Infiltrating Montréal through the apartment-hotel:
the anticipated mystery and strange familiarity of inhabiting the visited
city.

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Abstract

A city's built fabric is inscribed with a silent framework that at times, is imperceptible to those who permanently reside within its bounds, even though it is they, the permanent residents, who give rise to this framework, by inhabiting the city over time. In contrast, the visitor to a city is keenly aware of a city's latent framework. The morphology of the 'visited city' is of heightened clarity. The apartment-hotel, in turn, is a privileged urban figure as it is a hinge point between the visitor and the city. Through an architecture that celebrates the sequencing and ritual of everyday life, the apartment-hotel speaks of the tension between the transient nature of accommodation architecture and the permanence of urban domestic life. Its programmatic elements reveal to visitors the unknown domestic spaces of the visited city for the duration of their stay. This thesis examines the apartment-hotel as a didactic architectural device in the specific context of Montréal, a city possessing a strong urban logic that infiltrates architectural form and experience.

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Introduction:

The Anticipated Mystery and Strange Familiarity of the Visited City

Every city is, at certain moments and for certain urban dwellers, a 'visited city.' The silent framework which composes a city's fabric- at times imperceptible to those who permanently reside within its bounds- is re-animated by the urban traveler. Conversely, architecture, more than any other urban construct, provides the visitor with the essential part of their journey: a temporal sense of true belonging in the visited city.

In an era of voluntary diasporas, one is often confronted with the strangeness of an unfamiliar city. At the very least, visitors expect that each city will possess a system of landmarks that will allow them to establish their bearings in an unfamiliar urban context. At first, architecture enables the discovery of urban space simply by functioning as reference points in space. Architecture progressively reveals the city to the visitor, one reference point at a time. In this way, the true spirit of travel begins to take hold: the visitor, incited by curiosity and wonder, ventures further into the unknown. The visitor therefore begins to understand the visited city in terms of a tension between what they have already learned about the city and their constant new discoveries, that is, in terms of the tension between the unknown and the familiar. The visited city is always both expected and strange.

For this reason, the visited city is defined by the degree of transformation its urban morphology undergoes due to the presence of visitors within. Architectural space therefore structures the visitor's engagement with, and inflects the experiential aspects of, the visit. This thesis aims to examine the role of urban architecture, both public and private, in creating urban spaces that

mediate the experience of the visited city, and looks more specifically at the apartment-hotel -a figure belonging to both the public and private realms.

This thesis postulates that Montréal is encoded with a decipherable vernacular architecture, and advances that this vernacular architecture embodies a very specific urban code of social rules, historical understandings, and fundamental urban precedents, a kind of 'codex' of the urban fabric that is responsible for Montréal's complexity and richness (the metaphor of 'codex' will be discussed at a later point). The investigation leading to a design of an apartment-hotel in Montréal serves here as a lens to focus the question of how to make an architecture that participates in revealing a city.

This thesis is composed of two parts. Part one includes a discussion of considerations that will inform the design of the apartment-hotel proposal. Part two attempts to compile the relevant research into a design strategy. Chapter one, "The visited city," establishes the phenomenon of the visited city as an urban space that provides visitors with a temporary sense of belonging. The sociology of Georg Simmel serves here to explain the position of the visitor as objective witness to a visited urban space. The ritual of everyday life, transposed by the act of travel, will be explored as it unfolds within the visited city. Further, the role of everyday life as it pertains to the discovery of visited urban space, will be studied. This chapter concludes with a discussion of how the visitor inhabits the visited city, particularly, the urban space of Montréal.

The discussion of the visitor's experience of the visited city will be further substantiated in chapter two, "the apartment-hotel as an anchor-point for the visitor's discovery of urban space," through an examination of the specific urban figure of the apartment-hotel, a building that by nature provides a private, domestic space for public use, and one that pertains to both a city's

stable residential fabric and to its architecture of spectacle. This chapter explores the apartment-hotel type as an intersection of urban and spectacle architecture in Montréal's urban fabric. The role of the hotel in the visited city will be discussed in general terms, as well as accommodation architecture that is found on Boulevard Saint Laurent, the site of the design proposal.

From this foundation, the following chapters discuss how vernacular architecture defines the spaces of the city to the extent that its presence is deeply felt at the urban scale. Chapter three, "Boulevard Saint Laurent," discusses the characteristics of the Boulevard as it has developed and transformed and the important role it plays in Montréal. This chapter discusses the vernacular tradition of the Boulevard, as well as bringing to light the current conditions that will influence the design of the apartment-hotel proposal and the future of the Boulevard at large. Chapter four, "Behind the Boulevard," discusses social rituals and the inhabitation of semi-public spaces that are less apparent to the visitor. Devices such as the porte-cochère, the alleyway, the external staircase and the urban voids and yards, are examined, with reference to the important work of Jean-Claude Marsan on the topic of Montréal's vernacular architecture. This chapter further inquires into the capacity of new architecture to be informed by and further reveal the ancient 'text' of the urban fabric. Part one concludes with an overview of the various concepts that will inform the design of the apartment-hotel proposal.

The second part of this thesis is devoted to the presentation and discussion of a design project for an apartment-hotel located on the Boulevard Saint Laurent. In line with the theme of exploring and revealing the city, this apartment-hotel is designed specifically for visiting artists in Montréal. The choice of site is not incidental, and emerges from a study of Montréal's accommodation history and more specifically of the Boulevard Saint Laurent, an important street that has

played a formative role in shaping Montréal, and one that is currently undergoing a transformation of character due to the process of gentrification.

The final chapter, dealing with the design for an apartment-hotel on Boulevard St Laurent, yields interesting questions about accommodation architecture as a privileged architectural program suited to the exploration of urban fabrics in general. The idea of an 'urban codex' emerges as a useful metaphor in the design of thoughtful architectural interventions in urban contexts.

Part I:

Chapter One: The Visited City

1.1: Crossing the Threshold of Others

Perhaps due to the limited number of ties a visitor has to the visited city, architecture factors strongly into the experience a visitor has of their new urban environment. While displaced from his native country during a year spent studying abroad, Spanish poet Federico Garcia Lorca wrote of the visitor's experience of the city, stating that, "the two elements the traveler first captures in the big city are extra human architecture and furious rhythm. Geometry and anguish."¹ The visitor therefore forms a special tie to the urban architecture: nothing comes between the visitor and the urban fabric itself. In turn, the visited city is a city defined by the transformations of its urban morphology due to the presence of visitors within. It could be said that architectural space structures the visitor's engagement with and strongly inflects the experiential aspects of the visit. It is arguable that architecture, more so than any other urban construct, provides the visitor with the essential part of their journey: a temporal sense of true belonging in the visited city.

¹ Lorca, Federico Garcia. Poet in New York. translated by Greg Simon and

Steven F. White, edited and with an introduction and notes by Christopher Maurer. London, Viking. 1988.185.

1.2: An Interpretation of the Visitor through the Sociology of Georg Simmel

The visitor is the newest demographic addition to the post-modern city. At any given time, part of the city's population is made up of people who do not permanently reside within the city's bounds and who stay in the city for a limited period of time. Although they anticipate that they will find an urban infrastructure that will enable them to 'find their way,' the city is presently unknown to them. Being 'out of the know,' they are disconnected from the urban environment. German sociologist Georg Simmel provides insight into the visitor's position, analogous to that of his definition of the 'stranger,' within their new urban environment:

Objectivity may also be defined as freedom: the objective individual is bound by no commitments which could prejudice his perception, understanding and evaluation. The stranger is close to us, insofar as we feel between him and ourselves common features of a national, social, occupational or generally human nature. He is far from us, insofar as these common features extend beyond him or us, and connect us only because they connect a great many people, but between nearness and distance, there arises a specific tension when the consciousness that only the quite general is common, stresses that which is not common.²

For visitors to acquire knowledge of an urban space- the means by which to navigate and conduct their activities within the visited environment- they must construct an idea of the city from empirical observations of the lived urban reality. The lived urban reality involves partaking in social interactions and the life of the street. The visitor thus acquires a disposition similar to that of the *flaneur*. The basic precept of a *flaneur* is that the act of wandering in a city is a way of discovering important truths. The *flaneur* implies (in a related way) that a city's architecture influences the life of

²Simmel, Georg. "Metropolis and mental life". On Individuality and social forms. Donald Levine (Editor), Edward Shills (Translator). Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1971. 407.

the people who live in it in a much greater way than commonly thought. The experience of the architecture of the city becomes a way of understanding life as a whole:

For the perfect flaneur, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the magnitude, amid the ebb and flow. To be away from home, yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the centre of the world, yet to remain hidden from the world- such are few of the slightest pleasures of those independent, passionate, impartial nature...³

The experience of the city is therefore not a passive act, nor the self-referential unfolding of architecture before one's eyes. In this way, the visitor must take advantage of their liminal position of 'outsider,' and in doing so overcome the implications of their sense of 'un-belonging:'

Objectivity is by no means non-participation (which is altogether outside both subjective and objective interaction), but a positive and specific kind of participation- just as the objectivity of a theoretical observation does not refer to the mind as a passive tabula rasa on which things inscribe their qualities, but on the contrary, to its full activity that operates according to its own laws, and to the elimination, thereby of accidental dislocations and emphases, whose individual and subjective differences would produce different pictures of the same object.⁴

The visitor therefore experiences the city in a way that is different from those who are accustomed to it. The following description of Simmel's stranger and that of Baudelaire's *flaneur* reveals a similarity between the two within the urban environment: According to Simmel, 'the stranger,' or visitor, is not just a wanderer 'who comes today and goes tomorrow,'

³ Baudelaire. The painter of modern life, and other essays, Translated and edited by Jonathan Mayne. 9.

⁴ Simmel 404.

having no specific structural position. On the contrary, 'he is a person who comes today and stays tomorrow . . . He is fixed within a particular spatial group . . . but his position . . . is determined . . . by the fact that he does not belong to it from the beginning,' and that he may leave again. Strangers, or visitors, therefore occupy a privileged place within society as they exist as 'an element of the group itself' while not being fully part of it:

Objectivity is... also.... true of the stranger who moves on. This is the fact that he often receives the most surprising openness-confidences which sometimes have the character of a confessional and which would be carefully withheld from a more closely related person.⁵

Therefore, the visitor should be given recognition in the urban context. In the narrative of the visited city, the visitor's vantage point is most important; indeed visitors leave a trace of their passage on the identity of the city.

For the most part, this new citizen resides exclusively in hotels or other accommodation architecture, paying a premium for a level of comfort. Accommodation architecture undoubtedly plays a formative role in the traveler's knowledge of place, and on the urban environment as a whole. The visitor relies on architecture as an anchor point from which to experience the anticipated mystery and strange familiarity of the visited city.

⁵ Ibid.

1.3: Travel and the Ritual of Everyday Life in the Visited City

If your everyday life seems poor, don't blame it; blame yourself; admit to yourself that you are not enough of a poet to call forth its riches; because for the creator there is no poverty and no indifferent place.⁶

-Rainer Maria Rilke

How soon country people forget. When they fall in love with a city it is forever, and it is like forever. As though there never was a time when they didn't love it. The minute they arrive at the train station or get off the ferry and glimpse the wide streets and the wasteful lamps lighting them, they know they are born for it. There, in a city, they are not so much new as themselves: their stronger, riskier selves.⁷

-Toni Morrison

In this thesis, the 'visited city' is considered in architectural terms: a city in the process of revealing the order of its built fabric. The act of inhabitation in the visited city is expressed through the sequence and ritual of the everyday. In the visited city, the everyday ritual is established by the degree that urban space infiltrates or influences the sequencing of the visitor's experience of the visited city.

To travel is to displace oneself from familiar surroundings, the milieu of sameness, if only into the different sameness of another's for a moment in time. For the visitor, travel provides the conditions for a favorable reconciliation of everyday life events. It is the voluntary displacement and

⁶ Rilke, Rainer Maria. "Letter One: February 17th 1903." Letters to a Young Poet. translation by M.D. Herter Norton. New York, W.W. Norton & company, 1934.

