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REPURPOSING BUILDINGS

The Westmount Historian

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTMOUNT
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What do you do when a building becomes old: 50 years, 100 years, or over 200 years? Do you demolish it, losing it forever? Or do you repair and restore it with care and love, keeping some or all of its original architectural features? What do you do with carriage houses when cars have superseded horses as a means of transportation? When religious orders no longer need the building they have maintained for years?

How can you repurpose the local railway station once the trains no longer stop there?

In this issue of *The Westmount Historian* you can read about a carriage house built in 1907 on Roslyn Avenue that has been converted into a charming private home of today, as well as learn how the large 500 Claremont Avenue building changed from being a Protestant home to a Jewish orphanage to a Catholic residence over the decades. The current new owners will convert it once again, so its future is uncertain. The once vital Westmount Train Station was closed by CPR in 1984 and sits boarded up awaiting a new use.

When we celebrated our WHA December Social in the Gallery at Victoria Hall, adjacent to Westmount's delightful double cascade Flower Conservatory, we learned that it and all the greenhouses are in need of repairs and a second life. What will its future be?

DOREEN LINDSAY

WHA Winter/Spring 2016 Lecture Series *The Visual Arts in Westmount*

This series looks at the work of visual artists who have lived in Westmount or have a strong Westmount connection. The first talk will, unusually, be given in January, to coincide with the exhibition of the Beaver Hall Group at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

Thursday, January 21, 2016

The Beaver Hall Group: Some Westmount Links

Speaker: Elena Kruger, Volunteer Guide, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts

Thursday, February 18, 2016

Norma Shearer: From Grosvenor Avenue to Sunset Boulevard

Speaker: Oksana Dykyj, Head of the Moving Image Resource Centre, Faculty of Fine Arts, Concordia University

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Charles W. Kelsey: The Craft of Stained Glass

Speaker: Rosalind Pepall, former Senior Curator of Decorative Arts, MMFA

Thursday, April 21, 2016

Gabor Szilasi: My Life and Work in Photography

Speaker: Gabor Szilasi, Photographer

*Westmount Public Library, 4574 Sherbrooke St. W, from 7 to 9 pm
Admission free for members, \$5 for non-members at the door*

**Information: www.westmounthistorical.org / 514-989-5510
Series prepared by Caroline Breslaw, Louise Carpentier & Lorne Huston**

REPURPOSED BUILDINGS in WESTMOUNT

Westmount does not have a large stock of repurposed buildings. Most of its properties are residential. The majority of the converted buildings are found around the commercial arteries of Greene, Sherbrooke, Victoria, and St. Catherine. The earliest repurposed buildings were houses converted into shops or businesses on these streets. When cars replaced the horse and carriage, many Westmount coach houses became garages.

Over the years a number of interesting larger conversions have occurred, including:

- The POM Bakery (1930) – 4700 St. Catherine – converted into condos in 1986
- Fire Station No. 2 (1911) – 680 Victoria – condos since 1991
- Bell Canada/later Canadian Legion bldg – 4450 Sherbrooke at Metcalfe – now condos
- The Congrégation de Notre-Dame Motherhouse (1908) – 3040 Sherbrooke St. W. – Dawson College since 1982
- Institut pédagogique (1925) affiliated with the CDN – 4873 Westmount Ave. – Marianopolis College since 2007
- The Old Post Office (1913) – 1304 Greene – now offices of a wine importer
- Sherbrooke St. Post Office (1967) – 4895 Sherbrooke – now a clothing store
- Royal Bank (1930) – 4192 St. Catherine at Greene – now an antique store
- Biltcliffe Dept. Store (1910) – 350 Victoria – later West-

mount Moving until 1962 /Visual Arts Centre since 1974

- Robertson Macaulay residence (1911) – 3228 Cedar – now ECS School
- Thomas Macaulay residence (1912) – 3233 The Blvd. – now The Study school
- Residence at 815 Upper Belmont (1930) – now Villa Sainte-Marcelline School

Only two of Westmount's churches have lost their religious status: St. Andrew's United Church on Stanton Ave., which was sold to Selwyn House in 1985 for a sports centre, and a small, modern structure on Lansdowne Avenue, which has become a private residence.

