Fig. 1. West to east (from the Grand Trunk, Canadian Express and Customs House buildings to the Musée d'archéologie et d'histoire de Pointe-à-Callière) aerial view of Place d'Youville, before the redevelopment project. In the middle of the place is the old fire station that today houses the Centre d'histoire de Montréal.
(photo Pierre Lahoud)

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L u c i e   K .   M o r i s s e t [1]

Of History and Memory: an Allegory of Identity in the Redevelopment of Place d'Youville (Montreal)

This article describes the Place d'Youville redevelopment project, in the heart of Old Montreal. It also delivers an account of the conceptual process which led to the options ultimately selected. Luc Noppen and I, both architectural historians, worked on this project as part of a team spearheaded by the Groupe Cardinal Hardy and landscape architect, Claude Cormier. Our proposed concept and project were short-listed and later chosen as the winning entry in an architectural competition for redeveloping the square, held in 1997. Phase I of the construction was completed in 2000.

The project addressed both the historical and architectural components of the site. It could have been designed on a strictly functional basis, as a public retreat for residents of this area that is generally flooded by tourists attracted to Old Montreal. However, this square, steeped in history, had the potential of becoming a new symbol in Old Montreal, a contemporary urban setting that serves as a showcase for ancient and modern objects, unearthed from the soil below [2,3].

This type of historical quest has become commonplace, as many developments take local identity, memory and history into account. The search for *topoi* is performed through various approaches: historicist or even mimetic, i.e., simply producing replications of the past, functional consolidation via commemorative structures or interpretative institutions (which abound in Quebec), and lastly allegorical figuration, which suggests, often by *mitate* [4] the poetics of identity/space that are relevant to the present [5].

From this perspective, that we decided to develop Place d'Youville as a palimpsest formed by the accumulation of "layers" or "strata" that, each left their own visible imprint on Old Montreal. In an effort to uncover Place d'Youville's "true identity", we had to decode this palimpsest, and create a *site* that would be urban, typically Montreal, a place of leisure and significance, by gaining an understanding of the site "as it appears today" [6], and identifying components of its past and official movements that shaped its current identity [7].

The following pages outline this approach, which takes into account the square's past and present, as well as the constraints

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Fig. 2. Situation map of Place d'Youville: the project concerns the corridor-shaped area (in gray) between Place-Royale and the North-South axis of Rue McGill.
(Claude Cormier architectes paysagistes)

The old fire station (now Centre d'histoire de Montréal): the storehouses are located to the north (left), and the Gray Nuns buildings, to the south (right).
(photo Pierre Lahoud)

Fig. 4. East to west aerial view: the Musée d'archéologie et d'histoire de Pointe-à-Callière is at the foreground.
(photo Pierre Lahoud)

inherent to the completion of such a project. Our conceptual approach, related to the formal components of the landscape language we created, was then anchored in this general framework. This primarily involved awakening dormant memory and recycling its images into a new contemporary design.

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Place d'Youville, which is located in the Island of Montreal's southern section, adjacent to the Vieux-Port (Fig. 2), is one of Old Montreal's most popular recreational and tourist areas, drawing bus loads of sightseers every year. Yet, despite the influx of visitors, the square remains tranquil amidst several warehouses lining the central corridor, which have recently been converted into housing units.

This corridor stretches north-south along McGill Street, starting from the so-called "Place Royale". At this end, the square is home to a series of tall buildings dating back to the early twentieth century - head offices of major railway companies – which bear witness to Montreal's economic prosperity during that period. At the opposite end of the square, sits the majestic prize-winning *Musée d'archéologie et d'histoire de Pointe-à-Callière* (Dan Haganu, Architect, and Provencher Roy, Architects), inaugurated in 1992 to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the founding of Montreal (Fig. 4). Lastly, the area's central area features former warehouses on one side (Fig. 5) and a complex owned by the Sisters of Charity (Grey Nuns) for over 200 years on the other. One of these buildings is a previous fire station, now home to the *Centre d'histoire de Montréal* (Fig. 1, 3).

Taken as a whole, the area appears to be residual setting, lacking any specific vocation, overlooked by recent restoration efforts in Old Montreal. The challenge then, was to redevelop and unify this clearly important and historically significant site, and especially to imbue it with a fitting identity.

A witness

The site's design evolved through a stratification process, which over the years led to the creation of the square.

With the passage of time each historical era left a distinct mark – either trapped in a layer of sub-soil sediment to be later

The storehouses, on the north side of Place d'Youville.
(photo Luc Noppen)
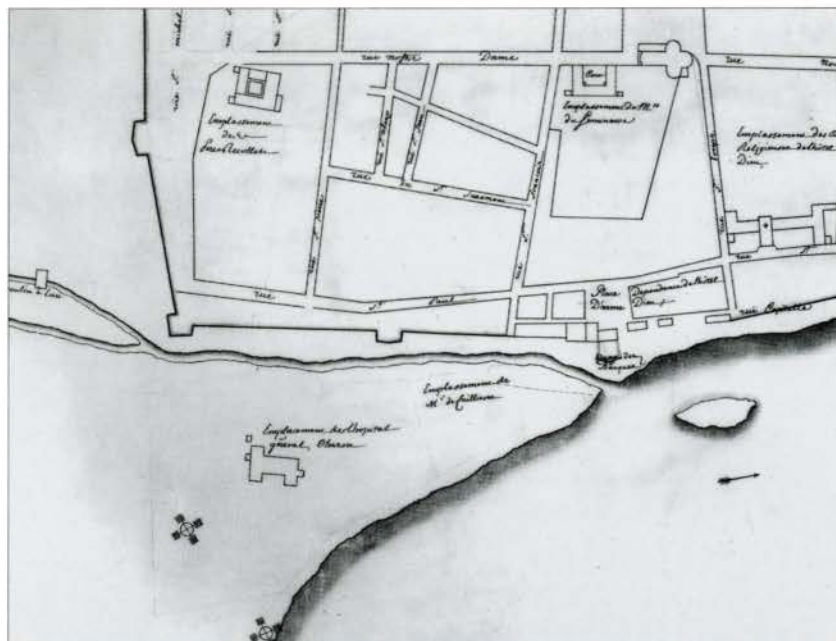
Fig. 7. On the soil above the new collector, the new markets; the "Rue des Commissaires" (Commissioners Street) and the "Rue des Enfants-Trouvés" (Foundling Street) frame the new *place*.
(ANQ, Québec, fonds Gérard-Morisset, Québec, Séminaire (archives) B-2)

Montreal's first Catholic cemetery. Thus, it is hardly surprising that when Montreal began erecting fortifications in 1717, Place d'Youville was excluded from the city, as was a home for the poor that had been constructed on the site in 1694. Later, in 1747, this *extra-muros* General Hospital was taken over by the Grey Nuns of Montreal, a common custom of the time. The Ruisseau Saint-Pierre then became the site's central element, separating the fortified city from the non-city, where the General Hospital stood (Fig. 6).

Successive extensions to the Grey Nuns' property, gradually pushed the limits of the future square closer to the stream, while the city's internal growth towards the north and eventual expansion of the fortification walls encroached the adjoining lots. When the walls were finally demolished (1802-1817), the area was still no more than empty space, a vacuum. Indeed, as late as 1830 it featured only a stream, its banks and a number of small bridges.

