

COMMUNITY VOICES

PERSPECTIVES ON NATHAN PHILLIPS SQUARE'S RENEWAL

SEPTEMBER, 2005



Prepared by  **Lura**
CONSULTING for the City of Toronto

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107 Church Street, Suite 400
Toronto, Ontario
M5C 2G5
Phone: 416-410-3888
www.lura.ca

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Sally Leppard
Nicole Fernando

September 30, 2005

Executive Summary

Recognizing the change in public needs and the surrounding neighbourhood, Toronto City Council has determined a need to renew and restore Nathan Phillips Square. An international design competition to accomplish this goal, is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2005 and conclude in 2006. In preparation for the competition, an extensive public consultation process designed to identify, develop and fine-tune the public’s views and creative ideas took place between January and June of 2005. Over 200 stakeholders and members of the public participated in a range of events.

A synopsis of the views and ideas gathered during the public consultation process is summarized in this report.

Community Vision and Values

From the very beginning of the consultation process, it was clear that a number of key vision elements and guiding principles resonated with stakeholders and the public. The Square should include:

- *A social gathering, multi-purpose and beautiful democratic space;*
- *A place with a safe, inviting and welcoming atmosphere to all Torontonians and visitors to the Square;*
- *The Square should remain the “heart” of the City, a gateway to Toronto, and the front door to City Hall;*
- *It should be accessible to all users, through improved connections and flow to surrounding areas;*
- *Flexibility in the design of the Square’s features;*
- *A showcase for talent for all of Toronto’s cultures through events, art, and icons;*
- *Preservation of the original design intent and dignity; and recognition as a unique historic place;*
- *A reflection Toronto as a healthy and green city;*
- *An international destination, a “Mecca” for tourists, which reflects and promotes other areas of the City;*
- *A celebration of the history of the space – through art, information, and plaques;*
- *A Square that keeps pace with the evolution of the surrounding area.*



Freedom Arches

Community Input on Features, Infrastructure and Buildings

Ideas can be grouped into four main themes: Special Events, Features, Facilities and Services; Walkways and City Hall Podium Level; Pathways, Connections, Access and Frontage; and Landscaping, Peace Garden and Sculptures.

Special Events, Features, Facilities and Services encompasses a wide range of concepts. Suggestions (sometimes contradictory) were made regarding appropriate, year-round programming, suitable staging facilities, the orientation of the reflecting pool and arches, the upgrade or removal of the canteen building and positioning of other features to more adequately serve the needs of the public. Participants tended to agree that it is necessary to have more adequate services on the Square including food services, tourism information, shade facilities and bicycling infrastructure.

Three schools of thought emerged regarding the treatment of the *Overhead Walkways*. These were to a) keep the walkways unchanged, b) improve and use the walkways, and c) remove some or all of the walkway structure. Most of the ideas focused on improving and using the walkways appropriately, and included many creative ideas for programming. Appropriate usage of the *City Hall Podium Level* was also repeatedly identified as a priority.

Participants discussing *Pathways, Connections, Access and Frontage* issues appeared unanimous in their desire to improve accessibility and connections between the Square and neighbouring areas and streets. Improved lighting, accessibility for disabled persons, and creating additional connections to the PATH system and the subway system were thought to be minimum requirements. Many other creative ideas for treating each frontage of the Square were also discussed.

Two divergent opinions regarding *Landscape, Peace Garden and Sculptures* emerged from the public consultation process. The first suggests that the Square should be maintained as a clear, uncluttered space for public gatherings, while the second suggests that it should become a softer, more park-like setting. In keeping with this dichotomy, divergent opinions also surfaced regarding the Peace Garden and sculpture features. Many participants felt that the Peace Garden should be moved to a more appropriate site on the Square’s periphery, while others felt very strongly that the Peace Garden should be maintained or enhanced in its current location. Several suggestions for the enjoyment of public art within the Square were also presented.



