

Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office (FHBRO)
HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

FHBRO Number:	01-87
DFRP Number:	-
Resource Name:	Family Museum
Address:	Montebello, Québec
Construction and Modifications:	1880; 1935, conversion to a chapel
Original Function:	Museum
Current Function:	Anglican chapel
Custodian:	Parks Canada
FHBRO Status:	“Recognized” Federal Heritage Building

Reasons for Designation

The Papineau Estate family museum was designated a “Recognized” Federal Heritage Building primarily because of its architectural qualities and environmental significance.

Historical value

As an added component of an existing seigneurial complex and like all the other outbuildings on the property, the family museum reflects the continued occupancy of the estate by the Papineau family. Built at the urging of Amédée Papineau, son and heir of Louis-Joseph as head of the Petite-Nation seigneurie, the building housed his collection of family portraits, paintings, sculptures and travel mementoes. It was later used as a gymnasium and then converted to a chapel in 1935. The building was subsequently owned by the Seignory Club and Canadian Pacific before Parks Canada became the custodian in 1993 and committed to its conservation. The Family Museum is also part of the Manoir-Papineau National Historic Site of Canada.

Architectural value

Although the museum has a somewhat stripped appearance, the design is consistent with the picturesque logic of the estate. The one-storey brick and stone building has a gable roof that forms a pediment on the gable wall and reflects a neo-Classical spirit with its neo-Roman accents, such as the round arch doorway and the wrought-iron window with twisted columns. These elements, along with the two ceramic medallions representing Diane and Apollo, are the vestiges of a since-vanished program of iconic images from the main façade of the museum and the only elements to soften the austerity of the exterior. Likely inspired by European museums that Amédée Papineau visited, the building is also similar in functional design to the curiosity shops that were built in the 19th century.

Despite a few changes made to accommodate a chapel, the simple, yet sturdy building is relatively well preserved.

Environmental value

The building strengthens the character of the area associated with the 19th-century seigneurie. The museum’s connection to its associated landscape remains relatively intact due to its inextricable link to the picturesque treatment of the whole, designed in the spirit of A.J. Downing. While the old museum is used much less often as a chapel today, its location next to the manor makes it a high-

profile element of the Papineau Estate.

Character-Defining Elements

- The neo-Classical spirit of the building, as evidenced in its proportions, its solemn massing, its gable roof forming a pediment on each gable wall, etc.
- The denuded appearance of the exterior, with walls constructed of plain stone and brick without any openings other than those of the main façade.
- The decorative elements that provide the sole relief from the austerity of the exterior: the neo-Roman cast iron window with twisted columns, and the ceramic medallions representing Diane and Apollo are the vestiges of a since-vanished program of iconic images on the façade.
- Features which are associated with the building's initial program of iconic images, reminiscent of curiosity shops as they were designed in the 19th century. Essentially, these features consist of the windowless walls that maximize the display space, scissor framing that keeps interior spaces open, skylights to let in overhead natural lighting, and adaptable open space.
- The relationship between the museum, the manor and its associated landscape, which respects the picturesque aesthetic of the whole inspired by A.J. Downing and rooted in such elements as topography, vegetation, circulation and sightlines.

For guidance on interventions, please refer to the FHBRO Code of Practice. For further information, contact FHBRO.

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