The William collector, Sainte-Anne's market and Parliament (1831-1900)

The most profound transformation of the area occurred in 1830-1831, when a sewage system was installed, to drain water from the plateau, the Ruisseau Saint-Martin and the Ruisseau Saint-Pierre. The construction of the William collector marked the site's true birth, finally lending this "non-place" an identity (Fig. 7). The area then became the setting for various activities and plans

unveiled by archeologists, or a virtual stratum in space, highlighted in the landscape language. Thus, curiously, while the surface featured commemorative structures (museums, sculptures, etc.) of historical figures and events, memories of the pasts were preserved and imprinted in the overall shape of the square itself.

A stream, its banks and bridges (1642-1830)

When Ville-Marie was settled, a stream, the Ruisseau Saint-Pierre, crossed the area occupied by what is now known as Place d'Youville. For many years, the stream determined the square's destiny (Fig. 18). A long time would pass before the site was developed. Indeed, the area's first inhabitants, the 1642 founders of Ville-Marie, quickly vacated, as the land was subject to flooding from the nearby St. Lawrence River. Soon after, it became

above the stream bed. The construction of the collector and resulting newly created land, (the future Place d'Youville), allowed for marketplace expansion from Place Royale (then known as Old Market Place)⁸ (place du Vieux Marché), to the hay market in the borough of the Recollets.

As early as 1833, Sainte-Anne's market moved to a new location, based on plans drawn up by Architect George Browne. This building became the home of the Parliament of United Canada in 1844, but was destroyed by fire in 1849 (Fig. 8). George Browne once again drafted plans for a market, constructed in 1851. A fish market, also designed by George James Browne, was added in 1879. Two streets running east-west – reminiscent of the former banks – provided both access and a framework for the markets (Fig. 7): Commissioners Street (*rue des Commissaires*, commissioned to supervise demolition of the city walls and
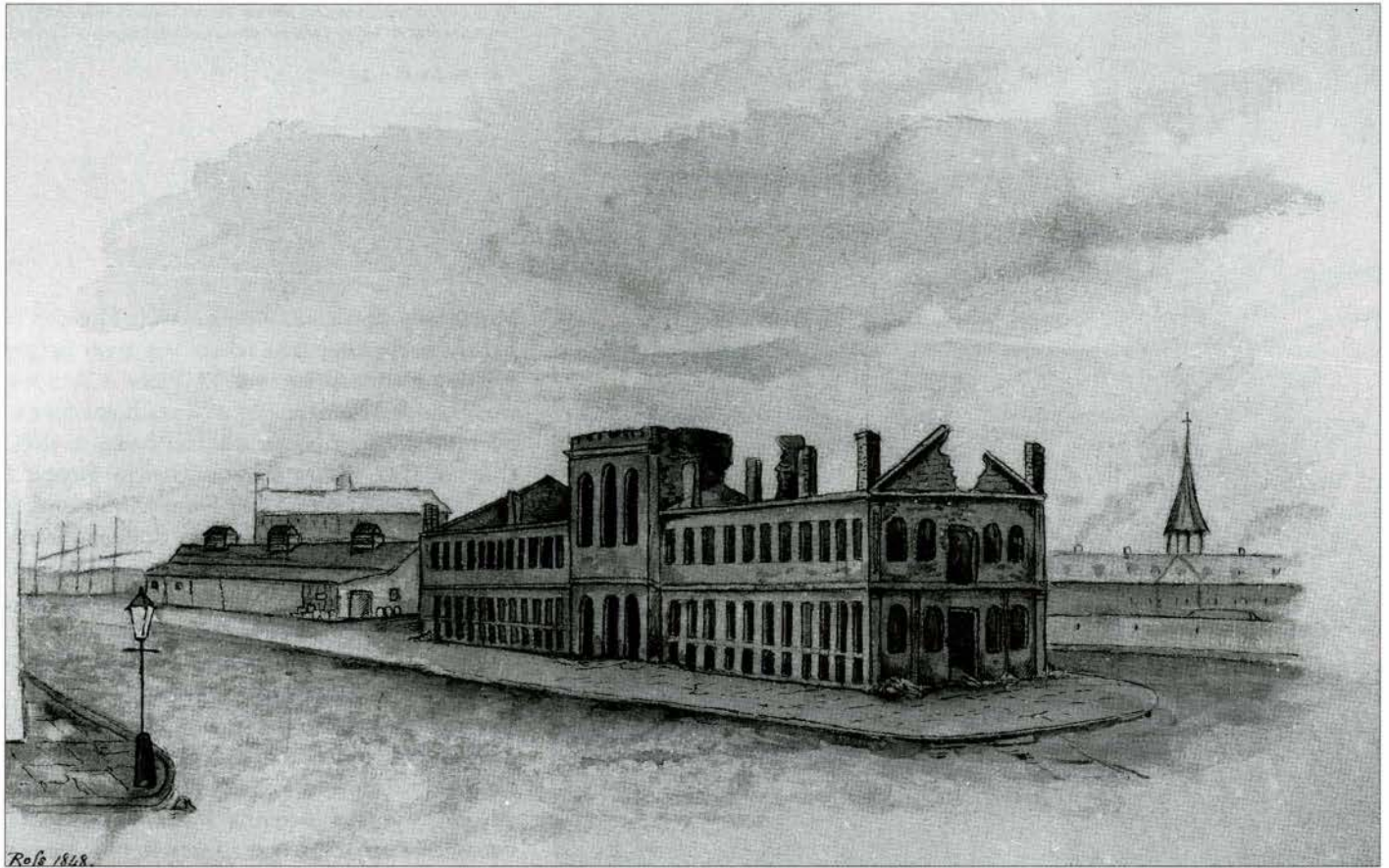
Fig. 8. West to east view of the Parliament building. Watercolour by John Hugh Ross (1867-1919).
(ANC, Ottawa, C-113682)

expansion of Montreal), and Foundling Street (rue des Enfants-Trouvés) which referred, of course, to the foundlings cared for by the Sisters of Charity.

On the eve of the XXth Century, the site was very different from the time of Ville-Marie. The construction of a canal system was central to the site's existence and responsible for the "corridor" shape, that stretched in a westerly direction from Place Royale. Furthermore, the main collector limited construction in the area above it. In short, from any perspective, the William collector triggered the establishment of Place d'Youville (Fig. 9, 18).

