks
  Along the east side of Ridout Street between King and Kent Streets

- On all streets west of Wellington Street within the Downtown, with the exception of York Street, Queens Avenue, and Fullarton Street, buildings are encouraged to incorporate a minimum 5 metre (16 feet) setback above the 14 to 18 metre building height encouraged at the building line, in order to maintain the pedestrian-oriented character of these streets, and to retain the visual prominence of Victoria Park.

- On the east side of Wellington Street between Dufferin Avenue and Princess Street (extended), buildings are encouraged to incorporate a 5 metre (16 feet) setback above the 14 to 18 metre building height encouraged at the building line, in order to retain the visual prominence of Victoria Park.
Building Orientation Guidelines

For Downtown buildings that are low in height and have almost 100% lot coverage, overall orientation of the structure is not of much concern. For buildings which are taller than the surrounding existing development, orientation is more of a concern. To address this condition, the following guidelines are proposed:

- For buildings that face the major open spaces along the Forks of the Thames and Victoria Park, it is preferred that the portion of the building up to a height of 14 to 18 metres (45 to 59 feet) be built as a continuous “streetwall”. This streetwall may be accomplished by use of a solid building mass, but may also be accomplished by other means, such as a continuous arcade treatment or covered walkway design. The intent is to provide a spatial enclosure for these important civic spaces.

- For buildings that face the major open spaces along Victoria Park and the Forks of the Thames, it is preferred that the portion(s) of the building that extend above the 14 to 18 metre height be oriented with their long axis perpendicular to the open space. This will maximize the view opportunities toward these spaces. In these locations, orientation perpendicular to these open spaces to maximize views is preferred to take precedence over orientation to maximize solar penetration.

- For buildings that front on the east/west streets in Downtown, it is preferred that the portions of the structure above the 14 to 18 metre height be designed so that the long axis of the building is oriented in a north/south direction. This will maximize the opportunity for penetration of winter sunlight into the street-level pedestrian environment.

Implementation of the Building Envelope Design Guidelines

Many of the guidelines that effect the envelope in which development may occur can be implemented through site plan control or zoning By-Laws. During the course of the preparation of the design guidelines, the Downtown Steering Committee considered whether
the Draft Zoning By-Law, which was then being prepared, should be modified to incorporate those elements of the guidelines that could be translated into mandatory controls within the provisions of Section 40 of the Planning Act.

The Draft Zoning By-Law includes two DA (Downtown Area) zones that provide for land uses and development intensity consistent with the Official Plan policies designating Downtown as the City’s dominant business and commercial core. Building heights of up to 90 metres (295 feet) are permitted, contingent upon wind mitigation studies for structures above 30 metres (100 feet) in DA1 zones and 15 metres (50 feet) in DA2 zones. In addition, buildings fronting on Dundas and Richmond Streets within the DA1 zone are required to provide 2:1 building stepbacks for development above 15 metres.

Potential modifications to the Draft Zoning By-Law evaluated by the Downtown Steering Committee for inclusion in the Draft Zoning By-Law included the following:

• Change of use designations on four parcels to designations that were more consistent with both the existing uses and the zoning designations proposed for surrounding parcels.

• Extension of the area in which the building setback provisions of the Draft By-Law would apply.

• Designation of areas in which a single building setback would be required on buildings greater than 14 to 18 metres (45 to 59 feet) in height (setback to occur at an elevation of 18 metres above the sidewalk).

• Requiring ground level retail uses in the DA1 zoning district.

• Requiring certain ground level building setbacks in order to maintain the landscape character of certain streets.
Incorporation of a holding provision to require wind tunnel studies of open plaza areas to minimize adverse wind conditions that often result from these spaces.

The change of use designations proposed to the Downtown Steering Committee have subsequently been incorporated into the Draft Zoning By-Law. The other potential modifications were not recommended by the Committee for inclusion in the Draft Zoning By-Law. The Downtown Steering Committee, with City Council confirmation, determined that these provisions should not be incorporated in the draft zoning By-Law at this time, in part due to concern regarding the effects of these provisions on private development with respect to Council's adopted policy on road allowance widening.

At the present time, the draft zoning By-Law incorporates required rights-of-way for Downtown streets. Some of these rights-of-way exceed the road allowances adopted by Council in May, 1988 (Dundas Street for example is not included in the road allowance widening policy, but is listed in the Draft Zoning By-Law for additional right-of-way). On other Downtown streets, the rights-of-way in the draft By-Law correspond to the previously adopted road allowances. While this issue must undergo further public review as part of the zoning By-Law approval process, this will not directly affect the underlying principles on which previous proposals regarding setbacks, stepbacks, and building height and orientation were based. For this reason, elements relating to building height, setback, stepback, and orientation, have been included in the guidelines as the preferred treatment and form of the building envelope in Downtown development.
Relationship of Buildings to the Street

Introduction

As described in the guidelines for Building Height, the most important aspect of a successful urban pedestrian environment is the way in which the facade of the ground floor level is designed. Of most concern in Downtown London is the design of the front facades on those buildings which front on the streets within the Downtown Shopping Area. Rear and side facades visible from, but not fronting directly on the retail pedestrian-oriented streets are also of concern, although their designs are not considered to be as critical to the continued success of the Downtown retail shopping environment. Also of secondary concern is the design treatment for the second through fourth levels of the front facades, since it is this height which is encouraged to be maintained in the Building Envelope design guidelines.

Policies for Downtown development in the Official Plan relating to the ground-level character of the Downtown, promote and encourage active, ground-level uses and the provision of an enhanced pedestrian environment. The Draft Zoning By-Law further defines specific regulations governing the uses permitted at ground level within the Downtown zoning districts (DA1 and DA2).

The following guidelines are an extension of these policies, describing the preferred visual character of building facades at the ground level, and the preferred treatments for other related issues such as the design of plazas and exterior signage.

Visual Character of Ground Level Facades

Windows and Fenestration

The pattern of windows and building openings is an important element of the visual character and functional vitality of the street. Much of Downtown London is characterized by the storefront layout that was typical of late 19th and early 20th century commercial architecture.
“Standard” elements of the storefront included tall windows and glass doors, which took advantage of daylight to illuminate interior displays, a recessed opening flanked by display windows, and a low “kick-plate” beneath the storefront windows. Awnings were often incorporated to provide weather protection for pedestrian comfort. Business identification signage was typically located immediately above the storefront in a specifically designed sign panel. The overall effect was of a large expanse of glass.

The general principles embodied in these design features are incorporated into the following design guidelines, both because they will encourage development that is sympathetic to the existing development pattern in the Downtown Shopping Area, and because they will contribute to its continued success.

- Continuous blank walls at the street level are discouraged. Generally, the existing condition along the primary retail streets (Dundas and Richmond) is that approximately 40% to 50% of the building face at the street level consists of glass or openings (doors). It is encouraged that new development in the Downtown Shopping Area continue this proportion along the street level facade.

- Generally, the existing condition along the primary retail streets is a series of continuous storefronts. These range in length along the street frontage from approximately 20 feet (6 m) up to 260 feet (79 m), which is the length of The Bay store (Galleria London) frontage on Dundas Street. For the most part, there is a continuous pattern and rhythm of storefronts and building entrances. It is encouraged that new development in the Downtown Shopping Area continue this pattern. Continuous expanses of blank building wall at the street line greater than 10 feet (3 m) are discouraged. This is approximately half the length of the shortest existing storefronts, and is therefore considered to be the maximum length of blank wall that could be incorporated without disrupting the visual continuity of the storefront window and door openings.

In recognition of the undesirability of continuous expanses of blank walls at the street level, the Site Plan Control By-Laws require planting material to be placed every three metres along
walls, enclosures, and blank building walls. It is proposed that this provision not be applied to blank wall conditions in Downtown.

- Individual retail uses are encouraged to be provided with a direct visual and physical link to the street. Multiple openings and entrances along the building facade are encouraged over single, shared entrances to maintain the small scale of the street facade and promote individual identity and character.

Conversion of large, older structures to interior "malls" has become a popular way to subdivide what would otherwise be large, difficult to rent space. While this offers the potential for new economic value for these buildings, it is encouraged that design devices be employed which visually "present" the various interior shops or uses to the exterior sidewalk area. Combined exterior signage panels is one common method used to identify interior activities. Display of graphic symbols, or of individual shop "logos" is another technique that might be employed.

- The use of reflective or dark tinted glass at the street level is discouraged. Glazing that permits views into the interior of buildings is preferred at the street level. The treatment of window elements at the street level such as framing and mullions should minimize obstructions of views into display windows.

- It is encouraged that building entrances not be excessively recessed. Doors located close to the front facade of the storefront are encouraged in order to minimize nighttime safety and security problems.

- It is encouraged that solid wall panels beneath storefront display windows be no more than 2'-6" (0.8 m) in height above the sidewalk level, to maintain the "open" character of traditional storefront design.

- It is encouraged that displays inside the front shop windows maintain an open view through the display into the interior of the shop. Walled-in display windows which prevent views into the interior of the shop are discouraged.
• Merchants and building owners are strongly encouraged not to use roll-down or sliding opaque chain or metal grille security screens that cover the shop windows or the entire front of the shop. Other, non-visible security techniques are preferred so as to maintain the visual quality of the street even when the stores are closed.

• Merchants are encouraged to leave display window lights on after the store itself is closed for business to maintain the lively character of the street at night.

• Merchants are encouraged to change interior displays frequently, both to prevent potential sun damage to merchandise and to provide an interesting, changing character to the street.

• Merchants are encouraged to use displays which minimize signage and maximize the visual impact of the merchandise. Many creative display techniques are also the least expensive to produce.

• Outdoor displays of merchandise is strongly discouraged except on special event days where all merchants are encouraged to provide outdoor vending.

Building Materials

The specification of building materials to be used on new construction or renovation is prohibited under Section 40 of the Planning Act, however, the following guidelines suggest that there are building materials that are considered to be inappropriate in Downtown, and their use is discouraged.

The most common building materials in Downtown include cut stone, brick, masonry, and concrete. Many of the newer buildings are glass curtain wall. Each of these materials is considered to be appropriate. Most of the applications of inappropriate building materials are found on renovated structures.
• The use of corrugated metal, imitation stone, or imitation brick is discouraged in Downtown construction.

• The restoration of original building facades and materials through the City/BIA Facade Improvement Program is encouraged.

• Where new construction is to abut existing structures, it is encouraged that distinctively different materials be used in the new construction, or that if similar materials are employed, design details be used at the intersection of the new and existing materials which retain the architectural integrity of the existing structure.

Awnings and Canopies

An awning or canopy is a fabric roof-like covering fixed to a building along at least one edge and that may extend over the sidewalk. Awnings and canopies extending from the fronts of buildings in the Downtown are considered to be appropriate, especially along the primary retail shopping streets. They provide colour, enhance the scale of the building facades, and can contribute to a distinctive street identity. Awnings and canopies have historically been used by merchants and small store owners to provide both pedestrian protection and advertising. Awnings and canopies must therefore not only be decorative, but be of sufficient depth to provide protection to pedestrians. Awnings and canopies will extend over the pedestrian right-of-way on structures built at the building line.

While awnings and canopies can provide a distinctive visual quality to the street, their use must be coordinated to prevent visual clutter. The following guidelines define ways in which this coordination can occur.

• Awnings should be designed to fit the proportions of the building facade to which they are attached. It is encouraged that they have a minimum depth (perpendicular distance to the building face) of 5 feet (1.5 m) to provide pedestrian weather protection. However, this dimension must be such that it does not intrude into the tree canopy located in the sidewalk area, or within the specified distance from the inside of the curbline.
• Awnings should have a minimum clear height above the sidewalk of 10 feet (3.1 m) as specified in the current By-Laws.

• Signs and advertising on canopies and awnings should follow the applicable sign guidelines.

• A minimum of 2 feet (0.6m) of clearance should be provided between the curbline and the outside edge of the awning.

• Fabric awnings are preferred. Plastic or metal awnings are strongly discouraged.

• Solid colour awnings are preferred, however, the use of vertical stripes has an historic precedent in Downtown. If vertical stripes are used, it is preferred that only two colours, exclusive of colours used for lettering, be used. It is preferred that these stripes be 18 inches (0.4 metres) in width, or be very narrow with a wide horizontal separation.

• The vertical and horizontal dimensions of awnings and canopies on adjacent frontages should be coordinated, however, they must meet the minimum dimensional criteria listed above. Where possible, it is considered to be most important for adjacent structures to match the vertical height of awnings and the vertical clearance of the awnings above the sidewalk. Where it is not possible, a distinctly visible offset is preferred.

• It is encouraged that awnings not be used to cover attractive architectural details on existing structures.

• Awnings designed for internal illumination of the entire awning surface are discouraged.

• Awnings designed for internal illumination of a sign panel on the valence of the awning are considered to be acceptable.
Arcades

Arcades are considered to be desirable street-level features of Downtown buildings. They provide shelter for pedestrians along the sidewalk, and add to the visual interest of the street. Building cantilevers above the ground floor are considered to be variations of arcades. In general, cantilevers are not supported by columns, and do not therefore provide the same sense of enclosure at the street level as arcades, however, they may provide weather protection and an extension of the sidewalk space.

General Provisions

- Arcades are encouraged to provide a minimum clear width of 10 feet (3 metres) between the face of the building and the face of the supporting vertical elements along the sidewalk.

- Arcades are encouraged to have a minimum vertical clearance of 12 feet (3.7 m) between the sidewalk surface and the underside of the arcade ceiling.

- Arcades should not be permitted to extend into the public right-of-way or encroach upon the adopted road allowance widenings (per the Draft Zoning By-Law) Special exceptions may be granted in extraordinary circumstances where property and roadway configuration permits, and where significant space would be added to the public sidewalk area.

- Uses abutting arcade spaces should follow the guidelines for ground-level uses in plaza spaces.