⁷ Morrison, Toni. Jazz. New York : Knopf : Distributed by Random House, 1992. 31.

the exchange of usual spatial anchors (bedrooms, bathrooms, kitchens) for new ones that give reason for a person to carry out their daily activities in a more thoughtful way. These new spatial compositions delight in the familiar through simple programmatic provisions. **[Figure 1]**. Visitors necessarily experience the visited city from a different perspective than how they live in their 'home' urban environment. More specifically, the visitor has the opportunity to reconsider activities of their daily life through the new conditions and the subtle differences of inhabitation presented by the visited city. Daily life events in the visited city, perhaps thought of as mundane in familiar surroundings, take on a newfound joy. As the visitor adapts to the new set of circumstances, an element of improvisation occurs and each ritual is 'reconsidered.' In this way, a sense of adventure characteristic of the experience of travel infiltrates the visitors' participation in familiar activities as they contend with sometimes unanticipated variables put forth by their new surroundings

Figure 1: Simple programmatic provisions, such as smaller-sized stoves, fridges, as well as vacuums, ironing boards, plates and vases, are items that allow for a deeper sense of temporary inhabitation in the apartment-hotel, giving rise to an improvisation of daily rituals- cups becomes bowls, microwaves used as ovens, etc. image by author.

The act of travel assumes that the individual comes along with a certain amount of personal possessions or belongings that coincide with their everyday life. However, when one travels, the significance of one's possessions is somewhat alleviated. Experiences of discovery, (which manifest as metaphysical artifacts), are collected in their place. In this way, the visitor's experience of the city is defined in terms of experiential investment with place, rather than in terms of personal effects and possessions. In other words, the traveler is less concerned with personal belongings in the visited city, and free to unravel the order of the fabric of the city and to set physical anchors, forming an idea of the visitor's place within the discovered urban environment. It is in this way that the visited city has the capacity to exist for the visitor as the purest urban form: a conceptual place of passage and experience. Urban space is enriched and built of the reciprocity of this relationship, between what is expected to be unknown and that which is familiar yet strange. The visitor in an unfamiliar urban context constantly mediates this tension. It is through the accumulation of small discoveries and recognitions that the visitor acquires an intimate knowledge of urban space.

1.4: Inhabiting the Visited City

Many urban travel destinations devote separate spaces specifically tailored to visitors and travel. In such cities, places of interest (arguably only to tourists) saturate certain areas of the urban fabric. Disney World in Orlando, Florida, is an extreme example of a place carved out of the urban fabric solely for the use of travelers.⁸ Other cities, perhaps more assured in their capacity for diversity, readily absorb visitors into daily urban life. These cities often present a more permeable version of public space, providing an opportunity for the visitor's travels to cross with the lives of residents. Though persistently showing signs of gentrification, the social interactions that animate certain sections of Las Ramblas in Barcelona, Spain, provide an example of urban permeability. Located on Rambla de Sant Josep, the covered outdoor market, Mercat de la Boqueria, is a celebrated extension of the activity of the street. Mercat de la Boqueria is a social place frequented by visitors and local residents alike- a place where the lives of residents and locals cross because of the common activity of shopping for groceries, their commotion set against the back-drop of the larger activity of the market. **[Figure 2]**. On closer observation, and as one gains an understanding of how the market functions in the larger urban context, one can distinguish tourist from local resident by how one navigates the stands. Vendors position the more expensive produce stands in immediate proximity of Las Ramblas in hope

⁸ How specifically Disney World is directed at travelers is evidenced by the financial incentives that have been implemented to draw locals, such as specially reduced prices on admission tickets for state residents only. Lee, Michelle. Field Study. Orlando, FL., January 27th 2005.

of attracting tourists passing by. Local residents are able to bypass these stands and their higher prices by taking their coffee at a stand adjacent to the stalls and conversing with vendors about the day's merchandise prior to shopping. The placement of the stalls follows a geometry that is mindful of the ritual of daily life of those who frequent this public space. It is obvious that even cities with more overtly permeable public spaces undergo a transformation of their character due to the traveler's presence there.

Figure 2: *An encoded urban knowledge is decipherable by observing the daily ritual and activities of those who frequent Barcelona's Mercat de la Boqueria. Image by author.*

1.5: Montréal as the Visited City

Considered the most cosmopolitan of North American cities, Montréal provides an evocative illustration of a contemporary urban space that can support a vibrant travel industry. Positioning itself as an urban travel destination, Montréal offers a plethora of cultural and entertainment events geared towards travelers. **[Figure 3]**. A number of international festivals that take place throughout the year animate the public spaces of Montréal.⁹ Architecturally, Montréal has invested heavily in the construction of public spaces to host and receive visitors, offering the greatest diversity of cultural and entertainment facilities in all of Canada.¹⁰ A proposal entitled *Quartier des Spectacles* promises to further secure the city's reputation as unrivalled urban host through the development of the southern portion of Boulevard Saint Laurent into the 'cultural heart of Montréal.' ¹¹ By any measure, a significant component of Montréal's identity is that of 'visited city.' Significantly, the city's active, animated and relatively safe streets are more celebrated than the physical

⁹ Montréal hosts a variety of international festivals including the Montréal International Jazz festival, Just for laughs festival, Les Francolies, the World Film festival, the air Canada grand prix, tennis masters Canada, and festival Nuits d'Afrique, to name a few. La Cité [electronic bulletin]. Board of Trade of Metropolitain Montréal. June 2003. vol. 1, number 8.

¹⁰ The major draws to the city include the Vieux Port, Montréal Casino, Bell Centre, Botanical Garden and Insectarium, Biodome, Montréal Museum of Fine Arts, Olympic Park, and Pointe-a-Calliere Musuem of Archaeology and History. La Cite [electronic bulletin]. board of trade of metropolitain Montréal. June 2003. vol. 1, number 8.

¹¹ "Le quartier des spectacles: une destination culturelle."
<http://www.quartierdesspectacles.com>.

attributes of any one of its buildings.¹² The intimate scale of Montréal's famed Boulevard Saint Laurent, the stomping ground for generations of creative minds, has held an allure for notable poets and artists for decades.

Figure 3: A sea of people flood Saint Catherine's street in downtown Montréal during the city's Jazzfest 2005. Image by author.

¹² Drummond, Derek. "Streets can be a city's living room." Grassroots, greystones & glass towers: Montréal urban issues and architecture. Bryan Demchinsky (Editor). Montréal : Véhicule Press, 1989. 83.

Chapter Two: The Apartment-Hotel as an Anchor Point for the Visitor's Discovery of Urban Space:

2.1: Finding Room for the Visitor in the City:

Issues of accommodation architecture are especially relevant in the city of Montréal: the city ranks as the third most visited in Canada. As an increasingly popular urban tourist destination, Montréal has experienced a recent construction frenzy in places of accommodation. Though the city falls behind Toronto and Vancouver, respectively, in the number of annual visitors, the highest occupancy rate of all urban Canadian centres is registered in Montréal.¹³

Montréal possesses a wide range of accommodation architecture; surprisingly however, few are located on Boulevard Saint Laurent. In fact, most new hotels are being constructed outside the neighborhood surrounding Boulevard Saint Laurent. Historically, the hotel typology has had difficulty taking hold in the neighborhood surrounding Boulevard Saint Laurent, due in part to the Boulevard's unstructured image.

The fact that the ritual of quotidian life takes place in the private spaces of domestic architecture is more apparent to the visitor than to the resident. For the duration of their stay, the most private space visitors have access to are the rooms in the city reserved for them. During the course of this thesis, field investigations were undertaken by staying at, and/or visiting the following various examples of accommodation architecture:

¹³ Approximately 13.2 million people visited Montréal in 2003, of those 7.7 million were overnight visitors. "Extra trend chart: a tempered tourism forecast for the Montréal summer." La Cite [electronic bulletin]. board of trade of metropolitan Montréal. June 2003. vol. 1, number 8.

- Montréal: Sept 17th 2004: Le Square Phillips (1193 Place Phillips), Hotel Godin (10 Sherbrooke Ouest), Hotel du Paris (901 Sherbrooke) Hôtel Gault,(449, rue Sainte-Hélène).
- Paris: Oct. 29-Nov. 1 st 2004: citadines les halles. 4, rue des Innocents.
- Washington, DC: Jan 1 2005: Red Suite,1315 16th Street NW Washington, DC.
- Montréal: Feb. 10th 2005: All Suite VIP Loft Montréal 329 Ontario Est.

Based on these investigations, the following chapter discusses three prevalent types of accommodation architecture found in Montréal: the mainstream hotel room, the Boutique hotel and the focus of this thesis, the apartment-hotel.

2.2: The Mainstream Hotel

For many travelers, an obvious, or at least convenient, choice of accommodation architecture in the visited city is the typical mainstream hotel, or chain hotel. In an unfamiliar context, the mainstream hotel provides a desired familiarity to visitors. Once an overlooked architectural genre, the recent publication of several recent books on the subject of hotels is evidence of a revival of the hotel type.¹⁴ Indeed, hotels are once again considered representative of the city's public space and of important architectural significance in the urban environment.¹⁵ **[Figure 4].**

Figure 4: A promotional hotel brochure details the many amenities and services within the hotel available to guests. Source: *The Windsor on Dominion Square, Montréal*. Montréal : Windsor Hotel, 1947.

¹⁴ Refer to bibliography for examples of recent publications.

¹⁵ Riewoldt, Otto and Jennifer Hudson. *Hotel design*. 1998. 9.

The French origin of the word *hôtel* inspires notions of status, as it refers to the mansion, or town residence of a person of rank or wealth.¹⁶ At an urban scale, the hotel operates as a social referent in the visited city, revealing the socio-economic status of its neighborhood. It has been said that in order to be considered a major commercial centre at the turn of the 19th century, it was demanded of an urban centre to have at least one grand hotel.¹⁷ The typical mainstream hotel developed as a function of the industrial revolution: the hotel signaled the importance of cities and centers of trade and commerce.¹⁸ Hotels, being traditionally situated near railway stations and associated with passage- urban pulse-points- were indicative of the surrounding density of urban commerce. Typically, downtown hotels were built in prestigious locations near main business centers and fashionable shopping districts, or near major city plazas and parks. In Montréal, one thinks of The Queen Elisabeth Hotel located in proximity to the train station as satisfying this description. **[Figure 5].**

¹⁶ "Hotel." Webster's new world dictionary, third college edition. New York:

Simon and Schuster, Inc. 1988.

¹⁷ Denby, Elaine. Grand hotels: reality & illusion. London: Reaktion Books, 1998.

Figure 5: A map of downtown Montréal, circa 1917, depicts the proximity of Queen Elisabeth Hotel to two major railway stations. Source: *The Queen's Hotel, Montréal*. Montréal: Queen's Hotel, 1917.

An obvious criticism of the mainstream hotel is the strict homogeneity of design, as hotel design stresses planning relationships based on standards of functionality. The chronic repetitiveness of the hotel surroundings results in amenities and services being formulaic, repeated from one hotel to the next. For example, according to *Hotel planning and design*, by Walter A. Rutes and Richard H. Penner, the positioning of the bathroom¹⁹ is the

¹⁹ The net width established the structural module throughout the building. 3.7 m (12') is most common. This measurement was established in the 1950s by the Holiday Inn chain for all of their properties, an industry standard pioneered by chain founder Kemmons Wilson and adopted by

generator of hotel geometry, governing the size and shape of the typical guest room. Additionally, guest room size, quality and room rate remain closely linked because of the overriding influence of construction and furnishing cost. Interestingly, many hotel operators believe that the guestroom and the guest bathroom make a more lasting impression on the lodging guest than any other single interior space: more so than the lobby, the restaurants, or other amenity spaces. This is due to the guestroom's residential character. The traveler, displaced from the comforts of home, and paying a premium for a night of relaxation, experiences any deficiencies in layout and equipment, flaws or lacks, in a very obvious way.²⁰ Mainstream hotels thus strive to homogenize design and décor to avoid possible sources of irritation for the visitor. For these reasons, staying in a typical room in a mainstream hotel is a rather mundane experience. Indeed, what urban understanding can one garner from the typical hotel room? It is with few exceptions that the typical guest room is an isolated box locked into a spatial matrix composed of other isolated boxes, sometimes linked to each other only through disruption. **[Figure 6]**. In this way, a hotel room tends to set people apart. The only time one is aware of one's neighbor is at times of frustration- such as noise from a neighboring room when one is trying to sleep or low water pressure during a shower.

Howard Johnson and other properties. It is a well-established fact within the industry that a differential in this measurement does not improve the layout, unless it is increased to 16', in which case it has the potential to provide a new set of design alternatives beyond the typical arrangement of two double-beds opposite a vanity and television. Rutes, Walter A., and Richard H. Penner. Hotel planning and design. London: Whitney Library of Design; 1985. 65, 171.

²⁰ Ibid 16.

