



TOWN OF MILTON

MATURE NEIGHBOURHOODS CHARACTER STUDY – PHASE 3

DORSET PARK NEIGHBOURHOOD

SUMMARY REPORT

December 2021



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Mature Neighbourhoods Character Study

The Town of Milton's planning staff initiated a Mature Neighbourhoods Character Study in 2018. The study was in response to a Council direction to staff to review the Town's existing Official Plan policies and regulatory framework relating to the construction of new dwellings in mature residential neighbourhoods and recommend appropriate changes to these tools to protect the character of these residential areas. The notice of motion arose from public concern regarding the construction of large new developments and how they impact the character of the Town's mature neighbourhoods. Residents in the Downtown Character Area initially raised the concerns, but residents in other areas of the Town's urban area are experiencing the same issue and have expressed their concerns as well.

The Mature Neighbourhoods Character Study is carried out in various phases to cover the extent of the Town's mature neighbourhoods. The study aims to:

- gain a better understanding, with community input, of the elements and qualities influencing the character of the Town's mature neighbourhoods;
- assess whether the policies of the Official Plan and the regulatory framework of the Town's Zoning By-law were effective in managing development and maintaining the character of mature neighbourhood areas; and
- inform potential improvements to the management of neighbourhood character issues related to applications for new residential development.

Phase 1 completed the review of Milton's Official Plan policies for mature neighbourhoods and Character Areas and assessed the low-density residential neighbourhoods within the Downtown Character Area and the residential properties fronting onto Martin Street. Amendment No. 60 to the Local Official Plan updated the Town policies to better manage development in Milton's Mature Neighbourhood Areas and Character Areas (*By-law No. 080-2020*).

A Zoning By-law Amendment (*By-law No. 081-2020*) introduced new standards that apply to residential development in the form of new housing, replacement housing or addition to existing housing in the Downtown Character Area.

Phase 2, also complete, assessed the Mountainview neighbourhood and the residential section of Old Milton located outside of the Downtown Character Area and west of Ontario Street North and South. The approved Zoning By-law Amendment (*By-law 077-2021*) introduced new standards that apply to these areas.

Phase 3 was incorporated to the work plan on July 2020 with the review of the low and medium density residential areas in a small section of Old Milton located outside the Downtown Character Area and in the Fallingbrook, Forrest Grove, Bronte Meadows and Valley View neighbourhoods. The approved Zoning By-law Amendment (*By-law 077-2021*) also introduced new regulations that apply to these areas.

During the final stage of **PHASE 3**, Town Planning staff conducted background work on the Timberlea and Dorset Park neighbourhoods with the Documentation and inventory of existing housing stock through data collection, mapping analysis and neighbourhood characterization, in order to identify the built form elements that define neighbourhood character, such as lot area, coverage, setbacks, garage location, number of storeys, landscaping features, etc.

The subject report presents the findings of the study in the Dorset Park Neighbourhood. A separate report documents the findings in the Dorset Park neighbourhood. Both reports have been presented to Council and the public at a Statutory Public meeting on December 13, 2022.

1.2 The Role of Milton’s Mature Neighbourhood Areas

The Mature Neighbourhoods Character Study has been informed by the Council-endorsed Milton’s Future Urban Structure framework (Report [PD-049-17](#)). The Future Urban Structure, introduced in 2017, establishes a set of areas along with a vision, attributes and dependencies for each area supporting the achievement of the vision. One structural element, described as the Stable Neighbourhoods within the Established Urban Area, is a significant precedent to the study.

The Stable Neighbourhoods comprise residential areas characterized as Mature Neighbourhood Areas. The Future Urban Structure framework establishes the vision, attributes, and dependencies for these areas, which provide further characterization and direction for development that ought to be considered:

Vision

- Generally, maintain pre-Halton Urban Structure Plan -HUSP- character (built form, lot fabric)
- Respect cultural heritage built form and landscapes
- Limited infill and redevelopment sympathetic to cultural heritage character
- Provision of a range of housing choices to support a full range of socio-economic circumstances including aging in place

- Potential for adaptive reuse of some historic building stock in appropriate locations

Attributes

- Concentration of cultural heritage built form and landscapes
- High degree of walkability due to grid road network
- High degree of visual interest
- Proximity to historic downtown

Dependencies

- Appropriate transitions between existing and new development
- Appropriate and defensible regulatory framework to protect important elements and to enable contextually sensitive redevelopment

Adequacy of servicing (municipal water, wastewater, storm water infrastructure, roads, parks, schools etc.) Amendment No. 60 to the Local Official Plan introduced a definition and a new set of policies, specific to Mature Neighbourhood Areas, consistent with the Council's directions for Milton's Stable Neighbourhoods.

Section 5.10.6 of the Local Official Plan includes a new definition for Mature Neighbourhood Area that builds upon the foundations of the Future Urban Structure for Stable Neighbourhoods, which provides direction for development to recognize the qualities and features that define their character:

“older residential area within the Residential Area designation, as identified in the implementing Zoning-By-law, characterized by predominantly single-detached dwellings generally on large lots, and other built and natural qualities that collectively provide a distinct and recognizable character”.

Policies now require development in the form of new dwellings, replacement dwellings, and additions and alterations to existing dwellings to be compatible and respectful of the character of the surrounding neighbourhood (Sections 3.2.1.8 to 3.2.1).

The amendment also introduced additional evaluation criteria in policy for minor variance and consent applications in Mature Neighbourhood Areas to require development applications to be compatible and respectful of the character and appearance of the Mature Neighbourhood Area and to minimize the impacts on adjacent properties (Sections 5.7.3.9 and 5.8.3.2).

The new policy framework recognizes the zoning standards that aim to maintain the character of the mature neighbourhood area and directs the zoning by-law to identify the Mature Neighbourhood Areas in zoning mapping and to detail the appropriate standards for new development within these areas, including setbacks, orientation, building separation, garages, lot area, lot frontage, lot coverage, landscaping and fencing.

