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# Army of architects brainstorms on Place d'Armes

MAX HARROLD  
THE GAZETTE

Teams of designers and architects moved in on Place d'Armes yesterday at the start of a week-long brainstorming session on giving the square a facelift.

The historic site in the heart of Old Montreal was created in 1693. It is to undergo renovations starting next year that will be part of a \$8.7-million refurbishing of the area's streets and sidewalks that should be completed by 2010, said Stéphanie Jecrois, of the city's Design Montreal bureau.

Hailing from Berlin, Buenos Aires and Montreal, three teams, each with eight designers and architects, discussed the site's significance and the city's objectives in refurbishing it.

They have until Thursday to propose ideas, which the city might use in its own project.

"One idea would be to remove the steps and the elevated plaza added in the 1960s," said architect Denis Lemieux, who works for Design Montreal.

The square used to be a transit hub for 26 tramway lines, Lemieux said. It is still a major tourist destination.

Landscaping, fountains, paving - everything is up for dis-




cussion, he said, noting Place d'Armes is the last major public square in Old Montreal yet to be renovated.

To accommodate those who flock there, the city might reopen the square's subterranean public restrooms, which were condemned in the 1970s. Today, stairs leading down into them at two ends of the square cannot be seen, as they are buried.

The statue in Place d'Armes commemorates Paul de Chomedey, sieur de Maisonneuve's defence of the early city, which was then a young French settlement, against the Iroquois. De Maisonneuve's allies.

People are invited to Place d'Armes today at 1:30 p.m. and next Sunday at the same time for guided tours (in French only).

There is also an exhibition on the square's history this week at the Monopoli Architecture Gallery in Old Montreal, where the design teams will meet with the public at noon on Tuesday and Thursday.

**For more information,** visit [vieux.montreal.qc.ca/placedarmes](http://vieux.montreal.qc.ca/placedarmes) or [www.galeriemonopoli.com](http://www.galeriemonopoli.com)

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LIAM MALONEY THE GAZETTE  
Mexican tourists Manuel Garcia Sosa and Carmen Cruikshank visit Place d'Armes yesterday as the statue of Paul de Chomedey, sieur de Maisonneuve, looms behind them.