THE HERITAGE VALUE STATEMENT
HOLY TRINITY SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CIVIC ADDRESS</th>
<th>HERITAGE DESIGNATION</th>
<th>RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>349 Melville Avenue, Westmount</td>
<td>Municipal - Category 1: Important (SPAIP) Provincial - None Federal - None</td>
<td>Serbian Orthodox</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OVERVIEW OF THE VALUE STATEMENT

Historical Value
The historical heritage value resides in the church’s early construction in Westmount, beside the park; its continued, although interrupted, association with the Presbyterian Church (as the Melville Presbyterian Church) from its construction in 1900 to 1976, when it underwent a denominational change and became the Holy Trinity Serbian Orthodox Church; its continual use of the site for religious and community purposes. Melville Avenue was renamed in honour of the first church congregation.

Contextual Value
The contextual heritage value resides in the siting of the church and its companion manse, beside Westmount Park; The varied profile and soaring bell tower of the church, contribute to a picturesque composition that can be seen from different vantage points across the playing fields of the park. While its overall massing makes it an imposing landmark in the area, the manse fits easily into the surrounding residential fabric. A lushly planted churchyard surrounds the complex and complements the greenery of the park.

Architectural and Aesthetic Value
The architectural heritage value resides in its associations with Edward and William S. Maxwell; its fine aesthetic design in a neo-Gothic style, craftsmanship and materials. This is true for both the exterior and interior of the complex. The excellence of the functional design can be seen in the shortened nave and transepts which read as a single space, reinforcing the sense of participation favoured by Presbyterians. The modifications to accommodate the Orthodox rituals have been incorporated in a respectful manner, with minimal impact on the original architecture. The manse is an important part of the architectural composition and the complex has a high degree of authenticity and integrity.

Spiritual and Community Value
The spiritual and community heritage value are a result of the influence of two denominations. From the period of the Presbyterian use, they reside in the soaring volume of the sanctuary and the plan, which brings the worshippers into a close relationship to each other and to the service; the simplicity and non-figurative ornamentation; the stained glass windows. From the period of the Serbian Orthodox use, they reside in the modifications to the chancel for Orthodox rituals and the installation of icons. The Presbyterian emphasis on education was accommodated in the basement class and meeting rooms and those located on the balcony. These spaces now are used for Serbian cultural and outreach programs.
STING

The Holy Trinity Serbian Orthodox Church is located on Melville Avenue between de Maisonneuve Boulevard and Melbourne Avenue, in a residential zone of single- and two-family houses, triplexes and low-rise apartment buildings. It faces the eastern edge of Westmount Park, and this location assures that the church and its manse can be viewed from a distance across the park, with the bell tower rising above the tree line.

DESCRIPTION

Holy Trinity was built from 1900 to 1901, for a Montreal Presbyterian congregation, which had been established in Westmount in 1886. First named the Melville Presbyterian Church, the church became the Holy Trinity in 1976 when the Serbian Orthodox community bought it. The church is designed in the Gothic Revival style, made of brown clay brick with Miramichi sandstone enrichments and a limestone foundation. It is an early work by Edward Maxwell, a Westmount-born architect, who became with his brother William Sutherland Maxwell, the most celebrated Canadian architects of the first decades of the 20th century. In 1912, John Rawson Gardiner designed a complementary manse, using a similar material palette and emphasizing the Arts and Crafts influences found in the Maxwell church. Since 1976, the Serbian Orthodox traditions have added another layer of history and religious tradition to the interior design of the sanctuary.