Henry Moore's 'The Archer'

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Community Voices: Perspectives on Nathan Phillips Square’s Renewal (Presentation)

1.0 Introduction

September 2005 will mark the 40th anniversary of Nathan Phillips Square and Toronto City Hall. Designed by Finnish architect, Viljo Revell, the City Hall building and the Square represent a famous heritage landmark and are known locally, nationally and abroad for the unique architecture and use as a pre-eminent public space. Nathan Phillips Square lies at the very heart of Toronto’s bustling downtown. It is a public gathering place, where more than 175 events are held over 225 days every year. The Square represents the front door to city government.

Toronto in 1965 was a very different place than today. Prior to the construction of Toronto’s “new” City Hall and Square, the tallest neighbour was “Old City Hall”. Now, the Square is surrounded by high-rise hotels and office towers on both the South and North sides. Osgoode Hall on the West flank, and Old City Hall on the East remain very much as before. And the neighbourhood continues to evolve, including the development of a nearby opera house, ‘Four Seasons for the Performing Arts’ at University Avenue and Queen Street West.

Along with the evolution of the neighbourhood, the public needs and uses of the Square have changed. City Council has determined a need to renew and restore the Square, and the City is embarking on an international design competition in fall, 2005. One key component in the development of the scope of the competition is to provide residents of Toronto with the opportunity to participate in the process.

Lura Consulting, a Toronto-based firm of public consultation specialists, was retained by the City of Toronto’s Facilities and Real Estate Division to design and conduct an inclusive public consultation process.



View from South: Construction Completed 1965

This report provides a summary of the visions and creative ideas of over 200 participants in the public consultation process. It is intended to provide the competition designers with perspectives from Torontonians – all of whom care deeply about the Square and its role in city life. The appendices to this report contain detailed documentation of each event that was held throughout the process, and readers are encouraged to peruse the appendices for further details.

Ideas and thoughts expressed in this report are derived entirely from the public consultation process. They do not represent the views of the authors.



*Community Creative Workshop – June 4th, 2005
Report Back Session*

2.0 Public Consultation and Outreach

The consultation process was designed to provide participants in the design competition with a synopsis of the values and opinions of Torontonians. It was developed around four key goals that are listed below.

2.1 Goals for the Public Consultation Process

The goals were simple yet ambitious:

- Generate awareness, momentum and excitement in the community about the project;
- Enhance and continue to build community spirit;
- Provide creative environments to engage external stakeholders and the general public in developing ideas and discussing alternatives; and,
- Document the vision, values, ideas, and priorities generated throughout the process.

2.2 Public Consultation Program

The program was developed in three iterative stages:

Stage 1 – Identification of Issues and Opportunities (February – May 2005): This stage included an internal city staff workshop (Appendix A); an external stakeholder¹ scan (Appendix B); four stakeholder focus groups (Appendix C) and two public information workshops (Appendix D). The result of this stage was a comprehensive and wide ranging identification of issues and opportunities associated with the renewal of Nathan Phillip Square.

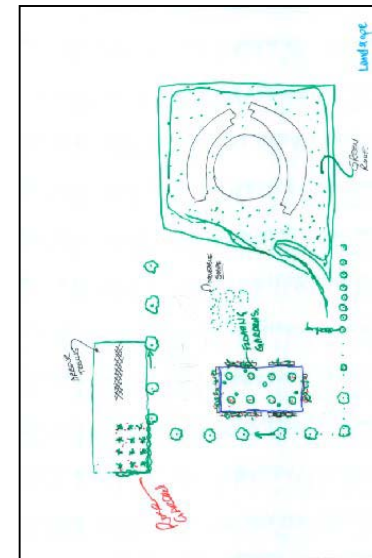


Table drawing from Community Creative Workshop – June 4th, 2005

¹ An external stakeholder is an organization, or representative of an organization, identified by relevant City Divisions as having an interest in Nathan Phillips Square.

Stage 2 - Development of Creative Ideas (June 2005): Following the identification of issues and opportunities, ideas were further developed by stakeholders and the public in a creative workshop setting. Participants collaboratively developed more detailed ideas and created sketches and visual concepts with the help of facilitators and illustrators. Creative suggestions were documented and are intended to serve as a guide to participants in the design competition.