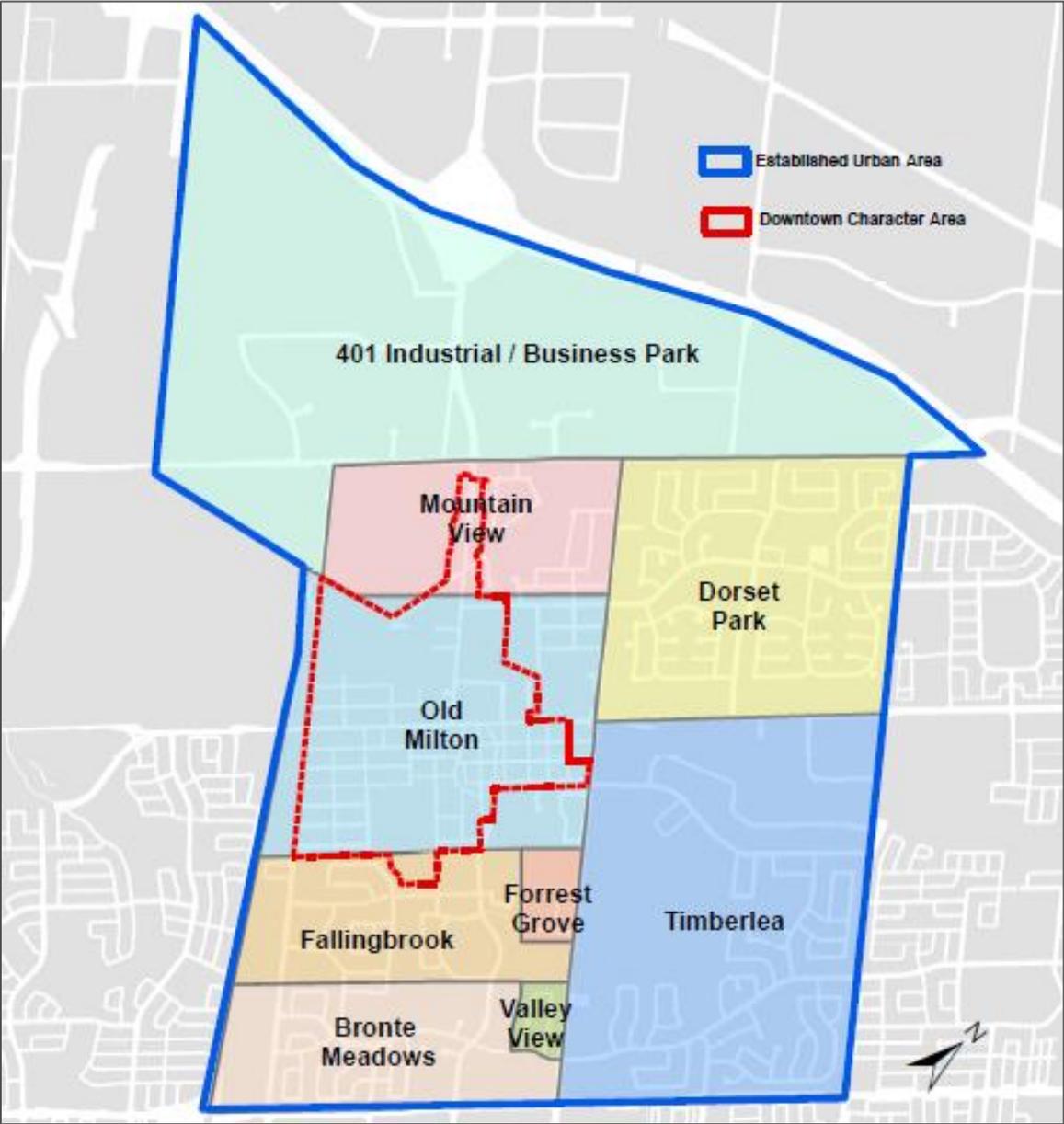


Figure 1. Mature Neighbourhoods within the Established Urban Area.

1.3 What is Neighbourhood Character?

Neighbourhood character in Milton’s mature areas is incredibly important to the overall perception of neighbourhood quality. It refers to the look and feel of an area and the activities, which occur there. It is often defined as the collective qualities and characteristics that distinguish a particular area or neighbourhood.

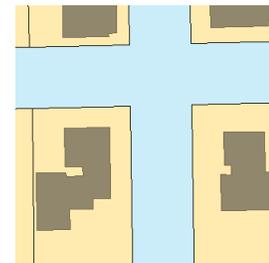
The Local Official Plan states the definition of Character as:

“the aggregate of features that combined indicate the quality and nature of a particular area. The distinct features include built and natural attributes of an area such as scale and massing, vegetation, topography, lotting pattern, colour, texture, material and the relation between buildings, spaces, and landforms”.

Every property, public place or piece of infrastructure contributes, whether great or small. It is the cumulative impact of quantitative elements, such as lot frontage, setbacks, and building height; and qualitative elements, such as landscaping, materiality, and door and window placement. These elements of a place can be building-related, property-related or neighbourhood-related, which blend to define a unique place and character.

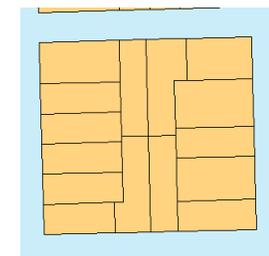
Building-related features

Building-related features include those features that define the character of the built form in a neighbourhood. Building features include elements such as the height and massing of buildings, setbacks from the street and from adjacent buildings, or materials.