Outside of this interior spatial matrix, the hotel's relationship to the city is weak. A guest who stays in the mainstream hotel has knowledge of the visited city 'at large' perhaps only through the space of the lobby, by means of tourist brochures or advertisements at the concierge booth offering guided tours. Standard luxury and mid-range hotels in effect create their own urban spaces, complete with mixed-use complexes with restaurants, bars, fitness centers, banquet and meeting facilities. The world that these hotels offers visitors is highly introspective, and programmatically self-contained to the point that visitors have little reason to venture outside to explore the visited city. The same sense of self-referentiality is also evident to a greater extent at Boutique hotels.

Figure 6: A floor plate of Mount Royal Hotel shows the pattern of repetition of guest rooms typical of mainstream hotel design.

Source: Mount Royal Hotel, Montréal, Canada: floor plans. United States : United Hotels of America, 1922.

2.3: The Boutique Hotel

The recent construction of Hotel Godin, **[Figure 7]**, located at the intersection of Sherbrooke Street and Boulevard Saint Laurent, marks the arrival of the 'Boutique' hotel type in the area. From a typological standpoint, the Boutique hotel challenges the accepted norms characteristic of mainstream hotel chains; it asserts that a hotel guest should experience a level of comfort beyond that which is provided by a standard bed and efficiency bathroom. The labeling of certain accommodations as 'Boutique,' a qualifier coined by Ian Schraeger, famous hotelier and founder of studio 54, refers to the *au courant* practice of conceptualizing a total package of luxurious accommodation with décor and amenities that are reflective of trends in the art and design world.²¹ One aligns oneself with a set of social and economic attributes promoted by the media, which provides an identity described and 'understood' by consumerist society. In this way, a particular designer brand pervades this type of hotel, often similar to a declaration of faith:

What impels modern people so strongly towards style is the unburdening and unmasking of the personality that is the essence of style. Subjectivism and individuality have accelerated almost to breaking point and in the stylised creations of form... there lies a tempering and toning down of this extreme individuality into something general and more universal.²²

²¹ Makovsky, Paul. "Boutique living: personal touches that make small hotels as comfortable as home." *Metropolis* 24.4 (2004): 138-41.

²² Simmel 404.

Figure 7: *The luxurious surroundings of the presidential suite, Hotel Godin, include plasma screen televisions, and generous- sized bathrooms. Image by author.*

Consequently, it is evident that the hotel, in particular, the Boutique hotel, has once again become a setting for social rituals and a mirror for contemporary myths.²³ The stylized objects of the interior signify a balance between the expression of individuality and the indication of supra-individuality since this style is shared with many others. There is currently a strong demand for the "Boutique" type accommodation. Staying in hotels that display a particular design approach or artistic position has become a statement of 'good taste' and economic status. Boutique hotels offer a pre-packaged lifestyle and status for those voluntarily displaced from their own social identity, however inaccurately these describe the visitor's actual circumstances:

²³ Riewoldt, Otto and Jennifer Hudson. Hotel design. Corte Madera: Ginko Press, 1998. 9.

*A super-individual form and law is produced between the subjective personality and its human and objective environment; the stylized expression, form of life, taste- all these are limits, forms of distance in which the exaggerated subjectivism of the times find a counterbalance and cloak.*²⁴

Hotel Godin involved the renovation of a historic building and a new construction on a site once home to a Greek Orthodox church damaged (though not beyond repair) by a series of fires in the 1980s. **[Figure 8].**

Figure 8: *The ruinous image of the now-demolished Greek Orthodox church, once located on the current site of the Hotel Godin.*
Photograph courtesy of Dan S. Hanganu, Architects.

The firm responsible for the project (Montréal's Dan S. Hanganu, Architects) revealed that the presence of inhabitants in the older building, a group composed mainly of squatting artists, was not a source of conflict to the design and construction process. Yet these tenants did in fact voice their resistance to the Hotel Godin project: sentiments regarding their relocation were expressed on the walls of their former apartments. **[Figure**

²⁴ Simmel 101.

9]. These wall inscriptions confirmed that the building was indeed inhabited. The inhabitants, a group of squatting artists taking inspiration from the activities of the Boulevard, would clearly not identify with the 'lifestyle' promoted by Hotel Godin, nor did the hotel design take them into account.

Figure 9: *Inscription of evicted "tenants" and the signs of a disrupted habitation in the existing building renovated as part of the Hotel Godin project. Photograph courtesy of Dan S. Hanganu, Architects*

2.4: The Apartment-Hotel

The combination of the visitor's typically longer duration of stay and the apartment-hotel's extended architectural program (in comparison to that of a commercial hotel) are specific to the apartment-hotel. Visitors usually occupy this hotel form for a period exceeding several days, (or perhaps for even weeks or months) and the apartment-hotel therefore appeals to a broad range of travelers who plan an extended stay in the visited city. The apartment-hotel is usually associated with the business traveler, however, many other kinds of visitors would undoubtedly welcome the apartment-hotel's more developed program, (its rooms suited to longer stays, its provision of laundry facilities and the kitchen, etc.), even if they only planned to stay in the city for a short period. For example, young adults may appreciate the additional facilities as a means to alleviate some of the cost of their travels; the couple may view the extra space as an added luxury; the visiting parents, finally, who do not wish to inconvenience their children but wish to re-establish a sense of home, may appreciate the room's domestic tone.²⁵ As previously discussed, the numerous festivals that take place in Montréal draw a large population of performers, musicians and artists, (as well as a large audience), all of whom must find room in the city for the duration of their stay.

Indeed, the apartment-hotel constitutes a growing segment of accommodation architecture. It is increasingly considered by the traveling public as fulfilling the same requirements as mainstream hotel accommodation, despite the fact that apartment-hotel

²⁵ The hotel room is becoming a temporary home, a pied-a-terre, a place not just for staying the night. Apartment-hotels like the Marriot group's residence inn, the French Citadines and German Madison hotels are the forerunners of a growing trend. Riewoldt, Otto and Jennifer Hudson. Hotel design. Corte Madera: Ginko Press, 1998. 9.

programmatically most closely resembles a Single Room Occupancy unit, a traditional form of affordable private housing for single people and people of modest means.²⁶ While the dimensions of the typically hotel room are 3.7 m (12') wide by a variable length, (though often 8 m or approximately 25'), the larger space allocation of an apartment-hotel is similar to that of an SRO.²⁷ These units offer affordable rents and usually do not require security deposits, nor first and last month's rent. An SRO room usually is small, between 80-250 square feet, and is usually not recommended for families but only for single individuals. The World Exposition of 1967 in Montréal unintentionally gave rise to the proliferation of the Single Room Occupant (SRO) type.²⁸ This is a result of property owners evicting their tenants in anticipation of the Expo, with the intention

²⁶ A recent competition in New York City, sponsored by the organization, Common Ground, with an architectural jury that included design luminaries Steven Holl and Toshiko Mori, explored the issues of the SRO typology. The competition attempted to maintain the tradition of the lodging house but provide an upgrade of facilities, as to provide safe and clean short-term accommodations to people transitioning out of homelessness. The competition proposed new design-directives applying architectural concepts like context, prefabrication, modularity, and individualization for the Andrews, a single-room-occupancy (SRO) hotel, on Manhattan's Bowery. The non-profit's plan for the Andrews was to rather than replicate the prototypical Bowery flophouse, to improve this much-maligned housing type by providing a reinterpretation of a transitional accommodation that would assist people moving from shelters to permanent housing. Proposing a larger space, 66 square feet as opposed to 33' feet, the entrants had the opportunity to explore an extended programmatic discourse. Steen, Karen E. 'Sustainable Metropolis: Competition Redefines SRO Hotel Design.' Metropolis. Posted 01.05. (2004): .

²⁷ Principles of hotel design. edited by the Architects' journal. 1970.

²⁸ McGregor, J. A. and L. Serge. The unacknowledged housing form: a study of rooming houses in Montréal. Montréal: Conseil du développement du logement communautaire, 1982.

of capitalizing on the looming influx of tourists. Property owners were therefore able to rent out their apartments as short-term accommodations for the duration of Expo. Left in a somewhat dilapidated state due the cyclical process of vacancy and occupation, these rooms were difficult to rent to more permanent tenants following Expo. As a result, many of them were converted into SRO housing.²⁹ The presence of the Bowery flophouse, on the southern segment of Boulevard Saint Laurent, has perhaps aggravated the Boulevard's unfavorable reputation.³⁰

As discussed, the apartment-hotel provides a heightened level of spatial considerations that allow for a deeper inhabitation of the space provided to the visitor for the duration of their stay. In order to accommodate its extended program, the apartment-hotel is often significantly larger.³¹ Several elements ensure that the apartment-hotel is reflective of domestic architecture:

Kitchen/ Kitchenette:

The most prominent differentiating feature of the apartment-hotel (as compared to the typical hotel room) is the presence of facilities to prepare food. It is these kitchens and kitchenettes that most closely tie the

²⁹ In 1986, the city of Montréal registered 627 rooming houses in the city. Allikas, Barry et al. Maison de chambres = Rooming house show. Catalogue of an exhibition held at 1060 rue MacKay, Montréal, PQ, Aug. 17-Sept. 21, 1986.

³⁰ Lee, Michelle. Field Study. Montréal, March 23rd, 2004.

³¹ Though the larger space of the apartment-hotel could be due to the planning of a new construction, often times these spaces are the result of the conversion of condominiums or rehabilitated apartment or office space located in the downtown core. Groth, Paul. Living downtown: the history of residential hotels in the United States. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

apartment-hotel to domestic architecture. For example, the visitor is able to experience locality through shopping for food in local stores and markets and preparing meals alongside other residents, and fully participating in the 'dinner hour' of the city. Their experience of taste is then more intimate than it would have been in a restaurant. The visitor gains knowledge of the city by engaging in the various social interactions involved in the selection and purchase of food available in the visited city.

[Figure 10].

Figure 10: *The kitchen facilities included in the apartment-hotel draw the visitor out into the city to shop for food at the local stores. Collage by author.*

Bedroom:

The spatial division of the sleeping quarters from the rest of the room further distinguishes the apartment-hotel from the traditional hotel room. This spatial relationship can provide the visitor with a more restful sleep as the bedroom is removed from other programmatic elements. This spatial division which speaks of the necessity of a good night's rest acknowledges the importance of the activities of the following day, given that they will unfold in the visited city. **[Figure 11]**.

Figure 11: *The visitor awakes in their 'own' bedroom in the apartment-hotel, prepared to explore the visited city. Collage by author.*

Workspace:

Usually a hotel room includes a small desk, connected to a vanity, which in turn is connected to an entertainment stand. The apartment-hotel often provides a separate workspace and access to such infrastructure as high-

speed internet, and separate telephones for work and leisure may be allocated. The business of one's life, or means of sustaining one's stay in the visited city, therefore becomes a design consideration. **[Figure 12].**

Figure 12: *The business of one's life is spatially considered through the work areas provided by the apartment-hotel. Collage by author.*

Windows/ Balcony:

A balcony or projecting windows extend to a view of the city and allows for a connection to the outdoors. The urban landscape is appreciated to a greater extent due to this architectural consideration. The balcony provides a chance for the visitor to experience the outdoors, to watch the sunrise and also separates activities (such as smoking) from the living quarters. In the case of the Square Phillips apartment-hotel, a bench/ sitting area over the radiator provides a seat to view the outdoors. The

visitor is thus encouraged to view the city they will soon discover. **[Figure 13].**

Storage:

Figure 13: *A balcony, or extended sitting area located next to the window connects the visitor with city beyond. Collage by author.*

Storage:

Storage for clothing becomes increasingly important relative to the duration of the visitor's stay. The act of dressing becomes ritualized when one occupies the closet space: one is made to feel at home and unpack their suitcase. Oftentimes the apartment-hotel room provides drawers or additional shelving in the closet space and at times storage for their empty suitcases to be put away, so they do not get in the way of the visitor's daily activities. From these subtle acts of inhabitations, a psychological acceptance of the state of displacement follows: the visitor

becomes aware that this is the place where they will be staying and where certain events of their life will unfold. Provisions for the care of clothing is considered and often times there is an iron and ironing board, services that are often only available in a hotel by request or at extra charge. In the kitchen (or kitchenette) there are places to store the food one has purchased in the city's supermarkets, perhaps a small pantry to store food items. The presence of a toaster, coffee maker, oven, stove-top, pots and pans, plates, cups, wine-glasses, table settings, multiple phones, placemats, knives, forks, saucers, and major kitchen appliances, give the guest room a sense of permanence and assurance that the activities of life that will unfold within the room are significant enough to warrant substantial means of conducting them. **[Figure 14].**

Figure 14: *The extended storage space offered by the apartment-hotel allows for a greater sense of permanency for the duration of the visitor's experience of visited city. Collage by author.*

Entrance:

Typically in the vicinity of the door and entrance, a doormat is placed inconspicuously. This simple gesture implies a prolonged visit, as there is place for more than one pair of shoes. The need for different footwear means the experience of the visitor therefore is not limited to one single event: there is space for a pair of shoes to experience the nightlife of the city, a pair of fitness shoes for partaking in exercise, and perhaps some slippers. The mat signifies that the residue of the outdoors is acknowledged in the experience of the room. Extra space is allotted to store more than one coat, an umbrella, etc as the extended stay of visitors means they must likely address the changing weather in the visited city. **[Figure 15].**

Figure 15: *The presence of a doormat ensures that the residue of the outdoors- a consequence of traversing the city- will not accumulate and disrupt the order of inhabitation within the visitor's private domestic space. Collage by author.*

Lobby:

Access to the guest room in the apartment-hotel is usually less grand and formal, much like entering the lobby of a private apartment building. Often more obscure, the lobby of the apartment-hotel is less of a meeting place, as the visitor has space upstairs to meet and receive guests. Also, as the visitor develops a familiarity with the city, it is plausible that they might take interest in meeting off-site. The concierge, who offers a guide to local services and events is not as necessary as the visitor experience a greater degree of integration in the visited city due to their experience of the visited that is made possible by the apartment-hotel.