Relationship of Arcades to the Sidewalk

- In general, it is encouraged that arcades be at the same grade as the adjacent sidewalk areas in order to extend the public sidewalk environment.
Grade changes of 12 inches (0.3 m) or less should be avoided due to safety considerations.

Arcades should generally be open to the adjacent sidewalk areas. Cutting off the arcade space from the sidewalk area with planters, railings, etc. is generally discouraged.

Arcades should provide for continuity of pedestrian movement between the covered space and the adjacent sidewalk areas. Dead end cul-de-sac type layouts are strongly discouraged.

**Arcade Architectural Treatment**

- To maintain the small scale street-level environment that exists in the Downtown Shopping Area, it is encouraged that the spacing of the vertical elements along the street face or sidewalk edge of the arcade not exceed 20 feet (6 m), which approximates the width of the storefronts in the existing older Downtown structures.

- It is generally encouraged that arcades be designed as recesses into the building facade, as opposed to outward extensions from the main building facade, in order to maintain the characteristic streetwall enclosure created by the older buildings in the Downtown Shopping Area.

- Cantilever designs may or may not provide weather protection for pedestrians, depending upon the height and width of the cantilever. In general, arcade-type structures are preferred along the streets in the Downtown Shopping Area in order to provide weather protection and continuity of the street facade lines.

- Cantilever designs with excessive corbeling effects where the depth of the space exceeds the opening height at the building line are generally discouraged, particularly on north-facing walls where they may become perceived as cold, dark spaces if not properly illuminated.
• It is generally encouraged that the floor surface of arcades use the same paving materials as proposed for the public sidewalk areas (brick and concrete) so as to visually extend the sidewalk area to the face of the building beneath the arcade.

• If materials other than those in the adjacent sidewalk areas are to be used, it is encouraged that they be distinctively different materials than those used in the sidewalk areas (ie, the use of a brick paver different from that used in the public sidewalk is discouraged) in order to maintain the design integrity of the paving used on the public sidewalk.

Plazas

As described in the Building Envelope guidelines, the preferred location for the ground floor facade of buildings in the Downtown Shopping Area is at the front property line, or prescribed road allowance, whichever is closer to the street. The premise of that guideline is to maintain continuity of the pedestrian-oriented retail environment on the ground floor of adjacent buildings. However, it is recognized that project developers and designers may wish to provide larger open spaces at the street level of their projects. Sometimes these spaces are designed to provide a special visual setting for the building, enhance the sense of entry, or create special places for outdoor dining or other activities. Sometimes they are provided to fulfill open space or lot coverage requirements, or sometimes they are simply left-over space that is not considered to be useful or desirable for building areas. In all of these cases, the plazas created return open space back to the public environment provided along the sidewalks.

The way in which ground level open spaces are designed and positioned can have significant effects on the functional success and visual character of the street-level environment. The University of Western Ontario wind study of Downtown illustrated the potential wind impacts that result from the overall shape of Downtown buildings and open spaces. In general, it can be concluded from that study that wind problems tend to occur at “breaks” in the relatively continuous fabric of Downtown buildings. One such location is the southeast
corner of Dundas and Wellington Streets, at the plaza area in front of the City Centre towers. This open corner often experiences very unpleasant wind conditions during the winter months because of its orientation and openness.

As a result of these considerations, the following guidelines are proposed to encourage the design of plaza spaces which will provide positive contributions to the functional and aesthetic environment of Downtown.

General Provisions:

• All proposed plazas are encouraged to undergo wind tunnel testing to measure any potential adverse wind effects on the pedestrian environment. It is encouraged that the plaza design be modified as necessary based on these tests to minimize adverse street level wind impacts.

• In order to permit maximum solar penetration, plazas are encouraged to be located on the north side of the street, facing south.

• Plazas are encouraged to be designed with a sense of spatial definition or articulation appropriate to the type of activities to be accommodated within the space(s). Open, non-articulated expanses of paving are generally considered to be inappropriate if they provide no setting for pedestrian-oriented activities.

• Spatial definition may be accomplished in a variety of ways, including the use of building enclosure, landscape and site elements such as seatwalls, slight changes in grade, etc. Enclosure by building elements is often an easy way to provide spatial definition.

• Plazas may serve as entrance courts to new development or as open space amenity areas, but it is preferred that they also be developed with active ground level pedestrian-related uses around their perimeter. Office uses and other activities that do not require or generate pedestrian activity are strongly discouraged adjacent to plaza spaces.
• It is encouraged that plazas intended for public use not be visually cut off from the street-level sidewalk spaces so as to insure the safety and security of these spaces.

• Plazas completely enclosed by buildings are considered to be courtyards. These spaces may or may not be climate controlled. However, courtyards intended for public use are encouraged to have clear visual linkages between the courtyard and the public sidewalk. In addition, appropriate signage should be provided indicating entrances to and exits from such spaces. In addition, the design of these spaces is encouraged to follow the guidelines described for interior pedestrian walkways.

Plaza Landscaping

• Landscaping is encouraged to be provided within plaza spaces since the additional open space provided by the plaza is an opportunity to expand upon the landscape character provided by street trees in the public sidewalk.

• The amount and scale of landscaping will vary according to the size of the space created, the orientation of the space, and the amount of sunlight, etc. Plant materials must be selected that will survive in the proposed location.

• Private developers are encouraged to solicit the advice of the City in the selection of appropriate plant materials for plazas in order to coordinate with City landscape efforts, and to take advantage of the City's knowledge of the maintenance aspects of landscape materials in the public sidewalk environment.

• In general, if landscape elements are to be incorporated in raised planters, those planters are encouraged to be no more than 18 inches (0.5 m) in height, and to incorporate a seatwall edge treatment.

• When landscaping is to be placed over concrete slab construction, sufficient soil depth, drainage, and irrigation must be provided to ensure the survival of the landscape elements.
Plaza Paving Materials

- It is preferred that paving in plaza areas use some variation of the brick paving patterns proposed for use in the public sidewalk areas in order to visually link the spaces together. This may be accomplished in a number of ways, therefore the prescription of a standard plaza paving material or design is considered to be inappropriate.

- Where plaza paving materials are not the same as the public right-of-way paving materials, they should not extend into the public right-of-way (See section on Sidewalk Design).

Relationship of the Plaza to the Street

- The arrangement of building elements and site topography will, to a large extent, determine the vertical location of plaza spaces relative to the level of adjacent sidewalks. In general, it is preferred that plaza spaces be at, or nearly at the same grade as adjacent sidewalk areas to provide the desired visual and functional connection between these spaces and sidewalk areas. Exceptions to this general guideline would clearly be in order where large changes in the existing grade of the site create opportunities for unique amphitheatre or cascading terrace design solutions.

- Plaza areas intended for public access and use that are designed to be depressed more than 2 metres (6'-6") below the adjacent sidewalk grades are encouraged to be raised to street-level, or depressed a full level below-grade. In this situation, the guideline regarding active uses around the perimeter of the lower level is considered to be extremely important. In addition, such lower-level plaza spaces may be covered for weather protection, but should be visible from the sidewalk level to insure the safety and security of these spaces.
Outdoor Dining

The use of the public right-of-way for outdoor dining space is done in many cities. These outdoor activities add a lively quality to the street, and often serve to attract people into the Downtown area. In the evening, these spaces can also provide a sense of security to the street by serving as activity generators, attracting people into the area.

Where these outdoor dining spaces occupy a portion of the public right-of-way, certain treatments are encouraged to maintain the pedestrian flow along the sidewalk, and to insure that the outdoor areas contribute to the overall visual quality of Downtown.

The following guidelines for outdoor dining spaces are proposed:

- A minimum 5'-4" (1.6 m) unobstructed pedestrian walkway is encouraged to be retained between the outdoor dining area and the street edge. This walkway must be provided clear of any street furniture or tree planting zone that may occur within the sidewalk (See Sidewalk Design Guidelines).

- The outdoor dining spaces are encouraged to be visually separated from the pedestrian walkway by movable devices. Appropriate devices to achieve this include cast iron bollards, and clay or cast stone flower pots or planters. Snow fences, plastic garden fencing, concrete, or unfinished wood are not considered appropriate materials for these separations.

- Outdoor furnishings are encouraged to be finished wood, metal, or plastic. Unfinished wood and picnic-type tables and benches are not considered to be appropriate materials.

- Movable landscape elements and/or planters are encouraged in outdoor dining spaces.

- All outdoor dining areas including sidewalk areas and furnishings are to be maintained by the Operator, in accordance with City regulations.
Sign Guidelines

Signage is possibly one of the most controversial elements of any guidelines, particularly when incorporated in guidelines for commercial areas. Signs are considered by many merchants not only to be crucial to the success of their business, but a “right”. These guidelines are therefore not proposed to be detailed and prescriptive, but rather, to outline general principles for building signage that are sympathetic to the needs of the property owner, and which will encourage improvement of the visual quality of Downtown.

The older retail buildings along the major streets in Downtown establish to a large extent the scale and character of the area. These retail buildings provide an historic precedent for the location of signs. One of the most common signs on 19th century buildings was the fascia sign. This type of sign was horizontal, and located in the fascia, the flat band between the display windows and the frieze and cornice that defined the ground floor of the building. These signs traditionally displayed the merchant’s or store name, and were of simple wood construction, with the name either painted on the sign board, or channeled letters painted in a contrasting colour. Other fascia signs include individual carved letters attached directly to the building face.

Other sign types include projecting signs that hang over the sidewalk perpendicular to the building face, wall signs mounted parallel to the building face, and movable, sandwich-board type signs often used by restaurants. None of these sign types are considered inappropriate in Downtown, if used properly.

Guidelines for appropriate signage include:

Types of Signage

- “Billboard” type signage, both freestanding or mounted on buildings, is discouraged. These large signs are out of scale with both the building and the street.
• Projecting signs are strongly discouraged above the ground level. Signs placed on and parallel to the facade are encouraged in these locations.

• Small projecting signs perpendicular to the sidewalk are considered to be appropriate on the ground floor level. These signs are considered to be secondary to the main business identification signage, and are oriented towards pedestrians walking on the sidewalk adjacent to the storefront. Because of their function, it is encouraged that these signs not exceed 4 square feet (0.37 square metres) of surface area.

These signs may be underhung from awning structures or attached to the facade of the building. In either location, the bottom of the sign should be a minimum of 8 feet (2.4 m) above the sidewalk surface.

• Free-standing, pole mounted signs are not considered appropriate in Downtown.

• Movable temporary flashing display signs (with the exception of highway or work crew signs) are not considered to be appropriate for use Downtown.

• Movable, sandwich-board type signs are considered to be acceptable, provided they do not obstruct pedestrian movement along the sidewalk. These signs should be placed within the property line on private property. These temporary signs may also be permitted within the planting strip or street furniture zone along those streets with these sidewalk improvements. Signs placed in these areas of the public right-of-way are to be removed at the end of the day.

• Advertising signage on transit shelters, benches, and other furnishings should be designed to visually complement, rather than "overwhelm," the structure to which they are attached.
Location of Signage

- It is preferred that the primary sign used to identify a business be located immediately above the storefront, or above the awning if one is employed.

- On existing buildings, merchants and owners are encouraged to place signage within the architectural “framework” of the ground level facade. It is preferred that signage not cover or otherwise obscure attractive architectural details.

- Signage may be incorporated in awning or canopy valences.

- Signage on the glass of storefronts is acceptable, but should be designed so as to not obscure interior displays.

- Signage on boards or cards mounted to the inside surface of storefront windows is strongly discouraged.

Lettering Size

- In general, the streets in Downtown are oriented toward pedestrian shopping activities and other related uses. The street widths in this area are not so wide as to require large lettering to be visible from the opposite sidewalk. Consequently, it is suggested that the lettering for the primary business identification sign not exceed 24 inches (0.6 m) in height.

- Lettering on awning valences and projecting signs is encouraged to be no more than 8 inches (0.2 m) in height.

- Lettering on glass storefronts is encouraged to be no more than 12 inches (0.3 m) in height.
• In general, merchants are encouraged to use graphic symbols and “logos”, rather than excessive numbers of words, to achieve a distinctive identity.

Illumination and Materials

• Internally illuminated box-type signs are generally discouraged. Reverse-channel letters with internal, concealed illumination, or externally illuminated signs with concealed light sources are preferred.

• Plastic sign lettering is discouraged. Painted wood, brass and cast aluminum or other metal are considered to be preferred materials for sign lettering.

Architectural Treatment

The following guidelines are intended to outline the preferred treatment for certain architectural elements on building facades. It is not intended the these guidelines constrain or discourage creative or innovative design. Rather, the basic premise is that buildings should appropriately relate to one another to provide a positive contribution to the existing pattern of Downtown development. Complementary colours, textures, cornice lines, and window treatment, as well as scale and massing, are important elements of the overall urban design of Downtown. This would not prescribe that every building look like its neighbour, but rather, that it complement and not overwhelm its neighbour.

The prescription of an architectural style, building material, or fenestration pattern is not permitted under the provisions of the Planning Act. There are, however, City policies included in the Official Plan that indicate the City’s preferences for new development.

Chapter 11 of the Official Plan includes a policy promoting architectural continuity: “The massing and conceptual design of new development should provide for continuity and harmony in architectural style with adjacent uses which have distinctive and attractive visual identity or which are recognized as being of architectural or historical significance.”
The future of heritage structures in the Downtown has been a related topic of much debate. Through designation of individual structures, or through the creation of Heritage Conservation Districts, the City may establish policies for the preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, or demolition of designated properties under the Ontario Heritage Act. A problem of many older structures, particularly small retail and commercial buildings, is their unsuitability for conversion to other uses. Where no new viable use can be found for a structure, it is often allowed to deteriorate, and ultimately, is abandoned, or demolished when it becomes structurally unsafe.