Stage 3 - Fine-tuning Key Features for Design Competition (June 2005): A Town Hall meeting was held on June 22, 2005 to present and discuss a further refinement of features and ideas that could be incorporated into the design competition. This session featured over 30 verbal presentations from external stakeholders and members of the public.



Community Creative Workshop – June 4th, 2005 - Report Back Session

2.3 Outreach Mechanisms

In the planning stages for the consultation program, a communications strategy was developed by the City of Toronto’s Corporate Communications Division to reach interested groups and the general public through the following mechanisms:

- A Web link on the City of Toronto site at www.toronto.ca/npsdesigncompetition containing all background information and announcements about public events;
- An e-mail address (NPSquare Competition@toronto.ca) to receive public comments, submissions and inquiries;
- Distribution of a brochure to Councillors, community centres, Toronto Public Library branches, City Hall and the civic centers;
- Briefing materials for Councillors;
- Questions and Answers about the design competition;
- Advertisements in advance of all public events;
- News releases in advance of all public events; and,
- Announcements of all public events were mailed or e-mailed to over 3000 interested individuals, groups and organizations and to Councillors and senior City staff.

Communications materials and displays were available at all public meetings. They included:

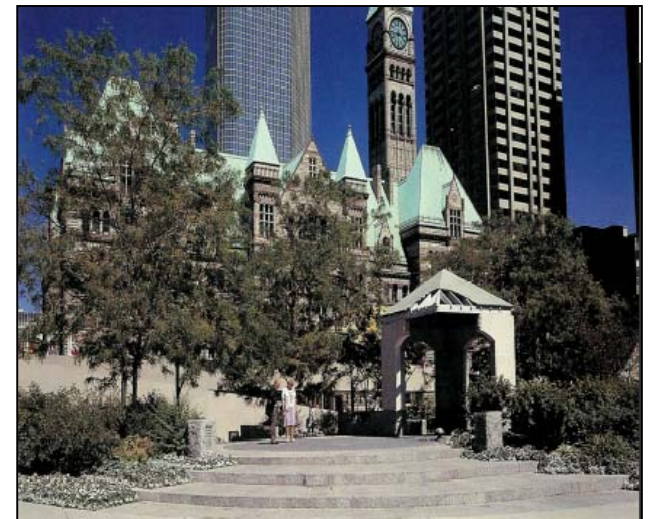
- Workbooks;
- PowerPoint presentations;
- Display panels showing various aspects of the Square;
- Questions and Answers about the competition; and,
- An original model of the architect’s design for City Hall and the Square.

2.4 Project Contact Database

During the public consultation program, a database was developed that now consists of approximately 2750 entries. This database contains:

- Contact information on identified stakeholder groups;
- Contact information on participants of the public consultations; and,
- Detailed records from each of the public events, media articles and drawings.

This database has been transferred to the City’s project team for its ongoing use.



Peace Garden

3.0 Community Vision and Values

During the first phase of the public consultation process, participants discussed their visions and values for the future of the Square, as summarized below.

Vision Elements: Elements of the vision for the future role of the Square include:

- *A social gathering, multi-purpose and beautiful democratic space;*
- *A place with a safe, inviting and welcoming atmosphere to all Torontonians and visitors to the Square;*
- *The Square should remain the “heart” of the City, a gateway to Toronto, and the front door to City Hall;*
- *It should be accessible to all users, through improved connections and flow to surrounding areas;*
- *Flexibility in the design of the Square’s features;*
- *A showcase for talent for all of Toronto’s cultures through events, art, and icons;*
- *Preservation of the original design intent and dignity; and recognition as a unique historic place;*
- *A reflection of Toronto as a healthy and green city;*
- *An international destination, a “Mecca” for tourists, which reflects and promotes other areas of the City;*
- *A celebration of the history of the space – through art, information, and plaques;*
- *A Square that keeps pace with the evolution of the surrounding area.*



Freedom Arches and Berlin Wall piece

These vision elements were frequently cited as important considerations in the design competition. However, one key difference of opinion emerged. Some participants felt that the Square’s renewal should maintain the 1965 design: that of an open, concrete, uncluttered space with the reflecting pool, the Archer, and the raised walkways - or even to go further and implement Mr. Revell’s original design. Others felt the Square should become a softer, landscaped space, by creating a park-like setting.

