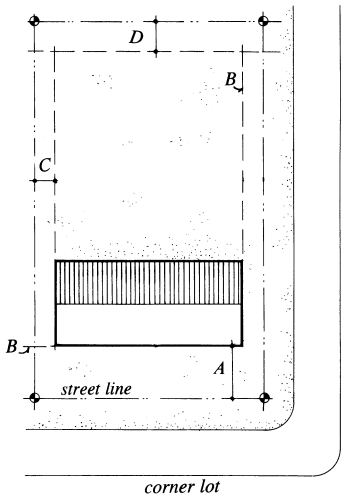
5. New Buildings, Major Modifications and Additions

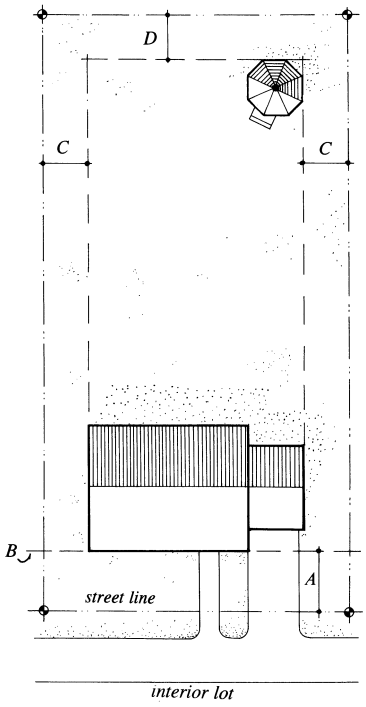
This guideline applies to new construction as well as to extensions to existing buildings. It applies as well to radical transformations of existing buildings in those major modification cases when such drastic change would meet the general intervention guidelines (ie. some category III buildings).

Note that the relevant guidelines dealing with specific building elements also apply to new construction, additions and major modifications.

5.1 Additions to category I*, I and II buildings

Additions affecting the character-defining features of buildings in category I*, I and II are generally unacceptable. In limited cases, additions to non-character-defining parts of the building, if any, could be considered if they are carefully designed and those additions would not detract from the original building.





No construction may take place in front of the building line (B) or within required side (C) and rear yards (D). The dimensions for these setbacks for any street or area are set out in the zoning and building line by-laws. The maximum area of the site covered by structures (buildings, decks, etc.) may not exceed the permissible site coverage.

5.2 Design harmony

Ensure that your project harmonizes with the character of the original building or streetscape.

5.2.1 Major Modifications and Additions

Ensure that an addition harmonizes closely with the design of the main building and, if visible from the street, with other buildings in the streetscape.

The greater the architectural and heritage value of the building, the more important it is that the design of the addition closely conforms to the existing building's defining characteristics.

5.2.2 New buildings

Ensure that a new building harmonizes with the buildings in the surrounding area, particularly on streetscapes where there is a clearly established character and considerable homogeneity. If almost all buildings (85% or more) on a streetscape or in a character area have one or more common defining characteristics, the new building must conform to this or these characteristics. If most (50% or more) of the buildings have one or more common characteristics, the new building should conform.

See the definition of defining characteristics in booklet 1.

5.2.3 General design principles

For any new building in the City, use a simple, coherent, orderly and integrated design approach with a consistent architectural vocabulary which uses the minimum number of materials, facade treatments and architectural details.

Whatever design approach is adopted, apply it coherently. Generally, all exterior walls should have the same treatment and use the same materials. However, in the case of buildings inserted between and mitoyen with buildings of similar or greater height, there might be cases where the treatment and materials of the rear facade might differ from those at the front.

Adding a vestibule or enclosing an alcove or other recessed area is not appropriate if it would change the character-defining features of a building.

In attached ensembles, ensure that the base, middle and upper portions of buildings relate to each other in terms of alignment of projections, size and location of openings, as well as use of materials.

All electrical and mechanical equipment including air conditioners, generators, geo-thermal units and wiring must be integrated within a new structure or addition. They should also be integrated in existing buildings when possible (see also section 3.4.2 and 6.7.3).