Breakfast facilities vs. Restaurant:

Typically, the apartment-hotel is not equipped with the facilities of a full-service restaurant. In exchange, it frequently offers the convenience of a dining hall, or breakfast room, where a continental breakfast is offered. The public space is drastically more casual than one would find at a hotel. Often an attendant rather than a full wait staff is available to provide minimal services and refresh the supply of food and beverages. It is here that the guest may encounter an opportunity for an informal interaction with the other staying clientele.

Combined, the facilities of the apartment-hotel describe a very different idea of accommodation architecture. Visitors have the potential to play host to their own guests. Unlike the contrived setting of a chain hotel room, the alternative presented by the apartment-hotel- an architecture of a more permeable nature- allows the visitor to establish a sense of place, by occupying the spaces of the unit with the activities of their

everyday life. In this way, the visitor engages the city by occupying the hybrid space of the apartment-hotel, allowing these to blur the distinction between the visitor and resident.

Staying in the visited city means the individual is removed from the comforts of home, whether these be material (their own clothes washer and dryer, plates and cutlery, recipe books, and ample closet space) or immaterial. Immaterial 'comfort' is the convenience of living according to one's personal rituals, or in accordance with the personal order one has set with regard to their private domestic space. For example, individuals often establish a certain place in domestic architecture where they store their keys, be it a key-box or drawer. It is these constants in their daily routine that provide a certain level of comfort and peace of mind. In the typical hotel room, no such place as a key drawer exists. In fact, the key has often been reduced to a two dimensional plastic 'ving' card, so that the insubstantiality of this object does not warrant a specific place. Although this has been done for the sake of convenience, if the visitor's stay is extended, (as it is the case in the apartment-hotel), this reduction can be seen as a compromise rather than as the convenience it was intended to be. Subtle oversights such as these results in the visitor feeling disconnected with the place that they must temporarily call 'home.'

Conversely, the Boutique hotel presents the other extreme, a specific predetermined lifestyle that does make many allowances for the visitor's preferences to pervade their temporary surroundings. For example, designer toiletries are made available for use in the bathroom, the often-present music system includes a pre-recorded play-list of music, and the mini-bar is stocked with fashionable and expensive brands of

refreshments. These assumptions ensure that choices in 'good taste' are made on behalf of the Boutique hotel guest.

The importance of having the authority to set order to one's personal space, to give name and set place, is essential to both the experience of passage and dwelling. The 'room' as a unit contained within the larger complex thus acquires a heightened role: it is where the traveler asserts their authority over their dwelling place, and where they can express ownership and knowledge of the city they are in the process of getting to know. In essence, the visitor develops a 'personal architecture' that is reflective of the specificity of their experience in the visited city. To paraphrase Simmel, the 'background or basis of daily life' must be stylized since 'in their rooms, human beings are the main object, the focal point as it were'. Yet in order for 'an organic and harmonious total feeling' to emerge, one must ensure the *interieur*, with its 'spatial confinement,' 'not mix with immediate life.' The inside must be given a focal point. The latter can only be fulfilled by the stylized work of art and not by the 'necessary accessories' of everyday life.³² Architecture should accommodate the personal acts of everyday life, so that the visitor's ritual inhabits the room in a way that is unadulterated by predetermined objects of consumption (provided by the Boutique Hotel), that attempt to fill the void, pacifying the vulnerability of the visitor's displacement. In the context of the present inquiry into the Montréal apartment-hotel, the work of art, 'the movable feast,' is the city itself- the apartment-hotel room no longer a space of confinement and isolation but one that opens up to the city.

³² Simmel 404.

By affecting the degree of integration the traveler is allowed in the visited city, accommodation architecture has the potential to perform an important role in the urban fabric. Hotels, of the mainstream, boutique and apartment kind, provide for the personal space of the visitor while forming important anchor points in the visited city. They are visual landmarks and social markers.

As it allows the individual to form deeper ties to the visited city, the apartment-hotel is more complex architecturally and urbanistically in comparison with other places of accommodation. The apartment-hotel provides a form of accommodation that is arguably more representative of lived reality in the visited urban environment than standardized mainstream hotels. Specifically the apartment-hotel's extended program (such as laundry facilities, a place to cook) allow for the 'infiltration' of the everyday rituals of life in the visited city, providing a sense of deeply felt inhabitation that reveals to the visitor an authentic experience of daily life in the visited city.

With the exception of Hotel Godin, one notices few 'typical' hotels on Boulevard Saint Laurent, where the most common form of accommodation is the bed-and-breakfast or hostel. These are most often integrated into existing residential buildings. Like the bed and breakfast, but with a more developed program, the apartment-hotel constitutes an appropriate intervention in a small-scale residential neighborhood. In contrast with the boutique and luxury hotel, the bed and breakfast and the apartment-hotel seek to blend into the city fabric. In this way, the apartment-hotel, by scale and program, is an appropriate intervention into the neighborhood surrounding Boulevard Saint Laurent.

Chapter Three: Boulevard Saint Laurent:

3.1: Identity of Boulevard Saint Laurent

Rivalling the fame of Barcelona's Las Ramblas, Boulevard Saint Laurent is Montréal's celebrated urban street.³³ Guiding visitors North or South, the Boulevard invites individuals to follow the long thread of Montréal's history as it has evolved from early settlement to modern metropolis. **[Figure 16]**.

Figure 16: An extruded site plan detailing the major routes of urban circulation and the relative scale of buildings on Boulevard Saint Laurent. Image by author.

Long considered to be at the centre of an 'international zone' between two prominent sections of Canadian society, the anglophone centre to the West, and the francophone communities to the East, the Boulevard functions as a microcosm of Montréal's larger urban condition. In this respect, the Boulevard itself is considered a kind of third city; neither

³³ Gubbay, Aline. A street called the Main. Montréal: Meridian Press, 1989.

French nor English, it accommodates a constant flow of newly arrived individuals, functioning as an international highway along which various ethnic groups have passed:

It is not a spectacular thoroughfare. There are no great monuments or outstanding buildings to see. What it offers, along with the continuity of its long history, is a parade of city life, human in scale, diverse in its background, which, through recurring cycles of change, poverty and prosperity, has retained a sense of neighborhood, stubbornly rooted in people. ³⁴

The process of renewal resulting from a constant flow of inhabitation results in the Boulevard's undeniable transitory quality.

³⁴ Ibid 11.

3.2: Formation of the Boulevard

In essence, what characterizes Montréal and distinguishes it from many Canadian cities is the way individuals mark their own places of inhabitation there. Dwellers furnish the urban framework with their dwelling spaces, giving the fabric its richness. Montréal's vernacular architecture developed as the city's early inhabitants made the transition from a rural way of life to a modern urban world.

The urban fabric surrounding Boulevard Saint Laurent is unique: one can easily decipher characteristics of its development, which enhances the physical experience of its urban spaces. Several dominant themes have shaped the area. The ailing industrial era, for example, has left remnants on the fabric surrounding the Boulevard **[Plate 1]**.

Plate 1: Morphology of a Neighborhood

Plate 1: An urban study of the morphology of Boulevard Saint Laurent, noting its evolution over five decades. Image by author.

The most determinant forces, historically, have been industry and transportation infrastructures. While the impact of this transformation has the potential to wreak havoc on urban spaces, it has on the contrary contributed to the Boulevard's diversity. Each era incited a specific response to the social, religious and economic circumstances of the time. One must here turn to the work of Jean-Claude Marsan, an important theorist of the urban spaces of Montréal. Marsan outlines the conditions that allowed the unfolding of resulting urbanity in his book, Montréal in evolution: historical analysis of the development of Montréal's architecture and urban environment:

The old pattern of development had been static, entirely centered on the physical symbols of religious and civil power. With the spread of industrialization, the traditional framework exploded, symbolically and physically, to make room for mobility, the city thus developed more exclusively on economic trends. ³⁵

The Catholic Church was the earliest influence in the formation of districts in Montréal.³⁶ The parishes provided the basic organizing units of the new communities, functioning as the ecclesiastic administrative units as well as bases for social interaction.

Following the undoing of such distinct and historic forms based on a closed hierarchical system, influences within the secular realm further shaped the city. As the Catholic churches progressively retreated from civic life, new urban patterns emerged. Necessities of life, work and day-to-day existence governed the new urban forms. The increasingly secular

³⁵ Marsan, Jean Claude. Montréal in evolution : historical analysis of the development of Montréal's architecture and urban environment. Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1981. 287.

lifestyle made possible by the industrial revolution played a formative role in the further cohesion of urban elements. New residents found themselves tied to the urban landscape of the machine and factory, just as the distant land from which they came tied them to their agrarian existence. By necessity, residence and place of employment remained in close proximity, as decentralization was limited due to a lack of adequate means of communication and of inner-city mass transportation. Therefore, a high population density characterized the first industrial areas that developed around the Boulevard. As a result, there were no strictly residential suburbs or districts until the end of the nineteenth century in Montréal. Residences and shops that defined the Boulevard's mixed-use character commonly catered to tertiary sectors, such as commercial ventures not too dependent on rail or water transport. As a result, the most prevalent commercial typology is that of the small business. The residents of Boulevard Saint Laurent provided the necessary workforce as well as an expanding commercial market.

Though necessary to the industrial revolution and subsequent development of an urban area, transportation unraveled the tightly-knit fabric of Boulevard St. Laurent to a certain extent.³⁷ The implementation of the city passenger railroad did not diminish the horse-cart as the primary means of transportation for commercial uses until the advent of the automobile. As the prevalent method of transportation, the horse-cart left an ensuing network of passageways that are a distinguishing feature of the Saint Laurent Boulevard area.

3.3: The Development of Vernacular Architecture on Boulevard Saint Laurent

Vernacular building evidences transposed cultures' attempts to maintain ancestral and traditional values as a protection against the anonymity of the urban environment.³⁸ This search for familiarity is apparent in the vernacular language used in Montréal's domestic architecture. Boulevard Saint Laurent's urban fabric is composed mainly of semi-detached and detached duplexes and triplexes, bungalows and split-levels. **[Figure 17]** Less common in the area are small groups of single-family houses that, modest in appearance, are vestiges of wartime restrictions. Collectively, these houses display a number of well-documented characteristics that are relevant to the evolution of the language of domestic vernacular architecture of Montréal.

Figure 17: *This triplex displays several characteristics typical of domestic vernacular architecture found in the neighborhood surrounding Boulevard Saint Laurent. Photograph by author.*

³⁸ Marsan 186.

Marsan provides a description of the tradition of vernacular housing in Montréal. For example, a typical Montréal street-scape is characterized by of a brick-clad wood framed houses built right up against the sidewalk; the simple facades are marked by the occasional balcony with two doors side-by-side on the same landing- one leading directly to the ground floor and the other to an inner staircase climbing to the floor above. In an attempt to imitate the houses of the rich, the main entrance was often protected by a porch and the roof was used as a balcony.³⁹ Elements such as these porches contribute to a strong sense of place in such districts as the "plateau," the flatlands to the east of Mount Royal.