Design Values: Throughout the discussions, participants expressed a number of values to inform the design competition. Some participants wanted to take a “blue sky” approach to the renewal project, one that promotes high quality new designs, while complementing the existing City Hall building and keeping pace with the surrounding area. Others wanted to ensure that any change is undertaken in a way that respects Mr. Revell’s work. In their view, optimum retention of the original vision is required. Achieving this would require restraint and delicacy.

While many participants wanted more facilities, perhaps a more European approach with outdoor cafes, music, art and social events, others expressed an underlying value to renew and refresh the Square in a manner that does not negatively impact its integrity through commercialization.

Heritage Values: Advocates for heritage protection and conservation identified the need to protect the integrity of the existing design (i.e., the whole space). They also identified a number of key heritage features for protection as listed below and discussed elsewhere in the report:

- Overhead walkways;
- Furniture;
- Reflecting Pool and arches;
- Canteen Building and skate changing area; and,
- Henry Moore’s bronze structure “The Archer”.

Other, more recent features of the Square were identified for protection:

- The Peace Garden; and,
- The Statue of Sir Winston Churchill.

As noted earlier, participants held very different opinions depending upon their school of thought – those taking a “blue sky” approach proposed moving some or all of these features – others felt strongly that they should be restored *in-situ*.

4.0 Community Input on Features, Infrastructure and Buildings



Fresh Wednesdays – Farmers’ Market

This section summarizes the input received from participants attending the various public consultation events, and has been divided into four general themes:

- Special Events, Features, Facilities and Services;
- Walkways and City Hall Podium Level;
- Pathways, Connections, Access and Frontage; and,
- Landscape, Peace Garden and Sculptures.

Key details and drawings are contained in the Appendices, where the readers are encouraged to review detailed reports from each public event.

4.1 Special Events, Features, Facilities and Services

One of the Square’s primary functions is to serve as one of the City’s prime events destinations, where people from all over the City and elsewhere come to enjoy the vast array of events and activities hosted by the City and many organizations across the City. It also serves as a public gathering space and provides space for political protests, celebrations, art exhibitions, farmers’ markets, and major multi-cultural events.

As well as these public events, many Torontonians use the Square as a “breathing space”, a place for lunch or coffee, to meet friends, or simply to sit and rest.

A number of the Square’s features have been added over time. Some residents and users have concern that the openness of the Square is limited by the location of these additions, such as chess tables, Speakers’ Corner, Peace Garden, and Winston Churchill statue. While these features are highly valued, they are seen by some participants to impede the Square’s ability to provide the necessary event and gathering space.

4.1.1 Special Events

In some participants’ minds, the capacity of the Square needs to be increased to improve this function, and one challenge is to ensure that all areas of the Square can be used while keeping it open to people for everyday use.

Most participants identified a real need to update the facilities, and in particular, to decide on whether a permanent stage should be installed. Currently, temporary stages are assembled and disassembled for certain events, and with the steady increase in the number of events, the time and effort required is onerous.

The Stage: Ideas for a stage ranged from keeping the stage temporary to locating a permanent stage in a central area. The creation of a semi-permanent stage that could move from below grade to above, using part of the underground parking garage to accommodate it was also suggested.

Programming Ideas: A number of ideas were suggested to enhance programming in the future. Attention could be paid to designing programming for all four seasons.

4.1.2 Features

Reflecting Pool and Arches: The reflecting pool and its winter use as a skating rink is a popular attraction. Some participants were of the view that the freedom arches symbolize what this City stands for. The protective fences located around the base of the arches are thought to be intrusive to the original design by some participants.

The reflecting pool and arches are highly valued from a heritage perspective. It was pointed out during discussions that both the design and location of the reflecting pool and arches were changed from Mr. Revell’s original design.