The era of markets was short-lived. Intentionally located behind Place d'Youville, west of Place Royale, to distance them from the city, these markets were deemed unhealthy, particularly when built in an area that was regularly flooded. The markets were finally demolished at the turn of the century. Meanwhile, after the great flood of Montreal, dikes were erected in Pointe Saint-Charles and a protective wall built around the city's low-lying areas. Population growth in this city district quickly spiraled. Fortunately, as though acting on a premonition, in 1871 the Grey Nuns departed,

Fig. 9. "St. Ann's Market, Montreal, 1901". The *place* is now represented.
(painting by Lillian Tucker, ANC, Ottawa, C-77)

donating enough land to accommodate two new streets: St. Peter Street (rue Saint-Pierre) and Norman Street (rue Norman, later renamed, rue du Port). Thus began a new era for Place d'Youville.
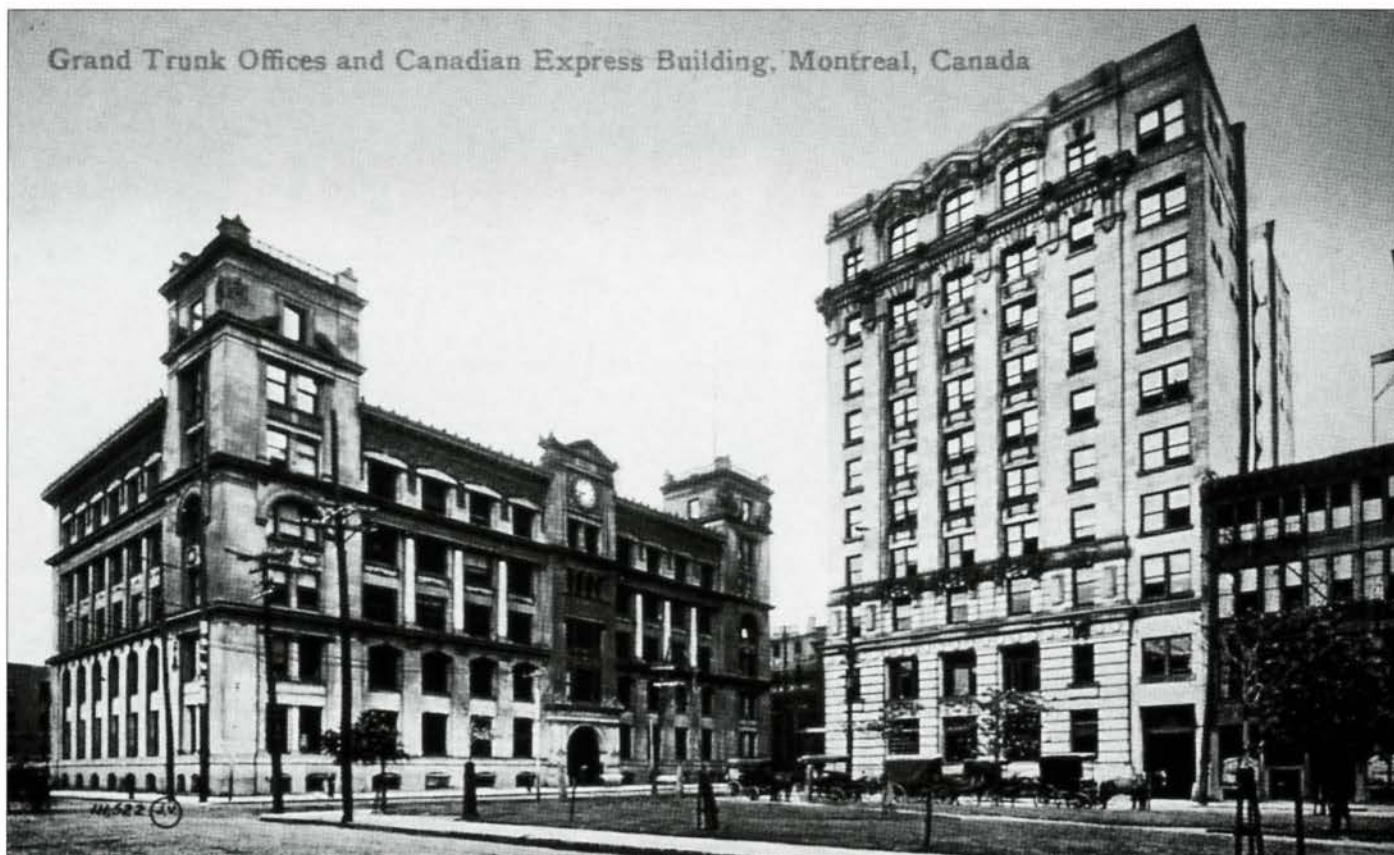
Grand Trunk Offices and Canadian Express Building, Montreal, Canada

The Grand Trunk offices and the Canadian Express building, built at the west end of Place d'Youville.
(BNQ, cartes postales)

Fig. 11. "The monument that marks the place where Maisonneuve landed in Montreal", in 1928.
ANC, Ottawa, PA-87966

Creation and consolidation of a civic space

The demolition of the markets signaled the creation of Place d'Youville as a civic space. Indeed, it was here in 1903, that the city built Fire Station No. 1, from plans drafted by Perreault and Lesage. The choice of this location was not happenstance. The Ruisseau Saint-Pierre, the collector and the markets, had impeded the site's development. While the rest of the city was implementing services, Place d'Youville was the only spot in this sector where fire engines could still be easily manoeuvred.

The launching of Place d'Youville as a civic site, first initiated with the construction of this municipal building was later confirmed in 1903-1904, when a small square was established within the rectangular area facing the fire station. New façades sprang up around the square, followed within a few years by the construction of some grandiose buildings (Fig. 10): offices of the Grand Trunk Railway (1898), the Canadian Express (1900) and Customs House (1912). Like the new site, these buildings were testimony of burgeoning harbor operations, which were facilitated by maritime improvements and draining of low-lying areas.

A new monument in Old Montreal
(1992 to date)

However, pressure on this first square quickly escalated, until it became a parking lot in 1920. The eastern section, left vacant after the construction of the fire station in center of the triangular corridor, was left primarily undisturbed. The city had

Fig. 12. Place d'Youville as a parking lot before the redevelopment project, in 1997.
(photo Luc Noppen)

undoubtedly anticipated some type of on-site construction, as the presence of the collector, could only be very costly. As if "in the meantime", the site became the storage area for the obelisk dedicated to the Pioneers (Fig. 11), the first cadastral boundary marker and the Archambault well. Yet if all these "embellishments" stood as silent witnesses to a wealth of historical change, along with those preserved in the former fire station under its new banner *Centre d'histoire de Montréal* and in the *Musée d'archéologie et d'histoire de Pointe-à-Callière*, no landscape or component had yet united, stabilized or formally established the site.

Finally, in 1992, in the course of the redevelopment related to Montreal's 350th anniversary, a virtual event/project related to the entire site's potential. France proposed five possible projects for Montreal's Place d'Youville, creations of five French artists (Dominique Perreault, Philippe Starck, Jacques Hondelatte, Roche and François, Jean-Marc Bustamante). Their primary aim was to pay tribute to the city's birthplace, which had been reinvigorated by recent improvements to the neighbouring Vieux-Port.

Place d'Youville had moved beyond the stage of space with potential, into the realm of a creative object, a dormant representation of a *"platzwollen"*, which had been waiting patiently in the wings for 350 years.