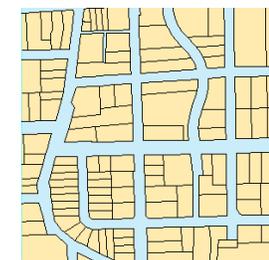
Property-related features

Property-related features include those features that define the lots in a neighbourhood. Lot features include elements such as the size of the lots and their frontage along a street, the orientation of the lots and the natural features common on the lots.



Neighbourhood-related features

Neighbourhood-related elements or features include those features that define the broader neighbourhood and include public areas such as the streetscape and street design, street network, sidewalks and trails, street lighting, street trees, natural features, and general lotting patterns (grid, curvilinear, cul-de-sacs, etc.).



2. THE DORSET PARK NEIGHBOURHOOD

The Dorset Park neighbourhood was registered in 1973 and largely developed during the 1970s. The neighbourhood is bounded by Steeles Avenue to the North, Main Street E. to the South, Ontario Street to the West and Thompson Rd. to the East. The neighbourhood is characterized by large its deep lots and many small cul-de-sac crescents, parks and walking trails.

The study focuses on the residential area of the neighbourhood. Two areas, each containing a noticeable set of attributes that contribute to their overall character, and containing a total of 1335 homes, have been established for the purpose of the study. Areas 1 and 2, separated by Woodward Avenue and depicted in Figure 2, generally group a number of properties and dwellings with similar characteristics. These two areas are described in the next section.

Town planning staff carried out background research to gain a better understanding of Dorset Park's planning and growth, existing built form and streetscape patterns that define its distinctive character. General observations of the lotting pattern, dwelling form, separation, and sitting, landscaping, street trees, and other streetscape elements were made to gain a better understand what elements and qualities stood out and to inform appropriate changes to the Town of Milton Zoning By-law regulations. Appendix A to this report includes a series of tables that present the overall findings for areas 1 and 2 and for the entire neighbourhood.



Figure 2. Areas 1 and 2 in Dorset Park.

2.1 Dorset Park - Area 1



There are 685 residential properties on the section of Dorset Park located north of Woodward Avenue. All properties are currently zoned Residential Low Density (RLD). Characteristics of this area that define the current neighbourhood character:

Streetscape

- Woodward Avenue and Wilson Drive, classified as collector roads, have sidewalks on both sides. All other roads, classified as local roads, generally have sidewalks on one side of the boulevard.
- Irregular block configuration with a good mix of mature street trees and ample front yards on both sides of streets.

Lot Fabric

- Rectangular lots sitting along longer straight streets and irregular lots around cul-de-sacs and on curved streets. There are no vacant lots on this section of Dorset Park.

- 59% of lots have an area less than 660 square metres. An additional 34% of lots have an area between 660 and 830 square meters.
- Lot sizes in this section of Dorset Park range from 273 to 3460 square metres. Average lot size is 647 square metres.
- Lot frontages are mostly within 15 and 20 metres (75%) or within 0 and 15metres (19%) with an average for all properties of 16.1 metres.
- 94% of lots have a depth greater than 30 metres, with an average lot depth of 36.8 metres for all lots. 40 properties have a depth less than 30 metres.

Built Form

- Houses are predominantly single-detached with a cluster of townhouses and a convenience store (not forming part of this review) at the intersection of Woodward and Wilson. Only two semi-detached dwellings were identified.
- 49% of houses are two-storey in height, 29% are one-storey, and 21% are one-and-a-half storey. This mix contributes to the diversity of the neighbourhood.
- The average lot coverage for all houses in Area 1 is 21.1%. 79% of properties have a lot coverage less than 25.1%, generally corresponding to the zoning provisions for the applicable lot size. However, a number of dwellings on small lots (7%), generally located on the same block, have a lot coverage greater than 30%.
- Attached garages are the predominant form (91%), with 65% being one-car garage structures.
- 47% of garages are positioned in line with the dwelling front wall while 40% are protruding structures. The garage projection is significant in a reduced number of dwellings built in the 1980s.
- 49% of houses have a front yard setback between 6.1 and 8.0 metres and an additional 49% have a front yard setback between 8.1 and 12 metres. The average front yard setback for all dwellings in Area 1 is 8.3metres.
- 35% of properties have an interior side yard setback of less than 1.5 metres and an additional 52% have a setback between 1.5 and 3.0 metres. The average side yard setback in this area in 2.1 metres.
- A centralized group of houses have a side yard setback of 0.6m.
- Properties with reduced side yard setbacks -between 0.6 and 1.2 metres- are generally grouped.
- Wood siding is the predominant materials in houses built in the 1970s. Likewise, brick is more predominant in houses built in the 1980s.
- Only one property is listed in the Town's Heritage Register. The property, built in the 1860s, is accessible from Ontario Street North and connected to the neighbourhood through a pedestrian pathway.
- There are no vacant lots in this section of Dorset Park.

2.1 Dorset Park - Area 2



There are 653 properties on the residential area located south of Woodward Avenue. All properties are currently zoned Residential Low Density (RLD) and demonstrate the following attribute that contribute to its current neighbourhood character:

Streetscape

- Area 2 features streets with mature trees and plenty of parks, pedestrian pathways, and green space.
- Woodward Avenue and Wilson Drive, classified as collector roads, have sidewalks on both sides. All other roads, classified as local roads, generally have sidewalks on one side of the boulevard, with the exception of Cabot Trail and Lorne Scot Dr., which has sidewalks on both sides.
- Irregular block configuration and multiple cul-de-sacs contribute to enhanced perception of the streetscape.

- Lots of frontage and landscaped yards.

Lot Fabric

- Mostly rectangular lots along straight streets with variation in shape on lots located on curved streets and around cul-de-sacs.
- 64% of lots have an area between less than 660. An additional 30% of lots have an area between 660 and 830 square metres. Average lot size for all lots in Area 2 is 648 square metres.
- 19% of lots have a frontage less than 15 metres in length. 79% of lot frontages do not exceed 20 metres. The average lot frontages in Area 2 is 16 metres.
- Lots are primarily deep with 92% of them having depth greater than 30 metres. The average lot depth for all lots is 36.7 metres.
- One lot on the southern edge of the area contains a Milton Hydro infrastructure facility.

