

Prepared for the **Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area**

BRIGHT LIGHTS - BIG CITY
A Signage Vision for the Downtown Yonge Strip
DRAFT - July 2008



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Appendix A: City of Toronto: Listed and Designated Heritage Properties along the Yonge Strip

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Introduction 1

In early 2006 the Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area (DYBIA) was requested by the City of Toronto to provide a vision that dealt with Third-party signage. Through the course of the process, it became evident that a vision was necessary to guide all large-format signage – defined as ‘billboard’-scaled, and often digitally animated and/or illuminated first and third-party signage; the concentration of which is unique to this part of the city. The purpose of this initiative is to provide recommendations to the DYBIA and the City of Toronto on an approach to guiding and assessing applications for large-format signage which can balance the interests of the BIA membership with broader district and city urban design objectives.

The following document presents a rational approach and guiding framework for large-format signage. There is an increasing interest in the installation of animated large-format signage and technological advances in signage are leading to exciting new design possibilities. However, there are limitations with the current signage policy and its ability to adequately address this area's unique existing and emerging signage context.

This signage vision evolved over a two year process that included consultation with the DYBIA membership, Councillor Rae and various relevant City of Toronto departments, including Planning, Urban Design and Heritage.



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Grey's Anatomy
SUNDAY 10pm
CITY

HOLT RENFREW
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Manulife

LEATHER
BANKLEY JEWELRY

SMITH
FOR LEASE
360-7888

Lory 18 1/2
Crown

live

Gerrard

LEATHER

Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area

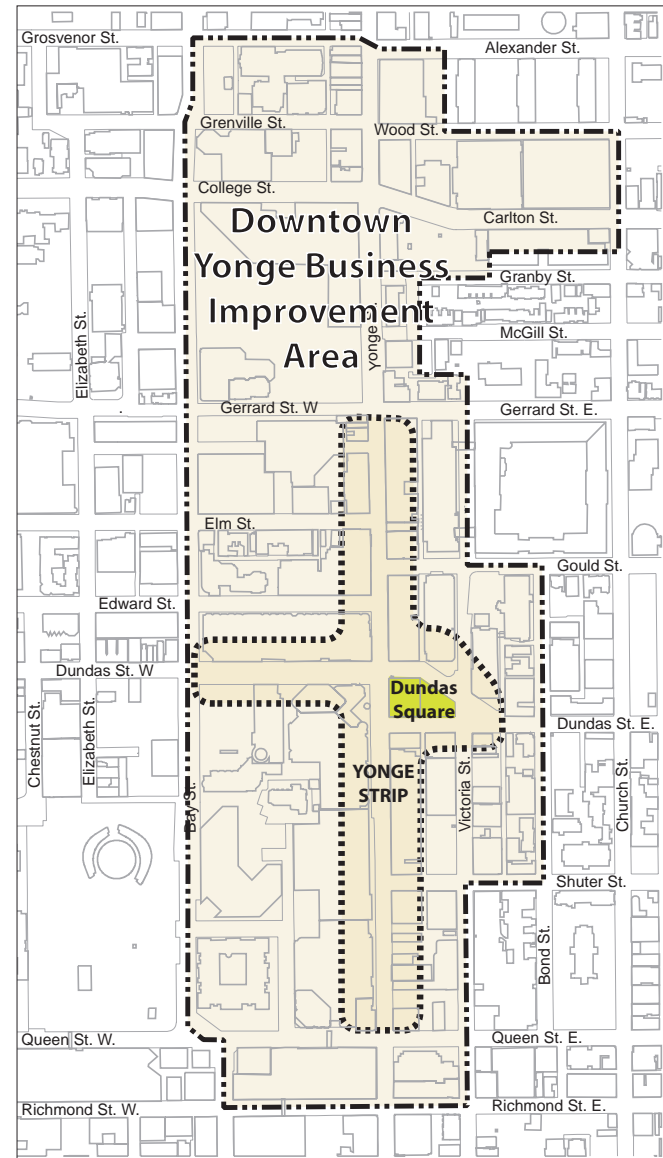
The DYBIA is a non-profit organization committed to improving and promoting Toronto's downtown core. It was formed in 2001 as a result of the efforts of the former Yonge Street Business and Residents Association. The DYBIA's members include approximately 2000 local business and property owners who share a common goal — to improve the Downtown Yonge area and make it safer, cleaner and more attractive to visitors. To accomplish this, the DYBIA has implemented a number of programs to enhance and maintain this distinct part of Toronto's downtown core.

Funding for the Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area comes from a supplementary tax levied on all commercial buildings within its boundaries. The City of Toronto collects this money and returns it to the community to fund local programs and improvements.

Study Area

For this study, the DYBIA area was considered - generally bounded by Grosvenor and Alexander Streets to the north, Bay Street to the west, Richmond Street to the south, and Church Street and Bond Streets to the east.

Having considered the entire DYBIA, this vision largely confines the area appropriate for large-format signage to the famed Yonge Street 'strip' (Yonge Strip) with Dundas Square at its heart. Specifically, this Vision only applies to those properties with principle frontages directly on Yonge St. and Dundas Square. Included is the small segment of Dundas Street between Yonge and Bay Streets, where large-format first-party signage has occurred in conjunction with significant developments and renovations. This small segment will have unique requirements for signage reflective of its different character as a transition area to the Yonge Street 'Strip'.



View looking south on Yonge Street at Gerrard Street



City of Toronto Archives, Series 574, s0574_R0028_i049455



Signage Context

Large-format signage in general refers to outdoor advertisement which is located on or above buildings but which is unrelated to that location or the business conducted on that property. Typically, the advertisement promotes products and services of private commercial corporations. Large-format signage occurs in this area in a variety of ways, including:

- Rigid signage hung on building walls
- Banners hung on building walls
- Applied on temporary hoarding around construction sites
- Structural 'billboards' on top of buildings
- Media towers as stand-alone structures or on top of buildings
- Painted on the sides of building

A clear approach to guiding and assessing applications for large-format signage should balance the interests of the DYBIA membership with broader planning and urban design objectives for the Downtown.

Initially, mostly associated with local businesses, bold large-format signage have historically been a defining characteristic of the area. Not only does this spectacular approach to signage contribute to the area's draw as one of the city's pre-eminent shopping and tourist destinations, it is also the source of the area's distinct 'sense of place'. Unique to this context, even signs alone have been recognized for their cultural and heritage value. By way of example, the former Sam the Record Man's iconic large-format neon signage was recognized for its cultural heritage value in 2007.

The 'Yonge Strip' also has a significant number of heritage buildings and several landmarks. New signage should be reconciled with historic buildings and signage.

Current large-format signage applications far exceed existing standards and are addressed on an ad hoc basis without a clear sense of what the cumulative outcome will be. The current proliferation of next-generation signage is emerging on an unprecedented scale, and a legitimate concern is emerging for ensuring an overall consistency in the quality of signage and its contribution to the area's distinct character.

Ensuring that signage does not compromise the visual appeal and physical comfort of the public realm, and the pedestrian environment is considered central to the enhancement of the DYBIA. The quality of existing facades and the interface between the grade-levels and sidewalks form an important focus for the architectural and civic character of the area.



1. *The Yonge Street Strip at approximately Yonge Street and Shuter Street (1950) shows how signage has always been a part of this areas identity*
2. *The Eaton Centre provides ample space for wall-hung signage*
3. *Signage reinforces the character of the Yonge Street Strip north of Gould Street*
4. *Large-format signage helps define Yonge-Dundas Square, at 385 Yonge Street*
5. *First-party signage supports at-grade retail*
6. *Hoarding acts as signage for Toronto Life Square, a retail and entertainment complex on the north-east corner of Yonge and Dundas Streets*
7. *The Canon Theatre and local retailers north of Shuter Street*
8. *The Yonge Street Strip, looking south from Gerrard Street*
9. *Yonge Street, looking north at Dundas Street, 1923 (City of Toronto Archives)*



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Planning Context

This study builds upon past and ongoing initiatives for improving the area, including:

The Provincial Policy Statement (2005) (PPS) provides an overall vision for Ontario's land use planning system. The current PPS came into effect on March 1, 2005 and includes policies that provide guidance with new construction adjacent to heritage properties. Section 2.6.3 permits development and site alteration on lands adjacent to protected heritage properties provided the proposed development has been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that the heritage attributes of the protected heritage property will be conserved.

City of Toronto Official Plan

The 'Yonge Strip' area falls within the Downtown and Central Waterfront designation. This area has a land-use designation of Mixed Use Area and has a site and area specific policy pertaining to the area. The Toronto Official Plan recognizes the unique identity and it's pre-eminence as a regional shopping and tourist destination. To reinforce this, lands within close proximity to Yonge-Dundas are considered to be the most appropriate and desirable location for significant change. Furthermore, section 3.1.5 outlines the City's objectives with respect to heritage preservation, restoration, and developments adjacent to existing heritage resources. This signage vision is consistent with the Official Plan policies and can help achieve the City's objectives by providing a clear and coherent vision for the large-format signage that will enhance the area, further reinforce its prominence as a retailing centre and major tourist attraction for the city, and ensure that heritage resources are protected and enhanced.

City of Toronto Zoning By-Law

Zoning By-Law 438-86 of the City of Toronto governs the area defined in this signage vision. The zoning by-law prescribes the permitted uses, the maximum height and density, as well as other regulations that implement urban design objectives such as setbacks and angular plane requirements. The 'Yonge Strip' defined within this vision is zoned as a Mixed Use (CR) District. Several of the sites surrounding Yonge-Dundas Square have