Fig. 13. The Musée d'archéologie et d'histoire de Pointe-à-Callière.
(photo Pierre Lahoud)

The forsaken Place d'Youville

By the 1990's, Place d'Youville was no more than a 70-year old parking lot[9], in the middle of which stood the old fire station (Fig. 12). The 350th anniversary celebrations sparked new interest in the area: the Vieux-Port, redesigned by the Groupe Cardinal Hardy, has become a popular recreational and tourist attraction, while the *Musée d'archéologie et d'histoire de Pointe-à-Callière*, has embellished the area with a new monument (Fig. 13). The boundary marker and the Pioneer's obelisk still stand in the

Fig. 14. The eastern area, between the Musée d'archéo-logie et d'histoire de Poite-à-Callière and the Centre d'histoire de Montréal.
(photo Luc Noppen)

square's eastern section; the Archam-bault well, moved during the museum's construction of the museum, and two new sculptures that adorn the east side of the *Centre d'histoire*, one by Gilles Mi-halcean, *La Peur* (Fear), the other, *Entre Nous* (Between Us) by Andrew Dulk-ewych, further embellish these comme-morative monuments.

In this context, the redevelopment of Place d'Youville had to take into account three factors: the square's shape, structure and surrounding buil-ding façades (morphology), future residential function in proximity to a busy recreational and tourist zone, historical past that determined the morphology and inevitably influenced the project's outcome.

Place d'Youville is distinctive from its surroundings: not exactly a street nor or a square, but a homogeneous space, still framed by streets running east-west and relatively uniform building façades that form an enclosure. In short, from Pointe-à-Callière to McGill Street, Place d'Youville is a unique and clearly defined area. More specifically, four structuring elements combine to lend it a square shape: i) the geometric "corri-dor" ii) segregation from the neibouring area iii) the site's uniform layout, despite the presence of the *Centre d'his-toire* and iv) lastly, the visual rapport

Fig. 15. The central area, in the rear of the Centre d'histoire.
(photo Luc Noppen)

with its surroundings: the east-west axis intimate perspective from Pointe-à-Callière, or interface view from McGill Street, and the interesting north-south vistas of the Vieux-Port and Old Montreal.

After taking these factors into account, as well as the fact that the area was divided by the presence of the *Centre d'histoire* that gave it two very different perspectives, a fifth structural element appeared. The area is divided into three sectors: i) a narrow passage alongside the museum, between Place Royale and Rue de Callière, ii) the area stretching from the *Centre d'his-toire* to Saint-Pierre Street (Fig. 15), and iii) the more geometrically shaped square, circa 1903, between the *Centre d'histoire* and McGill Street (Fig. 14). Although unique and secluded, the square bears

some similarity to the surrounding area; its particular shape – a sinuous corridor – is fairly typical of Montreal. Neither a Place Royale surrounded by homogeneous façades as in France nor an urban residue Place d'Youville seemed to have evolved out of some sort of organic development – typical of squares in Montreal.

Structural considerations coupled with functional conside-rations (namely the square's seclusion and the archaeological fra-gility of the sub-soil) underscored the need for a formal redevelopment solution that would reinforce the square's resi-dential vocation, while fostering the neighbouring recreational and tourist activities. The resulting autonomous and unified "pla-ce-object" would in turn, determine its role in the area's leisure

Fig. 16. The proposed layout. McGill Street is at the upper end of the image.
(Groupe Cardinal Hardy and Claude Cormier architectes paysagistes)

and tourism redevelopment. In short, Place d'Youville had to become a "must-see" (a sight) in Old Montreal.

Thus, our team proposed a landscape designed for individuals rather than crowds; a place of memory, sensitive to the past, but not dedicated to commemoration. In fact, we realised that simply choosing either a functionalist approach (a place designed only to please local residents) or a display of artifacts (a museum-square of Old Montreal) would not address all issues. It did, however, seem feasible to reconcile both approaches and create a square that would delight its residents, highlight some of Old Montreal's historical aspects, and attract, nowadays. Thus, significance became the nucleus of our design.

From palimpsest to significant patchwork

The square's identity, we felt, should be based on the stability of its structural makeup and on the permanency of its relationship to the city (the latter to stimulate and justify its desperately needed redevelopment). A site's permanency, acquired over time, is the main vehicle of memory and confers historic character. Short of disrupting all of Old Montreal to include some exogenous object, it seemed pertinent to draw from the panorama of urban forms that had shaped the site over time.

In other words, a more promising possibility was to recycle existing structural elements into a comprehensible contemporary landscape rather than adding new expensive elements, which entail a risk of rejection. We proposed updating the square in an indigenous fashion (i.e., consistent with local morphology), applying landscape organisation and layout details that would contribute to the site's structure and significance.

Reclaiming the past

Thus, Place d'Youville was a kind of palimpsest, its numerous sedimented layers of history with their accompanying "movements" had each imbued the site with a different spirit (Fig. 16). Our vision of this palimpsest was an "ever-evolving" patchwork quilt. The project we proposed would add a seventh layer or chapter to the saga of Place d'Youville, a story that began with the stream and grew into an urban space. This concept of an "unveiled" palimpsest would be expressed both materially (the project itself deposited on the surface like a thin layer leaving the soil bed undisturbed) and virtually, (formal configuration of this ultimate stratum or its "writing" would retain the imprint of everything buried below). In other words, the rearranged palimpsest, would blend the logic of its surface with the historical significance buried it its soil.

The formal organisation of such a palimpsest is based on evoking the past, beginning with memories anchored in the site's
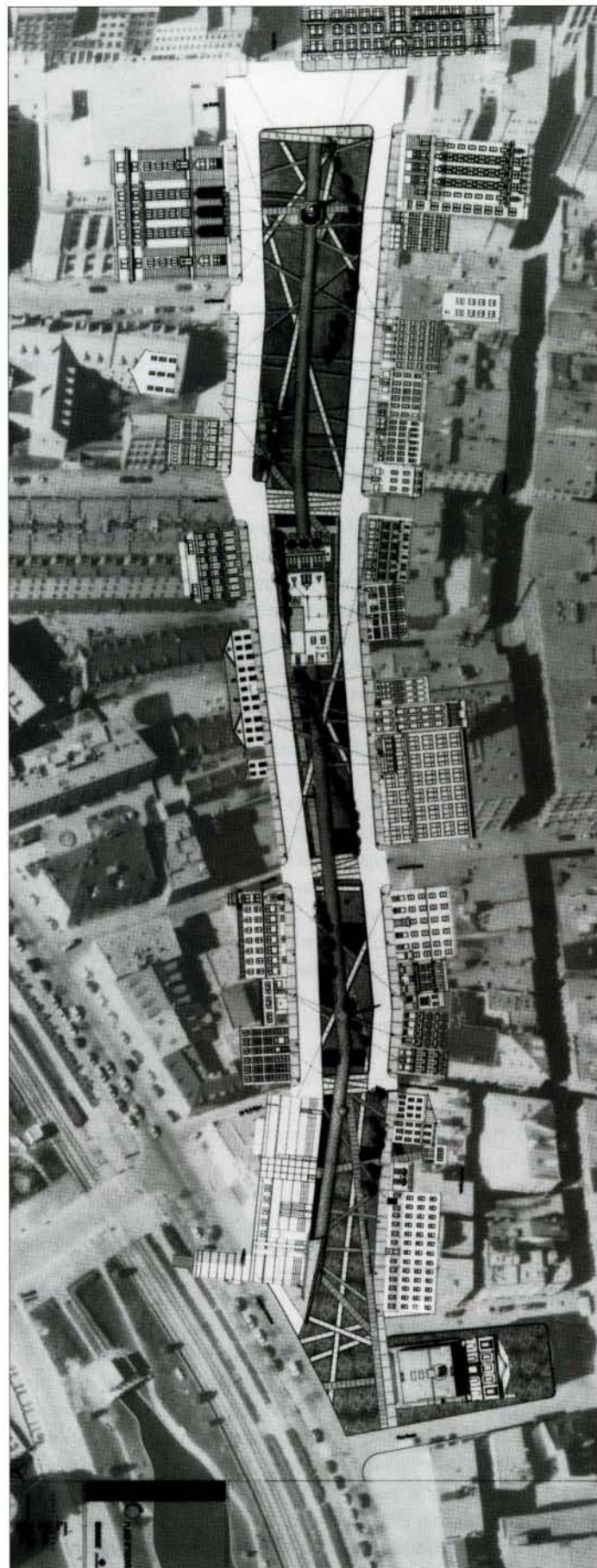
structural elements (morphology). In assembling the components of the final arrangement, we thus separate the interpretative from the evocative, and the "factual memory" from "structural memory" (or morphological memory).