Two retired school buildings were demolished: King's School (De Maisonneuve near Roslyn), and Queen's School (Olivier Ave.)

Two important buildings are now candidates for repurposing – the Westmount Train Station (4848 St. Catherine at Victoria) and the religious residence at 500 Claremont (corner of Windsor). Definite uses have not been determined for either. The RMR/Westmount Armoury at 4625 St. Catherine Street stands on land owned by the City, and will revert to the City of Westmount at the expiration of its 99 year lease. This building has great potential because of its architectural merit, the spacious interior, and the location next to the Westmount Recreation Centre.

CAROLINE BRESLAW



Dawson College since 1982. Repurposed from the Congrégation de Notre-Dame Motherhouse built in 1908. 3040 Sherbrooke St. W.



Original Biltcliffe Department Store opened in 1910 at 350 Victoria Ave. Later it became the Westmount Moving Co. until 1962, and then it was converted to the Visual Arts Centre in 1974.



Fire Station #2 was built in 1911 at corner of Victoria Ave. and The Boulevard. It was converted into three condominiums beginning in 1991 by the architectural firm of Archtem. Photo 2010

EVOLUTION of the CARRIAGE HOUSE in WESTMOUNT

The earliest buildings to be repurposed in Westmount were carriage houses and homes converted into shops on commercial streets. Carriage houses were found throughout the community. They were necessary in the 1800s, when no public transportation existed, and travel was by horse and carriage (or sleigh in the wintertime). A stable and 2-storey carriage house (also called a coach house or 'remise') stood behind or beside the residence. The carriage house,



Carriage house at 414 Wood Ave. was converted to a private residence with walled courtyard.

built to house the carriages and tack, sometimes also included stalls for the horses. Upstairs, there were living quarters for the groom or coachman and a hay loft, if horses were stabled there.

When horses were replaced by cars, many coach houses were demolished. In Westmount, a number of stables and carriage houses were repurposed into garages, with an upstairs apartment for staff. A charming example is the carriage house at 85 Church Hill at the corner of Montrose Avenue. This was built in 1878 in the same architectural style and materials as 'Hazelbrae', the Second Empire cut grey-stone residence. The driveway once curved around the front entrance and swept past the east side of the house to the coach house.

Some of these conversions are still in use today. They can be found from the Summit down to lower Westmount (see the list of existing carriage houses on the WHA website). They have also been copied in form and purpose by more recently developed properties, providing apartments above garages which match the house. These buildings are still known as carriage houses, in deference to their original use.

On larger properties, the land was sometimes subdivided. The carriage house became a separate residence with its own house number and garden. The brick carriage house at 414 Wood Avenue, located behind an imposing greystone residence on Sherbrooke Street, was converted into a private home with a charming walled courtyard. Such conversions often feature lovely gardens and interesting architectural elements which reflect their past history. CAROLINE BRESLAW



Beside the Hurtubise House on Côte St. Antoine Road, the coach house or 'remise' from the 1880s still stands. Once there were separate stables behind the house. This is the only Westmount carriage house which retains its original use. The entire property, including the 'remise', was designated an historical site and monument in 2004 by the provincial government.

1907 CARRIAGE HOUSE TRANSFORMED to PRIVATE HOME



Repurposed carriage house at 543 Roslyn Avenue was bought by Sharon Sparling and Robert Graham in 2007. They had a slate roof installed, as well as new windows and doors, and limestone floors on top of cement floors on the main floor. Sharon's carefully planned front garden provides pleasure to the family as well as passersby.

Between 1907 and 1909, a carriage house was constructed on the south side of the large sandstone residence at 545 Roslyn Avenue. It stood at the back of the property, with access via a laneway. The carriage entered through double doors, with the horses being stabled to the right. The hayloft and the living quarters for the groom were on the top floor.

After World War II, between 1945 and 1947, the property was subdivided, and the carriage house was converted into a private home with a deep front garden. The staircase was relocated from the north side to the centre of the building. Work was carried out using wartime supplies and materials recycled from the original structure. In 1967, the young Stethem family became the owners. They invested great energy in the property, removing the Chinese elms which obscured the house, and creating a country garden. The Stethems lived in the house for 40 years, raising a family and

a series of dogs.

