"It's your city, only you can save it!":

Save Montreal's Grassroots Opposition to Urban Redevelopment

A Thesis

In

The Department

of

History

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of Master of Arts (History) at

Concordia University

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

May 2016

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

School of Graduate Studies

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

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Entitled: "It's your city, only you can save it!": Save Montreal's Grassroots Opposition to

Urban Redevelopment

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts (History)

complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with

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Abstract

"It's your city, only you can save it!":

Save Montreal's Grassroots Opposition to Urban Redevelopment

Eliot Perrin

Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, the urban conservation group Save Montreal actively opposed the city's high-modernist redevelopment. To date, their efforts have been studied within the context of heritage preservation and its contribution to evolving notions of local identity. While Save Montreal was undoubtedly concerned with the retention of structures considered historically significant its members did not characterize themselves as heritage preservationists. Rather, I argue that Save Montreal's membership constructed their organization and campaigned so as to challenge the means and process by which development occurred in the city centre. My use of oral history as a primary method of analysis reveals the socio-economic and political motivations of the group while also serving to democratize urban history. Oral history also represents a valuable means by which to understand and contextualize urban conservation movements. While local in operation and outlook, Save Montreal's 1973-1985 activist period paralleled postwar grassroots conservation movements in other North American cities.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the continued guidance of my supervisor, Dr. Steven High, the ongoing encouragement of my family and the incredible support of Elizabeth Pellicone who stood with me from start to finish.

This thesis is dedicated to all past members of Save Montreal. Their efforts not only provided me with a thesis topic but have also contributed to my love of Montreal in all manner of subtle, yet important ways.

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Introduction

> **Adele** – What really had an impact on me was when they destroyed the Van Horne mansion at the corner of Peel and Sherbrooke Street. I remember that day very clearly in my mind. I was on that street corner, with my son, and there was the big ball, and the house was coming down and I even picked up some kind of relic, I don't know, it was a piece of stone or whatever, and I had it for a long time, I don't know what I did with it. And after that I said 'There's something wrong about that. Why are they tearing down housing? Why are they tearing down such beautiful houses, I just don't understand.'[1]

Adele Mardoche's recollection of the destruction of the Van Horne mansion, which stood at the corner of Rues Stanley and Sherbrooke in Montreal's wealthy Square Mile until it's razing on the morning of September 8, 1973, reveals the shock and incomprehension of its loss. Built in 1869, the eclectic greystone mansion was once the home of William Van Horne, former general manager and president of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR). Replaced by a modernist office tower, the building was mourned by Adele and others who witnessed its demolition. Decades later, the sense of loss remains audible in Adele's voice and words. For Adele it was unimaginable that a structure of such architectural allure, situated on one of Montreal's most cherished streets, could be so wantonly destroyed. There existed an apparent value gap between Adele and both those who committed the demolition or abetted the processes and climate in which this act could take place. While this event was one of sorrow, this memory also serves as the foundation for Adele's life of activism in downtown Montreal.

I first encountered Adele in 2013 by happenstance while volunteering with a Heritage Montreal walking tour. At the time I was contemplating my master's application and how best to examine Montreal's heritage preservation movements. The tour guide, aware of Adele's activism and my research interests, identified her as someone who had been previously involved with a group called Save Montreal, an organization then unfamiliar to me. I introduced myself and was immediately introduced to another former

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[1] Mardoche, Adele, interview with Eliot Perrin. Montreal, October 25, 2013.

member of the group, Jane Broderick, who was also taking the tour. This meeting proved fortuitous as Save Montreal became my entry point into the history of Montreal's preservation movement following the Van Horne mansion's demolition.

In the postwar years, government bodies throughout North America sought ways and means to arrest the social and economic decline of their inner cities. Postwar suburbanization depopulated city centres of their residents, depleting the local tax base.[2] Overseas competition and greater automation put pressure on both manufacturers and their employees. By the late 1960s, blue-collar jobs were in decline as factories quit the inner-city for suburban areas and other regions.[3] Their solutions entailed the adoption of high-modernist principles pertaining to governance and urban development. Technocratic planning called for the rationalization of urban space and the segregation of land uses via zoning regulations. These measures were achieved by adopting modern architectural forms that deliberately supplanted traditional streetscapes and patterns.[4] Central to such principles was a robust belief that large-scale development correlated to socio-economic progress.[5] As a result, North American cities, with state/provincial and federal support, underwent sweeping changes to their built form and Montreal was no exception.

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[2] Suburban communities revealed class and racial divisions, fostering a growing alienation between geographic areas. For an example of this process see: Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

[3] For additional information on the impact of deindustrialization in North America see: Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison, *The Deindustrialization of America: Plant Closings, Community Abandonment, and the Dismantling of Basic Industry* (New York: Basic Books, Inc. 1982) and Steven High, *Industrial Sunset: The Making of North America's Rust Belt, 1969-1984* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003).

[4] Modern architecture resists easy classification and styles evolved throughout the postwar period. However, International style, new formalism, mid-century modern and brutalism are the styles that best define the era.

[5] See Peter Hall's Chapter "The City of Towers": Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century* (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 218-261.

While Montreal's previous era of development had been the result of economic prosperity, the postwar building boom was birthed in a time of economic uncertainty.[6] Industry was quitting the inner-city, part of a deindustrialization process occurring throughout the continent's manufacturing heartlands.[7] Historically working class neighbourhoods such as St-Henri and Pointe St-Charles witnessed the shuttering of factories, depriving the areas, and the city, of valuable jobs.[8] The departure of industry was aided by the rapid expansion of automobile and truck usage and the implementation of automobile infrastructure networks, allowing manufacturers to opt for inexpensive greenfield sites outside of Montreal or even the province.[9] Highway construction also impacted Montreal's railway companies, who saw a decline in their fortunes as the automobile supplanted trains in the transportation of people and goods. Their position would erode even further following the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959, whereby ocean-going vessels could bypass Montreal's port altogether.[10] Highway

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[6] The 1880-1930 period represented the peak of Montreal's economic prosperity. Major construction projects during this time reflected the city's affluence: Isabelle Gournay and France Vanlaethem, *Montreal Metropolis, 1880-1930* (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing; Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 1998).

[7] See chapter "The Deindustrializing Heartland," Steven High, *Industrial Sunset*, 92-130.

[8] The decline of manufacturing as a percentage of the Montreal workforce was from 37.6% of the population in 1951 to 30.65% of the population in 1971 to 20.06% of the population in 1981. Robert K. Whelan, "The Politics of Urban Redevelopment in Montreal: Regime Change from Drapeau to Doré," *Quebec Studies* 12 (Spring/Summer 1991): 158.

[9] Toronto's economic ascendancy can be traced back to the 1930s when its stock market transactions overtook those of Montreal's See David Ley, *The New Middle-class and the Remaking of the Central City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 144. Throughout subsequent decades, for a variety of reasons relating to continental economic trends and a westward population shift, Toronto overtook Montreal as the financial capital of Canada. For further explanation of the circumstances behind this economic power shift: Paul-André Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal depuis la Confédération* (Les Editions du Boréal: Montreal, 2000), 429-432. Corresponding with Toronto's economic ascendany was the departure of many Anglophone Montrealers. Again, there are a number of factors that prompted Anglophones to decamp to other cities. For more details on this subject see: Sheila McLeod Arnopoulos and Dominique Clift, *The English Fact in Quebec* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1980), Martha Radice, *Feeling Comfortable?: The Urban Experience of Anglo-Montrealers* (Montreal: Les Presses De L'Université Laval, 2000) and Ronald Rudin, *The Forgotten Quebecers: A History of English-Speaking Quebec 1759-1980 (*Quebec: Institut québécois de recherce sur la culture, 1985).

[10] Montreal's geography, as the furthest upriver oceangoing port, had been economically advantageous, benefiting the national rail companies (CPR, CNR) headquartered there. The

construction proved an incentive for residents to move to newly erected housing in the West Island and off-island communities.[11] The suburbanization of the greater Montreal area depleted inner-city neighbourhoods of residents and businesses, further damaging the city's economy.[12]

Aggravating this situation was the abject state of the city's housing stock. The Great Depression and the wartime diversion of housing materials resulted in severely deteriorated homes throughout much of the city. By the mid-1940's federal authorities recognized that, of the 25 largest Canadian municipalities, Montreal's housing needs were the greatest.[13] While housing construction was aggressive in the immediate postwar years, new units were often constructed in increasingly suburban areas and economically out of reach for much of the city's working class. The result was a growing segregation between the burgeoning wealthy suburban areas and the city centre.[14] Equally alarming for many Montrealers were the illicit activities associated with inner-city neighbourhoods. Lurid stories of sexual and criminal transgressions in dilapidated tenements contributed to the development of an urban renewal narrative propagated by media outlets and local authorities.[15] The civic corruption that stemmed from gambling and other forms of vice occasioned a legal confrontation in which Jean Drapeau, an anti-

opening of the Seaway eliminated this national advantage and undermined the city's prominent rail industry: Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal*, 436-440.

[11] Montreal's suburban area grew rapidly in the postwar era. Between 1951-1971, the suburban region's population grew by 258% while Montreal's only grew by 48%: Yves Bussière, "L'automobile et l'expansion des banlieues: le cas de Montréal, 1901-2001," *Urban History Review* 18.2 (1989): 161.

[12] For a more detailed overview, see André Lortie's chapter "Montreal 1960: The Singularities of a Metropolitan Archetype," in *The 60s: Montreal Thinks Big*, ed. André Lortie (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2004), 75-142.

[13] The wartime Department of Reconstruction determined that Montreal required 16,400 dwellings immediately and another 50,000 over the course of the next five years: Marc H. Choko, *Les Habitations Jeanne-Mance: Un Projet Social Au Centre-ville (*Montreal: Editions Saint-Martin, 1995), 29.

[14] Catherine Charlesbois and Paul-André Linteau, *Quartiers Disparus: Red Light, Faubourg À M'Lasse, Goose Village* (Montreal: Les Éditions Cardinal inc., 2014), 40.

[15] Will Straw, "Montreal and *The Captive City*." *Quebec Studies* 48 (Fall 2009/Winter 2010): 18. For an in depth examination of the prolificacy of gambling in Montreal see: Magaly Brodeur, *Vice et corruption à Montréal 1892-1970* (Quebec: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2011).

corruption prosecutor, emerged as a name in municipal affairs. His work as member of the Comité de moralité publique propelled Drapeau to electoral victory. As Mayor, Drapeau became one of the key individuals responsible for Montreal's civic remodelling.[16]

The bulk of Drapeau's mayoralty was characterized by an adherence to modernist principles dating back to the turn of the century.[17] Earlier planning visionaries like Le Corbusier and Siegfried Giedion promoted urban renewal as a means to rectify societal ills considered inherent to existing cityscapes. They perceived the nineteenth-century industrial city to be an agent of chaos and incongruity, responsible for engendering crime and squalor. In response, they called for the demolition of city centres in favour of a rational street grid comprised of repeating high-rises, surrounded by green spaces. High-density living spaces were considered necessary in order to liberate cities from their excessive congestion.[18] Their form of modernism was considered progressive in nature and proved to be a powerful influence on the development schemes adopted in many jurisdictions on both sides of the Atlantic during the postwar period.

Armed with Keynesian economic reasoning, governments utilized high-modernist philosophy a means of rectifying the economic ills facing the continent's cities as a result of deindustrialization, suburbanization and disinvestment. According to James Scott, "high-modernist ideology" can be described as

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[16] Brodeur, *Vice et corruption*, 49-59.

[17] Drapeau was not atypical of municipal politicians during this era. City planning in New York City and Toronto were also dominated by forceful personalities (Robert Moses and Frederick Gardiner, respectively) who articulated a modernist approach to urban renewal and transportation policy. See: Robert A. Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975) and Timothy J. Colton, *Big Daddy: Frederick G. Gardiner and the Building of Metropolitan Toronto* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).

[18] See: Jon Caulfield, *City Form and Everyday Life: Toronto's Gentrification and Critical Social Practice* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press: 1994), 52 and Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*, 222.

> a strong, one might even say muscle-bound, version of the self-confidence about scientific and technical progress, the expansion of production, the growing satisfaction of human needs, the mastery of nature (including human nature), and, above all, the rational design of social order commensurate with the scientific understanding of the natural laws.[19]

Utopian in its outlook, high-modernism believed that society is best governed by a centralized, technocratic state. Society's ills could be rectified by the widespread, indiscriminate application of standardized policy. This mentality informed architects and urban planners who believed that the replacement of aging inner-city districts with sleek, functionalist housing and office blocks was beneficial to the economic and social health of the area and its residents. The application of strict zoning ordinances and widespread private automobility were also understood as necessary in the creation of a highly-ordered, utilitarian city.[20]

In Montreal, high-modernist thinking contributed to a series of "*Grand projets*" that typified development throughout the Drapeau era.[21] Massive in scale, their forms boldly broke from existing streetscapes and local architecture, drastically reshaping the city and how it functioned.   These "megastructures, "a symbol of the optimism of large-scale thinking", were "broadly imagined to be a flexible framework that enclosed the functions of a city, thereby making immanent new forms of human interaction, social

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[19] Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 4. The terms "modernist" and "high-modernist" are often used interchangeably. I will be using "high-modernist" throughout this paper as it best summarizes the degree to which Montreal was redeveloped as well as reflecting the undemocratic manner in which municipal politics were conducted throughout the time period under discussion.

[20] Peter Blake's *Form Follows Fiasco*, offers an issue-by-issue examination and response to the principles of modernist planning and architecture, and serves as an excellent overview for the subject. While the work is admittedly biased, Blake was originally a proponent of modernist forms before further analysis convinced him of the misguidedness of this philosophy. See: Peter Blake, *Form Follows Fiasco: Why Modern Architecture Hasn't Worked* (Toronto: Little, Brown & Company, 1977).

[21] Some examples include Place des Arts, the Palais des Congrès, the Hydro-Québec headquarters, and the Université du Québec à Montréal campus.

control and the technical organization of space."[22] Place Ville-Marie was, perhaps, the

building that most emblemized this era. Its strikingly modern cruciform structure housed

corporate offices, while its base contained a shopping concourse with links to

surrounding businesses and transportation. The interiorization of city life represented a

CENTRE-VILLE : LES TROIS ZONES

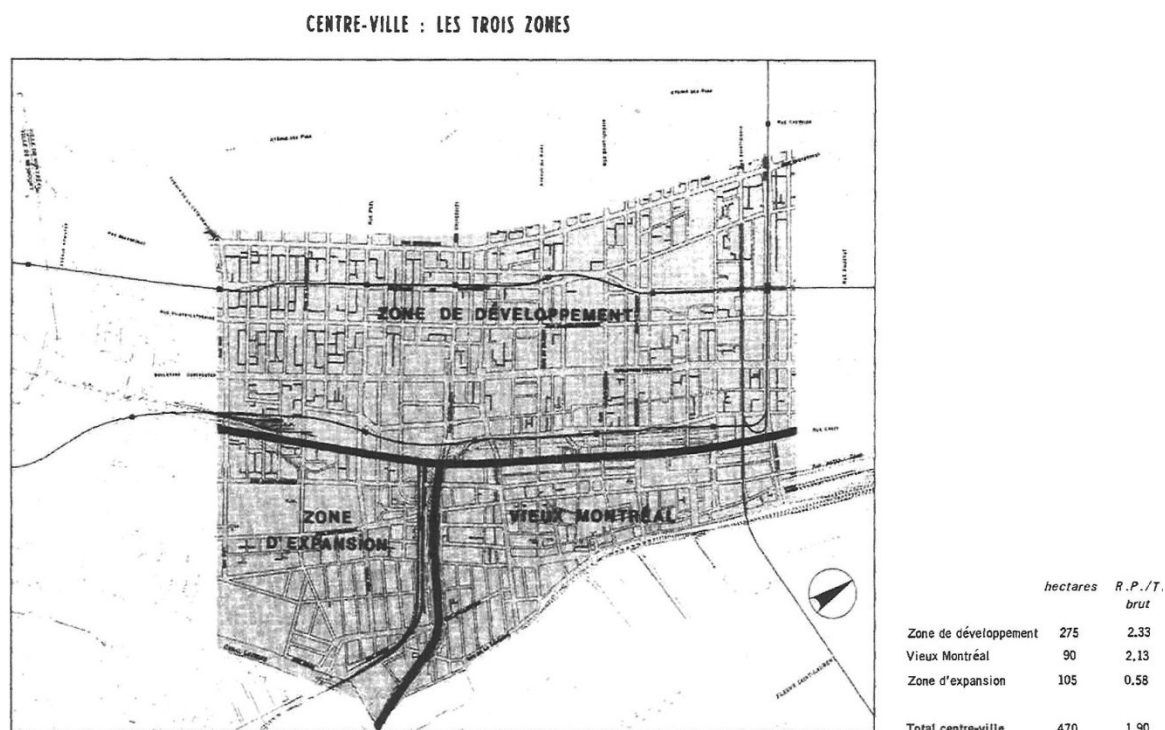|	hectares	R.P./T. brut
Zone de développement	275	2,33
Vieux Montréal	90	2,13
Zone d'expansion	105	0,58
Total centre-ville	470	1,90

Illustration 1.1: Map of downtown Montreal that demonstrates the areas north and west of the Old City that were targeted for development in the postwar period.[23]

further privatization of consumption patterns and one that would be replicated in other

buildings and the expansion of indoor/underground shopping.[24] Furthermore, Place Ville-

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[22] Inderbir Singh Riar, "Montreal and the Megastructure, ca 1967," edited by Rhona Richman Kenneally and Johanne Sloan, *Expo 67: Not Just a Souvenir* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010): 193.

[23] Clément Demers, "Le nouveau centre-ville de Montréal." *Cahiers de géographie du Québec* 27.71 (1983): 213.

[24] Don Nerbas provides an excellent historical overview of Place Ville-Marie, highlighting the impact the building had on the city and the manner in which it corresponded to nationalist, modernist and capitalist ambitions for Montreal's urban centre. Don Nerbas, "William Zeckendorf, Place Ville-Marie and the Making of Modern Montreal," *Urban History Review* 43.2 (2015): 5-25.

Marie corresponded to a reorientation of Montreal's business district away from the old city. The previously low-density Square Mile would soon play host to a wide array of construction projects, immense in footprint and initiated by both government bodies and private interest groups.[25] As will be elaborated upon later in this thesis, the developmental pressure that resulted from these developments carried significant implications for buildings and streetscapes in this area.

In accordance with their high-modernist philosophy, automobility preoccupied governmental authorities during this time, resulting in a series of road widenings and the construction of vast networks of urban expressways. Such measures were considered necessary for relieving congestion in urban centres. Early projects such as the widening of Dorchester Boulevard stemmed from a desire to improve auto circulation both within the city and for commuters arriving from the suburbs.[26] The announcement of Montreal's hosting of Expo 67 in the early 1960s prompted authorities to "set into motion a surge of new construction and the completion of roadwork aimed at making Montreal a modern, world-class metropolis."[27] In the six years prior to Expo, the city dedicated almost half of its capital expenditures to improving the city's automobile infrastructure.[28] Further

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The construction of the Montreal Metro also contributed to the interiorization of Montreal's downtown business and retail sectors. Metro stations provided "developmental potential" as "direct links…would ensure a captive public and a high economic return." See: Bruce Anderson, "Making the City More Useable: an evaluation of weather protected public spaces in Montreal," *JAE* 29.3 (1976): 20-22.

[25] Since 1941, the city's *Service de l'urbanisme* delinated the business district boundaries several times in subsequent decades. By 1982, the district would correspond roughly to Rue Atwater, Avenue Des Pins, Rue Amherst, the river and the CP tracks immediately west of Rue Guy. See Demers, "Le nouveau centre-ville," 209-235.

[26] The widening of Dorchester Boulevard (now Boulevard René-Lévesque) was the first instance of circulation-related measures undertaken. It would be followed by the construction of Boulevard de Maisonneuve, Avenue Docteur-Penfield, the Autoroute Ville-Marie, the Autoroute Décarie and the Autoroute 25.

[27] Claire Poitras, "A City on the Move: The Surprising Consequences of Highways," in *Metropolitan Natures: Environmental Histories of Montreal* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), 171.

[28] Harold Kaplan, *Reform, Planning, and City Politics: Montreal, Winnipeg,* Toronto (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 425.

support in the way of provincial and federal government subsidies resulted in a latticework of expressways across the island.

The aforementioned architectural forms also articulated a burgeoning confidence felt by French-Canadians, and were considered complimentary to the modernization/nationalization campaigns then underway as part of the Quiet Revolution.[29] Massive complexes for crown corporations were constructed to house the rapidly expanding civil service. Offices for Hydro-Québec and Radio-Canada became physical manifestations of the upward mobility of French Quebec that the Quiet Revolution promised.[30]

However, despite the fanfare surrounding these large-scale projects, they failed to have the intended economic effect and proved to be more panacea than remedy. As sociologists Annick Germain and Damarais Rose note: the rationalization of "urban space for production, circulation and consumption for a newly emerging reconfigured corporate society is highly problematic and expensive" and required "the costly destruction and reconstruction of the city's physical infrastructure."[31] Unlike the structures that replaced them, the vast majority of buildings demolished were residences.[32] The construction of the Autoroute Ville-Marie alone required the demolition of 3,000 homes, the relocation of 15,000 residents and a disruption of the lives of

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[29] The advent of the Quiet Revolution coincided with the election of Quebec Liberal Party in 1960, with Jean Lesage as premier. During this period the provincial government assumed a greater role in the provision of health care and education, while expanding the civil service immensely.

[30] Lortie, "Montreal 1960," 104.

[31] Annick Germain and Damaris Rose, *Montréal: The Quest for a Metropolis* (Chichester, West Sussex, England: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2000), 66.

[32] Francine Dansereau and Peter Foggin estimate that of the buildings demolished in Montreal (1964-1971) between 80% and 90% were residences. Francine Dansereau and Peter Foggin, *Quelques aspects du développment spatial de l'agglomération Montréalaise* (Montreal: Institut national de la recherché scientifique,1976), 42. Drapeau often dismissed these homes as "*les taudis*" and a blight upon Montreal's landscape that needed to be removed: Martin Drouin, "De la demolition des taudis à la sauvegarde du patrimoine bâti," *Urban History Review* 41 (2012): 26-27.

147,000 people.[33] By depleting surrounding areas of their buildings and residents, these structures further damaged an already suffering local economy and caused distress to both those evicted and those who lost their source of income.[34]

Although residents initially shared the city and provincial government's enthusiasm for these projects, by the late 1960s ongoing demolitions and dislocation contributed to a growing opposition to the modernist philosophy shaping public policy and Drapeau's style of governance. While Drapeau often characterized his behaviour as acting in the interests of the citizenry, in reality his administration suffered from the centralization of power and an absence of elected opposition. His propensity for sweeping remedies for societal ills revealed the "deeply authoritarian" nature often attributed to high modernist disciples.[35]

Local socio-political opposition manifested itself in neighbourhoods most threatened by Montreal's developmental aim, specifically in areas that ringed the downtown area, both to the west (Little Burgundy, Saint-Henri and Pointe Saint-Charles) and to the east (Centre-Sud and Hochelaga). In addition to the developmental pressure facing each neighbourhood, these areas also suffered from the poor delivery of social

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[33] Poitras, City on the Move, 176.

[34] Chan Kwok Bun, *Smoke and Fire: The Chinese in Montreal* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1991), 293.

[35] James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 94. Under Drapeau, city committee meetings were frequently conducted by telephone, public consultation was nonexistent and developers often met privately with the mayor. Public policy stemmed the executive council, where council candidates were handpicked by the mayor, "a fact which ranks him among the most powerful of urban political figures and which contributed to his ability to treat Montreal as little more than a site for his personal dreams of glory.": Timothy Lloyd Thomas, *A City with a Difference: The Rise and Fall of the Montreal Citizen's Movement* (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1997), 23-24. By 1970, civic opposition to Drapeau had coalesced under the Front d'action publique (FRAP) banner. However, FRAP became a political casualty of the October Crisis as Drapeau effectively painted as them as Front de libération national sympathizers, winning the subsequent election: Dominique Clément, "The October Crisis of 1970: Human Rights Abuses Under the War Measures Act," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 42.2 (2008): 170.

services. Responding to local needs, organizations were often formed to provide legal,
medical, or social services considered lacking or unavailable.[36]

Elsewhere in the city, activist groups formed in opposition to specific direct
threats to their neighbourhoods. Plans for a massive office-hotel complex dubbed La
Cité that required the demolition of 25-acre residential area centered on Rue du Parc, for
example, triggered the formation of the Milton-Parc Citizens' Committee and led to a
protracted struggle.[37] The construction of the east-west Autoroute Ville-Marie likewise
elicited vociferous local opposition, with critics citing the needless destruction of housing
and the deterioration of air quality as major concerns. Furthermore, the lack of public
consultation was a major source of grievance for locals. The expressway's proposed
route, from Westmount to Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, united Anglophone and
Francophone residents in their opposition.[38]

This neighbourhood-lead opposition to modernist planning echoed those
transpiring in other North American cities, most often in response to expressway
construction, and the demolitions they entailed. Since 1959, activists in San Francisco
had routinely opposed cross-town expressway plans, leading to their eventual

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[36] Such groups formed in the Sud-Ouest neighbourhoods as early as 1963. Often their aim was
to improve upon already existing services and they operated in conjunction with established
government or church-lead organizations. Local groups in the Centre-Sud and Hochelaga
emerged in the late 1960s and often sought to establish their own social services, separate from
the state. Areas such as these were often targeted for widespread demolition as a result of the
preponderance of aged housing and the fact they were often home to lower-income residents:
Donald McGraw, *Le développement des groupes populaires à Montréal (1963-1973)* (Montreal:
Université du Québec à Montréal, 1978), 13-15.