Some Programming Ideas

- Son et Lumière – sound and light show
- “Funtains” for children – creative water fountains
- International days to promote the multi-cultural nature of our City
- Enliven at night and on weekends
- Provide areas for buskers
- Populate the walkways and podium level with programming or destination events
- Improve visibility of library and provide access onto the Square

Participants’ perspectives ranged from increasing the size of the reflecting pool to relocating it entirely to open up the Square. Some of the ideas, ranging from minor to quite major changes in both function and form, included:



Freedom Arches

- Leaving “freedom arches” where they are, but re-design them to more closely reflect the original design;
- The chain fence at the base of the arches should be removed;
- Increasing the size of the pool/skating area and add a water feature;
- Providing equipment such as fountains and coloured lighting;
- Providing a wading pool and play area for children;
- Using the reflecting pool as a basis for a light show;
- Allowing paddleboats and other recreational uses for the pool; and,
- Moving the location of the skating rink, possibly to the podium area.

Canteen/Public Washroom: This building houses the former food concession area, skate rental area and washrooms. Participants noted that these facilities are in disrepair and considered not up to par with a venue of this stature.

Numerous participants identified this facility as needing improvement. Others questioned whether it could be moved or updated, given its heritage value. Some of the suggestions included:

- Moving it to another location that is more inviting and use for visitor information, washrooms, skate rental and food/beverages;
- Moving it to outside the square and commercializing it;
- Making it less intrusive;
- Expanding change-room facilities;
- Building a 2-storey structure, with skate return on ground floor and café on 2nd floor; and,
- Ensure that facilities are fully accessible.

A Square for All Seasons: One idea to make the Square more user-friendly in all seasons is to install a retractable roof or canopy to cover the Square.

Chess Tables and Children’s Playground: Suggestions included moving the chess tables to the west side, and possibly moving (but definitely improving) the children’s playground.

4.1.3 *Facilities and Services*

Food Services: To complement the Square’s public uses, existing food service areas need to be improved and more access to refreshments and food was considered important both as an attraction and to provide services to visitors to the Square. Restaurant areas were promoted as welcoming additions to attract visitors during all seasons. Suggestions included:

- European-style outdoor cafés;
- Concession stands;
- An outdoor/indoor restaurant on the roof of the existing canteen building;
- A café at the City Hall podium level;
- Improving access to the existing restaurant; and,
- Adding restaurants and pubs on the outskirts of the Square, and under the walkways.

Services to Tourists and Visitors: Toronto City Hall and Nathan Phillips Square attract countless tourists each year. Participants identified the general state of disrepair and lack of adequate services for visitors as a significant concern. The renewal of the Square should result in a public space that welcomes visitors and tourists to a vibrant and prosperous Toronto.

Tourists and visitors should be welcomed with innovative technology and information areas, such as:

- An information booth with electronic screens;
- A permanent map of Toronto;
- Information and promotion of other areas of the City;
- More animation;
- Improved furniture – chairs and tables outside for people gathering and resting. Install benches and planters, while respecting the “old-style” vision;
- Huge patio spaces and solariums; and,
- A museum about Toronto and the history of the Square.



Café on the Square

Bicycle Friendly: A number of ideas to increase access to cyclists were presented. In particular, more bicycle parking could be provided on the west side. Bike share and rental programs could be made available to encourage use of this environment-friendly form of transportation. A full-service cycling centre (with change and shower rooms) should be provided.

4.1.4 Infrastructure and Maintenance

Improving the facilities required to support the special events and activities was seen to be paramount, not only by staff and organizations responsible for the events, but also by most other participants. Suggested improvements include:

- Improved lighting to increase visibility and safety at night (solar power could be utilized, considering the podium as a catchment area for the sun’s energy);
- Installation of IT facilities (i.e. Internet);
- Updating the garbage and recycling facilities;
- Improving storage areas for event and activity-related equipment (such as a Zamboni for the skating rink).