FAITH AND COMMUNITY LIFE

The Holy Trinity is the only Serbian Orthodox church in Quebec (aside from a missionary parish in Sherbrooke), and draws its congregants from outside the population of Westmount. The Orthodox Church is one of the three main Christian groups. (The others are the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches.) The Orthodox community is further divided into the Oriental and Eastern Orthodox Churches. The Serbian Orthodox Church is a member of the latter group, and as is typical, it derives its name from the geographical and cultural traditions of its believers. The Serbian Orthodox Church has, since 1219, been autonomously governed by the Patriarch of Belgrade. The Orthodox Churches share a common approach to Christian theology, tradition, and worship. Core beliefs revolve around the revelation of God through Jesus Christ, his incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection, and the guiding presence of the Holy Spirit in all the daily workings and rituals of the Church. There is an emphasis on individual worship and prayers based on the practices and liturgy of the early Christian Church. There are seven key sacraments, including the celebration of the Eucharist and infant baptism. As part of its mission, the church provides religious services, ceremonies, and charitable and community activities.
GOVERNANCE

L’organigramme de l’église se compose d’un conseil d’administration de 12 personnes qui se rencontrent tous les mois. Toutes les églises canadiennes appartiennent au diocèse de l’Ontario, dirigé par l’évêque canadien. Le chef de l’Église est le patriarche. L’église locale est autofinancée et peut prendre des décisions sur l’entretien du bâtiment.

RELEVANT DATES

1976
Renovations to the choir to accommodate Orthodox traditions; installation of the iconostasis (Jose Majzner, artist)

2004
Installation of a new iconostasis

Other modifications

1979-1986
Modifications to the landscaping elements and addition of a basement access

Circa 1989-1992
Enlargement and renovation of the community room in the basement, with associated excavation work; Milena Mejevic, architect

1996
Renovations to the interior decor

2000-2001
Restoration of the exterior masonry and slate roofs

2005-2006
Replacement of the windows in the manse

2009-2010
Restoration of the stained glass
HISTORICAL VALUE (1/2)

DESCRIPTION

A Westmount Congregation
During the last quarter of the 19th century, as the tramway lines extended westward from the city of Montreal and development followed, the pattern of residential building lots replaced that of farmland. The increase in population mirrored the growth of the municipal government, from village to town. Municipal improvements, such as the creation of Westmount Park in 1898, began to take shape. The religious institutions were relocated to Westmount to serve their burgeoning communities. Many of the first churches were mission chapels, quickly evolving into full congregations.

According to a history of the Melville Presbyterian Church, it grew out of a Sunday School, established in 1884 by the Erskine Presbyterian Church in Montreal. This school was a mission outpost in the village of Cote St. Antoine (since 1895: Town of Westmount; 1908: City of Westmount). The building was soon replaced by a wooden, Gothic Revival church, built on the corner of Stanton Street and Cote St. Antoine, and known as the Cote St. Antoine Presbyterian Church. It opened its doors to worshippers in 1886. In 1900, a schism developed in the congregation, over the issue of temperance. The “wets” stayed in the existing church and renamed it St. Andrew’s. Those who left -the “drys”- purchased a lot on Elgin Avenue, fronting on the new Westmount Park. They chose to name the new congregation after Andrew Melville (1545-c.1622), a Scot considered to be a father of the Presbyterian church. Westmount Council changed the name of the street from Elgin to Melville to honour the church membership, sometime between 1907 and 1912.

The church opened in 1901 and continued until 1925. The following is an extract from the Melville Presbyterian Church website: “...After the founding of the United Church in 1925, Melville Presbyterian Church amalgamated with Westmount Methodist to form Westmount Park-Melville United Church in 1925. The combined congregation worshipped in the Melville Church building for two years, until it was sold [back] to former members who remained with the Presbyterian Church. Victoria Hall served as a temporary site while the new Westmount Park-Melville Church, which is now known as the Westmount Park United Church, was under construction...”

A Complex Serving Two Faith Groups
The church housed an active Presbyterian congregation until it was sold to the Serbian Orthodox community in 1976 and renamed ‘Holy Trinity’. It has belonged to this congregation for the last four decades.