Factual memory refers to factual memory of past episodes, moments or events that explain the square's ontogenesis(its life), which did not really impact its structural or morphological development (apparent form). In historical literature, this generally takes the form of a commemorative monument that supposedly represents, or is reminiscent of the past. It includes dates, names, places and famous personalities, which being without substance, are the essence of an interpretative monologue of the past. In Place d'Youville, for example, this type of memory can be found in the *Musée de Pointe-à-Callière*, the *Centre d'histoire* or on the commemorative plaque adorning the obelisk. Incidentally, the only factual memory of interest to us in this instance, is that associated with urban elements such as façades, streets, alignments, plants, etc. It is not actually anchored to the actual site unless, of course, it features story-telling panels or symbolic figures (e.g., bronze statues). Factual memory must be continually rewritten, as our interpretation of the past is intertwined with our ever-changing present.

Structural, or morphological, memory (what has been uncovered in the site's various strata), is built over time and explains the site's logic, makes sense of it. Structural memory is responsible for the very existence of a significant and valid entity (space). Without explaining all the events that have occurred therein, this type of memory accounts for the cultural essence of the object to which it relates. It can also be responsible for our understanding of each of the visible elements, as they are associated with a specific era in history, via its relationship to the others and how it fits on the logical (spatio-temporal) continuum. Lastly, structural memory transcends the "here and now", the ephemeral and rhetoric. As it is written in time, it becomes evidence and is permanent when etched into the landscape.

Our decision to opt for a design based on structural memory, seemed appropriate for a context that appears more urban than historical. It should be borne in mind, that the apparent amnesia surrounding Place d'Youville could not have been caused by a lack of factual memory interpretative structures, as the square is littered with commemorative tributes to Montreal's past (a museum, historical center, monuments). Additional memorials to bygone eras and events would only lend further confusion and disarray to the site, transforming it into a kind of history book with blank pages. Also, highlighting only one time-period of factual memory via a specific layout on the site, would require rearranging, or even removing existing "witnesses", thereby minimizing their significance. However, it is possible and preferable to underscore many events, considered by today's standards as important, in the appropriate showcases (the museum and historical center).

On the other hand, marrying function with historical interest in Place d'Youville, by creating an urban setting against a backdrop of undisturbed history that merges them into a single entity, involved multiple components. Public access to these components, tales or, as in this case, stories would be facilitated through "educational" activities organized by the museum and cultural center. In fact, evoking factual memory involves as many relics (or clues) as the number of facts to be recalled. Structural memory evocation draws upon a different level of understanding: at first glance, an evocative ingredient may also appear to be an inseparable part of a larger whole.

In this context, we proposed a plan inspired by structural memory: installing the ultimate layer of the palimpsest in a manner that would synthesize the whole, re-surfacing and breathing life into various meanings considered long-buried. Indeed, the layout itself contributes to in this evocation, confronting visitors with visible historical references, monumentalized in formal configurations. The site then becomes a relic, a sightseeing attraction[10] in the heart of Old Montreal. Instead of being only didactic, Place d'Youville, as both a living and a historical setting moves to a cultural level, improving its chances of durability and thus its resistance to the passage of time.

Actual and virtual witnesses

Defining and extracting the structural memory, as sketched by the previously identified historical inputs, involved recycling history as a design material[11]. Streams, and city walls are not part of the vocabulary used nowadays for designing squares. Moreover, simply replicating such items would only have resulted in a chaotic layout.

Therefore, we chose a design process aimed at paying homage to the memory specific to each historical element, thereby incorporating the site's morphology into a single, significant entity. This process makes it possible to raise each layer of the palimpsest to the surface, altered by time but still comprehensible, in the light of other existing elements (real witnesses, such as building façades and virtual witnesses, i.e. recent replicates of past items), using contemporary (challenging) terminology. Instead of inspiring nostalgia, the "evolving" square updates the past, reinterpreting and breathing new life into it. More than a strict representation of the past, the memorial design is dynamic: an acknowledgement of history's role in shaping the future and "enriching" the soil.

Fig. 17. The three areas, distinguished by the dimensions of the green segments, their "weft" and the paving density of the "comings and goings": the civic space (upper), the intimate place (middle) and the public area (lower).
(Groupe Cardinal Hardy and Claude Cormier architectes paysagistes)

The various elements involved in this synthesis can be classified under five themes: a "central green", "comings and goings", "the collection and the collector", "vegetation landscape" and "lighting". Together they would serve to attract both residents, seeking an original and relaxing environment, as well as visitors and tourists, searching for new clues to Montreal's history.