Much of the historic fabric of Downtown London has been retained. There have been many successful examples of rehabilitation and reuse of older structures. In order to encourage this pattern to continue, the City has adopted policies for the retention of heritage resources, outlined in Chapter 13 of the Official Plan.

Proposed guidelines for architectural treatment include the following:

• In support of the Building Envelope guidelines, which encourage new construction to emphasize the three to four story height at the building line, it is further encouraged that new infill construction retain the small scale of the existing three and four story buildings. Continuation of the existing horizontal and vertical proportions is one method to achieve this.

• Another method to maintain the scale of the existing structures is to retain the proportions of openings to solid wall materials that occur on existing structures. Generally, the existing three and four story structures in Downtown have between 25% and 60% of the upper levels (floors above street level) in glazing. New development is encouraged to continue this proportion of windows and building openings in the second through fourth levels.

• The continuation of major horizontal facade elements such as cornice lines, floor elevations, and trim bands is another method to relate new and existing construction, and
is encouraged.

- The removal of non-historic or inappropriate facade materials on existing structures is encouraged. Existing quality materials should be preserved and uncovered wherever possible, and new materials chosen to complement the existing development.

- Creative and innovative design is encouraged in Downtown. The use of "signature" elements such as articulated roof pediments, exterior lighting, etc. is encouraged, particularly at locations identified as important Downtown gateways.

- Where possible, existing facades with architectural or historical merit are encouraged to be retained and incorporated into new development.

- If used properly, most building materials can be designed to produce attractive architectural treatments. It is generally encouraged, however, that natural materials be used in lieu of synthetic simulations or substitutes, in order to ensure long-term durability and quality of appearance.
Pedestrian Movement Facilities

Sidewalks

Factors Affecting Sidewalk Design

The design of the public sidewalks is a critical feature of the Downtown environment. In recent years, a number of sidewalk improvement projects have been undertaken in Downtown London. Several of these improvements were undertaken as the result of Commercial Area Improvement Plans (CAIP). As part of these improvement programs, specific light standards, street furniture, and paving patterns were selected. In addition, sidewalk improvements have been undertaken in conjunction with major private development projects. The Galleria London is a recent major project in which all new sidewalks were constructed. These improvements have generally conformed with the publicly-sponsored streetscape improvement projects.

Other projects, such as the City Centre development at the corner of Dundas and Wellington Streets, have used special paving materials, although they are not the same as those used in previous sidewalk improvement projects. The One London Place project currently under construction at the corner of Queens Avenue and Wellington Street also incorporates special paving between the building face and the street curb. The design of this paving incorporates paving “bands” of red, black and light grey granite.

Although the City has adopted standards for types of sidewalk pavements, there is no standard design for the paving pattern itself, nor a standard “interlocking paving stone” prescribed. As can be seen in different parts of Downtown, there has been an evolution in the pavement design over time. In general, the trend has been to reduce the amount of brick and increase the amount of concrete surface. This is in response to some unhappiness with a total brick sidewalk from a pedestrian comfort point of view. The type of street lights used in Downtown sidewalk improvement projects has remained consistent through the various publicly and privately sponsored sidewalk improvement projects as the City has adopted the "character"
light fixtures for use in Downtown. This has been the result of general practice rather than policy, as the City has not officially adopted the “character” light fixtures used in the BIA projects for use on all Downtown streets.

Looking toward the future development and improvement of Downtown design, it is considered important for the City to adopt a consistent approach to the design and implementation of sidewalk improvements. The resulting consistency will improve the overall visual appearance of Downtown, and improve the ease of maintenance through the use of standardized components.

A number of physical design factors will affect the design of sidewalks in Downtown. One of the major determinants of sidewalk design is the street right-of-way. At present there are two facets to the street rights-of-way in Downtown. The first is the existing street right-of-way or reservation. The second facet is the “proposed road allowances” that were recommended by the City Engineer and forwarded to the City Council. On May 16, 1988, the City Council passed a resolution stating that the proposed road allowances be adopted as the “standard widths of land dedications required in the Central Business District”. Prior to that adoption, the City’s procurement of road allowance widenings evolved “by practice and implied intent”.

Since it is the City's policy that the road allowance widenings are to be dedicated for the provision of additional sidewalk space, this policy can provide long-term benefits to Downtown. The fact that the road allowances have not been required in certain development projects, however, indicates the difficulty in implementing such a policy in every situation. Although it is certainly desirable to increase the pedestrian sidewalk space, other factors will probably enter in to such decisions. In certain instances where existing structures are likely to remain for an indefinite period of time, the acquisition of additional road allowance may not be possible in any predictable time frame. In addition, there may be instances where acquisition would be desirable from a pedestrian-space point of view, but the overall ensemble of building facades along a street would be better served if a new structure was built to match the position of the existing adjacent facades. It is therefore suggested that each case
must be viewed individually on its own merits, and that flexibility be maintained in the
decision-making process so that an "optimum balance" can be achieved in the implementa-
tion of this policy.

Existing sidewalk widths in Downtown vary depending on the width of the road surface.
Prior to both the right-of-way road allowance acquisition policy, and the road allowance/
right-of-way policies in the Draft Zoning By-Law, the general condition was that streets east
of Wellington Street and north of Queens Avenue included 132 feet of right-of-way and the
other streets had 66 foot rights-of-way. Along Dundas Street in the Downtown Shopping
Area, the existing condition includes blocks with approximately 42 feet of roadway and 24
feet of sidewalk (12 feet on each side), and blocks with 26 feet of roadway, which would result
in 40 feet of sidewalk (20 feet on each side). Along most of the other Downtown Streets with
66 foot right-of-way widths, existing traffic lanes are 42 to 46 feet wide, resulting in 10 to 12
foot sidewalks on each side. In a few locations, such as along sections of York Street and
along Talbot, Richmond and Clarence Streets south of King Street, the existing curb to curb
paved surface approaches 50 feet, resulting in sidewalks of less than 10 feet in width.

Traffic movement needs are a second, interrelated factor affecting sidewalk design. In some
cities, sidewalk width has often been sacrificed to accommodate additional traffic lanes.
Although in some instances this result may be unavoidable, it is considered important that the
pedestrian environment not be sacrificed to provide additional space for the automobile,
particularly along the major pedestrian retail streets in the Downtown.

A third factor affecting the design of sidewalk areas will be the accommodation of transit
facility needs. In general, the present London Transit Commission (LTC) bus transit system
that serves Downtown is considered to be a key asset to the continued success of Downtown
London. As such, facilities to accommodate these functions should be incorporated into the
design of downtown sidewalks, as may be required by the transit system, and in accordance
with what is possible within the constraints of the existing and future sidewalk widths. The
proximity of the VIA railway to Downtown must also be considered in terms of future transit
needs, and any subsequent requirements that an expanded rail transit system might have on
the pedestrian right-of-way.
In general, it is anticipated that sidewalk areas will be required to accommodate pedestrians waiting for buses, along with the appropriate amenities such as benches, wind and weather protection, open queuing areas and transit route information structures. In certain selected instances of high transit use, it may be beneficial to narrow sidewalk widths for short distances to accommodate pull-off areas for bus loading and unloading.

Fourth, the use of on-street parking will affect the future sidewalk environment in Downtown. In many cities, on-street parking is removed to allow wider sidewalk areas to be provided. In other instances sidewalks considered to be wider than necessary sometimes become candidates for narrowing the sidewalk to provide on-street parking or additional driving lanes. From an overall perspective of the future pedestrian environment, it is considered important that sidewalk areas not be reduced unless there is no other solution to traffic or parking problems.

Finally, the amount of additional street furniture desired, such as benches, trash receptacles, telephone booths, information kiosks etc., will affect the design of sidewalk areas. Given the use of benches in previous sidewalk improvement projects, it is assumed that it will be desirable to continue using these items in future downtown projects. Other items such as trash receptacles, telephones and information kiosks are commonly accepted pedestrian amenities that should be considered for continued use in downtown London.

**Dimensional Criteria for Sidewalk Development**

There are two broad options that may be considered for the determination of sidewalk widths in Downtown London. The first approach is for the city to adopt standard widths for sidewalks along specified streets or in certain locations. These widths would then have to be provided by the public sector and/or private developers in each development project as it is implemented. If the sidewalk dimensions could not be met within the public right-of-way, there would have to be a public policy requiring the private developer to provide the required sidewalk area or that portion not able to be accommodated in the public right-of-way on the private property incorporated in the development. This private sidewalk reservation could
be administratively accommodated through a dedication or easement type of mechanism reserving the sidewalk area for public use in perpetuity.

This approach had been adopted in Ottawa as the city policy in the early 1980's. However, a sidewalk design plan completed in 1985 pointed out the difficulties in implementing such an approach and recommended modification to that policy to allow more flexibility in sidewalk dimensional criteria. In conclusion, that study pointed out the major difficulty of this approach was the amount of existing downtown development (ie buildings) that were not likely to undergo substantial change in the foreseeable future. In this situation it becomes highly unlikely that the “standard” sidewalk widths will ever be achieved.

Downtown London is in a similar situation. The proposed Draft Zoning By-Law provides capacity for substantial development potential in the Downtown study area. Within this area there are many vacant lots and lots used for surface parking which will be more likely to undergo new development before the existing built-up core of the retail shopping district will undergo redevelopment. Therefore, in built-up areas with many individual property owners, it is highly unlikely that redevelopment will proceed at such a pace as to transform the sidewalk to a new wider dimension in any predictable time-frame.

As a result of these considerations it is proposed that the City of London adopt a two-tiered system of sidewalk dimensional criteria rather than a rigid standard. The first, and most basic level should be an absolute minimum sidewalk width standard that will insure public safety. For this purpose it is proposed that a 5'-4" (1.6 m) sidewalk width from the inside edge of the curb be established. This minimum width should not be reduced with street lights or other furnishings. Hence, this minimum will have only limited potential uses and should be considered as a “last resort” in cases where no other solution is possible.

The second tier of dimensional criteria include several sidewalk widths that are considered to be preferred, but are subject to modification to fit the existing conditions that may be found along individual property frontages.
The first preferred width is the minimum considered appropriate for inclusion of basic pedestrian necessities and amenities such as street lighting, street trees and miscellaneous furniture such as trash receptacles. This width includes the following dimensions, which are based on an 8” (0.2 m) module for brick pavers:

- a 6” (0.15 m) concrete curb
- a 6’-0” (1.8 m) planting and furniture strip
- a 5’-4” (1.6 m) wide sidewalk walking surface.

Total sidewalk width from the inside edge of the curb to the building face is 11’-4” (3.5 m)

Where sidewalks do not meet these dimensions, consideration should be given to designs which will minimize obstruction of the pedestrian walking surface. For example, a 7’-0” (2.1 m) width of sidewalk (measured from the face of the building to the inside edge of curb) is considered to be too narrow for trees to be accommodated comfortably. If trees are desired in this situation, it is proposed that other landscape solutions be explored, such as “bump-outs” of the sidewalk at mid-block or corner locations if the width of the driving lanes or on-street parking can be reduced in these locations. Alternatively, trees could be spaced further apart and the tree pit covered with a perforated concrete tree “grate” so as to maintain as much pedestrian walking surface as possible. In addition, the sidewalk design guidelines describe the various paving patterns that are considered to be appropriate for the various overall sidewalk widths that may be encountered.

The third level of preferred sidewalk width is considered appropriate on streets which are major pedestrian routes in Downtown. Dundas, Richmond and Wellington Streets are such “primary” pedestrian streets. These locations require the maximum amount of space devoted to pedestrian movement, as well as the maximum amount of space dedicated for pedestrian amenities such as benches, trees, and transit facilities.
The following are the preferred widths for these streets:

- a 6" (0.15m) concrete curb
- 6'-0" (1.8 m) landscape/lighting zone
- 4'-8" (1.4 m) furniture zone (transit facilities, benches, information kiosks, etc.)
- 5'-4" (1.6 m) pedestrian movement zone.

* Total sidewalk width from the inside edge of the curb is 16'-0" (4.9 m)

Clearly these treatments represent the “ideal” or preferred conditions. Since these will not always be possible, it will be necessary to adjust these dimensional guidelines according to each individual situation. In general, it is proposed that the City not attempt to overly “clutter” the sidewalk areas with excessive plantings, paving and street furniture. Therefore, where it is not possible to accommodate the preferred sidewalk dimensions, and it is not possible to widen the sidewalk area, it is generally proposed that the placement and number of trees and furnishings be reduced as previously described in order to maintain sufficient room for pedestrian movement.

Sidewalk Surface Treatments

There are several sidewalk surface treatments that presently exist in Downtown London. The two major materials used in previous improvement projects are brick pavers and standard broom-finish grey concrete. Since the city has not adopted a standard brick for use in sidewalks, bricks selected for individual projects may vary. The brick used for the previous publicly-undertaken sidewalk improvement projects has been a modular rectangular concrete paver. The City Centre project, constructed in the 1970’s, incorporates an interlocking type of concrete paver. However, this type of unit paver has not been used in the more recently completed improvement projects. In addition the bricks have been used in a variety of design
configurations. These range from a full brick paver sidewalk such as exists on sections of Dundas Street, to a variety of brick “band” designs such as on Clarence Street just north of Dundas Street, and around the Galleria London.

The following guidelines for sidewalk treatment define several different paving designs that are proposed in certain locations throughout the Downtown. It is proposed that standard paving materials be adopted by the City for all of these paving designs. Two basic materials are proposed:

• Natural grey cement, broom-finish concrete

This material is proposed as the major surface for downtown sidewalks. Many pedestrians find it easier to walk on than the full brick sidewalk treatment, and it is easier to maintain and repair than most other materials.

• Brick pavers

This material is proposed for use as an accent to the concrete areas in the sidewalk. To maintain consistency, it is proposed that a standard rectangular concrete paver be adopted by the City. This paver should match those used on the improvements recently completed on Clarence Street north of Dundas Street.