Overall Maintenance Issues: While participants understood that maintenance is not part of the design competition process, many participants noted that a priority should be placed on ongoing maintenance of the Square, in order to sustain a welcoming atmosphere and appropriate aesthetics. Areas that are currently run-down and “failing” need to be improved now. Moreover, an effort should be made to use durable materials that reduce maintenance costs over time.

4.2 Overhead Walkways and City Hall Podium Level

At each of the public consultation events, discussions on “what to do” with the overhead walkways were always lively and spirited.

4.2.1 Overhead Walkways

Three schools of thought concerning the future of the overhead walkways emerged during the public consultations as discussed below:

- Keep the walkways “as is”;
- Improve and use the walkways; and,
- Remove some or all of them.

Keep the walkways “as is”: Overhead walkways are considered by some participants to be an integral part of Mr. Revell’s original design, which remains valid today. Walkways are part of the building, create scale and frame the view of City Hall. The walkways should also be used for their original purpose – access to the podium and civic government. Restoring the walkways will increase the capacity and use of the Square.

Improve and Use the Walkways: A priority for many groups and participants is to open the elevated walkways to the public, and use them appropriately. Several suggestions were generated, including:

- Replace the walkways’ concrete guardrails with glass to visually open the walkways;
- Improve function of walkways for viewing events and controlling access to space;
- Refurbish and redevelop walkways;
- Make walkways interior spaces, provide canopy on walkways for all-weather use;
- Use walkways to create shade and storage;
- Install gardens and cafes;
- Retain symmetry on either side;
- Use walkways to tell history, story and culture of the Square and City Hall. Show art work of emerging artists on the walkways - bring colour and involve younger people;
- Use walkways as a map;
- Walkway parallel to Queen Street should be removed – open up vista to get a complete view OR move the south walkway further towards Queen Street;
- Walkways could be sloped up for emergency vehicle access;
- The West side of the walkways could be moved further west; and,
- The North side could be developed and connected to the podium level across the street.

To some participants, the walkways provide a necessary linkage between the podium and the Square. They could be extended North to the podium roof to enable its use as a destination.



Ramp to Podium Level

Remove Walkways: Some advocates for removing the walkways believe that they are redundant now that the City has “grown up” around the Square. In their view, the walkways create a visual barrier from all sides, and create a “no-man’s land” when accessing the Square. Removal of all or part of the elevated walkway structure is a priority in order to open sightlines and create a welcoming atmosphere. Some people believe they are the wrong height, and that space within the walkways is limited.

It is important to note that at the Creative Workshop, the workshop group that discussed the walkways recommended against the complete removal of the overhead walkways.



View from the podium level

4.2.2 City Hall Podium Level

Capitalizing on the effective use of the City Hall podium level was thought by many participants to be a priority for the design competition. Some thought that enhancing this feature would be a real asset to the Square, since the podium level was originally intended to be accessible to the public, and connect the taxpayer to City government. Some participants indicated that the access ramp should be renovated and used for its original purpose.

A number of ideas put forward for consideration are summarized below:

- Open up the podium to attract people: the podium roof and Square should work together;
- Turn the podium roof into a skating rink in the winter and use it for a running track in the summer;
- Program the space as a destination - functions and facilities could include a wedding chapel, community garden plots, an amphitheatre, café, restaurant, bar, terrace, patio and art display space;
- Use to generate solar power;
- Install more green space; and,
- Ensure “dignified” uses.

4.3 Pathways, Connections, Access and Frontage

General Issues: Some participants stated that pedestrian access both to and from the Square via pathways, walkways and connections is a key area for design improvement. In discussions at the Creative Workshop, impediments to pedestrian entry points to all areas of the Square were discussed. One of the workshop groups reported that the current site is too rigid and limits pedestrian access from the surrounding neighbourhood. The Square, as a destination, needs to be the focus for pedestrians, rather than City Hall. Pedestrian pathways need to be more clearly defined, and connections to the underground PATH system, the underground parking garage and to the subway need to be either improved or constructed.

Accessibility to persons with disabilities was identified as a significant area where improvement is needed.