[37] The Milton-Parc Citizens' Committee was founded in 1968 and, like groups in other
neighbourhoods, also worked to provide services to local residents. For a more detailed
explanation of the group and the events leading to the creation of the Milton-Parc housing co-
operative see Claire Helman, *The Milton-Park Affair: Canada's Largest Citizen-Developer
Confrontation* (Montreal: Véhiculre Press, 1987) or Lucia Kowaluk and Carolle Piché-Burton,
Communauté Milton-Parc: L'histoire d'hier et le fonctionnement d'aujourd'hui (Montreal:
Communauté Milton-Parc, 2012).

[38] Valérie Poirier, "L'autoroute est-ouest, c'est pas le progrès!": enviornnement et mobilisation
cityoenne en opposition au projet d'autoroute est-ouest à Montréal en 1971," *Bulletin d'histoire
politique* 23.2 (2015): 67-70.

cancellation.[39] Throughout the 1960s residents of New York's West Village

neighbourhood assailed the proposed Lower Manhattan Expressway.[40] In Toronto,

residents stalled plans for the Spadina Expressway which would have cleaved a series

of inner-city neighbourhoods in two.[41]

By 1973, these local neighbourhood struggles coalesced into a city-wide

preservationist movement under the banner of Save Montreal. Calling for the cessation

of demolitions and elimination of green spaces, the group advocated for a transformation

in the manner that development was realized in the urban core. The adoption of

planning guidelines was considered the means to achieve this while also democratizing

the planning process.

The response of Save Montreal, and other groups and residents, to postwar

high-modernist planning stands can be viewed through two lenses. The first is an

offshoot of the wide-ranging grassroots political and social movement often categorized

as the New Left. Secondly, community activism has been understood as an

aesthetic/architectural rejection of modernist forms in favour of those more closely

associated with everyday usage and the vernacular.

The New Left and Grassroots Community Activism

As noted earlier, high-modernist disciples regarded the redevelopment and

rationalization of urban space as necessary for socio-economic prosperity. The

imposition of massive forms in North American city centres was initially welcomed but

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[39] See William Issel, "Land Values, Human Values, and the Preservation of the City's Treasured Appearance': Environmentalism, Politics, and the San Francisco Freeway Revolt," *Pacific Historical Review* 68.4 (1999): 611-646.

[40] Alice Sparberg Alexiou, *Jane Jacobs: Urban Visionary* (Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd., 2006), 107-134.

[41] The Spadina Expressway was eventually permanently cancelled by Ontario Premier Bill Davis in 1972. Danielle Robinson, "Modernism at a Crossroad: The Spadina Expressway Controversy in Toronto, Ontario ca. 1960-1971," *The Canadian Historical Review* 92.2 (June 2011): 295-322.

would eventually be met with criticism from many inner-city residents. An early, and perhaps most influential, critic of urban renewal policies was Jane Jacobs. As a result of her involvement with the grassroots contestation of urban redevelopment in Lower Manhattan, she penned *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, a book that would prove hugely influential to urban planning and local politics. Jacobs' concluded that large-scale redevelopment projects were ruinous to the behaviours and patterns that made cities successful in the first place. Existing streetscapes and the aged buildings that populated them were important for the livelihood of both residents and small businesses.[42] Furthermore, Christopher Klemek surmises that what was possibly most galling to Jacobs and her fellow activists was that urban renewal "was fundamentally tyrannical in its concentration of power and undemocratic in its application."[43] Absent from municipal plans at the time was any consultation from the very people who were to be most disrupted by civic redevelopment proposals. In subsequent years, Jacobs' philosophy has been criticized by some scholars for her commodification of aged buildings.[44] Nonetheless, her anti-bureaucratic, resident-oriented contestation of state-sponsored redevelopment projects was emblematic of a growing form of urban-centered activism that came to be designated as the New Left.

Appearing during the 1960s, the New Left entailed a rejection of the postwar "bureaucratic societies" that were considered responsible for stifling democratic initiatives[45] as well as political parties traditionally associated with the left.[46] Activist

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[42] Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961).

[43] Christopher Klemek, *The Transatlantic Collapse of Urban Renewal: Postwar Urbanism from New York to Berlin* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 244.

[44] In promoting built heritage as elements of an "authentic" neighbourhood, Zukin argues that Jacobs contributed to patterns of consumption and real estate acquisition that would result in the displacement of existing residents from the very types of neighbourhoods Jacobs wished to safeguard: Sharon Zukin, *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 227-230.

[45] Bryan D. Palmer, *Canada's 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era.* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009)*,* 252.

[46] Ibid., 250.

groups that held New Left principles spurned formal structures, instead demanding "a new politics of resistance founded on authentic emancipation and human freedom, a 'socialism' of self-management, anti-imperialism, and direct democracy."[47] The movement was distinctly urban in nature and its activists believed that cities provided the milieu in which "to construct a *counter*-modernity, an alternative society in which citizens would be able to control the forces that shaped their lives."[Italics his][48]

Scholarly discussions of the New Left in Canada consider Montreal as the locus of New Leftist thought and activity in the country. Sean Mills notes how worldwide decolonization movements shaped and inspired New Leftst ideas in the city, helping make the city into a prominent centre for Black consciousness and feminist thought.[49] These postcolonial conversations, Ian McKay argues, contributed to the growing nationalist movement as activists increasingly viewed English Canada and the United States as purveyors of capitalist domination.[50] Despite the apparent effervescence of Montreal's leftist community, these debates consider the movement fleeting, with Bryan Palmer arguing that by the end of the 1960s the movement imploded thanks to factional infighting.[51]

Discussion of 1970s activism tends to focus on overall trends amongst community organizations. Mills, Jacques Godbout and Jean-Pierre Collin contend that leftist activists and the labour movement grew more militant during the 1970s, becoming increasingly associated with Marxist and Maoist schools of thought.[52] Henri Lustiger-Thaler and Eric Shragge explain that by the late 1970s community groups experienced a

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[47] Ian McKay, *Rebels, Reds, and Radicals: Rethinking Canada's Left History* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2005), 183.

[48] Sean Mills,*The Empire Within: Postcolonial Thought and Political Activism in Sixties Montreal.* Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 58.

[49] Ibid., 97-120.

[50] McKay, *Rebels, Reds*, 188.

[51] Palmer, *Canada's 1960s*, 256.

[52] Mills, *Empire Within*, 208-210 and Jacques Godbout and Jean-Pierre Collin, *Les organismes populaires en milieu urbain: contre-pouvoir ou novella pratique professionelle?* (Montreal: Insitut national de la rechcerce scientifique, 1977), 220-221.

growing degree of institutionalization once they received provincial funding for service

provision, a trend that would lead towards an increasingly narrow organizational focus in

later decades.[53] While these studies provide an adequate overview, their analysis

overlooks community groups that resist such classification.

Political factors also influenced the outlook and behaviour of community activism

during this period. Disappointment regarding ongoing economic inequalities in Quebec

pushed governmental bodies and non-state actors towards a more stringently nationalist

position.[54] This outlook would also inform the provincial government's development of

cultural policy, while influencing how built forms were interpreted in Quebec.[55]

Changing Relations to Built Form

As noted by scholars, the recognition and preservation of built structures is

charged with symbolism. Since the late nineteenth-century, the commemoration of

buildings and sites has been utilized by governing bodies as a means of fostering a

cohesive nationalist sentiment throughout Europe and North America.[56] This

interpretation of heritage sites resembles Maurice Halbwachs conclusions regarding

social memory. Halbwachs argues that an individual's recollections are contiguous on

their perpetual reconstruction within the greater community. However, such a

reconstruction is not an act of passivity; the maintenance of a distinct social memory

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[53] Henri Lustiger-Thaler and Eric Shragge, "The New Urban Left: Parties Without Actors," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 22.2 (1998): 233-244.

[54] William D. Coleman, *The Independence Movement in Quebec 1945-1980* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 93.

[55] Richard Handler considers the 1972 Cultural Property Act to be an extension of nationalist politics as "the various activities that it initiated or championed indicate that its primary mission was to make both French Canadians and the members of other nations aware of the existence of French Canada's historical and cultural possessions." See: Richard Handler, *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Quebec* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 144-145.

[56] For example see David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985) and Randall Mason, *The Once and Future New York: Historic Preservation and the Modern City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

requires the ongoing erasure of all that might fragment or distance the constituent groups from one another.[57] The result of state-sponsored heritage commemoration is the creation of a built memory infrastructure, a means by which to remember the past (keeping in mind that such remembrance is a form of interpretation) and guiding our present understandings of place and identity.

In the case of Quebec, scholars have argued that relations to built heritage are enmeshed with concerns and rivalries between the linguistic communities. The competing duality of English and French Montreal fostered a climate in which each cultural community interpreted their urban area by means of their own distinct read of the city's history. As historian Alan Gordon notes, throughout the first decades of the twentieth-century, monuments were erected commemorating people deemed to be of local, regional or national significance. The historical actors selected for commemoration by each linguistic community emphasized differing periods or events as foundational, or contributing, to each group's collective memory.[58] Such conceptions of built heritage remained interwoven with notions of national identity in postwar Quebec. Addressing the development of provincial heritage sites in the Quebec City area, Patrice Groulx and Alain Roy highlight the divergent aims of provincial and federal cultural policy. While the federal government designated buildings it considered representative of the development of Canada, the Quebec government increasingly viewed heritage sites as a method by which to cultivate the Québécois nation.[59]

However, by the late 1960s, contemporary scholars argued that identity was less enmeshed with national memory infrastructure and increasingly invested in one's locality

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[57] Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. and ed. by Lewis A. Coser. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 182-183.

[58] See Alan Gordon, *Making Public Pasts: The Contested Terrain of Montreal's Public Memories, 1891-1930* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001).

[59] See Patrice Groulx and Alain Roy, "Les lieux historiques de la region de Québec comme lieux d'expression identitaire, 1965-1985," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 48.4 (1995): 527-541.

or community. This outlook was congruous with the anti-structural positions prominent

with individuals and groups associated with the New Left. Furthermore, this community

emphasis also contested the forward-looking structural redevelopment of many North

American cities. In the case of Montreal, early critiques by architecture scholars, such

as Melvin Charney and Jean-Claude Marsan, rejected modernism's institutionalized

forms. They believed that architecture was not simply an aesthetic movement but one

with an implicitly social element. Whereas governing bodies celebrated the new and the

grandiose, Charney and Marsan praised the built vernacular which they felt to be the

clearest representation of both a people and their place.[60] Jean-Claude Marsan, himself

a former member of Save Montreal, considered this new concept, "*l'idéologie de la

réappropriation*", an ideology characterized by a rediscovery of values and the

neighbourhood life that nurtured them. These values, Marsan notes, stem from a

concern for the physiological and psychological needs of the populace. Such needs

represent a diverse array of tangible and intangible requirements from clean air and

security, to personal happiness in their urban space.[61]

The first manifestation of this new ideology was the formation of neighbourhood

advocacy and urban conservation groups in the late 1960s and early 1970s.[62] According

to Luc Noppen, Lucie Morisset and Martin Drouin the result of these conservationist

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[60] See Melvin Charney, "Towards a Definition of Architecture in Quebec," in *On Architecture: Melvin Charney A Critical Anthology*, ed. Martin Louis, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013), 246-264. and Jean-Claude Marsan, *Montreal: une esquisse du future* (Quebec: Institut québécois de recherché sur la culture, 1983).

[61] Marsan, *Esquisse*, 146.

[62] There existed an abundance of neighbourhood-affiliated groups during this time. As Donald McGraw notes, many of these groups operated in areas surrounding downtown Montreal (Saint-Henri, Little Burgundy, Pointe Saint-Charles, Centre-Sud, Hochelaga). Due to the downtown redevelopment, these surrounding neighbourhoods faced developmental pressure as well: Donald McGraw, *Le développement des groupes populaires à Montréal (1963-1973)* (Montreal: Université du Québec à Montréal, 1978), 13. For a more detailed examination of these neighbourhood groups see McGraw's text as well as Jacques Gadbout and Jean-Pierre Collin, *Les organismes populaires en milieu urbain: contre-pouvoir our nouvelle pratique professionelle?* (Montreal: Institut national de la recherche scientifique, 1977) and Pierre Hamel. *Logement et luttes urbaines à Montréal* (Montréal: Université de Montréal, 1983).

groups was the formation of a specifically "Montreal identity" rooted in a previously ignored built environment, what Drouin labels the "Victorian city", an area of the city composed of 19th century buildings and architecture beyond the limits of "Ville-Marie" (or "Old Montreal"). Furthermore, by attaching local identity to this area, conservationists were also rejecting the "City of Progress" viewpoint then adopted by Mayor Jean Drapeau and Montreal's city government.[63]

Like many of their contemporaries, it was in this milieu that Save Montreal operated. As a result, Noppen and Morisset argue that Save Montreal "*eurent un impact essentiel sur la conceptualisation de l'identité montréalaise*".[64] Drouin, in his examination of Montreal's heritage preservation movements, *Le combat du patrimoine à Montréal (1973-2003)*, also considers Save Montreal to be one of the organizations principally responsible for nurturing this shift in local identity.[65] While these works aptly situate Save Montreal into a broader discussion regarding the changing relationships between community, identity, and built heritage, they nonetheless represent a teleological analysis. As a result, Save Montreal's other principles and objectives are discussed only peripherally.[66] While Save Montreal was undoubtedly concerned with the preservation of built heritage, it was far from being the group's only concern. Rather, the group's wide-ranging concerns and goals prevent the organization from being classified in any singular manner. Save Montreal exists at the intersection of local identity and New Left-

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[63] Drouin, *Combat du patrimoine*, 318-323.

[64] Morisset, *Identités urbaines*, 166.

[65] See Martin Drouin, *Le combat du patrimoine à Montréal (1973-2003)* (Quebec : Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2005).

[66] To date, Ryan Madden is the only author to have written about Save Montreal exclusively. In his research paper, Saving Montreal: The Underlying Values of Urban Conservation in 1970s Montreal, Madden explores the values he perceives to be inherent to Save Montreal. These values are namely what he characterizes as "left educationalism", a concept that constitutes a "contestation of capitalism while relying on academic principles as a model." However, Madden's inquiry is limited by the parameters of a MA research paper and its use of Save Montreal's periodical SOS Montreal as its primary source of analysis. See Ryan Madden, *Saving Montreal: The Underlying Values of Urban Conservation in 1970s Montreal* (Research Paper, Concordia University, 2012), 57.

inspired ideals that combined to create a group whose disposition included both the safeguarding of the past and the advocation of a more equitable present.

This thesis will undertake a detailed survey of Save Montreal and its campaigns throughout the years 1973-1985, calling special attention to the personal stories behind the group and the campaigns in which they were engaged. Conversations with former members reveal specificities and positions that are not necessarily reflected in the documentary evidence. In studying the inner-city resettlement of Toronto neighbourhoods, Jon Caulfield explored the "efforts by human beings to resist institutionalized patterns of dominance and suppressed possibility and create new conditions for their social activities."[67] In a similar fashion, an oral history analysis reveals that Save Montreal's membership constructed their organization and campaigned so as to challenge the means and process by which development occurred in their city centre. This constituted a rejection of the city's high-modernist philosophy and the democratic deficit in civic affairs. While Save Montreal undoubtedly contributed to an evolving Montreal identity, the group's abiding interest in the economic impact of development, and ongoing demands for citizen participation in the planning process, highlight a group not only concerned with its city's past, but also for its future. In addition, throughout this paper I will situate the group within the broader North American context. While Save Montreal was grappling with government bodies specific to its locality, the group is nonetheless part of a transnational trend in which urban high-modernist practices were being challenged by other grassroots movements.

In profiling Save Montreal and its campaigns in greater detail, I am seeking to contribute to the study of urban conservation in Canada in general and Montreal in particular. As described earlier, the historiography of urban conservation in Montreal remains limited and most studies conceptualize debates over heritage preservation as

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[67] Caulfield, *City Form*, xiii.

part of a broader contestation over local identity. In highlighting the political-economic

considerations inherent to Save Montreal's activism, my paper seeks to help elucidate a

dimension of Montreal's urban conservation discussions that has been somewhat

overlooked. Furthermore, studies of Quebec activism have tended to concentrate on the

growing radicalization of leftist/labour groups in the province during the 1970s,

accentuating their Marxist/Maoist outlook.[68] Groups that eschewed this degree of

militancy have received less study or remain absent from discussion altogether.

Furthermore, pan-Canadian investigations of 1970s urban reform generally place

greater emphasis on Toronto in their studies.[69] The electoral success of reform-minded

politicians in the 1970s makes the city a useful example of the institutionalization of

urban conservationist ideas. As a result, Montreal's anti-urban renewal activism is often

neglected. This thesis seeks to broaden this discussion so as to situate Montreal in this

conversation, better revealing it as a forum for conservationist debate. This is especially

pertinent seeing as some of the buildings Save Montreal successfully campaigned for

are considered to be of national significance.[70]

In demanding reforms to the urban planning process Save Montreal understood

public participation to be a means of democratizing inner-city development. Considering

the group's position, this thesis will also contribute to historical discussions of North

American urban planning.[71] The positionality of public responses to postwar urban

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[68] See Pierre Hamel, *Logement et luttes urbaines à Montréal* (Montréal: Université de Montréal, 1983) and Palmer, *Canada's 1960s*.

[69] Prominent examples include: David Ley, *The New Middle-class and the Remaking of the Central City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) and Christopher Klemek *Transatlantic Collapse*.

[70] The Grey Nuns mother house, the Shaughnessy House, Windsor Station, the Monument National, and the Sulpician towers at the Grand Séminaire were all, to various degrees, the subject of Save Montreal's conservation efforts. All of these sites were designated National Historic Sites: Drouin, *Combat du patrimoine*, 345.

[71] Planning history is a relatively recent addition to scholarship: Christopher Silver, "From the Editor," *Journal of Planning History* 1.1 (2002): 3.

change is central to planning history conversations.[72] Debates over the methods and

mentalities of local opposition to development projects are incredibly relevant given that

the means used to achieve effective participatory planning remains unresolved.[73]

In conversation, some of the Save Montrealers pondered their potential role in

gentrifying the inner-city. Scholars have argued that the preservation of built heritage

has not been the precursor for sustainable community building but rather a contributing

factor to the ongoing displacement of inner-city residents.[74] Considering this, the impact

of grassroots conservationist organizations on the gentrification of Montreal's central

neighbourhoods requires further exploration.

This thesis utilizes publications produced by Save Montreal during the years in

which it was primarily active (1973-1985), namely the organization's central publication

SOS Montreal as well as press releases relating to the city's housing crisis.[75]

Correlating newspaper articles relating to specific civic addresses were accessed at the

Archives de Montréal.[76] In effect, this material acted as the public face of the

organization and the means by which the group most effectively communicated its

positions. Coupled with the newspaper articles penned by and about Save Montreal,

they form the bulk of the known documentary material. However, considering that many

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[72] Recent examples include Issel, "Land Values, Human Values", Gregory L. Thompson, "Taming the Neighborhood Revolution: Planners, Power Brokers, and the Birth of Neotraditionalism in Portland, Oregon," *Journal of Planning History* 6.3 (2007): 214-247 and Christopher W. Wells, "From Freeway to Parkway: Federal Law, Grassroots Environmental Protest, and the Evolving Design of Interstate-35E in Saint Paul, Minnesota," *Journal of Planning History* 11.1 (2012): 8-26.
[73] Public participation in local planning processes often exists as token gestures, whereby residents are legally notified about projects, but are offered little opportunity to comment or critique, leaving many frustrated and alienated. Judith E. Innes and David E. Booher argue that public participation needs to be a highly collaborative effort that encourages local stakeholders to dialogue throughout the process creating an environment in which projects can thoughtfully mature: Judith E. Innes and David E. Booher, "Reframing public participation: strategies for the 21st century," *Planning Theory & Practice* 5.4 (December 2004): 419-436.
[74] See Andrew Hurley, *Beyond Preservation: Using Public History to Revitalize Inner Cities* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press: 2010) and Sharon Zukin, *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1982).
[75] *SOS Montreal* was published (either monthly or quarterly) throughout 1976-1982.
[76] The civic addresses consulted were related to the Van Horne mansion and campaign sites.

Save Montrealers still reside within the city, it was imperative to speak with them. Conversations revealed a greater complexity to the group than that contained strictly in the written material.

As a result oral history sources form the primary research for this thesis, specifically twenty interviews with sixteen former members of Save Montreal.[77] Interviewees were identified primarily through word of mouth. In some cases, individuals could not be reached as their available contact information was out of date. Sadly, another individual with whom I had been in contact passed away suddenly before we could speak in person. The interviews concentrated on the members' reasons for joining Save Montreal, their reactions to local urban change, the conservation campaigns they participated in, and personal reflections regarding the group's perceived impact on residents evolving mentalities. These oral history interviews fill a crucial gap in the study of heritage preservation in Montreal. As Steven High observes, "As an oral historian, I believe it is essential that we try to understand the ways in which people define themselves."[78] Furthermore, I feel that oral history's aim of widening the circle of historical enquiry is especially appropriate given the grassroots, non-hierarchical ethos of Save Montreal.

When conducting oral history it is necessary to reflect upon one's role in the interview process. Self-reflexivity provides the opportunity to identify the power dynamics that are often at play when conducting oral history interviews. As Alan Wong writes, "being reflexive reminds oral history practitioners of their own positionality at all times relative to the narrator and, thus, helps keep the power balanced between those

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[77] For a complete list of the interviewees, please consult the Appendix.
[78] Steven High, *Oral History at the Crossroads: Sharing Life Stories of Survival and Displacement* (Toronto: UBC Press, 2014), 20.

on both sides of the table."[79] Considering the non-hierarchial structure adopted by Save Montreal, it was crucial to share authority with the participants as much as possible.

I took the time to introduce such concepts as "shared authority" with my interview partners, and explained that while I may be the author, the story I was telling was theirs. With each interview, I became further convinced of the need to allow the interviewee to guide the interview as they saw fit. Questions were prepared in advance but often my standard opening question would be the only one utilized. Instead, the interviewees became as much, if not more, of a guide as I was. Another means by which I sought to share authority was through my analysis of conservation campaigns. Save Montreal's organizational structure allowed its members to conduct simultaneous campaigns. As a result, the group's activism was prolific. It was necessary to hone my focus. The campaigns examined in this thesis were selected due to the importance accorded to them by the Save Montrealers. While I originally had ideas regarding which campaigns would be the focus of this paper, the interviews altered this plan and I adjusted my focus.

The devolution of power and authority in the interview process was also attained by establishing friendships with the interviewees. As Lisa Tillman-Healy writes, friendship can be an important element in oral history fieldwork, the method by which researchers "gain entrée" to their sources.[80] However, while the closeness and proximity I felt with the Save Montrealers undoubtedly helped the research creation process, it brought about other concerns, specifically related to what Valerie Yow describes as "unconscious advocacy", a scenario in which the researcher becomes "too greatly

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[79] Alan Wong, "Conversations for the Real World: Shared Authority, Self-Reflexivity, and Process in the Oral History Interview," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 43.1 (2009): 245.