Marsan explains that Montréal is composed largely of a number of background buildings and relatively few foreground buildings.⁴⁰ These background buildings constitute the bulk of residential architecture in Montréal. There are distinct residential vernacular types that come together and form a heterogeneous mixture. The diversity in small-scale housing is a result of several factors that speak of the history of the inhabitation of Montréal. For example, the various construction cycles that took place throughout the city's history are made more apparent due to developments' relatively modest size: each stage reveals the preferences or building practices of a large number of contracting companies. The houses that constitute the background architecture are often criticized as being too passive architecturally, merely the results of economic and zoning limitations. However, these restrictions fuelled the development and execution of a vernacular architecture. Increased economic activities resulting from the industrial revolution and waves of migration at

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Sheppard.

the turn of the 20th century, resulted in an increasing need for small, compact, and well-equipped dwellings for people who would normally be busy working elsewhere, and who would be unable to spend much time on maintenance.⁴¹ The typical house, with its long plan (narrow and poorly lit by the lack of natural daylight), **[Figure 18]**, was an unavoidable result of urban planning strategies: as the great majority of the streets run from east to west, only one side of the uninterrupted houses receives sunlight during the greater part of the year.

..It would be wrong to blame architecture for these flaws as they stem from poverty and lack of resources, both which prevailed..... On the contrary, this house, which is a true illustration of an architecture without architects, is quite remarkable for its high degree of prefabrication and the overt layout of its function and for its communications potential expressed through its balconies, galleries, passages and outside staircases all of which are reminiscent of the aerial conveyors of the grain elevators of the harbor. These original houses have generated an equally original environment which has deeply marked the identity and image of Montréal.⁴²

⁴¹ Marsan 320.

⁴² Ibid 281.

Figure 18: *Study of light dispersion in a typical plan of housing found on the Boulevard. Analysis by author.*

The tradition of small-scale housing developments, prevalent in the Montréal streetscape, has not been entirely lost. Boulevard Saint Laurent's appearance has remained domestic in tone and scale, despite undergoing several eras of architectural transformation. One can see how accommodation architecture in the vicinity of Saint Laurent Boulevard would benefit from referring to the local vernacular houses, since these respond vividly to the immediate, functional and practical needs of the population it houses.

3.4: Foreground and Background Architecture as Vernacular Typologies

Though often used to distinguish residential from institutional architecture, categorization into foreground or background buildings means something different in the case of domestic architecture. Indeed, foreground and background dwelling structures correspond to socio-economic divides during Montréal's formative years: there are the dwellings of the wealthy and those of the working-class.

Residences of the wealthy reflected primarily the pretensions of a privileged colonial group while housing for the less privileged reflected the need to adjust to the social and economic realities.⁴³ The tendency of a colonial society, (which in Montréal was composed largely of wealthy Anglo-Saxons), to 'show off' their success or money in public and to cling to the familiar values of styles belonging to the past, found its ideal in the picturesque. In this way, the homes of the wealthy have a well-fed pretentious look about them, **[Figure 19]** but no definite style of their own.⁴⁴ The foreground buildings provide punctuation in the urban fabric through the visual impact of their grandiosity. These homes represent a style that is transplanted and in obvious contrast to the more cohesive background architecture. The foreground buildings can be compared to the mainstream hotels found in the downtown core of Montréal. Impressive by virtue of their generous scale alone, these buildings nevertheless disappoint as they provide an anonymous face of accommodation architecture.

⁴³ Marsan.

⁴⁴ Ibid 263.

Figure 19: *Costly building materials and a stylistic articulation of the facade are common characteristics of foreground architecture. Photograph by author.*

Additionally, the housing of the wealthy has an impact on the remaining background architecture of the working class. The demand for small housing units resulted in a gradual transformation of these large homes into smaller units or apartments. The gradual fading of these foreground buildings to the realm of background architecture took place through the subdividing of large units into several compact ones. This practice became especially common in sectors that are in close proximity to the downtown area.⁴⁵ It is obvious that the absorption of foreground architecture into the background of city life along Boulevard Saint Laurent has given the street much of its allure.

The present locations of foreground and background structures were historically dictated by power and economic realities: the wealthy built

⁴⁵ Ibid 321.

their homes wherever they pleased, while workers settled in close proximity to their places of employment. Until the onset of the industrial revolution, it was fashionable for the wealthy to establish country villas on the then relatively uninhabited terraces of the plateau. As the city grew, working class homes on the Boulevard Saint Laurent eventually caught up to the grand homes of the wealthy, (once located in the countryside). These were gradually consumed by the framework of homes of the working classes located, out of necessity, in proximity to the industrial sector of the city. The variety in residential architecture on the Boulevard today is witness to the fact that all sorts of people, of various means, make the Boulevard their home.

Until the 1950s, Montréal developed and maintained a strong architectural and urban tradition, manifested in its institutional buildings, the urban villas on the mountain, and most importantly, in its medium-density housing. This tradition in residential architecture produced not only a readable and cohesive cityscape, but gave rise to some of the more outstanding residential streets to be found in any North American city.⁴⁶ Montréal exists as an enlivened composition: the friction between the background and foreground buildings yields an urban condition defined by diversity and corresponds to the continuous interplay of dwellers, each finding their place in the city.

⁴⁶ Sheppard 206.

3.5: Current Economic and Social Conditions of the Boulevard

Having long asserted a unique sense of place, the area surrounding Boulevard Saint Laurent is now undeniably undergoing a transformation of its physical and social character **[Figure 20]**. The newfound confidence in Montréal's commercial viability and increased political stability following the defeat of the referendum in the early 1990s, has resulted in a marked increase in construction in the city, and on Boulevard Saint Laurent in particular. To a certain extent, there is concern that gentrification will threaten the Boulevard's dynamic equilibrium, and its identity as a place where residents, artists, students, business people, and leisure travelers coexist in harmony. The urban and architectural implications of economic speculation geared towards the commercial development of Boulevard Saint Laurent are concurrent with the shifting demographics of the surrounding neighborhood.

Figure 20: The conversion of older buildings into condominium lofts is an increasingly common occurrence on the Boulevard. Photograph by author.

The presence of a number of vacant lots, **[Figure 21]**, (presently being used as parking lots), diminish the area's urban coherence and make evident that the Boulevard is still closely identified with marginality. It is precisely marginality that makes the area vulnerable to economic speculation. Much to the detriment of the Boulevard, this speculation has at times resulted in an increased homogenization and commercialization of space. As a result, the process of the physical, social, economic, and cultural phenomenon of gentrification is extremely visible on Boulevard Saint Laurent. Gentrification is a process whereby working-class and/or inner-city neighborhoods are converted into more affluent middle-class communities by remodeling buildings and landscaping, resulting in increased property values and in the displacement of the poor and former residents who can no longer afford to live in the area. Sociologist Ruth Glass coined the term in 1964, stating, "Once this process of 'gentrification' starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working-class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed."⁴⁷ **[Figure 22]**.

Figure 21: *Vacant lots, mainly used to generate parking revenue, populate the Boulevard. Analysis by author.*

⁴⁷ "Gentrification." Wikipedia online encyclopedia. www.wikipedia.org.

The street has become a fashionable destination within the city for leisure travelers, largely for the purposes of dining, entertaining and shopping. Interestingly, there are few institutions of tourism on Boulevard Saint Laurent: the Boulevard itself is the venue for a myriad of festivals and events.⁴⁸ However, recent development projects threatened this dynamic. Cinema Ex-Centris, a project designed and built by Montréal musician and producer Daniel Langlois, is touted as a 'cinematographic research laboratory and a state of the art film screening facility.'⁴⁹ **[Figure 23].**

Figure 22: An abandon sign left on the Boulevard is indicative of the displacement experienced by certain Montréal residents.

⁴⁸ "Master Plan" City of Montréal. http://www2.ville.Montreal.qc.ca/plan-urbanisme/en/plan_urbanisme/index.shtm.

⁴⁹ 'About ExCentris.' www.ex-centris.com.

A self-proclaimed 'contemporary complex of exceptional design,'⁵⁰ the theatre claims to fill a niche missing of the art house in Montréal, introducing the urban moviegoer to marginal productions, including classical and art films as well as more experimental works. It claims to be a response to mainstream theatres. But does the cinema not merely offer a trendy, more 'urban' version of the multi-theatre complex commonly referred to as 'cine-plex'? For example, the Cinema includes a café which 'will complement events with fine cuisine be it for a traditional breakfast, a trendy cocktail or an exquisite meal.'⁵¹ Additionally, the complex promotes itself as the 'location of choice for annual meetings, press conferences and product launchings.'⁵² The presence of Cinema Ex-Centris on Boulevard Saint Laurent seems an attempt to capitalize on the activities and expectations of the leisure traveler. Despite its imposing presence on the Boulevard, observations show that the complex is infrequently busy and functioning as a tourist info-centre at best. Most significant to a discussion of urban architecture, Cinema Ex-Centris fails to contribute to the life of the street: due to its large scale, the complex is not cohesive with the small-scale architecture of the neighborhood. The Cinema functions to 'process' a large number of people, whereas the more established businesses on the Boulevard, such as the Euro Deli or the Main Steakhouse, serve fewer patrons at any one time and foster an intimacy of social interactions. For example, the Main Steakhouse is eager to offer prospective patrons a sample of their smoked meat, in order to prove its superiority to Schwartz's, the famed establishment down the street. In several ways, the insertion of the Cinema Ex-Centris into the urban fabric surrounding Saint Laurent Boulevard can be compared to

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

the 'foreground' nature of the mainstream hotel: Cinema Ex-Centris asserts its position in the urban fabric through its scale and insularity.

Figure 23: The massive footprint of Cinema Ex-Centris dominates the block of Boulevard Saint Laurent between rue Milton and Prince Arthur. The project forms a 'megablock' on the Boulevard as it is attached to the adjacent, pre-existing, building(left) which currently houses SoftImage, a software development firm specializing in computer generated animation.

Buildings such as Cinema Ex-Centris demonstrate how the foreground architecture found on Boulevard Saint Laurent forms a relatively monotonous wall. The solidity of the façade is selectively mutable, in that the openings reveal spaces that the passerby is 'allowed' to see into. The wall therefore contains visual 'breaks' to communicate the commercial activities that it houses. As is the nature of public architecture, this low-relief face tacitly directs the gaze and path of inhabitants and visitors. Of particular interest is the manner in which public/ semi-public/ semi-private and private entrances are organized. The public entrances of the buildings allow people to fully permeate the façade. The even ground

plane of the sidewalk ensures that access to these spaces is easy and even welcomed. The semi-public spaces are somewhat less discernable. In this way, the commercial aspect of Boulevard Saint Laurent provides explicit rules of access. The even ground plane of the sidewalk ensures that access to these spaces is easy and even welcomed. The semi-public spaces are somewhat less discernable. In this way, the commercial aspect of Boulevard Saint Laurent provides explicit rules of access. An attempt to mediate between the scale of the larger buildings, perhaps more 'foreground' architectures and the human scale is evidenced in the serendipitous configuration of urban furniture along Boulevard Saint Laurent. In front of the Toronto Dominion Bank, for example, there is a fence and gate, steps, a wheelchair ramp, a statuesque light-post and a bench for the nearby bus stop populate the area near the TD bank, adjacent to the site. Historically, the comfortable human scale of the neighborhood surrounding Boulevard Saint Laurent has yet to be eroded as it is referenced even in the case of larger scale constructions.

The uniqueness of Boulevard Saint Laurent has become vulnerable in an era of gentrifications as it increasingly embodies characteristics one would expect on any main street in a North American city. The public façade of the Boulevard therefore constitutes a defining element of the 'city of consensus,' the public architectural space that is agreed upon at an urban scale. It represents the space of the city that is constructed with 'everyone' in mind, its formal characteristics predominantly defined by accepted standards and common use rather than individual expression. In this respect, it is fair to say that everyone 'agrees' on the front, or the facades presented to the public realm. This public reality is in contrast to the deep inhabitation of the alleyways. However, these semi-public spaces propose important urban considerations, an idea of architectural

form that is more indicative of lives of those who inhabit the neighborhood.