View looking of Yonge-Dundas Square looking east from Yonge Street



Rigid Hung Signage



Structural Billboard



Banner Hung Signage



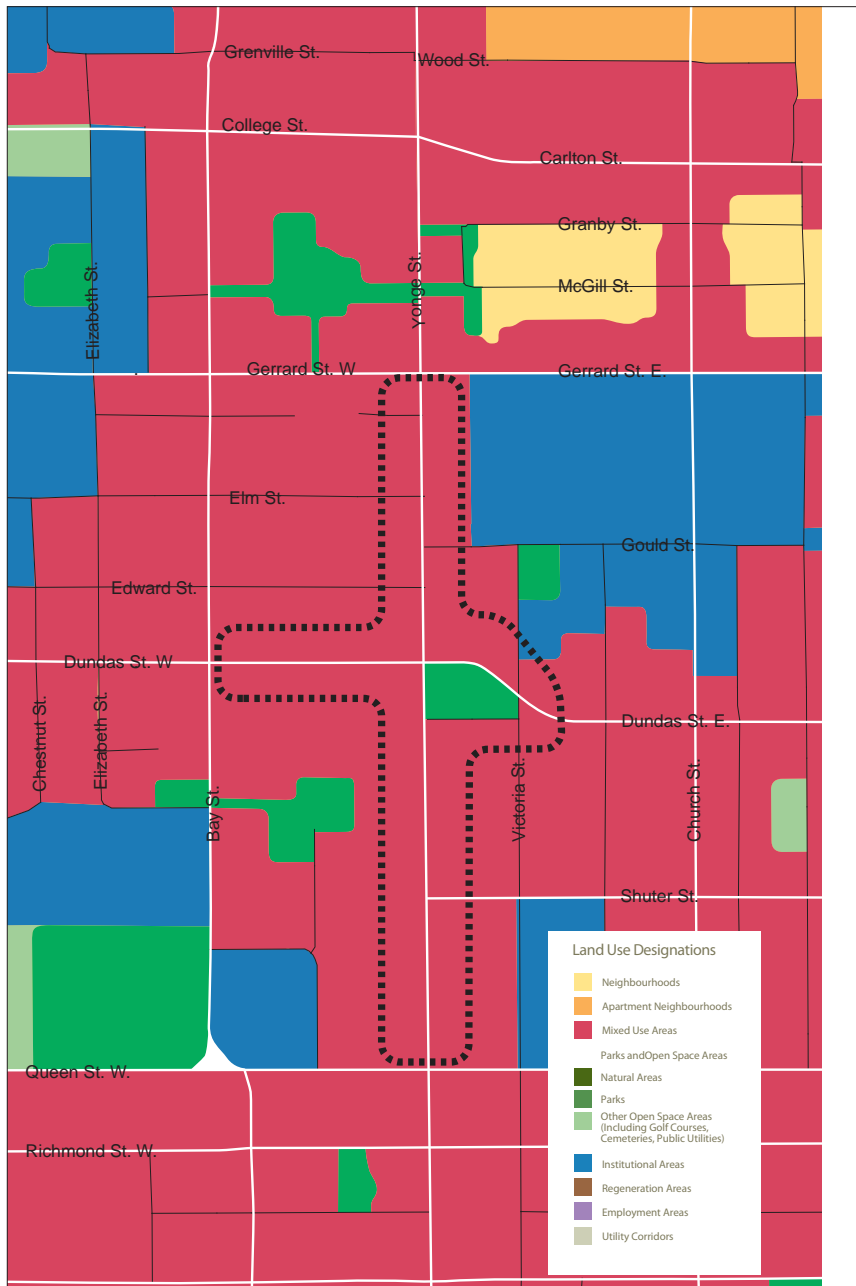
Painted Signage



Signage applied to temporary hoarding



Media Tower installed on building



site-specific by-laws to permit the unique signage treatments on those buildings.

The maximum heights for the 'Yonge Strip' are generally reflective of the existing built form and envelopes defined by the zoning by-law, and step down from Queen Street to the south, and Gerrard Street to the north. This in combination with the angular planes that define a certain scale for the street walls reflects the City's objectives with respect to directing larger scaled buildings along the Bay Street corridor while built forms more complimentary to shopping streets that are more human scaled and that permit adequate sun penetration are directed to Yonge Street:

Queen Street to Dundas Street

Between Queen St and Dundas St, maximum permitted heights are 76.0m at the Yonge St. and Queen St. intersection and along the west side of Yonge St. Along the east side of Yonge St, heights step down from 76.0m to 46.0m up to just north of Shuter St. and then decrease to 30.0m up to Dundas Square. Portions of a building greater than 28 metres in height on the east side of Yonge Street are subject to a 60 degree angular plane.

Dundas Street to Gerrard Street

North of Dundas St., the maximum permitted height for the east and west side of Yonge St. is 20.0m. Portions of a building greater than 16 metres in height on either side of Yonge Street are subject to a 44 degree angular plane.

This signage vision could help strengthen and articulate the existing and intended street wall heights by promoting signage as a built form component consistent with the current zoning permissions.

The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (2003) is the first-ever pan-Canadian benchmark for heritage conservation practice in Canada. It offers results oriented guidance for sound decision making when planning for, intervening in and using historic places. In March 2007, Council adopted *The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* as the official



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SAM SAM

Constraints and Opportunities

A number of constraints and opportunities have helped to define this vision for signage. The following summary emerges from general research, an analysis of existing conditions, consideration of relevant standards and conditions from other cities and as a result of consultation that included the DYBIA, the City, landowners, and proponents of large-format signage.

Issues and Constraints

- Adjacent residential areas, hospitals and public institutions pose serious constraints to the scale, illumination and locations for large-format signage and therefore limit the extent of where vibrant signage should be located.
- If not properly located, large-format signage could result in conflicts with at-grade First-party commercial signage and the ability for the pedestrian to discern between the two.
- Different types of signage (banners, wall-hung, structures and temporary signs) create new challenges to integrating visual media in a consistent manner.
- Currently, there is an inconsistency in the quality of all signage in the area and discerning the difference between Third-party and First-party signage is challenging at best.
- Large signage installations create potential exposure and safety issues in different weather conditions that must be considered.
- There are shadowing and wind impacts associated with large signage installations that extend beyond the existing built form.
- The quality and upkeep of properties and in particular heritage structures is in need of consideration.
- The integration of signage on heritage properties in a compatible manner that does not detract from the cultural heritage value of the building.

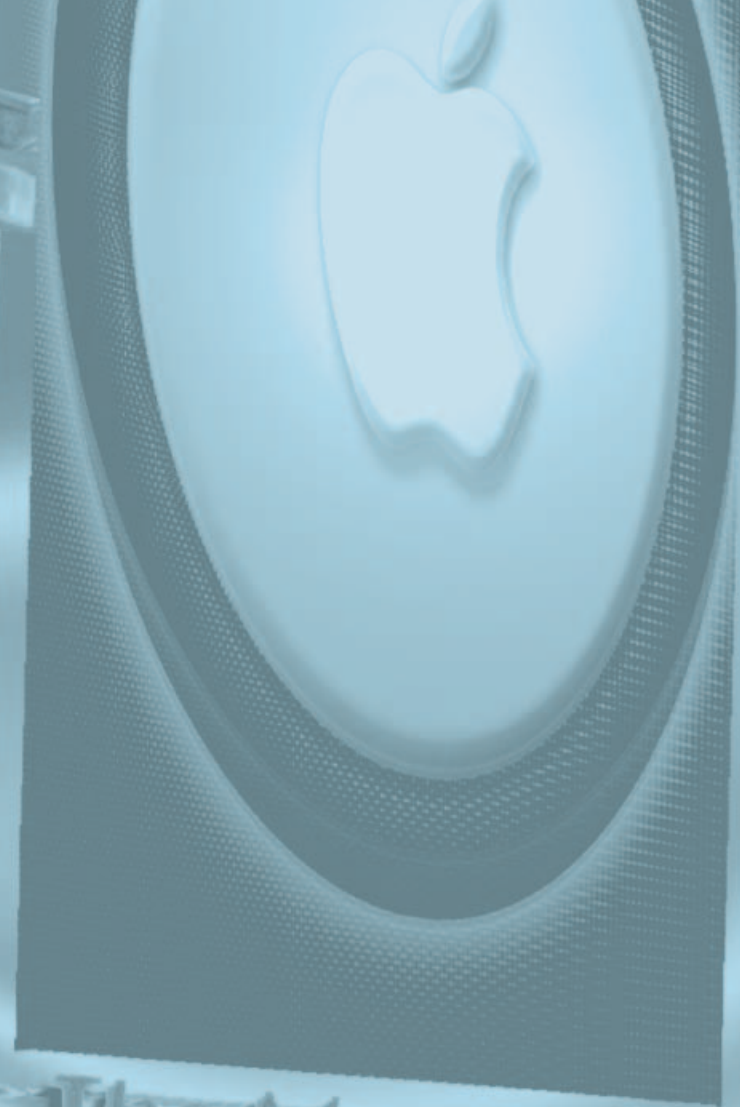
Inconsistency in the quality of all signage in the area: view looking south on Yonge Street towards the Gould Street intersection

Strengths and Opportunities

- A clearly defined area with vibrant signage already exists and can be reinforced without raising significant concerns about compatibility.
- High quality signage that is well designed and well placed can reinforce the identity of the area as a pre-eminent shopping destination and unique tourist attraction.
- Façades and Heritage Buildings can be significantly improved as a result of the potential revenue generated from large-format signage.
- Consistent parameters for design of signage within a defined framework can improve the visual coherence of the area and enhance the pedestrian experience.
- Ensuring an appropriate relationship between First-party and Third-party signage can ensure the health of both sectors.
- The integration of public art in a unique way that is tailored to the signage character of the area can serve to further enhance the area's appeal for local shoppers and tourists.



Adjacent residential areas, hospitals and public institutions pose serious constraints to the scale, illumination and locations for large-format signage and therefore constrain the extent of the area for vibrant signage.



The Mac Store



ZANZIBAR



THE BEST GIRLS THE BEST SHOW SMOKING
OVER 75 RED HOT GIRLS ALL NUDE ROOM INSIDE

XOEB

LaOX



The Vision 3

Integral to the unique identity of the DYBIA, large-format signage is embedded within a Vision for the 'Yonge Strip' that encompasses all signage and considers it in the context of the area's existing, emerging and potential economic, civic and destination role and function for Toronto:

A signage vision should ensure that the Downtown 'Yonge Strip' will continue to be one of the City's most important, vibrant and recognizable commercial streets while evolving and transforming into one of the City's greatest civic achievements.

The Downtown 'Yonge Strip' will continue to build and improve upon its unique and distinct qualities with high quality signage as a defining characteristic that frames and enhances public space; that respects and celebrates heritage; and, that serves to create a contemporary, exhilarating, dynamic and ever-changing urban experience that will resonate with all ages, during the day and night, and in all seasons.

Appealing and innovative signage along the 'Yonge Strip' will aim to provide a unique architectural and civic environment of a quality and calibre that will place it amongst the world's most renowned destinations and will therefore play an important role in shaping and promoting the image of Toronto as an exciting, cosmopolitan and modern city.

The following sections recommend an Approach to signage, and an Urban Design Strategy with relevant Guiding Design Principles to bring this Vision to life.





The following approach establishes a framework for addressing large-format signage so as to bring this vision to fruition.

Acknowledge a Distinct Precinct with Tailored Rules for Signage

The creation of a distinct precinct within the DYBIA is both endorsed and recognized by the BIA as fundamental to achieving a bold vision concerning large-format signage. As noted in the Downtown Yonge Street Improvement Plan, the unique signage context of the precinct requires “special rules” to govern signage. An approach that includes special considerations and exceptions within this defined precinct is further reinforced by several considerations:

- *The 'Yonge Strip' specifically is an area that has historically been characterized by its concentration of signage that is distinct in extent, scale and animation from anywhere else in the City, if not the country. Both existing and emerging signage trends reinforce and enhance this context.*
- *Vibrant, enormous and highly illuminated commercial signage is already a broadly accepted condition that residents and tourists associate with and expect within this specific area. Encouraging a concentration of signage within the area can also ensure the critical mass necessary to achieve a cohesive urban design vision for the precinct.*
- *However, because the 'Yonge Strip' is recognized as a unique area for signage within the city, an exceptional approach has been considered for signage on heritage buildings.*

Moreover, this distinct area should be acknowledged as such in the context of the entire city. Consequently, the primary interest in this precinct is focused on the design and quality of all signage that form part of the urban street-wall helping to define public space. This distinction on a city-wide basis is important to ensuring the viability of the Urban Design objectives envisioned as an outcome of exceptional large-format signage permissions; and, to assuring a level of certainty for residents and other incompatible land uses that such signage will not encroach beyond this clearly defined area.