Given the overall harmony and refined order that distinguishes Westmount, the use of striking contrast is not appropriate.

5.2.4 Siting and Orientation

Set back a new building the same distance from the sidewalk as the predominant setback of other buildings on the block. Locate additions at the rear or on an inconspicuous side of the original building; do not destroy or cover the defining features of the original building.

5.2.5 Construction in front of the Building Line

All construction must normally take place behind the building line. However, Westmount's zoning by-law allows City Council to authorize construction in front of the building line in a few exceptional circumstances when there is no other practical way to deal with unusual site topography or public safety.

- No part of a building can be built in front of the building line other than bay windows on residential streets or other parts of a building in exceptional circumstances required to deal with particular site topography. The desire of the owner to increase the floor space of a building is not a valid justification for building in front of the building line.
- An underground garage could be considered in front of the building line provided there is enough depth (at least 700mm for grass and one metre for trees) between the top of the garage and the finished grade to provide for vegetation.
- A garage contained within an escarpment in front of a building and fronting on a street might be considered provided this solution would significantly reduce the impact on natural topography (compared to building the garage behind the building line) and provided that at least two-thirds of the escarpment is preserved.
- Steps could be considered in front of the building line provided that this is consistent with the streetscape.
- Sculptures, flagpoles, gazebos, mechanical equipment and other elements installed on foundations are considered to be structures and must respect the building and zoning by-laws including the provision that they be located behind the building line. Their location, size, materials and colour should not detract from the visual harmony of a streetscape.

5.2.6 Massing

Consideration must be given to how the overall volumes of the building are configured on the site. This arrangement of volumes is called massing. It is used to break down the perceived volumes of the building, to introduce human scale and to provide picturesque compositions or respond to unusual site conditions. An appropriate massing will not necessarily achieve the maximum volume allowed by the zoning constraints.

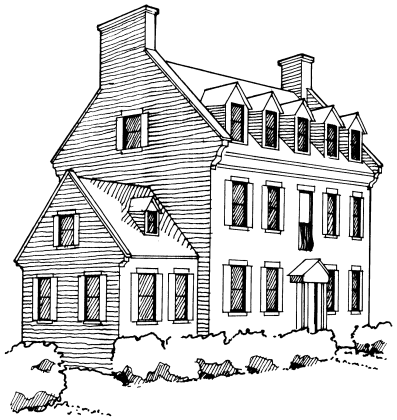
The massing of a new building (or addition) should be compatible with adjacent or neighbouring structures; it should also be consistent with the overall stylistic intentions, and respect the style of the building.

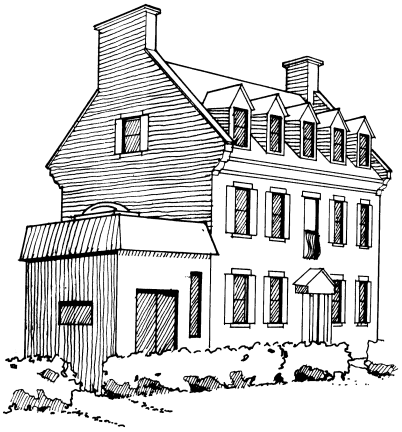
The addition of a new volume that is distinct from the main volume of a house might be treated as a visually lightweight addition such as a conservatory or sunroom.

5.2.7 Height

The height of a new building should normally be limited to the height of its neighbours and, if the height is consistent within a streetscape, should align with this height. If additional height is required and is permitted in the zoning by-law, the architectural treatment should minimize the perception of this additional height by setting back the upper floor sufficiently to ensure that it is not perceived as a an extension to the main building facades. In areas of single-family dwellings, no exterior wall fronting on or highly visible from the public way should exceed three-storeys in height; if the overall height is greater, the building should be stepped.

Although in general, the zoning in Westmount corresponds closely to the existing situation, in a few cases the zoning allows higher buildings; this is when the use of setbacks or other architectural devices to align the perceived heights is warranted.