In 2007, Sharon Sparling and Robert Graham bought the carriage house, which had been gutted by the previous owners who had purchased the property from the Stethams. Working closely with a contractor, Sharon spent a year renovating, putting in French drains, a slate roof, new windows and doors, and limestone floors on top of the cement on the main floor. The wood-burning fireplaces were replaced by more efficient gas ones. In the living room, windows of equal height were installed and ceiling beams were put in to provide symmetry. The basic floor plan of the ground floor was retained, but the second storey was reconfigured and simplified. There are fewer bedrooms now, and fewer doors open onto the landing. The basement remains in almost the original form, with the old stone walls and the hole from the former stalls for horse waste still visible. An



This impressive curving staircase in the centre of the house descends from second floor to first floor. The original stairway had been in the northwest corner of the original carriage house. (see architect's plan reproduced on following page)



Greta Stethem lived in this house with her family including their beloved dogs for 40 years beginning in 1967.

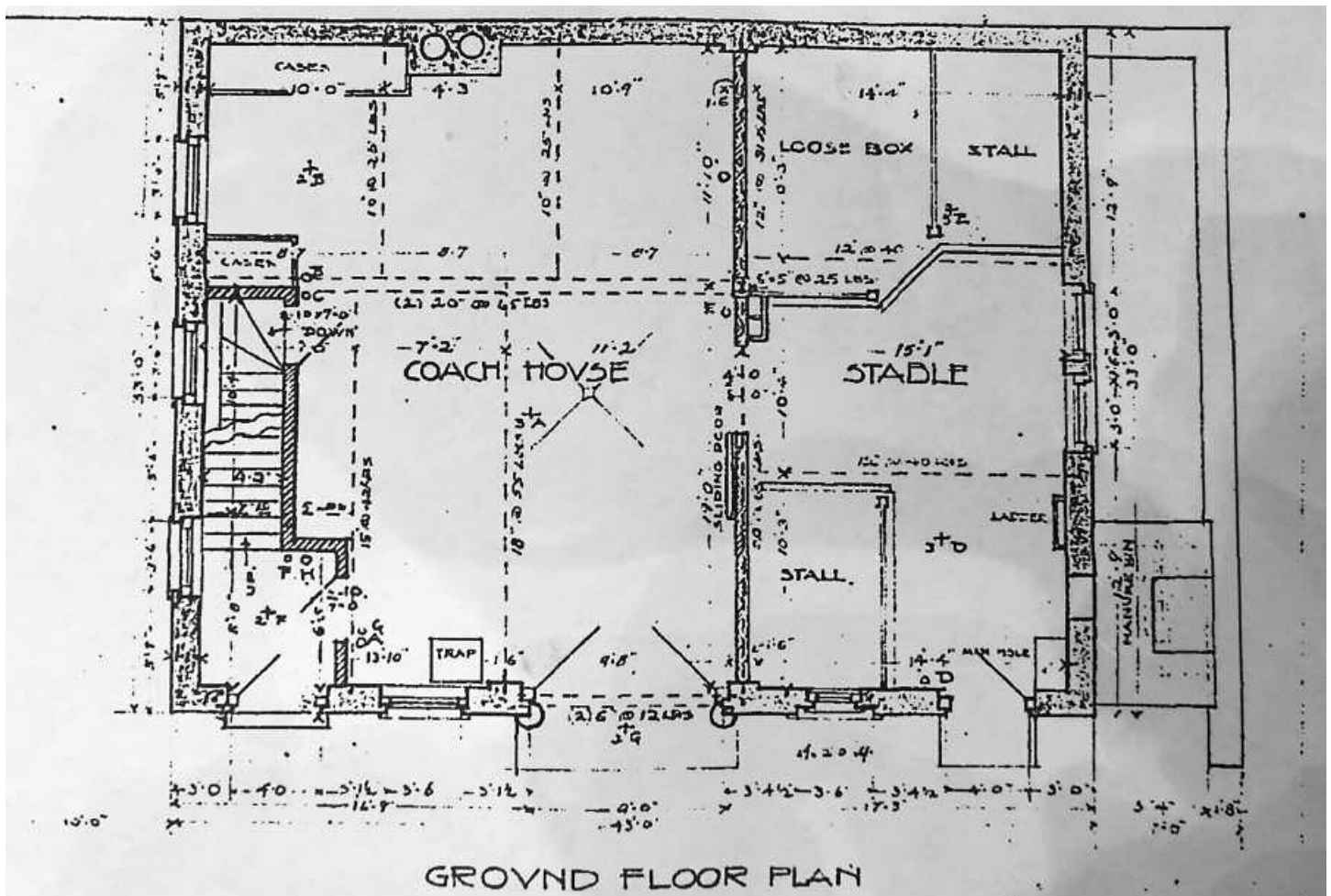
original feature is the tongue and groove panelling, once found throughout the building, which remains in the master bedroom.

