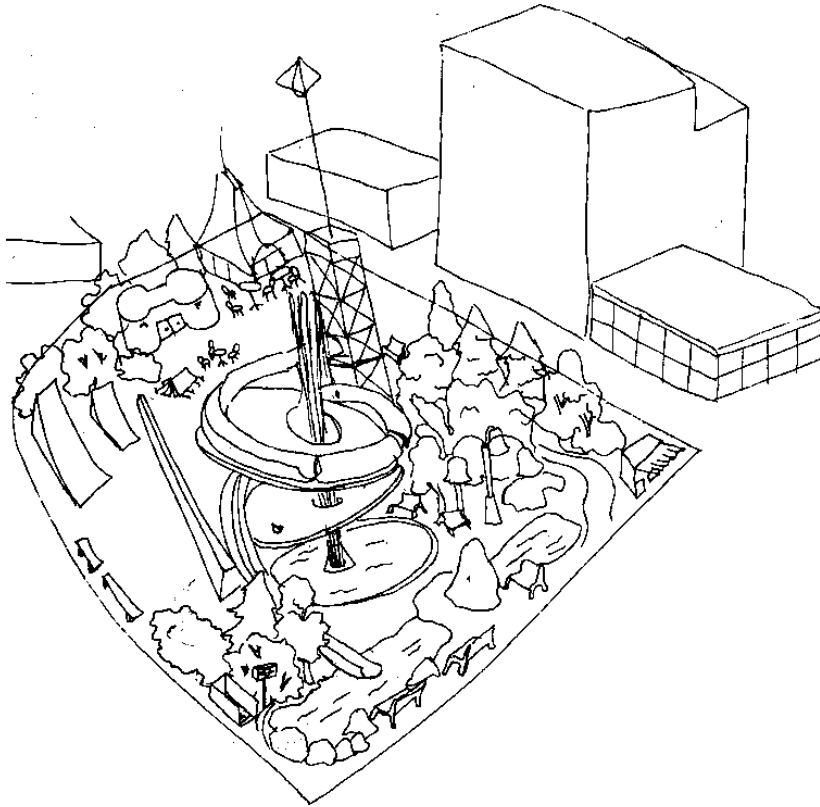


Proposed (Re)Re-Development Plan for Dundas Square



Site improvements:

- 1) Benches
- 2) Trees
- 3) Water Slide & Splash pad.
- 4) Skate Park
- 5) Democratically programmed video displays.
- 6) Café
- 7) Disco Ball light tower

Reclaim the Square!



‘a problem is now arising where portions of the public believe that Dundas Square is a public space’
- Julian Fantino, Chief of Police

Contrary to the idealized, celebrated vision of Dundas Square that has been aggressively marketed by the City of Toronto and *Yonge Street Business Improvement Association (BIA)*, the space consuming the south-east corner of Yonge and Dundas Streets is nothing but a marketing showplace, intended to facilitate little more than the act of consumption and the adoption of consumer identities through the absorption of the surrounding cacophony of hyper media advertising.

With the presence of Surveillance Cameras covering the Square’s empty, concrete expanse, and the addition of 24/7 private security (*Intelligarde*- a company which has a long, documented history of violence, intimidation and discrimination), the Square has been designed for the explicit purpose of commercial consumption, and anyone caught engaging in any other activities (such as riding a bicycle or

skateboard, releasing balloons, lighting candles, climbing trees, busking, loitering or just asking for some spare change) are recorded by surveillance cameras, accosted by private security, and removed from the site, forcefully if necessary.

This type of urban design is an attack on the poor and the homeless, who, due to lack of affordable housing have been forced to physically occupy the streets and parks. The denoting of 'illegitimate' activities can be seen as an attempt by the City and private sector to revoke the citizenship of economically marginalized peoples in 'public spaces', while at the same time engaging in a form of social cleansing of the space as an middle class sphere of consumption. Rather than dealing with the root social causes of homelessness, the city and private sector simply increase the level of repression- a trend that is strikingly similar to patterns seen in many American urban centers.

Where can I sit?

There is a curious lack of seating in the design of Dundas Square. This is ironic because a basic rule of urban design involves ensuring that there is ample seating in public areas. Dundas square was intentionally designed as a space of transit- peoples are not meant to pause, sit and relax, but instead to use the space to mediate between one point of consumption and the next. The police who were consulted on the design of the Square wanted a vast, visible, open space in order to ensure the effortless surveillance of large crowds. In this sense, anyone walking through the Square is caught between the technological gaze of the surveillance cameras and private security officers, and the encircling glow of corporate multi-media advertising.

Dundas Square is a urgent, local example of how 'public' spaces are progressively being colonized, controlled and co-opted by the cooperative forces of the City, private sector, politicians and corporate capital.

Reclaim Public Space!

If, as the political-economic supporters of the project might have us believe, Dundas Square occupies the (artificial, contrived) 'heart' of Toronto, then we have to show the City some love by 're-claiming' this highly-symbolic, rigidly-controlled, (quasi/pseudo-) 'public' space- let's tell the Yonge-Dundas Square Board of Management that we, the people of Toronto, truly are the architects of the Square by designing and implementing our own creative, autonomous uses for the Square!

Don't let your city be taken over, privatized and controlled by the influences of advertising and commerce- Dundas Square desperately needs to be reclaimed in the name of an autonomous, social public body.

Public Space = Party Space!

The ideal vision of *public space* promoted by Reclaim the Streets involves a truly democratic space where everyone in society— people from vastly different social/economic/cultural backgrounds— can randomly engage and interact with one another. In this sense, *public space* is an inclusive notion that directly involves the free and unregulated mixing of people from a diversity of economic and social groups. Public space is like a low intensity public party where everyone is invited.

By attempting to reclaim Dundas Square we are trying to create a public space that deviates from the existing architecture and management of Square. By re-casting Dundas Square as *Party Space* we intend to create a place of social transcendence, that communicates progressive social desires and implies a critique of the commodification of everyday life, suggesting alternatives to the culture industry.