Some participants felt that access points to the Square are not welcoming, easy or inviting. Surrounding streets need to be incorporated, which would necessarily expand the “precinct” of the current Square.

Queen Street West: Some participants suggested that a re-design of the entrances, or creation of a “Grand Entrance” from the Queen Street side should be incorporated into the design. This would improve the aesthetics and functionality of this space and reduce maintenance efforts and cost.

Participants raised the concern that tour buses and concession vehicles use Queen Street as a parking area, and thus block both the entrance to the Square and the views. Some participants thought that concession vans, which provide the only source of food on the periphery of the Square, are unsightly and should be moved entirely. Tour bus parking should be relocated elsewhere for the same reason.

Southwest Corner: Access at the southwest corner of the Square should be improved, particularly in light of the construction of the future opera house nearby on the south side of Queen Street West. A suggestion was made that the access ramps on the southwest corner of the Square should be closed to eliminate conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians moving along this part of the Queen Street frontage. Paving was also suggested for the southwest edges.



Underground Parking Garage

Opportunities for Enhancing Accessibility

- Install a vertical access route to the Podium
- Brighten entrances to the parking garages, and increase perimeter lighting and security – to encourage evening visitors and enhance security
- Ensure the Square is accessible for physically challenged visitors and users
- Connect PATH directly to the Square
- Emergency vehicle access is a priority for any future design changes, considering the number of special events that take place at the Square
- Limit the amount of vehicle traffic on surrounding streets, and improve pedestrian-friendliness
- Provide better connection between the Square and other neighbouring walkways and,
- Construct a crossing from the Eaton Centre to the Square

West Side: Currently, the laneway along the west edge of the Square, adjacent to Osgoode Hall and originally intended for pedestrian traffic, is clogged by delivery vehicles. Alternate arrangements for movement of goods and delivery vehicles need to be made. One suggestion included returning the laneway to pedestrian use and incorporating a cobbled path.

Instead of the current arrangement, it was suggested that the north laneway area be used for delivery of goods into the Square. Modifying the north/west access ramps to the parking garage could facilitate this change. The elevated walkway is thought to deter efficient delivery of goods, and as an alternative, north access to the Square could be more efficient.

It was also suggested that opening up Chestnut Street from the north side, south to Queen Street west, would improve access in this area.

Northeast Corner: It was suggested that the northeast corner be revitalized and provide improved access to the Square. In developing the North side, the walkway ramp could be connected

Bay Street: The view was expressed by some participants that access to and from Bay Street is difficult, with low overhead walkways providing a visual and physical barrier to the Square. A more “organic” approach from Bay Street was suggested, that could be designed to improve access from this area.

Southeast Corner: In the opinion of some participants, the fences surrounding the chess tables at the southeast corner of the Square (at Bay Street and Queen Street West) block easy access into the Square and should be removed.

Other Issues: A number of other issues and opportunities were discussed for improving the welcoming atmosphere of Nathan Phillips Square. Some of these ideas are included in the text box.

4.4 Landscape, Peace Garden and Sculptures

4.4.1 Landscaping

As noted elsewhere in this report, some Torontonians hold the view that the Square should be a clear, uncluttered, concrete space, while others visualize a green, park-like setting. Grappling with this issue necessitates considering the integrity of the original design, consideration of the uses and functions of other major venues in the City, and thought about the current and future uses of the Square itself.

Ideas relating to landscaping of the Square were generated, ranging from making minor changes, to implementing major landscaping improvements.

4.4.2 Peace Garden

In 1984, Toronto made a worldwide commitment to peace through the installation of the Peace Garden on Nathan Phillips Square. By doing so, Toronto promoted its status as a Nuclear Free City and the Peace Garden symbolizes Canada and Toronto’s role as a leader for peace, as well as a symbol of international peace and freedom.

Throughout the public consultation process, participants learned more about the role of the Peace Garden. While many Torontonians and visitors to the Square may not be aware of the Peace Garden, it is highly valued by many people, who are dedicated to its preservation and enhancement, and believe it should be promoted as a place for quiet reflection and tranquility. Others appreciate it, but believe its location impedes the Square’s functionality and thus, it should be moved to another prominent location on the Square. And, some believe it should be moved altogether to another location in the City.

