

**Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office (FHBRO)**  
**HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT**

<b>FHBRO Number:</b>	<b>01-87</b>
<b>DFRP Number:</b>	-
<b>Resource Name:</b>	<b>Manoir Papineau</b>
Address:	Montebello, Québec
Construction and Modifications:	1848-1850; towers altered in 1880 and 1892; living room added later (1881); various interior renovations (in particular at the upper storey and in the basement)
Original Function:	Seigneurial manor
Current Function:	Open to the public as an interpretive site
Custodian:	Parks Canada
FHBRO Status:	“Classified” Federal Heritage Building

**Reasons for Designation**

Manoir Papineau was designated a “Classified” Federal Heritage Building because of its exceptional historical associations, its fine architectural values and its significant environmental importance.

**Historical value**

Manoir Papineau is directly associated with Louis-Joseph Papineau (1786-1871), a politician who became the first French-Canadian nationalist leader, a major national historic figure and who was the seigneur, designer and first occupant of the house. The building bears outstanding witness to the final period of the seigneurial system in the 19th century, when it played a considerable role as home of the administration and records of the Petite-Nation seigneurie. Its construction at the time Papineau permanently settled in Montebello also corresponds with a period of significant growth in the local community resulting notably from the community’s involvement in developing the seigneurie. 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. It was also named a National Historic Site of Canada in 1986.

**Architectural value**

The manor stands out due to its unique design, which is both aesthetically pleasing and functional. The design reflects the personality, tastes and ambitions of Louis-Joseph Papineau, whose ideas were brought to life by architect Louis Aubertin. Related to neoclassical villas, but drawing on a variety of styles, the imposing stone house consists of a central block flanked by towers. The building’s picturesque architecture blends well with the surrounding landscape and features a number of unusual elements that demonstrate carefully planned strategic use of spaces, such as housing the library in one of the towers, safe from fire. The fine quality of materials and craftsmanship reflects a level of refinement usually found in bourgeois houses of the period. The property as a whole, which is well preserved, includes a number of particularly fine elements, such as the spiral staircase, considered the masterpiece of the interior.

### Environmental value

Standing atop Cape Bonsecours, from where it overlooks the Ottawa River, the building embodies the fundamental principle of the character of the setting associated with a 19<sup>th</sup>-century seigneurial estate. Echoing the picturesque landscape designed in the spirit of A. J. Downing, the manor retains a relatively close link with its setting. The manor benefits from a significant symbolic empowerment making it the most outstanding house and landmark in the area, and transforming it into an increasingly popular tourist attraction.

### Character-Defining Elements

- The picturesque character of the manor, consolidated by its eclectic composition, which borrows from a variety of styles, including French, Regency and traditional Quebec architecture, and by the building's strong massing composed of an imposing central core that rises to a broken hip roof with wide eaves, a veranda and four towers, each topped with a different type of roof. Details such as the loopholes of the library tower add to the house's character.
- The neoclassical elements of the design, particularly the squat appearance of the main block, the overall linearity of the building, the five pierced bays across the main façade, the regularity of the fenestration and the very definite symmetry both inside and out.
- The differentiation between the front and back elevations: the front is very articulated, echoing traditional Quebec domestic architecture with its broad-eaved roof pierced by chimneys, while the back is framed on both sides by towers that lend a monumental appearance accentuated by the position of the house overlooking the river.
- The quality of the exterior materials and finishing details, which include the turned railing of the veranda and the woodwork around the doors and windows.
- The cast iron balcony bearing the effigy of the Papineau family, an eloquent historical testimony to the identity of the primary occupants of the manor.
- What remains of the building's original plan, particularly the originality of its spatial arrangements, which was largely based on efforts to take advantage of natural light and views of the surrounding landscape, contributing to the spacious, sun-filled interior rooms. With these design priorities, conventional plans were modified positioning formal rooms at the back and opening the wide vestibule and hall in order to draw the eye toward the river. Efforts were also made to maximize use of the southeast corner, with the heavily glazed conservatory tower. The row of French-inspired doors creates a sense of large space.
- The quality of the interiors, which ranges from the varied treatment of the formal rooms to a very stark and elaborate décor in the more private spaces. This "esthetic discrimination" is particularly evident in the decorative woodwork and plaster elements, as well as in the hardware.
- The spiral staircase in the southwest tower, an extraordinary piece of carpentry that eliminates the need for people to go up and down the stairs in the main part of the house.
- The dominant location of the manor on Cape Bonsecours, which is strengthened by the ceremonial seigneurie grand driveway. The transition from dense vegetation cover to a clearing that highlights the house contributes to this transition effect.
- The relationship between the manor and its surrounding landscapes, designed in the spirit of A.J. Downing, which contributes to the picturesque logic of the property. The views from and toward the manor are an essential component of this relationship, as are elements of

topography, vegetation and circulation.

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

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