The Serbian Orthodox Church is an ecclesiastically independent member of the Eastern Orthodox Church, located mainly in Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina. About 70,000 believers live in the United States and Canada. Although Serbs first settled in Montreal before the First World War, it was not until 1961, that the first church for the community opened its doors, in a renovated building on De Bullion Street, renamed the Serbian Temple of Holy Trinity. Almost immediately, due to a wave of Serb immigration in 1964, the temple was too small. A search for a new house of worship was resolved with the purchase of the Melville Presbyterian property. The project was led by Dr. Dragutin Drago Papich. A bronze bust of Papich is prominently displayed beside the church’s main entry.
HISTORICAL VALUE (2/2)

CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS

- The early establishment of the Melville Presbyterian Congregation and its continued presence for 75 years.
- The impact of the church on the street, which caused its renaming.
- The continued presence of the Serbian Orthodox congregation for over 40 years, and the unique position of the church as the only one in Quebec, making it a spiritual beacon for the faithful in this province.
- The continual use of the property for religious and community worship.
- The continued presence of the two constructions on the property, both of which retain a high degree of integrity: the church (1900-1901) and the manse (1912-1913).
- The bronze statue of Dr. Papich.
CONTEXTUAL VALUE

DESCRIPTION

The Relationship of the Site to its Immediate Surroundings
Although Holy Trinity is an institutional building, with a large footprint relative to the houses that surround it, its massing and material palette allow it to meld with its immediate environment. The manse contributes both to the overall size of the complex and also relates to the surrounding residential fabric.

A Landmark in the Area
Its siting on the edge of Westmount Park permits Holy Trinity to be seen from a distance within the park. Like its neighbour, Westmount Park Church, it becomes a picturesque element at the periphery of the green, and contributes to the appreciation of the park. The bell tower rises above the tree canopy.

A Green Churchyard
The churchyard slopes upwards from Melville Avenue, presenting a raised podium on which the church sits. While this sets the church apart from the neighbouring houses, the change in elevation is not disruptive to the overall streetscape. The surrounding landscape is largely green, with lawn, shrubbery and a few mature trees.

CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS

- Its sympathetic scale in the neighbourhood. The church does not overwhelm and the manse fits with the surrounding houses.
- Its elevated location facing Westmount Park, which allows the church to be seen from a distance and to act as a landmark in the area.
- Its large green space with shrubbery and plantings.
ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC VALUE (1/3)

DESCRIPTION

A Church by a Celebrated Canadian Architect
Edward Maxwell (1867-1923) is one of Westmount’s most celebrated sons. In partnership with his brother, William Sutherland, he established the foremost architectural practice in Canada through the first decades of the 20th century. He trained first in the office of A.F. Dunlop and then, by 1886, he moved to Boston to work in the offices of Shepley Rutan and Coolidge, the successor firm to Henry Hobson Richardson. When the firm won the competition for the Montreal Board of Trade Building in 1892, Maxwell moved home, supervised the project and opened his own office. In 1901, he was joined by his brother, trained at the Ecole des beaux-arts in Paris. This unusual combination of training and talents, married to access to the ‘captains’ of Canadian industry, was unassailable. The Maxwell Brothers designed many residences, in the Square Mile, Westmount and Senneville. They were also responsible for some of the most iconic buildings in Canada, including the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, the Saskatchewan Legislative Building and the significant additions to Windsor Station Montreal and the Chateau Frontenac in Quebec City.

Edward Maxwell designed the Melville Presbyterian Church early in his career. It was one of the few ecclesiastical buildings that he did (See: The Unitarian Church, Montreal) and is therefore more valuable because of its rarity. Professor John Bland noted (bold added): “There were also churches designed on simple principles of order, proportion, and truthful expression. The Knox Church in Montreal...was a forthright solution unhindered by stylistic pretensions and could well have been inspired by something he had seen, for Edward Maxwell was more architect-performer than architect-inventor. His skill lay in clever and appropriate adaptations. Knox Church has been demolished, but Melville Presbyterian Church in Westmount remains. Although not a large building, it has a conspicuous, well-proportioned tower with a good silhouette and pointed openings. It is quite uncontrived and appears to be just right in the sensible way it was built by good bricklayers and carpenters...”