It is proposed that the City adopt these materials, in conjunction with the sidewalk design treatments for use in the public rights-of-way in Downtown. It is also proposed that the City encourage the use of these same materials in private property improvements adjacent to the sidewalk, such as plazas or building setbacks, so as to further enhance the continuity of the pedestrian environment.
Street Furniture

Through the sidewalk improvement projects previously completed in Downtown, a palette of street furniture has evolved. This furniture includes street light fixtures, combined street light and traffic signal fixtures, trash receptacles, benches and bicycle racks. The consistency provided by these fixtures is admirable. Since many Downtown streets now contain these fixtures and furniture, it is proposed to continue to use them throughout Downtown.

Therefore, it is proposed that the City adopt the following street fixtures and furniture for use in all sidewalk improvements within the public rights-of-way in Downtown:

Street Light: Match existing "traditional" light poles and fixtures.

Street Light with traffic Signal Arm: As above

Bench: Match the existing custom logo street bench, with London “tree logo” insert.

Trash Receptacle: Match the existing custom logo trash receptacle, with London “tree logo” insert.

Bicycle Rack: Match the existing custom logo bicycle rack, with London “tree logo” insert.

Tree Grates: Cast iron tree grate, 4'-0" square, 2 sections, with narrow aperture to meet handicapped accessibility requirements.

Tree Guards: To match existing tree guards used in previous BIA street improvement projects.

In addition, it is proposed that the design vocabulary established by these furnishings be extended to include other items of street furniture. These include street name plates and poles, telephone kiosks, newspaper dispenser boxes, information kiosks, stop sign standards and poles, and bus stop shelters. All of these furniture items should be coordinated to establish a fully integrated design vocabulary.
Special District Furnishings

In general, guidelines for sidewalk design and furniture selection are intended to promote the visual continuity of design in pedestrian areas of Downtown. These same elements can also be used to distinguish special areas from one another, and thereby highlight the unique "districts" in Downtown.

During the preparation of the design guidelines, the idea of creating special districts was discussed. Although there was some interest expressed in the idea, there was also some concern about how such districts could be defined without "arbitrarily" drawing boundaries, and without creating districts that have no strong functional identification. As a result, the concept of special districts has been further developed as described in the following guidelines.

In general, it is proposed that basic sidewalk patterns be applied consistently throughout Downtown to maintain the overall design continuity and integrity of the pedestrian environment.

* It is proposed that several special districts be highlighted within the overall context of Downtown. These are based on the major activity areas described in the overall urban design concept. These areas, which are already functional and to some extent, visually identifiable are:

  - the Dundas, Richmond and Wellington Street pedestrian "district"
  - the Covent Garden Market "district"
  - the Carling Street "district"
  - the Victoria Park "district"
  - the Forks of the Thames "district"

The intent, as reflected in the overall urban design concept, is to build on the existing physical and functional assets of Downtown to re-establish a sense of identity, rather than arbitrarily
attempting to impose a new character and identity. From a conceptual point of view, London already has an identity; it simply needs to be better expressed and reinforced.

- The BIA should consider modifying the design of the existing street banners to a unique "logo" for each of the different design "districts". The banners would then be installed along the streets in and adjacent to each of the special areas. In addition, a "standard" Downtown logo could be designed to be used in all other locations throughout the Downtown. The adjacent illustrations are intended to suggest the possibilities of this approach, but are not intended to be the actual designs. To promote wider community interest in Downtown design, the City and/or the BIA may want to consider a local competition for the banners.

- In addition to the banners, the City should consider using the special district logos in the benches, bicycle racks, and litter bins used in each district in lieu of the London tree logo. In this way, a distinctive look could be further reinforced without totally changing to different styles of furniture.

- In street tree plantings, the City should consider using different trees in each of the above-described design districts. This would be a relatively simple way to enhance individual identity, while also maintaining diversity of the overall tree stock in Downtown.

- The City and/or BIA should consider designing and providing storefront window coverings. Individual merchants and property owners would be encouraged to use this covering over the inner surface of storefronts that are vacant or are undergoing renovation. This paper product could be economically produced in large rolls, and could incorporate repetitive patterns of the logos used in the banner designs.
Sidewalk Design Guidelines

Sidewalk improvements in Downtown London have been undertaken in the past in a variety of ways. Improvements have been made through publicly sponsored programs such as the CAIP (Commercial Area Improvement Programs); maintenance-related improvements have been undertaken by the City; and improvements have been undertaken by private property owners in conjunction with major private development projects, such as Galleria London. Although all of these improvements are undertaken under the direction and control of the Engineering Department according to engineering standards, they have not been coordinated within an overall design framework.

To provide an overall design continuity for sidewalk design in Downtown, it is proposed that the City adopt the following design guidelines as the treatments to be implemented in the public rights-of-way in the Downtown study area. If adopted, this policy would clearly identify Downtown as a special district and provide the mechanism whereby this identity could be implemented and maintained over time.

Adoption of this policy will require noticeable changes in the present process whereby sidewalk improvements are implemented. In particular, the present practice in which major projects are permitted to establish their own sidewalk design statement in the public rights-of-way would be modified so that the treatments implemented within the public rights-of-way would be consistent.

While this will certainly change the way in which private property owners approach the design of the “interface” between the public and private sidewalk treatments, it will not infringe on their ability to design their own special or unique paving patterns within the boundaries of their own property. Similarly, future publicly-sponsored sidewalk improvement projects would also have to conform to these guidelines, as would normal repair and maintenance activities.

The proposed sidewalk design treatments are organized in a descending order of complexity
and cost. The most complex and highest cost treatments are designated for the most important pedestrian streets in Downtown: Dundas, Richmond and Wellington Streets. Other sidewalks are provided with less complex and less costly designs in accordance with their secondary function within the overall pedestrian movement design concept. Special design treatments are proposed for Covent Market Lane and Carling Street, in accordance with the special activity concepts for these streets.

The way in which streetscape improvements are implemented will have an effect on the way in which the following guidelines are applied to specific sidewalk configurations. In particular, utility line locations will be a major determinant of what can and cannot be done with regard to sidewalk design. In the instance where only minor repairs and/or improvements are undertaken, ie, those in which only the sidewalk surface is modified and the roadway and utilities remain, the location of existing above-ground and/or subsurface utilities and vaults will determine where street trees may be placed.

In such situations, the tree positions indicated in the guidelines will likely have to be adjusted to avoid conflicts with the existing utilities. In those instances, the basic principles established in the guidelines should be followed, even though the specific details and dimensions must be modified.

In those situations where major road reconstruction is to be undertaken, consideration should be given to a total streetscape renovation in which utilities may be relocated to facilitate future access and maintenance, as well as to accommodate a more consistent application of the sidewalk design guidelines.

The following guidelines are based in a large part on existing paving patterns that have been used in Downtown London. The designs also respond to conditions of existing paving treatment, in particular, a general dislike expressed for continuous brick surfaces on main pedestrian walking areas.

The following design treatments are therefore an attempt to synthesize the good aspects of
the designs already in place, and to provide a systematic concept for their application in the future. All of the dimensions referred to as “minimums” in the following sections refer to the minimum width to accommodate the particular design treatment. Minimum widths in regard to functional considerations are defined in the “Dimensional Criteria for Sidewalk Development” section of this report.

Major Retail Streets and Downtown Gateways

This sidewalk design represents the highest level of design complexity and cost for standard sidewalks, and is therefore reserved for the most important pedestrian movement corridors and the most important visual entrances into Downtown. The proposed treatment (type A1.0) consists of a continuous brick band 6'-0" (1.8 m) wide that runs parallel to, and just inside the inner edge of the curb. This band provides room for a 4'-0" (1.2 m) square tree grate, surrounded on all sides by a soldier course of brick pavers. A double soldier course of bricks is incorporated along the inside edge of the curb. In addition, the design includes 5'-4" (1.6 m) wide brick bands running perpendicular to the curb. These bands should be located on the centrelines of trees or equally spaced between tree pits when trees are spaced greater than 25 feet (7.6 m) apart. The perpendicular bands extend across the entire width of the sidewalk. At the face of buildings a 12" (0.3 m) wide continuous concrete band is proposed to run parallel to the building face. This provides a consistent edge treatment alongside building facades which may have a variety of conditions where the building meets the sidewalk.

This treatment is recommended to be used on those streets designated in the accompanying diagram “Sidewalk Design Guidelines: Design Treatment Key Plan.” In instances where sidewalks on these streets are less than 10 feet (3 m) in overall width (face of building to inside edge of curb), it is recommended that the Type B1.0 design be utilized, since the perpendicular bands will appear awkward on such a narrow sidewalk dimension.

In instances where sidewalks are a minimum of 21'-4" (6.5 m) wide, design A1.1 is proposed. This design incorporates all the features of type A1.0. In addition, a second 5'-4" (1.6 m) wide brick band running parallel to the curb, with a separation of 4'-8" (1.4 m) between the two
BUILDING LINE

FACE OF BUILDING
(MAY ALSO BE
PROPERTY LINE,
AND/OR ROAD
ALLOWANCE LINE.)

CONCRETE

TREE GRATE

BRICK

CURB & GUTTER

(LESS THAN 11'-4"/3.5 m, USE A1.0)

5'-4"/1.6 m MIN.

6'-4'/1.9 m

6'-0'/1.8 m

DESIGN TYPE A 1.0

DESIGN TYPE A 1.1

MAJOR RETAIL STREETS & DOWNTOWN GATEWAYS
PROPERTY LINE (LOCATION VARIES)

BUILDING LINE

DESIGN TYPE A 2.0

MAJOR RETAIL STREETS & DOWNTOWN GATEWAYS
parallel accent strips. This band provides additional visual interest for wider sidewalks while retaining a minimum 5'-4" (1.6 m) wide concrete walking surface adjacent to the building face.

A second type of sidewalk design is proposed for several unique conditions. These occur in situations where the road allowance is wide relative to the actual width of the automobile traffic lanes, and may also occur where additional building setbacks are proposed at major Downtown “gateway” locations. In each of these conditions the potential width of the sidewalk area is likely to exceed the 21'-4" (6.5 m) prescribed in design A1.1. In these instances it is proposed that a different paving pattern be introduced which will reflect the large scale and visual significance of these locations.

In general, the proposed treatment (A2.0) consists of two brick paver bands running parallel to the curb, as in design type A1.1. In this design treatment, however, it is proposed that trees be located in the second, or inner brick band, as well as in the outer brick band adjacent to the curb. In order to provide proper spacing for tree growth, it is recommended that these parallel bands be separated by a minimum of 14'-8" (4.5 m). This “row and column” or bosque-type design will create a substantially wider tree canopy that is considered appropriate for significant gateway locations and large scale spaces. This same treatment is also proposed on Queens Avenue, where the existing wide road allowance combined with the relatively narrow curb-to-curb dimension creates an extremely wide potential sidewalk dimension.

In these instances, the actual property line or road allowance line may fall in the middle of the proposed paving design due to the existing sidewalk width. In these situations, the private property owners should be encouraged to extend the proposed paving and planting pattern onto private property. For them to do so would be considered to be a significant civic gesture.

The space created between the two parallel brick bands will, as proposed, be a minimum of 14'-8" (4.5 m) wide. The preferred surface treatment in this zone is a combination of landscape and hardscape elements. Acceptable options include: total dedication of this area...
to an at-grade, or slightly raised (18" (0.5 m) maximum) planter with a surrounding seat wall; creation of semi-enclosed seating areas defined by at-grade or slightly raised planters (18" (0.5 m) maximum) with seat wall; or creation of seating areas through the coordinated placement of benches, trash receptacles and other street furniture. Use of a special paving material that is complementary with the brick pavers, such as granite pavers, is also an acceptable treatment that would convey the added significance of these locations.

The dimensions for the basic details of this design are the same as those prescribed for treatment A.1.1, and are illustrated in the adjacent figure.

Secondary Retail and Commercial Streets

The design treatment proposed for these streets (B1.0, B1.1) is similar to that proposed for types A1.0 and A1.1, with the exception that the brick bands running perpendicular to the curb-line are deleted, and replaced with natural grey concrete. This design will provide the desired visual continuity with the A1.0, A1.1, and A2.0 designs, while reducing the cost and complexity of the design treatment. As in the A-series designs, variations are possible within this basic concept as illustrated in the accompanying diagrams. Although unlikely to occur, a B2.0 design comparable to the A2.0 design for extremely wide sidewalks is also possible. In these cases the layout of the pattern remains basically the same as in the A-series with the exception that expansion or control joints in the concrete replace the change of materials from brick to concrete that distinguishes the A-series design treatments.

Although it will be possible to implement the B1.0 design treatment on sidewalks that are less than 9'-0" (2.7 m) in width (building face to inside edge of curb) it is preferred that a minimum width of 3'-0" (0.9 m) be achieved between the inside edge of the brick band, and the face of the building. This will insure a minimum concrete surface for pedestrian movement. Should the total sidewalk width be less than 9'-0" (2.7 m): (6'-0" (1.8 m) brick band, plus 3'-0" (0.9 m) concrete walkway), it is strongly encouraged that a plain concrete sidewalk be employed. In this condition, the installation of street trees is considered undesirable or questionable at best, due to the reduction in pedestrian walking area that will be required to incorporate the
tree planting. In areas of low pedestrian traffic, this may be acceptable, however, each situation in which the sidewalk is 9'-0" (2.7 m) wide or less should be given careful consideration as to its treatment. In such situations it is also considered desirable to use perforated concrete tree grates in lieu of open metal grates. These provide a continuous pedestrian walking surface, and have already been used in locations in Downtown London. Prior to their further use, however, the issue of frost heaving that has been experienced with some of these installations should be further investigated. Use of aggregate top courses or other materials that do not retain moisture (and consequently should not experience frost heaving) should be considered under these solid-surface tree grates if the problem of frost heaving persists.