Sharon Sparling dedicated herself to the garden, creating a large parking apron near the street at the front of the property, with a pathway leading to the front door. This provides great privacy to the house and the front garden. There are terraces outside the dining room's French doors and beside the living room. Passersby continue to be enchanted by the renovated carriage house and the garden in all the seasons.

CAROLINE BRESLAW



"Tongue and groove" wood panelled walls have survived since 1907 in what were originally the living quarters on the second floor for the horse's groom. The walls are now painted black and the room is used as the family study.



One of the plans for the original coach house and stable by Hogle & Davis architects, Montreal. Hogle was also the architect for the Hervey Institute built in 1908 at 500 Claremont Ave. (see pages 8-11.) Note stable, coach house and original stairway.



A terrace on the north side of the house opens from the living room and is accessible from the front garden. The owners encouraged local moss to grow between the patio stones and built terraces of native plants to create a small private garden.



This front patio was created by the current owners. Access is from the front walk or through the French doors from the dining room.

THE LIVES of 500 CLAREMONT 1908-2015



500 Claremont: For over a century this large institutional building has occupied the corner of Claremont and Windsor Avenues in Westmount. Built by the architect Morley W. Hogle in 1908 for the Hervey Institute, a Protestant charity institution, it was later taken over by the Jewish community and from 1952 was managed by Catholic authorities. Photo: Doreen Lindsay 2015

1908-1942: Protestant and Jewish charitable institutions

In Quebec, care for the poor and childhood education were primarily responsibilities of the various religious institutions within each community until the Quiet Revolution of the 1950s and 1960s. For the first 35 years, the building was devoted to the care of impoverished children, first in the Protestant community, then in the Jewish community. The functions served by the building remained much the same and no major renovations occurred during the period.

Unlike the protestant girls that were trained for domestic

service in earlier years, Jewish children were not educated on the premises, but were bussed to the Berthelet School, a Protestant school near St. Lawrence Blvd. and Ontario St. By the 1940s the social welfare authorities in the Jewish community felt that foster homes provided a better environment for looking after disadvantaged or orphaned children and the operations on Claremont Avenue were phased out.

1942-1947: Second World War

The traditional philanthropic function of the building was interrupted during the Second World War. When the

Canadian Army took over the building in 1942, extensive interior renovations were made in order to dedicate the premises to vocational training. It became Vocational Training School No. 4, where underage recruits were prepared to exercise trades crucial to the operations of the armed forces. For a short period after the war, it was used to provide college-level preparatory courses for ex-servicemen who wished to pursue higher education.

1947-1970: The emergence of the social work profession

After the war, the social services in the Protestant community were reorganized under the jurisdiction of the Children's Aid Society. At the same time, certain communities within the Catholic Church became more specialized in ed-

ucational and social welfare services. After the Army turned over the building in 1947 to the Children's Aid Society, it was used as a "Receiving Home" to temporarily house children placed under the Society's care.

Louis Braille Institute

Eventually the Catholic Church became owner of the property. The provincial government paid the operating costs of the Louis Braille Institute and the Clercs de Saint-Viateur assumed responsibility for the first institution providing secondary education for blind boys in the province. The Braille Institute moved to the South Shore in 1960 and the building was turned over to the Dominican Sisters to be run as a residence and school for troubled children. It was during this period that an additional floor was added to the building.