3.6: Existing Demographics of Boulevard Saint Laurent:

Demographically, the neighborhood surrounding the Boulevard has always been in 'dynamic equilibrium' with residents who are of various cultural, social and economic backgrounds: the neighborhood is capable of supporting various activities that are not 'at odds' with each other. A mixture of students, families and single working people call the neighborhood their home, though for the most part they do not purchase homes and set up only temporary residence there. Under the pressures of gentrification, the practice of renting - prevalent among Montréalers - is destabilized and made unpredictable. In this way, gentrification highlights the instability of renting.⁵³ For example, new arrivals to Montréal with limited means, who at one time would have made their first home and/ or business on the Boulevard, can hardly afford to set up shop next to trendy new chain-stores that decorate the Boulevard **[Figure 24]**. As a consequence, newcomers must settle in areas outside the downtown core **[Figure 25]**. At one time, the independent spirit of new arrivals to the city resulted in a certain sense of 'proprietaryship' of the street. Many businesses in the area have been in existence for over seventy years, and most bear the unmistakable stamp of the Boulevard in their unpretentious air, an inheritance from the hard times of the depression.⁵⁴

⁵³ Denis, Paul-Yves. *The Development of the Various Districts. Montréal: Field Guide*. Ed. Ludger Beauregard. Montréal: Les Presse de l'Université de Montréal, 1972.

⁵⁴ Gubbay 8.

Figure 24 and 25: An advertisement for American Apparel, a trendy clothing chain store that has recently set up shop on the Boulevard, and a view into a Portuguese bakery located nearby. Both market their merchandise by appealing to an idea of sensuality. While the clothing store can effectively communicate its appeal through an on-line ad, the selling points of the bakery- the aroma of freshly baked goods- are rooted in lived reality and more accessible through actual experience. Source: www.americanapparel.com. Photograph by author.

3.7: The Outdoor Room

Boulevard Saint Laurent does not merely function as a street, but as a public room of the city and an integral part of urban life in Montréal.⁵⁵ Boulevard Saint Laurent continues to support a network of public and semi-public spaces that stimulates (a network of) social encounters and informal social interactions and unplanned encounters based more on chance than on planning. According to McGill University urban theorist Derek Drummond:

*Good cities are places where the whole adds up to much more than the sum of its parts; where each building is part of a larger whole; where there is a healthy density of use and occupancy to allow for healthy and voluntary interaction; where balance exists between the public and private domains and where architecture is the embodiment and expression of the common rules of conduct and place.*⁵⁶

One finds these statements to be descriptive of the character of Saint Laurent Boulevard. People feel a certain level of comfort on the Boulevard, participating in activities there that are usually confined to the domestic domain. **[Figure 26].**

⁵⁵ Sheppard, Adrian. "Housing that belongs to Montréal Streets." Grassroots, greystones & glass towers: Montréal urban issues and architecture. Bryan Demchinsky (Editor). Montréal : Véhicule Press, 1989. 209.

⁵⁶ Ibid 210.

Figure 26: *Montréal's residents feel comfortable partaking in activities on the Boulevard that would be usually confined to the domestic realm- for example, an impromptu carwash on the Boulevard is an activity that in many other cities would only take place in the car owner's driveway. Photograph by author.*

The same financial constraints that generate vernacular languages of architecture are also responsible for dynamic levels of social interaction. Crowding, small rooms and extended families forced residents to seek refuge outside on the Boulevard in suitable weather. In this way, the public spaces of the city became an extension of the apartments and homes of residents. Today this tradition continues: one notices that the park benches that line the street are often occupied, as is the semi-public space of the steps leading into shops and restaurants.

The area historically known as the 'Jewish Main,' bordered by Pine and Rachel Streets on Boulevard Saint Laurent, (now populated by Spanish and Portuguese communities) is an example of a fully inhabited place.

People seem to treasure social interaction and to inhabit the Boulevard as a public room of the city.

The existing streetscape contributes to the feeling of community that is indelibly linked to the identity of Boulevard Saint Laurent. Berson's stone yard is an excellent example of architecture that is infiltrated by the life of the city. A venerated establishment, Berson's stone yard **[Figures 27 and 28]**, in operation since 1922, represents a considerable zoning anomaly, set amongst the tertiary services and residential typologies on the Boulevard.

Figure 27 : A view of Berson's stone-yard(3884 Boulevard Saint Laurent), from Rue Bagg. Photograph by author.

Figure 28: *The original sign for Berson's stone-yard is written in Hebrew, indicative that this portion of the Boulevard was once home to a predominantly immigrant population. Photograph by author.*

On this site, tombstones are engraved with the names of the city's recently deceased. The chain link fence surrounding the yard provides a barrier between the property and the Boulevard, but it acts not so much as a barrier than as a viewing screen, distancing the elements within from the street by means of a metallic veil. **[Figure 29].**

Figure 29: *The chain-link fence demarcating the property line of Berson's stone-yard acts as a screening device, framing the activities of the Boulevard from the tombstones beyond. Photograph by author.*

Berson's fence thus functions as an instrument of comfortable distancing from the site's content and provides the occasion for a poetic reconciliation with the tombstones. A small retaining wall, the concrete footing of the fence, forms an impromptu bench in front of the property. Curiously, as people take their ice cream from the neighboring parlor, and consume it on that bench, they seem untroubled by the stone yard background, possibly enjoying the temporality of the moment against the permanence of the granite and marble festoons that surround them. On Sundays, this occupation ceases, one supposes, out of respect for the somber tone that marks the site on this day when families traditionally

come to finalize decisions regarding their deceased relation.⁵⁷ Berson's stone yard is therefore one of many existing examples that the Boulevard supports a domestic program on the urban scale. It is there without prohibiting other things from happening nearby. It welcomes neighbors. In fact, Berson's stone yard provides an example of the infiltration of the urban framework, and the resulting deep inhabitation of the city's public spaces. The property is adjacent to several emblematic Montréal sites: Schwartz's delicatessen is across the street, Schubert Baths further North, and the cross on Mont Royal is visible from the cross streets.

Nestled above the public office that serves the stone yard is the less accessible, private studio of Canadian sculptor Stanly Lewis, an artist capable of making rock yield to the sensuality of his creations. **[Figure 30]**. This more secluded studio contains several of Lewis's sculptures; however, his gallery is the Boulevard itself, found below. One fortunate enough to make his acquaintance may be taken on a tour of his work, on display in several of the businesses on Boulevard Saint Laurent. Adjacent to the stone yard is the Cococabana, a small bar that functions as the unofficial office of Canadian Film Board legend Ryan Larkin.⁵⁸ The recent documentary Ryan, about his life, has brought him a revival of fame. It is here that he frequently meets with his agent, and, receives business calls on the bar's payphone! This section of the Boulevard retains a no-nonsense, low-key tone, characteristic of historic Boulevard Saint Laurent, although the process of gentrification is in looming proximity, taking place a few blocks closer to Saint Catherine's Street. Berson's morphology thus did not impede a variety of activities from developing around it, but rather, it encouraged it.

⁵⁷ Lee, Michelle. Field Study. Montréal, March 23rd, 2004.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

Figure 30: *The "pink lady," a marble sculpture by Montréal artist Stanley Lewis. The piece makes reference to the dual nature of the Boulevard and the larger city. Photograph by author.*

3.8: Aspirations

Boulevard Saint Laurent's greatly increased land values are tied to serious questions about the city: will private producers, (even cultural ones), manage the public spaces henceforth? Will the development of this historic area purposefully lead to a kind of 'disneylandization' or to a spiritless downtown, such as those found in many North American cities? Will the anticipated land and property speculation have the effect of evicting those artists who have found sanctuary within this zone, and who are, after all, the source of this development that is at last becoming possible? Will the increase in property value discourage newcomers and large immigrant populations, more specifically, who likely arrive in the city with lesser means, from choosing to settle there? One is optimistic that, like Las Ramblas, the public space of Boulevard Saint Laurent will be permeable enough to absorb tourists into daily life while retaining the unique character of the Boulevard, despite the process of gentrification. Though the Boulevard will undoubtedly have to contend with accommodating an increasing number of tourists, the activity of their transposed daily life holds the potential to animate the spaces of the Boulevard and the urban framework at large.

Today Boulevard Saint Laurent still provides a transitory home for many, but it must also now face the challenge of reconciling the integration of travelers and local residents in a way that revitalizes the real, imaginary and mythic territories of the Boulevard. This integration must leave room for the Boulevard's flaws, contradictions, and incongruities. These characteristics are important to retain as they are descriptive of the process of several generations of inhabitation of the Boulevard, and not simply based on considerations of commercial viability.

Chapter Four: Behind the Boulevard

4.1: The City Inside

In examining the architecture that compose the identity of a visited city, one naturally looks to the important public spaces that form the urban composition. Public spaces present the visitor with a projection of the consensual identity of the city. However, these spaces constitute only a fraction of the city: the outer city. The domestic private spaces of the city are far less accessible to the visitor. Permanent residents of Montréal, appropriately take ownership of domestic architecture, and consequently, private spaces of dwelling are associated with the permanence of residency. Unless invited into a resident's home, the visitor's experience of the city is limited to the 'permitted uses' of public space. As a result, the city's private spaces remain largely unknown to the visitor. Yet, domestic architecture is fundamental to the identity of the visited city, for it describes urban lived reality at the scale of the individual. It is the day-to-day rituals of dwelling of the 'city inside' that are arguably responsible for shaping the surrounding urban condition. Domestic architecture is not only the most authentic reflection of the ideals of an era but also the faithful mirror of the social and economic conditions of a population.⁵⁹ It is therefore the private, domestic spaces that bear to a city's character, however discretely so.

How one inhabits the city through the rituals and sequencing of everyday life is very specific to the urban. For example, July 1st marks the day on which most rental leases in the city are renewed. Those who reside in rental units partake in a city-wide move on this day **[Figure 31]**. While the

⁵⁹ Marsan, Jean Claude. Montréal in evolution : historical analysis of the development of Montréal's architecture and urban environment. Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1981. 256.

symbolic connotations of the date of July 1st, Canada's Confederation Anniversary, pass by largely unobserved, the main activity on the streets is the activity of people moving in (and out of) rental units. Discarded furniture decorates the street, and items are quickly claimed and find a new home furnishing others' apartments. Events such as the citywide move exemplify the unique interrelationship of domestic life and urban space in Montréal.

Figure 31: *Chairs left in a Montréal alleyway on Moving Day, July 1st 2005. Abandoned furniture is often "left," not exclusively as garbage, but in anticipation, (and with the understanding of residents), that it will be claimed and find a new home in the city. Photograph by author.*

4.2: Montréal's Urban Fabric as 'Codex'

Montréal's underlying spatial framework is complex. The city is a system of measurements and dimensions imposed upon a geographical place. How these dimensions become encoded within the architecture of the city speaks of the specific historical factors from which they are derived. One can look to the city of Montréal as unique in North America by virtue of the strength of its urban fabric. Observing it, one can derive a sense of the local building codes, available building materials and skill level of the local trades. The rigorous information encoded in the urban framework enables visitors to rationally navigate and find their way within its fabric. The highly refined nature of Montréal's urban code offers a fruitful terrain for the exploration of the very idea of 'urban framework.' The complexity and richness of Montréal's urban code warrants description through the metaphor of an "urban codex."

A 'codex' refers to a loosely bound manuscript. In ancient times, the development of the codex was seen as an improvement over the commonly used scroll format. The codex was a compact book that could be carried in a saddlebag and used italic type as a means of increasing print density, and therefore was more portable- considerably easier to take on one's travels. Historically, codexes are usually named for their most famous resting-place, whether it be a city or a private library. While acknowledging the origins of the word, for the purposes of this thesis codex is here used to refer to a description of information encoded in the architecture of the city. The term codex describes well the 'book' of Montréal's urban order. The buildings of Montréal form the text of this urban codex, streets become the codex's pages, and specific neighborhoods constitute unique chapters in the unbound manuscript of

Montréal. One 'reads' the text of this fascinating document by traversing and discovering its urban spaces, in essence, uncovering the layers of the city through the experience of travel.

Elements of Montréal's 'codex' infiltrate the city's architectural forms, shaping its unique urban spaces. Although certain idiosyncrasies in Montréal's urban fabric- spaces not clearly defined as belonging to either the public or private realm - serve to describe its specific character previously defined as 'the city inside.' These spaces are also indicative of the degree to which the city influences its architecture, and provide a counterpoint to the rigidity of the urban system

Among the oldest of North American urban morphologies, the unique fabric of Montréal and particularly that surrounding Boulevard Saint Laurent is decipherable by virtue of its distinct urban and architectural characteristics, notably its *porte-cochère*, alleyways, yards, and external staircases to name a few.

4.3: *Porte-Cochère*

One specific element that defines the unique character of Montréal's city blocks is the passageway or *porte-cochère* that cuts through buildings bordering the street. **[Figure 32]**. The *porte-cochère* eliminated the need for passages through buildings from the street, cutting down on the space allotted to the ground floor apartments. These *porte-cochère* are a function of the building lots being often wider than deep, allowing for a horse and cart to access the courtyard beyond.