Spatial-defining of the site: the central green

The geometry of the public property

The proposed redevelopment is designed with minimized disruption, in an effort preserve the various archaeological strata contained in the soil. Phase 1 of the project is a central green space, baptized the "central green". It will restore vegetation, and serve as the baseline of he area's geometry, without disturbing the site.
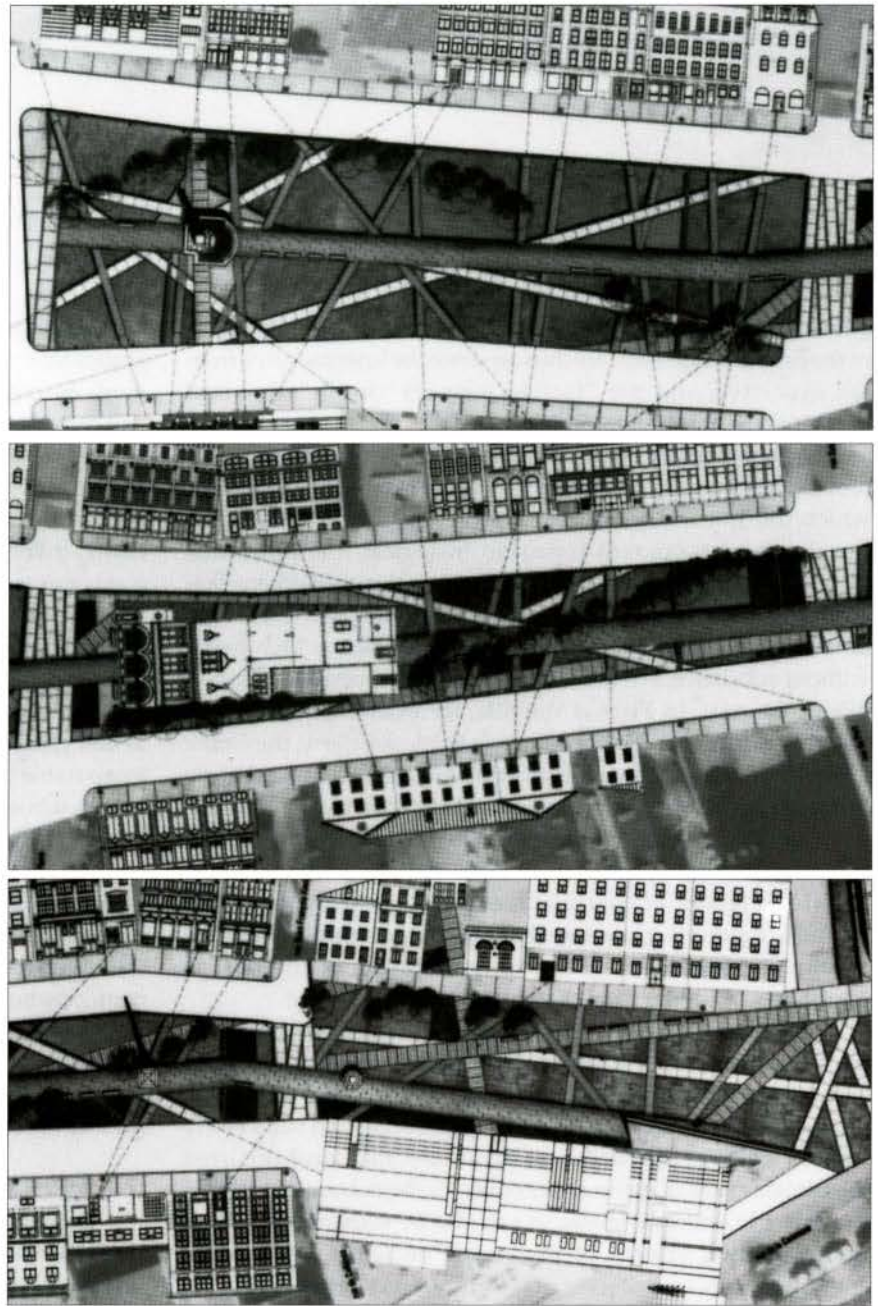
This process involves laying turf in the center of the square, between Place Royale and McGill Street, in a shape (irregular) that is reminiscent of the former winding stream and of a contrasting color (green) that defines the central area, enhancing the special alignment of the façades generated by the old city walls and the General Hospital. Giving priority to the square's center enables the various crossings and lateral walkways to be preserved and serves as common space for local residents. Furthermore, it acts as a deterrent to motorists, thus slowing traffic along Saint-Pierre, du Port, and de Callière Streets, safeguarding the site's tranquility.

Protection of the sub-soil

From a design perspective, this thin green layer adopts the contours of the underlying strata, thereby eloquently highlighting the existing palimpsest, while physically, the green covering protects the ground beneath. In other words, the grassy area serves as the foundation for the surface layout, with minimum disruption of the sub-soil, while serving as a protective tarpaulin of the historical vestiges buried below.

Spatial continuity

Obviously, our decision to establish the square's definition by working outward from the center, corresponds to the site's morphogenetic continuity, framed by Commissioners Street and Foundling Street as early as the 19th Century, as well as to the traditional principles of Montreal square design. A carpet of green that firmly and clearly defines the center offers balance for the surrounding façades.

This green space then becomes the focus for completing the project, the site's fundamental element to the whole picture offered to local residents, as well as a sightseeing attraction in Old Montreal. This carpet of green links the square's three sections, defines the façades of the north and south extremities, lending coherency to the square as it is today with the main structural elements of its irregular corridor shape.

The three sections

The green turf is the site's unifying element. Consolidating the unusual geometric shape accentuates Place d'Youville's visual perspectives, tracing a penetrating line from the Vieux-Port (Fig. 19). This penetrant had to be that of an intimate space, so the green underscores the rhythm of the three areas with the soil materials. Perpendicular streets formally divide this area into three sections: the de Callière, which is public and can accommodate crowds, the more intimate central section and Youville, more public and scaled to the dominating façades.

Still in an effort to unify the square, we divided the green space into three further distinctive areas, by varying the dimensions of the green segments, their "weft" and the paving width of the "comings and goings" (Fig. 17).

The "comings and goings": between the city and the site

The green carpet is interspersed with diagonal and perpendicular pathways, evoking the comings and goings in the square of people and goods since small bridges first connected the banks of the stream (Fig. 18). As illustrated, the walkway design stages intercepting traffic (Fig. 17), and the pathways suggest an urban park for leisurely strolling (Fig. 20, 22).

Three types of visual connections

These walkways also serve the spatial structuring function of creating a relationship among the surrounding walls, bringing a city view to a doorstep or linking a carriage entrance to a facing passageway; each axis becomes a visual structure linking the square to its boundaries. The "comings and goings", each depicting a "micro-historic" portrait, that actually built the landscape, are simultaneously alive, memorial and urban.

Three types of walkway, three types of material

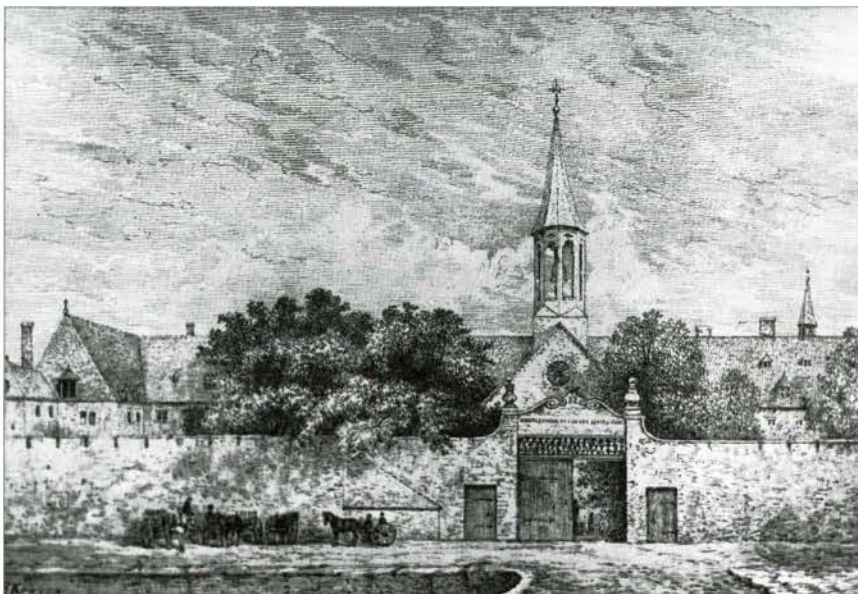By outlining the green segments and the "weft" with walkways, we not only create an

Fig. 19. The axis penetrating from the Vieux-Port into Place d'Youville.
(photo Luc Noppen)

hierarchical arrangement of the visual links according to the scale of each façade, we also call to mind the palimpsest's three layers: the fortifications, the General Hospital (an era of wooden private walkways), Place d'Youville's founding period, when walkways were upgraded around the markets and paved with stone, and lastly, the era of concrete sidewalks that integrated the square into the city. Together, the three types of sidewalks are testimony to the site's longevity and different eras. These "comings and goings", residential pathways, commercial walkways and municipal sidewalks, trace the phases of the square's relational history– private citizens, groups and eventually Montreal itself.