[80] Lisa Tillman-Healy, "Friendship as Method," *Qualitative Inquiry* 9.5 (2003): 732. In these circumstances, Tillman continues, the "primary procedures" of oral history become "those we use to build and sustain friendship: conversation, everyday involvement, compassion, giving, and vulnerability." Such proximity with interviewees is often beneficial for it can bring about "a level of understanding and depth of experience we may be unable to reach using only traditional methods." See Ibid., 734 and 737.

affected by" their "respect for an institution in the public presentation of the oral history evidence."[81] Personal experiences provided a means of identifying with the members of Save Montreal and their campaigns. My parents participated in successful heritage campaigns in Oakville, Ontario where I grew up. As a result, heritage preservation and urban conservation were a frequent topic of conversation growing up. My earliest political letter writings were to Oakville's mayor regarding buildings under threat. It was no surprise that I chose this topic for my thesis and that I, for the most part, aligned socially and politically with the Save Montrealers. As the project took shape and I became further embedded in my research, I became increasingly attached to both the project and the individuals who made this project possible. I was fortunate to not only have gained access to a wealth of knowledge and information but also to have created friendships along the way.

And yet, when writing a thesis utilizing oral history, there exists a power imbalance; namely I, the author, have access to the words of others in formulating an argument of my deducing. Despite attempts throughout the interview process to share authority with the participants, there remains an asymmetry of which I am the beneficiary. As a result, I have decided to integrate self-composed poems at the outset of each chapter and thesis conclusion. Writing poetry represents an opportunity to share authority with one's reader since the medium often leaves the subject matter open to interpretation. In this way, the reader is invested with a degree of power and authority as they are free to construe the meaning of each piece. In addition, considering the democratic principles advocated by Save Montreal, I felt it important to at least disadvantage my position somewhat in creating this thesis.

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[81] Valerie Yow, "Ethics and Interpersonal Relationships in Oral History Research," *Oral History Review* 22.1 (1995): 55.

While each piece differs in form, the poems will focus on both my role in the research process as well as one's relationship to our built heritage. I must acknowledge the central influence that the poet Dennis Lee had on these poems, as his writings on the urban environment have been a source of ongoing inspiration.[82] Further explanation of the poems is deliberately avoided, impelling the reader to consider the pieces independently and thereby derive their own conclusions.

The following chapters scrutinize Save Montreal and its campaigns with oral history excerpts serving as both a guide and object of analysis. While Save Montreal's activities have been documented to a degree,[83] oral testimony provides a heretofore unutilized means by which to examine the group during its activist phase.[84] More specifically, chapter one focuses on the formation of Save Montreal as a result of changing attitudes amongst those Montreal residents dismayed by the demolitions affecting the city centre. Save Montreal's membership, their reasons for joining the urban conservation movement and the non-hierarchial structure adopted by the group are examined in this chapter.

Chapter two turns to the campaigns undertaken by Save Montreal as well as its use of walking tours to educate residents of the city's built heritage. This profile reveals the diversity (in architecture, proportions and cultural provenance) of structures targeted for demolition, showcasing the extent and arbitrariness by which central Montreal was

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[82] Lee was involved with community preservation movements in Toronto (including the efforts to halt the Spadina Expressway) and wrote a number of poems about the need for civic engagement, specifically the book of poetry, *Civil Elegies*.

[83] As discussed earlier, works by Noppen, Morisset and Drouin consider Save Montreal as one of the key groups responsible for cultivating a civic identity (*montréalité)* associated with the Victorian-era structures of the city-centre and adjoining neighbourhoods. By incorporating these areas, and the built structures that comprised them, Save Montreal and other urban conservation groups were responsible for expanding identity beyond the confines of the Old Montreal-rooted "Ville Marie" and the mid-century "City of Progress" popularized by Drapeau, the provincial government and the private sector.

[84] By activist phase, I am referring to a period during which the group was utilizing more confrontational tactics such as street protests and demonstrations. While the group would continue to operate beyond 1985, it transitioned to a less combative organization and met with less frequency.

being developed. The details of the proposed redevelopments may have differed but Save Montreal's response was consistent in arguing for a more gradual and consultative planning process. Furthermore, the manner by which Save Montreal responded to these plans reveals the organization's multifacetedness. Confrontations over the city's built environment cannot simply be reduced to debates over heritage and aesthetics. While Save Montreal utilized these arguments, they also employed a range of strategies and responses to reveal the social and economic impact that demolitions and modernist architectural forms had on the city.

Chapter One: Formation of Save Montreal

Not for the first time, I ask: am I interlocutor or interloper?
These pages, carefully curated language,
Privilege me, the discipline in which I ply
The ensuing remarks mine but
Their scaffolding is shoulders
Elevated over years, countless hours
At a cost often concealed from casual observation.
Such insight proves troubling gossamer
Unsettles the author, making the comfortable
Perch that is the present, something less
akin to certain.

The demolition of the Van Horne mansion in 1973 was an example of a wider

pattern of development in Montreal's recently-established central business district.

Henry Aubin's multi-year investigation into the sources of capital being used for urban

redevelopment revealed the trans-national workings at play in Montreal. Business

interests from a host of European nations provided the financing or financial backing for

a host of residential and commercial constructions. Throughout the post-war period

Montreal established a reputation amongst foreign investors for its accessible property

market, an environment supported by the municipal and provincial authorities.[85]

Demolition permits were easy to come by and, until 1975, could be had for a $5 fee.[86]

Montreal's property tax structure also encouraged high-rise construction. Property taxes

were allocated based on the condition of the building and according to the "the highest

potential economic use" for a particular site, that is if the site was deemed suitable for

high-rise/density development.[87] The former rewarded property owners who refused to

maintain or renovate existing structures, while the latter provided the financial incentive

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[85] Henry Aubin, *City for Sale: International financiers take a major North American city by storm* (Montreal: Editions l'Etincelle,1977), 46.
[86] Berku, Dida. "Saving Montreal," in *The City Book: The politics and planning of Canada's cities*, James Lorimer, ed. (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1976), 162.
[87]Ibid., 166.

to redevelop a site by building a structure whose size would match the property taxes accorded to the site.

Publicly financed infrastructure projects also contributed to the redevelopment of Montreal. Built to accommodate the soaring ambitions of the burgeoning Quebec middle class, these projects aided the development of the corporate city, including the Montreal Metro. Critics of Mayor Drapeau charged that there was little coherent transportation planning aside from providing corporate workers and clients ease of access to the downtown area.[88] The Metro, with its warren of subterranean tunnels providing ready connections to newly-built office complexes, aided Montreal in attracting national and international investors.

Montreal's attractiveness for investors and developers also stemmed from the fact that other Canadian cities (of which Toronto was most notable) were adopting contrary urban planning policies. By 1962, Toronto's municipal government had abandoned large-scale urban renewal programs in favour of more sensitive, community oriented revitalization strategies. First the Alexandra Park and, to an even greater degree, the Trefann Court project demonstrated a marked change in approach to renewal policies.[89] The pre-existing modernist vision for the city was further undermined when, in June 1971, following years of vocal public opposition to Toronto's Spadina Expressway, Ontario Premier Bill Davis cancelled the project.[90] The next year David Crombie, an opponent of the expressway, was elected mayor of Toronto. Under Crombie, Toronto City Council adopted a by-law that would require "specific exemption from Council for any buildings downtown more than 45 feet tall or 40,000 square feet in

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[88] Abe Limonchik, "The Montreal Economy: the Drapeau Years," in *The City and Radical Social Change* ed. Dimitrios Roussopoulos. (Montreal: Black Rose Books Ltd., 1982), 185.
[89] Pierre Fillion, "The Neighbourhood Improvement Plan: Montreal and Toronto: Contrasts between a participatory and a centralized planning approach to urban policy making," *Urban History Review* 17.1 (1988): 18.
[90] Danielle Robinson, "Modernism at a Crossroad", 320.

size."[91] Despite the fact that city council provided many exemptions, development in downtown Toronto was diminished and greater emphasis was placed on harmonizing new projects with the city's existing architecture and street grid. This "tightening of development restrictions" taking place in Toronto and other Canadian cities made Montreal more attractive to property developers and the foreign capital that was supporting them.[92]

The result of this shifting political context was ongoing demolitions throughout Montreal, and especially in the city centre. The numbers were dizzying. Over a ten year period (1965-1975) the demolition rate accelerated from 1,600 to 2,500 residential units per year.[93] In 1974 alone the city issued demolition permits for 245 buildings comprising 1200 dwelling units.[94] Furthermore, the rate of property abandonment also increased over this period.[95] Low-cost housing was the primary casualty of Montreal's modernization campaign. The political support accorded to the rationalization of urban space ensured that developers encountered little to no opposition from government bodies. Affordable family rental units were razed and not replaced in new developments. While demolitions took place throughout the city, the low-rise residential areas ringing the burgeoning new office district centered on Boulevard René-Lévesque were the hardest hit.[96] The effect these actions had on some residents was profound; provoking a strong, visceral reaction amongst those who later joined Save Montreal.

Historian Joy Parr, writing about the effects that megaprojects had on local residents, noted how "radical changes had unsettled their daily lives and forced them to

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[91] Jon Caulfield, *The Tiny Perfect Mayor* (Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1974), 100.
[92] Berku, Dida. "Saving Montreal," 165.
[93] Melvin Charney, "Housing in Canada: A Dead-End Choice," in *On Architecture: Melvin Charney A Critical Anthology*, ed. Martin Louis (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013), 285-286.
[94] Berku, "Saving Montreal," 164.
[95] Charney, Melvin, "Housing in Canada," 285-286.
[96] Charney, Melvin, "Housing in Canada," 285.

encounter their environment anew and adapt the practices through which to live competently and sustainably day by day."[97] Having experienced massive changes to their local environment Montrealers were forced to rethink the ways in which they understood and synthesized their city. Familiar patterns and landscapes had been altered or destroyed so Montreal's residents had to relearn their city anew. Parr considers this process to be 'embodiment', which acts both

> as active adaptation to changed circumstances and as 'the whispering of ghosts', relicts of past successful adaptations to familiar worlds later remade, persisting as familiars, reminders of losses, and also sources of resilience and resources for rebuilding.[98]

The loss of vast tracts of the urban fabric provided inspiration to confront those who were responsible for Montreal's remaking. Although disorienting and depressing to the future Save Montrealers, past demolitions and future threats prompted individuals to challenge the prevailing high-modernist mentality.

Not only were existing streets and buildings being erased, but the buildings erected in their place were often of inferior quality. Frequently, they were not replaced with anything at all and instead left vacant, for parking or for a possible future project. While some notable projects from the 1960s were lauded for their architectural impact, the corporate and residential towers being constructed during the 1970s were, according to some Montrealers, not of the same standard. Their designs lacked innovation and their concrete exteriors exhibited a mundane monotony. In conversation, the Save Montrealers referred to the Shaughnessy Village neighbourhood as an area that best exemplifies this type of dull construction.[99] In addition, the streetscapes themselves were irrevocably transformed. Changes in scale brought about by relentless high-rise

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[97] Joy Parr, *Sensing Changes: Technologies, Environments, and the Everyday, 1953-2003* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 1.
[98] Ibid., 2.
[99] Shaughnessy Village, as a neighbourhood, is a more recent conceptualization, but the area in question is between Rues Atwater, Guy, Sherbrooke and Boulevard René-Lévesque.

construction produced an altogether different landscape from the low-rise, historic

streetscapes that had predominated in what had been the Square Mile and adjoining

neighbourhoods. In other instances, homes were often lost to infrastructural projects

such as the Ville-Marie Expressway and its off-ramps. This was the case for Brian

Merrett who witnessed his "neighbourhood suddenly transformed from a residential area

with housing and of small apartment buildings all around into, eventually, in 1973, a

highway exit ramp."[100] For Brian, photographs "became that document of 'My goodness,

what is happening to my neighbourhood?'"[101]

For Adele, the changes resembled something out of this world – a scarred, lunar

landscape, devoid of life: "It was going to look like something out of the moon, you

know?"[102] Her comparison of Montreal to the moon reveals the degree to which many

parts of the city experienced structural obliteration, and how foreign these changes

seemed. Such frustration was echoed by Caroline Breslaw who related how precious

Victorian homes were razed in the Shaughnessy Village area for proposed high-rises:

> **Caroline** – Let's tear down the north side of Dorchester to put up high-rises. Do
> you know they tore down, in the 60s, the citizens protested what was planned:
> two 25-storey towers near the corner of, west of Atwater on the north side of
> Dorchester. The neighbours to the south in Shaughnessy Village protested and
> now we have parking lots.[103]

Caroline uses 'parking lots' as means of emphasizing the follies of the past. The fact

that, over 40 years later, the site is still a parking lot highlights the senselessness of past

decisions, especially given the public opposition at the time. While office towers of poor

architectural merit were obviously disheartening, the loss of cherished buildings for

desolate parking spaces was downright galling.

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[100] Brian Merrett, interview with Eliot Perrin, Montreal, November 19, 2014.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Adele Mardoche.
[103] Caroline Breslaw, interview with Eliot Perrin, Montreal, January 16, 2015.

While blame for these travesties was accorded to private interests and all three

levels of government, it was the civic government, and Drapeau specifically, who bore

the brunt of criticism. As Adele notes, criticism stemmed from the manner and speed by

which the city was being redeveloped:

> **Adele** – Absolutely, absolutely, there was absolutely a sense of urgency. Yes,
> absolutely. And, and, and at the same time, you know there, there was also such
> a lack of, you know the city of Montreal didn't, didn't have a plan, everything was
> very, was being rampant, you know, in a rampant way, in a random way.
> Drapeau was just running his administration whichever way he wanted, 'This is
> what I want, this is what's going to happen'. {Chuckle} There was no opposition,
> there were no provincial laws, I mean, you know, everything had to be
> constructed, everything had to be created, laws had to be written.[104]

As noted in the introduction, Drapeau's critics charged that his administration

operated in a fairly authoritarian manner. City council rarely met, businessmen enjoyed

unrestricted access to Drapeau, and there existed no avenues for civic input. Until the

1974 election, there existed virtually no elected opposition to Drapeau's Civic Party.

With such power, Drapeau pursued his developmental agenda which combined a

"laissez-faire attitude" to private high-rise development with his pursuit of large-scale

public projects.[105]

Adele's summary above reveals how development looked to the eyes of a

Montreal resident – unplanned and hasty, without any concern for other opinions or

perspectives. Emphasizing the words rampant and random, Adele leaves one with the

impression of unrelenting, senseless change. Equally offensive for the interviewees

were the architectural styles and forms foisted upon the city:

> **Norman** - I mean it was just ridiculous that people were coming in and felt free to
> tear down these buildings, and build monstrosities, including the city! I mean it
> wasn't like the City of Montreal wasn't exempt. The things that were being done
> under the renovation plan of the City of Montreal were horrible. As a matter of

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[104] Adele Mardoche.
[105] Filion, "Neighbourhood Improvement," 21.

fact, they were probably the worst! A private enterprise was doing a better job. The city was terrible! And it did change, and it evolved under our pressure.[106]

The civic government was not only passively aiding the redevelopment of Montreal, but it was also directly contributing to the destruction of the city's streetscapes. Criticizing the city in no uncertain terms, Norman is scathing in his analysis. Norman was hardly alone in his characterization of the architectural styles then being utilized by both the city and private developers. During this period noted architecture critics Reyner Banham and Peter Blake excoriated modernist architecture and the impact it had on cities everywhere. According to Blake, modernist architecture was plagued with a host of problems, both aesthetic and dogmatic in nature, that were detrimental to the functioning of cities. New materials weathered poorly, disfiguring the city whilst high-rises, internalized commercial areas, and windswept plazas eroded or destroyed the streetscape and the human-scale activity that accompanied it.[107] The strict adherence to modernist principles such as decentralization, automobility, zoning and massive built forms was detrimental to cities and residents. Blake concludes the real beneficiaries of modernist architecture were greed-motivated developers and realtors.[108] Banham agrees, arguing that while modernist megastructures had been considered avant-garde and innovative during the 1960s, by the 1970's they were being built by government bodies and private developers (Banham summarizes these actors as "the despised Establishment") as a means of "maximizing the returns from urban development."[109] These views were also in accordance with those articulated by Jane Jacobs over a decade before.

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[106] Norman Spatz, interview with Eliot Perrin, November 19, 2014.
[107] See "The Fantasy of the Skyscraper" chapter: Peter Blake, *Form Follows Fiasco: Why Modern Architecture Hasn't Worked* (Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1977): 69-82.
[108] Blake, 149.
[109] Reyner Banham, *Megastructure: Urban Futures of the Recent Past* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), 9.

The critiques highlighted above were published during the mid-1970s, a time when high-modernist projects had already been defeated in certain jurisdictions.[110] Throughout the 1970s modernist ideologies would come under further assault. The demolition of the massive Pruitt-Igoe housing complex in St. Louis, Missouri, only 22 years old, was viewed as a resounding defeat for high-modernist principles. Plagued by blight and crime, the complex proved a startling example of the failure to solve urban social and economic ills via top-down, statist initiatives.[111]

Operating in concert with modernist critiques was a growing appreciation of existing built forms. In *Death and Life* Jacobs had argued that aged buildings were necessary for the social and economic value they delivered to small shopkeepers and owners. By the 1970s though, the appreciation for the aesthetics of heritage structures led to the occupation of these spaces first by artists and then by young professionals. Attracted by the heritage and industrial elements of these spaces, city newcomers often repurposed spaces, reflecting changing attitudes toward urban life. Sharon Zukin considers this to be the "commercialization of cultural change", a process whereby industrial spaces quickly morph into artistic production spaces before becoming sites of commerce and consumption.[112] Despite many artists and professionals being against the profit-driven transformation of a neighbourhood, their presence often heralded the arrival of developers and retailers.[113] This urban demographic and economic change, now most commonly referred to as gentrification, was taking place in urban centres throughout North America. Newcomers to city centres inflated the housing costs, especially for rental units. The conversion of rental units to condominiums, the demolition of existing

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[110] Examples from the introduction include highway revolts in San Francisco, New York and Toronto.
[111] Architecture critic Charles Jencks went so far as to describe the demolition of Pruitt-Igoe as "The Death of Modern Architecture": Charles Jencks, *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (London: Academy Editions, 1981), 9.
[112] Zukin, *Loft Living*, 81.
[113] Zukin, *Loft Living*, 111-112.

homes for new development, and the rehabilitation of homes for higher-income earners resulted in the displacement of low-income households. In Toronto, for example, such changes to the housing market resulted in a displacement of 54,000 people between the mid-1970s and the mid-1980s.[114] Similar trends were taking place in Montreal, especially in the Outremont and Plateau-Mont Royal neighbourhoods. However, in comparison to other Canadian urban centres, the size of the city's rental market meant there were often units available for displaced residents in close proximity to their original dwelling. Furthermore, while these residents experienced, on average, a 20% rent increase the units they occupied were usually in better condition.[115]

However, despite the decline of high-modernist principles elsewhere, and a growing shift towards inner-city resettlement, redevelopment in Montreal's city centre continued apace. The electoral success of Drapeau's Civic Party ensured that Montreal's city government remained committed to a modernist planning agenda. The democratic deficit in city affairs, the manner by which development occurred, and the perceived poor quality of those developments generated opposition towards Drapeau and the city government. Feelings of sadness and loss produced by such circumstances prompted, even demanded, people to act. The anger and frustration felt by many Montrealers was about to boil over, it only required a tipping point. That tipping point was the Van Horne mansion.

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[114] Ley, *City Form*, 66.
[115] Ibid., 69.

Van Horne Mansion, 1973[116]

Illustration 2.1: The demolition of the Van Horne mansion, September 8, 1973.
Copyright: *La Presse*.[117]

      The demolition of the Van Horne mansion was, unquestionably, the galvanizing

event for many Montrealers, and an affair that attained national attention. The home

was purchased by developer David Azrieli with the intention of erecting an office tower

on the site.[118] News of the mansion's proposed demolition inspired Michael Fish to help

found a small group called Society for Great Places that included future Save

Montrealers Audrey Bean and Peter Lanken. They joined a growing chorus of

opposition that was calling for the home's preservation. They took to the press, calling

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[116] A general chronology of the events leading to the Van Horne mansion's destruction can be found in Donna Gabeline, Dane Lanken and Gordon Pape, *Montreal at the Crossroads* (Montreal: Harvest House Ltd., 1975) or Martin Drouin, "Les campagnes de sauvegarde de la maison Van Horne et du couvent des Soeurs grises ou les questionnements d'une identité urbaine (Montréal, 1973-1976)," *Journal of the Society for the Study of Architecture* 26.4 (2001): 25-36.

[117] "Demolition of the Van Horne Mansion." *La Presse*, September 10, 1973. Available from: Encyclopedia of French Cultural Heritage in North America. Accessed December 10, 2015. http://www.ameriquefrancaise.org/en/article-459/Van_Horne_Mansion_(1870-1973):_a_Demolition_That_Changed_the_History_of_Heritage_Preservation.html Used with permission. Copyright *La Presse.*

[118] At the time Azrieli was a little-known developer who had accrued capital through the sale of other projects to primarily German real estate interests. See Aubin, *City for Sale*, 158-160.

for the house, once home to Van Horne's revered art collection, to be taken over by the

Museum of Fine Arts. Michael believed the building perfectly suited for the museum:

> **Michael** – I was kind of a volunteer with the museum, the Montreal Museum, and I had done a little travelling in Europe and it was the ideal house for the museum as most of the paintings in the Montreal Museum were from the estate of William Van Horne. You know, it could have been another Frick.[119]

Michael's sentiments were echoed by others writing to the city's newspapers

recommending other uses for the building be considered, including a library or small

museum. By advocating an alternative use for the building, Michael, and others,

demonstrated the value of buildings, not solely as historical artifacts, but as structures

with inherent use. Conceptually, this reflects David Lowenthal's argument that physical

vestiges of the past should be considered malleable so as to remain pertinent for the

future.[120] The presentation of alternative plans for sites, with greater detail and insight,

would become an important tool in future Save Montreal campaigns.

Governmental bodies displayed an indifference to the fate of the Van Horne

mansion. Arguments that highlighted William Van Horne's prominent role in the

construction of the CPR did not move government officials or even had the reverse

effect. As Drouin notes, Van Horne's role as an American born, English-speaking

capitalist curried him little favour in post-Quiet Revolution Montreal.[121] Such arguments

were also recalled by the interviewees who did not share this assessment of Van Horne

or this reason for demolishing the home. Brian Merrett was shocked, "Here was, you

know, the man of the CPR, here was an artist, here was a collector, here was somebody

who was influential and nobody lifted a finger to preserve that house."[122] In conversation

with Peter, the logic of the 'Van Horne persona' argument was discussed:

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[119] Michael Fish, interview with Eliot Perrin, Montreal, August 12, 2014.
[120] Lowenthal, *Past is a Foreign Country*, 411.
[121] Drouin, "Sauvegarde", 31.
[122] Brian Merrett. By "nobody", Brian is referring to the governmental bodies, not the local activists arguing for the home's preservation.

> **Peter** – Part of the argument was that it should be classified and then, oh boy, and then some people said 'No, you should tear it down because Van Horne was not a nice man, and he exploited the workers.' And that doesn't quite ring true to me somehow.
> {Mutual chuckle}
> **Eliot** – You could tear down Versailles, right, by that logic.
> **Peter** – Well, like they tore down the Tuileries in Paris, you know…[123]

The exchange, including Peter's evocation of the French royal palace destroyed by the Paris Commune in 1870, demonstrates our mutual distrust of demolition with political intent. The Van Horne mansion's historical and architectural legacy revealed Montreal's linguistic-political divide. The bureaucratization and centralization programs of the Quiet Revolution had alienated many Anglophones who fought back against the nationalism that pervaded newly-created government departments. In doing so, Arnopoulos and Clift note, the English community "became a leading target…of growing social unrest in Quebec."[124]

The provincial Department of Cultural Affairs, after initially agreeing to classify the building as a historical monument under the recently passed Cultural Property Act, decided to refuse classification. Then Cultural Affairs Minister François Cloutier argued that the ministry was only "concerned with preserving those buildings which are important to the history and culture of Quebec" and that it was the federal government's prerogative to "save buildings important to Canadian history and culture."[125] Adding to the intrigue was the admission of the 12-person Cultural Property Commission, responsible for advising the minister on such matters, that they had not been consulted on Cloutier's change of heart.[126] Appeals made to Premier Robert Bourassa were spurned. The federal government was apathetic, and had little power in the matter as

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[123] Peter Lanken, interview with Eliot Perrin, Montreal, December 13, 2014.
[124] Arnopoulos, *English Fact*, 107.
[125] Donna Gabeline, "Loses historic status: Van Horne home 'not typically Quebecois" *The Gazette*, July 11, 1973.
[126] Donna Gabeline, "Violation: decision wrong historians say," *The Gazette*, July 24, 1973.

federal historic designations carry no protection against demolition.[127] Finally, despite

some support amongst the city councillors to save the building, the city "was hampered

by the restrictions of its charter and had no power to intervene."[128] Montreal had no

"authority to refuse to grant a demolition permit if all legal requirements are met and the

developer is acting within zoning regulations."[129] Weak laws governing urban

development and a lack of interest produced a scenario where the three levels of

government failed to protect a building that many Montrealers considered to be of

national significance. Unfortunately, these governments would continue to hinder the

efforts of these same individuals for years to come.