Additions should harmonize with the architectural character of the original building (top).

Summary of various related provisions in the Zoning By-law

All additions and new buildings must comply with the requirements of the current zoning and building by-laws with respect to side and rear yards, building lines and site coverage. Note also that additions to non-conforming existing buildings must conform with current regulations.

Enclosed extensions to existing rooms must not reduce the requirements for lighting and ventilation of those rooms. Extensions in the rear yard of attached and semi-detached buildings may not extend more than 3.5 meters beyond the rear wall of the building.

A part of a building which does not conform to current zoning by-laws may be retained (vested rights) provided that at no time is more than 50% of the structure removed for any reason. If there is an existing non-conforming portion of a building over the building line or within the required side or rear yard, it cannot be extended upwards.

5.2.8 **Style**

New buildings or additions to existing buildings can be designed in the original style, using details similar to the original building (in the case of an addition) or to the other buildings of the streetscape or character area (in the case of new buildings or major modifications). Another approach is to design an addition or new building using contemporary ideas and detailing that nevertheless harmonizes with the original building or streetscape.

Small extensions to the main volume of an existing building are generally best treated in a manner similar to the main part of the building with the same kind of masonry, with similar roof shape, window openings, detailing, etc.

New buildings and larger additions to existing buildings that are volumetrically distinct from the main building may lend themselves to a different approach which is contemporary in its detailing but nevertheless harmonizes by using similar features (form, materials etc.). The addition of a new room that is distinct from the main volume of a house might be treated as a visually lightweight addition such as a conservatory or sunroom.

5.2.9 **Garages**

Garages should be located and designed to minimize their visibility from the street and their impact on existing buildings. Garage entries must not constitute a major element in the principal or street facades of new buildings. Detached garages should be clearly secondary to the main building.

In new buildings, garage doors should be accessed from lanes where they exist (see guideline 6.5.1). If there is no lane, they should be located on secondary facades not facing the street. However, when the majority of the buildings on a given street have a garage door fronting on a street, then a new building may be allowed a garage door on the street façade in order to better integrate into the streetscape. A proposal for a garage door on the main façade that allows for the conservation of a tree or a proposal that results in an increase of greenery and a reduction of the paved area might also be considered.

There should be no more than one single door of a minimal width visible from the street. If a garage cannot be physically accommodated behind the building line due to unusual topography, a proposal to build it in front of the building line might be considered provided it substantially reduces the negative impact on the natural topography.

With respect to existing buildings, if the zoning regulation allows a garage in a building that does not currently have one, it should be accessed from the lane (or rear driveway) or, if there is no lane, from a secondary facade. If it is impossible to locate the garage door on a secondary façade or on a lane, no more than one garage door visible from the street may be considered provided it is not detrimental to the architectural integrity of the building. New openings for garage doors are not permitted for Category I* and generally not acceptable in category I buildings. Doors should generally be panelled and a row of windows included if appropriate to the design of the building.

5.2.10 **New buildings on large properties**

In the case of new construction on a site that was originally part of a larger property and on which the original building and/or landscaping features still exist, any new building should be designed in the spirit of the original site and building design and to be complementary to the main building. Prepare an overall plan for the entire original property showing the new building(s) and landscaping in relation to the existing building(s) and landscaping.

It is particularly important in such cases that the new building be harmonious in style and scale with the existing buildings.

5.3 Impact on setting

Ensure that your proposed project respects the existing landform and landscaping on the site and in the area. Design new buildings or additions to minimize any negative impact of the original building and street as well as on the light, views and privacy of neighbouring properties.

5.3.1 Walls on or near the property line

It is preferable not to have a building located right on or near the property line unless it abuts an existing building. If it is absolutely necessary to extend beyond the existing building in order to meet the program requirements, minimize the length, height and visual impact of the wall on the adjacent property.