500 Claremont remains unoccupied since it was bought by a private developer, Brookline Developments, in January 2014, and its fate remains to be determined. It has always been a mystery why this building is known by its civic address on Claremont Ave., whereas its main entrance is on Windsor Ave.

1970-2014: A Catholic Residence

The educational vocation of the building ended in 1970 when it was taken over by the Clair Séjour order of nuns, with its head office in France. It was active in social work in Montreal and the building was used solely as a residence for nuns of the order.

1976-2014 Congrégation de la Fraternité Sacerdotale

In 1976 the sisters were replaced by the Congrégation de la Fraternité Sacerdotale and the building became the "Résidence Eugène-Prévost". This order was dedicated to providing material and spiritual support for the clergy, Theological students from foreign countries, visiting dignitaries, as well as priests in need of temporary accommodation were also housed on the premises for varying lengths of time.

Extensive renovations were done. The lowest floor was dedicated to service functions: the kitchen and dining room were located there as were the laundry and heating facilities.

Dormitories were converted into private studios and small apartments were created on the upper floors to accommodate some of the permanent residents as well as guests. Common spaces such as a chapel, a library and reception rooms were created. The top floor was given over to a separate order of sisters who looked after the household functions for the residents of the building.

As the number of vocations waned and the needs for lodging diminished, it became apparent that the days of 500 Claremont as a religious institution were numbered. For over a hundred years, this building had been dedicated to the care and social welfare of the community. In 2014 the property was sold to Brookline Developments, a private real estate developer.

2014-? Private ownership

The history of 500 Claremont has reached a crossroads. To what extent a social or community vocation is possible for all or part of the building remains to be explored.

LORNE HUSTON



Manny Cohen (left) resided at 500 Claremont when it was the Montreal Hebrew Orphans' Home (1921 to 1942). Père François Breton (right) resided at 500 Claremont when it was owned by the Congrégation de la Fraternité, a residence for clergy and guests.



The balcony of 500 Claremont where residents rested and visited out of doors with a view of the St. Lawrence River.

OCCUPANTS OF 500 CLAREMONT

1908-1921	Hervey Institute, a protestant home and School of Industry
1921-1942	Montreal Hebrew Orphans' Home
1942-1947	World War II educational activities of troops and veterans
1948-1952	Children's Aid Society
1952	Acquired by Archdiocese of Montreal, renovated by Quebec Government
1952-1959	Louis Braille Institute, home and secondary school for boys
1960-1970	Home & School for juvenile delinquents, Sœurs dominicaines
1970-1975	Residence for members of Clair Séjour order of nuns
1975-2015	Congrégation de la Fraternité, residence for clergy and guests
2014	Sold to Brookline Developments



Mika Goodfriend, photographer and Westmount resident, presented his photographs and explained his relationship with the priests and nuns of 500 Claremont at the lecture on Sept. 17th. Mika lived two blocks away from the 500 Claremont building and was curious about the life of the nuns and priests who lived there. While completing a BFA program at Concordia University he made a social documentary study in 2010 and 2011 of the priests and nuns who were part of the «Fraternité Sacerdotale». His photographic project was exhibited in the Gallery at Victoria Hall in 2012.

Selected photos from the series «Congrégation de la Fraternité Sacerdotale»



Sœur Hélène



Frère Lucien



Prêtre Jean-Baptiste



Frère Michel

WESTMOUNT TRAIN STATION: Opened 1907 Closed 1985



The Westmount Train Station stands boarded up at the bottom of Victoria Avenue at 4848 St. Catherine Street. It was designed in 1907 by the chief architect of CPR in American Shingle Style sometimes referred to as “early Frank Lloyd Wright.” By 1983 it was closed to passenger service and sold to the City of Westmount in 1998. Designated as a Heritage Railway Station in 1993 for its historic importance, architectural form, and site relationship to its community. It is one of 42 so designated in Quebec. The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada established the Heritage Railway Stations Protection Act in 1990.

The Westmount Train Station at the southern end of Victoria Ave opened in 1907 and was sold by the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) to the City of Westmount in October 1998.