Perhaps most galling to the Van Horne mansion's supporters was the mediocrity

of the building that took its place. Irregardless of Van Horne's legacy, and the

architectural and heritage merits of the building, was the fact that David Azrieli built an

office tower that the Save Montrealers considered mundane and unimaginative.

Recalling his mood following the mansion's demolition, Peter offered his opinions on

Azrieli and Van Horne saga:

> **Peter** - Anyway it had been gone and in the afternoon we did some press conference and interview stuff. You know, for all the energy that had been put into it we got beat, for sure. And we were beaten by…how do I say this…by an uninteresting man who had no culture and no respect, and did what he did for commercial reasons.[130]

Peter then followed with an anecdote from the French Grand Prix of 1979. In that race

Montreal's Gilles Villeneuve beat Réné Arnoux in what is considered one of the best

races of all time. The caliber of the competition both racers offered each other ensured

the quality of the race and their performance. Afterward, the two men would embrace

[127] Gabeline, *Montreal at the Crossroads*, 26.
[128] Ibid., 24.
[129] Ibid., 24.
[130] Peter Lanken, December 13, 2014.

each other as "they both realized they had raced, each of them had raced the other to a

height that they could never had done by themselves."[131] Peter concluded,

> **Peter** – That's one way of getting beaten.
> **Eliot** – Right.
> **Peter** – When you get beaten by, you know, somebody you don't respect…
> **Eliot** - Right.
> **Peter** - That hurts a little bit.[132]

Peter's hurt stems from the undistinguished results of the Van Horne fight. The tower

that replaced the mansion was viewed with dismay; its austere façade considered

unremarkable.[133] Furthermore, Azrieli was not seen as a worthy opponent for his actions

indicated values fundamentally different than those held by the future Save Montrealers.

The destruction of a cherished building, its early morning demolition, and subsequent

replacement with a mediocre office tower painted him as shallow in the eyes of those

interviewed. Adding insult to injury was Azrieli's decision to inscribe his name in stone in

front of his newly erected tower.[134]

The home's demolition illustrated the profound changes taking place in Montreal

at the time. The provincial and city governments were intent on remodeling the city

centre as a means of encouraging economic growth while also supporting nationalist

sentiments. New modernist constructions were believed to epitomize a renewed

confidence in Montreal's economy and an affirmation of the invigorated self-assurance

felt amongst French-Canadians as a result of the Quiet Revolution. These efforts

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[131] Peter Lanken, December 13, 2014.

[132] Peter Lanken, December 13, 2014.

[133] A view shared universally by the Save Montrealers who offered an opinion on the structure. It should be noted, though, that the group's antipathy to modernist architecture was not all-encompassing. Place Ville-Marie, for instance, was considered a remarkable building by many. Many group members, Peter included, were trained architects, and so brought their own critical eye to such a project. Their sentiments towards modernist structures such as the Azrieli building echoed the postmodernist critique of Robert Venturi. His 1966 work *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* criticized the monotony of contemporary structures while celebrating, as his title indciates, complexity and contradiction in architectural form. See Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1977).

[134] Azrieli would continue inscribing his name on developments and, years later, would be exposed for his lack of an architecture degree and subsequently endured lengthy court battles: William Marsden, "The Would-Be Architect." *The Gazette*, May 14, 1994.

mirrored steps taken in social policy. The Cultural Property Act, passed in 1972, firmly emphasized the province's French cultural heritage, creating categories for vernacular religious structures and French regime buildings.[135] The francisation of the province continued with the passage of Bill 22 in 1974. That bill streamlined immigrant children into the French school system and ended official bilingualism in the province.[136]

The Van Horne mansion was evidently disadvantaged by its location in an area selected for modernist redevelopment, and its association with a wealthy, Anglophone capitalist. However, considering the fact that three properties of similar pedigree and in the immediate vicinity to the Van Horne site were given provincial heritage status the following year, perhaps it was modernist planning principles and economic considerations that prevailed in this instance.[137] The flip-flop of the Minister of Cultural Affairs on the Van Horne file is confounding. The discussions between the minister and the Cultural Property Commission were deemed confidential at the time[138] rendering it difficult to discern the exact motivations for the decision. While highly interventionist throughout the 1960s, by the 1970s the provincial government had become more inclined to give private developers a freer hand in the remodeling of downtown Montreal. Ultimately, whatever the reasons may be for its loss, protection for the house fell beyond governmental priorities at the time.

The demolition of the Van Horne mansion affected a number of Montrealers on an immediate and personal basis. As alluded to, these individuals were primarily

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[135] Handler, *Politics of Culture*, 144-145.

[136] Marc V. Levine, *The Reconquest of Montreal: Language Policy and Social Change in a Bilingual City* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 107.

[137] The buildings designated in 1974 were the Mount Royal Club, the Louis-Joseph Forget house, and the Reid Wilson house. While Louis-Joseph Forget was one of the few Francophone residents of the Square Mile, both the Mount Royal Club and the Reid Wilson house are structures indicative of the elite Anglophone establishment.

[138] Donna Gabeline, "Violation: decision wrong historians say," *The Gazette*, July 24, 1973.

Anglophone, but not exclusively so.[139] These residents were awakened to the fact that virtually nothing was sacred in the city, not even cherished local landmarks. The provincial and municipal governments, nationalist and pro-development in outlook, could not be relied upon to protect these structures. The impact the home's demolition had on the interviewees and their community was a common topic in conversation:

> **Adele** – And I remember that day very clearly in my mind. I was on that street corner with my son and there was the big ball and the house was coming down and I even picked up um some kind of relic, I don't know, it was a piece of stone or whatever and I had it for a long time, I don't know what I did with it. And, um, after that I said there's something wrong about that. Why are they tearing down housing? Why are they tearing down such beautiful houses?[140]

Adele's inability to comprehend the reasons why such a building was demolished was shared by others. Lonnie spoke about how "it was such a shock and just a feeling of loss, of great loss and the feeling it can never be restored, you can never bring it back."[141] Feelings of sadness and loss were a common pattern. They revealed the ways in which structural change to one's environment impacted residents lives.

Conversations and readings regarding the Van Horne saga reveal the palimpsestic qualities inherent to the site. "The trope of the palimpsest" Andreas Huyssen remarks can "be fruitfully used to discuss configurations of urban spaces and their unfolding in time without making architecture and the city simply into text."[142] Furthermore, Huyssen argues that

> an urban imaginary in its temporal reach may well put different things in one place: memories of what there has been before, imagined alternatives to what there is. The strong marks of present space merge in the imaginary with traces of the past, erasures, losses, and heterotopias.[143]

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[139] For example see Luc d'Iberville-Moreau, "Pourquoi il faut sauver la maison Van Horne," *Le Devoir*, September 1, 1973.

[140] Adele Mardoche.

[141] Lonnie Echenberg, interview with Eliot Perrin, Montreal, September 11, 2014.

[142] Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 7.

[143] Huyssen, *Present Pasts,* 7.

The Van Horne mansion site, in the realm of the imaginary, is imbued with multiple meanings and traces of the past. Currently housing a five-star Sofitel Hotel used by dignitaries and hockey players, the site is still connected to the home's demolition.

Arguments for the preservation of Van Horne's mansion created further layers of history and meaning. Drouin notes how the fate of the house pitted modernist city-building aspirations against the construction of local identity. Ideas of what constituted a "Montreal identity" or "Montrealness" were being transformed and residents were attributing a identity to the Van Horne mansion and other structures in the area. Nowadays, Drouin considers the destruction of Van Horne's home "*l'événement fondateur qui institua l'«an 1» de la lutte pour la reconnaissance du paysage bâti à Montréal*",[144] a viewpoint shared by many Save Montrealers. Although the site is starkly different than its previous incarnation, it nonetheless carries with it important connotations and traces that render it a site of ongoing interpretation and imagination. The site would be continually associated with the mansion and its loss as revealed by the ongoing recognition its demolition date receives.[145] The Sofitel Hotel itself even pays tribute to the home itself by displaying a few architectural fragments original to the home in its lobby.

From a more tangible perspective, the destruction of the Van Horne mansion established a pattern that was often replicated in future preservation battles: private developer aided by government acquiescence or government body as developer, architectural homogeneity via modernist forms, and a poor understanding of the economic impact of such projects. The early high-modernist structures (Place Ville-Marie, Expo 67) that had fired the imaginations of Montrealers gave way to a glaring

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[144] Martin Drouin, *Le combat du patrimoine,* 314.
[145] Heritage Montreal, and others, paid tribute to the Van Horne house on the 40th anniversary of its demolition, reaffirming its status as a starting point for heritage preservation/urban conservation in Montreal.

monotony throughout Montreal's cityscape. As Aubin noted in his exposé of property

ownership and investment in Montreal, development firms such as Trizec were, in order

to maximize profits, erecting generic, standardized forms in cities throughout North

America.[146] Developers looking to reduce prohibitive costs associated with skyscraper

construction were required to clad the exterior of a building with the most basic material

(light metal, glass, plastic).[147] Furthermore, skyscraper designs were increasingly built

with the realtor in mind. As a result, Blake argues that thanks to skyscrapers modernist

architecture has become "the chief apologist for the real estate speculator."[148]

As modernist forms proliferated throughout urban centres, critiques arose to

counter the narratives being proffered by modernism's proponents. Arguing in favour of

architectural pluralism (and against architectural conformity), Italian architect Bruno Zevi,

in his Expo 67 address, claimed that modern architecture "states that our world is too

complicated, too various, too contradictory to be expressed in one coherent style. A

democracy can be managed only with many tendencies and contradictory elements."[149]

Such sentiment was echoed later by Charney who claimed that "institutionalized

architecture in its present form has lost all meaning."[150] Instead, he advocated "an

authentic architecture born of real things and rooted in people's lives."[151] To modernist

critics, architecture had to be representative of the polyglot society in which it was being

practiced. Although the members of Save Montreal may not have characterized their

actions in such terms, they were nonetheless concerned with a variety of buildings from

differing eras. The campaigns they undertook were rooted in the 19th century, Victorian

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[146] Aubin, *City for Sale*, 72.

[147] Blake, *Form Follows*, 70.

[148] Ibid., 82.

[149] Bruno Zevi, "Architecture 1967: progress or regression?" in *Man and His World: The Noranda Lectures Expo 67* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), 195.

[150] Charney, "Towards a Definition," 247.

[151] Ibid., 247.

city; an area Drouin posits became integral to an emerging "Montreal identity".[152] It was in this milieu in which Save Montreal contested the orthodoxy of development employed by the public and private bodies responsible for the spatial reconfiguration Montreal's urban environment.

First Meetings

In the immediate wake of the Van Horne mansion's demolition, eleven local activist groups came together to announce the formation of Save Montreal, initially conceptualized as a federation of urban preservation societies. These groups represented the residents' efforts to halt the demolition of particular sites both downtown or to the west of the city centre. Examples included the Friends of Windsor Station, the Society for Great Places, the Lower Westmount Association, the Milton-Park Committee and the Community Design Workshop.[153] Common to all groups was the fact they were defined by a single-issue or cause; they represented threats to buildings: Windsor Station, Van Horne mansion, or areas of the city: Lower Westmount, Milton-Park and Little Burgundy. Others, such as Society to Overcome Pollution (STOP) and Green Spaces were concerned with the city at large, but were primarily concerned with pollution and the elimination of green areas. While there were some instances of membership overlap, these groups operated independently of one another. However, the Van Horne mansion's demolition demonstrated the need for solidarity. Save Montreal was intended to change the dynamics of citizen advocacy by unifying local

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[152] Drouin, *Combat du patrimoine*, 32.
[153] The Community Design Workshop was a program created by McGill University professor Joseph Baker in order to counsel and assist underprivileged communities with home renovations: Danhui You, *Long-term results of user participation in housing rehabilitation: the Community Design Workshop in Pointe St. Charles* (Thesis, McGill University, 1998).

groups under one banner. In doing so, the members believed they could better contest

the form and manner in which Montreal was being redeveloped.[154]

The organization's inaugural meeting was held on October 13, 1973 at the

University Settlement, a community centre located east of the McGill campus on Rue St-

Urbain, on October 13, 1973. Between 30 to 40 people attended.[155] Designated

speakers held discussion panels where pressing issues facing Montreal were

addressed. The result of the meeting was the founding of Save Montreal and the

adoption of the following resolution:

> This organization dedicates itself to the preservation of housing and community
> assets, for the shelter and enjoyment of all citizens of the region of Montreal.
> Community assets are understood to include buildings of social and cultural
> value, and open spaces within and around the urban region.
> Furthermore, this organization will work actively to support the achievement of
> planning legislation that will be responsive to the needs and wishes of the
> citizens of Montreal.[156]

The resolution highlights the urban conservationist principles of Save Montreal and can

be read almost as a blueprint for future actions by the group.

That first meeting proved to be a turning point in Montreal's urban preservation

movement and for the members themselves. As Jane Broderick recalls: "And I went to

the meeting and you realize that there were a lot of other people who felt the same way I

did, it was kind of a nice feeling."[157] That first meeting provided a venue where people

with similar thoughts and feelings could encounter one another. When considering the

loss and sadness caused by mass demolitions, it was comforting to encounter others

with similar values. This was also true for individuals who joined Save Montreal in

subsequent years. Norman relates that: "And all of a sudden, you know, you were going

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[154] Luana Parker, "Lesson learned from Van Horne mansion fight: 'It's gloves off' to preserve historic buildings'," *The Gazettte*, September 29, 1973.

[155] As remembered by Jane Broderick, interview with Eliot Perrin, Montreal, November 7, 2013.

[156] Reprinted in Save Montreal, *SOS Montreal* 1.1 (February 1976): 17.

[157] Jane Broderick.

to meetings, planning protests, it was instant!"[158] Despite joining years after its founding,

Norman was immediately inducted and participated in campaigns. The energy and

passion during the group's first meeting remained undimmed years later. This strong

social element bolstered the group's identity and allowed Save Montreal to maximize its

reach within the community. As Peter notes, "…this was the genius of Save Montreal,

that everybody knew someone."[159] Some individuals were already familiar with each

other due to past previous experiences with other activist groups; such was the case

with Peter Lanken, Michael Fish and Audrey Bean who were all members of Friends of

Windsor Station. Some individuals were the members of multiple groups, providing a

general awareness of the greater activist community. Other connections were the result

of shared employment, for example Peter, Mark London, Linda Thompson and Julia

Gersovitz were all employed at the architectural firm ARCOP. Friendship-based, word-

of-mouth networking also played a part in informing the general public of Save

Montreal's existence and would help diffuse information regarding meetings and

campaigns. Finally, some individuals arrived at Save Montreal meetings through

happenstance, having seen a printed or posted notice for the group. This informal

strategy, while sufficiently inclusive, made for a diverse group.

Save Montreal's membership defies simple categorization. For example, Peter

describes how

> Save Montreal, at its greatest period, was an amalgam of really different people.
> There was Westmount people, and I'm not saying any people were not
> dedicated, but there were different kinds of people. Some of them worked in
> offices, you know, had good jobs, and some of them lived in the Centre-Sud.[160]

Those who regularly attended meetings stemmed from different socio-economic

backgrounds. Some members had especially modest upbringings while others had

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[158] Norman Spatz, interview with Eliot Perrin, Montreal, January 28, 2015.
[159] Peter Lanken, December 13, 2014.
[160] Peter Lanken, interview with Eliot Perrin, Montreal, January 10, 2015.

grown up in far more privileged circumstances. As a result, the Save Montrealers hailed

from a variety of neighbourhoods including Westmount, Milton-Parc, the Centre-Sud and

the Plateau. Some members were born and raised in Montreal while others were recent

transplants to the city. Personal circumstances did not seem to play a role in the way

individuals interacted with the organization or other members. If anything, the

interviewees exhibited a subtle pride for Save Montreal's openness to all, especially in

these early stages.[161]

Although the group operated primarily in the former Square Mile, they did not

reflect the traditional Anglo-Saxon/Anglo-Celtic populace of the area. A number of the

Save Montrealers were Jewish, and the member's families reflected an array of

European backgrounds. Even though they were advocating for the retention of stately

19th Victorian homes, religious buildings and commercial sites, their reasons for doing so

were not due to familial or cultural association:

> Dimitri – It was, in other words as Save Montreal grew and connected with other
> social movements, a variety of people came from a variety of backgrounds and
> they had one love in common, this city and the historic city, which their
> forefathers didn't live in. I mean, Jane Broderick's family did not live in the Van
> Horne mansion, nor did Adele Isaac's (Mardoche), nor did mine. But that doesn't
> mean we couldn't feel pain...
> Eliot – Right, right.
> Dimitri – When the bastards took it down (the Van Horne mansion) a tocsin rang
> across Montreal.[162]

While diverse in many respects, the organization was predominantly

Anglophone. Initial meetings were conducted in English and internal documents

reflected the linguistic make-up of the group.[163] Asked why this was the case, the

interviewees, for the most part, did not have concrete answers or even found the

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[161] Tensions would arise in later years due to differing political viewpoints, namely regarding the
debate over the Grand Prix. However, this was not representative of the organization as a whole.
[162] Dimitri Roussopoulos, interview with Eliot Perrin, Montreal, June 2, 2014.
[163] Josh Wolfe recalled that meetings had been conducted in English until the Parti Québécois
were elected in 1976. Following that, French was increasingly predominant. French was
frequently employed in communication with municipal or provincial authorities.

discrepancy noteworthy. Considering the oft-cited regional linguistic jostling, the absence of tension within the group was surprising. While disproportionately an Anglophone group, the members all held some degree of fluency in French as exhibited by the articles they submitted to French newspapers. Furthermore, the French-language press – especially *Le Devoir*, but also *La Presse* – were considered sympathetic to Save Montreal's cause.[164]

Save Montreal's members also hailed from a variety of professions, although architects featured prominently amongst those interviewed.[165] As noted above, four Save Montrealers worked for ARCOP during a time when the firm was engaged in a number of prominent projects that conformed to modernist ideas and form, including Place Bonaventure and an early proposal for the La Cité project threatening the Milton-Parc neighbourhood.[166] Unsurprisingly, those from other backgrounds also exhibited a strong personal and professional interest in urban life and the social issues at play.[167]

While cognizant of the group's diversity, the Save Montrealers frequently conveyed feeling a shared sense of dedication to both their organization and their city. Such dedication was evidenced by their tireless commitment and willingness to execute tasks. In conversation Jane pointed out that "it was never a lot of talk and no action."[168] This view was supported by Peter who recalled that "Simply because there was a small group of people with a common objective and, you know somehow or other, the work got distributed and it got done."[169] The group's prolificacy speaks to that. Meetings were held every week, from which sprung a flurry of activity: letters to the press, press

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[164] Mark London and Linda Thompson, interview with Eliot Perrin, telephone, January 19, 2015.
[165] Of those interviewed Michael Fish, Julia Gersovitz, Phyllis Lambert, Peter Lanken, Mark London and Norman Spatz had architectural training.
[166] Ironically enough, a number of Save Montrealers would become involved in the creation of the Milton-Parc co-operative.
[167] This applies both to the work the members were undertaking while part of Save Montreal and to their professions in following years. Examples include: community organizer, urban planner, teacher, immigration lawyer, etc.
[168] Jane Broderick.
[169] Peter Lanken, December 13, 2014.

conferences, research, writing, and performance of walking tours, protests, information sessions, colloquiums, meetings with governmental officials, article writing, newsletter design and formatting, development of counter-proposals, and gathering petitions. Aside from these activities Save Montrealers held jobs and had responsibilities that occupied their daytime hours. Some were students working on degrees. Many also had families, sometimes young children. The meetings and activities described above were conducted in the Save Montrealers' 'off-hours', times of the day when most people dedicated themselves to their personal lives. As a result the sacrifices, small and large, were many. Personal relationships were, at times, foresworn or lost. Writing from the comfortable perch of the present, it is easy to overlook these details. While this level of dedication did produce some unfortunate consequences, it is what helped make Save Montreal such an effective organization.

In conversation, the former Save Montrealers often emphasized the sense of commitment and shared instances of camaraderie that resulted from their participation with the group:

> **Adele** – Yes, and that camaraderie, you see? You see, that's very important. When you're a member of a group that has the same ideals, the same goal and that is willing to put up the time without, you know, without even thinking.. you just do it. You just get involved. You take your kid along you. You call, you know, my parents and, you know, I'm on TV tonight or this is happening and, there's a march and I mean, you know, they, they thought I was crazy but, you, you just do it because your surrounded by people who are also working at it and your not alone, you know? So that's wonderful.[170]

Adele's warm recollections were very much representative of the conversations as a whole. Despite different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds and living in different areas of the city, the members of Save Montreal created a community rooted in shared ideals and aspirations for the future. The type of community they created is one suggested by social network theory. Steven High and John C. Walsh argue that social

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[170] Adele Mardoche.

network theory "does not assume that community exists (or does not exist) based on place."[171] What connected these individuals was not a shared sense of place, but rather an affiliation based on shared experiences and the sensations they produced. The Save Montreal community has now evolved to occupy the realm of shared memory. The warm and positive associations with their youth and past activism common to the Save Montrealers have resulted in a unifying sense of identity that is not contingent on a particular place.

Group Structure

Although founded as a federation, Save Montreal came to operate as its own distinct association. Some of the organizations – Friends of Windsor Station and Society for Great Places, for example – were, by admission of the interviewees, quite small in membership. They, and others, were effectively subsumed into Save Montreal since the larger group could, and did, advocate for the same causes. Others, such as Green Spaces and STOP held a broader mandate and continued independently while working in conjunction with Save Montreal. Tax deductible memberships were offered as a means of fund-raising, with members receiving the group's publication by mail.[172] The group held weekly meetings at a member's home, the University Settlement, or in the St. Cunégonde Church parish house where they had an office for a few years. The production of press releases, the publication of a periodical, the operating of walking tours, the holding of information talks and film screenings, and even the issuance of buttons and t-shirts speaks to the formation of a distinct Save Montreal identity.

Complimenting Save Montreal's emerging identity was a dedication to a democratic way of operating. From the outset, Save Montreal deliberately eschewed the

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[171] Steven High and John Walsh, "Rethinking the Concept of Community," *Social History* 32.64 (1999): 262.
[172] For example, see Save Montreal, *SOS Montreal* 1.1 (February 1976).

adoption of assigned positions or a strict hierarchy of roles. According to Michael, "Save

Montreal had never even had a structure" and "nobody wanted a structure."[173] This view

was supported by Peter who argued that "Save Montreal was structured as pretty much

open."[174] There existed an executive core which fluctuated from year to year. There was

no set number of executives; it consisted of those individuals who attended meetings the

most regularly. For legal purposes, there was a president and officers, but that was

strictly to handle the finances accrued by the organization. However, these were surface

formalities and did not reflect the manner in which Save Montreal conducted itself.

A good illustration of this was given in conversation by Peter who, for legal

purposes only, acted as president for a number of years:

> **Peter** - I was just a representative like everybody else. Which I think it had to be like that, so anybody who had something to say and would come to the meeting and say 'Could I use the name Save Montreal for this issue?' and generally the answer would be yes and we'd say 'Well, here's how to do it, here's a list of people to call in the media, here's the politicians you have to talk to. Here it is, go on and do it!
> **Eliot** - Yeah, yeah.
> **Peter** - And call yourself Save Montreal. Absolutely, go and do it![175]

As described by Peter above, Save Montreal operated with a degree of fluidity

when deciding which campaigns to undertake. Particular issues and causes were raised

at meetings and, following discussion, a decision was made as to whether to pursue the

matter. Members were often encouraged to spearhead campaigns themselves. If an

individual raised an issue they considered pressing at a Save Montreal meeting that

person was charged with organizing the group's response. Such was the case with

Susan Stanley who, concerned by the proposed demolition of St. Stephen's Church at

the corner of Atwater and Dorchester, contacted Michael Fish who, in turn, explained

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[173] Michael Fish, August 12, 2014.
[174] Peter Lanken, December 13, 2014.
[175] Peter Lanken, December 13, 2014.

how one could organize a preservation campaign.[176] Absent was the need to be

contingent on one authority. Furthermore, as Peter notes above, Save Montreal was

also willing to share its name with individuals who were advocating for a similar cause.