Built Form

- All houses in Dorset Park's Area 2 are single-detached.
- Existing diversity of built form. 58% of the houses are two-storey in height, 37% are one-storey and only 4% are one-an-a-half storey.
- 86% of the houses have a lot coverage less than 25% and an additional 14% have a lot coverage between 25.1 and 30%. When all are combined, the average lot coverage is 20.3%.
- 87% of properties contain an attached garage. 70% of properties contain a one-car garages and only 5% remain with no garage structure.
- 47% of dwellings contain a garage that is aligned with the front wall of the dwelling. An additional 40% have a protruding garage, generally with a small projection. Garages that are setback from the dwelling front wall are also present in the neighbourhood in small number (14%).
- 53% of houses have a front yard setback between 6.1 and 8.0 metres and an additional 45% have a front yard setback that range between 8.1 and 12.0 metres. The average front yard setback for all properties is 8.3 metres.
- Interior side yard setbacks vary between 0.6 metres and 8.0 metres. The average interior side yard setback is 2.2 metres.
- A centralized group of houses close to Ontario Street North have a side yard setback of 0.6m.
- Exterior side yard setbacks are found in the range of 2.0 to 11.0 metres. The average exterior side yard setbacks is 7.3 metres.
- Wood siding and brick are the predominant materials.
- There are no listed heritage properties in Area 2.

3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The interpretation of residential character is based on how the elements of the built and natural environment combine in both the public and private realms to create the context and feeling of the neighbourhood. All elements of a neighbourhood contribute to an authentic character as all buildings contribute and influence in the same way.

The following considerations are important in defining the character of the Dorset Park neighbourhood:

Neighbourhood Character

- The residential area in the Dorset park neighbourhood in the Town of Milton comprises 1337 residential properties that are currently zoned Residential Low Density (RLD) in the Urban Zoning By-law. Properties demonstrating similar characteristics can be grouped in two areas.
- The neighbourhood is characterized by its open space system, well connected parks, mostly curvilinear streets and numerous interconnected cul-de-sacs.
- 62% of lots in Dorset Park have an area less than 660 square metres and 32% are in the 660 to 830 square metre range. Only a small percentage accounts for lots greater than 830 square metres. The average lot area for the entire neighbourhood is 647 square metres.
- The majority of the housing stock consists of low-density suburban development built in the late 1970s (96%) with a small number of units built in the 1980s (4%).
- Single detached dwellings are the predominant built form (91%) with an additional 9% of dwellings being semi-detached units within the subject area.
- 53% of the dwellings are two-storey in height, while 33% are one-storey. Houses are typical contemporary suburban models.
- Only one property in Dorset Park is listed in the Town's Heritage Register. The property, built in the 1860s, is accessible from Ontario Street North and is only connected to the neighbourhood through a pedestrian pathway.
- A 4% of the properties do not have a garage structure. An additional 6% have an attached carport, all other dwellings have a one-car (67% of dwellings) or two-car (22% of dwellings) attached garage. Some rear detached garages are also present.
- 45% of all existing garages are positioned in line with the dwelling front wall, and 39% are protruding structures, generally with a small projection. This garage projection is larger in a number of dwellings built in the 1980s.

- Area 1 and Area 2 are characterized by extended front yard setbacks and good separation between dwellings. Large front lawns, and trees help with keeping the aesthetic and character.
- Two- localized clusters of houses have a 0.6 metre side yard setback.
- Within the neighbourhood, Woodward Avenue and Wilson Drive, classified as collector roads, and Cabot Trail and Lorne Scot Dr., classified as local roads, have sidewalks on both sides of the boulevard. All other roads, classified as local roads, generally have sidewalks on one side.