Park Linkage Streets

Park linkage streets are those which tie the core Downtown Shopping Area to the major adjacent open spaces at Victoria Park and at the Forks of the Thames. The design intent for sidewalks on these streets is to extend the landscape character of the parks into the Downtown Shopping Area.

The sidewalk design proposed for these streets (C1.0) utilizes the brick bands running perpendicular to the curbs, as in the design for major retail streets and Downtown gateways. However, in lieu of the 6'-0" (1.8 m) brick band running parallel to the curb, this design incorporates a grass strip running parallel to and alongside the curb. This strip is consistent with the grass strips that currently exist on many of the streets around the periphery of Downtown. To coordinate with the brick bands found on the retail streets, it is proposed that the grass strip be provided with a double soldier course of brick pavers running along the inside edge of the grass. This will create a distinctive appearance for these sidewalks appropriate to their function.

In addition to providing a “softer” design, the grass strip also provides the opportunity for installation of a continuous width of topsoil to be installed within which tree roots can extend parallel to the curb.
Neighbourhood Linkage Streets

The intent of this sidewalk design is to better “blend” the Downtown environment with the scale and character of surrounding residential streets. To achieve this, a simple sidewalk design is proposed which is very similar, if not exactly the same as some of the existing sidewalks around the perimeter of Downtown.

As in the Park Linkage Streets, this design (D1.0) calls for a continuous grass planting strip within which trees are to be planted. In lieu of the brick bands used on the Park Linkage Streets, however, this design calls for simple concrete sidewalks to match those existing in adjacent neighbourhoods.

Special Activity Streets

Covent Market Lane and Carling Streets have been identified in the overall urban design concept as special activity streets. The intent is for these small-scale streets to be the location for certain outdoor events. Covent Market lane is proposed to be the site for outdoor “Market Days”, when market activities would spill-out onto the street itself. Similarly, Carling Street is proposed to be a candidate location for a “Taste of London” restaurant festival, a booksellers market, and other events that would benefit from the small scale of the space.

In order to reflect these activity concepts, it is proposed that the streets be given special paving treatments. At present, Covent Market Lane has continuous brick paving in place on the sidewalk areas. This paving has also been extended onto the driving surface of the street. The street also includes the London “Standard” light fixtures, benches, trash receptacles, etc., so that for the most part, the street has already incorporated most of the desirable features expressed in the design guidelines for sidewalk treatment. Therefore it is recommended that these treatments be retained until such time that they are in need of major repair, or until a major renovation of Covent Garden Market is undertaken. At such a time, consideration should be given to decreasing the overall use of brick pavers in accordance with the general intent of the sidewalk treatment guidelines. Paving between the brick bands should be
SPECIAL ACTIVITY STREETS
concrete, or other colours of special pavers. Asphalt is not considered to be an appropriate material for these special streets. It is desirable, however, that the brick pavers be carried through both the sidewalk and driving surface areas to tie the horizontal surfaces together into a continuous design.

Carling Street presently has continuous brick pavers on the sidewalk areas, along with street trees and other “standard” BIA-provided furnishings. The street surface itself is presently asphalt. At such a time as the street surface requires replacement or major repair, it is proposed that the surface be designed as a special pavement similar to that proposed for Covent Market Lane. It is encouraged that the design for Carling Street not match exactly the design for Covent Market Lane, so as to reinforce the unique character of each street.

**Major Vehicular Streets**

York Street is the only street considered to be in this category, which is a sidewalk design category, not a traffic movement category. Although there are other streets in Downtown that are important vehicular traffic streets, York Street is considered to be different because of its location on the southern periphery of the Downtown area. In response to this location and its automobile-oriented function and uses, it is considered appropriate that a separate sidewalk design be considered.

The proposed design for these sidewalks (F1.0) is the simplest and least expensive of those proposed. It consists of simple grey concrete sidewalks with trees planted in the outer 6'-0" (1.8 m) of the sidewalks. It is proposed that along this street the perforated concrete tree grates be used in order to further reduce the cost of this design treatment. The use of these grates is, however, subject to minimizing frost heave, as discussed in the description of the Secondary Retail and Commercial Streets design treatment.
Pedestrian Crossings/Intersections

The major intersections of the primary pedestrian streets should be developed with special street crossings. Along Dundas Street, there are some existing examples of this, but as is the case with the sidewalk treatment along much of Dundas Street, its application has not been consistent.

A simple treatment that incorporates elements of the sidewalk design standards described above is proposed for these crossings. A broom-finish concrete walkway with a double soldier course of brick pavers along the outside edge between the concrete walking surface and the asphalt driving surface is proposed. This treatment will provide a visual link across the intersection, and distinguish the pedestrian surface from the vehicular right-of-way. Care must be taken in these locations to provide the necessary structural support for the concrete pavers.

The intersections proposed for this treatment include:

Wellington and King Streets
Wellington and Dundas Streets
Dundas and Clarence Streets
Dundas and Richmond Streets
Dundas and Talbot Streets
Dundas and Ridout Streets
Dundas and Thames Streets
King and Thames Streets
Richmond and King Streets
Richmond Street and Queens Avenue
Richmond and Fullarton Streets
Richmond Street and Dufferin Avenue
Dufferin Avenue and Talbot Street
Dufferin Avenue and Ridout Street
Carling Street at Talbot and Richmond Streets
Covent Market Lane at Talbot and King Streets

The average existing block length along Dundas Street between Ridout and Wellington Streets is approximately 550 feet (168 m). This length suggests that mid-block pedestrian crosswalks would be useful on this important retail street between Wellington and Ridout Streets. This is especially true where there are existing north-south through-block connections. Implementation of such crosswalks would help to enhance the character of the street as a pedestrian district. If such crosswalks are implemented, consideration must be given to pedestrian safety. Pedestrian-activated crosswalk signals, or a special By-Law giving pedestrians the right of way in these crosswalk locations are options for consideration. These crosswalks would be developed with the special crosswalk treatment described above.

On each of the three blocks between Wellington and Talbot Streets, the current development pattern suggests locations for these mid-block locations. Between Wellington and Clarence Streets, a connection across Dundas Street to the entrance of The Bay would provide access into the only entrance to Galleria London that fronts on Dundas Street. A mid-block connection between Clarence and Richmond Streets would provide access from the south side of Dundas Street to the entrance to the new parking garage to be constructed on the old theatre site. A mid-block connection in the block between Richmond and Talbot Streets would link the existing pedestrian passage to Covent Market Lane on the south side, and the enclosed pedestrian link to Carling Street on the north side.

Placement of Street Furniture Guidelines

Street furnishings are considered both necessary and desirable elements to include in the Downtown public sidewalk environment. At the present time there are a variety of furnishings that exist in Downtown. Most notable among these are the benches, trash receptacles and bicycle racks that are provided by the BIA. At present, the BIA will provide these fixtures where they are requested by individual property owners. This system is desirable because
it allows individual owners and merchants to have a “say” and certain degree of direct control over the public environment adjacent to their properties. However, it is recommended that the placement of these furnishings adhere to the following guidelines.

For the purpose of the following discussion, street furnishings are defined to include the following items:

- Light poles and fixtures
- Street identification poles
- Traffic regulatory poles
- Trash receptacles
- Telephones
- Information kiosks
- Newspaper distribution boxes
- Transit shelters
- Bicycle racks

Placement of street furnishings should adhere to the following guidelines:

- In general, furnishings should not obstruct the “building-side” of the sidewalk width, in order to maintain pedestrian movement space along the building face.

- In general, furnishings should not be installed where insufficient sidewalk width exists in which the furnishings may be properly placed.

- In general, only the following furnishings should be permitted within the “curb-side” sidewalk area:

  traffic regulatory signage and poles
  street and identification signage
  light fixtures
Installation of these furnishings should be in accordance with City engineering standards and requirements.

- Where no other location is possible, the following additional furnishings may be placed in the “curb-side” sidewalk area:
  
  \[
  \text{trash receptacles} \\
  \text{telephones} \\
  \text{newspaper distribution boxes}
  \]

However, this is not the preferred location for these furnishings, and their installation should be subject to City engineering requirements.

- In particular, newspaper boxes, bicycle racks and trash receptacles should be kept back from corner locations so as to not obstruct pedestrian movement across the intersection.

- The preferred location for the following street furniture:
  
  \[
  \text{benches} \\
  \text{newspaper distribution boxes} \\
  \text{trash receptacles} \\
  \text{telephones} \\
  \text{information kiosks} \\
  \text{bicycle racks}
  \]

  is in a 4'-8" (1.4 m) wide area located between the “curb-side” zone and the “building-side” zone. The preferred minimum sidewalk width to accommodate these furnishings is 16'-0" (4.9 m).

- On streets where a grass strip is proposed to occupy the curb-side zone, the preferred minimum paved sidewalk width to accommodate furnishings is 10'-0" (3 m), to maintain
a 5'-4" (1.6 m) clear area along the face of adjacent buildings for pedestrian movement.

- In general, benches are considered appropriate and desirable on the following streets: Dundas, Richmond, Wellington, Carling and Covent Market Lane, provided sufficient sidewalk width exists to accommodate them.

- Benches may also be desirable in other locations, provided sufficient sidewalk width exists to accommodate them. Candidate locations include:
  
  near crosswalks and corners
  near other pedestrian sidewalk amenities such as plazas, landscaped setbacks, arcades etc.
  near transit stops
  in areas that receive winter sunshine, and/or are protected from winter winds.

Transit Facility Location Guidelines

Transit is currently an important means of movement into and within Downtown London, and is considered an integral feature of a successful Downtown. Therefore, transit stops and transfer points should be retained in the core retail shopping district, and not be removed to peripheral locations.

The location of transit facilities, however, is often cause for concern among merchants and property owners who sometimes perceive them as detrimental to the character of Downtown, and disruptive to their individual businesses. This may be in part due to inadequate space being provided to accommodate the numbers of people that may be waiting at a given location. The following design guidelines therefore, are intended to assist the City in providing adequate space for transit facilities within the sidewalk areas so as not to disrupt adjacent businesses and to insure that transit facilities are visual as well as functional assets in Downtown. The specific number of stops, location of bus routes and scheduling are the responsibility of the London Transit Commission (LTC) and are not the subject of these
It is proposed that transit facilities be provided in accordance with the following spatial guidelines.

- In general, it is preferred that bus stops be located in areas where sufficient sidewalk width exists to accommodate the necessary waiting and boarding functions, so as not to obstruct pedestrian movement along the sidewalk, nor disrupt access to adjacent retail and other commercial activities. To accommodate this, the preferred sidewalk width is 16'-0" (4.9 m). This allows a 4'-8" (1.4 m) area for placement of benches and/or transit route information signage.

- It is preferred that heavily utilized routes and transfer stops be located where sufficient sidewalk exists to provide shelters and/or benches.

- The preferred minimum overall sidewalk width to accommodate transit shelters and benches for waiting is 21'-4" (6.5 m). As shown in the accompanying diagram, this dimension provides a 6'-0" (1.8 m) wide "curb-zone" and a 5'-4" (1.6 m) wide (minimum) pedestrian movement corridor along the face of adjacent buildings, plus sufficient width for a 6'-0" (1.8 m) wide transit shelter.

- Where existing sidewalk width does not conform to the minimum proposed dimension the following choices should be pursued: (in order of preference)

  A. Relocate the transit stop to a location where sufficient sidewalk width exists, either within the public right-of-way or in building setback areas. Use of building setback areas for transit facilities will be subject to negotiations with the private property owner.

  B. Widen the sidewalk to the minimum or preferred widths. One approach to this is to provide a sidewalk “bump-out” for these facilities, where sufficient street width exists, and where such a scheme will not reduce or restrict traffic movement.

  C. Accommodate the transit stop, but delete any shelters, benches or other furniture which would obstruct the "curb-side" or "building-side" sidewalk areas.
CURB & GUTTER
CURB-SIDE ZONE
TRANSIT FACILITIES ZONE
BUILDING-SIDE ZONE
BUILDING LINE

UNOBSTRUCTED PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY ADJACENT TO BUILDING FACADE.

POTENTIAL BENCH LOCATIONS.

TRANSIT SHELTER
6'-0" WIDE X 14'-0" LONG.
MAY BE EXPANDED IN WIDTH TO 10'-0" WIDE.

DELETE TREES AT TRANSIT FACILITIES.

POTENTIAL ZONE FOR TRANSIT FACILITIES.

TRANSIT FACILITIES-SHELTERS

21'-4"/6.5 m MIN.
• The City should encourage developers of major new Downtown projects to coordinate the ground level plans of their buildings with the LTC, and to provide setback areas or covered arcade areas which could be used for transit stop facilities.

• The City should encourage owners of existing buildings to cooperate with the LTC to provide space and/or facilities for existing transit stops.

Street Trees

A number of factors will affect the type of street trees selected for use in Downtown. Among these are:

• Tree tolerance to the low nutrient levels of Downtown soils

• Tree tolerance to road salt

• Current health factors, ie, diseases that may be currently affecting certain tree species

• Need for species diversification to minimize losses to species-specific diseases

• Canopy spread

• Tree availability

• Maintenance considerations

• Flowering and/or colour characteristics

Because of these variables, it is preferred that the PUC select a list of trees which are considered to be suitable for use in Downtown. Due to changing conditions relative to the above-listed factors, it is recommended that the City review, and if necessary revise this list.
on an annual basis. This list should be made available to the public through the Building Division, BIA and PUC in order to promote general understanding of the City's preferences.

The trees selected for Downtown streets should meet the following general guidelines:

- **Trees should be selected to “fit” the overall width of the sidewalk in which they will be placed:**

- Sidewalks less than 10 feet (3 metres) in width can accommodate only the smallest canopy trees with upright or columnar growth patterns.

- In sidewalks 10 feet (3 metres) or less in width, consideration should be given to sidewalk “bump-outs”, or wider spacing of trees so as to not obstruct the space for pedestrian movement.

- On sidewalks 15 feet (4.6 m) or wider, large canopy trees are encouraged to provide shaded walkways.