> **Peter** - Because there was a number of people who could, and did, speak in the
> name of Save Montreal, that was effective.
> **Eliot** - Yeah, it wasn't just all hinging on one person.
> **Peter** - It would have died. It wouldn't have worked.[177]

In conversation Peter noted, this approach had both practical and ideological

applications. By delegating responsibility, the group was able to launch numerous

campaigns simultaneously. Considering the scale to which Montreal's city centre was

being redeveloped, the ability to operate on multiple fronts was an asset and gave the

group greater public exposure. The selection and mounting of campaigns through group

discussion or personal initiative also highlighted how fundamental a democratic, non-

hierarchical form of governance was to the group. Meetings and activities were open to

all who wished to join. Save Montreal helped coordinate the Citizens' Commission on

the Future of Montreal, a series of public forums "designed to serve as a forum for

citizen participation in planning the future of the city."[178] As will be demonstrated in

Chapter Two, Save Montreal throughout their campaigns would consistently demand

public participation for particular projects, and in conceptualizing development at large.

In this way, the group resembled the federative model it had originally sought to

implement. However, the group was still contingent on the Save Montreal identity and

structure (meetings, publications, etc.).

In order to operate effectively Save Montreal asked that its membership be

organized and educated about the issues facing Montreal and how to organize a

campaign. Some members, such as Michael Fish and Peter Lanken, had some prior

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[176] Susan Stanley, interview with Eliot Perrin, Montreal, March 16, 2015.
[177] Peter Lanken, January 10, 2015.
[178] Save Montreal. *SOS Montreal*. 1.4 (May 1976): 2.

experience with preservation campaigns, while Lucia Kowaluk and Dimitri Roussopoulos

had been involved with the anti-nuclear movement and community organizing. Most

members, though, were new to advocacy and learned via their peers and through

personal experience. Describing her involvement, Adele Mardoche notes how the

organization was a synthesis of community awareness exercises and personal learning:

> **Adele** – There was, you know, I was a foot soldier, really. I marched and I put up posters, and I talked on interviews, I did door knocking. I even took a course at Concordia actually that was one year, six-credit course in urban planning. It was a wonderful course. And we also used to do book readings. Dimitri especially, Dimitri Roussopoulos would have, you know he would have us read books and we would have discussions because, you know, we needed to get educated, I mean I needed to be educated.[179]

In her interview, Jane Broderick also described herself as a "foot soldier".[180] In both

cases, I felt the descriptors to be intentionally modest, perhaps even purposely

diminishing one's role. The interviews with Adele and Jane were also the first two I

conducted. Throughout the interview process I was often met with similar modesty on

the part of the interviewee's, either by downplaying one's own role or highlighting the

work of others. By diverting praise to other members, the Save Montrealers

demonstrated a desire to recognize the work of others while also reinforcing the non-

hierarchial manner by which the group operated. As will be evidenced further in chapter

three, the members of Save Montreal undertook different roles and participated in

particular campaigns.

True to Save Montreal's nature, the manner by which campaigns were assigned

and conducted, and information disseminated was highly-democratic. In mounting these

campaigns, Mark London noted a certain naivety to the group's proceedings and to what

they could possibly accomplish:

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[179] Adele Mardoche.
[180] Jane Broderick.

> **Mark** - And we would say 'Oh, ok, we've got six items on the agenda this week. So and so, this building over here is threatened, someone's threatening to tear this down, ok you and you, you're in charge of that one. Come back in a week with a plan to save that one. And there's this other one, ok let's have a report from the people who are working on saving this other one.' And, in an hour and a quarter, we would go through, we would just run it as, and we had no idea we couldn't actually do these things, right? That we couldn't save these buildings…
> **Eliot** - Ok.
> **Mark** - Or these complexes, or preserve these green spaces. It didn't occur to us that we couldn't do it. We'd just out and try and do it. And very often were successful.[181]

This feeling may have been more pronounced in those without previous activist experience, although it was undoubtedly a learning experience for all. However, what could have been a drawback was actually an advantage. The energy and passion that stemmed from their commutuality made them less fearful of failure. Had they been aware of the forces aligned against them, they may not have brought the same verve or stamina. Considering the group's weekly diligence and degree of public prominence, it seems this naivety served them well.

In educating themselves about the threats posed to Montreal's urban fabric and the mechanics behind public awareness, the members of Save Montreal were also cultivating a response to the projects they were opposing. Rather than just shouting 'Stop!' at new development the group sought to articulate a different approach to Montreal's built form and future city building. That approach was best argued by offering alternatives; viable options that demonstrated how new development and urban conservation could operate in unison. Despite their claims, the projects favoured by governmental bodies were detrimental to the local economy. Save Montreal's campaign writings often identified the incongruities between development and the economy. As Julia Gersovitz recounted, Save Montreal became a mechanism by which the public could be made aware of, and interpret, redevelopment schemes:

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[181] Mark London and Linda Thompson.

> **Julia** – Yes and also we were able to make, I don't mean that they were developed at enormous depth, but you were able to critique things that were being said. You know often when a development scheme comes out the developer packages it in such a way that looks very shiny. And the public, who are laymen, are not necessarily able to have the critical eye, or the critical judgment to critique it. What we were able to supply was that critical eye and sometimes there were counter-proposals drafted up, you know.[182]

Julia's observation, whereby Save Montreal acted as interlocutor and critic of proposed developments for the general public, could be read as running contrary to Save Montreal's democratic and non-hierarchial ideals. However, Sharon Zukin notes that "the state's method of operation is fairly subtle. It both transforms the social climate that surrounds the built environment and institutionalizes the climactic changes that are thereby imposed on the positions of investors and consumers."[183] While Zukin's position stems from her analysis of loft conversions, it is nonetheless prescient. Langdon Winner, in discussing the politics of artifacts, posits a similar argument. Describing the urban developments of Robert Moses, Winner notes that "many of his monumental structures of concrete and steel embody a systematic social inequality, a way of engineering relationships among people that, after a time, becomes just another part of the landscape."[184] In Montreal, the state was attempting to transform residents' spatial understandings and institutionalize climatic change, albeit in the form of high-modernist megastructures and their corresponding transportation infrastructure.

Save Montreal's urban conservation ideals reflect the group's rejection of this modernist orthodoxy. Responding to these changes, the group launched numerous urban conservationist campaigns against a myriad of development projects. The subjects of these campaigns were buildings and structures which played an important role at the local level. Their absence, it was argued, would be detrimental, even ruinous, to the local economy and to the lives of those who lived and worked in the area. In

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[182] Julia Gersovitz, interview with Eliot Perrin, Montreal, September 19, 2014.
[183] Sharon Zukin, *Loft Living*, 150.
[184] Langdon Winner, "Do Artifacts Have Politics?," *Daedalus* 109.1 (1980): 124.

making this argument, Save Montreal attempted to counter an economic narrative that had been successfully deployed throughout North America.

This is not to argue that Save Montreal necessarily stood in opposition to the government's objectives, it was that they rejected the form and methods governmental bodies employed to achieve their modernist agendas, and lamented the results. The circumstances that produced Save Montreal were a result of a democratic deficit on the municipal level and the absence of applied planning principles. At the provincial and federal level, political and economic concerns, with a similar absence of planning policy, produced comparable results. The outcomes were disastrous for Montreal neighbourhoods. The form and function envisioned by the political and economic leaders produced staggering changes to Montreal's built form, changes that demanded an active opposition.

The next chapter highlights the diversity of structures Save Montreal campaigned to save. It also demonstrates the variety of methods employed by Save Montreal; evidence of the non-hierarchial structure assumed by the group. The discussion that follows represents only a portion of Save Montreal's activities. Nonetheless, these are the campaigns that featured most prominently throughout virtually every interview. These campaigns confronted the undemocratic, high-modernist manner by which Montreal's urban centre was being redeveloped while arguing in favour of citizen participation, heritage preservation, neighbourhood retention, recognition of the local economy, and built forms that supported vibrant streetscapes.

Chapter Two: Campaigns

The only way to witness is by walking
Cities are not static spaces, they
Decline the inhibition of automobility
Instead crave familiarity, presence
And in their absence, mourning
But, if intimacy is the cipher
For the book of lamentations
Can a migrant ever solve these streets
With only faded images
Culled from tarnished pages?

Rue St-Norbert, 1975

> **Jane** - "And that was a beautiful little row of houses, very modest you know, not of great architectural significance, but a nice little row. And it was only one side of the street because the other side of the street was the Bon-Pasteur, I think."
> **Eliot** – "Ok, yep, on the other side."
> **Jane** - "That whole row, it was one block, was threatened and that was sort of a big thing because there were people who occupied the buildings. So we got involved in that, a lot of people, a lot of my friends from Save Montreal got involved in that. And we stayed down there for a month, so that was kind of…that was interesting." {Chuckle}[185]

Throughout the summer of 1975, Save Montreal members joined demonstrations against the planned demolition of row houses along Rue St-Norbert.[186] The city, having passed a resolution to expropriate the homes, planned to evict the 50 residents (who occupied 40 apartments) and demolish the buildings in favour of a municipal public works yard. When announcing the plan, *Le Devoir* noted the irony in tearing down homes amidst an ongoing housing crisis. Despite the civic administration claiming housing was a priority, they were determined to demolish the homes for a parking lot.[187] In response, residents formed the St. Norbert Tenants' Association to combat the decision, arguing for renovation as an alternative to demolition.[188]

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[185] Jane Broderick.
[186] Located immediately east of Rue St-Laurent and one block south of Rue Sherbrooke.
[187] "Rue Saint-Norbert: 40 logies seraient sacrifiés au profit d'une cour de voirie," *Le Devoir*, May 15, 1975.
[188] "Battle to block wrecker's ball: Tenants will fight city hall," *The Montreal Star*, July 18, 1975.

Responding to the Tenants' Association appeal, community groups lent their support, including the Montreal Citizens Movement, Comité Logement Saint-Louis, and Save Montreal. Asked by the Association to assess the homes, Michael Fish and Phyllis Lambert concluded the structures were structurally sound and that renovation was a cheaper option to constructing new units to re-house the families.[189] Attempts to designate the Monastère Bon-Pasteur north of St-Norbert[190] and efforts to communicate alternatives to demolition were rebuffed by city officials. As a result, mass eviction was scheduled for July 30th, 1975. Lacking options, the Tenants' Association opted to resist demolition by occupying the homes.[191]

Their actions received media attention, bolstered by sympathetic organizations that helped keep the demolition question front and centre. In response, six squatters were arrested and charged with 'refusing to circulate' when city workers arrived to shut off the utilities.[192] Despite the arrests, others joined the squat, including members of Save Montreal, hoping to call attention to the problems facing low-cost housing in the city.[193] Amongst them were Jane and Peter:

> **Eliot** – You stayed in the buildings?
> **Jane** – Yeah, for I think most nights. I was probably there most nights. I can't remember how often I would, you know, go home for a couple of days, or a day just to change my clothes or something. I wasn't working at the time, or I was working a little bit, I had a few jobs, you know, so very little. So, I had the time. When I didn't stay there overnight, I was there a lot during the day as well. So, you know, it was a whole month. I think it was the month of August.[194]
>
> **Peter** – Me and some other people actually moved there. Although it was stupid because I was working and I would go there for supper. It was interesting because there some blood-red incandescent Marxist guys from Paris 68 who

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[189] "Citizen drive stalls parking lot project," *The Gazette*, June 10, 1975. A more detailed renovation plan was showcased at a nearby community centre in order to better inform the public of the possibility: "Projet de renovation," *La Presse,* July 12, 1975.
[190] Provincial designations were accompanied by a 500 foot heritage radius, the limits of which would have provided the St-Norbert homes with a modicum of protection.
[191] "Rue Saint-Norbert: la guerre ouverte," *Le Jour*, July 31, 1975.
[192] Richard Huot "Rue Saint-Norbert: La police arête 6 occupants," *Le Devoir*, August 2, 1975.
[193] "Rue St-Norbert: l'eau est coupée," *La Jour*, August 2, 1975.
[194] Jane Broderick.

were, you know, who really believed we had to throw down the whole system and when the system was destroyed something better, something really communist…anyway, but they were very good. They were Frenchmen, they weren't Québécois and they, you want 20 posters? Fuck, they could make 20 posters in a day. You want supper for 85 people? No problem, we know how to make supper, in the street, for 85 people.[195]

The Save Montrealers were joined by representatives of other advocacy groups, staying at St-Norbert on a rotating basis. The squat also attracted committed Marxists, both local and international in origin. Housing was an issue that drew support from a wide array of individuals of varying political leanings. In form, this protest differed greatly from others. Occupying buildings deviated from more traditional pressure tactics such as letter-writing, petitions, and articles. The radical presence spoke to the prevalence of Marxist thought during the 1970s.[196] In conversation, the Save Montrealers considered the radicals' commitment to the homes secondary to their desire for confrontation.[197] Although both groups considered the St-Norbert circumstances shameful, their objectives diverged, revealing divisions within the activist community. Despite these differences, the Save Montrealers felt a degree of camaraderie between themselves and the other squatters; an uneasy affiliation that produced a modicum of respect. However, despite this show of solidarity, the homes fate was sealed. On August 1st, the city expropriated the homes and cut their utilities. By the end of the month, demolition work had begun and the block was quickly dismantled.[198]

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[195] Peter Lanken, January 10, 2015.

[196] Peter Hall dubs this "The Marxist Ascendancy", a period where theorists such as David Harvey and Manuel Castells utilized Marxist theory to explain the role of capital and the state in urban development: Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*, 367-368. As noted in the introduction, Francophone organizations in Montreal were heavily influenced by contemporary Marxist analyses.

[197] Michael Fish, interview with Eliot Perrin, Montreal, September 15, 2015.

[198] Norman Provencher and Richard Levesque, "Death-knell sounds for St. Norbert rowhouses," *The Montreal Star*, August 29, 1975 and Dane Lanken, "Wreckers razing St. Norbert," *The Gazette*, August 29, 1975.

Reporting on the St-Norbert circumstances, *La Presse* made reference to a climate of fear felt by residents in targeted areas.[199] Downtown redevelopment was having an overly detrimental impact on the housing available to Montrealers, exacerbating a crisis that had continued unabated for many years. In central Montreal, where the St-Norbert homes were situated, 57% of homes were lost over a twenty-year period (1961-1981).[200] Other, lower-income areas were hit just as hard. From 1961-1971 Pointe-Saint-Charles lost 900 units, Saint-Henri: 2700, and Mile End: 1000.[201] The housing crisis affected families the most. In central Montreal, 60% of all housing was units of 3.5 or smaller, leaving much of the central area suited only for single or double-occupants.[202] Public housing units in the city had a waiting list of 6,000 people; old age homes had a waiting list of 2,024 people.[203] When new housing was constructed, it often resulted in higher rents or values, leaving a growing number of residents unable to afford newly available units.[204]

Given the dire circumstances facing inner-city residents, the decision to demolish standing homes left the Save Montrealers dumfounded:

> **Jane** - You know it was really bizarre to tear down a row of housing. I still don't understand what was really going on behind, whether that was the real plan or whether there was a big developer, and we just didn't know about it, you know.[205]

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[199] Claude Turcotte, "Les démolitions à Montréal: La bataille continue sur plusieurs fronts," *La Presse*, June 5, 1975.

[200] Francine Dansereau, *Habiter au centre: Tendances et perspectives socio-économiques de l'habitation dans l'arrondissement Centre*, (Montreal: Institut national de la recherché scientifique, 1988), 18. The area in question roughly corresponds to the present-day Ville-Marie Borough.

[201] Richard Morin, "Déclin, réaménagement et reanimation d'un quartier ancient de Montréal," *Urban History Review* 17 (1988), 34.

[202] Dansereau, *Habiter au centre*, 35.

[203] Julia Weller, "The occupation of St. Norbert Street," *The Gazette*. August 30, 1975.

[204] This was a trend throughout Quebec. In 1971, 35% of renters did not have to spend more than 30% of their income on rental units. By 1983 that number had dropped to 15% of renters. Morin, "Déclin, réaménagement", 38.

[205] Jane Broderick.

Contributing to this disbelief was the fact that the St-Norbert homes were eliminated for a municipal yard. Despite this defeat, the housing crisis remained a key issue for Save Montreal, and one they would argue with increasing thoroughness.

The following year, Save Montreal publications stressed the need for a new housing strategy.[206] The 'Housing Policy' press release laid out, in specific detail, strategies and resolutions the three levels of government could adopt to thwart the wanton loss of adequate housing in the Montreal area. "Montreal: City in Crisis!" provided figures detailing the loss of housing and parks, and the projects (Autoroute Ville Marie, Radio-Canada Complex, etc.) that necessitated such losses despite the abundance of parking lots that pockmarked the downtown area. A colour-coded
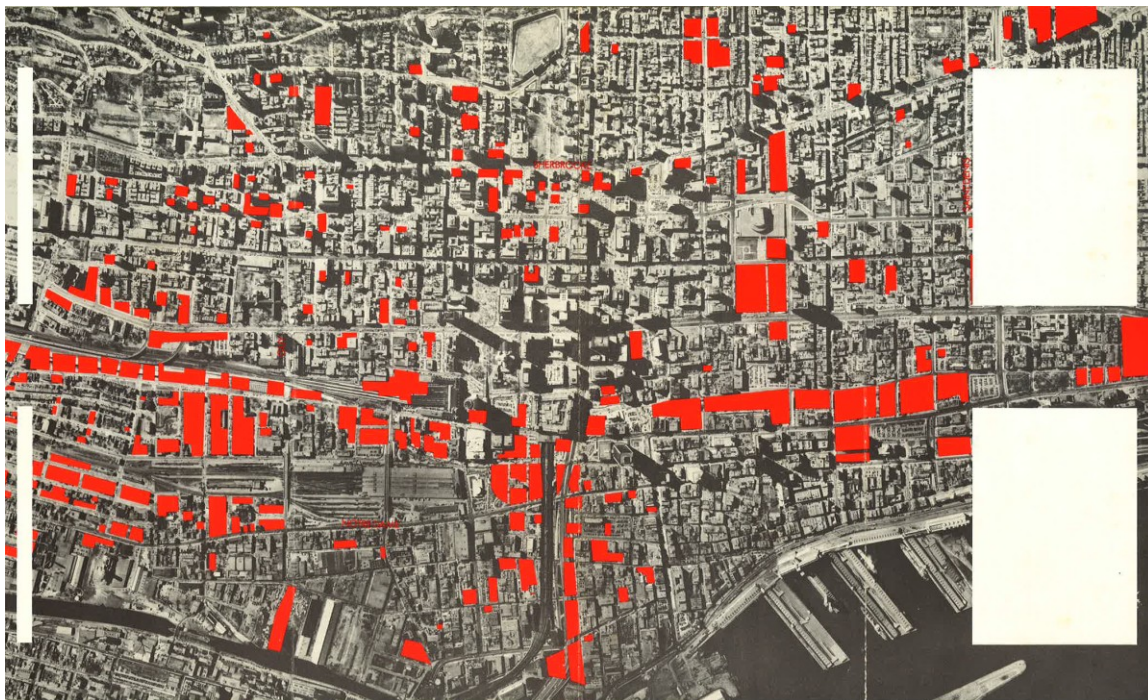

Illustration 3.1: Map of downtown Montreal on the back of a brochure made by Save Montreal. The red areas indicate demolished sites c. 1976.[207]

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[206]By Mark's calculation, one-fifth of the land in downtown Montreal was available for redevelopment: Save Montreal, *Housing Policy for Immediate Release*, January 28, 1976; Save Montreal, *Montreal: City in Crisis!*, 1976; Mark London, *Preservation and Development: There is room for both in central Montreal*, January, 1976.

[207] Save Montreal. "It's your city, only you can save it!". Peter Lanken personal files, Montreal.

pamphlet distributed by Save Montreal starkly identified how many buildings were lost to

vacant lots.[208] Mark London, having previously authored a study on available land in

downtown Halifax, conducted a similar one for Montreal:

> **Mark** - I put that together, and we published it, and I would like to think that was one of the things that contributed to changing the dialogue. Because the dialogue had been, sort of, preservation – the report was printed under the heading 'Preservation and Development: There is Room for Both.[209]

Calculating the amount of land available and the rate of construction in downtown

Montreal, Mark determined that "the available land would permit continued construction

at the present rate for 120 years, with absolutely no demolition." [Underline his][210] As

Mark noted in conversation, the group's intention was clear: to demonstrate demolition

was not a requisite for new construction and that Save Montreal and related movements

did not oppose new developments:

> **Mark** – Sort of like 'Oh, you're against development.' And we're saying 'No, we're not against development, but save the important buildings and streetscapes and neighbourhoods, and put the development in the empty land', which was largely south of downtown.[211]

Adding to the absurdity of the debate was the fact that the municipal government

had initiated home renovation programs in other areas of the city. In an attempt to

address the housing crisis, in 1972 the city launched a *programme détaillé de renovation*

in the eastern Centre-Sud (also known as Sainte-Marie). This program entailed the

construction of new affordable housing and the restoration of existing housing stock.[212]

Throughout the 1970s similar programs were established in other areas of the Centre-

Sud, as well as north Saint-Henri. However, despite differing in appearance from major

urban renewal projects, these projects still suffered from a lack of public consultation or

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[208] Save Montreal. "It's your city, only you can save it!" Peter Lanken personal files.
[209] Mark London and Linda Thompson.
[210] London, *Preservation and Development.*
[211] Mark London and Linda Thompson.
[212] Morin, "Déclin, réménagement," 35.

democratic engagement with existing residents and therefore deviated "as little as possible from earlier planning objectives".[213]

The St-Norbert homes most were likely casualties of their location. Modernist ideology stressed the strict segregation between residential areas and commercial/industrial sectors.[214] Since first elected, Drapeau conceived the city centre as a place for business and commerce, even going so far as to initially oppose Montreal's first modernist housing complex, Habitations Jeannce-Mance due to its central location.[215] The St-Norbert homes, resembling the "taudis" Drapeau railed so hard against, stood little chance against this planning philosophy.

In many ways the St-Norbert fight resembled citizen-lead housing initiatives in other parts of North America. In Toronto, reformist politicians, activists and local residents acted in concert to establish urban renovation projects for areas such as Trefann Court and Don Vale. With citizen consultation, existing homes were restored and new homes built to scale all the while retaining existing street patterns.[216] Meanwhile, in 1970s Brooklyn newly-arrived middle-class professionals joined with existing residents to oppose urban renewal plans for their brownstone neighbourhoods.[217] These battles constituted a new conceptualization of urban life that favoured the retention of existing structures as a precondition for neighbourhood livability.

In subsequent years, housing remained a priority for Save Montreal and its members, many of whom were involved in creating the Milton-Park co-operative, the

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[213] Fillion, "Neighbourhood Improvement," 23.

[214] See "Fantasy of Zoning" chapter: Peter Blake, *Form Follows Fiasco*, 109-120.

[215] Choko, *Jeanne Mance*, 99-105.

[216] See John Sewell, *The Shape of the City: Toronto Struggles with Modern Planning* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 160 and Caulfield, *City Form*, 64-65.

[217] Although this partnership would devolve during the 1980s due to ethnic tensions and ongoing gentrification: Suleiman Osman, "The Neighbourhood Movement" in *The Invention of Brownstone Brooklyn: Gentrification and the Search for Authenticity in Postwar New York* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 233-269.

largest co-operative in Canada at that time. Lucia Kowaluk and Dimitri Roussopoulos had been prominent members in the Milton-Park Citizens Committee since their arrival in the neighbourhood in 1971.[218] Phyllis Lambert and Heritage Montreal played a pivotal role in obtaining federal support for the co-operative. In addition, Adele Mardoche and Joshua Wolfe were both involved in the formation of Milton-Parc as well as being long-time residents.

While Save Montreal considered "the housing situation…the most critical issue in Montreal",[219] it was far from being the group's sole concern. Elsewhere in the city, structures occupying more prominent spaces were under similar developmental pressure. Despite their historic, social or economic importance, Montreal's civic authorities considered their value equally nebulous.

The Laurentien Hotel, 1974-1977

> **Lonnie** - There were so many different areas of the city that were being affected. We felt we had to act while the hotel, the old hotel at the corner of Dorchester was being demolished.[220]

The hotel at the corner of Peel and Dorchester was the Laurentien Hotel. Built in 1948, the 1,004-room building's architecture displayed a fusion of late-art deco and modernist elements. Canadian Pacific Ltd. (CP), having purchased the building from the Sheraton Hotel chain in 1969, was intent on replacing the hotel with an office tower,[221] a proposal the Friends of Windsor Station had been contesting since 1970.[222] However by 1974, despite interest from the Bank of Montreal, no concrete action had taken place.