The urban spatial implications of this system are that beneath the apparent uniformity conferred by the orthogonal traffic grid, the urban fabric is actually textured like Gruyere cheese. The resultant form is that inside the traffic blocks there is plenty of room for the unexpected: an extension of spatial appendages reaching from the public space of the street into the private residential realm. The passages play an important role in mediating the transition of the public space of the streets and the arguably semi-public space of the alleyway.

In many instances, the presence of the *porte-cochère* served to provide access to utility sheds located adjacent to the alleyway, joining the rhythm of city life to the sequence and ritual of inhabitation characteristic of the domestic realm. These rear sheds were an important component of urban life as they were used to store coal and other things typically found in the attic, which was instead used as living space. Composed of light, less durable materials, the rear sheds constitute an interplay of masses against the vertical galleries of the residences. As a result, the alleys often display heterogeneous constructions in interesting spatial relationships. Once their original function became obsolete, these sheds have become,

in essence, urban fixtures. The usefulness of the *porte-cochère* has dissipated; however, where they have not been blocked in with new shop fronts, they provide access to the larger network of alleyways.

Figure 32: *The Port-cochère in its various permutations.* Photograph by author.

4.4: Alleyways

The alleyways bear witness to the immediacy of activities of the Boulevard. Unique to urban space, the alleyways are semi-public space, as they are less apparent and therefore less traversed. Being quite unpleasant from ground level, the alleyway is preferably observed by residents from the balconies and external staircases of surrounding apartments.⁶⁰ The alleyways are where urban life is negotiated on a daily basis. For example, many undefined activities that describe the unique inhabitations of the city take place in the alleyway. The alleyway plays a critical role in joining and connecting homes and lives, presenting the opportunity for shortcuts and ultimately evidencing the inner workings of the urban system. **[Figure 33]**. In the alleyway, one finds an assortment of unique inhabitations, including: the accretion of this serviced city through add-ons, extensions, unresolved skins, cubist encroachments, unrefined compositions of entrance and exit sequences and a variety of elevations from the ground. **[Figure 34]**.

⁶⁰ Lee, Michelle. Field Study. Montréal, March 23rd, 2004.

Figure 33: An urban study detailing the network of alleyways that connect the public and semi- public urban spaces of the neighborhood surrounding Boulevard Saint Laurent. Analysis by author.

Figure 34: The enclosure created for a staircase leading from the alleyway into one of the businesses found on the Boulevard is descriptive of the non-conformity characteristic of these unique inhabitations. Photograph by author.

This 'architecture of compromise' supports the calm outer façade, and evokes a greater sense of being scaled to human proportion and need. It is in these spaces that the individual is privy to such events as people moving in and out of domestic spaces, food and merchandise deliveries to restaurants and stores, the spectacle of workers on breaks from their jobs, and acts of retrofitting rooftops as comfortable places of leisure and repose- the daily occurrences a city dweller takes for granted. **[Figure 35]**. One sees in the alleyway the activities of the city that are often concealed. It is the place where people neither live nor work, yet this architecture makes both possible:

Metropolitan man reckons with his merchants and customers, his domestic servants and often even with persons whom he is obliged to have social intercourse. These features...contrast with the nature of the small circle in which the inevitable knowledge of individuality as inevitably produces a warmer tone of behaviour, a behaviour which is beyond a mere objective balancing of service and return.⁶¹

⁶¹ Simmel 176.

Figure 35: *Workers furnished an outdoor 'staff room' in an alleyway located behind Boulevard Saint Laurent. Photograph by author.*

The urban alleyway belongs to the realm of the living city, supporting as it does all of the activities presented to the public on the Boulevard. Access to the alleyways is provided in a specific way- this is indicative of the established order and ritual of activities such as garbage pick-up and delivery. It is a system that has been crafted by the urban system of the city- one can imagine what a huge undertaking it is to remove all of the city's garbage. Additionally, the presence of garbage on the street at night is indicative that the following day is when garbage is collected. This routine has been coordinated and adapted to suit the formative organization and geometry of the architecture of the city. Conversely, the inhabitants of the city have also adapted their everyday life to this established routine.

It is in these urban axes that one is proffered with a behind the scenes look of the inherent inner workings of urban life. The city is a place of constant

renewal. The activity and processes that we take for granted in modern urban life, are made apparent in the 'backstage' architecture of the alleyways. The architecture of the alleyways is appropriate to the tasks of several 'overlooked' activities: For example, the worker who brings the produce to the supermarkets, and the restaurant servers who take their breaks there, all inhabit the alleyway in unique ways. Interestingly, these workers take a certain artistic license to build into the alleyway, not unlike the description of the proprietorship of the street found further up the Boulevard. The division of space is approximate at best. For example, the informal break-spots are not clearly demarcated as belonging to a specific business, but rather understood through a familiarity of the social interactions that take place during these 'down-times.' This fluidity does definitely not occur on the public face of the Boulevard. There are of course some exceptions: some restaurants on the Boulevard are slightly elevated, the steps leading up to them are at times appropriated by passers-by. This can be seen at the Euro-Deli. These inhabitations fundamentally describe the interactions and rituals that construct the neighborhood surrounding Boulevard Saint Laurent.

4.5: Voids Versus Yards:

As previously described, a number of urban voids form the urban fabric surrounding the Boulevard. These voids have become ingrained in the identity of the neighborhood to the extent that newer building footprints refer to them. Rear lots of newer buildings incorporate large courtyard spaces uncharacteristic of the diminutive scale of the neighborhood. These large courtyards make reference to the rhythm of the neighboring 'underdevelopment,' but their size (much larger than older courtyards) has the unfortunate spatial implication of 'shutting the city out.' Although the newer courtyards provide green-space, these do not always reference the 'right' voids. For example, Cinema Ex-Centris provides an introspective, fenced in and park-like scene. **[Figure 36]**. The courtyard of Ex-Centris is removed from the activity of the street in a very ostentatious way: a large brick wall divides the courtyard from the street. The view of the passerby is therefore cut off, and only the office windows inside the building can view this green-space. These courtyards become an object, or 'noun.'

Figure 36: *The void of the court-yard of Cinema ExCentris is cut off from the sidewalk by a tall, imposing fence, and the solidity of a large brick wall. Photograph by author.*

The passageways invite a dynamic experience of the urban blocks: the alleyways organize the encounter of green-spaces, which though frequently unfenced, are tacitly unapproachable. **[Figure 37]**. These could be said to function as a 'verb,' a mediator of boundaries lightly demarcated and therefore still slightly accessible. The voids of green-space found in the alleyway invite journey and views into others' lives, in a dynamic relationship that is scaled to the individual. These yards are infused with a character uncommon to a large city; on display are things such as bicycles, cages filled with pets and boxes of odd found items. In contrast, the void of the courtyard of Cinema ExCentris contributes to the impersonal distancing that marks the disappearance of the yard. In this way, the city is there closed out from the street.

Figure 37: *The boundaries of back-yards located behind Boulevard Saint Lauren are lightly demarcated by see-through chain link fencing, inviting the passerby to view into resident's outdoor domestic space. Photograph by author.*

4.6: The External Staircase

It is arguably the design of edges - the devices marking the distance of the building from immediately bordering sidewalks or alleyways- that is so critical to the network of public spaces. Edges after all determine whether social activities are attracted or discouraged.

In addition to its experiential quality, the external staircase exists as a decorative object in space and as a means of visually connecting spaces.⁶² In Montréal's urban context, the external staircase reaches an archetypal status. The external staircase assumes a participatory role that reveals and intertwines the architecture it services and the larger urban context. **[Figure 38]**. Staircases require that buildings be sufficiently set back from the sidewalk. In order to have the largest possible lot, the tendency was to reduce the space of the front yard to a minimum by twisting and compressing the staircase as much as possible; the contorted stairs are sometimes quite astonishing, twisted to fit between the sidewalk and balcony. Through the archetypal tectonic language of its exterior staircases, Montréal's streetscape is extended and elevated. The staircases form a dynamic relationship to the street.⁶³

⁶² Templer, John A. The staircase. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992.38.

⁶³ Marsan.

Figure 38: *The archetypal Montréal staircase exists as both a device for viewing urban space and as a decorative (though functional), tectonic element. Photograph by author.*

The planning method that moved the circulation to the exterior of the building, economized on floor-space as well as the cost of the heating, providing a larger, rentable unit.⁶⁴ Though some critics argue that the external staircase is ill-suited (and a hazard) to winters in the extreme climate of Montréal, the counterpoint of the argument raises an equally

⁶⁴ Architect and theorist Leon Battista Alberti (1406-1472), wrote of the role of the staircase in the context of domestic architecture. Curiously, on first consideration Alberti is seemingly opposed to the helical stair in any use whatsoever, as he dismisses the stairs as a nuisance, stating, ‘*the fewer staircases that are in a house, and the less room they take up, the more convenient they are esteem'd.*’ Alberti, Leone Battista. Ten books on Architecture: the 1755 Leoni Edition. Book 1; chapter XIII. New York: Dover Publications, 1986.

valid position: the external stair is better suited to the stifling Montréal summers.⁶⁵

The external stair provides residents with more privacy, and a feeling of greater security than an inside stairwell leading to several apartments.⁶⁶ Conversely, external staircases encourage social communication from one staircase to another, from one balcony to the next one, without making such encounters unavoidable. The external staircase eliminates the potential to shelter any unwelcome visitors that may bring about unplanned encounters.⁶⁷ The openness of the external stair makes the intimacy of its circulation highly visible.

Through the external stair, the act of dwelling is intimately connected to the experience of the city. This tectonic device allows for an extension of the living space of domestic architecture. The outside staircase became the most suitable means of linking the apartments on the upper floors to the washrooms, the wells, and the laundry facilities located in the backyards, before the advent of modern conveniences that allowed for mechanized clothes-washing facilities. Consequently, the external stair became more of an instrument of communication, embellishment and spectacle.⁶⁸ The user experiences a changing exterior view, a vertical tunnel of space that dissolves, breaks and gives way to the surrounding streets and lives contained within. One is able to view the city and its architecture from a changing perspective, perhaps noticing urban euphuisms, such as the preservation of unique tectonics not visible from

⁶⁵ Issues of safety and appropriateness can be blamed largely on the landlords who lived on the first floor and were not concerned with the potential danger of these external staircases in the winter. Montréal field study guide.

⁶⁶ Montréal field study guide.

⁶⁷ Marsan.

⁶⁸ Templer 56.

the street, such as the remainders of older portions of buildings that have proved too resilient to be done away with, despite the disappearance of the original structure they were once a part of. **[Figure 39]** The spiral stair is a unique appendage that highlights these aberrations in the urban fabric.

Figure 39: A view of a 'surviving' tectonic made possible through the elevated perspective of the exterior Montréal staircase. Photograph by author.

4.7: The City of Consensus Versus Deep Inhabitation

The porte-cochère, the alleyways, voids and yards, and external staircases, all form part of what we might call the elements of 'deep inhabitation' of a city. Deep inhabitation describes inhabitation that engages with the under-workings of a city, or processes of 'urban mechanics' that make possible the daily rituals of the city. Deep inhabitations means to be aware, in one's dealing with the city, with urban codes and 'rules' of inhabitation specific to the city. Most commonly, these deep inhabitations are located in the semi-public space of the city's service alleys, and therefore crafted to suit the specific needs and activities of individuals. Though deep inhabitations are found in the spaces that belong to the larger public realm, the semi-public nature of these spaces results in them being arguably more up for grabs, spontaneous and 'deeply inhabited'. For example, due to building codes, the Boulevard is accessible to all members of the public. Like any North American city, (mindful of the limitations of the disabled), an even street level is maintained in order to provide equal access. In a similar way, each commercial venue provides large windows so that the public can easily view the merchandise within. There is no mystery to the function or contents of these public spaces. The facades that constitute the public realm of Saint Laurent Boulevard conform to, quite simply, each other, in terms of height, division of spatial articulations, and the positioning of means of entrance and egress. One can see how the 'city of consensus' is easily accessed by the visitor, whereas the alleyways present a deep inhabitation that is not immediately perceptible

Conclusion of Part I

The life of our city is rich in poetic and marvelous subjects. We are enveloped and steeped as though in an atmosphere of the marvelous; but we do not notice it. ⁶⁹

-Baudelaire

Familiarity of the urban environment instills a certain disregard for circumstances that others less accustomed might find entrancing. The visitor has been previously identified as holding a unique vantage from which to experience the city. The following discussion explores the role of the visitor in discovering and animating the visited city.