- Trees should be protected with the “standard” London tree guard when first planted, and the guard retained until the trees are established.

- Open metal tree grates are preferred except in locations described in the Sidewalk Design Guidelines.

- Where major street or sidewalk construction is planned, consideration should be given to sub-surface designs that provide as much soil area for tree root growth as possible. Since this installation is likely to require relocation of utility lines, it must be coordinated through the City Engineer.

- Consideration should be given to incorporating small white “twinkle lights” on trees along Dundas, Richmond and Wellington Streets, and along Covent Market Lane and
Carling Street on a year-round basis to promote the special importance of these streets.

**Interior Pedestrian Walkway Design Guidelines**

Interior ground-level pedestrian walkways are considered to be desirable additions to the overall pedestrian environment in Downtown. The location and design of interior ground-level pedestrian walkways should be subject to the following design guidelines:

- In general, interior ground-level pedestrian spaces are encouraged which provide connections to existing or planned activity centres as described in the Activity Framework element of the overall urban design concept.

- Interior ground-level pedestrian spaces are encouraged which provide linkages between parking facilities and existing or planned activity centres as described in the Activity Framework element of the overall urban design concept.

- Where interior walkways are clearly intended for public use their interior design should reflect this purpose:

  A. Interior paths should be clearly marked for orientation to the outside sidewalks streets and activities through appropriate directional signage.

  B. "Blind" twists and turns should be avoided in interior pedestrian routes.

  C. For visual surveillance and general security purposes, ground level uses adjacent to interior walkways should have a high proportion of a clear glass in the partition between these activities and the interior walkways. Blank wall surfaces should be avoided.

- It is preferred that ground level activities adjacent to interior walkways have their main pedestrian entrance oriented to the exterior sidewalk. Provision of pedestrian access to these activities solely from the interior pedestrian walkway is strongly discouraged.
• Interior pedestrian walkways that are to remain open in the evenings when other activities in the building may be closed should be provided with security and lighting to maintain a safe pedestrian environment.

**Pedway Design Guidelines**

In the proper location, pedways may be beneficial and supportive of the ground level shopping district. However, because of their visual prominence in the public environment, care must be taken in choosing their location and design so they will provide a positive contribution to the visual as well as functional environment of Downtown.

Therefore, it is proposed that pedways be designed in accordance with the following guidelines:

**Minimum Basic Requirements**

• *Pedways should meet minimum vertical clearance standards as may be established by the City engineer and/or other governmental entities having jurisdiction over air-rights construction within the public rights-of-way.*

• *Pedways intended for general public use are encouraged to be handicapped accessible and should be constructed in accordance with local and provincial accessibility codes and standards.*

• *Pedways should not be so wide as to unduly obstruct light access to the street level, or otherwise be constructed to create low-visibility or “non-defensible” space adjacent to existing or new structures.*

**Pedway Locations**

• *Pedways are strongly discouraged in locations which are considered important features of the overall visual character of Downtown London. These locations comprise the*
“Civic Space Framework” and include the following streets and spaces:

- Wellington Street between Centennial Hall and the VIA tracks
- Richmond Street between Kent and King Streets
- Ridout Street between Kent and King Streets
- Thames Street between York and Dundas Streets
- Dufferin Avenue between Ridout and Waterloo Streets
- Queens Avenue between the Thames River and Talbot Street
- King Street between Thames and Ridout Streets

- Pedways are considered appropriate, and are encouraged in locations which support and reinforce the street level pedestrian environment, and pedestrian-oriented retail uses that exist on Dundas, Richmond and Wellington Streets. Pedways that connect peripheral parking structures or employment concentrations with these streets are encouraged.

- Pedways connecting two or more separate locations of the same business are considered appropriate, provided they conform to other aspects of the guidelines. These are considered private pedways.

- Pedways that would, in combination with second level walkways in buildings, create separate second level pedestrian routes parallel to Dundas, Richmond and Wellington Streets that would be greater than one and one half blocks in total length are strongly discouraged.

- A comprehensive, interconnected second level walkway system in Downtown is strongly discouraged, so as to maintain the functional importance of the ground level Downtown Shopping Area.
General Design Issues

• Pedways should generally run as nearly perpendicular to the street right-of-way they are crossing as is practical.

• Pedways crossing streets at extremely acute angles are discouraged.

• Pedways running parallel and immediately adjacent to the front facade of existing or new structures are strongly discouraged.

• Pedways should generally intersect buildings in a perpendicular orientation.

• Pedways intersecting the front facade of heritage structures, or other buildings deemed by the City to have architectural or historic merit are strongly discouraged.

• Pedways connecting structures under separate ownership, or with different tenants are considered semi-public pedways. These structures are encouraged to provide for public access even when the buildings to which they may also be connected are closed to general public access.

• It is generally preferred that pedways have a weatherproof roof canopy and enclosed sides for weather protection. They need not, however, be climate-controlled.

• Individual expression of character is encouraged in the design of pedways to accentuate the uniqueness of each location in which they are installed.

• Pedways that are to remain open after dark should provide proper illumination for pedestrian access within and adjacent to the pedway structure.

• Pedways that cross public rights-of-ways should incorporate lighting on the underside of the structure as may be required to maintain City standards for roadway illumination.
• Incorporation of small “twinkle-lights” to accent the exterior structure of pedways is generally encouraged to enhance the night-time image of Downtown London.

Design Details - Materials

• Pedways should be as visually transparent as possible both for security reasons and to minimize the overhead bulk of these structures.

• It is generally encouraged that no more than 25% of the vertical face of the pedway sidewalks be of opaque materials.

• Use of extremely dark and/or reflective glass in pedways is strongly discouraged.

• Durable materials such as glass, aluminum, stainless steel and other non-corrosive metals, properly coated steel, genuine stone, and architectural quality precast concrete are considered to be acceptable, and preferred materials for the exterior cladding of pedway structures.

• In general, low-maintenance materials with integral colour finishes (natural stone, etc.) are preferred for exterior cladding to insure the continued visual quality of Downtown.

• Brick, imitation brick or stone and corrugated metals are considered undesirable cladding materials for the opaque portions of pedways structures.

Design Details - Colour

• In general, it is preferred that pedways be constructed of neutral coloured materials so as not to conflict with the architectural treatment of adjacent structures.

• Extremely bright and/or very dark colours are generally discouraged. Other colours may be acceptable if they are a middle tonal value (ie, midway between the lightest and darkest tone of a particular colour).
Site Design Guidelines

The following sections address the functional aspects of site design, including service and loading, parking and basic visual guidelines for on-site landscape treatment. Each of these items are further governed by the Site Plan Control By-Law, which describes a variety of mandatory design conditions to which the reader is referred for more information.

Service and Loading

Service and loading facilities in densely developed urban areas such as Downtown London, often conflict with pedestrian movement, and if not properly designed, can be unattractive elements of the visual environment. The following guidelines are proposed to minimize the potential adverse effects of these facilities.

- In order to minimize the disruption of pedestrian movement on the important pedestrian-oriented streets in Downtown, loading and service areas are strongly discouraged from being located on the following streets:

Wellington Street between York Street and Victoria Park
Dundas Street in the Downtown Shopping Area
Richmond Street in the Downtown Shopping Area

- In general, it is encouraged that service and loading facilities be provided within the building, enclosed from views from public spaces.

- Shared entrances to common loading and service areas are encouraged, in order to minimize the number of curb-cuts on a given street. Developers of new projects are
encouraged to work with the owners of adjacent properties, through the City’s Site Plan Review Group, to provide such shared entrances and facilities.

- In cases where loading and service areas are located along the street frontage of a building, it is encouraged that these entrances be located at mid-block.

- Entrances to service and loading areas should be architecturally integrated into the building facade in which they are located, and should not be a dominant visual feature when viewed from the public right-of-way.

- Where sight lines and turning radii permit, it is encouraged that service and loading facilities or their entrances be oriented perpendicular to the street to minimize the width of these facilities at the building line.

- Where parallel or angle-type loading and service areas are more advantageous from a functional standpoint, the side of the service and loading area facing the public right-of-way shall be visually screened and integrated into the architectural treatment of the building facade as previously described.

- Unless otherwise required by the Zoning By-Law, it is encouraged that buildings have no more than two service bays located on the street. These service areas should be constructed with sufficient depth to allow service vehicles to be located out of the right-of-way. Opaque doors should be used to screen these service bays when they are not in use.

- Where site conditions or the building design would require that there be a change of grade between the level of the loading and service area and the street, it is preferred that the grade change be incorporated within the structure or behind a garage door or gate. This will help to avoid conditions that create “cave-like” service entrances along the street.
The sidewalk surface treatment should continue across the entrance to any loading or service area to maintain the visual continuity of the pedestrian walkway.

Sufficient sight lines should be retained from loading and service areas across the pedestrian right-of-way.

In instances where the preceding guidelines may not be possible or practical to implement, it is encouraged that service and loading activities be undertaken during "off-hours", so as to minimize disruption of the Downtown pedestrian environment.

Parking

The provision of readily accessible parking is essential to the vitality of the Downtown. Most new development incorporates parking as an element of the development, not only because zoning may require it, but because it is required to make the project marketable. At the same time, many undeveloped or vacant parcels in the Downtown are used for surface parking until they become developed.

Both of these types of parking areas can be disruptive to the pedestrian environment and visual quality of Downtown if not properly designed. The following guidelines propose ways in which these facilities can be better integrated into the visual environment of Downtown.

General Provisions

Parking lots and structures are encouraged to be designed so as to minimize the number of curb-cuts required for ingress and egress.

Shared ingress and egress points between two or more separate parking facilities is encouraged.

Curb-cuts should be set back from corners and intersections in accordance with By-
Law requirements, or as may be determined to be necessary by the City Engineer.

- In general, it is preferred that entrances to parking facilities not occur on the following streets:

  Wellington Street between York Street and Victoria Park  
  Dundas Street in the Downtown Shopping Area  
  Richmond Street in the Downtown Shopping Area

- Parking areas with controlled access points (surface lots or structured parking) should provide sufficient stacking space for vehicles out of both the vehicular and pedestrian right-of-way. A minimum of one car length (approximately 20 feet or 6 metres) between the control point (ticket booth, card reader, or ticket machine) and the inside edge of the sidewalk is encouraged.

- Sufficient sight lines shall be required from parking lot exits to provide safe vehicular crossing of the pedestrian right-of-way.

Surface Parking Lots

- Surface parking lots should be screened from the street. The use of landscaped screens or buffers alone is not preferred, as this form of screening is subject to wear and tear in urban areas, and often does not provide effective screening during the winter. Surface parking areas should be screened from the street by walls of a minimum 1.5 metres (5 feet) in height, as per the screening design characteristics outlined in the Site Plan Control By-Law, subject to the retention of required sight lines on corner properties. Wall materials are encouraged to be consistent with the building materials of surrounding structures, or of brick or cut stone. Chain link fences, pressure-treated timber, and wood are not considered to be appropriate along the street frontage in any Downtown locations.
• The Site Plan Control By-law requires a 3 metre setback from the street line and a 1.5 metre setback from any property line for parking areas. These setback areas are to be landscaped. This landscaping may be used to provide screening in conjunction with, but not instead of, walls.

• In general, coniferous or other non-deciduous shrubs are considered to be appropriate for landscape screening materials.

• Large coniferous trees are generally considered to be inappropriate as screening material Downtown. They are better suited to large-scale spaces and open landscape areas.

• The paving treatment of the pedestrian sidewalk areas should continue across entrances and exits to parking areas.

• Interior areas of surface parking lots are encouraged to be paved and provided with landscaping in order to improve the visual quality of these large open spaces.

Parking Structures

• It is encouraged that the ground floor of parking structures facing the street contain pedestrian-oriented uses such as retail or personal-service uses. Continuous blank walls are discouraged.

• It is encouraged that parking structures be integrated into the overall structure of a building or large-scale development rather than as a free-standing structure, so as to reduce the visual impact of the parking structure on the visual quality of Downtown.

• It is encouraged that the architectural treatment and materials of parking structure facades that are visible from the public right-of-way be the same as that used on the other building(s) in the development.
• It is encouraged that the facades of parking structures visible from the pedestrian right-of-way incorporate vertical architectural elements to maintain the small scale of the existing pedestrian environment. (see Arcades section for a discussion of the appropriate spacing of these elements).

• Ground level facades of parking structures which do not incorporate retail or other active uses along the public sidewalk are encouraged to be designed so as to screen views of the interiors of these structures. Perforated grilles or screens are one method to accomplish this.
Implementation Options and Evaluation

The design guidelines described in the preceding sections of this report provide the basis for the City of London to take a more active role in affecting and improving the design quality of Downtown development. The type of implementation process that is adopted by City Council will reflect the extent to which the City wishes to intervene in the design of public and private improvements. In general, there are several broad options or strategies which the City may consider for implementation of the design guidelines. These may be classified as:

Promotional Activities
Design Review Process
Zoning and Site Plan By-Laws
Amendment to Provincial Planning Act

Some, all, or none of these options as determined by Council, may be pursued by the City in its effort to promote good design.

Since, by definition, guidelines are not mandatory prescriptions for design treatments, their use and implementation will require more interpretation, and encouragement, on the part of the City, and more cooperation from the developers and designers of specific projects. In essence, the guidelines must "lead-by-example" rather than force. To achieve this type of implementation will require commitment, cooperation and consistency among the City Council and City staff in their efforts to induce good design.