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[218] Claire Helman, *The Milton-Park Affair: Canada's Largest Citizen-Developer Confrontation* (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1987), 78.
[219] Save Montreal, *SOS Montreal* 1.1 (February 1976): 12.
[220] Lonnie Echenberg.
[221] William Wardwell, "Giant new downtown development expected," *The Montreal Star*, June 18, 1973.
[222] Michael Fish, "The Laurentian Hotel: A case study of developer demolition," in *The Second City Book: Studies of urban and suburban Canada*, (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1977), 101.

Nonetheless, CP reiterated its intention to raze the hotel the following year.[223] Save

Montreal responded with a press conference communicating its opposition to the hotel's

demolition, and called upon municipal, provincial and federal authorities to intervene.[224]

Despite CP's intentions, numerous demolition delays ensued. The hotel was granted a

reprieve following the Bank of Montreal's withdrawal from the project. During this time

provincial bodies also advocated deferral. The upcoming 1976 Olympic Games required

considerable accommodations in the city for games-related staff. The Olympic

Organizing Committee and the provincial Olympic housing bureau wanted the building to

house the international press corps.[225] These delays provided time for Save Montreal to

better mount their campaign. However, as interviewees recounted, the Laurentien Hotel

posed specific challenges:

> **Michael** – Anyway, I knew that demolishing the Laurentien Hotel, which was just like a big bachelor apartment, was a stupid idea. It was, comparatively speaking, brand new and it had to be making a lot of money. Anyway, nobody liked it because it was art deco.[226]
>
> **Peter** - Michael got all excited about it and said it was a wonderful example of post-war architecture and there was some amazing innovations, and the bathrooms in each room. But, a hard sell. Nobody…most people couldn't really see it as a historic monument, or a monument of architecture and this or whatever. Because, it was even hard to tell people, at that time that Grey Nuns, for instance, was an important monument. And, I see in these clippings that the Chamber of Commerce of Montreal - I don't know if you've come across those Chamber of Commerce – when, just at the end of the Grey Nuns campaign, came out with very strong statements against classification and saying that the city should not be a museum of architectural monuments and the city is an arena for real estate development and that's what it's for! So, even Grey Nuns wasn't easy to promote and the Laurentien Hotel was less so.[227]
>
> **Josh** – So the Laurentien Hotel was kind of unusual for Save Montreal because it was neither – well it was affordable hotel accommodations in downtown, so there was some question of social aspects, but not for Montrealers, for tourists –

[223] Charles Lazarus, "Hotel to close in 1975," *The Montreal Star*, June 22, 1974.
[224] "La demolition de l'hôtel Laurentien est un acte obscene," *Le Jour*, October 11, 1974.
[225] "L'hôtel Laurentien, pas démoli avant les Jeux," *La Presse*. November 12, 1974.
[226] Michael Fish, August 12, 2014.
[227] Peter Lanken, January 10, 2015.

so it wasn't an architectural monument, it wasn't particularly important architecturally, nor was it a charming neighbourhood.[228]

As Peter noted in conversation, if it was difficult to build awareness for prominent buildings of historical significance, than it was even more so for structures of post-war vintage. Josh voiced similar sentiments, pointing out that the hotel did not fit the building or streetscape profile Save Montreal was accustomed to campaigning for. Furthermore, Josh felt the social benefits of the hotel mostly benefited visitors to the city, rather than the residents themselves. Nonetheless, the members of Save Montreal engaged in a multi-year, protracted campaign to save the building. Arguments were mostly rooted in the negative economic impact the hotel's demolition would cause.

Centrally located in downtown Montreal, the hotel remained a profitable enterprise. Sheraton Hotels, which had continued to rent and operate the Laurentien, was "delighted" by CP's decision to delay demolition identifying the hotel as "one of the biggest money-makers in the company" ranking "among the top five hotels" within their 350 hotel chain.[229] Save Montreal highlighted how the hotel catered to many tourists by offering low-cost accommodations, and proved especially popular with bus tours, receiving "40 to 50 bus tours a week in peak season, more than any other hotel in North America."[230] In conversation, Michael related how members of the tourist bureau spoke to him and "practically wept that this thing was going to be gone because they didn't have another hotel at that price level that would keep these people in town for another day."[231] The loss of so many inexpensive rooms would contribute to an overall inflation in hotel room costs in Montreal.[232]

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[228] Josh Wolfe, interview with Eliot Perrin, Montreal, July 14, 2015.
[229] "Anxious to keep Laurentien operating: Sheraton delighted by hotel decision," *The Montreal Star*, November 8, 1974.
[230] "The Laurentien Hotel: coming down soon!" Save Montreal, *SOS Montreal* 1.6 (September 1976): 2.
[231] Michael Fish, September 15, 2015.
[232] Michael Fish, "Hotel serves society's needs," *The Gazette*. August 7, 1976.

Having spoken with tourism industry insiders, Save Montreal claimed that the hotel's demolition would also adversely affect the city's convention business. With convention organizers requesting "a certain percentage of budget-rooms in a city",[233] a Convention and Visitors' Bureau representative estimated the loss of 10 conventions per year as a result of demolition.[234] In addition, Save Montreal identified the negative impact demolition would have on surrounding businesses. A September 1975 fire necessitated the temporary closure of the hotel. Local businesses were impacted by the decision, and eagerly waited its reopening.[235] Considering the building's size, and the fact that it was a relatively recent construction that had undergone further renovation following the 1975 blaze, Save Montreal members considered it an eminent waste of money and resources. Armed with these arguments, Save Montreal utilized many tactics to pressure CP into preserving the hotel, some of which were recalled in conversation:

> **Lonnie** – And we got out there and marched in the street, and we wore garbage bags over us {laughter} to protest what was happening. We wrote letters to the editor saying "What was this building, they just put million of dollars into renovating it and now they're tearing it down. It was an inexpensive hotel for a lot of people that was right in the centre of the city.[236]

> **Lucia** – And we had a vigil, it was in the fall – pretty sure it was the fall. It was cold, but not bitter. We stood in a line, spelled each other off. Maybe there were 20 of us, off and on, for a whole day to call attention to the fact we considered it a huge wasted of a building, of energy, to tear that building down. We even all bought shares in Canadian Pacific. So we went to the annual meeting and just, you know, said we don't agree, why are you tearing down this building, and so on and so forth. But they tore it down anyway…[237]

Everything from meetings with city and provincial officials, to letter writing and media pressure, to absurdist street performances and song-writing (The Laurentien

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[233] "The Laurentien Hotel: coming down soon!" Save Montreal, *SOS Montreal* 1.6 (September 1976): 2.
[234] Michael Fish, "The Laurentian Hotel," 98.
[235] "Shops await customers: Laurentien Hotel reopens Sunday," *The Gazette*. January 2, 1976.
[236] Lonnie Echenberg.
[237] Lucia Kowaluk, interview with Eliot Perrin, Montreal, July 21, 2014.

Song), was employed as a means of calling attention to the issue.[238] The donning of garbage bags that Lonnie described spoke to the cavalier manner in which the city and developers disposed of buildings. The final acts of protest were perhaps the most daring. Having purchased shares in CP, Save Montreal filed a brief to the Quebec Superior Court asking the company, and its developmental subsidiary Marathon Realties, be enjoined from demolishing the structure.[239] The brief "contends that the defendants…are acting in a manner which is 'oppressive and fraudulent', and prejudicial to the interest of its shareholders" and that the "demolition would be a 'flagrant waste of a productive and remunerative asset of the defendants, and would unjustifiably diminish the value of the shares' held by Save Montreal."[240] However, by the time the brief was filed in February, 1977 demolition work had already commenced. Despite deliberation, the judge ruled that a request for injunction "to halt demolition was useless since the building was effectively destroyed." In one last attempt to sway CP, members of Save Montreal attended the shareholders meeting and submitted questions to the chairman asking why the hotel was being demolished and countering the claims that the hotel was losing money. Nonetheless, despite the group's best efforts, demolition work continued and the hotel was demolished.

The Laurentien Hotel, as a subject of a prolonged preservation campaign, is interesting for what it is not. As a recent construction, it lacked historicity, depriving its advocates of one means of defence. Speaking to *The Gazette* Michael Fish pointed out that "the Laurentien doesn't have a particular historic or cultural significance and it isn't a neighbourhood".[241] The hotel's lack of heritage credentials camouflaged the building's

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[238] See Save Montreal, *SOS Montreal* 1.8 (December 1976): 4.
[239] 25 shares were held by the Save Montreal organization and 10 were held by Lucia Kowaluk: Lucia Kowaluk, "The Laurentien Battle is Lost," *SOS Montreal* 2.3 (August 1977): 3.
[240] Save Montreal, "Save Montreal Goes to Court to Save Laurentien," *SOS Montreal* 2.1 (March 1977): 9.
[241] Donna Gabeline, "Group appeals for Laurentien," *The Gazette*, October 11, 1974.

importance. Even today, despite being one of the group's central campaigns, the fight

over the Laurentien Hotel receives scant attention, receiving only brief mention in
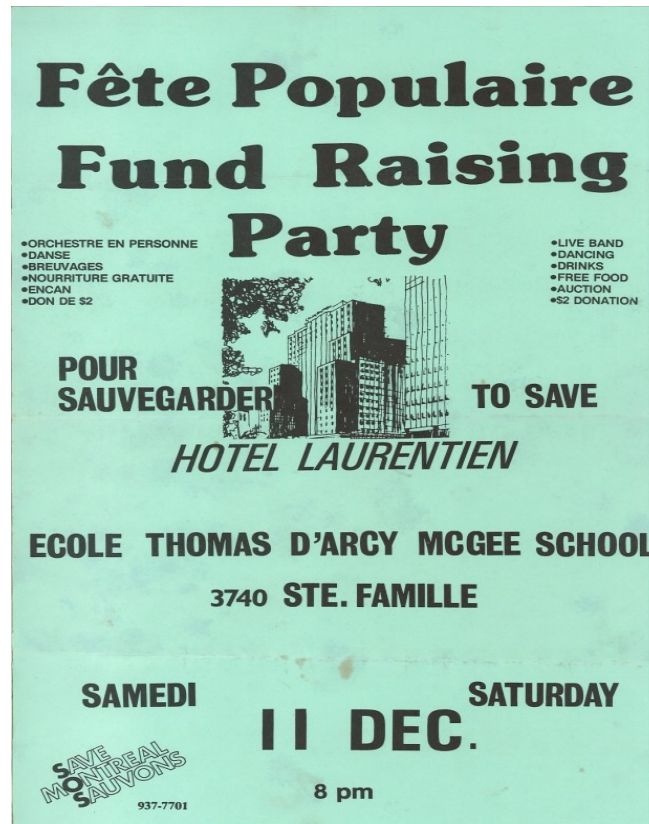
Drouin's history of Montreal's preservation movement.[242]

Illustration 3.2: Flyer for a Laurentien Hotel campaign fundraiser.[243]

Despite this challenge, Save Montreal understood the building for what it

represented to its staff, neighbours, and the city as a whole. By outlining an economic

argument, Save Montreal wanted the city's residents, politicians and business

community to rethink how Montreal was being developed and to reflect on the

schizophrenic demolition/construction cycle that was unsustainable and economically

detrimental to the city centre.

[242] The Laurentien Hotel fight was discussed, to varying lengths, by 15 interviewees, all of whom considered it a pivotal campaign of Save Montreal. Drouin mentions the hotel on two pages and only in relation to larger threats surrounding the Windsor Station site: Drouin, *Combat du patrimoine*, 74-75.
[243] "Save Montreal, "Fund Raising Party To Save Hotel Laurentien," Eliot Perrin, personal files, Montreal.

Shaughnessy House and the Grey Nuns, 1974-1976

Of the campaigns under discussion, the threats posed to the Shaughnessy house and the Grey Nuns motherhouse are perhaps the most indicative of the attitudes and times in which Save Montreal operated. Both buildings were aesthetically and architecturally representative of Montreal's pre-war built character, and both were associated with important figures in Montreal's development; Thomas Shaughnessy and the Sisters of Charity of Montreal, widely-known by their moniker the Grey Nuns. Despite these impressive credentials, both structures were threatened with demolition by large developers. In both cases, Save Montreal campaigned for their preservation and the buildings received designations as Cultural Property from the provincial government in 1974 and 1976, respectively.

The Shaughnessy house, built in 1876, was bought by Thomas Shaughnessy, assistant general manager, and later president, of the CPR. [244] Its location at Dorchester and Rue St-Mathieu had once been a fashionable area replete with mansions of similar elegance. Many had been lost though, the result of the Ville-Marie Expressway punching holes in the neighbourhood's fabric. Demolition for high-rise development was also rampant in this area of downtown.

Brian Merrett, having grown up in the area came to be familiar with the building and, through contact with the religious order, the Sisters of Service, who owned the premises was given access to photograph its interiors:

> **Brian** – And, I went into this wonderful house and I saw this great Victorian house and it was big and beautiful woodwork and stained-glass and I asked the nuns "Can I, you know" - I didn't say I was a photographer right off, I said student of architecture - "could I photograph in the house?". "Oh yes, sure" they said "but please don't show your photographs to the press because, you know, the house is being sold, it's going to be torn down, they're going to build a hotel here." So, talk about the influence of photography and a very important person which came

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[244] The home was also, for a short time, the residence of William van Horne prior to Shaughnessy's purchase of the building.

into play here. Over a couple of days in May 1973 I went into the house, again a small format camera, tripod, photographed interiors, details, the architecture and the spaces. Great, you know, fire places, stained-glass..great house but no, I wasn't to show it to the media and there were two people in the media, one at the Montreal Star, one at the Gazette who were really itching to get their hands on the photographs and I wasn't allowed to show them to them. At that time, a friend of mine told me about an architect who moved back to Montreal from Chicago and she was interested in preserving architecture.[245]

This proved fortuitous because later in the year, and only 10 days after the Van Horne mansion demolition, the building was threatened.[246] A Toronto developer wished to purchase the house and replace it with an 11-storey tower. Sensing an opportunity, Mark London approached the developer with an idea:

> **Mark** – And at the same time after work, like this is what I was doing for my day job, but my evening job we would go to these Save Montreal meetings. And then the Shaughnessy House was threatened and, again, I said 'There's a lot of room on that property, why are they tearing down this beautiful house! Why don't they build the hotel behind the house and they could save the house, and use the house for the…
> **Eliot** – Like as a lobby.
> **Mark** – Meeting rooms, dining hall of the hotel, and it would be really classy.[247]

The proposal would have seen the house retained and incorporated into a hotel facility. The spacious interior was well-suited to the dining and conference needs of a hotel. At the same time, the federal government expressed interest in designating the building as a site of national importance and did so later that year.[248] However, the developer opted to pass on the hotel proposal:

> **Mark** – And, I think we asked the developer, they weren't interested. So we were trying to get it classified by the province of Quebec as an historic property, which would mean they weren't allowed to demolish it. And the Ministry of Cultural Affairs official said 'Look, the nuns have sold it, and the nuns need the revenue. If you can find someone who would be willing to buy the property…[249]

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[245] Brian Merrett.
[246] Drouin, *Combat du patrimoine*, 61.
[247] Mark London and Linda Thompson.
[248] Drouin, *Combat du patrimoine*, 345.
[249] Mark London and Linda Thompson.

At the time Mark was working for the architectural firm ARCOP and in Halifax on assignment. The developer coordinating the Halifax project with ARCOP was Y & R Realities whom Mark approached with the same hotel proposal:

> **Mark** – I approached the developers and they said 'Hey, there's this property in downtown Montreal, it costs x amount of dollars, would you be interesting in developing a hotel here? Save the building, build it.' And they came, and they looked at it, and they were interested. So we put together this deal, and the Ministry of Cultural Affairs was going to classify it.[250]

Again, the developer declined, leaving the house's fate still uncertain. Luckily, having been introduced to the house by Brian Merrett, Phyllis Lambert agreed to purchase the building.

> **Brian** – So, I met Phyllis Lambert and, at my apartment on St-Marc Street. Trotted out all these photographs and laid them on the table and she took a set of photographs away with her. And, it took a few years, the next year she purchased the house, a few years later she converted it into the CCA and built all the buildings around it. So, talk about the impact of photography – that, that I think was probably the most powerful project that I worked on...[251]

Phyllis Lambert, a member of Montreal's prominent and wealthy Bronfman family, was uniquely positioned for such an acquisition. An architect by training, she had been instrumental in the design of prominent modernist structures in New York and Montreal (the Seagram Building and the Segal Centre respectively). Despite her pedigree, fellow Save Montrealers insist that Lambert was a member on par with the rest of the group and many were unaware of her familial connections for some time. Nonetheless, the resources at her disposal were, at times, beneficial to the organization, although this was mostly consigned to financial assistance for day-to-day activities. In this instance, Lambert had the ability to acquire the home. While this was not necessarily done on Save Montreal's behalf, it was nevertheless bought to ensure the building was retained.

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[250] Mark London and Linda Thompson.
[251] Brian Merrett.

Having purchased the house and, following a few years of deliberation, Lambert decided to build the Canadian Centre for Architecture on the site, utilizing the Shaughnessy House as an office, reception, and conference area. The interior details were retained with minimal changes while the sensitive rear attachment connects the building with the rest of the centre. The house was also designated as a cultural property by the provincial government in 1974.

Located a few blocks east of the Shaughnessy house stands the Grey Nuns motherhouse. Founded in 1738 by Marie-Marguerite d'Youville, the Grey Nuns came to operate the Montreal General Hospital and were a prominent institution in the Montreal community for many years. Their second motherhouse was constructed in 1871 and designed by renowned ecclesiastical architect Victor Bourgeau.[252] Since 1973, there had been reports of a possible sale to a developer.[253] By 1974 news of the sale were leaked, the nuns were considering selling their property to a developer, Valorinvest.[254] Valorinvest was the Canadian affiliate of the Swiss bank Soginvest Banca S.A. and a significant real estate management company in the Montreal area.[255] Details of the development were mostly in the form of rumours, but Peter had a fortunate connection who disclosed the transaction:

> **Peter** – …but it started with a rumour that Grey Nuns had been sold, or had been optioned but nobody knew anything about it. However, my father had been a florist and there was a florist on Guy Street, on the property…I went to the florist who ran this little store and I introduced myself. And he said 'Oh yeah, yeah, I've known Mr. Lanken from a long time ago'. So I said 'Look, there's some rumours about this property' and he said 'Yeah, within the last month we've been told to pay our rent to a company called Valorinvest' and that was the first time, I believe, that the name Valorinvest emerged and suddenly, suddenly there was an objective![256]

[252] Donna Gabeline, "Grey Nuns convent to get wreckers' axe," *The Gazette*, November 23, 1974.
[253] Jean-Pierre Proulx, "Les soeurs grises envisageraient de mettre en vente leur maison-mère," *Le Devoir*, April 26, 1973.
[254] Donna Gabeline, "Grey Nuns convent to get wreckers' axe," *The Gazette*, November 23, 1974.
[255] Aubin, *City for Sale*, 31-32.
[256] Peter Lanken, January 10, 2015.

Phyllis Lambert tried to purchase the convent, but her offer was rejected since Valorinvest submitted a higher bid.[257] Initially the provincial Minister of Cultural Affairs, Denis Hardy, designated the motherhouse's central chapel as Cultural Property.[258] This hardly quelled the issue. Hardy was then under pressure to designate the entire structure while Valorinvest was lobbying for demolition approval as the chapel's designation provided a protective radius of 500 metres; any development that fell within that radius was subject to provincial approval.[259]

Looking to keep the pressure on Hardy to designate the entire complex, Save Montreal stepped up its efforts. In January, 1975 a series of ads, in French and English, circulated throughout newspapers. The ads had been conceived by Phyllis Lambert who utilized personal connections to have them printed:

> **Phyllis** – I went to, because of my family, I knew some of the people in advertising and I went to the advertising firm and I said 'I need – I did it again for the mountain…
> **Eliot** – Ok.
> **Phyllis** – And I said 'We need to have an ad.' So I think we raised money to put it in papers, but they did this for us, you know, without any charge and *pro bono* I suppose is the term one uses. Yeah, yeah, yeah, they want to shoot our dearest treasure. And the Grey Nuns in the gun sight, yes, yes, and we had a pamphlet, and I mean a little ticket at the bottom to send to Quebec, because that was the only way you could save anything, you had to get things classified with a 500-foot area around from the farthest edges of the entity to be classified. And we used that strategically to cover areas of the town. But we sent these coupons up to Quebec and, you know, we brought the coupons to drugstores everywhere. And people filled these in, you know, we raised the flag and people came.[260]

The ads depicted the motherhouse in crosshairs framed by the words "They're ready to blast one of Montreal's most precious treasures" "Your silence is their best

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[257] Donna Gabeline, "Seminaire towers made historic site, demolition barred" *The Gazette*, December 7, 1974.

[258] Jacques Benoit, "Le geste de Hardy n'assure qu'une protection proviso ire," *La Presse*, December 6, 1974.

[259] Jacques Benoit, "La maison des Soeurs grises, rasée pour 'Place de la Tour'," *La Presse*, December 4, 1974.

[260] Phyllis Lambert, interview with Eliot Perrin, Montreal, July 15, 2015.

weapon."[261] The ad included a cut-out letter to be signed and mailed to Hardy asking him

to classify the entire structure. As always, Save Montreal was prepared with counter

proposals. It was suggested that the federal government take over the building for office

space, a solution that would alleviate the need for the proposed Guy-Favreau complex, a

project that Save Montreal was also campaigning against.[262] Save Montreal prompted

Concordia University to explore the possibility of purchasing the site.[263] Peter Lanken

was asked to provide some drawings concerning the possibilities for the building in their

university magazine. Arguments made by Save Montreal and other groups stressed the

historical significance of the project. Michael Fish called the proposal "un saccage de

notre patrimoine" and that such a project would not be tolerated in a European city.[264]

The project remained in the media for months as Hardy and the provincial

government deliberated over a decision. Finally, on June 10, 1975 Hardy announced his

decision, Valorinvest's proposal was rejected due to the negative impact the plan would

have on the site.[265] It was a victory for the preservation efforts, but it did not protect the

convent indefinitely, Valorinvest could return with a different plan for the site. However,

that was not to be the case. Following a cabinet shuffle Jean-Paul L'Allier replaced

Denis Hardy as Minister of Cultural Affairs and in January 1976, L'Allier announced that

the entire Grey Nuns motherhouse would be classified as a Cultural Property.[266]

While the other campaigns discussed in this paper represent defeats or partial

victories, the Grey Nuns motherhouse and Shaughnessy house represent important

victories for the group, especially considering their current prominence. The members of

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[261] "Your silence is their best weapon," Grey Nuns notice, Canadian Centre for Architeture, Save Montreal collection.

[262] Jacques Francoeur, "Installer les bureaux du fédéral dans l'immense couvent des Soeurs Grises," *Dimanche Matin*, December 15, 1974.

[263] "Concordia may save convent for campus," *The Montreal Star*, January 29, 1975.

[264] Jacques Benoit, "Place de la Tour: un saccage de notre patrimoine," *La Presse*, December 5, 1974.

[265] Denis Hardy, Press conference notes, June 10, 1975.

[266] "Grey Nuns site 'historic,'" *The Montreal Star*, January 28, 1976.

Save Montreal were quick to recognize the possibilities at each site and advocated

initiatives that would retain the heritage structures while allowing for new, innovative

uses. In both instances Save Montreal engaged in negotiations with public and private

bodies to protect noteworthy buildings.

Alternative positions responded to the concerns of both property owners and

advocated, in the case of the Shaughnessy House, a sensitive incorporation of the

building into a hotel and, with regards to the Grey Nuns complex, its adoption by either

the federal government or Concordia to meet their respective spatial needs.

Furthermore, their current status – the Shaughnessy House has been sensitively

incorporated into the Canadian Centre for Architecture to serve as office, meeting and

event space, while the Grey Nuns motherhouse (in what is, perhaps, a testament to

Save Montreal's forward-thinking) has been converted to student residences and study

space by Concordia University – speaks to Save Montreal's promotion of preservation

and reuse over demolition and redevelopment.

Place Guy-Favreau, 1972-1984

> **Mark** – And the federal government was going to, originally they were going to
> have offices in Complexe Desjardins but then they pulled out, and they were
> building a federal building, what eventually became Complexe Guy-Favreau.[267]

Complexe Guy-Favreau was first announced to the public in 1972 as a "$100

million, multi-tower service complex" that would "centralize federal government services

in Montreal."[268] At the press conference, Drapeau claimed "that in terms of development,

the 1970's in Montreal would be 'more sensational' than the 1960's".[269] The Minister of

Public Works Jean-Eudes Dubé expressed hope that the "project will encourage more

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[267] Mark London and Linda Thompson.
[268] Ralph Surette, "$100 million complex for city," *The Montreal Star*, March 30, 1972.
[269] Ibid.

developments in the eastern section of downtown Montreal".[270] Drapeau had long

advocated for an eastern pole to Montreal's downtown area and reiterated this belief by

claiming "the only way we can make Montreal one of the greatest cities in the world is by

ensuring there are no gaps between the eastern and western sections of the city".[271] The

federal government was in agreement, the Ministry of Public Works having chosen that

location in support of downtown Montreal's eastern development.[272] Complexe Guy-

Favreau's construction would also be the latest node in the spatial redevelopment of an

area extending south from Boulevard de Maisonneuve to the borders of Old Montreal.

