

FHBRO Number 90-025

Montréal, Québec

Louis-Joseph Papineau House

440 Bonsecours Street

Louis-Joseph Papineau House was constructed for Colonel John Campbell in 1785 on a lot formerly owned by Joseph Papineau, the grandfather of Louis-Joseph. In 1831-32, major modifications were made by Papineau, his wife, and his brother-in-law. From November 1850 until after the turn of the century, the house was rented. On November 21, 1962, Eric McLean purchased the building and fully restored it. The property was designated a National Historic Site in 1968. Environment Canada took possession of the building in 1982. Parks Canada is the custodian. See FHBRO Report No. 90-25.

Reasons for Designation

Louis-Joseph Papineau House has been designated Classified because of its historical, architectural and environmental significance, and because of its local significance.

Papineau House is closely related to the theme of Canadian political history, more specifically, the British colonial constitutional system. The political career of Louis-Joseph Papineau is closely linked to political and social issues current in Lower Canada in the first half of the 19th century, when he resided in this house in Montréal.

Located within the old walled city of Ville-Marie, Papineau House is typical of the vernacular architecture of the period. The modifications by Papineau in 1831-32 transformed it into a residence of quality, both inside and out. In aesthetic terms, the house is worthy of note for its unique neo-classical facade of wood cladding fashioned to simulate cut stone, and for its elegant interior. Both in the renovations of 1831-32 and in the restoration of 1962-65, quality workmanship and excellent materials were used.

Papineau House had a significant influence on the historic architecture of Old Montréal. The particular volume of the building, the wood cladding made to imitate masonry, and the alignment with the other buildings on the street helped create a harmonious flow of facades all along Bonsecours Street, thereby directing attention to historic Notre Dame de Bonsecours Chapel.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage value of Papineau House resides in its form and architectural details, interior as well as exterior; in the excellent quality of workmanship and materials; and in its volume in relation to its immediate environment.

Papineau House succeeds as an amalgam of diverse stylistic influences. Its principal volume is constructed of stone and brick. At the rear, a masonry passageway leads to

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a stone annex, leading in turn to a garage. The original structure—whose volume and design were in the architectural vocabulary inherited from the French regime—was later given a neo-classical “facade” of wood simulating stone to create, in the Palladian tradition, a clear distinction between the first and second storeys. The wood cladding protects the masonry facade wall and provides additional insulation. It requires considerable upkeep, however, as it can conceal sources of water ingress.

The rear facade is still in the original quarry stone with cut stone around the bays. The roofing is metal, and was replaced in 1983 in accordance with details of the 1962 restoration, which was based as period research. The locations of the dormers are also as researched, as well as all openings in the facade.

The interior contains four levels: two within the stone walls plus two attic levels. Although the building has been divided into three separate apartments, care was taken to preserve the essential interior traffic patterns as in Papineau’s time, the grouping of rooms in the French style, and the wood-and-plaster walls in the neo-classical style. It was none other than Louis-Joseph Papineau who is responsible for this aesthetic design, particularly the proportions and the enfilade of rooms on the ground floor. All windows in the facade wall have decorative wood panels on the embrasures, the underside of the lintels and below the window sills. No such panels were provided for the dining room windows, in accordance with Papineau’s specifications. Many windows in the house are old and still have their hardware.

Some date from the original construction, others from 1831-32. These windows should be carefully maintained according to trade practice to ensure they will continue to operate with their original components.

The interior highlights of the house are the vestibule, the indoor balcony, the enfilade of rooms with detailed woodwork, the living room with its high ceiling and neo-gothic fireplace, and the master bedroom and anteroom. The interior should be maintained at a standard consistent with previous work, including the high quality of workmanship and materials. All work should conform to the level of elegance, attention to detail, and simplicity. Any future work should be minimal in scope and should be based on existing information to maintain the distinction between original elements and subsequent work.

The building still contains some components of the heating technology developed by Papineau. The restoration in the 1960s left these components intact, and most fireplaces in the house were also left in functional condition.

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The restoration work to date has been in accordance with conservation principles. All future work should also adhere to these principles and conform to the period documentation.

The back yard has been restored and reflects Papineau's design intentions.

For further guidance, please refer to the *FHBRO Code of Practice*.

Revised

1998.10.01

Translation