The first option, Promotional Activities, is likely to be the least controversial strategy that may be considered. In this strategy, the City would adopt the design guidelines "in principle" as a general statement of design preferences. At the same time, the Council would designate a person or department within the administration to be responsible for the dissemination and "promotion" of the design guidelines to the private development and business community. No other formal design review, zoning By-Law changes, or other "enforcement" actions would be necessary in this strategy.
Once designated, the mission of the design guidelines "coordinator" would be primarily to encourage private businesses and developers to utilize the design guidelines in renovation and new construction activity in Downtown. Ways in which this may be accomplished include:

- **Distribution of high-visibility posters, flyers or other materials outlining the purpose and benefits of good design.**

- **Preparation and distribution of monthly design "news letters" announcing on-going or proposed development projects which exemplify good design.**

- **Issuance of "best" and "worst" civic design awards for renovation and new construction projects.**

- **Speaking at various civic and special interest group functions in support of good design.**

- **Assembly and distribution of technical design information and examples of good civic design from other cities in the Province and Canada at large.**

- **Participation in and monitoring of the Chamber of Commerce and BIA activities related to Downtown design.**

- **Sponsoring design competitions such as designs for the railroad underpasses or for a civic sculpture at the Forks of the Thames.**

The advantage of this approach is that the City would not be constrained by the legal, procedural and administrative processes that would be required in the other strategies. The major disadvantage of this strategy is that there is no clear public role in influencing the design outcome on specific projects. There is also no specific means of enforcement such as would be offered by zoning and site plan By-Law amendments. Nor is there a means for the City
to monitor the results of the design "coordinator" activities.

The second potential strategy is for the City to establish a design review process. In this strategy, City Council would adopt the design guidelines as the City’s official policy on Downtown design. This adoption would be coupled with the creation of a design review process. The purpose of this process would be to provide a clearly defined role for the City in the design of specific Downtown projects. There are a number of alternative ways in which the design review process may be structured. In any such process, however, the City will be limited in its ability to enforce adherence to the design guidelines due to the limitations on such enforcement imposed by the Planning Act.

In accordance with Section 40 of the Planning Act, certain design elements related to site plan issues may be directly mandated and enforced by the municipality through the site plan control By-Law and its associated review and approval process. Similarly, major features of private development such as building height, setbacks, density and use may be directly controlled through the provisions of the zoning By-Law with its associated review and approval process. Beyond these two By-Law elements, the Planning Act does not provide the municipality with the authority to mandate or directly control other design aspects that may be considered important to the successful integration of new development within the existing fabric of Downtown. The purpose of the design guidelines in this context is to address these other issues that may not be directly controlled. Since a development proposal cannot be denied solely on the basis of non-conformance with the design guidelines, the purpose of the design review process as stated below, is somewhat different than the site plan review purpose.

**Purpose of the Design Review Function**

1. To establish a procedural basis for a dialogue between the City and project developers and their designers regarding the design aspects of the projects.

2. Establish a systematic method to provide the project applicant with the City’s preference
with regard to certain design features of the project.

3. Discourage undesirable provisions of proposed projects and encourage use of preferred design treatments.

4. Provide a written review of the project describing the manner in which it conforms to or exceeds the guidelines, and identifying design treatments which are contrary to the guidelines, or which are not specifically addressed in the guidelines.

5. As necessary, bring broader media and public exposure to the design aspects of the project, in an effort to induce beneficial design modifications.

The purpose of the written review is to induce the applicant to conform with the guidelines. Implicit in this type of process is the indirect use of public opinion as a means of inducement. The extent to which public opinion will be a factor in the urban design review process will depend to a great extent on the type of review process established. It should be noted that each of the design review processes described below would operate within the constraints of Section 40 of the Planning Act, which would limit their legislative authority to control those design elements specifically excluded under the legislation. This would be the case even if the design review committee was a full Committee of Council, as Council’s authority to regulate design is also constrained by this legislation.

Several types of review groups and procedures have been discussed during the course of this study:

Staff Review

Basic Premise/Structure

In general, a review process which occurs strictly at staff level could be expected to offer the least exposure to public opinion. This could be advantageous in that the majority of projects could proceed without broader public participation. This internal review process would
come into play as applications for Site Plan Control review are made to the Building Division, in much the same way as any rezoning applications that may accompany these applications are forwarded to the Planning Division. As described here, this process is considered to be the easiest review process to implement, as it does not require the creation of any new design review group or administrative structure. The proposed implementation strategy that follows incorporates an expanded Staff role in design matters, and would require additional Staff time and effort.

Review Process

This process is considered to be entirely internal, with no separate application made with respect to the design guidelines. This will mean that there will be no interaction between Staff and the applicant. When applications are made for projects within the Downtown area that require Site Plan Control review, the project will be reviewed by a staff member for conformity (or non-conformity) with the adopted guidelines. A written review of the application’s conformity with the guidelines will be forwarded to the Site Plan Review Group for their consideration. The Site Plan Review Group would then be responsible for informal negotiations of the application of the design guidelines.

Potential Staffing and Time Implications

It is possible that this review process could be accomplished with existing staff. An average of ten site plan applications annually have been reviewed by the Site Plan Review Group for projects within the Downtown study area. This would indicate that an existing staff person could be designated to review these applications as they were received. No time would be added to the existing site plan review process.
"Technical Expert" Committee

Basic Premise/Schedule

A second possible format for the design review function would be to establish a design review committee composed of "technical experts". These individuals would be registered architects, landscape architects, planners and engineers who practice in the City of London. This group could provide several functions:

• provide a "technical" review of the project related to the design guidelines.

• provide recommendations to City staff regarding which projects should receive additional public review (Council, or "blue ribbon" committee)

• provide recommendations on an annual basis for modifying the guidelines and/or the review process.

Review Process

Such a group would meet on a monthly basis to review projects. The advantage of such a group is the higher level of expertise that could be brought into the design review process. The disadvantage of having such a group as the primary design review group is they may be perceived as not being representative of the "average" citizen's view of design. Such "peer" groups can also "dilute" the review process if members may themselves come before the review committee at some later date. In such cases the reviewers may tend toward leniency in their opinions. The reverse may also occur, however, in which the technical review committee becomes a platform for attacks and counter-attacks among individuals in the design community. There would be no applicant presentations to this group.

The findings of the Technical Committee would be transmitted to the Building Division for incorporation into the site plan review process. As with the Staff review process, it would
be the responsibility of the Site Plan Review Group to undertake informal negotiations with
the applicant regarding conformance with the design guidelines. This group could also
function in an "oversight" manner. In this format, they would not be responsible for directly
reviewing projects, but would rather review the way in which reviews were undertaken by
Staff. The group would then issue annual reports to Council to recommend changes and
improvements in the guidelines and/or review process.

Potential Staffing/Time Implications

This process would, like the "High Profile" Committee described in the following text,
require additional administrative staff time. Because of the technical expertise of the panel,
additional professional staff would not be required, as the members of the Committee are
drawn from the professional community, and not from Staff.

Citizen Review Panel

Basic Premise/Structure

Another structure is the alternative in which a design review group is organized with laymen,
or "average citizen" members. Such groups are often created as "Community Appearance
Boards" who's main purpose is to evaluate the exterior appearance of the proposed project.
The disadvantage of this type of group is the general lack of technical knowledge among the
members. This may work well when evaluating whether a particular house design "fits in"
with the neighbourhood, but may not be appropriate to deal with less clear and more
complicated issues such as discussed in the design guidelines.

Review Process

This Committee would meet on a monthly basis to review applications. Presentations by the
applicant to the Committee would not be required. The Committee would review the
application in terms of the design guidelines, and transmit their findings to the Building
Division for incorporation into the site plan review process. As in the previously described processes, the Site Plan Review Group would be responsible for informal negotiations pertaining to the guidelines.

Potential Staffing/Time Implications

This committee will require both administrative and professional staff time and support. Due to the nature of the Committee, technical issues may require interpretation by professional staff. Administrative staff will be required to prepare meeting minutes, reports, schedule meetings, and transmit materials to both the Committee and the Building Division.

“High Profile” Design Review Committee

Basic Premise/Structure

At the other extreme is the review process which is formalized, and in effect provides an open public forum for scrutiny of the project. Such a process would best be oriented around a high profile design review committee composed of City Councilors, prominent members of the local design community, community activists etc. City Council itself could function as this Committee. Meetings of this committee and its deliberations would be open to the public and news media to “judge” the project under review. Although the findings of this committee would remain non-binding, it would provide the opportunity for public opinion and news media to apply “pressure” to achieve the desired design results. The disadvantage of this format is that not every project would require, or deserve, this intensity of review. Creation of such a process could also be perceived as discouraging new development by members of the business community.

Review Process

It is anticipated that this Committee would meet quarterly to review all major projects in the Downtown area. Formal presentations by the applicant of the project would be made to the
Committee for their review. As proposed, these sessions would permit public exposure of major Downtown projects.

Given the "high profile" and visibility of this process, it would be expected that formalized negotiations would be undertaken directly between the Committee and the applicant in regard to the design guidelines. In order to accommodate this process, it will be likely require two closely spaced Committee review meetings at each quarterly assembly of the Committee.

Potential Staffing and Time Implications

Due to the formal nature of this process, additional administrative time will be required for meeting preparation, public announcements, scheduling, recording of the minutes, preparation of the quarterly report, and transmission of material between the members of the Committee and the Building Division. As with the other design review processes, the findings of this Committee would not be binding upon the applicant.

Because this Committee is proposed to meet on a quarterly basis, there would be additional time added to the application process in certain cases since the application would be reviewed at longer time intervals. Given the relatively low number of applications in the Downtown area, this may be acceptable. If necessary, the Committee could be called to meet in "extraordinary session" on urgent design matters which could not wait for the quarterly review.

Evaluation

The basic procedure by which any of these processes would be implemented is generally the same: Following submission of an application to the Building Division for review, the project would undergo design review by staff, or one of the design review committees previously described. Staff and/or the design review committee (Technical Expert Committee or Citizen Review Panel) would issue its own position paper regarding the conformance or non-conformance of the project relative to the design guidelines. This position paper would then
be forwarded to the Site Plan Review Group. Should the design of the project not conform to the adopted design guidelines, it would then become the Site Plan Review Group's function to attempt informal negotiations with the applicant while at the same time negotiating with the applicant on other matters related to mandatory requirements contained in the zoning and site plan By-Laws. Although this type of informal negotiation is not as clear or simple as going down a checklist with yes or no answers, it has proved to be successful in other cities, notably Scarborough and Toronto.

Assuming the applicant produces an acceptable plan (re-zoning and site plan issues) and fulfills the intent of the design guidelines, the Site Plan Review Group would grant its approval for the project. Should the plan fail to meet zoning and site plan requirements it could be rejected on the basis of non-conformance with By-Laws. Should the plan fail to meet the intent of the design guidelines the course of action for the Review Group is less clear. Since the application could not be denied solely on the basis of non-conformance with the design guidelines, the Site Plan Review Group would have two potential courses of indirect action. These are:

1. Continued requests for modification of the application until such time as the applicant either conforms to the guidelines or presses the Committee to approve the project on the basis of mandatory zoning and site plan requirements.

2. If enacted, refer the project to the “High Profile” Design Review Committee. The purpose of this action would be to open the review process to public scrutiny and thereby bring public pressure to bear on the design of the project in question. The intent of this action would be to induce the applicant to conform through the use of media and public attention.

It seems clear that some projects would be too small to warrant a major design review. The negotiations and resolution for the design of these projects would best be handled entirely at the level of the Site Plan Review Group. Indirectly, this procedure could in fact encourage small scale in-fill and renovation projects since it would be clear that they could be approved without major “public” intervention.
At the other extreme would be large or otherwise significant projects which will clearly have a dramatic impact on the Downtown environment. Unless these projects were clearly meeting or exceeding the design guidelines, it would be expected that the Site Plan Review Group would refer them to a design review committee (Council or appointed “High Profile” Committee). This referral would in turn set in motion a highly visible design review in which the public and media would be allowed to be present. This setting will maximize public exposure of the project and will undoubtedly generate extensive media coverage. The intent of this public exposure is to induce the project developers and designers to make their project conform to the design guidelines. The advantages and benefits of this process are obvious; large projects can theoretically be made to conform to the public design preferences. Realistically, this may not always be the case, however. Should a developer/owner/designer choose to “dig in his heels,” they could conceivably withstand any attempts at public pressure that might be brought to bear through the design review process.

In this sense, presenting the project for a “public” design review process has the distinct possibility that the public (as represented by the “High Profile” Design Review Committee) might lose the “battle” over the design of such a major project. Doing so could have negative repercussions for future use of this process. Once developers/owners/designers of such major projects realize that the “system can be beaten”, it could well destroy the credibility of the design review process, and the guidelines themselves. This factor suggests that the use of a highly visible design review committee be limited to only the most critical projects of public concern. In this way the risk of “losing” the design battles is limited, and because of this limited use the effect on public opinion when it is utilized could be expected to be more forceful.

The third potential strategy for adoption of the guidelines involves the adoption of the appropriate guidelines into the zoning and site plan By-Laws. Since these are mandatory regulations, the selection of items to adopt as part of these instruments must be carefully evaluated. Care must be taken not to overextend the municipality’s authority on such matters as expressed in the Planning Act.
Enactment of appropriate guidelines as mandatory regulation is the strongest form of enforcement available to the City, and is therefore the best way to insure the successful implementation of the guidelines. This is also likely to be the most difficult strategy to pursue due to the amount of public review that must occur before the By-Laws can be amended.

The fourth potential strategy would involve the City sponsoring an amendment to the provincial Planning Act. Such an amendment would modify the provisions of Section 40 to allow the City to formally control certain design elements that are now outside the realm of the municipality’s control. The success of such a process would presumably allow the City to deny or approve a development application on the basis of mandatory design guidelines. While this might be viewed as the “ultimate” solution in which the City could exert maximum control over the design of specific projects, it could also create numerous problems. First, no other Ontario city has achieved such a release from the Act, with the exception of Ottawa. In Ottawa, private member’s legislation in the 1950’s established design review authority for all public streets, spaces and buildings, beyond the purview of the Act. The justification for this special exception was the civic importance of the nation’s capital city. It is therefore questionable whether the City of London could make a strong case for its exemption from certain provisions of Section 40 of the Planning Act. In addition, should the City be successful in obtaining such a release, there could well be legal challenges to the City’s authority to implement a mandatory set of design guidelines. Legal challenges that might be years in resolution could in turn create a negative image of the City among the development community. In summary, although this strategy may offer the possibility for substantial design control it also the potential for significant and not altogether desirable “side effects”.
**Proposed Implementation Strategy**

The implementation approach selected must accomplish the following:

1. It must provide a balance between public "control" and privately initiated "design creativity". An approach which is "unbalanced" to favour one point of view (i.e. public) over another (i.e. private) will likely be politically unacceptable. An implementation program which is "un-adoptable" will be of no value.