The area's rationalization required the replacement of ageing, low-income housing with

megastructures, producing a series of four interconnected complexes with rapid transit

access. The size and scope of the project would further acknowledge Boulevard René-

Lévesque as an avenue of major office complexes. Furthermore, there were political

considerations at play. The complex "was conceived to bring more than 10,000 federal

civil servants under one roof, thus asserting the physical as well as symbolic presence of

the federal government in the city and the province."[273]

Standing in Guy Favreau's way was the area housing Montreal's historic Chinese

population. Like other Chinatowns, the neighbourhood was "known to maintain and

support a marginal population: the elderly and the poor, handicapped by linguistic,

cultural and psychological barriers."[274] Under developmental pressure since the opening

of the Hydro-Québec headquarters in 1962, the neighbourhood suffered further

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[270] David Marcil, "Federal complex aids eastern downtown area," *The Gazette*, March 30, 1972.
[271] Ibid. Drapeau was a strong advocate for the development of an eastern pole to Montreal's downtown that could act as a Francophone counterbalance to the predominantly Anglophone west. Projects such as Place des Arts, Complexe Desjardins and Place Dupuis represented some of the most prominent embodiments of this ambition: Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal*, 504-505.
[272] "$100 Millions!," *Journal de Montreal*, March 30, 1972.
[273] Chan Kwok Bun, "Ethnic Urban Space, Urban Displacement and Forced Relocation: The Case of Chinatown in Montreal," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 18.2 (1986), 68.
[274] Chan Kwok Bun, *Smoke and Fire: The Chinese in Montreal* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1991), 295.

encroachment by the construction of Complexe Desjardins. The plans for Guy-Favreau called for the demolition of churches and private residences in the neighbourhood's western end. Following its announcement, Chinatown community leaders denounced the impending expropriations claiming they "would destroy not only present achievements but the community's ever-increasing development."[275] Removal of the institutional structures, community leaders argued, would hamper the community's ability to function, reducing it to an area delineated solely by consumption. In addition, the possibility of future expansion of the complex called into question the entire neighbourhood's existence.[276]

Over the ensuing years, Save Montreal employed a variety of arguments against both the project and its proposed location. Of immediate concern was the cloud of secrecy surrounding Guy-Favreau's status. Repeated attempts by members of Save Montreal to speak with Public Works officials regarding the project were ignored.[277] In a letter discussing Guy-Favreau, Save Montreal stated that while developers were "especially secretive…the worst offenders in this regard in our city are government departments who have no justification for secrecy."[278] It was considered especially egregious that a governmental body, entrusted to operate on the public's behalf, was operating confidentially on this file. In a *Gazette* article, Lucia Kowaluk argued that the ongoing construction of new office buildings necessitated the demolition of existing, moderately-priced, commercial building stock. New office space is inevitably more expensive, Kowaluk argued, contributing to an overall inflation in commercial rents in the

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[275] Mary Janigan, "New complex dooms heart and soul of Chinatown," *The Gazette*, April 8, 1972.
[276] Jacques Forget, "La mort du quartier chinois: Au nom du progress, Montréal se verra amputer d'un autre quartier pittoresque," *Dimanche-Matin*, December 10, 1972.
[277] Peter Lanken, "New building simply too big," *The Gazette*, October 2, 1975.
[278] Michael Fish, "Without public voice development destructive," *The Gazette*, December 27, 1975.

city, a situation that was without warrant when considering the vacancies in other, newly-built office complexes.[279]

The project's design was also a source of chagrin for the Save Montrealers as noted by Lucia and Mark:

> **Lucia** – So buildings were torn down for it and it was to be all government buildings and luxury condos.[280]

> **Mark** – And the original design of that wiped out absolutely everything in Chinatown and was this huge, this huge box, like totally, I mean it's already a bit out of scale the way it ended up being, but it was, like, 10 times bigger.[281]

From a social standpoint, Lucia was angered by the demolition of existing homes so that government workers could be housed instead. The original design, Mark noted, would have eliminated most of Chinatown, its scale dwarfing any remaining buildings, and thereby undermining the neighbourhood's structural and social components.

In January 1976 the federal government temporarily suspended plans for the complex in order to accommodate design changes and to compensate for any potential work shortages. If the construction industry slumped following the Olympic Games the complex could be pushed forward.[282] Despite the suspension a significant section of Chinatown had already been levelled, leaving only eight buildings remaining in the neighbourhood's western section.[283]

Throughout 1976 and 1977 Save Montreal helped keep the project in the limelight demanding that it be reduced in size and scope, existing buildings be integrated, and federal government offices be decentralized.[284] Furthermore, governmental devotion to megastructures, they argued, produced a "construction

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[279] Lucia Kowaluk, "New complex to create 'dead area' in city," *The Gazette*, December 11, 1975.
[280] Lucia Kowaluk.
[281] Mark London and Linda Thompson.
[282] Charles Lazarus, "Place Guy Favreau losing height," *The Montreal Star*, January 3, 1976.
[283] "S'opposant aux projects du federal. Sauvons Montréal: ne détruisez pas le quartier chinois!," *Le Jour*, May 5, 1976.
[284] "Place Guy Favreau." Save Montreal Press Release. May 4, 1976.

industry of artificially inflated size which is oriented almost exclusively to large projects"
and that "this oversized labour force is being used to justify projects like Place Guy
Favreau".[285]

These arguments were communicated in meetings with newly-appointed Minister
of Public Works André Ouellet.[286] In the following press conference Ouellet outlined
changes to the original Guy-Favreau plans, namely the reduction in size from three-
towers to two 12-storey towers, and the incorporation of social housing. Furthermore,
the government also committed to refurbishing existing federal buildings to house certain
ministries rather than relocate them to Guy-Favreau. Ouellet also indicated that the
design was the result of consultation with Save Montreal and other groups.[287]

At the same press conference, Ouellet also promised to form a public
consultation committee and incorporate its recommendations into the design. However,
the committee proved to be an incredibly frustrating experience. As indicated in three
damning *SOS Montreal* articles, the committee lacked authority, its members were
ambivalent at best, and it served as a buffer between the organization and the
governmental decision-makers.[288] With further demolitions in west Chinatown, it was
clear the process was a charade. However, as Lucia noted in conversation, subsidized
housing, not even on the drawing board when the project was announced, remains a
feature of the complex. The southern face of Guy-Favreau more closely resembles a
traditional streetscape than the monumental atrium that graces its northern entrance.

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[285] Save Montreal, "Editorial: 'The Edifice Complex," *SOS Montreal* 2.3 (August 1977): 6.
[286] Mark London and Linda Thompson.
[287] Charles Lazarus, "Decision on Favreau complex 'not political," *The Montreal Star*, October 15,
1977.
[288] Audrey Bean, Julia Gersovitz and Peter Lanken, "Guy Favreau: Stop demolitions, end
secrecy," *SOS Montreal* 3.2 (April-May 1978): 5; Save Montreal, "Guy Favreau consultative
committee 'Hogue-tied," *SOS Montreal* 3.3 (June-July 1978): 8-10, and Peter Lanken, "Guy
Favreau 'improvements," *SOS Montreal* 3.4 (September 1978): 6.

The efforts of Save Montreal were not all for naught, an opinion held by many of its

members:

> **Lucia** – And we also, Save Montreal fought hard to get the government to have a certain amount of subsidized housing in it, which we succeeded in doing.[289]

> **Mark** – And I remember meeting, Save Montreal. I think maybe Peter was there, I don't remember, maybe Michael, a few of us. But I put together the 10 reasons why Complexe Guy-Favreau, I don't know if it even had that name then, should not be built. Or should not be built the way it was being proposed. We proposed that it be scaled down, more mixed-use, have housing, be smaller scale on La Gauchetière, be more respectful of Chinatown, and we met the André Ouellet, and he was very sympathetic, they ended up totally redesigning the building pretty much along the guidelines – pretty much, it's still a big complex – but pretty much along the guidelines we had recommended.[290]

When the complex opened in 1984, reviews were decidedly mixed. Architecture

professor Jean-Claude Marsan summarized it best, arguing that the building "*a perdu sa*

raison d'être".[291] Conceived over a period of 15 years, and subject to considerable

revisions, it was a building that spanned two eras; that of the megastructure, and that of

sensitive integration into the surrounding urban setting. Save Montreal, through its

dogged opposition to the project, helped persuade the federal authorities of a need for a

building that was more respectful to the neighbourhood it had so insensitively

encroached upon. Furthermore, although the public consultation committee was for

optics only, it was an early instance of such a committee being held.

Although much of Chinatown was lost, the intervention of Save Montreal and

other groups ensured that matters relating to heritage, housing and the local economy

were at the forefront of public debate. Like the St-Norbert street protests, opposition to

the Guy-Favreau complex further demonstrated Save Montreal's willingness to advocate

on behalf of an impoverished area. By arguing for the safeguarding of Chinatown, Save

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[289] Lucia Kowaluk.
[290] Mark London and Linda Thompson.
[291] Jean-Claude Marsan, "Le complexe Guy-Favreau: une victim de son époque," *Le Devoir,* September 8, 1984.

Montreal again exhibited its ability and to advocate for spaces that fell beyond Montreal's

Anglo-Victorian pedigree.

Walking Tours, 1976-1988[292]

In 1976 Save Montreal began hosting walking tours of various neighbourhoods in

the city. These tours were not, by definition, campaigns but they represent an important

counterpoint to the group's preservation efforts; the walking tours demonstrated what

Save Montreal stood for, as opposed to what they stood against. It is important to

remember that Save Montreal was a multi-faceted organization and, while it often acted

as a protest group, its members also sought to educate Montreal residents about their

own city. Some members were far more active in raising community awareness than in

organizing protests.

> The walking tours were first proposed by Norman Spatz:
>
> **Norman** – And the one idea I'm extremely proud of was I, at that time, went and visited a friend who was living in Chicago, which has the Chicago Architectural Assocation, and they offer a series of walking tours, and it occurred to me that we should offer a series of walking tours. And so I was actually the developer of what has morphed into the Heritage Montreal walking tour program. And I started in, I guess, 76 or something. And we had, like, three walking tours and it was a lot of work, and I did it for about two or three years...[293]

The Chicago Architecture Foundation that Norman referred to was founded as the

Chicago School of Architecture Foundation in 1966 by local architects looking to save

the John Glessner house from demolition.[294] Following their initial success the

organization began hosting annual walking tours in 1970, and has since expanded to

include exhibitions, river cruises, and community programs.[295]

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[292] Heritage Montreal took over responsibility for the walking tours in 1988. Taken from Heritage Montreal website: "Bref historique," http://www.heritagemontreal.org/en/about-us/history/.
[293] Norman Spatz.
[294] "The House." http://www.glessnerhouse.org/the-house/
[295] "About CAF," http://www.architecture.org/about-caf/.

While Norman remembered some initial opposition to the idea, the walking tours'

composition ensured the values and objectives of Save Montreal were well-represented.

A newspaper article highlighting the Chinatown tour summarized these objectives as

such:

> "The basic aim of Save Montreal's free walking tours is to show Montrealers their
> city in a new light – to explore with them unfamiliar and interesting areas, and
> also to point out sections which face demolition and development."[296]

The tours deliberately focused on areas frequently neglected by the city. The Little

Burgundy tour opened with a three-page history of the area, imbuing it with a sense of

character and repudiating the notion that low-wage neighbourhoods were inherent

blights on the urban fabric. The introduction ended with reference to the city's

redevelopment of the area, citing "the final effects of the programme are not yet known,

but one thing is certain: the population is rapidly declining. We will speak much more

about the City's programme throughout this tour."[297] What followed was a fascinating mix

of historical contextualization, architectural highlights, current circumstances, and social

commentary, ensuring the pressures facing the neighbourhood and its residents were

the central theme.[298]

Much like the Little Burgundy tour, the tour of the Main/St-Laurent also

prominently featured those who lived and worked in the neighbourhood. Despite a lack

of material resources, Caroline and others were able to create these tours through

contact with residents and small shop owners who provided them with information on

neighbourhood life and the origins of their businesses:

> **Caroline** – Oh yeah, it was really folksy. I went and spoke to all sorts of owners
> like Berson, who owned the Hebrew monument maker…"Right, the gravestones.
> St. Lawrence Bakery existed in those days. Simcha, which was a little grocery

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[296] "You don't know what you've got: Tour explores doomed Chinatown," *The Montreal Star*,
August 28, 1975."
[297] "Little Burgundy Tour," Jane Broderick's personal files, Montreal.
[298] Ibid.

store at the corner of Napoleon. I went into so many of those stores and interviewed the owners. And, made a walking tour and we offered this walking tour and it was a huge success. A lot of people...it must have been one of the first that was free…[299]

Throughout our conversation Caroline described these tours as "folksy", "granola" and "amateur" signifying members' initial inexperience in conducting tours. However, the ad hoc method by which they developed the tours may have contributed to their success. In the case of the Main tour, many individuals came from more suburban areas to acquaint themselves with the old Jewish quarter in which their grandparents had resided. Caroline recalled how the walking tour provided an opportunity to learn about both their city and own family story:[300]

Caroline – I mean, and they were staggered. They were staggered because they could see that what they considered a slum area now was in. And this was just the beginning.
Eliot - Ok, ok.
Caroline – Of it being in. Prince Arthur was just starting to be developed. The Bas St-Louis, and I don't even know if it's still there, on the south side of Prince Arthur at St-Dominique was the first restaurant. He'd taken over from an old fish shop.
Eliot – Ok.
Caroline – And, so it was really fun for these people who lived in all the Jewish suburbs, you know? And were coming back and rediscovering their roots, a lot of them. So that was one of the activities. And it was our first walking tour, definitely was. There was information about the architecture, how much information was there? I mean, I research and write and give lectures on history and architecture but in those days the information we had, there wasn't an internet, we didn't have this kind of information available. It was very folksy.[301]

In profiling the neighbourhood from a grassroots perspective, Caroline and others were not just illuminating the area's past, but its present as well. By showcasing a functioning,

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[299] Caroline Breslaw.
[300] The second and third generation tour attendees recalls Pierre Nora's conclusion that modern memory is increasingly reliant on external repositories; storehouses that transmute memories into historical consciousness. Nora considers "the passage from memory to history has required every social group to redefine its identity through the revitalization of its own history. The task of remembering makes everyone his own historian.": Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations* 26 (Spring, 1989): 15.
[301] Caroline Breslaw.

populated neighbourhood these tours educated those unfamiliar or out of touch with their

own city centre and countered modernist perceptions of inner-city blight.

The content of these tours recalls Jacobs' book *The Death and Life of Great*

American Cities and its pervasive anecdotes of neighbourhood life. For Jacobs, the

contact that sidewalks and storefronts afford a community is necessary for fostering

public safety, mutual respect, and common identity.[302] In addition, by highlighting the

architectural forms associated with early immigrant experiences, the walking tours also

contributed to an ongoing rediscovery of the vernacular form already evidenced by such

publications as *Montréal en évolution* (1974)*, Exploring Montreal* (1974) and *Lost*

Montreal (1975). By profiling lost or threatened architectural heritage, these works

advanced local understandings of place and neighbourhood, emphasizing the value of

buildings of varying style and provenance.

When questioned about the public's response to the tours, Norman was

emphatic:

> **Norman** – Oh, incredibly enthusiastic! I mean, even given at the beginning a number of people said 'No, no, no, this is a bad idea', etc., no one complained after the first season.
> **Eliot** – Ok.
> **Norman** – I mean it was instant. And the irony, again, was that we got more public response from the walking tour than we had done from protests…
> **Eliot** – Ok.
> **Norman** – Or from anything else. I mean the public just flocked, and once you had them on the walking tour, you know, that was your opening to really change public opinion, which was ready to be changed. I mean it was one of those fortuitous things. I would like to be self-important and say 'We changed!' It was happening. Whether we had been there for not, it was happening. It was just a question of who.[303]

Norman's summation that '"it was happening" alludes to a growing disavowal of

Montreal's dispassionate, technocratic planning that undermined the very type of

neighbourhoods the walking tours lionized. Modernist architecture often ignored the

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[302] Jacobs, *Death and Life*, 56.
[303] Norman Spatz.

street, turning business and social life inwards, away from that component, the street, that Jacobs adroitly identified as being so necessary to the health of a city. Save Montreal's walking tours reacquainted residents with this dimension of their city, one their government had been so keen to forget. That they were successful meant local mentalities were shifting; the old orthodoxies were giving way.

Avenue McGill College, 1982-1985

> **Mark** – Well, there's not much urban planning that had been done historically in Montreal. But the one little piece of urban design that had been done is an architect – I think he was an architect or planner named Gréber, I believe – had done a design in - I don't remember when it was, the 20s, the 30s, maybe the 30s, the 40s - had proposed that McGill College would be a classical grand boulevard, sort of the Champs Elysées of Montreal.[304]

Since 1926, there existed plans to widen Avenue McGill College. As Mark noted in conversation, it was one of the few plans the city ever provisioned for. From the gates of McGill University to the recently-completed Canadian National Station on Dorchester, McGill College was to be a broad, tree-lined boulevard; a prestige artery for the city. While the Great Depression and World War II put these designs on hold, they re-emerged in the postwar period.[305] The public square adjoining Place Ville-Marie represented what was to be the avenue's southern terminus. And while in subsequent years the city proceeded with the required expropriations,[306] by 1983 the original plans for the avenue were in serious jeopardy.

The development firm Cadillac Fairview proposed to erect a shopping complex at the intersection of Ste-Catherine and McGill College. The complex would house a symphony hall for the Montreal Symphony Orchestra as well as a cinema, theatre space

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[304] Mark London and Linda Thompson.
[305] Jean-Claude Marsan, "La fierté a-t-elle encore sa ville," *Le Devoir*, May 5, 1984 in *Sauver Montréal: Chroniques d'architecture et d'urbanisme* (Montréal, Boréal, 1990), 250.
[306] Ibid., 250.

and 200 shopping units. What made the scheme most controversial, though, was a

proposed covered walkway across McGill College that would connect new shopping

centre with the Simpson's store in close proximity to the site. The walkway, at 55 metres

deep, was to be a large, bulky structure that would have blocked views of Montreal's

namesake mountain.

Drapeau, in pursuit of a signature project, was asking, yet again, that all

considerations be put aside in favour of the economy:

> **Mark** – Meanwhile, and before, while it was still being debated, I remember it
> went to city council, and city council had to approve going to close off McGill
> College and to sell it to the developer, or whatever they were going to do. And I
> remember being at that city council meeting and being in the gallery, and I
> remember Jean Drapeau, Mayor Drapeau, saying 'Don't talk to me of urban
> planning when the unemployment rate is 10 percent.[307]

A similar pattern was in effect: the building of a modernist structure with internal

shopping would provide economic salvation. Drapeau was not alone. The provincial

government, arguing the city needed an economic stimulus, was willing to contribute $30

million towards the symphony hall portion of the project.[308]

Despite utilizing glass for the passageway, the plan was judged to "*ne possède*

aucun aspect positif."[309] By erecting what was effectively a wall, the developer would

further separate Montrealers from the mountain. Opposition to this project was

widespread, with community groups, property owners and the MCM lining up against the

Cadillac Fairview's proposal.[310] The Comité de promotion économique de Montréal,

representing the Montreal Board of Trade and Chambre de commerce argued that local

property owners' building plans were jeopardized by the city's abandonment of the

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[307] Mark London and Linda Thompson.
[308] Heather Hill and Harvey Shepherd, "Protesters may force changes in McGill plan," *The Montreal Gazette*, May 5, 1984.
[309] Jean-Claude Marsan, "Un processus d'aménagement doit remplacer la fatalité," *Le Devoir*, May 12, 1984 in *Sauver Montréal: Chroniques d'architecture et d'urbanisme* (Montréal, Boréal, 1990), 253.
[310] Harvey Shepherd, "Municipal opposition joins protest against downtown project," *The Gazette*, May 11, 1984.

original McGill College Avenue proposal. The Comité de promotion économique considered the unilateral abandonment of long-standing plans and abuse of expropriation powers to be arbitrary changes to the "rules of development" and damaged the city's reputation.[311] Furthermore, closing a prominent intersection would cause circulation problems that would negatively impact Rue Ste-Catherine businesses. Once again, the absence of a municipal plan charting future development was highlighted, albeit this time from a group representing private interests.[312]

Since the fall of 1982, Save Montreal had opposed the widening of McGill College citing the loss of heritage buildings, pedestrian safety and the lack of need for a street of such width in the vicinity.[313] Nonetheless, the demolitions occurred, primarily on the street's west side. Following Cadillac Fairview's project announcement, the group began raising awareness and collecting petitions recommending the city alter the firm's plans.[314]

Mounting pressure resulted in the project's deferral and the holding of public consultations throughout the summer of 1984. These consultations were held by a collaborative body called the McGill College Area Urban Design Consulative Committee which produced a 160-page report that highlighted many of the criticisms of the site, while also recommending design changes.[315] While Save Montreal agreed that aesthetic changes were needed, the group also wanted the project's economic impact to be properly assessed:

> **Josh** – There were two parallel processes that have unfortunately been forgotten. People in Save Montreal were concerned that blocking the view of the

[311] Alain Duhamel, "À son tour, le COPEM s'oppose au projet de Cadillac Fairview," *Le Devoir*, May 10, 1984.
[312] Ibid.
[313] Gérald McNichols Tétreault, "L'élargement de la rue McGill College: Une atteinte à l'intégrité de la rue Ste-Catherine," *SOS Montreal* 7.3 (Fall 1982) : 4-5.
[314] Lonnie Echenberg.
[315] Mark London, "McGill College is now project most can live with," *The Gazette*, October 6, 1984.

mountain, were concerned with this private-public trading of property, but we were also concerned about the economic impact on St. Catherine Street.[316]

However, the debates over McGill College involved many groups with varying interests. Save Montreal, no longer the lone voice, was unable to ensure these concerns were addressed.

Following the public consultation process Cadillac Fairview abandoned the glass passageway component of their proposal, while also reducing its proportions. In lieu of a passageway, tunnels would connect the project to surrounding department stores and the metro system. Otherwise, the proposal retained many of its original elements, including the symphony hall and tower.[317] Furthermore, McGill College would be widened so as to cleave more closely to the original street plan. By 1985, however, the project had morphed again. Gone were the complex's cultural elements with towers and additional shopping units taking their place. However, set back from the street, the towers avoided spoiling views of Mount Royal.

Reflecting upon what transpired, Josh lamented that the economic impact of these projects was ignored:

> **Josh** – And we were concerned, and part of the McGill College Avenue project, the Cadillac Fairview project, was to include a tunnel. We were concerned about the impact on St. Catherine Street. We said 'There shouldn't be…this will reduce the vitality of St. Catherine Street.' And I think that is what happened. I think that, and I remember speaking to someone in the municipal government who said 'I'm not worried about that because the shops will evolve, the property owners will find uses for them. It may not be the same stores, but it will still be a commercial street.' Well, I think it declined in value, it declined in quality, and that's unfortunate. And I think part of that is the result of this underground tunnel.[318]

Josh Wolfe's disappointment stems from the continuing inability, or unwillingness, on the part of the city and developers to consider the city as a coherent whole. Despite

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[316] Josh Wolfe, June 12, 2014.
[317] Mark London, "McGill College is now project most can live with," *The Gazette*, October 6, 1984.
[318] Josh Wolfe June 12, 2014.

architectural differences these complexes, by incorporating shopping concourses,

mirrored the structures built in decades prior. Underground connections to buildings with

mixed-commercial functions took residents off of the street. Decades after Place Ville-

Marie had been constructed; the familiar patterns of form and function remained.[319]

It is easy to understand the reasoning, the aesthetic argument is much easier to

make, although aesthetics were compromised by the McGill College plan. Jean-Claude

Marsan, citing such streets as Ste-Catherine and St-Denis, argued that shops and

sidewalk activity were the key ingredients to a vital street.[320] McGill College, on the

other hand, was "*trop large par rapport à sa longer. Ses trottoirs aussi sont trop vastes

si l'on considère leur faible fréquentation: en dehors des heures de pointe et du lunch, ils

paraissent désertes.*"[321] The avenue's northern terminus misaligned with McGill's

Roddick Gates and its southern terminus coincided with a two-door parking garage while

large office towers lined both its sides. The result was an avenue lacking in human

presence. By forsaking street-level retail, the office complexes that lined McGill College

produced a streetscape devoid of the elementals to a successful avenue.