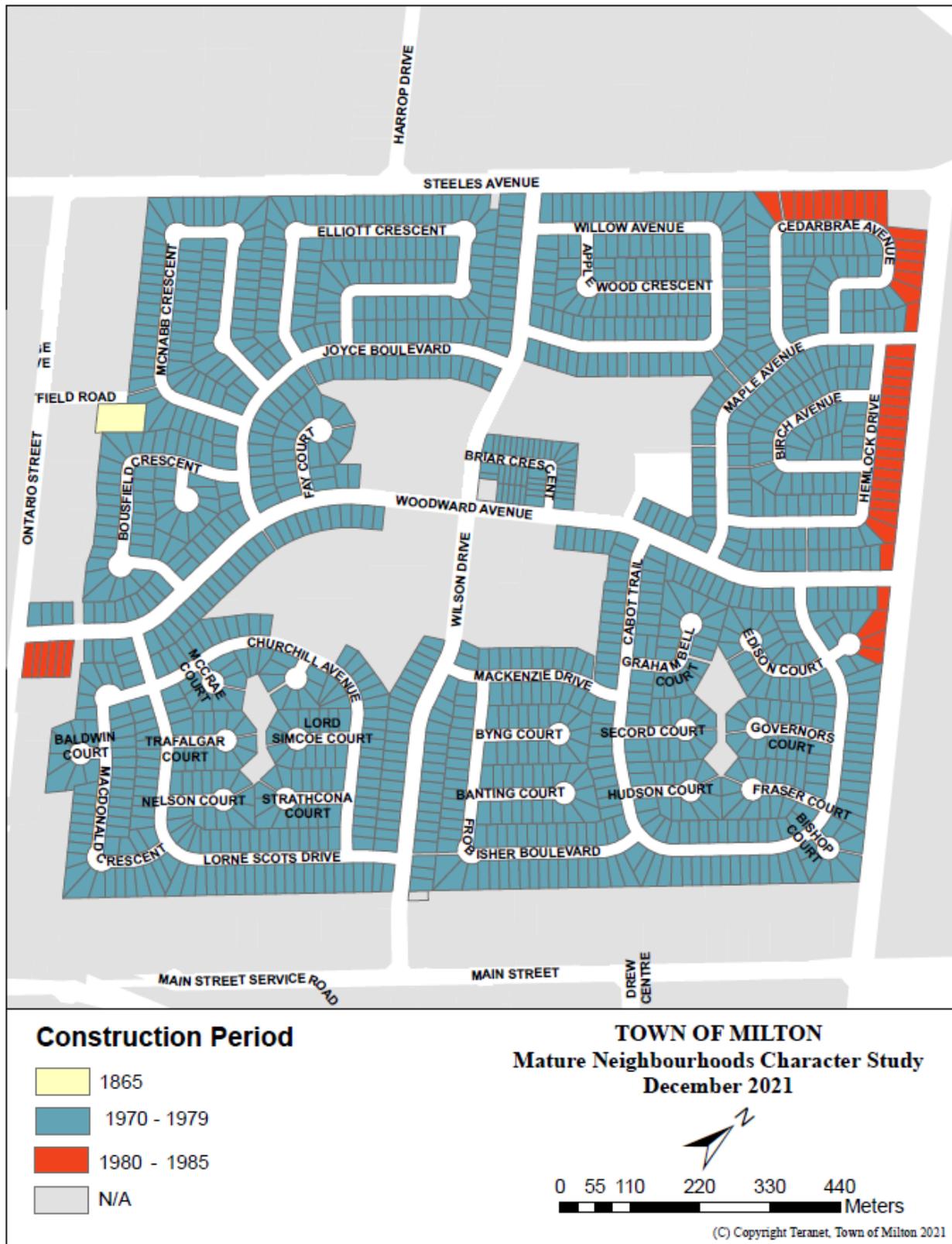
Landmark Features

- Ecole St. Nicolas Catholic School and Robert Baldwin Public School
- Baldwin Park, Centre Park, Court Park, Fay Court Park, Kinsmen Park and Melanie Park. Major parks are centrally located and serve the adjacent schools and the neighbourhood. Smaller parks are connected to the multiple cul-de-sacs creating a significant pedestrian network.

Development and Change

- Dorset Park's neighbourhood character has experienced minor changes since its development in the 1970s. Most works have included alterations and façade changes or additions to existing houses.
- Two replacement houses were recently approved. One in particular represents a new design and more contemporary style.
- Housing development in Dorset Park is not subject to site plan approval.
- Residents support maintaining the neighbourhood's present low-density character and green space and value their front yard and reduced heights. Back yards are considered a significant feature of the neighbourhood. However, some residents believe a less restricted lot coverage should be permitted and a house depth restrictions be added.
- Replacement homes are perceived as incompatible with the existing character of the neighbourhood.

APPENDIX A. MAPPING



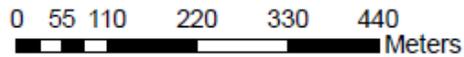
Map 1. Period of Construction



Lot Area

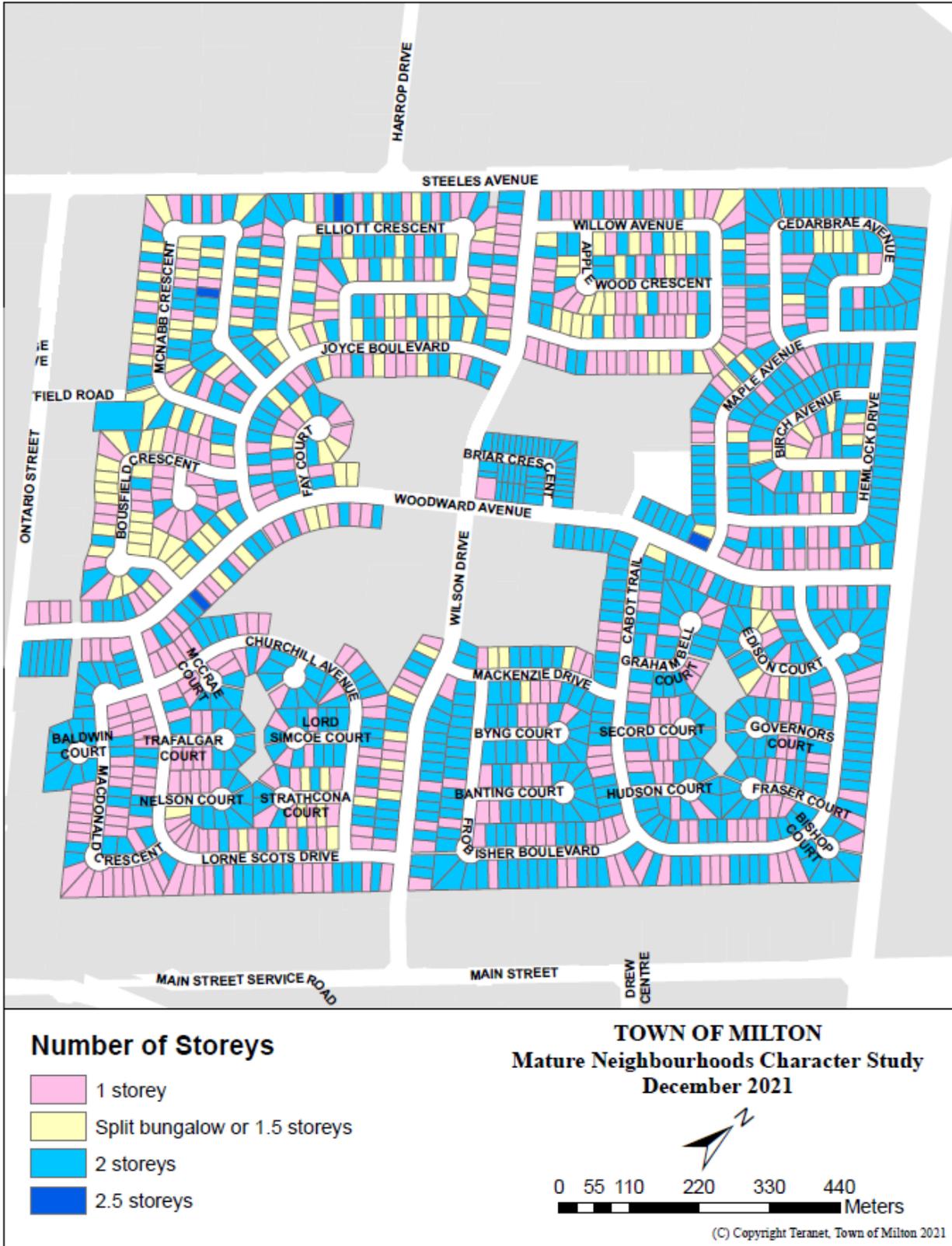
- 660 sq.m. or less
- 660 - 830 sq.m.
- Greater than 830 sq.m.

