

# Sleeker Speaker's Corner still retains memories of old one

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Melinda Dalton, Record staff

**KITCHENER—** With sleek granite, polished benches and modern light standards, the newly unveiled Speaker's Corner bears little resemblance to its previous incarnation.

But looking closer at the square's centrepiece — a shining, stainless steel cylinder — the memory of the old becomes apparent in the new.

"I think, very simply, we often forget our history," said the man behind the work, artist Allan Harding MacKay. "It was really a way of relocating the memory."

The redesigned Speaker's Corner, located at the intersection of King and Benton streets, was unveiled Friday at a ceremony that formally marked the end of the first phase of the King Street redevelopment.



## Materials

### Sculpture:

*Stainless steel mirrors, granite pedestal and collar, sandblasted text*  
8ft h x 3 ft w  
*Porcelain anomorphic image tiles*  
13ft x 11 ft



Mathew McCarthy Record staff

*People get a closer look at an art installation by Allan Harding-MacKay that is part of the newly unveiled speakers corner at Benton and King streets in Kitchener, Friday.*

The idea behind the Speakers Corner renovation was to open up a more viable space for the community, said Bluhm.

"We wanted to make sure it is conducive to public events," he said. "We wanted to give it a new civic function and still keep with the notion of what Speaker's Corner was."

That notion is summed up in the new focal points of the square — the three part installation that blends the corner's soapbox heritage with its new, sleek facelift.

The work, titled *Relocation and Transformation of Memory*, is made up of three separate pieces in the square, including the centre sculpture. The piece features and anamorphic image — one that appears distorted unless viewed from a specific perspective.

When a viewer stands on the tiles at the base of the work and looks into the mirrored piece, they can see a photograph of the old square reflected back from a skewed image printed on the tiles.

Physics professor Jim Hunt of Guelph worked with MacKay to develop the anamorphic aspect of the piece.

Two granite-clad walls etched with the phrases, "SPEAK UP SPEAK OUT" and "SPEAKING PUBLICSPEAKING" also border the square. The total cost for the art was \$80,000.

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