

URBAN DESIGN DICTIONARY

- 32 TERMS YOU SHOULD KNOW -



ACCESSIBILITY

Providing for ease, safety, and choice when moving to and through places



ADAPTIVE REUSE

Converting an existing building into a new use



ANGULAR PLANE

A geometric measurement that maintains solar access and height transition



ANIMATION

Support sustained activity on the street through visual details, engaging uses, and amenities



ARTICULATION

The layout or pattern of building elements (e.g. windows, roofs) that defines space and affects the facade



BUILT FORM

The physical shape of developments including buildings and structures



CHARACTER

The look and feel of an area, including activities that occur there



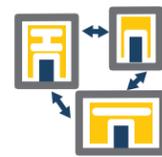
CIRCULATION

The movement patterns of people and vehicles through a site or community



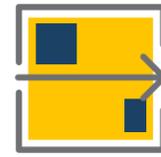
COMPATIBILITY

Similar size, form and character of a building relative to others around it



CONNECTIVITY

The ease of movement and access between a network of places and spaces



DESIRE LINE

Shortest or most easily navigated route marked by the erosion of the ground caused by human traffic



FACADE

The exterior wall of a building exposed to public view



FIGURE GROUND

The visual relationship between built and unbuilt space



FINE GRAIN

A pattern of street blocks and building footprints that characterize an urban environment



FOCAL POINT

A prominent feature or area of interest that can serve as a visual marker



GATEWAY

A signature building or landscape to mark an entrance or arrival to an area



HEIGHT TRANSITION

The gradual change in height between buildings within a community



LANDMARK

Highly distinctive buildings, structures or landscapes that provide a sense of place and orientation



MASSING

The effect of modifying the height and bulk of the form of a building or group of buildings



NODE

A place where activity and circulation are concentrated



PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED

An environment designed to ensure pedestrian safety and comfort for all ages and abilities



PUBLIC REALM

Public spaces between buildings including boulevards and parks; where pedestrian activities occurs



RHYTHM AND PATTERN

The repetition of elements such as materials, details, styles, and shapes that provide visual interest



SETBACK

The orientation of a building in relation to a property line, intended to maintain continuity along a streetscape



STEP BACK

A recess of taller elements of a building in order to ensure an appropriate built form presence on the street edge



STREETWALL

The consistent edge formed by buildings fronting on a street



STREET FURNITURE

Municipal equipment placed along streets, including light fixtures, fire hydrants, telephones, trash receptacles, signs, benches, mailboxes, newspaper boxes and kiosks



SUSTAINABILITY

Developing with the goal of maintaining natural resources and reducing human impact on ecosystems



URBAN FABRIC

The pattern of lots and blocks in a place



VIEW TERMINUS

The end point of a view corridor, often accentuated by landmarks



VISTA

Direct and continuous views along straight streets or open spaces



WAYFINDING

Design elements that help people to navigate through an area (e.g. signs, spatial markers)

ABOUT URBAN DESIGN @ MHBC

MHBC understands that urban design can help to connect people with places, balance the protection of the environment with emerging built form, and influence the development process to achieve development that promotes a sense of place and local identity within a community. Our firm deploys an interactive design process that includes visioning, community outreach, team facilitation, team capacity building, and graphical representation to achieve design solutions that are reflective, responsive and

respectful of the local community context. Our design approach is collaborative, working with landowners, municipalities, stakeholders and the public to achieve design that balances input from all, allowing for community buy-in and personal ownership of the final design. Learn more about MHBC at www.mhbcplan.com.

KITCHENER
WOODBRIDGE
LONDON
KINGSTON
BARRIE
BURLINGTON