Things to see and follow:
the collection and the collector

The collection

Place d'Youville has a vast eclectic array of commemorative and historical objects (the *Centre d'histoire*, the sculpture *La Peur*, the boundary stone, the obelisk, the Archambault well and the *Musée de Pointe-à-Callière*, before which stands the sculpture, Entre Nous), which together form an incongruous collection of components lacking a formal common thread. In short, to the untrained eye, there is no evidence of the vast historic wealth contained in the square that is supposedly represented by its various monuments. While developing the site as a unified object would validate these structures, as a series of parts making a whole, we proposed integrating them into a portrait, a site-tapestry.

Despite the apparent profusion of objects, the collection is incomplete, as many noteworthy artefacts found in Place d'Youville during archaeological excavations were left in situ. In an effort to highlight this archaeological presence, (as though a protective "tarpaulin" was placed on the soil to preserve imprints) we proposed patterning the smaller triangles (too small for turf) in a crisscross design resembling scattered artefacts as in the conventional image of an archaeological site. Similarly, we suggested implementing "history hatches" to reflect the "faults" associated with archaeological findings (above-ground), using sound to recall specific facts/events (e.g., debates in Parliament and the din of foundlings), drawing on knowledge gained from the archaeological findings.

Thus, these memories we suggest commemorating are not really factual in nature, rather an imprint of a number of realities that contributed to the square's "evolution". Use of these "history hatches" is a patchwork quilt approach to the redevelopment project: assembling on the surface layer of the palimpsest today's archaeological findings as a characteristic and structural element. This access to samplings and knowledge provides further input to the project. We strove to incorporate them as structural memory, in a form that would evoke both the act of digging and the acquired knowledge of the history of Place d'Youville. This, of course, adds to the recounting of the site's colourful history.

The collector

Compiling commemorative objects may enhance the square's historic value and potential, but this process is only significant when such objects are displayed as part of a coherent unit. To link these objects formally and symbolically, we proposed a design based on the site's most determining structure: the William collector, represented on the surface in the shape of a slightly rounded "human spine".

This lends the collector its true significance, as being responsible to a large extent for fusing many past events that are commemorated. Now, the collector of the comings and goings of yesteryear, would bring together today's pedestrians. Its secondary function as a "collector" of artefacts, lends coherence to the entire tapestry, by cutting through it and uniting objects in its path, including both Pointe-à-Callière and the *Centre d'histoire*, drawing them into the picture, so to speak.

various constraints linked to tree planting, particularly the necessity to avoid disturbing archaeological remains, an east-west axis consistent with the square's alignment was chosen, which would delineate the green carpet, ensuring that it remain inviting to visitors. The visual result of this east-west perspective would be a series of alignments consolidating the square's unity; the transversal, less ordinate view (as seen from the buildings along the periphery of the square, or the bordering streets), would mainly consolidate the central space of the site.

The homogeneity of this vegetation language, which validates the trees as elements of the square's evocative arrangement, will be ensured by using a single species: the honey-locust (gleditsia triacanthos var. inermis), chosen for its limited root system, growth rate, extensive lifespan, resistance to urban conditions and easy maintenance. Moreover, this species is particularly ideal, as it grows 15 to 20 meters high with light and airy foliage, which provides the necessary transparency to preserve coherency of the whole layout (Fig. 21).

Illumination of the city, the square, its monuments

In addition to making the square safe at night, lighting is also an integral part of the site-as-monument. Three levels of lighting were proposed: the first belonging to the urban space, the second defining the site, and the third for highlighting architectural elements and morphology, which so far have been excluded from the synthesis ground-level layout (Fig. 23). These various levels of lighting establish a clear distinction between the container and the contents in the site's layout, dissociates the site to be seen (the sight) from urban illumination and that of the city that frames it. This dissociation is reinforced by the use of contrasting lighting, warm for the framework and cool for the object enclosed. The lighted façades, vertical elements of the tapestry, together with the arrangements at ground level, are both container and contents because they frame the square which is in turn framed by the urban environment, distinct from the monumental lighting.

City lighting

As Place d'Youville is an urban site and an integral part of present day Montreal, it was normal that its lighting be an extension of the city's system. To integrate the sidewalks and streets as part of the public space, lighting from console lanterns atop lampposts that are set well back on the sidewalks (minimal congestion) was proposed. This lighting, similar to that of the surrounding city, would be modified to accentuate the distinctive character of the square; the addition of a reflective accessory

Vegetation landscape: serenity and distinction

In an attempt to imbue Place d'Youville with a distinct character, we chose a "green space" (in addition to the carpet of green), where people would be drawn to enjoy a stroll through the square. Once again, however, the selection was in-character with Place d'Youville[12], i.e. using vegetation (function) to enhance both the leisurely aspect (form) and the potential meaning (significance).

Choice of planting site

In fact, we felt that the Place d'Youville landscape project should reflect its original design, which no doubt was spontaneous and irregular, like the banks of the Ruisseau Saint-Pierre. Conjuring up this memory called for organic material, without planting an entire forest, as the choice of trees and their placement should not hamper one's view of the entire site. The idea was to have them blend in with the environment (façades with their idiosyncrasies, heterogeneity, and relationship to each other from various perspectives), while assuming a distinctive role.

Adopting an arrangement that would hark back to the original vegetation, the winding stream and alignment of the walls, which together defined the site's geometry, a sparse planting of trees (spaced at 10-12 meters), was proposed. While respecting
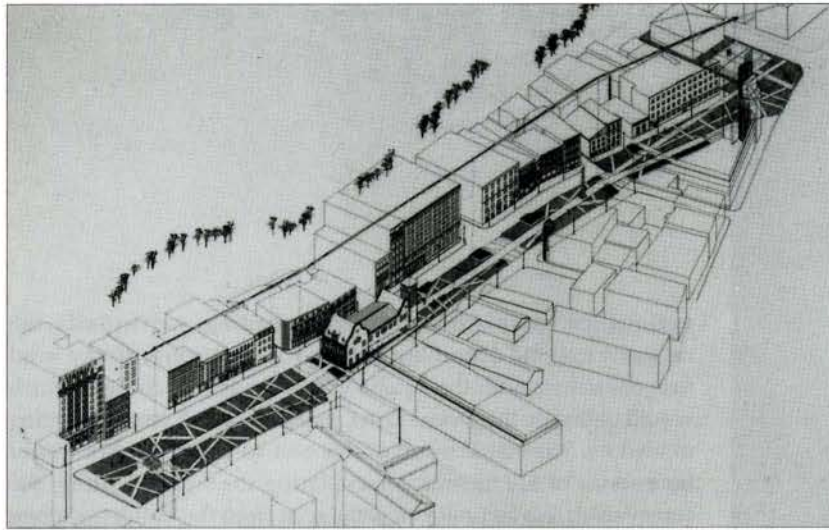
to the functional lighting would create ambiance illumination for the buildings that frame the site.