Knox Presbyterian Church was built in 1893. It had the misfortune to be built on the north-west corner of Dorchester and Mansfield Streets, and within two decades, it was demolished for the expansion of the Sun Life Building. Professor Bland does not mention that the Knox was influenced by Maxwell’s mentor, H.H. Richardson. However, by 1900, Maxwell was exploring other design sources. The Melville Presbyterian was shaped by reference to English medieval country churches, modified by an Arts and Crafts sensibility which Maxwell consistently demonstrated throughout his career.

The design may have been a response to the client budget, but the decisions to lower the roof of the nave, and use dormer windows to light the interior, the choice of warm, brown brick instead of stone, and the simple, well-proportioned forms and scale fit not only the neighbourhood, but also the sobriety of a Presbyterian congregation.

The architectural interest of the front facade derives from its formal simplicity and its lack of embellishment. Maxwell used Gothic Revival elements throughout the exterior; their use was modest and appropriate. The southern
ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC VALUE (2/3)

entrance porch below an ogee arch, is centered in the base of the bell tower. The crenellated tower is emphasized by buttresses at the corners, with stone caps. Each visible side of the tower is marked by an oculus window, containing a trefoil and a large opening, incorporating slate louvers.

The verticality of the tower is balanced by the low, horizontal volumes that bracket it and contain side entrances. (While the design references English country churches, the work of contemporary New England architects, such as Cram & Goodhue or Henry Vaughan may also have provided Maxwell with design inspiration.)

All stone trim is in ochre Miramichi sandstone. The windows are in wood, with beautifully proportioned wood mullions. Many have stained or coloured glass. The exterior doors and their wood frames are intact. The roofs were originally all in slate. However, in 2001, the front roofs were changed to batten sheet metal.

Maxwell used two architectural devices that are worthy of mention. In order to respond to the Presbyterian traditions of participatory worship, he designed a Latin cross plan which is foreshortened in both its nave and transepts. This results in a single open space in the sanctuary, rather than one which is subdivided. He further emphasized the intimacy of the space by lowering the walls of the nave, introducing windows which interrupt the roof line with a series of gables. This latter design decision emphasizes Maxwell’s affinity for the Arts and Crafts movement, which echoes in the simplicity of the sanctuary interior. Here, the interest of the architecture derives from the explicit expression of the wooden structural elements, the stained glass and the hand-crafted fittings and original furniture.

The Holy Trinity has added liturgical furniture and fittings which reflect the Orthodox traditions. Of particular note is the elaborate wooden iconostasis, which dates from 2004 and replaces an earlier structure. In Eastern Orthodox churches, the iconostasis is a screened wall containing religious icons and paintings, separating the nave from the sanctuary, and providing private space for certain Orthodox rituals performed and witnessed only by the priests. The project for the 2004 iconostasis was drawn by the architect Ljupko Tomic from Montreal, and the ash wood iconostasis was made by the sculptor Rade Pantic from the Republic of Srpska. It integrates the icons that were on the first iconostasis, created by the sculptor and painter, Jose Majzer. The iconostasis is distinguished by the quality of the three-dimensional carvings and the deep, rich tones of the over twenty icons.

(The other liturgical furniture and fittings (throne, lectern, votive candle stands and baptismal font) reflect the traditions and rites of the Orthodox Church. However, they do not share the heritage potential of the screen.)