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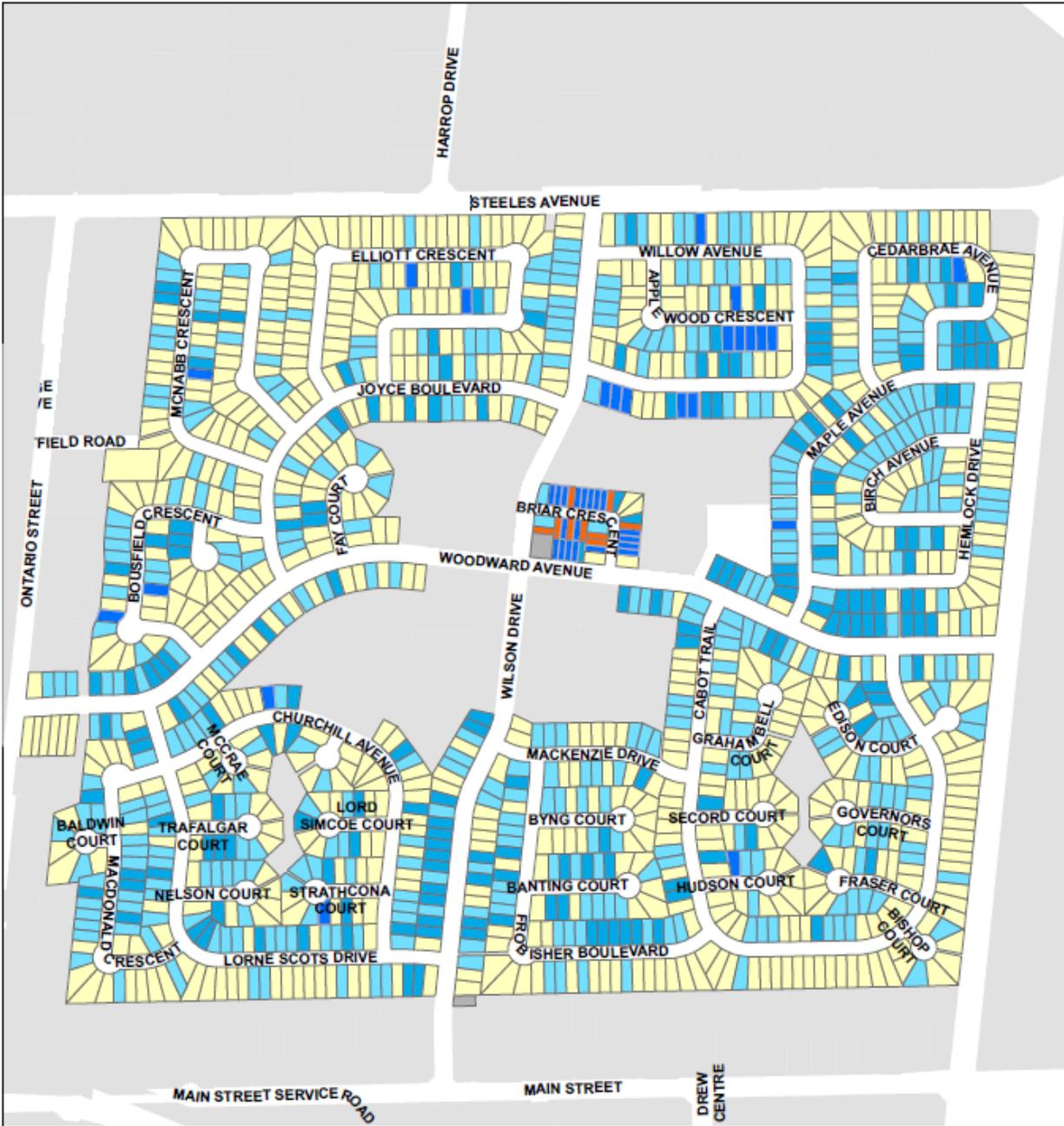


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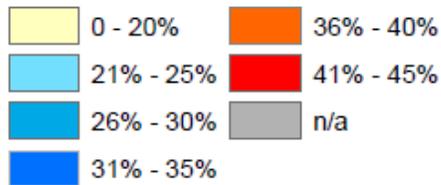
Map 2. Lot Area