Lighting of the sight

The central sight of the redevelopment, the site-tapestry, is highlighted with ground-level illumination, underscoring its formal definition and anchoring its composition to the structural element, the collector. To draw attention to the "site to be seen", we proposed using bollards in quincuncial (staggered) arrangements that would emit soft aqua blue light, to link the spectacle of the site with that of the neighbouring Vieux-Port.

Monument lighting

In addition to the abovementioned lighting, monument lighting will be installed in accordance with the Plan Lumière du Vieux-Montréal, in an effort o highlight the built partitions that now frame the square and lend rhythm, through their special shapes, to the successive periods that built the palimpsest. More precisely, it is a matter of integrating the retrieved (real) memorial witnesses, namely those linked to the site's oldest inputs (the Youville stables, the General Hospital), the witnesses of the first Place d'Youville (the Fire Station, the Customs House, Canadian Express, the Grand Trunk Railway/Guy Godin) and those of its consolidation (224, Place d'Youville), as well as the embryos of the site that came later, while highlighting the site's historic and contemporary characteristics (Musée d'archéologie and d'histoire de Pointe-à-Callière).

A place of leisure, a tapestry: a dialogue between the city and its birthplace

The re-designed Place d'Youville can be spatially appreciated from four perspectives: the Vieux-Port, McGill Street, the tapestry from the adjoining buildings, or strolling its streets. In short, from any angle the square is original and tranquil offering historical significance and various layers of meaning conveyed by multiple languages. The site's history is accessible through the commemorative monuments (e.g., the boundary stone, obelisk) or interpretive centres (Fig. 22).

In addition to meeting certain functional requirements, such as pedestrian security, residential tranquility, access and development of cultural activities, the main objective of the Place d'Youville project was to enhance a section of Old Montreal. Historical significance is the essence of this area, and by evoking the structural memory we underscore its specific identity, uniqueness, and re-establish its link with the past and with Old Montreal. As the city's birthplace, Place d'Youville then becomes the reference that validates and explains determining factors of Montreal's identity.

In other words, Place d'Youville's rediscovered identity is the result of a harmonious blending of history with the contemporary, and the public with the private square. This renewal represents a discovery for all of Montreal — the valuable evidence of its collective memory. Place d'Youville is in fact, an interface between the city and its history.

Thus, our project was not didactic in nature, which would have involved emphasizing the interpretative rather than the evocative. Instead, our approach embraced the simple pleasure of being - Place d'Youville as a "leisure" or a "mise en bonheur", which draws upon the art of landscape to develop a contemporary design, the lighting and selected materials blending perfectly (fixtures, lighting, etc.) into Old Montreal. This backdrop for residential, recreational and tourist activities, both past and present, is the place to see and be seen, with a layout that marries current surroundings with memories of days gone-by.

The aim of this project was to heighten understanding and interest in Place d'Youville by adding a new, unification layer. This square is not a museum, but an anchor, the main element of its renaissance being a rear-view mirror with a very contemporary perspective. Indeed, Place d'Youville may be the ideal gateway to Montreal as the city approaches its 400th birthday.

Fig. 22. The eastern area of Place d'Youville as it is today.
(photo Denis Farley)

Notes

2   The development of this language is based on recent research into urban analysis and architecture. Luc Noppen and I proposed in an earlier paper, that the "memorial language" in question should "use history as one of the project materials", in the sense that interpretation of the past should not be restricted to the act of construction , but performed in conjunction with it, as input to the urban or architectural project. For more on this subject, see Luc Noppen, Lucie K. Morisset, "édifier une mémoire des lieux en recyclant l'histoire", Jacques Mathieu, ed., *La mémoire dans la culture* (Sainte-Foy: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1995), 203-234; also, Luc Noppen, Lucie K. Morisset, "L'histoire, matériau du projet urbain. L'exemple du réaménagement des boulevards du centre-ville de Québec", Jean-Michel Lacroix, ed., *Villes et politiques urbaines au Canada et aux États-Unis* (Paris: Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1998), 275-293.

3   This process refers to recycling meaning rather than shape, and calls for new terminology. In this sense, our approach borrows from Eisenman's fictional archaeology, which has been adapted to allow for intertwining memory and space in order to anchor the present structure in an historic topological continuum. Regarding our theoretical background, see especially Noppen et Morisset, "édifier...", is mentioned above.

Fig. 23. "By night".
(photo Denis Farley)

4   The word mitate is taken from Augustin Berque, who explained this reference-by-analogy process applied to Japanese landscapes. Cf. "Paysage, milieu, histoire", in *Cinq propositions pour une théorie du paysage* (Paris: Champ Vallon, 1994), 13-29.

5   To redevelop Montreal's Place Émilie-Gamelin, Philippe Poullaouec-Gonidec favoured an approach inspired primarily by urban landscape and only to a limited extent, by the site itself. A similar approach could be used as a the baseline for future re-landscaping initiatives in the same area. However, as our main objective was to achieve precisely the opposite, we drew essentially from our adopted conceptual vocabulary. Cf. Philippe Poullaouec-Gonidec, "La 'place Berri' à Montréal", *La place publique dans la ville contemporaine* (Montreal: Méridien, 1995), 101-108.

6   The process involved a classic morphological analysis of a site.

7   Beyond typomorphology, the challenge is to trace a link between the site's physical aspects and the continuum of past events.

8   Our use of English place names corresponds to those given in maps and plans of the day. The French translations now in use, came later.

9   The "spell" cast on the square was highlighted in an analysis of the "ravages" of modern urbanism observed in various cities, see France Vanlaethem in *La place publique dans la ville contemporaine* (Montreal: Méridien, 1995), 14.

10 For more on significance and sights, see, of course, Dean Mac-Cannell, *The Tourist. A New Theory of Leisure Class* (New York: Shocken Books, 1979).

11 For information related to recycling history, see Rossi, Gregotti, as well as the abundant literature on the subject, and more specifically our theoretical approach, Noppen and Morisset, "édifier une mémoire des lieux en recyclant l'histoire", Jacques Mathieu, ed., *La mémoire dans la culture* (Sainte-Foy: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1995), 203-234.

12 With respect to the potential significance of vegetation, see, among others: Luc Noppen, Lucie K. Morisset, "L'urbanisme végétal : de l'usage historique et postmoderne", Guy Mercier et Jacques Berthemont, ed., *La ville en quête de nature* (Sillery/Lyon (France): Septentrion/Centre Jacques-Cartier, 1998), 211-239. Of course, this topic is well document by landscape architects, particularly Bernard Lassus, in France. Additional references are provided in the above-mentioned article.