The first CPR Westmount train station was built at the bottom of Abbott Ave in 1896, and the second one at the foot of Victoria Ave. The latter was a larger, red brick building, with a slate roof and waiting rooms at either end. The station agent’s office was located centrally with a bay window for observing train movements. An express baggage room was added later at the east (far) end of the building. A separate Westmount control tower was erected but later demolished. In 1923 a pedestrian underpass was built to the south platform. The station mostly served CPR commuter trains to the West Island and long-distance trains headed further west.

WHA archival photographs of the exterior and interior of the station at Victoria taken in 1984 before the station was closed in 1985 show the interior furnishings and equipment, including a station master’s ticket-stamping machine and a pot-bellied stove later donated to the WHA.

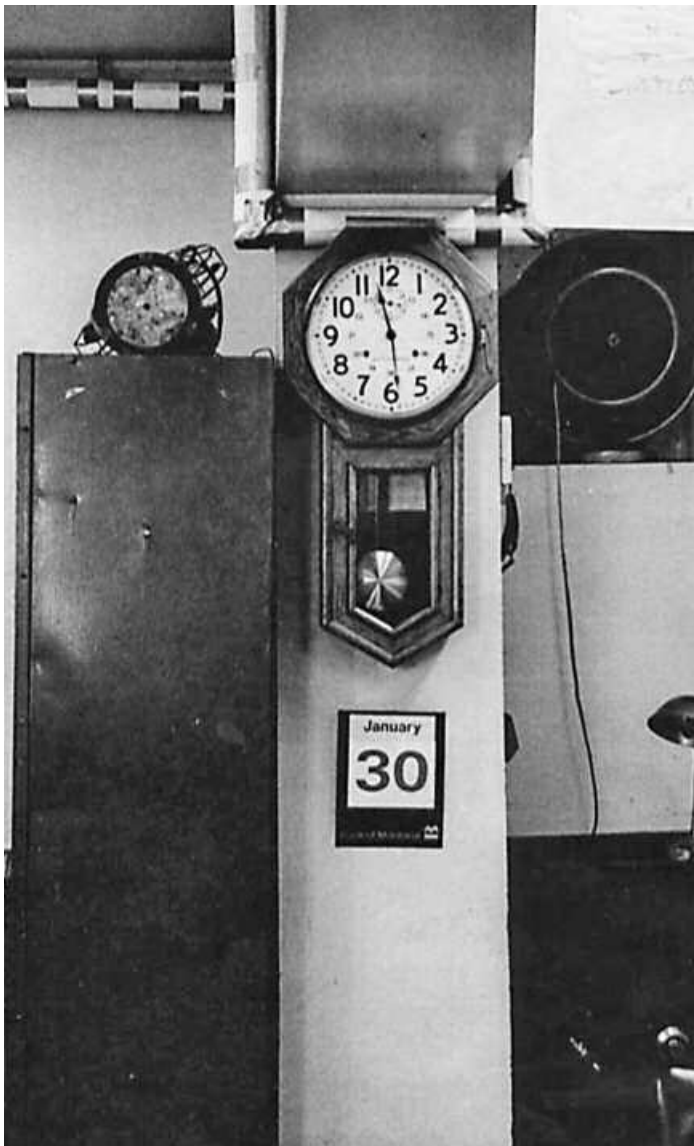
Designed by the CPR’s chief architect, Walter A. Painter, the Westmount Train Station has long awaited a repurposing. Recently it was a Master’s thesis case-study of an historic abandoned station in an urban setting. The thesis gives examples of repurposed train stations in other locations with and without contemporary additions. Possible new usages for the Westmount train station were suggested based on consultations with selected stakeholders including the WHA and Heritage Montreal. Some suggested uses were associated with the McGill University Health Center (MUHC) at the Glen and other uses could be viewed

as being inappropriate for a building located so close to a still active railway line.

The City of Westmount has created a heritage zone (Zone HP-39-03) allowing the following uses of the site: heritage interpretation centre, exhibition centre, museum, public park or square (HER Bylaw 1245). The Heritage Montreal Web site states: "Today, the station no longer has any legal protection since the Heritage Railway Stations Protection Act (C-205), adopted in 1985 and implemented in 1990, applies only to railway corporations. Moreover, the building has no municipal status to reflect its heritage value."

