



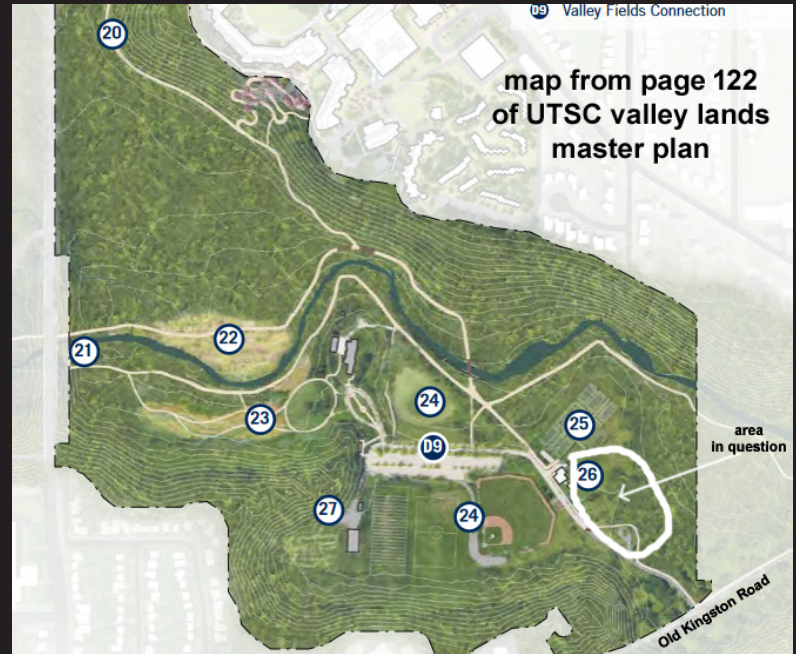
utsc valley lands changes?

I have found out from a reliable source that UTSC is going to make changes to a part of the UTSC valley lands, a part that is dear to me and to a considerable number of other members of the public who frequent it.

I am an alumnus of U of T graduating in 1979 from Woodsworth college at the downtown campus.

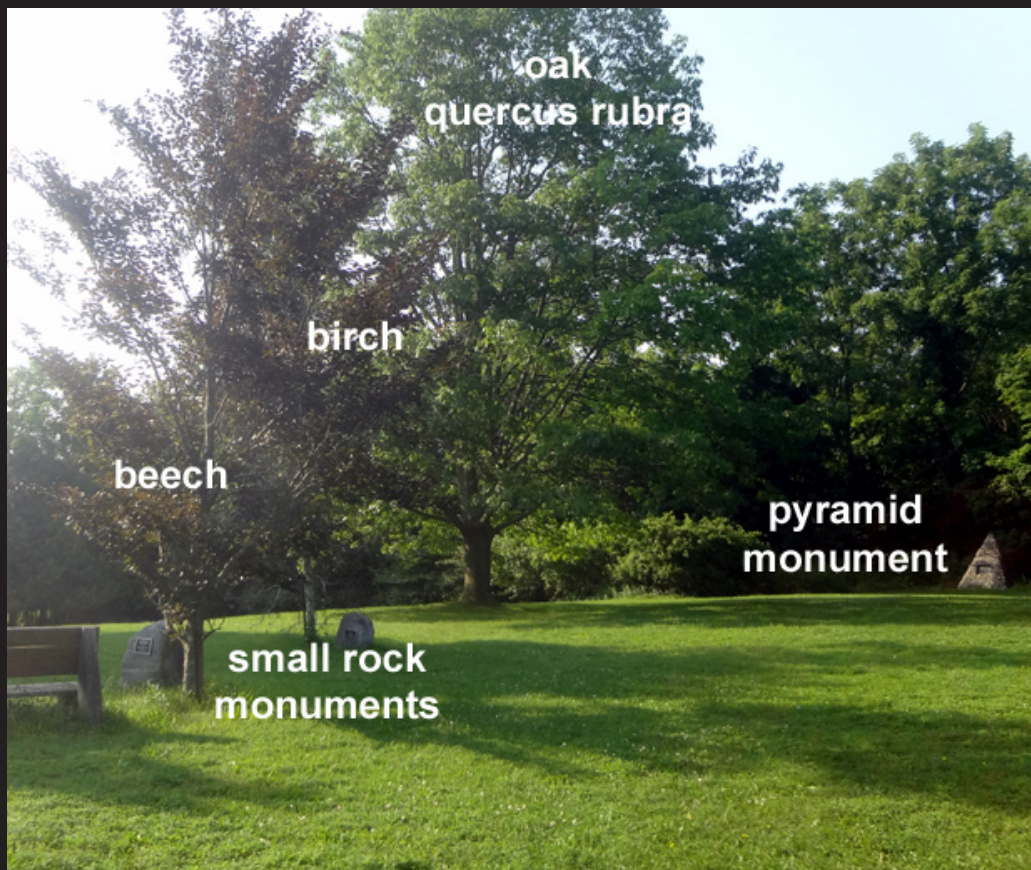
Since then I have taken a keen interest in U of T affairs especially at the Scarborough campus. I live close to the valley and visit the area almost every day on my walk.