Acknowledge the distinct signage context of the Yonge Street Strip: view looking north on Yonge Street



Develop a Design Strategy that Considers All Signage within the District Precinct

Within the 'Yonge Strip' - the segment generally bounded by Gerrard and Queen Streets - Third-party signage is often indistinguishable from all other signage in its scale, location and character. The sheer magnitude, concentration, variety and broad range of installations create a context of signage that on one hand defines the distinction of this precinct, and on the other, defies conventional categories.

Whether signage *conceals* the majority of the façade as in the landmark "Sam The Record Man", or is *inset* within the façade as in the Eaton Centre, or is *free-standing structures* atop of buildings as those rising around Dundas Square, or is *integral* to the façade as in the Zanzibar, the commercial advertisement is all-pervading. It is this immersion in all signage that creates the colourful, animated and illuminated environment that defines this precinct.

If this is to be the desired 'civic' outcome and distinction of the area, then clearly Third-party signage alongside First-party signage is an essential means of enabling this vision. Consequently, the primary 'public' interest in this context is less about the accumulation and encroachment of advertising on public space and more about the form and quality of all signage as a framework for public space. Hence, the strategies and principles presented in this vision reflect an integrated approach that considers both Third-party and First-party signage.

Third-party signage is indistinguishable from other signage in its scale, location and character: view looking north on Yonge Street at the Gould intersection

Harness the Propensity for Signage to Generate a Grand Urban Design Gesture

For a vision of signage of this magnitude to be successful, urban design initiatives need to exist within a cohesive and structured civic framework that is consistently applied by the City. While it may be desirable to permit almost free license in the deployment of advertisements on any given site, the same principle would not necessarily apply to the quality, siting and massing of the signage itself. A lack of design controls on signage could lead to a cluttered and disordered environment that would undermine the precinct's attraction and appeal.

Consequently, individual signage should be subject to an overarching urban design strategy that reinforces and enhances the pedestrian experience and distinct 'sense of place' of the 'Yonge Strip'. This signage vision provides an urban design strategy that can be easily understood by applicants and the merits of individual applications should be easily evaluated against guidelines that may be developed to implement this strategy.

Principles that should apply to an urban design strategy for signage include:

- *A legible hierarchy that acknowledges Dundas Square at the core of the precinct, while acknowledging other sites of lesser importance but of visual prominence such as precinct gateways, view termini and corner sites.*
- *Reinforcement of a continuous, human-scaled and proportional street enclosure.*
- *A sensitive relationship that respects heritage resources and is linked to restoration initiatives.*
- *Minimal adverse shadow and wind impacts on public spaces and light pollution on adjacent residential areas.*
- *Signage should correspond to improvements in façades and grade level conditions of host buildings.*
- *Higher architectural design, material and structural standards.*

Signage can reinforce Urban Design objectives: Yonge-Dundas Square is envisioned to be the central focus for the area and signage can reinforce this hierarchy





Protect and Enhance Heritage Buildings and Ensure Compatible Signage Design

Heritage buildings form an important part of the character and urban structure of the 'Yonge Strip'. Heritage buildings contribute a valued and unique sense of history and place which should be preserved and protected so they remain important landmarks and indicators of the history in the area. To that end, special conditions for large-format signage on heritage buildings in the area should be adhered to. Although large-format signs will not be restricted from all heritage buildings in the area, it is important to realize that not all heritage buildings may be able to accommodate large-format signage.

To enhance the precinct's unique and distinct qualities, signage should be sympathetic, subordinate and compatible with the existing heritage structure by respecting the building's architectural proportions as defined by its vertical and horizontal articulations, including window openings. The *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* should be consulted whenever signage is added to, or has the potential to impact, a listed or designated heritage property. The objective is for signage to compliment rather than detract from the defining characteristics of the heritage building. Large-format third-party signage may also provide revenues that can be streamed, in part, into conservation and rehabilitation of important heritage buildings in the 'Yonge Strip'.

With this objective in mind, opportunities for signage on heritage resources require detailed study in conjunction with a heritage conservation strategy. In addition, when evaluating proposed signage on buildings adjacent to heritage resources, the evaluation will consider the proposal's relationship to and impacts on the heritage resources. Any recommendations considered will be building specific. Within this approach, contemporary signage design can coexist with historic architecture.

Signage should be sympathetic and compatible with heritage buildings: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City.

Installations of Large-Format Signage Must Ensure Significant Improvements to the Host Building and the Viability of Commercial Uses

Large-format signage presents a tremendous opportunity to raise the bar on all design and the environmental quality of the precinct. The installation of any large-format signage must correspond directly to an overall improvement to the façade and in particular to the grade-level conditions of the building where it interfaces with the street. Specifically:

Signage should reinforce and not conceal the building's key architectural features and should enhance the attributes and characteristics of heritage resources where applicable.

Grade-level retail uses must continue to exist and signage should not restrict the viability of that use in any way.

Grade-level transparency is a fundamental characteristic in the animation of the sidewalk and should not be inhibited by blank walls, cluttered shop windows or signage.

Signage located at-grade should correspond to the at-grade use or activity and only first-party signage will be permitted on the first two storeys of the building to enhance the pedestrian experience and protect local retail commercial activity.

Large-format signage is not permitted to conceal windows to residential uses. Large-format signage concealing windows on non-residential uses is discouraged, however may be permitted with special consideration given to light penetration, visibility, building context, and subject to the review and approval of City Planning.

The overall cleanliness and upkeep of an exposed façade associated with new signage is to be of paramount consideration in its installation.

Eligibility for Third-party signage would require applicants to include a securable plan and strategy for the concurrent improvements to the remaining visible aspects of the building, including but not restricted to: the restoration of heritage structure if applicable; improvements to other signage on the building; graffiti removal; improvements to façade finishes; de-cluttering and upgrading storefronts and glazing; and, the removal of signage that is not consistent with the vision and desired signage quality of the precinct.

Large-format signage development should correspond to overall improvements to the host property: view of recent Eaton Centre renovations





Ensure Signage is of the Highest Quality and Contributes to the Precinct's Distinction on the Global Stage

Although this bold approach to signage may be distinct for Toronto, it is not unique to the world.

Cities such as New York, Tokyo, London and Las Vegas demonstrate examples of greater magnitude, quality and notoriety than that of the 'Yonge Strip'. To transform the area into an attraction with a global presence, installations should showcase design, quality and innovation, and seek to provide an experience distinct from its global counterparts. To generate such an effect, commercial signage installations must be considered in concert with creative enhancements to public space and infrastructure in the precinct.

For example, public art that employs technology or streetscaping features that incorporate animated qualities and/or sounds can be viable considerations if even a small proportion of the revenues generated by third-party signage can be redirected back into public realm improvements for the 'Yonge Strip'.



Ensure distinction from global counterparts: Tokyo



Ensure distinction from global counterparts: New York City

Ensure distinction from global counterparts: London, UK



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& SPORTSWEAR

399

THE JUMP OFF
THE JUMP OFF

LEATHER

BARCLAY JEWELRY

TOYS

SMITH
FOR LEASE

Manulife

Grey's Anatomy
Grey's Anatomy
CEV

Grey's Anatomy
Grey's Anatomy
CEV

Gerrard

DOWNTOWN

Almond
Chestnut
St. Patrick
St. Andrew
St. Nicholas

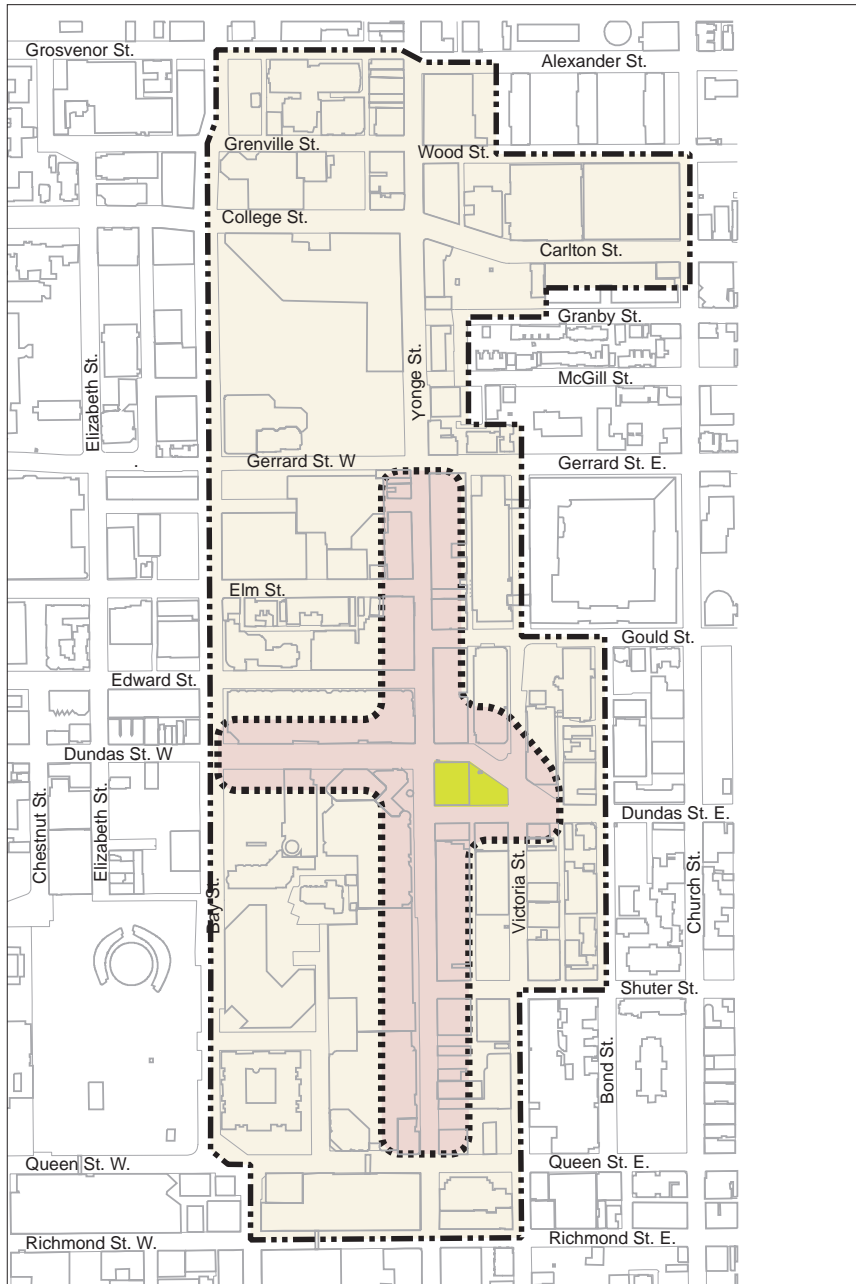
Loy's
18th
Cherry

Cinema

The Urban Design Strategy 5

The following section sets out a strategy to permit high calibre, spectacular signage that helps to strengthen the precinct as a special place in Toronto. The strategy recognizes the opportunity for signage to become an integral built form component and contribute to urban design objectives for the precinct. The emphasis is on establishing a clearly defined urban design framework that governs all signage and requires any sign to meet high architectural and design standards.





Define a Distinct Precinct

Defining a distinct precinct for special rules for signage provides for clarity for the public and landowners and will ensure a consolidated and cohesive urban design strategy.