The McGill College campaign's emphasis on the street was characteristic of the

growing postmodern influence in civic affairs. As Annick Germain and Damarais Rose

note,

> in the 1980s, there was a renewed emphasis on city streets as structural spaces.
> The battle over McGill College Avenue became a turning point in this respect,

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[319] By 1989, four years after Avenue McGill College's creation, the underground system of passageways had expanded to the point that 35% of downtown office space and 30% downtown boutiques were connected to it. Properties in proximity that could attach to this network rose in value. There was a corresponding change in the profile of street front businesses as the more exclusive merchandisers turned inwards: David Brown, "The Indoor City: From Organic Beginning to Guided Growth," in *Grassroots, Greystones & Towers: Montreal Urban Issues and Architecture*, ed. Bryan Demchinsky (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1989), 72-73.

[320] Jean-Claude Marsan, "La proposition du Service d'urbanisme pour l'avenue McGill College: un concept perfectible," *Le Devoir*, May 10, 1985 in *Sauver Montréal: Chroniques d'architecture et d'urbanisme* (Montréal, Boréal, 1990), 266.

[321] Marsan, *Sauver Montreal*, 275.

especially since it coincided with a new, postmodernist shift in Montreal architecture.[322]

Congruity emerged between developers and citizens' groups over the need for a master plan. At least with regards to materials and design, the McGill College towers differed from the modernist architecture of previous decades, although their proportions remained massive. The advent of public consultation was also encouraging, although it did not signify a move towards greater democratization in urban development.

The withdrawal of federal funds for urban renewal projects required that city governments acquiesce to the wants and demands of private interests if development in central business districts was to take place, a circumstance that, according to Sharon Zukin, produces an "asymmetry of power favoring the private sector."[323] As a result

> The material landscape created by the joint efforts of speculative developers, elected officials, financial institutions, and architectural designers responds to these conditions by merging public places and private markets, often under the management of a quasi-public urban development corporation. Significant public life moves inside from the streets.[324]

While people spoke of McGill College as Montreal's potential Champs-Élysées, it instead became a streetscape dominated by corporate office towers and an interiorized space of consumption with direct links to the building that birthed Montreal's underground consumer culture, Place Ville-Marie. The street, eulogized by Jacobs and passionately defended by Save Montreal, was subverted by forms which, although postmodern in appearance, nonetheless betrayed the street they were supposed to celebrate.

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[322] Germain, *Quest for a Metropolis*, 71.
[323] Sharon Zukin, *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 53.
[324] Ibid., 54.

Conclusion

Would it make our conversation easier
If these glass belfries remained parking lots?
Abscesses from which one could surely recoil?
Testaments to our modern bereavement.

Each era the narrative reforms itself
Within a constellation of corporate spires
Accompanied by their bland asterims
Still the standard quantifying method
For divining our economic constitution

As I saunter past these structures,
Armed equally with aspiration and expectation
I wonder to what degree am I complicit,
If these measures sanction my staying or leaving?

The McGill College confrontation was the final major campaign undertaken by

Save Montreal. Years of activism, performed in conjunction with full-time jobs, university

studies and parenthood left many feeling burnt out.[325] Furthermore, the acknowledged

consensus amongst the interviewees was that by the early 1980s public enthusiasm for

mega-projects had soured, indicative of a broader paradigm shift then underway.

Montreal's hosting of the 1976 Olympic Games proved to be financially ruinous to the

city. Mayor Drapeau imagined "that a glamorous, exciting Olympics would once again

put French Canada at centre stage in the world and help attract large-scale foreign

investment, particularly from Europe."[326] The staggering costs of the games, and

especially the towering concrete Olympic Stadium, left many Montrealers disillusioned

with large-scale development.[327] Empty lots, cleared for developers, existed as physical

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[325] Group responsibilities transpired on a weekly or even daily basis. This level of involvement, over many years, held negative repercussions for the personal lives of some group members. Some of the original members had retired from the organization in years previous. However, even those who remained with the group throughout the 1980s had been members for years.
[326] Nick Auf der Maur, *The Billion-Dollar Game: Jean Drapeau and the 1976 Olympics* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, Publishers, 1976), 34.
[327] Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal*, 537.

manifestations of the city's thwarted ambitions.[328] Simmering dissatisfaction with

Drapeau and his Civic Party culminated in electoral success for the MCM, ending almost

three decades of uninterrupted single-party governance.[329] The MCM's victory stemmed

from "the electorate's desire for an administration able to pay real attention to the

constraints imposed on their daily life".[330]

The public was not alone in their growing disavowal for large-scale urban

redevelopment; a similar repudiation was transpiring at the governmental level. While

the continental recession of the early 1980s forestalled developments in many urban

centres, governing authorities demonstrated a growing disinclination for statist economic

intervention reflecting what political scientist François Rocher considers "the neo-liberal

turn of the state throughout Quebec society".[331] While many western nations were

repealing elements of the welfare state, what made Quebec notable in this regard was

the previous affiliation between the state and Francophone nationalist aspirations. One

major reason for this change was the economic and social ascendancy of the province's

Francophone majority.[332] The modernization initiatives of the Quiet Revolution coupled

with the French-incentivising language legislation of the 1970s had, by 1985, eliminated

previous wage disparities between the province's linguistic groups.[333] The emergent

French-Canadian business class was more economically integrationist in mindset,

especially with regards to the growing issue of free trade.

Municipal programs mirrored the province's disengagement in their abandonment

of large-scale development projects. The launching of the '10,000 logements' program

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[328] Lortie, "Montreal 1960," 114.

[329] In the 1986 municipal election the MCM won 55 of 58 city council seats as well as the mayoralty. Thomas, *City with a Difference*, 96.

[330] Jacques Léveillé and Jean-François Léonard, "The Montreal Citizens' Movement comes to power," *International Journal of Urban Research*. 11.4 (1987): 579.

[331] François Rocher, "The Evolving Parameters of Quebec Nationalism," *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* 4.1 (2002): 8.

[332] Ibid., 10-11.

[333] David Albouy, "The Wage Gap between Francophones and Anglophones: A Canadian Perspective, 1970-2000," *The Canadian Journal of Economics* 41.4 (2008): 1212.

by the city in 1979 (to be followed by the '20,000 logements' program) indicated a planning about-face on the part of city council. The program prompted home construction, mainly throughout Sud-Ouest neighbourhoods strongly affected by the area's loss of manufacturing.[334] Newly-created agencies such as the *Programme général d'interventions dans les quartiers anciens* (PIQA), *Sociétés d'initiative des artères commerciales* (SIDAC) and *Commission d'initiative et de développement économique de Montréal* (CIDEM) intended to revitalize neighbourhoods and their commercial arteries.[335]

In their attempt to repair the urban fabric, these programs differed greatly from the high-modernist forms previously favoured by the municipal authorities. While the contrast might appear stark, there was nonetheless precedent for these programs. As noted in Chapter Two, since 1972 the city government's *programme détaillé de rénovation* initiated home construction and renovation in lower-income neighbourhoods. While substantial redevelopment was occurring in the city centre, residential areas were undergoing less intrusive, or even restorative, proposals. The differences in planning approaches suggest high-modernist principles were not comprehensively applied. Historian Tina Loo's recent critique of James Scott's high-modernist theory contends that rather than displacing local knowledge urban planners and engineers often undertook an "intense engagement" with their surroundings "which resulted in an understanding of it that was in part embodied, embedded in the particular, and characterized by an

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[334] David Johnston, "The Metaporphosis of Balconville." *Canadian Heritage*, 12.2 (1986): 28.
[335] Yvonne M. Macor, *Revitalization of the Montreal Urban Environment* (Thesis, McGill University, 1982), 3. Macor argues that these programs lacked public consultation and that residents were often unaware of the economic ramifications of their implementation. As a result, rent increases and property speculation resulted in the displacement of residents from sectors (Hochelaga and Pointe Saint-Charles, for example) targeted by these agencies. See Ibid., 111-121.

acceptance of its limits."[336] While Drapeau was actively pursuing his vision of a modern city throughout downtown Montreal, civic bureaucrats were displaying a more nuanced view towards urban planning throughout other areas of the city. Even in the city core, though, by the 1970s high-modernist principles could not be applied without opposition.

The very existence of Save Montreal and other grassroots organizations attests to a civic engagement often absent in the execution of high-modernist planning. According to Scott, one of the four principles in the successful application of high-modernist principles is "a prostrate civil society that lacks the capacity to resist these plans."[337] While the city undoubtedly suffered from a lack of democratic accountability in its electoral and political systems, residents were far from prostrate. Save Montreal's ongoing ability to contest projects and win concessions, testified to the fact that a segment of civil society was able to counter the city's guiding planning principles.

Montreal's abandonment of high-modernism coincided with the gradual dimming of Save Montreal's role in civic affairs. Economic downturns and the disillusionment with statist approaches to city building resulted in less developmental pressure and a decline in demolitions. Within this context, one can best understand the rise to prominence of Heritage Montreal throughout the 1980s.

Created by Phyllis Lambert in 1975 to be a funding arm for Save Montreal and other organizations, Heritage Montreal evolved to become an independent body with a distinct, yet overlapping, membership with its own activities. In contrast to the more confrontational activism employed by Save Montreal, Heritage Montreal operated behind the scenes, establishing contacts within business and government circles, and parlaying those contacts into funding. Greater funding allowed Heritage Montreal to host a series of home renovation courses where owners of heritage houses could learn how to

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[336] Tina Loo, "High Modernism, Conflict, and the Nature of Change in Canada: A Look at Seeing Like a State," *The Canadian Historical Review* 97.1 (2016): 44.
[337] Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 5.

perform basic restoration. Accompanying home renovation publications were also made available to the general public.

In look and in structure, Heritage Montreal differed from the organization it was intended to compliment. Save Montreal operated as a non-hierarchial organization without ranks or paid positions.[338] While strategies and information were shared, campaign work was disbursed so as to maximize effect. Every member of the organization could speak on its behalf. Campaigns were run effectively on shoestring budgets; the result of activist know-how honed over years. In contrast, Heritage Montreal hired paid staff, opened a storefront in 1981, and assumed an executive structure.[339] By the late 1980s, Save Montreal's primary role was awarding the annual Oranges and Lemons Prizes, distributed to buildings that either harmonized with or maimed the existing streetscape.[340]

In discussing the decline of Save Montreal and the rise of Heritage Montreal, the interviewees had mixed feelings. Some Save Montrealers were members of both groups, or transitioned to Heritage Montreal. A few even assumed prominent positions within the Heritage Montreal organization, including executive-director. In these instances, it was felt that the changed landscape effectuated a change in tactics and outlook. Government funding for co-operative renovations, an increase in heritage designations throughout Save Montreal's existence,[341] and the election of the MCM communicated to many individuals that the era of mass demolitions had passed. Urban

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[338] One exception was the hiring of students to conduct office work and surveys one summer. It was regarded as a poor decision by the participants who spoke on the subject.

[339] Heritage Montreal also assumed responsibilities for Save Montreal's walking tour program in 1988. "Bref historique," http://www.heritagemontreal.org/en/about-us/history/.

[340] See *Sauvons Montréal: Les Prix Orange*", Canadian Centre for Architecture.

[341] Heritage designations by the province grew from one designation a year throughout the 1960s to multiple designations a year beginning in 1973 and continuing throughout the 1980s. Municipal designations occurred while Jean Doré and the Montreal Citizens' Movement was in power. Twenty-six heritage sites and ensembles were designated during the 1987-1992 time period. Federally designated National Historic Site status has been granted to buildings and areas in the Montreal area routinely and unabated since the late 1960s. Source: Drouin, *Combat du patrimoine*, 339-346.

conservation also experienced a degree of institutionalization during this time.[342]

Members of Save Montreal also found themselves in paid positions that promoted

conservation such as Mark London taking a position with the city's urban planning

department or Julia Gersovitz founding her own architectural conservation firm.[343]

For others, the loss of Save Montreal weakened the urban conservation movement, as

they felt that no organization fulfilled the activist role Save Montreal had assumed for so

many years. One interviewee described the relationship between the two organizations

as that of "good cop/bad cop" with Save Montreal fulfilling the role of "bad cop", willing to

challenge developments in a more brazen fashion. Others worried Heritage Montreal

was too intimate with the business community diminishing the organization's

effectiveness and ability to criticize proposed developments. Concerns for the state of

the urban conservation movement were also shaped by demolitions reminiscent of the

Drapeau era, overseen by a party that had promised to transform the manner by which

politics and planning was conducted in the city.

  While ushering in positive policy and administrative changes, the MCM

nonetheless, in the eyes of many, floundered on key conservation cases. In 1987,

private developers evicted tenants from their homes on the Overdale lot at the corner of

Boulevard René-Lévesque and Rue Lucien-L'Allier. Armed with a demolition permit

supplied by the Doré administration, despite protests and petitions, they demolished the

existing Victorian homes for a proposed two-tower condominium project, a project that

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[342] According to Pierre Hamel, Heritage Montreal was not alone. During the late 1970s and early 1980s many of Montreal's urban movements assumed a more pragmatic approach to their advocacy, the result of a shifting economic and political landscape. In addition, social factors, such as an aging activist community, shifted the organizational outlook of many groups: Pierre Hamel, *Action collective et démocratie locale: les mouvements urbains montréalais* (Montreal: Presses de l'université de Montréal, 1991): 116-117.

[343] Julia Gersovitz was a founding partner in FGMDA Architects, one of the principle conservation firms operating in Canada today.

was never realized.[344] The following year city council condemned the historic Queen's

Hotel on Rue Peel at Rue St-Jacques for a similar two-tower project that also went

unrealized.[345] Until the recent excavations at the Overdale, both sites remained as

empty lots for over twenty-five years.[346]

 During the 1986 electoral campaign, the MCM had benefitted from the

endorsement of local activists and left-wing organizations. However, subsequent actions

taken by the party disillusioned many supporters. Activists who had tirelessly fought the

development policies of the previous administration found the party was "committing the

same crucial errors in judgement which had allowed them to replace the Drapeau

administration."[347] The loss of the Overdale homes and the Queen's Hotel confirmed, for

many, that the MCM had abandoned its roots. Despite the ejection of the Civic Party

from power, the demolition of homes and heritage structures, while curtailed, remained

an ongoing concern and reality for the city's residents.

 Unfortunately, in the face of renewed development in Montreal's downtown area -

the same arena so hotly contested in years past – the parameters of urban conservation

endures as a point of discussion. Despite the passage of time and legislation, the

delicate balance between growth and conservation remains an issue that Montreal – its

city council, businesses and residents – is still grappling with. In order to illustrate this,

we can return to the crossroads that first beget Save Montreal as an organization.

 At the southwest corner of Stanley and Sherbrooke Streets, diagonal from the

site once occupied by the Van Horne mansion, stands the Maison Alcan complex, a

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[344] Anna-Maria Moubayed, *Overdale Avenue: Narrative, Urban Design and Utopia* (paper
presented at the Montreal as Palimpsest: Architecture, Community, Change Conference,
Montreal, Quebec, March 18, 2008), 6.

[345] Thomas, *City with a Difference*, 105-106.

[346] The YUL condominium project began excavations in the summer of 2015: Peter Hadekel,
"Chinese investment lands in Montreal at YUL condo project," *Montreal Gazette*, January 28,
2015. Accessed March 11, 2015. http://montrealgazette.com/business/local-business/chinese-
investment-lands-in-montreal-at-yul-condo-project.

[347] Ibid, 105.

project conceived by former Alcan CEO, and long-time Montreal resident, David Culver.

As both a child living in the Square Mile and as an adult residing in Westmount, Culver

would always walk to work along Sherbrooke Street.[348] Those walks provided him with

ample evidence of the redevelopment of Montreal's built landscape and the apparent

disregard for the city's history and architecture, something which appalled Culver.[349]

With a lease expiration approaching, Culver sought a new space for the Alcan

headquarters along Sherbrooke, one that would, amidst ongoing corporate

decampment, affirm the company's commitment to the city while also serving "as a

catalyst for the further protection and restoration of the glory of Sherbrooke Street, which

had been maimed over the years by out-of-control demolition."[350]

Having quietly amassed a row of heritage structures, Culver hired Ray Affleck,

architect behind Expo 67's Canada Pavilion and Place Bonaventure, to fulfill his vision of

erecting an "unobtrusive jewel" along the street he so adored. According to Norbert

Schoenauer the "complex demonstrates the viability of a moderate profile – rather than

high-rise – office building that is neither in conflict with the scale of old buildings nor with

the functional demands expected by corporate clients."[351] The sleek, yet restrained,

modern addition, sheathed in Quebec-mined aluminum, paid deference to the buildings

already existing on the site. A light-filled atrium, co-designed by Peter Lanken, provided

a space for an aesthetic interplay between architectural materials. The height and

dimensions of the complex complimented the existing scale of the block ensuring the

heritage elements were not overshadowed. Major interior restorations of the existing

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[348] David M. Culver with Alan Freeman, *Expect Miracles: Recollections of a Lucky Life* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014), 9 and 111.

[349] Ibid., 9 and 112.

[350] Ibid., 115.

[351] Norbert Schoenauer, "A Skyline for All Seasons," in *Grassroots, Greystones, and Glass Towers: Montreal Urban Issues and Architecture*, edited by Bryan Demchinsky. (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1989), 27.

heritage buildings were performed by Julia Gersovitz. The results drew high praise, including the *Prix d'Excellence* from Quebec's Order of Architects in 1984.[352]

The building is, both intentionally and unintentionally, representative of a spatial, architectural and social disassociation from the urban developments of the preceding three decades. Formally situated in Place Ville-Marie, the pioneering structure that shaped so much of the development that was to follow, Alcan decamped for an office that, structurally and aesthetically, rejected the trends of the time. The building eschewed the megastructure and instead employed an economy of scale that respected surrounding streetscapes. Existing heritage structures were utilized as aesthetic advantages, not as impediments to a modernist vision. The courtyards and atrium were designed as spaces for congregation.[353] For its incorporation of existing structures, respect for scale and surroundings, and creation of public space the complex, consciously or not, subscribed to many of the tenets of Save Montreal. The complex demonstrated, categorically, that it was possible to marry development and conservation. Furthermore, its location, sitting diagonal from the Van Horne site, imbued the complex with additional significance, the type that, when combined with its other attributes, would stir present-day Montreal residents, this author among them.

On July 20, 2015, upon arriving to work, my colleagues and I were shocked to discover, care of an article in the *Montreal Gazette,* that a plan to demolish portions of the Maison Alcan and an adjoining heritage building in order to erect a 20-storey office tower, had been approved by the Ville-Marie Borough. The *Gazette* article informed us that the public consultation had already transpired. No one had attended which was understood to be due to the fact that notice of the consultation was given only in *Le Devoir* and on the borough website under the generic title "avis publique", and that the

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[352] Culver, *Expect* Miracles, 124.
[353] Ibid., 124.

consultation took place on June 25th, the day following the *Fête Nationale* holiday. We were further informed that the day on which the article was published was also the deadline for submitting a petition against the proposed development.[354] The petition only required twelve signatures but all signatures had to be collected from a landowner or primary tenant within a defined zone. There were many zones within a larger area, some of which were only one block in size. The zones were identified upon the map of Montreal; however the map resembled a gerrymandered electoral map with commercial areas south of Sherbrooke represented but none of the residential areas immediately to the north. In addition, efforts to identify each zone were hindered by the illegibility of the map. Even if we had been able to collect signatures from primary tenants and landowners of commercial buildings within one given zone, we would have been unable to read the zone numbers due to the poor quality of the map which had been buried on the website. Needless to say, our efforts to collect signatures were unsuccessful.

In response to what appeared as surreptitious methods on the borough's part, my colleagues and I wrote a couple of opinion pieces that were carried by the *Gazette* which was followed by interviews for the paper and Radio-Canada. At the same time, respected figures such as Raphaël Fischler and Adrian Sheppard were also explaining the importance of the Maison Alcan site and how the proposed design deviated too far from the site's original concept.[355] Initial opposition to the project prompted an opinion piece from Mayor Coderre and city councillor Richard Bergeron. In the letter they stated that "for some 20 years, from 1992 to 2012, nothing was happening downtown, with its

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[354] Marian Scott, "Deadline is Monday to sign register contesting Maison Alcan plan," *Montreal Gazette*, July 20, 2015.
[355] Marian Scott, "Proposed tower would disfigure Montreal's iconic Maison Alcan, critics say," *Montreal Gazette*, July 19, 2015.

vast vacant lots and street-level parking lots looking like a bombed out strip."[356] Now, with numerous construction projects underway, they argued that elected officials should not "hamper this economic revival of Montreal".[357] The banal, yet relentless logic that economic revitalization required redevelopment of the urban core, an argument used so frequently by past administrations, was deployed once again.

However, many opinions were unmoved by this argument. Letters and articles continued unabated in the press with many local intellectuals of significant heft lending their voice to opposing the project. This relentless opposition prompted the city to delay holding a final vote on the project. The provincial Ministry of Culture, while aware of the proceedings, had not yet waded into the fray. Any changes to the complex required the ministry's approval since the site fell within a 500 foot radius of the Mount Royal Club, a provincially designated structure.[358] However, given the chorus of opposition to the project, Hélène David, the Minister of Culture, announced that the entire complex would be classified as a provincial monument.[359] While this designation does not prevent demolition, it places greater constraints on future development, and further necessitates provincial approval, not to mention bestowing the site with greater recognition and ensuring that future proposals would garner public scrutiny.

The recent threat to the Maison Alcan reveals a lingering pattern regarding development in this city, a pattern that Montreal residents have been routinely contesting. For over a decade Save Montreal operated as one of the principle

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[356] Denis Coderre and Richard Bergeron, "Opinion: Mayor Denis Coderre and Richard Bergeron defend the Maison Alcan project," *Montreal Gazette*, July 22, 2015.
[357] Ibid.
[358] Marian Scott, "Canadian architecture institute condemns Maison Alcan project," *Montreal Gazette*, September 30, 2015, accessed September 30, 2015, http://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/architects-condemn-maison-alcan-project.
[359] Michelle Lalonde, "Quebec takes steps to protect Maison Alcan as heritage property," *Montreal Gazette*, November 5, 2015, accessed November 6, 2015, http://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/quebec-files-intention-to-make-maison-alcan-a-heritage-site.

articulations of local opposition to the redevelopment of the city centre. Important

lessons regarding urban planning have been gleaned from the public dialogue to which

they contributed. Nonetheless, new developments retain an allure that continues to

transfix many civic leaders. Office and condo towers remain the barometers by which to

measure the economic health of a city. As a result public consultation operates more as

a formality than guiding spirit. Critics of the brazen manner by which such consultation

takes place are treated as little more than a nuisance. Despite the passage of time, the

city centre, the geographical milieu in which Save Montreal was most active, remains

vulnerable to private interests and politicians all too eager to sacrifice the city of today for

the specious promises of tomorrow.

Appendix

The interviews will be archived at Concordia University's Centre for Oral History and

Digital Storytelling, unless requested otherwise by the interviewee.

List of Interviewees in Alphabetical Order :

Breslaw, Caroline. Interview by Eliot Perrin, Montreal, January 16, 2015, 50:28.

Broderick, Jane. Interview by Eliot Perrin, Montreal, November 7, 2013, 66:01.

Echenberg, Lonnie. Interview by Eliot Perrin, Montreal, September 11, 2014, 61:54.

Fish, Michael. Interview by Eliot Perrin, Montreal, August 12, 2014, 102:06.

Fish, Michael. Interview by Eliot Perrin, Montreal, September 15, 2015, 63:50.

Gersovitz, Julia. Interview by Eliot Perrin, Montreal, September 19, 2014, 31:29.

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Lanken, Peter. Interview by Eliot Perrin, Montreal, April 12, 2015, 24:17.

London, Mark and Linda Thompson. Interview by Eliot Perrin, telephone, January 19, 2015, 115:11.

Mardoche, Adele. Interview by Eliot Perrin, Montreal, October 25, 2013, 62:15.

Merrett, Brian. Interview by Eliot Perrin, Montreal, November 19, 2014, 60:16.

Roussopoulos, Dimitri. Interview by Eliot Perrin, Montreal, June 2, 2014, 83:13.

Spatz, Norman. Interview by Eliot Perrin, Montreal, January 28, 2015, 61:47.

Stanley, Susan. Interview by Eliot Perrin, Montreal, March 16, 2015, 72:59.

Wolfe, Josh. Interview by Eliot Perrin, Montreal, June 12, 2014, 30:20.

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