The zoning by-law only permits such construction when the building is attached to a building on the adjacent property and, for main buildings, only in certain districts. Reducing the visual impact of a part of the building that extends beyond the adjacent building can be done by stepping back part of the wall to reduce the perceived length or height. Surface treatments such as variations in the brick pattern (eg. recessed panels, banding in the brick pattern reflecting floor heights) can give scale to a blank wall.

5.3.2 Landform and landscaping

Buildings should be sited to allow preservation of mature trees and other significant vegetation. On sites that are not flat, the natural landform must be preserved as much as possible. The building should integrate into the natural slope. Vehicular access to the site (leading to drop-offs, driveways, parking areas and garages) must be located to minimize conflict with pedestrians and vehicular traffic (e.g. as far away from intersections as possible).

5.3.3 Impact of projections

Avoid large projections from a building or parts of a building which are not enclosed underneath. Projections such as balconies and oriel windows should have brackets or corbelling to provide “visual support”.

The view of the underside of a large deck or addition that is not enclosed underneath is visually unsightly, particularly from neighbouring properties or when seen from the street. The maximum depth of a projecting part of a building (including any deck more than 2m. off the ground) should be kept to a minimum.

5.3.4 Relation to the street

In flat areas, building entrances as well as lobbies of apartment and office buildings should generally be located at or above sidewalk level. There should not be any blank walls adjacent to sidewalks.

5.4 Exterior wall materials

The primary material for exterior walls in Westmount must be stone or brick that harmonizes with other surrounding buildings.

5.4.1 Principal material

The principal exterior material must be brick or stone, of standard or traditional dimensions. It must also be of a natural colour that is compatible with the colours of surrounding buildings. If a type of brick or stone is clearly predominant within a streetscape, the new building should use the same type of material. Avoid the use of large precast panels or polished stone. Metal and vinyl siding are not acceptable exterior wall materials.

In Westmount, most buildings use indigenous materials, namely Montreal Limestone and brick made from local clay. In most cases, these same materials should be used.

5.4.2 Secondary materials

Materials other than brick and stone may be used as secondary façade materials for small projections from the main volume of the building such as bay and oriel windows, or sunrooms. Materials other than glass, painted wood, true stucco and copper are generally unacceptable. Avoid bright colours. The use of acrylic stucco-covered polystyrene foam is not permitted.

Note that municipal by-laws may require masonry wall construction, even where there is a non-masonry exterior finish.

5.5 Construction process

The impact of the construction process on the surrounding neighbourhood should be minimized. Before undertaking construction, the owner must submit a construction management report detailing how various aspects of the construction site will be dealt with. Westmount may impose limits on both the amount and intensity of excavation methods. Since limits on rock excavation might have a significant impact on the time and cost of construction, excavation in rock should be reduced as much as possible.

5.6 Building at the limit of another borough

The impact of the construction at the limit of one or more Boroughs should be minimized. When any new building, addition or major modification project is contemplated which borders on another neighbouring Borough, the project should not negatively impact the neighbouring properties with respect to the following articles.

5.6.1 Sharing a residential rear yard

A project intended to exceed the maximum allowable height permitted in an adjacent Borough must not create a greater impact on a residential property other than that of a project set at one and a half times the allowable height in that Borough. Ambient light, direct daylight, visual perception and massing are some of the issues to be considered in particular.

In many instances, projects may incorporate sloped roofs and/or have the upper storeys set back with respect to the rear yard and possibly the side yard. In general, as the height is increased the impact related to volume, visibility and sunlight must be controlled and reduced.

5.6.2 Bordering the public way

A project located on a property that borders the public way and faces, or is adjacent to, another Borough must be sensitive to the by-law on Site Planning and Architectural Integration Programmes of both respective Boroughs. It is important to ensure the continuity of the architectural expression of the public way as it flows through the limit from one Borough to another.

