

Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office (FHBRO)
HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

FHBRO Number:	01-87
DFRP Number:	-
Resource Name:	Granary
Address:	Montebello, Québec
Construction and Modifications:	1855
Original Function:	Storage, artist's studio
Current Function:	Ground floor open to the public for interpretation
Custodian:	Parks Canada
FHBRO Status:	"Classified" Federal Heritage Building

Reasons for Designation

The granary on the Papineau Estate was designated a "Classified" Federal Heritage Building because of its significant historical associations and its architectural and environmental values.

Historical value

The granary is directly associated with two people of historical significance at a national scale: politician Louis-Joseph Papineau (1786-1871), the first French-Canadian nationalist leader and seigneur of La Petite-Nation, who designed the building, had it built and was the first user; and Napoléon Bourassa (1827-1916), an architect and painter who used the upper floor studio during the summers of 1858 to 1871. The building, designed as a storehouse for grain given to the seigneur by the settler-tenants as payment for their rent and dues, bears eloquent testimony to an activity associated with the seigneurial system, even though it was built after the system was abolished in 1854. It was built the year Papineau moved permanently to Montebello, a year of significant development in the local community. 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 granary is also part of the Manoir-Papineau National Historic Site of Canada.

Architectural value

The granary is unique in that it resembles a small rural church, and the design is extraordinarily refined given the function of the building. Rising to one-and-a-half storeys, the rectangular brick structure sits on a stone foundation, is covered by a gable roof and is topped by a bell-turret. The picturesque composition is decidedly neo-gothic to which a number of classical elements have been added. The frescoes along the top of the inside walls, the sketches for which were done by Napoléon Bourassa for the Chapelle de l'asile de Nazareth in Montreal, bear fitting tribute to the artist's time in the building and add a great deal of esthetic interest. The building features a balance of formal elements that enable it to provide optimum conditions for storing grain. The simple spaces were ultimately perfect to accommodate an artist's studio.

Environmental value

The building strengthens the character of the area associated with the 18th-century seigneurie. Forever linked with the spectacular landscapes that are part of the whole, designed in the spirit of

A.J. Downing, it retains a relatively close link with its landscape. The height of the shed symbolizes the power and strength of the manor, and the frescoes have been recognized by experts.

Character-Defining Elements

- The picturesque qualities of the building's design, which stem from neo-gothic inspired elements, such as the dramatically pronounced vertical lines, the bell-turret and wind vane, the eave brackets, the flared eaves, the pointed arch windows and other elements. Together, elements drawn from the Classical repertoire (turned spindle balcony, semicircular windows) confirm an eclectic style unique to the building.
- The studied composition of the hangar elevations, which is apparent in the symmetry of the gable walls and the regular spacing of the side windows.
- The elements that are associated with its initial use for grain storage make it particularly suitable for that purpose, including the use of non-flammable materials (brick and sheet metal on the roof); the absence of windows; and carpenter-made air vents. The entrances to the building, the second floor door and the versatility of the open space are also associated with functional design qualities.
- Testimony to the time Napoléon Bourassa spent in the upstairs studio, which has frescoes along the ceiling and on the end walls, reflects his work in the Chapelle de l'asile Nazareth de Montréal, which no longer exists, and his handwritten, personal recipes for encaustic paint.
- The soaring quality of the building's silhouette and its resemblance to a small country church affords the Granary strength of presence alongside the manor.
- The relationship of the building with the manor and the surrounding structures, in terms of the overall picturesque aesthetic, designed in the spirit of A.J. Downing. Existing relationships are largely rooted in topography, vegetation, traffic and sightlines.

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

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