At the Town Hall Meeting, many voices spoke passionately of its historical and symbolic significance. One person suggested that the Peace Garden be used as the “foundation for the renewal” of Nathan Phillips Square.

The Peace Garden provides a place to celebrate humanities’ peaceful co-existence, for peace and reflection.

Landscaping Ideas

- Change and improve soft landscaping
- Add furniture, but don’t fill space
- Create a children’s garden
- Use landscaping not as a barrier, but as an asset
- Install water fountains
- Add more greenery in general and consider hanging gardens. Improve greenery on West side
- Add trees
- Install gardens and trees on the podium
- Add gardens on the walkways
- Provide moveable shade
- Install floating planters in reflecting pool
- Update planters on the Square
- Create areas of quiet shade and relaxation – protect people from effects of UV radiation
- Remove the garden north of the canteen building

Suggestions Regarding the Peace Garden

- Move Peace Garden away from stage
- Move stage away from Peace Garden
- Improve to reflect ecosystem
- Enlarge
- Make the Peace Garden more of a public space
- Keep the Peace Garden well maintained

Some ideas for improvement or change are listed in the text box.

4.4.3 *Sculptures and Artwork*

Participants frequently noted that the Square has great potential to showcase art and sculpture. Among the permanent art on display in the Square are Sir Henry Moore’s “The Archer”, a statue of Sir Winston Churchill, and a Roman column to recognize Toronto’s Italian culture.

Participants in the consultation process had numerous suggestions relating to the current sculptures and artwork and ideas for the future. These included:

- Adding a statue of Theodore Roosevelt to accompany the statue of Sir Winston Churchill;
- Moving the Archer to another location to make room for more public space;
- Encouraging and incorporating more public art, with an emphasis on multi-cultural artists, to celebrate Toronto’s multi-ethnic communities;
- Adding artwork to the overhead walkways and ramps; and
- Using art to celebrate new and young artists’ work.



*Sir Winston Churchill Statue and
Speakers’ Corner*

5.0 Conclusions

The public consultation process for the renewal of Nathan Phillips Square generated enthusiasm, debate, and creative ideas. This report summarizes and documents these comments, views, values and ideas.

The input received from the public and stakeholders suggest a key challenge for the City of Toronto and the entrants participating in the design competition. This is to:

Maintain and enhance the Square’s value as a public gathering place, historical landmark and icon of civic engagement, by protecting the original design concept while meeting the changing needs of residents and visitors.

The Square has a variety of uses, including its use as an every-day gathering spot, the site of annual festivals, the staging spot for one-time celebrations and an important destination for tourists. All of these uses and others should be accommodated through a design that supports programming and necessary services.

The podium level and the elevated walkways of Nathan Phillips Square represent opportunities for designers to meet the key challenge. The existing, underutilized space could be opened to the public and effectively programmed, which could support the original design concept. Alternatively, many participants suggested that the walkways might be removed in order to better facilitate events that use the Square as a whole.

Connections between the Square and its surrounding neighbourhood encompass a significant portion of the key challenge. Accessibility to the Square and its programs is a concern for Torontonians, and a welcoming culture and atmosphere is a common desire. Stakeholders and the public made many specific suggestions about how each frontage could be redesigned.

Two main opposing views emerged with respect to the landscaping and overall “feel” of the Square. The first view sees the Square as a traditional urban oasis of wide-open spaces for gathering, and the second sees the Square’s greenery and park-like characteristics as predominant. Perceptions of the



Official Opening Ceremonies: September 13, 1965

role played by the Peace Garden and public art depend on which view an individual favours. The opposing views suggest multiple approaches to meeting the key challenge.

Throughout the public consultation process, numerous participants representing a rich diversity of interests offered an assortment of values, views and ideas about the future of Nathan Phillips Square. Consensus on design concepts was not sought, however one clear message emerged: Torontonians care deeply about Nathan Phillips Square, and wish to continue to participate in its development.