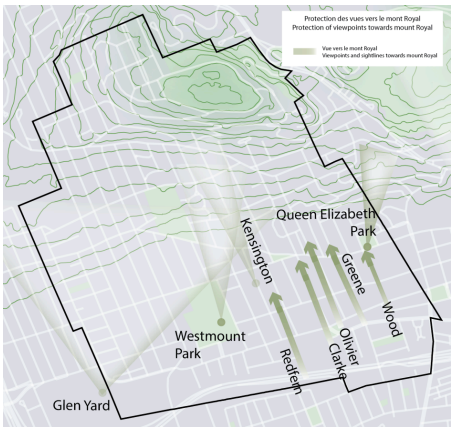
The project should contribute to and harmonize with the streetscape and character of the area. Building height, building set back and siting, landscaping of the front yard, parking and vehicular access to the site, signage and building materials are some of the principle issues to be considered.

5.7 Mount Royal Heritage Site

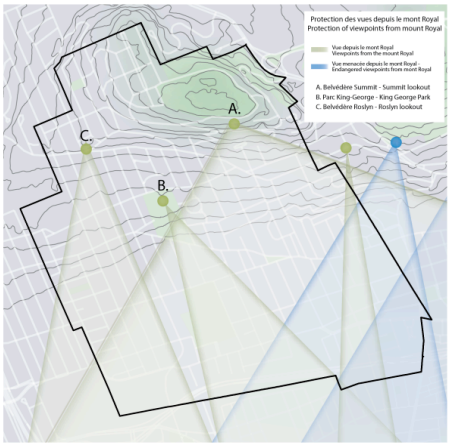
The only parts of Westmount comprised in this Site are Summit Woods and the lots fronting on Côte-des-Neiges. These areas are known as zones P1-02-01, R13-02-02 and R13-02-09 on the Zoning Map and referred to as Schedule C of Zoning By-law 1303. The impact of the construction in this site should be minimized. When any new building, addition or major modification project is contemplated, the project will then be subject to review by the Provincial Ministry concerned.

Guideline 5.7 and 5.7.1 apply only to properties located in the said site.

Protection of viewpoints towards Mount Royal



Protection of viewpoints from Mount Royal



5.7.1 **Preservation criteria and submittal requirements**

Submissions respecting projects in this site must contain impact studies on a variety of concerns and must incorporate preservation criteria into a well-integrated and sympathetic design solution. These would include, among others, a study on the archaeological potential of the site, on the hydrographic reservoir of the site, on the landscape and natural vegetation indigenous to the site.

Every project must give consideration to protecting views to and from the Westmount and Mount

Royal mountains, as indicated on the maps to the left. In addition, the submittal requirements as outlined in Booklet 0, Obtaining a Building Permit, must also be met.

The Mount Royal Heritage Site is to be preserved. Large landscaping proposals and major changes to the natural topography are strongly discouraged. It should be noted that although the rest of Westmount's built environment is not officially included in the Mount Royal Heritage Site, the Guidelines for Renovating and Building in Westmount ensure that changes to existing buildings or new construction will harmonize with existing buildings, the site and character area, and as well, will limit the negative impact on public areas and neighbouring properties. Furthermore, property owners should be aware that the uncovering of archaeological artefacts on a site might require further investigative studies to be carried out.

Every subdivision project must respect the natural and landscaped features and topography of the site and it must protect or create views toward or from Mount Royal. The subdivision must also respect the character of the neighbourhood and complement the building on the site to be subdivided.

5.8 Ecoterritories

Ecoterritories are designated zones with natural habitats of ecological interest slated for priority protection, existing protected areas (large parks, nature reserves, etc.) and some urban settings. One particular ecoterritory - *The summits and Slopes of Mount Royal* - is partly in Westmount territory. All of zone P1-02-01 and part of zone R1-01-01, which is north of Devon Street, are in Westmount and are governed by this guideline.

Ecoterritories

5.8.1 Cadastral operations in an ecoterritory

Any cadastral operation project involving a parcel of land located in whole or in part within 30 metres of the ecoterritory must be carried out so as to:

- maximize views and opportunities for contact with nature over the entire circumference of the mountain;
- foster the creation of green links between areas of natural vegetation on the three summits, both within and outside the existing parks;
- maximize the preservation of the woods and the natural environments, taking into consideration their ecological value;
- promote the creation of ecological and recreational corridors that link the woods and the natural environments.