The 'Yonge Strip' Precinct:

Vibrant and large-scale Third-party party signage already exists and is a defining characteristic of this precinct. Large-format signage in this area should be subject to special rules that are exceptional to any other location in the city and that are considered within an integrated vision that addresses all signage in the precinct.

Remaining Areas:

Significant Constraints on illumination levels and scale are appropriate and to be expected. The Vision supports the constraining of animated large-format signage outside of the 'Yonge Strip' Precinct and is reliant on the City in not permitting the proliferation of such signage into other areas of the City. However, it is also understood that there may be other locations within the BIA and elsewhere in the City where unique and creative approaches to signage currently exist or may be considered. While this Vision is specific to this area and not anticipated to be replicated in the same form, character and extent elsewhere, other studies may determine that there are opportunities for unique approaches to signage in other locations.

Identify Signage Character Areas

Building on the distinction of each particular area within the 'Yonge Strip' Precinct, a hierarchy of intensity, animation and scale can be defined according to Signage Character Areas.

Yonge-Dundas Square:

The area around Dundas Square is the heart of the precinct and currently includes the largest and most recent major signage installations and is appropriate for the highest 'peak' for signage intensity, animation and scale. Dundas Square will remain the focal point for signage within the precinct.

Yonge-Dundas Square to Gerrard:

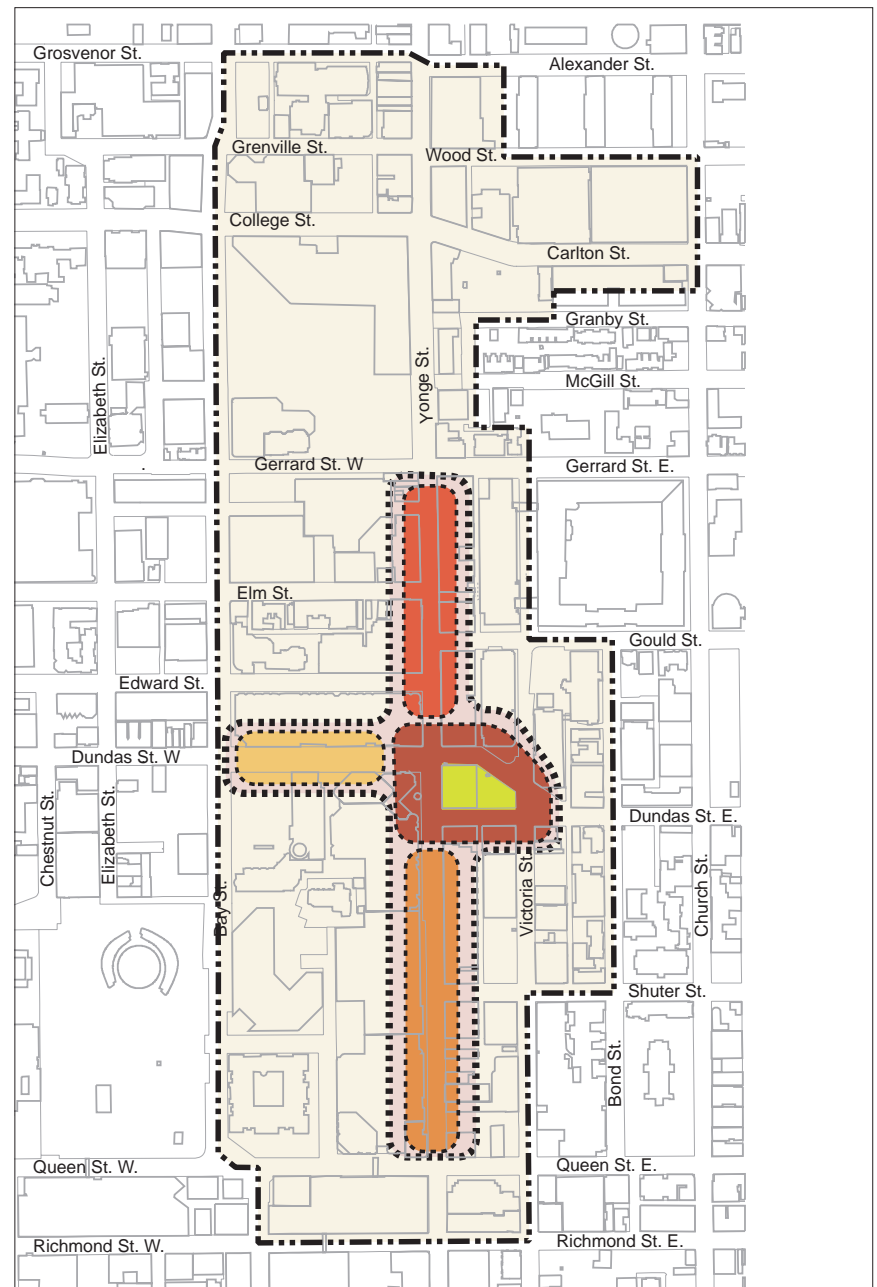
The approach to Yonge-Dundas Square from the north is the area historically associated with large-scale vibrant signage but generally limited in heights of no more than 4 storeys. Signage here can continue to be vibrant, illuminated and animated but within a height range that respects the street proportions.

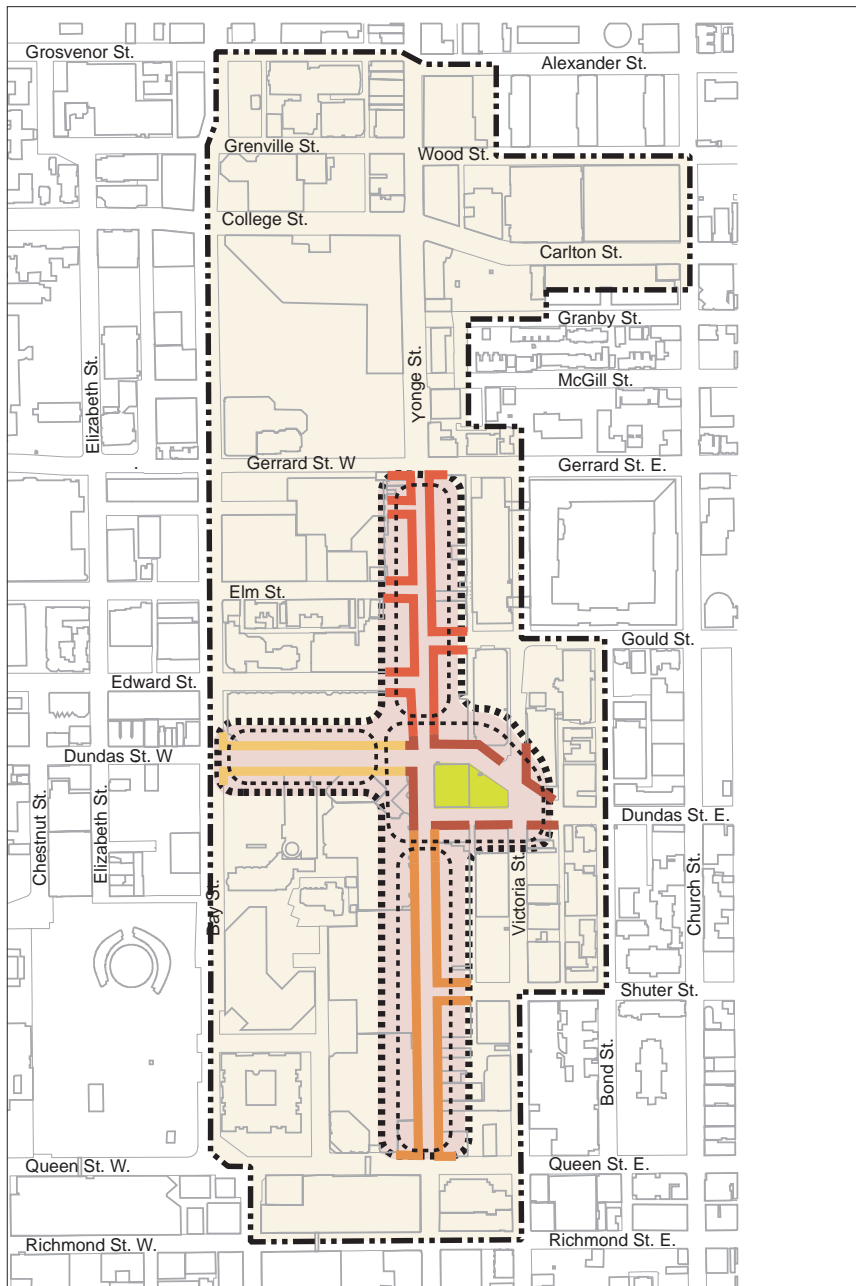
Yonge-Dundas Square to Queen:

The approach to Yonge-Dundas Square from the south is generally framed by taller buildings, many of them of heritage stock. This condition is also reflected in greater height permissions in the zoning by-law. Signage here should be of a height that is consistent with the existing street wall; complementary of the heritage character; and, of less vibrancy and animation than Yonge-Dundas Square or the strip between Dundas Square and Gerrard Street.

Yonge-Dundas Square to Bay:

The segment of Dundas Street between Yonge and Bay Streets is framed by three major non-residential functions that are closely linked to the 'Yonge Strip' Precinct: The Eaton Centre, The Atrium on Bay and Ryerson University. Large-format first-party signage already exists or is anticipated along this corridor. To serve as an approach to Yonge-Dundas Square from the west, bold and large-scaled signage may be accommodated within the existing street wall heights. However, it should only be first-party signage and there should be a notable reduction in the level of illumination and animation moving from Dundas Square towards Bay Street.





Appropriate Enclosure of Public Space

Signage should reinforce the street wall by consolidating signage in a manner that will lend to the area's continuity and cohesion and that will enhance the pedestrian experience. Reinforcing the street wall is accomplished primarily through consistent heights and setbacks and design integration. Signage should as much as possible be designed to not appear to have a 'billboard' quality and character. Principles for ensuring appropriate enclosure include:

- Signage should not extend beyond the prescribed heights outlined below
- First-Party signage should be predominant at the grade and second levels with commercial uses that are clearly legible and that engage with the sidewalk
- Signage above buildings should not be setback relative to the front building wall and should be designed and integrated in such a way that it appears to extend the street wall
- New buildings should be designed to architecturally integrate signage within the street wall in a manner that is consistent with the objectives of this vision
- Signage along the street wall is the most visible to the pedestrian and should therefore be of the highest possible material and architectural quality

Principles specific to the Signage Character Areas are as follows:

Dundas Square:

Yonge-Dundas Square is a key part of the City's parks and open space areas and preserving usability of the Square for public functions is of critical importance. The scale of the square permits the greatest street wall heights to ensure the space is provided with an appropriate sense of enclosure. In general, signage should be consistent with a 36 metre street wall height. Signage that generates significant shadows on the Square will not be permitted. Where minimal shadows on the Square are of concern, review should consider the desire for sun penetration and providing the space with appropriately proportioned enclosure and the area's use and function in all seasons and at night. Alternative solutions to constraining height when shadowing is a concern may include:

- setting back the signage; and,
- other potential design solutions to the structure or material quality that permits adequate sun penetration, such as the use of translucent signage.