Based on talks by Michael Leduc, a railway historian and author, Doreen Lindsay, WHA President, and Joumana Chemaly, Master's student at the Université de Montréal, at the Westmount Public Library on November 19, 2015.

LOUISE CARPENTIER



*Wall with clock and calendar
photographed inside Train Station in 1984.*



*CPR Westmount Train Station showing original
room with large windows and benches for the public.
Photo by Doreen Lindsay 1984.*



*Michael Leduc, railway historian and author,
with Joumana Chemaly, Masters student at
Université de Montréal. Photographed after
their talk for WHA on Nov. 19, 2015.*

WHA DECEMBER 2015 SOCIAL



*Councillor Cynthia Lulham speaker at the WHA Social, held in December in the Gallery at Victoria Hall, continued the theme of repurposing buildings in Westmount. The event had originally been planned to include an evening stroll through the Westmount Conservatory. Fate intervened, with the collapse of a glass pane from the roof in September, resulting in the closure of the Conservatory for an indefinite period. Councillor Lulham converted the walk into a talk about the history of the two heritage buildings and potential new uses for the other adjacent greenhouses.
Photo by Gabor Szilasi*



*Doreen Lindsay demonstrates how to hand colour black and white photographs. Transparent oil paint is applied to the matte surface of a photograph and blended until the desired colour is achieved.
Photo by Jane Martin*

The Social Evening was enhanced by the exhibition of seven of Doreen Lindsay's colour-tinted photographs of the Westmount Conservatory. They had been part of her 2001 show in the Gallery at Victoria Hall. Doreen demonstrated her hand-colouring technique by applying layers of transparent oil paints to areas of a black and white image, which had previously been coated with a mixture of linseed oil and turpentine. The results were magical, evoking the beauty of the Westmount Conservatory.



Triptych of Westmount Flower Conservatory. Three hand-painted black and white photographs form a triptych of the Flower Conservatory. The triptych was first exhibited with other hand-painted photographs in The Gallery at Victoria Hall in 2001 by the artist Doreen Lindsay. The Conservatory was originally constructed in 1927 by the firm of Lord & Burnham. Alterations were made in 1930, 1966, 1967, 1971 and 2014. It is closed until future notice because of a recent fallen glass pane.

The Westmount Conservatory is one of the only two remaining cascade design conservatories in Canada manufactured by the English firm of Lord & Burnham. It was built in 1927, and had a palm house and a greenhouse with a fishpond. Many additions and alterations took place over the years. An entrance vestibule was added, and a pond was installed in the main greenhouse. The most recent work was done in 2004, when the architectural firm of Beaupré et Michaud carried out an extensive restoration of the buildings. New features, such as a contemporary bridge and waterfall and an electric lift for visitors, were also added at the time.

With the recent damage to the main building, newer technology, such as an automatic watering system, and more durable materials, such as metal instead of wood, may be incorporated. The Jungle Room will remain as a feature. The greenhouses at the rear, where in the past annual bedding plants were grown for the floral clock in Westmount Park, the floral emblem beside City Hall, and for the flower beds in municipal parks, may find new uses, which are better suited to Westmount's evolving needs.

CAROLINE BRESLAW

WHA 2015 DONORS

It is with deep thanks to our donors and members in 2015 that we were able to develop a program of eight lectures and produce two newsletters for WHA members and the public.

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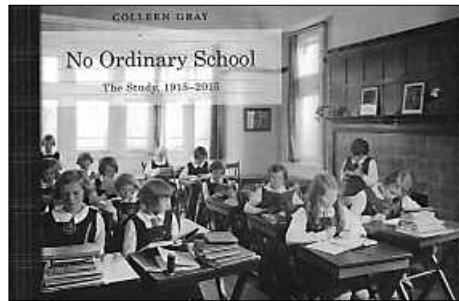
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NEW ACQUISITIONS



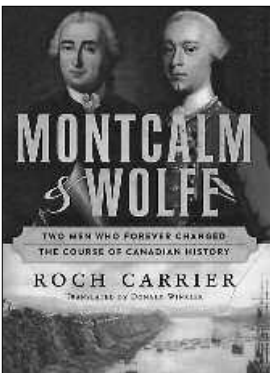
MONTREAL'S GOLDEN SQUARE MILE by MacKay L. Smith, 2015.