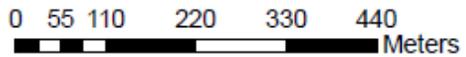
Map 3. Number of Storeys



Lot Coverage

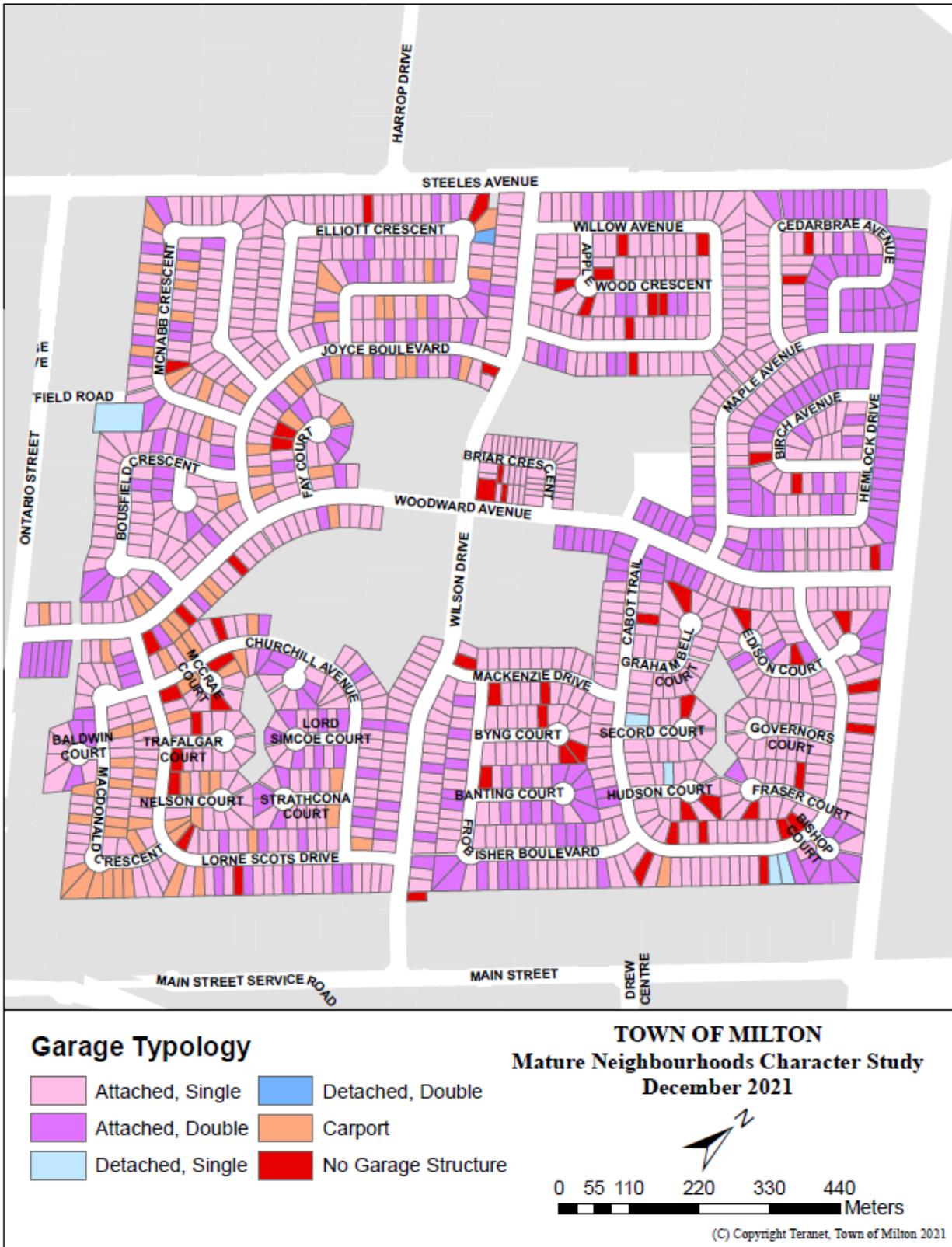


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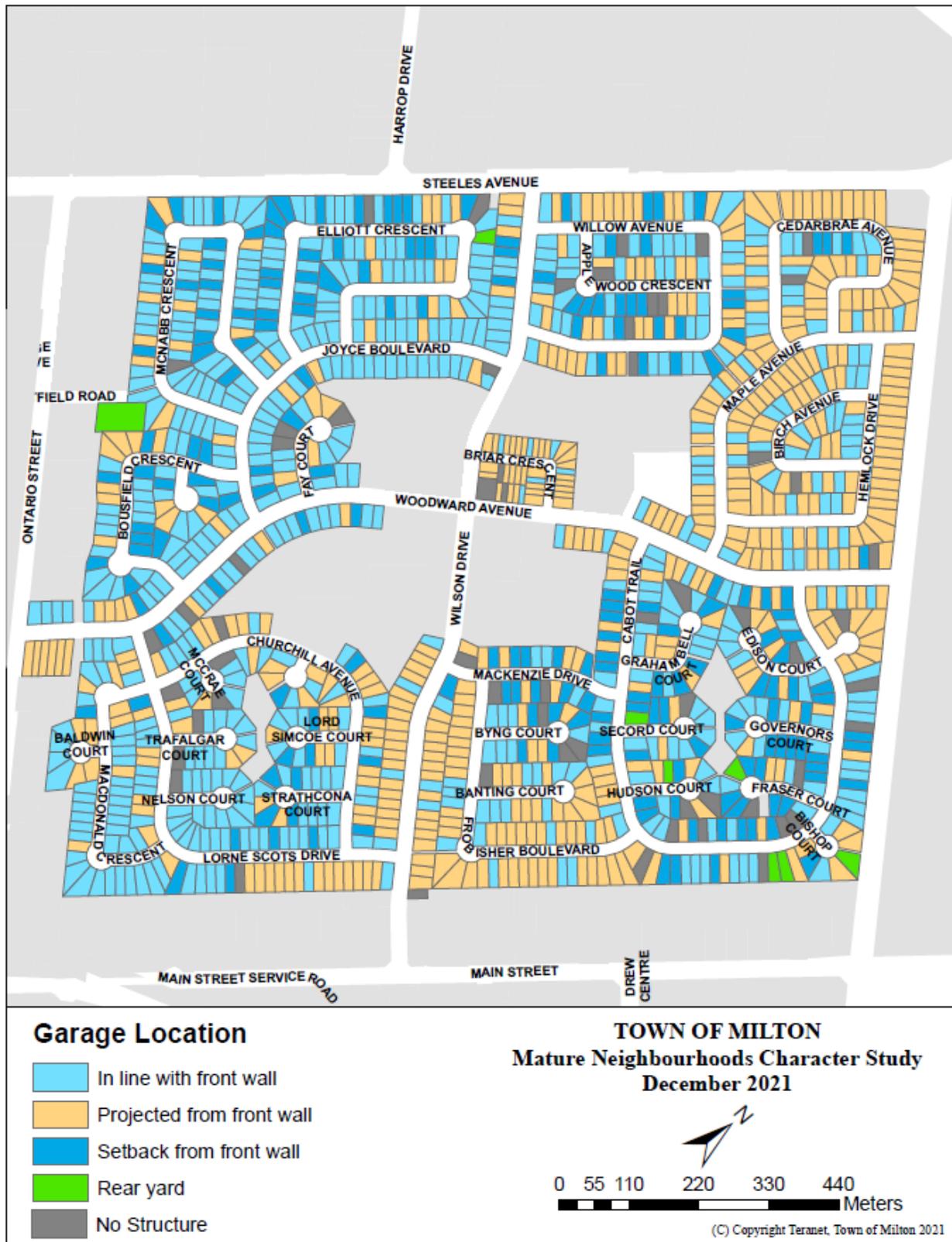