Not all sites surrounding the Square are equal and will be considered in the context of their impact on the public realm. Landmark signage opportunities identified for sites with heritage buildings will need to be treated differently than those without heritage buildings, with particular respect for heritage values and features. This can include considerations of different scale, size, placement and materials at these locations.

Dundas Square to Gerrard:

Signage heights should not exceed the existing 16 metre height restrictions for the street wall (current zoning permits 20 metre heights subject to a 44° angular plane beginning at a 16 metre base height). At identified Key Visual Sites, modest additions in height above the prescribed street wall may be permitted subject to the design principles.

Dundas Square to Queen:

Signage heights should not exceed the existing 28 metre height restrictions for the street wall (current zoning permits 30-76 metre heights subject to a 60° angular plane beginning at a 28 metre base height). At identified Key Visual Sites, modest additions in height above the prescribed street wall may be permitted subject to the design principles.

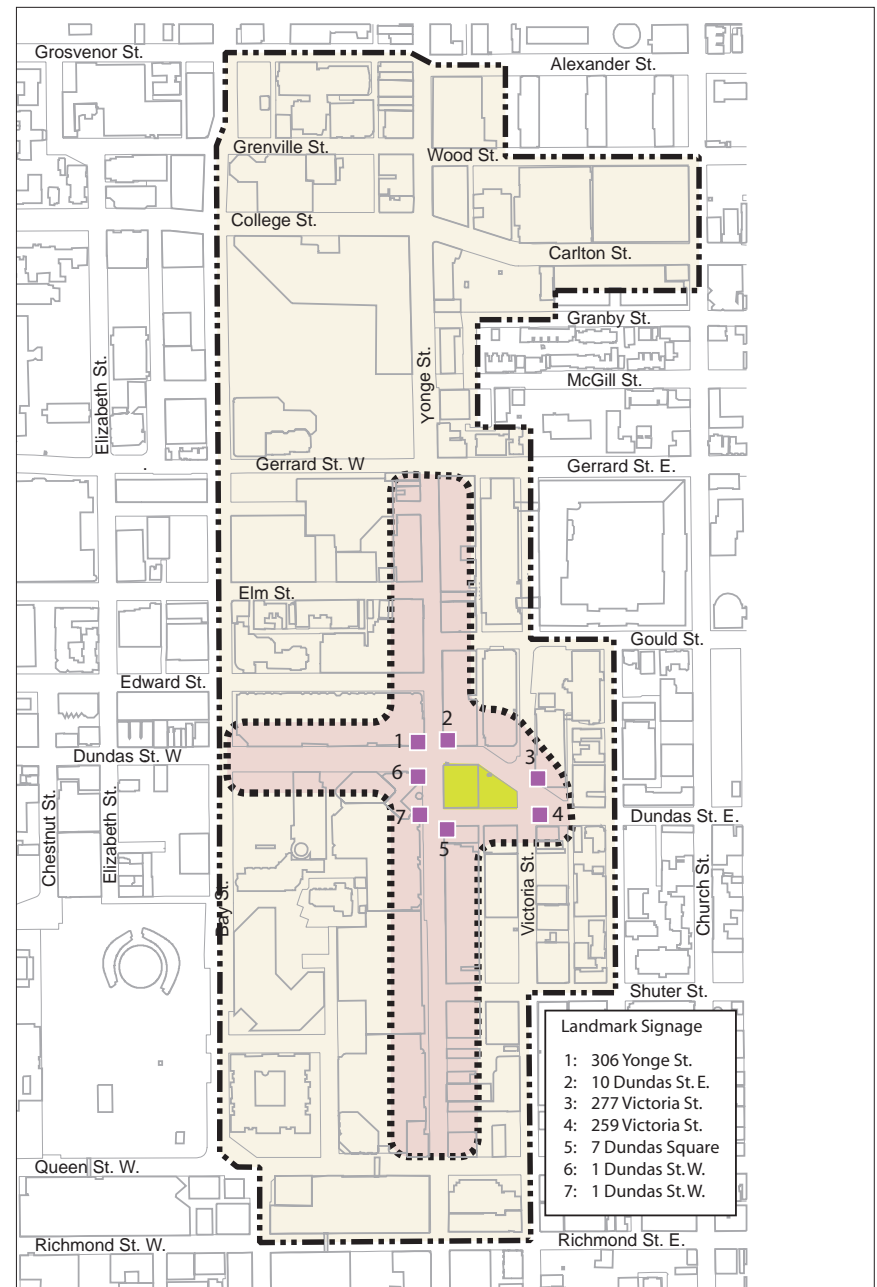
Dundas Square to Bay:

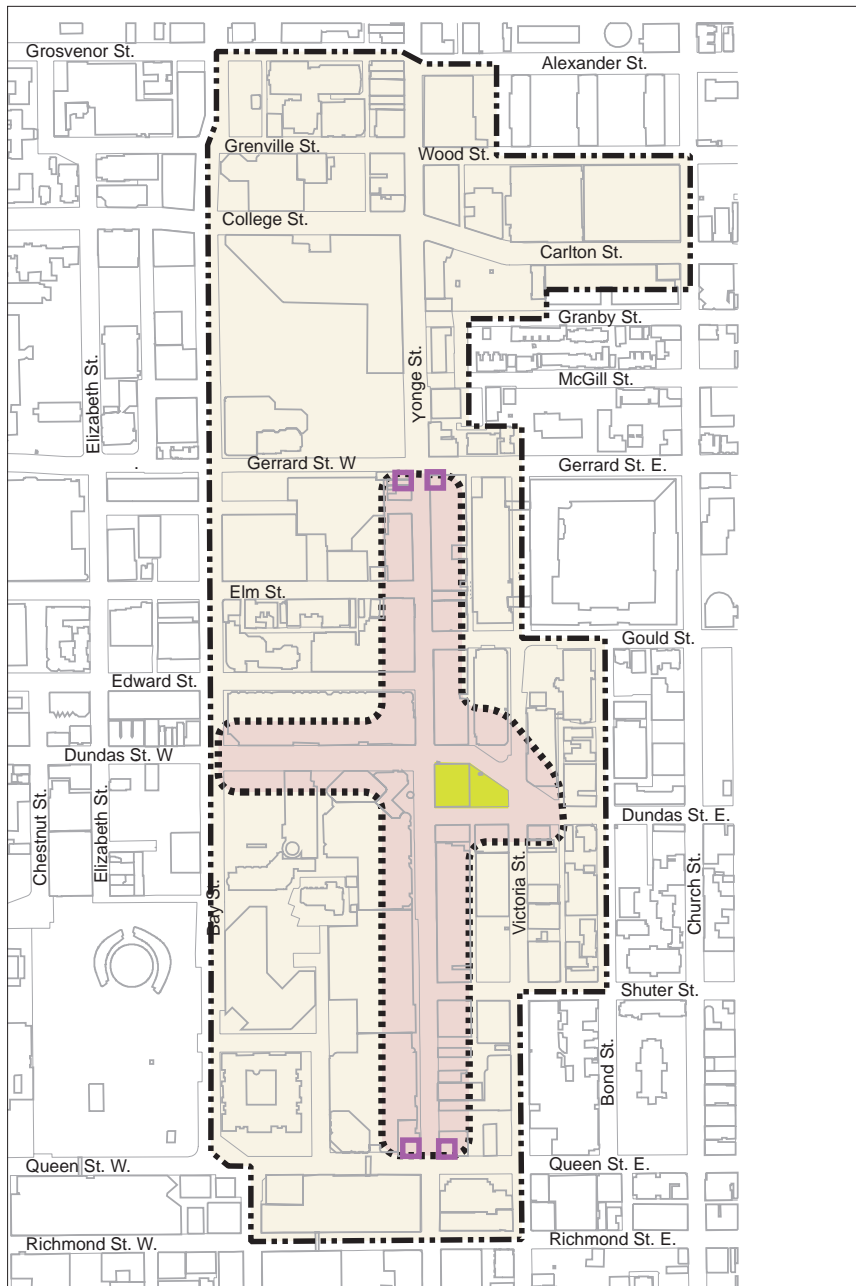
Signage heights should not extend beyond the existing building street wall.

Key Visual Sites: Dundas Square Landmark Signage

Landmark Signage for key visual sites are identified for Dundas Square to reinforce the primary importance of this area within the precinct. Design principles include:

- Should be located at key corners and view terminus sites
- Should be of the highest architectural quality and design
- Some of these sites are appropriate for the tallest signage structures in the strip, and consideration must be given to the context of the site.





Key Visual Sites: Gateway Signage

To accentuate key entry and egress points of the precinct, signage that perform as Gateway markers are permitted. Design principles include:

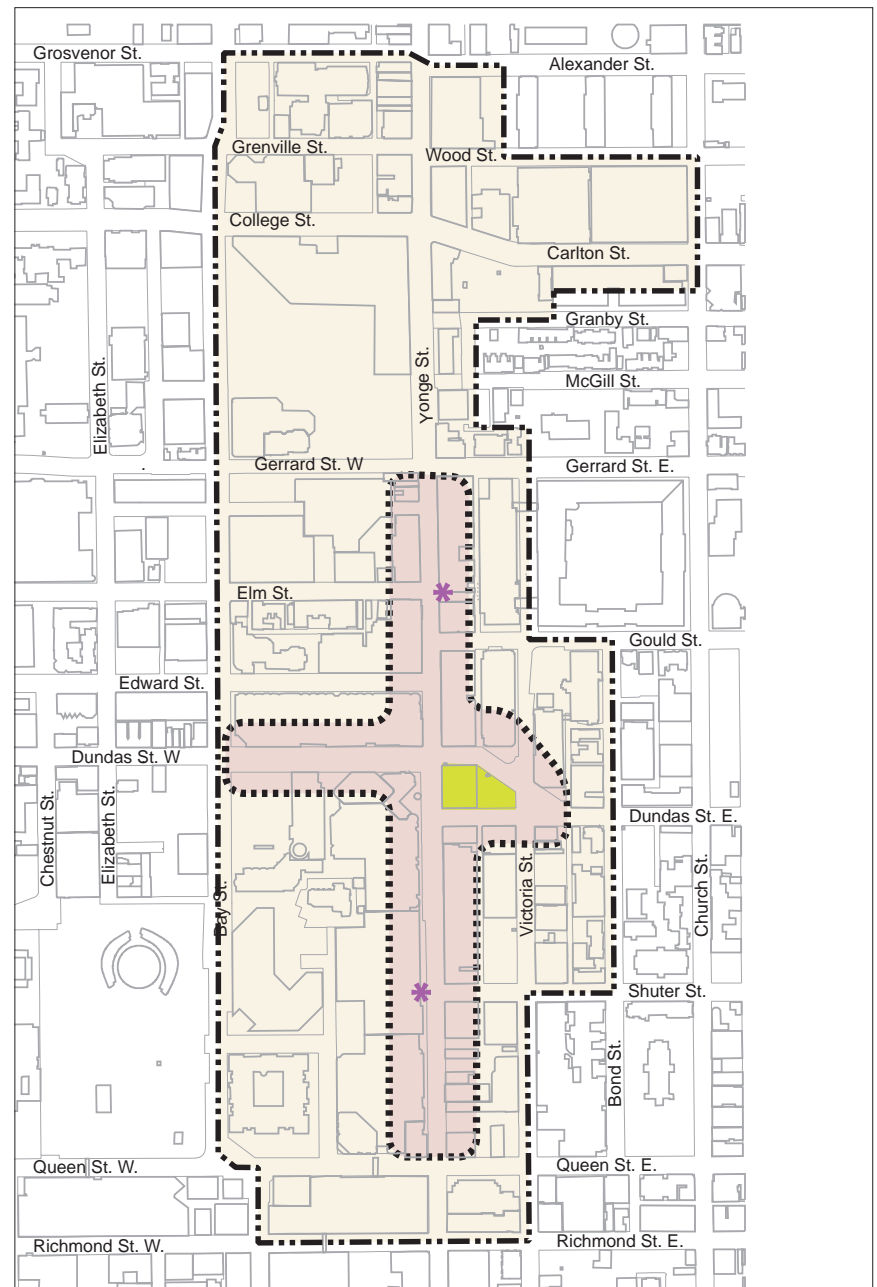
- To be constrained to the corners locations of the property
- To accentuate the gateway treatment, signage at the corner is permitted to be taller than the allowable street wall height, but not to exceed the maximum permitted zoning height
- Slender architectural features excluding signage may extend beyond the permitted zoning height
- Should be designed as much as possible to twin with adjacent gateway signage in scale and architectural quality, without necessarily being identical
- These sites oblige the highest possible quality in architectural design, lighting and framing
- All four of the gateway sites are heritage buildings and must be considered appropriately; refer to the heritage inventory map on page 31 and the full list in Appendix A.
- Where signage wraps onto a cross-street to the 'Yonge Strip', signage may have no more than 15 metres of frontage from the corner.