A Complementary Manse by a Noted Montreal Architect
John Rawson Gardiner (1866-1956) was the architect for the Melville Presbyterian manse. Although he did not achieve the fame and broad practice of his confrère, Edward Maxwell, he was active for nearly sixty years in the Montreal region. His reputation is closely associated with the number of Anglican churches which he designed on the island, including St. Stephen’s church in Westmount, at the intersection of Dorchester Boulevard and Atwater Avenue.
ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC VALUE (3/3)

Born in England, he trained in the London offices of Taylor and Gordon. This firm led by Andrew T. Taylor, and headquartered in Montreal, was one of the most important Montreal offices in the last two decades of the 19th century. Within four years of his relocation to Montreal, Gardiner opened his own practice, specializing in both residential and ecclesiastical architecture. He was an active member (and president) of the Province of Quebec Association of Architects.

Gardner exploited the architectural forms of the Arts and Crafts in his design for the three storey manse. In his choice of material palette and his sense of detailing and scale, he produced a sympathetic addition to Maxwell’s work, and to the surrounding residential neighbourhood. The exterior is well-preserved, with the unfortunate exception of the windows, which have been changed to aluminium.

Architectural Authenticity
The church building demonstrates a high degree of architectural authenticity and integrity on both its exterior and interior.

CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS

Exterior features
- The volume, including the Latin cross plan with a flat apse, the two transepts, the side-aisles, the central and side porches, and the pitched roof.
- The materials, including the slate roofs with projecting rafters, structural brick walls, ashlar Miramichi stone trim, the dormer windows, the wood windows, doors and frames.
- All façades, including the central bell tower and its ornamental components (buttresses, oculus windows with trefoil tracery, louvered openings, cornice, crenellations).

Interior features
- The triple nave, with a central nave and side-aisles.
- The visible rafters (side walls and transepts).
- The plaster walls, the parged polygonal vault with its visible wood frame (trusses, purlins, brackets and arches), except the ceiling stucco.
- The wood doors, windows and trim, balcony railings.
- The iconostasis.
- The throne made from the original pews.
- The stained glass windows.
- Fraser memorial window - Raising of Jairus’ daughter - designed by C. W. Kelsey in 1936.
SPIRITUAL AND COMMUNITY VALUE (1/2)

DESCRIPTION

Iconostasis
Iconostasis (εἰκονοστάσιον), which in Greek translation means a place for icons, and has, since the 3rd century C.E., been an integral part of every Orthodox church. The basic elements of the iconostasis are imperial doors, deacon doors and icons. The number of icons on the iconostasis depends on its size. Icons are placed according to prescribed canon law and represent important biblical events. (This didactic purpose shares a communality with Roman Catholic and Protestant stained glass windows.) The first iconostases were built of stone and separated the altar, accessible only to the priests, from the worshippers. Nowadays, the iconostases are made of stone, marble or wood, like that of Holy Trinity. The installation of the iconostasis was key to the denominational transformation of the church in 1976. Initially, the iconostasis from the De Bullion Street church was installed. However, in 2004, a new one was carved in Serbia and reassembled in Westmount. It incorporates the original icons, executed by the Jewish-Canadian artist, Jose Majzner. The De Bullion screen was relocated to St. Simeon Serbian Orthodox Church in Sherbrooke.

A Dynamic Place with Religious Celebrations, Charitable Works and Community Activities
Religious celebrations and activities: Mass in the Serbian language, baptisms, marriages, funerals, Catechism instructions, religious choirs with concerts, Christmas and Easter (procession of icon around the church or the block on Saturday midnight).

Charitable works: activities for the poor and sick.

Community activities: Serbian history classes, folk dancing, women’s association, chess club, library, language classes, etc.
SPIRITUAL AND COMMUNITY VALUE (2/2)

CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS

Symbolic layouts or components

- The botanical and biblical motifs of the stained glass windows.
- The numerous carvings on the iconostasis, symbols of fertility and prosperity.
- The icons.
- The “Serbian Totem” painting, which represents in vertical form a history of the Serbian people, from medieval to present day.

Assembly spaces for religious celebrations, community gathering and activities such as a school, a parish hall, community spaces and a Serbian language-based library.
PROCESS
This Value Statement is based on a visit made in the autumn of 2016, analysis and a group discussion held on July 5th, 2018.

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