The area where the changes are to be made is the memorial area just to the east of the Dan Lang baseball diamond, across the access road, and south of the new tennis courts, an area which is at present a lush green gentle hill with, at its peak, a mature majestic oak (probably planted as a memorial) and lower down the hill, a beautiful horse chestnut tree.



area #26 where domes are to be built





A variety of wild flowers grace the green hill; birdsfoot, clover, pineapple weed, ground violet, dandelion, buttercups, mushrooms and along its edges, aster, goldenrod, queen anne's lace, bugloss, raspberry and countless other species. (see next page for photos)

There are also two smaller trees near the oak, a beech and a birch both with rock memorials beside them.

If it were not completely mowed every week or two, it would be a rich meadow.



all photos  
taken at  
the site in  
question





Just in front of the ruined foundations of one of Scarborough's oldest elementary schools (now overgrown 'rewilded') with large maples and other species), is a pyramid monument built to honour the woman, Lucy Swanton Doyle, who bought the school (plus three acres) in the 1950s or 60s (?) when it became redundant. She lived in the schoolhouse until fire destroyed it.

My source says that this pyramid is going to be bulldozed in the process of leveling/grading the gentle hill leading up to it, so that four 'geo-domes' can be built on the site as part of converting it to a somewhat ironically named 'environmental innovation centre or hub' as outlined in the master plan for development of the valley lands.

It is #26 area on the map of the master plan on the online PDF page 122  
No specific planning notes about this particular area #26 are provided on the subsequent pages of the master plan.

We have been given to understand that this *bulldozing is to begin in just a few weeks from now* without any public consultation in an area which has always allowed public access as part of the historical legacy of the valley lands.

The Scarborough Historical Society informs us that UTSC has “always had a problem” with the old school foundations and the pyramid in front of it, because of ‘vandalism’ of which i have seen *no evidence* over the last dozen or more years since i started frequenting it.

I have seen some vandalism in the valley, mostly speeding cars and trucks on the access road, vehicles parked on grass, some rare dumping, littering, and occasionally deep car tyre tracks across various grassed areas but *nothing serious around the monument or the old school foundation.*





The stones used on the pyramid monument were obviously carefully chosen and placed for maximum effect and may have been part of a collection kept by Lucy Doyle herself or by the builders of the monument. They display a great variety of form, texture, colour, sparkle, figure, fossils and are likely ‘river rock’ from *Yat-qui-i-be-no-nick* (Highland Creek) river nearby. It was certainly a labour of love for those who built it.

If any of the faculty of UTSC fine arts, geology, environmental studies departments etc and/or their students were to visit the monument they would concur that this is a remarkable, aesthetically pleasing ‘sculpture’ which should be preserved as a memorial to Lucy Doyle and to the old school behind it which was one of the earliest schools in all of Scarborough. You only have to examine closely the stones especially on the front around the metal plaque to see their subtle beauty. The whole area should be preserved as the site of the very beginnings of education in this part of Scarborough. It is, in a sense, the *foundation of education* on the UTSC campus.

It already is an ‘environmental hub’ of the campus, even a spiritual one, a last remaining oasis of peace in an increasingly over-developed natural area overwhelmed by athletic facilities and their attendant vehicle parking wastelands. Domes are only going to spoil the views and the natural peaceful ambience of the place.

We surely have enough plastic ‘dome-ination’ in the valley with that massive eyesore of a storage shed near the allotment gardens which it seems are now to be developed as a ‘research site’ in the same last minute, no-consultation, decision-making process as the memorial area itself.



For those who take the time and trouble to really look at the pyramid monument, they will also find it a haven, in its crevices and on the rocks, for all kinds of creatures; ants, spiders, harvestmen, beetles, crickets, dragonflies, butterflies, sowbugs, snails and even garter and brown snakes that bask in the sunshine around the base. Given what is happening with the dire state of biodiversity worldwide, this is truly and environmental sanctuary hub if ever there was one. Alongside it is a whole bed of 'lily of the valley' leading in to the old school foundation which is also home to a rich variety of flora and fauna.



(all photos taken at the monument)





The brass plaque on the monument reads as follows, with the last line particularly interesting given what is about to happen to this shrine-like “memorial garden”...

in Memory of  
**Lucy Swanton Doyle**  
1880 - 1971

Noted Candian newspaper woman with  
the Toronto Telegram  
from the 1890s to 1930 and descen-  
dant of the Swanton Loyalist family.  
She owned the Schoolhouse built here  
in 1870.

***Her cherished wish was that her  
“valley” become part of Scarbor-  
ough College grounds.***

Would Lucy say that today?







The area has been traumatized a great deal in recent years with all the new Pan Am tennis court gravel fill being dumped on this hill for two years. It is only now recovering from that.

At least, please consider a month's reprieve so that when the new academic year begins faculty and students will have a chance to see the area and appreciate its unique charms.

Finally a suggestion for enhancing the site environmentally; instead of building four domes ask the grounds staff to allow four areas of the grassy hill to grow into four meadows with mowed pathways between/around them. Something like the image on the right.

*Sweet are the uses of adversity:  
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,  
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head;  
And this our life, exempt from public haunt,  
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.*

from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*