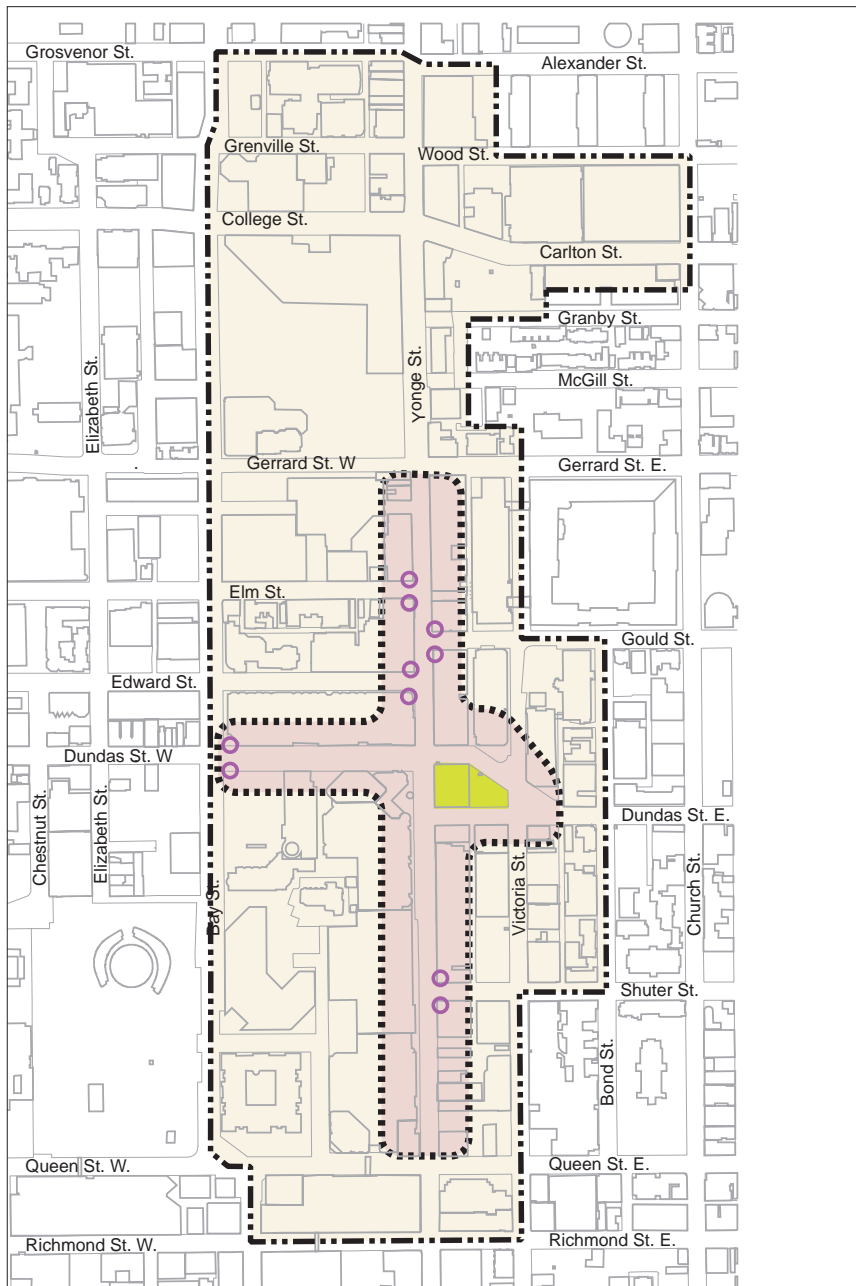
Significant residential developments are anticipated at the north-west corner of Yonge and Gerrard Streets and the south-west corner of Dundas and Bay Streets. The proximity of dwellings facing these gateways will constrain the amount and intensity of illumination at these locations.

Key Visual Sites: Terminating Signage

To accentuate where important cross streets visually terminate at Yonge Street, unique Terminating Signage treatments are permitted. Design principles include:

- Slender architectural features excluding signage may extend beyond the permitted zoning heights
- Should be designed to respond directly to the view axis by orienting signage and architectural features to be centred on the view corridor
- These sites oblige the highest possible quality in architectural design, lighting and framing
- Terminating signage treatments should be set back from the street wall.





Key Visual Sites: Corner Sites

To accentuate sites at important intersecting streets, unique Corner Signage treatments are permitted. Design principles include:

- Should be oriented to the primary corner
- These sites oblige the highest possible quality in architectural design, lighting and framing
- Many corner buildings are heritage buildings and must be considered appropriately; refer to the heritage inventory in appendix A.
- Signage is encouraged to reinforce the corner in its orientation and design.
- Where signage wraps onto a cross-street to the Yonge Strip, signage may have no more than 15 metres of frontage from the corner.



Integrate and Conserve Heritage Buildings

Numerous heritage buildings exist in the area that are to be retained and enhanced. The strategy for signage within the 'Yonge Strip' does not intend to supersede good heritage conservation principles and objectives. The implementation of this plan should endeavour to conserve heritage in the area. Additions should not diminish the impact of the heritage buildings and should be sympathetic to architectural orders, rather than harmonize with them. However, because the 'Yonge Strip' is recognized as a unique area for signage within the city, an exceptional approach has been considered for signage on heritage buildings. These exceptions apply only to this precinct while heritage in other areas continue to be subject to standard guidelines for signage as outlined in separate City policy documents. Any buildings with heritage potential can be put forward for listing or designation by Council at any time.

Design principles for integrating signage include:

Buildings Not Appropriate for Large-Format or Third-Party Signage

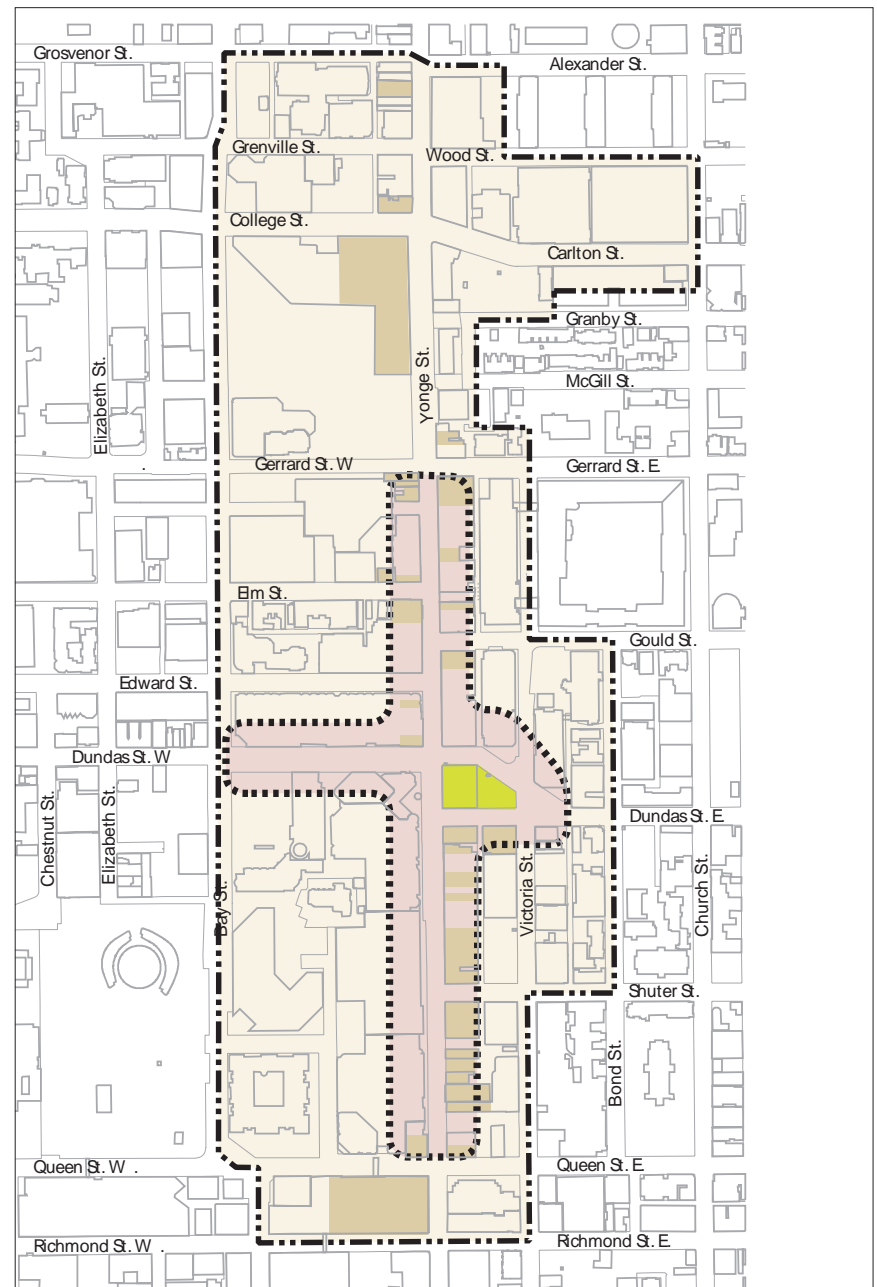
Not all heritage properties are appropriate for new signage. Some structures have characteristics and significance which cannot accommodate large-format signage despite the intention of the larger signage program for the Yonge Street BIA corridor, such as rooftop, structured, and fixed signage. These structures include, but are not limited to:

- Temple banks
- House form buildings
- Buildings with irregular or angled roofs that could not easily accommodate a new signage structure or where the roof is a recognized attribute
- Heritage buildings with pre-existing heritage signs

General Standards for Signage on Heritage Buildings

General standards to be adhered to in considering large-format signage for heritage buildings (source: *The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*):

- Conserve the heritage value of a historic place. Do not remove, replace, or substantially alter its intact or repairable character defining elements. Do not move a part of a historic place if its current location is a character defining element.
- Conserve heritage value by adopting an approach calling for minimal intervention.