NO ORDINARY SCHOOL: The Study, 1915-2015 by Colleen Gray. McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015. Donated by Colleen Gray.



L'HOTEL CHATEAU VERSAILLES UN HISTOIRE/A HISTORY by Betty Guernsey, 1979. (booklet)



MONTREAL & WOLFE: Two Men Who Forever Changed the Course of Canadian History by Roch Carrier, translated by Donald Winkler. Harper Collins Publishers Ltd., 2014.

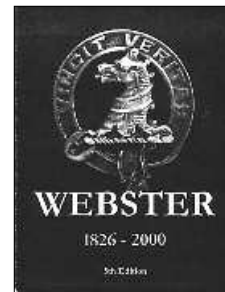
THE LAWN JOCKEY and other Aislin cartoons by Aislin (Terry Mosher). McClelland & Stewart, 1989.

OLD WHORES: More Aislin cartoons by Aislin (Terry Mosher). McClelland & Stewart, 1987.

STRETCH MARKS: 15 Years of Aislin Cartoons by Aislin (Terry Mosher). McClelland & Stewart, 1982.

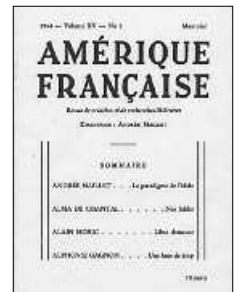


THE MONTREAL OF MY CHILDHOOD by Antonio de Thomas. Tundra Books, 1994.



THE WEBSTER FAMILY IN CANADA 1826-2000 by James Parke Woods and Dorothy Jean Woods, 2000.

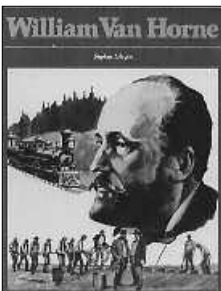
THE HISTORY OF THE WEBSTER FAMILY by Lorne C. Webster, 1941. (booklet)



2 issues of the literary publication AMÉRIQUE FRANÇAISE (1952, 1964) produced by renowned Canadian publisher, poet, writer and long-time Westmount resident Andrée Maillet (1921-1995). Donated by Raphaëlle Corbeil, granddaughter of Andrée Maillet.



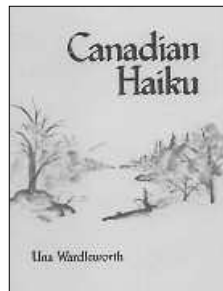
EMBROIDERED JACKET CREST of the St. George Curling Club (Westmount), ca. 1950s. Donated by Councillor Patrick Martin.



WILLIAM VAN HORNE by Stephen Mayles. Fitzhenry & Whiteside Ltd., 1982.



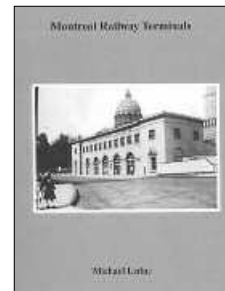
DARE TO DRAW/LA PASSION DU DESSIN by Sean B. Murphy. Visual Arts Centre and McClure Gallery, 2008.



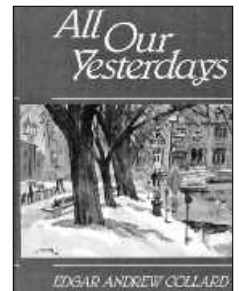
CANADIAN HAIKU by Una Wardleworth, 1979. (booklet) Donated by Sally Hooff.



WILLIAM VAN HORNE by Stephen Mayles. Fitzhenry & Whiteside Ltd., 1982.



MONTREAL RAILWAY TERMINALS by Michael Leduc, 2008.



ALL OUR YESTERDAYS by Edgar Andrew Collard. *The Gazette* (Montreal), 1998.

The WHA is proud of its growing archival collection, which is rich in photographs of our evolving cityscape, and also contains a range of documents, maps, and memorabilia relevant to the community's long history. We sincerely

thank all those who have donated original items to the archives, or published materials for our reference shelves.

JANE MARTIN, WHA ARCHIVIST