2. It must be economically efficient. An implementation program which significantly adds to the expense of a project will likely be unacceptable from a budgetary point of view for both the City and a developer.

3. It must be administratively efficient. A process which significantly extends the review time for development projects will likely be perceived as a "dissincentive" to Downtown development.

4. It must achieve visible, identifiable results. The City, and the community in general must be able to perceive the results of the design guidelines.

It should also be recognized that London is at the beginning of its active participation in the design of Downtown. As such, it will be important to establish an implementation process which is able to be modified over time as the City gains experience in this new role.

Based on these considerations, the following implementation process is proposed for consideration by the Steering committee.

1. The City Council should adopt the design guidelines as representative of the City's preference on Downtown design matters.

2. Concurrent with this adoption, the City Council should officially take responsibility for the promotion of the design guidelines. The BIA is encouraged to assist in the promotion of the
3. Concurrent with this adoption City Council should establish a design review process. This process has two key objectives:

A. Keep the design review process internal (i.e. staff level) on the majority of projects.

B. Provide an oversight function to monitor the on-going success of the process and recommend modifications of the guidelines and/or design review process to City Council.

The following chart is a simplified version of how such a process would operate. There are several key factors affecting the success of this process. First is securing the right staff person to handle the internal review. This person must be technically competent as an urban designer, with a background, preferably a degree, in architecture. In addition he/she must be a “salesman” and able to communicate verbally and visually. He/she must have political sensibilities about how to handle the urban design review. Some experience in the private sector could be useful, so as to have a background and insight into private development practices, issues and concerns. This is a mid- to upper-level position, (5-10 years experience) reflecting the importance of the urban design review process. Although this person may already be on staff, it is more likely that the City will need to hire someone to fill this position. As reflected in the organization chart, it is anticipated that this person would undertake informal negotiations with the Applicant prior to forwarding comments to the Site Plan Review Group. This person should also be made a member of the Site Plan Review Group, which would further his/her credibility with the development community, and add some “weight” to the informal negotiation process. The City Division to which this staff position is assigned will be subject to further internal organizational discussions. However, the Divisional assignment is considered to be less important than the assignment of this person to the Site Plan Review Group.

It is recommended that urban design review be carried out entirely by professional staff, who would implement the Downtown Design Guidelines through review of public and private
PROPOSED DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS
CITY OF LONDON, ONTARIO

PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT

PUBLIC PROJECTS

PLANNING STAFF REVIEW

STAFF APPROVAL

SITE PLAN REVIEW

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

PLANNING COMMITTEE AND COUNCIL APPROVAL

MONITORING BY DRC
development proposals. The staff would also prepare additional urban design guidelines as required, and submit same to Council, through the Planning Committee. Appeal of staff decisions would be to the Planning Committee of Council. This process is consistent with the selected approach to urban design utilizing Council-approved design guidelines. This approach would provide a process with the requirements known up front to all parties, and a relatively speedy processing time. A Council-appointed Design Review Monitoring Committee would be formed as a part of this process. This Committee would be made up of persons knowledgeable about urban design, and include one Councillor. The Committee would report on a semi-annual basis to the Planning Committee on the effectiveness of the design review process, and the design guidelines. This would give Council an additional oversight of the process.

A second key ingredient is the need for cooperation and coordination among City staff and Council. Council and all senior City officials must "play by the rules" and allow the design review process to function. In this manner the City will be able to provide a rational response to development submissions and avoid ad-hoc responses to future design matters.

4. Since it has already been determined by the Steering Committee and City Council that the guidelines regarding building use, height, bulk and setbacks will not be incorporated into the Draft Zoning By-Law currently under consideration, it is proposed that the City wait at least one year following adoption of the new By-Law before attempting to incorporate these provisions of the design guidelines.

5. Pursuit of an amendment to the provincial Planning Act be tabled until at least two years have elapsed following the adoption of the proposed design review process. If at that time the presently proposed process has proved successful, no amendment would likely be required. If on the other hand, the proposed design review process has not been successful, this fact will provide a substantive argument to bring before the Provincial government as to why London should be granted additional design review authority. In effect, the establishment of the design review process becomes the "base year" against which its success (or lack thereof) can be measured.
6. The implementation of the Downtown Urban Design Concept will require several steps:

A. Clarification and direction by the Steering Committee and City Council that the City wishes to consider the Urban Design Concept for adoption at this time. The adoption of the Guidelines and their implementation process is not dependent upon the adoption of the Urban Design Concept. Adoption of this overall concept simultaneously with the design guidelines would be considered to be beneficial from and overall strategic point of view with respect to the City moving forward in its effort to lead Downtown development, but it is not considered to be essential.

B. If the City wishes to pursue the adoption of the Urban Design Concept, additional public participation and input may be required in accordance with City policy on such procedures.

C. Specific aspects of the overall Downtown Urban Design Concept may need to be modified and/or further developed in response to any additional public input.

D. Following further input, the Urban Design Concept may need to be put into "adoptable" format and language to identify specific public actions that are to be incorporated.

E. City Council adoption of the Urban Design Concept would likely be an adoption "in principle" in which major concepts and ideas are approved, subject to further detailed planning, design, engineering, funding feasibility testing, and other technical studies.

F. Concurrent with the adoption of the Concept, Council should designate a City Department or Division and person to be responsible for moving forward with the implementation of the Concept as reflected in the public and private projects identified. This Department/Division should provide annual progress reports to Council on its efforts toward implementation so that Council may take the appropriate actions to insure its continued progress. The person or persons assigned this responsibility may be considered to be the "Downtown Coordinator." In addition to moving forward with the development projects suggested in the Urban Design Concept, the Coordinator should also be charged with the implementation of the other specific elements contained in the Concept as follows:
i. In order to implement the Activity Framework aspect of the overall Downtown Urban Design Concept, the City should, upon adoption of the design review process, designate the Downtown Coordinator to be responsible for overall programming of Downtown activities. The Coordinator should also be given the responsibility to initiate the programming, search for funding, and preliminary design of such physical design improvements as may be suggested for or required by the Activity Framework and/or overall Urban Design Concept.

The Coordinator should submit an annual report on the results of his/her efforts toward the implementation of the Activity Framework and Urban Design Concept. This will allow Council to decide the appropriate next steps that should be taken toward the implementation of these concepts on an annual basis.

ii. At the time the Design Guidelines are adopted, Council should also designate the Downtown Coordinator to be responsible for the implementation of the sidewalk guidelines prescribed in the preceding report. The Coordinator should provide the interaction between the City Departments and private developers necessary to insure the implementation of the sidewalk guidelines. To insure this coordination, all improvements to sidewalks, whether public or private, must be reviewed and approved by the Coordinator prior to their implementation.
Glossary of Terms
**Glossary of Terms**

Scale: the sense of proportion and size of the space created by the placement and size of buildings along a street. The term most often applies to how the sense is perceived by a pedestrian along the street.

Setback: as used in this report, equivalent to the definition of front or exterior side yard. Setback refers to the horizontal distance from the property line to the outside face of a building or exterior wall.

Stepback: a form of setback requirement in which a horizontal setback is applied at a specified interval of building height.

Street-line: the outside line of a required right-of-way or road allowance, usually the same as the property line.

Building Envelope: the volume of space that may be occupied by a building, it is usually defined by a series of dimensional requirements such as setback, stepback, permitted maximum height, maximum permitted lot coverage, etc.

Building Line: the edge condition created by the front exterior walls of buildings along a street.

Downtown Shopping Area: the area as defined in the Official Plan as the eight block area bounded by Ridout, York, Wellington, and Dundas Streets, plus the properties fronting on the north side of Dundas Street between Talbot and the mid-block between Wellington and Waterloo Streets, and the properties fronting on Richmond Street north to Dufferin Avenue.

Plaza: an open, uncovered space provided on private property, at ground (street) level. A plaza, by definition, opens to and connects with the public sidewalk environment. Spaces larger than 3 metres wide by 3 metres deep (10 feet by 10 feet) are considered to be plazas.
**Downtown London Urban Design Study**

*What will future development in Downtown London look like?*

*What can the City do to promote a high quality of design in Downtown?*

*How can the City help shape future growth in Downtown?*

To answer these questions, the City of London has initiated a Downtown Design Study. The products of the study will be an overall urban design concept for Downtown London, and a set of design guidelines that will assist the City and prospective developers in shaping the designs of future developments.

The area under consideration in the study is the Downtown Area as defined in the new Official Plan, and is generally bounded by the CN/VIA railway tracks to the south, Colborne Street to the east, Princess Avenue, Victoria Park, and Kent Street to the north, and the Thames River to the west.

*What is Urban Design?*

The term "Urban Design" has been in use for many years. Unlike architecture or engineering, it is not a clearly defined discipline, and consequently, has been given a variety of definitions. In simplest form, Urban Design may be defined as "shaping the physical environment of cities". Implicit in this definition is that Urban Design addresses the public rather than the private spaces within the city. Generally, the exterior of buildings and their relationships to one another and to streets and other civic spaces are considered to be a part of the public space within the City.

In certain instances, the design of entire cities may be predetermined, as in New Towns. However, the majority of cities are the result of incremental development accomplished over
many years, by many people, hence the need for a "guide", whereby the incremental
development may be shaped to create the desired overall city form.

The guide, or "guidelines", as they are called, must therefore address the different compo-
nents that, when combined, create the physical form of the public environment. These
components may include the following separate, but inter-related, major elements:

I. VISUAL FRAMEWORK

A. Building Form
   1. Height
   2. Setbacks (at street level and above)
   3. Relationship to the street
      a. arcades, overhangs
      b. location of entrances

B. Open Spaces
   1. Street trees
   2. Parks
   3. Recreation facilities

C. Spatial Relationships
   1. "Enclosure"
   2. "Landmark" structures
   3. "Gateways"
   4. "Edge Conditions"
   5. "Barriers"

D. Architectural Treatments
   1. Building materials
   2. Fenestration patterns
   3. Details
II. FUNCTIONAL FRAMEWORK

A. Movement Systems
   1. Pedestrian systems (or “linkages”)
      a. sidewalks
      b. pedestrian malls
      c. interior walkways
      d. pedways
   2. Automobile movement
      a. street classifications (arterials, local streets, etc.)
   3. Public transit systems

B. Parking
   1. Surface lots
   2. Structured parking

C. Services
   1. Delivery
   2. Trash removal

These components comprise the basic “language” of urban design, and provide categories within which design guidelines may be developed.

What are Urban Design Guidelines? Are they Development Controls, and if so, how are they implemented?

The degree to which municipalities may regulate design matters is defined by Provincial law. The Planning Act (1983) outlines the powers and mandate of municipalities in the Province of Ontario over design issues. Those elements that can be thought of as “design control” are outlined in Section 34, covering Zoning by-laws, and Section 40, concerning site-plan
control. Under these sections, urban design features such as the height, bulk, density, size, and placement of structures on a site (setback and yard requirements) can be controlled by the City through Zoning by-laws. Zoning by-laws also permit the City to determine appropriate land uses for a site.

Site plan control by-laws deal with site issues such as off-street loading and parking, exterior lighting, fences, walls, and landscaping, pedestrian walkways and access, and trash collection areas. In areas under site plan control, the City may also require that drawings showing plans, sections, and elevations of proposed buildings be submitted. These drawings must show the massing and conceptual design of the building, its relationship to adjacent buildings and streets, and public access and open spaces. Specifically precluded by this section are the interior layout and interior design of the building, the colour, texture, and type of materials used on the exterior, and window, construction, and architectural details.

For issues in which the Planning Act precludes direct regulatory intervention, many cities have adopted a set of urban design guidelines to supplement basic land development controls. Unlike the zoning by-law provisions, guidelines are not mandatory. Rather they attempt to describe preferred design treatments. The guidelines may address the various individual elements that make up the urban design of the City. The basis for such guidelines are the goals and objectives for downtown design that are described in the new Official Plan. Examples of design guideline statements are:

• **Building Service entrances should not be located on the following streets.**

• **The use of brick as the major building material is encouraged in new and renovated structures on Dundas Street...**

Such guidelines, if adopted, would reflect the City's preferences for design features that cannot be prescribed under existing legislation, and would reflect the goals and policies for the future development of Downtown London.
Reports Prepared

Two reports were prepared for the Downtown Design Study for presentation to Council. These include:

1. Downtown Design Study, Phase 1 Report
   March, 1990.
   
   This report provided an inventory and analysis of the existing conditions in Downtown London, as well as an identification of design opportunities and constraints.

   February, 1991

   This report was the second draft of the Downtown Design Study, and forms the basis of the Final Report. The first draft was presented in November, 1990.

   In addition to drafts of these reports, numerous interim reports, working papers and technical documents were submitted to the Downtown Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Committee for review and comment.
Public Information Meetings

Public information meetings were held during the preparation of the Downtown Design Study to provide the opportunity for public input. Records of public comments made at these meetings were prepared by the Consultant, and provided to the Downtown Steering Committee for discussion and consideration. Numerous public comments were incorporated into the Final Report as a result of these meetings. In addition, written comments were invited from the public prior to the submission of the Draft Final Report to the Downtown Steering Committee, Planning Committee and Council. Numerous personal interviews were also undertaken by the Consultant during this process.