- Evaluate the existing condition of character defining elements to determine the appropriate intervention needed. Use the gentlest means possible for any intervention. Respect heritage value when undertaking an intervention.
- Conserve the heritage value and character defining elements when creating a new addition to a historic place or any related new construction. Make the new work physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to and distinguishable from the historic place.
- Create any new additions or related new construction so that the essential form and integrity of a historic place will not be impaired if the new work is removed in the future.

Guidelines for Signage on Heritage Buildings

Signage Should Retain the Visual Prominence of Heritage

- Signage should not obscure character-defining materials, forms or spatial configurations, including unique and visible roof forms and lines
- Smaller signage along horizontal and vertical orders is preferable so that no character-defining elements are hidden
- Promote signage atop or separate from the building itself, ensuring that the building is not damaged or destroyed by the signage
- The type of signage and its display method should be as inconspicuous as possible
- Whenever possible, the design of a large-format sign on a heritage building should be designed to minimize its impact upon the building while allowing for effective signage.

Signage as Additions to Heritage Resources

- There should be a clear distinction between what is historic and what is an addition
- All roof top signage should create a visual 'break' or 'gap' between the bottom of the sign and the top of the building's nearest structural component (parapet, roof top, building edge, etc.) to ensure it is visually separate from the building.
- Additions should be "visually compatible":
 - Signage should fit within existing architecture wherever possible.



Photo by Ian Mulloo

Signage as an addition to a heritage building that fits in with its context.



Photo by Ian Mulloo

Distinctive historic signage such as the one at the Elgin and Winter Garden Theatre should be protected.

- Additions should be compatible in mass: The size and scale of signage should be limited to its relationship with the heritage building; signage should not be larger than the building itself
- Additions should be designed to harmonize with the architectural 'orders' of the heritage building – the key vertical and horizontal articulations in the façade

Signage Framing

- When installed on heritage buildings, framing should be minimized as much as possible to reduce the visual interference with the heritage building.

Signage Material and Lighting

- Additions to heritage buildings should generally be sympathetic, subordinate and compatible to the heritage building. It is desirable to encourage signage types on heritage buildings which respect the heritage of the area while complimenting the larger signage vision. Historic material types (such as neon) on dynamic displays, or static displays are preferred. Backlighting is acceptable, however other forms of lighting that are more sensitive to the heritage building are strongly preferred.

Signage as Banners

- Banners can be incorporated into some buildings provided it is compatible with the architecture of the building, for example, suspended between columns on a classically inspired building. These may only be appropriate as temporary signage, but must adhere to the standards and guidelines.

Tilting Signage

- Tilting signage diminishes the impact of the façade and proportions of the buildings and should be eliminated to ensure the proportions of the building are protected and complimented.

Visual Permeability of Signage

- Signage that is not solid or does not have a solid background may be preferred on some buildings. This will minimize the impact of the signage on the building while still allowing for effective advertising.

Historic Types & Grandparenting Old Signage

- Distinctive historic signage types and forms should be protected such as the sign at The Canon Theatre, and the Elgin and Winter Garden. Not only should these be conserved, they may offer technology types or design cues that are desirable for other signage in the area, such as:
 - neon tubing which was prominent in the History of downtown Yonge Street.
 - visual permeability.
 - perpendicular or projecting signage.
- In many cases, signage currently exists in the precinct that does not represent a historic type or form. In these cases, it is the expectation of the City that signage inconsistent with this Vision will be removed. Heritage Preservation Services should be consulted before removing any aged signage in the area.

Scaffolding as Signage

- Where scaffolding is required for construction, the image of the building should be the predominant feature of the scaffolding.

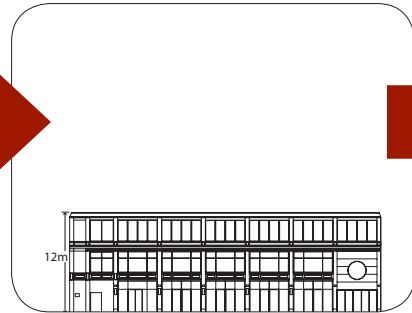
Heritage Conservation

- Signage development should correspond to the highest possible level of conservation of heritage properties and is an expectation of the City.
- The financial benefits of signage in the precinct ought to be passed on to heritage properties that do not have signage opportunities. For example, an option may be a formal system whereby annual signage fees are pooled in a fund administered by the City with grants back to property owners upon completion of heritage conservation work.

Demonstrations of how signage can be applied to heritage buildings are illustrated in the following section.



7 Yonge-Dundas Square



Existing Heritage Structure



Horizontal & Vertical Orders

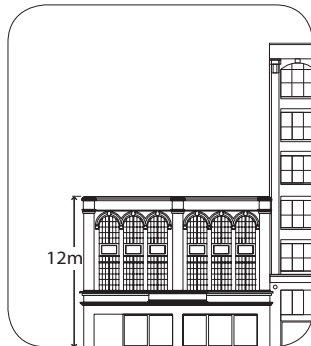
Street Wall Height 30 metres
Subject to Shadow Impacts

Corner Identified for Yonge-Dundas Square Landmark Signage. Adverse shadow impacts on Yonge-Dundas Square will not be permitted.

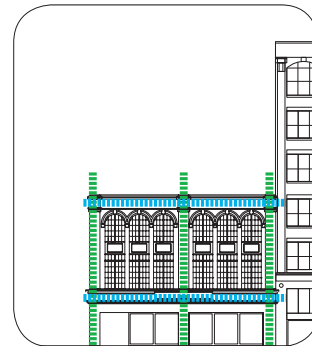
Urban Design Considerations



221 Yonge Street



Existing Heritage Structure



Horizontal & Vertical Orders

Street Wall Height 28 metres maximum

Corner Identified for Corner Treatment. In a context where neighbouring buildings are taller, would suggest taller orders are appropriate.

Urban Design Considerations



385 Yonge Street



Existing Heritage Structure



Horizontal & Vertical Orders

Street Wall Height 16 metres maximum

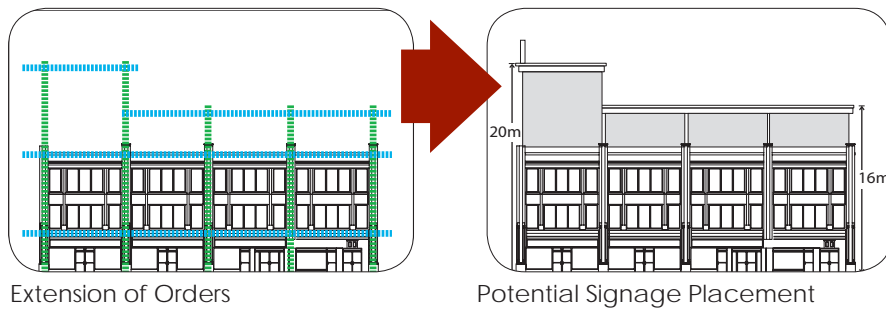
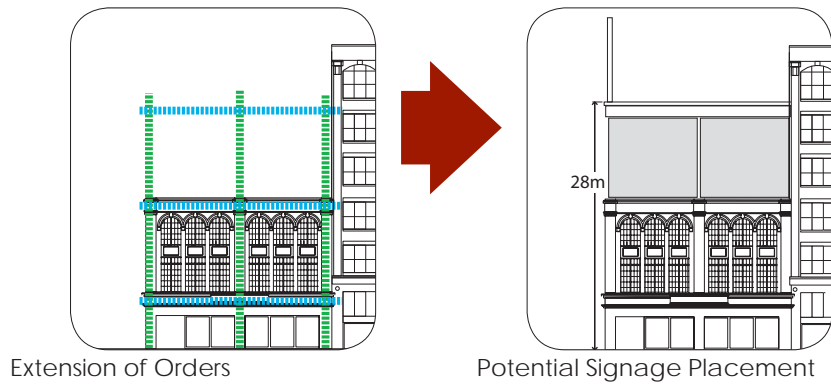
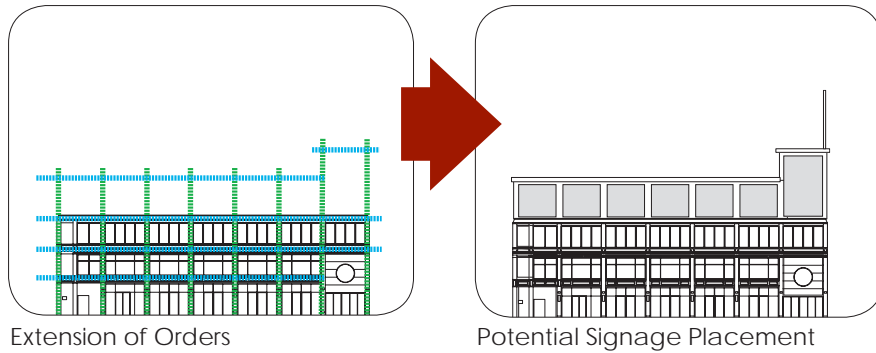
Corner Identified for Gateway Treatment - 20 metres maximum

Urban Design Considerations

The Urban Design Strategy

Demonstration of Design Principles for Signage on Heritage Buildings

The following illustrations are intended to demonstrate how the design principles for signage on heritage buildings would be applied. Three heritage buildings in different Signage Character Areas were selected to illustrate how the different design principles in these respective locations translate into a framework for signage on these specific sites. Signage additions to heritage buildings should be sympathetic to the architectural orders of the building and should not diminish or alter the sense of scale, symmetry and balance of the building.





After: reinforcing the street wall



Before: inconsistent quality of signage and discontinuity in the street wall

After: reinforcing the street wall and enhancing heritage

Before: inconsistent intensity of signage and discontinuity in the street wall



The Urban Design Strategy

Demonstration of Urban Design Strategy

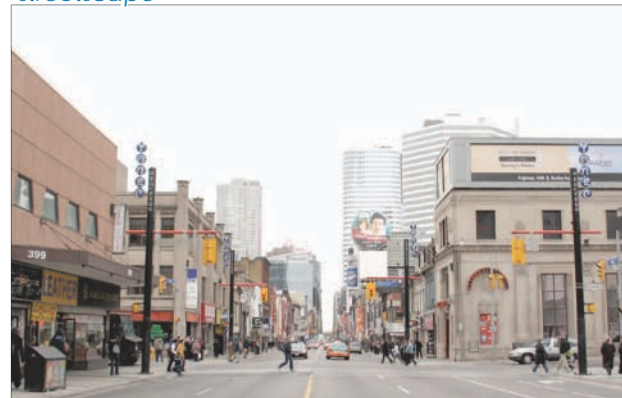
The images on these pages are intended to show 'before' and 'after' photomontages that demonstrate how different areas within the 'Yonge Strip' Precinct could potentially be transformed with the application of the recommended Urban Design Strategy.