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Map 4. Lot Coverage



Map 5. Garage Typology



Map 6. Garage Location

APPENDIX B. SUMMARY OF LOT AND BUILDING CHARACTERISTICS

Table A.1 Lot Area (Square Metres)

	<i>Area 1</i>		<i>Area 2</i>		Total	
	685		650		1335	
660 sq.m. or less	403	59%	419	64%	822	62%
660 - 830 sq.m.	234	34%	195	30%	429	32%
830 sq.m or greater	48	7%	36	6%	84	6%
Average	647 sq.m		648 sq.m		648 sq.m	

Table A.2 Construction Period

	<i>Area 1</i>		<i>Area 2</i>		Total	
	685		650		1335	
1865	1	0%		0%		0%
1970-1979	646	94%	640	98%	1287	96%
1980-1989	38	6%	10	2%	48	4%

Table A.3 Number of Storeys

	<i>Area 1</i>		<i>Area 2</i>		Total	
	685		650		1335	
1 storey	202	29%	243	37%	445	33%
1.5 storeys	145	21%	28	4%	173	13%
2 storeys	335	49%	378	58%	713	53%
2.5 storeys	3	0%	1	0%	4	0%

Table A.4 Lot Frontage (Metres)

	<i>Area 1</i>		<i>Area 2</i>		Total	
	685		650		1335	
0 - 14.9 m	132	19%	156	24%	288	22%
15 m - 19.9 m	515	75%	433	67%	948	71%
20 m - 24.9 m	36	5%	54	8%	90	7%
25 m - 29.9 m	1	0%	5	1%	6	0%
30 m or greater	1	0%	2	0%	3	0%
Average	16.1m		16.0m		16.1m	

Table A.5 Lot Coverage

	<i>Area 1</i>		<i>Area 2</i>		Total	
	685		650		1335	
15% or less	110	16%	104	16%	214	16%
15.1 - 20%	236	34%	230	35%	466	35%
20.1 - 25%	198	29%	222	34%	420	31%
25.1 - 30%	94	14%	91	14%	185	14%
30.1 - 40%	47	7%	3	0%	50	4%
Average	21.1%		20.3%		20.7%	

Table A.6 Lot Depth (Metres)

	<i>Area 1</i>		<i>Area 2</i>		Total	
	685		650		1335	
0 - 30 m	40	6%	49	8%	89	7%
30.1m or Greater	645	94%	601	92%	1246	93%
Average	36.8m		36.7m		36.8m	

Table A.7 Front Yard Setbacks (Metres)

	<i>Area T-1</i>		<i>Area T-2</i>		Total	
	685		650		1335	
4 m or less		0%		0%	0	0%
4.1m - 6.0m	3	0%	6	1%	9	1%
6.1m - 8.0m	333	49%	346	53%	679	51%
8.1m - 12.0m	336	49%	292	45%	628	47%
12.1m - 16.0m	13	2%	6	1%	19	1%
16.1 or greater		0%		0%	0	0%
Average	8.3m		8.3m		8.3m	

Table A.8 Interior Side Yard Setbacks (Metres)

	<i>Area T-1</i>		<i>Area T-2</i>		Total	
0.0m	2	0%	0	0%	2	0%
0.1m - 1.5m	454	35%	339	27%	793	31%
1.6m - 3.0m	682	52%	744	60%	1426	56%
3.1m -4.5m	144	11%	118	10%	262	10%
4.6m - 6.0m	18	1%	27	2%	45	2%
6.1m or greater	10	1%	10	1%	20	1%
Average	2.1m		2.2m		2.1m	

Table A.9 Garage Typology

	<i>Area T-1</i>		<i>Area T-2</i>		Total	
	685		650		1335	
Attached Single	447	65%	452	70%	899	67%
Attached Double	179	26%	114	18%	293	22%
Attached Carport	36	5%	45	7%	81	6%
Detached Single	1	0%	4	1%	5	0%
Detached Double	1	0%		0%	1	0%
No garage	21	3%	35	5%	56	4%

Table A.10 Garage Location

	<i>Area T-1</i>		<i>Area T-2</i>		Total	
	685		650		1335	
Projected	263	40%	240	37%	503	38%
In line with façade	306	47%	264	41%	570	43%
Setback from façade	93	14%	105	16%	198	15%
Rear yard	2	0%	6	1%	8	1%
No garage	21	3%	35	5%	56	4%