Such a cadastral operation project must be accompanied by a land subdivision project for the entire site.

5.8.2 The construction or enlargement of a building and excavation and backfilling operation in an ecoterritory

Any building or expansion project and any excavation and backfilling operation on lot situated in whole or in part within 30 metres of the ecoterritory, must be carried out so as to:

- maximize views and opportunities for contact with nature over the entire circumference of the mountain;
- favour the creation of green links between areas of natural vegetation on the three summits, both within and outside the existing parks;
- maximize the preservation of the woods and the natural environments taking into account their ecological value;
- integrate the use of the lot or construction project with enhancement of the woods and the natural environment;
- preserve the natural site topography by limiting excavation and backfill work;
- favour the creation of ecological and recreational corridors that link the woods and the natural environments.

5.9 Area of archeological interest

Several parts of Westmount have significant archeological potential related to the successive occupation of the territory, from the time of the First Nations to the advent of urbanization and industrialization. The City of Westmount supports efforts to document its archeological heritage and identify sensitive areas that present strong potential for archeological discovery. Westmount's areas of archeological interest are identified in Map No. 5 of the Planning Programme.

5.9.1 Subdivision project and creation of a public right-of-way:

An application for a subdivision permit to create a public right-of-way in an area of archeological interest must be accompanied by a study of the archeological potential of the area under consideration for subdivision. This requirement would also enable the City of Westmount to document and add to the knowledge of the successive occupation and development of its territory.

The study must present a summary of existing historical and archeological data as well as an indication and characterization of the archeological potential together with a plan and strategy for action, if required.

5.10 Universal accessibility

5.10.1 Universal accessibility goals and criteria:

Every new residential multi-family project consisting of 8 dwellings or more, every new commercial-use project and every new community or institutional facility project must incorporate measures ensuring barrier-free access. Every such project must provide for reducing gaps in height between entrances to buildings and the street/sidewalk, thereby promoting the creation of safe and well-lit walkways between building entrances and the street. Parking spaces reserved for persons with reduced mobility should be located close to barrier-free pedestrian access to the projected building.

5.10.2 Access ramp for persons with reduced mobility

An access ramp for persons with reduced mobility, as defined in the zoning by-law, must have the objective of integrating itself in the most harmonious manner with the built environment and landscape of the site and its immediate surroundings, and this, according to the following criteria:

1. The design of the ramp, in its form, area, and dimensions, is designed primarily for access to the building for persons with reduced mobility. As a result, it remains auxiliary in relation to other access features (e.g. stairs, steps, etc.) unless its architectural composition is integrated with these features and contributes to the architectural quality of the building and the preservation of its components;
2. The siting and location of the ramp is consistent with the building and landscaping of the site in order to respect the natural features and topography, to minimize excavation and backfilling;
3. The design of the ramp limits the mineralized surfaces on the lot;
4. The location of the ramp allows the preservation of existing trees;
5. The architectural design of the ramp, including its massing and materials, is complementary to the building it serves;
6. The design of handrails and other complementary elements is detailed, well integrated throughout the structure, and provides adequate functional safety;
7. If a proposal for ramp lighting is integrated, it meets safety requirements while reducing adverse effects on the neighbourhood, avoiding glare and direct light rays.

5.11 Land adjacent to a railway

The railway runs along Westmount's densely populated neighborhoods. This cohabitation in an urban setting sometimes generates conflicts of use that could compromise the quality of life for residents living in the immediate vicinity. Railway noise is basically generated by locomotive engines, the friction of wheels on rails and the sounding of train whistles. Passing trains also cause ground-borne vibrations.

Therefore, land use adjacent to a railway must promote the security of the required facilities or construction, and new development projects must incorporate measures to reduce the nuisances generated by railway operations.