After: reinforcing the street wall and defining gateways

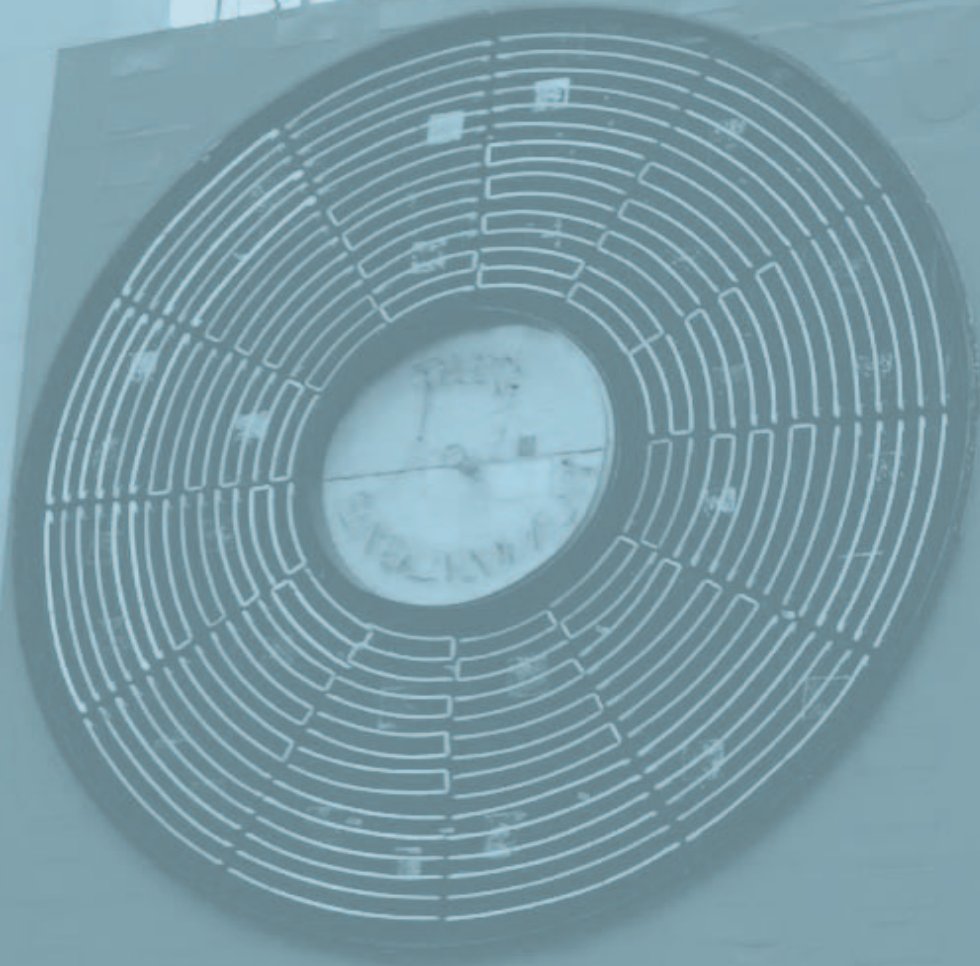


Before: inconsistent signage quality and incoherent streetscape



SHOP

re.



YES
THIS
IS

SAM

DIVISION OF SNIDERMAN'S MUSIC HALL

THE
RECORD
MAN

YES
THIS
IS

SA

DIVISION OF SNIDERMAN'S MUSIC HALL



YES
THIS
IS
SAM



Other Considerations & Implementation

6

The following implementation strategies arose through the course of the study process and are intended to provide recommendations for unresolved matters that would generally fall within the City's jurisdiction for addressing signage. Some of these ideas were raised in consultation and identified as relevant for consideration in subsequent studies and plans that may emerge in devising implementing polices for large-format signage in this area.

Implementation:

Require Site Plan Approval

All signage that consists of a structure extending beyond the building should require Site Plan Approval to ensure compliance with urban design standards and to secure design and material quality.

Require Licensing

To ensure ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the buildings, licensing large-format signage was raised as a potential means for enforcement. Licensing could be administered by the City and would require on-going renewal so as to ensure the highest possible property and signage standards are maintained. Furthermore, the New City of Toronto Act (2007) provides new opportunities such as tying signage standards and their continual maintenance by making it a requirement under the renewal of a business licence.

Exceptions to the Principles

The design principles in this report are intended to provide benchmarks but are not intended to discourage creative design solutions that may not necessarily meet the standards recommended. Signage design and technologies are constantly evolving and exceptions may be considered where the intent and objectives of the vision and the integrity of the urban design strategy remain intact.

Toronto Preservation Board

The Toronto Preservation Board should be consulted whenever an application for large-format signage is considered for sites on or adjacent to existing heritage resources, so they may provide



the Bay

CIBC

RENOVATION

No Left Turn

Red Traffic Light

Other Considerations & Implementation

guidance with respect to the appropriate mitigation measures (if necessary) and ensure that the signage is compatible with heritage resources.

Signage Peer Review Process

A signage peer review process may be appropriate in this context to uphold the design intent of this vision. Applicants could be required to formally submit their signage applications to be peer reviewed in a timely manner, wherein either refinements could be suggested/negotiated, and/or a recommendation would be made for approval/refusal.

This panel should be professional and representative by nature, including relevant City staff and representatives from the BIA. To ensure that heritage resources within the 'Yonge Strip' Precinct are protected and enhanced, this panel should also include members of the Toronto Preservation Board to ensure their input and involvement in the signage application approvals process.

This will ensure that good heritage conservation principles and objectives are maintained and that no heritage building or its attributes will be compromised as a result of the approval of large-format third party signage on or adjacent to heritage buildings. The peer review process may be administered by the City and paid for by the applicant as part of the signage application fee.

Phasing-in the Vision Should not be Necessary

Much like the evolution of buildings in an urban environment wherein not all buildings will fill out their allowable building envelope at the same time, it is to be expected that the installation of signs in the precinct will evolve in an incremental manner. The district itself is consolidated to an extent that ensures an intensity of signage will be maintained regardless of the sequencing of installation, given that a critical mass of signage currently exists in this area. It can be anticipated that within this consolidated area a momentum for bold and improved signage can take hold. In concert with

the corresponding improvements to individual properties and the overall enhancement of the public realm, this vision can come to fruition.

Other Considerations:

Temporary Signage

Signage on temporary structures such as hoarding around construction sites or on buildings facades or the sides of buildings may not meet the principles recommended in this report but should be held to the same quality standards. To some degree, all signage has an ephemeral or temporary state relative to buildings, but they contribute equally to the quality of the public realm. Consequently, to ensure that the 'Yonge Strip' continues to improve in quality, temporary signage in this area should be held to a higher standard than would generally be considered in other parts of the city.

Fascia Signs

Within the 'Yonge Strip' Precinct, fascia signs that are hung on building walls can be accommodated subject to being consistent with the spirit and intent of this Vision. In other words, greater permissions for fascia signs may be considered within this area, however a higher design standard would also apply. Particularly on blank exposed walls, fascia signs of a high graphic quality can contribute to the area's enhancement. Specific principles to consider include:

- The scale and dimensions of the fascia sign should be proportional to the building wall it occupies.
- On heritage buildings, fascia signs must be consistent with the principles provided in this document.
- The highest graphic design standards are to be considered on all fascia signs.

Temporary hoarding around the Hudson's Bay Store on Queen Street showing an image of the building underneath.



Contributions to Public Art & Public Realm Improvements

Special permissions and exceptions for signage should result in a reasonable public art and public realm contribution that will result in the area's overall enhancement and furthering the objectives of the DYBIA Streetscape Master Plan. Improvements such as lighting, landscaping, and sidewalk improvements should be considered.

An Integrated Public Art Concept

To enhance the area's distinction on the global stage, consideration should be given to generating a unique approach to public art within a signage context. The advanced technology being used for signage today presents tremendous opportunities for creative approaches that would not otherwise exist in other areas. Thinking big about how public art might contribute to a pedestrian's movements and experience of the entire district could be considered and each signage installation might play a role in this concept. A design competition may be appropriate to define an approach to an integrated public art concept.

Integrating Ryerson University

The undeniable presence of Ryerson University both in proximity and in its existing and potential frontages within the 'Yonge Strip' Precinct offers an opportunity to integrate a civic institution within the urban design vision. On one hand a unique approach to signage can showcase the distinction of the University and on the other hand it ensures that the area's vibrancy is one that is truly mixed-use. The University should be encouraged to apply the highest possible design standards (that may include design competitions) to firmly establish its presence in this context.

Develop Comprehensive Signage Guidelines

This report was intended to provide a vision and rational approach to dealing with large-format signage. The scope of the study did not allow for more detailed standards generally associated with Signage Guidelines. It may be appropriate to develop guidelines that can further deal with matters such as signage types, the nature of sign structures, the levels of illumination and other factors that may prove to be important considerations in decision-making.

Listing and Designated Heritage Properties within the Yonge Strip

Address	Building Type	Reason
173 Yonge Street	Financial	Architectural Context
176 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural Historical Context
184 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural Contextual
188 Yonge Street	Demolished	Architectural Contextual
189 Yonge Street	Miscellaneous	Architectural Contextual
193 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural Historical Contextual
195 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural Historical Contextual
197 Yonge Street	Financial	Architectural Historical Contextual
199 Yonge Street	Financial	Architectural Historical Contextual
201 Yonge Street	Financial	Architectural Historical Contextual
203 Yonge Street	Financial	Architectural Historical Contextual
205 Yonge Street	Financial	Architectural Contextual
211 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural
215 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural
219 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural
221 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural
223 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural
225 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural
227 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural

229 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural
231 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural
233 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural
235 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural
236-242 Yonge Street	Demolished	Architectural
241 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural
248 Yonge Street	Demolished	Architectural Contextual
253 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural
261 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural Historical
263 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural Historical
274-278 Yonge Street	Demolished	Architectural Contextual
275-277 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural
279-283 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural
302 Yonge Street	Financial	Architectural Contextual
335A Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural
335 Yonge Street	Residential	Architectural Contextual
340 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural
347 Yonge Street		Signage 'Sam the Record Man'
349 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural
363 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural
364 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural
365 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural
372A Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural
372 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural
374A Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural
374 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural
376A Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural
376 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural

378 Yonge Street	Financial	Architectural Contextual
385-395 Yonge Street	Commercial	Architectural
7 Dundas Square	Commercial	Architectural
17 Dundas Square	Commercial	Architectural
19 Dundas Square	Commercial	Architectural
21 Dundas Square	Commercial	Architectural
33 Dundas Square	Commercial	Architectural
2 Queen Street East	Financial	Architectural Contextual
2 Queen Street West	Commercial	Architectural Contextual
5 Shuter Street	Commercial	Architectural
7 Shuter Street	Commercial	Architectural
15 Shuter Street	Public	Architectural Historical Contextual
297 Victoria Street	Commercial	Architectural Historical
1 Gould Street	Residential	Architectural Contextual
3 Gould Street	Residential	Architectural Contextual
8 Elm Street	Commercial	Architectural Contextual
20 Gerrard Street East	Miscellaneous	Architectural Historical Contextual
1 Gerrard Street West	Financial	Architectural Contextual

Items in **red bold** font are designated properties under the Ontario Heritage Act.