Few have articulated the experience of the visitor to a city more eloquently than Georg Simmel. Simmel's ideas can be extended into architecture through an examination of the apartment-hotel typology in the visited city. Simmel postulated both inevitability and predictability as essential to the urban system:

The movement of life, which goes equally from inside to outside and from outside to inside.... life on the earthly plane throws a bridge between the unconnectedness of things, likewise stands inside or outside the door through which it will lead from its separate existence into the world or from the world into its separate existence. ⁷⁰

The animation of the city is a multifaceted phenomenon made possible by the social interactions of the people who reside there. Coherent with the work of Simmel, the urban framework chosen here for the design of an

⁶⁹ Baudelaire, Charles. "On the Heroism of Modern Life," from *Salon of 1846. Baudelaire selected writings on art & artists.* Edited by P.E. Charvet. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981. 107.

⁷⁰ Simmel

apartment-hotel consists of an intricate web of multiple relations between individuals who are in constant interaction with one another.

As the urban environment is composed equally of both public and private places, the visitor necessarily derives knowledge of the visited city from both types of space. Consequently, the degree of familiarity one has of the city is a social calibrator of whether an individual is a resident or visitor. The visitor does not have as full a grasp of a city's urban forms and meanings, nor as complete knowledge of the city, as does the permanent resident. Architecture reveals the city to the visitor through its capacity to heighten the experience of transition, displacement and discovery.

Although one presumes urban space to be an ordered system, unpredictable forces, be they economic, cultural, social or of a legal or regulatory nature, order the visited city. However, these considerations affect formative characteristics of architecture on an individual scale and are a function of lived reality, rather than geometrical imposition. Occasionally, architecture remains in the realm of the implied, an unanswered tectonic to be dictated by surrounding built form, written in the pages of the urban codex, but not yet constructed. On those occasions, one has the sense that the urban landscape reflects and mirrors what is not yet there, but perhaps should be; one might even say that there is nothing more revealing about the urban fabric than a vacant lot. The building that is there, yet not there, speaks of, reveals and describes the urban fabric's rules, and it does so in a very efficient way – registering that which 'matters the most' about a site.

This is especially true in cities like Montréal, where the urban order has historically been strongly asserted. The geometrical precepts of the implied intervention is therefore understood through the vantage point of the existing 'apparent absence' in the urban fabric. This architectural 'should-be' brings to the forefront potential precedents, historical forms, encoded information, scale, existing urban character and archetypal influences. The apartment-hotel too is about both presence and absence, as it includes some aspects of domestic architecture, but it is the subtle exclusion, or 'minimization,' of other programmatic elements that serve to remind the visitor that the apartment-hotel is only a temporary home. For example, the extra space that it allocates to the storage of personal items- though greater than that of a typical hotel room- does not allow the visitor to collect a great deal of physical objects, and signals that the experience of the visited city is one of passage and travel. In this way the visitor is reminded of what is not there. This simultaneous absence and presence is characteristic of the apartment-hotel, as it contains, excludes and ultimately mediates certain programmatic elements characteristic of domestic and accommodation architecture. The vacant lot too, perhaps heightens awareness of 'what is there' through this selective exclusion. The empty lot is only empty as it is surrounded by lots that are not empty, and presents to the visitor something very real and decipherable. Other lots are filled up though their relationship to the emptiness of the vacant lot. The emptiness is no less real, and awaits description and habitation. In a similar way, the accommodation provided by the apartment-hotel includes only a small number of familiar elements. It is a 'limited' room in many ways that does not provide all of the supports to domestic life that one would find in a 'home.' This heightens the visitor's displacement, allowing them to collect new rituals, appropriate to their new urban surroundings.

The following proposal attempts to put into practice the ideas and concepts discussed in Part I of this thesis into the design of an apartment-hotel on a vacant lot. The specific proposal **[Plates 2-5]** aspires to reveal elements of Montréal's urban spatial code to the visitor.

Plate 2: Ground Floor Plan of the Proposed Apartment-Hotel

Plate 3: Second Floor Plan of the Proposed Apartment-Hotel

Plate 4: Third Floor Plan of the Proposed Apartment-Hotel

Plate 5: Lateral Sections through the Proposed Apartment-Hotel

Part II: The Design Proposal

2.1: *Design Objectives*

This design component of this thesis aspires to allow the city to metaphorically infiltrate architectural form and reveal the urban knowledge of a specific Montréal neighborhood. The design project aims to identify, evaluate and critically re-interpret the spatial implications of the apartment-hotel within the urban context of Boulevard Saint Laurent. The project explores, re-examines and subsequently challenges the program of the apartment-hotel as a temporary place of dwelling within the urban context of Montréal. The resulting architecture will draw inspiration from various architectural sources: both the domestic architecture that shaped the city, as well as the accommodation architecture in the city.

2.2: The Visiting Artist as Paradigmatic Urban Visitor

In order to emphasize the creative dimension of the act of inhabitation, I have decided to design the apartment-hotel specifically for visiting artists to the city of Montréal, their presence fulfilling the role of the paradigmatic urban visitor. Although this thesis acknowledges that a room never 'knows' for whom it was intended, the idea of focusing the architectural project in this way helps to isolate the central issue of this thesis: how to design an architecture that 'receives' the city around it.

Ideally a painter (and, generally, an artist) should not become conscious of his insights: without taking the detour through his reflective processes, and incomprehensibly to himself, all his progress should enter so swiftly into the work that he is unable to recognize them in the moment of transition. Alas, the artist who waits in ambush there, watching, detaining them, will find them transformed like the beautiful gold in the fairy tale which cannot remain gold because some small detail was not taken care of.⁷¹

- Rainer Maria Rilke

The life of the artists, as communicated through their work, is a rich and evocative description of their environment. Artists are people whose everyday acts of inhabitation are unfiltered by the city in a vivid and descriptive way. Quite simply put, the artist is defined as someone who creates. Webster's dictionary more specifically defines an artist as 'One, such as a painter, sculptor, or writer, who is able by virtue of imagination and talent or skill to create works of aesthetic value, especially in the fine

⁷¹ Rilke, Rainer Maria. "Oct. 21, 1907." Letters on Cézanne, edited by Clara Rilke ; translated by Joel Agee. Publisher New York : Fromm International Pub. Corp, 1985. 75.

arts.' ⁷² Another definition defines an artist in a different light, as 'One who is adept at an activity, especially one involving trickery or deceit: a *con artist*.' ⁷³ This thesis proposes that our understanding of artists bridges these two definitions, that in the case of this investigation, the artist is in the city for a specific purpose, to aesthetically comment on urban space. It could be said that metaphorically, the visitor takes on the role of an artist, in that they, by virtue of their imagination, talent and skill- here defined as a function of heightened awareness of their environment- becomes adept at an activity- for the purposes of this thesis, in the rituals of everyday life. Therefore, the visitor is an artist, and his or her work is the act of everyday life. Let us therefore imagine here found object artists, public artists, photographers of the city, and other artists whose work is to reveal the city as the paradigmatic urban visitors.

⁷² 'Artist.' Webster's new world dictionary, third college edition. New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc. 1988.

⁷³ Ibid.

2.3: Site Considerations

The project's site is a lot measuring 24 meters by 49.75 meters, nestled between Cinema ExCentris (3536 Boulevard Saint Laurent) and the Toronto Dominion Bank (3590 Boulevard Saint Laurent). The site presents several conditions that influence the design of the larger complex of artist's studios. The site spans the width of the block on Boulevard Saint Laurent. It is currently vacant, however, like many of the vacant lots that line Boulevard Saint Laurent it is temporarily being used as a parking lot. As the site is composed of two back-to-back blocks, it must acknowledge two distinct façades: the East façade, on Boulevard Saint Laurent, **[Figure 40]**, and the west façade on Rue Clark to the West. Rue Clark is the face of an almost archetypal Montréal residential neighborhood **[Figure 41]**. Though the urban significance of Boulevard Saint Laurent has been described in great detail in previous discussions, one can see how its more commercial and public character presents an interesting counterpoint to Rue Clark.

Figure 40: *The public facade of Boulevard Saint Laurent.* Photograph by author.

Figure 41: *The residential façade of Rue Clark.* Photograph by author.

Access to the site is provided by Boulevard Saint Laurent and Rue Clark, as well as an alleyway which leads off the side-street Prince Arthur. The alleyway constitutes a lesser known axis, previously described as mediating spatial qualities 'in-between' those possessed by Rue Clark and Boulevard Saint Laurent. Therefore, the site is accessed by three different axes; each having a distinct character, each traversed in a very different way.

My strategy for the design of the apartment-hotel was to consider the site in terms of three different zones that reflect three important urban conditions: the two frontal zones of Boulevard Saint Laurent and Clark Street, and the internal zone of the courtyard. There is one building mass in each zone. **[Figure 42].**

Figure 42: *The proposed apartment-hotel inhabits the three distinct zones, thereby addressing the specific axial considerations of the site. Image by author.*

Additionally, I have inserted an axis that slices East and West and constitutes the main means of passage through the site from Boulevard Saint Laurent to Rue Clark. The nature of this axis is comparable to that of a *Porte-Cochère*. The role of the *porte-cochère* as a means of passage is further emphasized by the placement of the apartment-hotel's vertical circulation to either side of this axis [Figure 43].

Figure 43: The insertion of a *porte-cochère* creates a fourth axis that allows for circulation of the site between Boulevard Saint Laurent and Rue Clark. Vertical circulation, which provides access to the guest units, is organized adjacent to the *porte-cochère* Image by author.

As the axis of the site factors strongly into the design of the project, the ground plane itself was an important consideration. The proposed ground plane of the apartment-hotel is made up of a patchwork of materials, all found in various sites around the Boulevard. For example, the exterior stairs that lead to an upper level public gallery space are clad in marble that reminds one, or perhaps provides clues to the fact that the studio of Stanley Lewis is nearby. The polished concrete that paves the areas immediate to the street is divided into segments that correspond with such influences as the footprint of surrounding buildings, and the openings of windows. In addition, where overlaps of spaces occur, the ground plane material 'infiltrates' into the bordering area, providing a material connection between the two distinct spaces **[Figure 44]**.

Figure 44: *Infiltration of materials used on the ground plane of the apartment-hotel complex provides a visual connection between the public space of the courtyard and the semipublic space of the artist's studio. A metal grate set in the walkway that extends from the alleyways allows passersby to bring objects to the artists that might prove useful in their projects. Image by author.*

For example, the material used in the artist studio is polished concrete, providing a visual continuation of the street-scape, and implying that the space of the artist too, belongs to the public realm. The interior courtyard space of the apartment-hotel complex is paved in granite tiles, a material that connotes public squares in the city.⁷⁴ In some instances, grass is used as a border as it softens the spaces between the apartment-hotel and the neighboring alleyways, inviting dwellers to pause but not pass further.

⁷⁴ The revitalization of Victoria Square, the creation of Place Jean-Paul-Riopelle, the inclusion of fountains, lighting treatments and trees (more than 500 trees) has produced a green and inviting environment for residents, workers and visitors. The integration of superior materials such as granite, aluminum, glass and wood also contribute to the quality of this environment enhancing the well-being of users. "Special Mention Montréal Quartier International de Montréal." Metropolis: World Association of the Major Metropolises
http://www.metropolis.org/Data/Files/266_Special_Mention_-Montréal.doc.

2.4: Design Issues Presented by Site Considerations

The space of the Boulevard is composed of both the obvious or immediate façade presented to the public, the more intimate, residential scale of Rue Clark, and the semi-public space of the alley. When considered together, one ascertains an understanding of the pluralistic nature of the city.

Facades:

The façade of the apartment-hotel, facing the Boulevard, emerged from a study of the interplay of foreground architecture and urban furniture found on the vicinity of the site. **[Figure 45].**

Figure 45: *The Boulevard Saint Laurent façade of the proposed apartment-hotel. Image by author.*

The apartment-hotel's Boulevard Saint Laurent façade thus reinterprets the foreground buildings' facades and inserts 'urban furniture' elements into them. For example, I have included a café and news-stand that mediate the 'front' of the apartment-hotel complex, (the façade that faces the commercial aspect of the Boulevard), in an attempt to lure passersby to infiltrate into its interior spaces. The news-stand opens up to the Boulevard by means of large garage doors. On the interior, the wall

that divides news-stand and the private space beyond which contains the apartment-hotel's amenity areas, is perforated by apertures. This wall can be seen from the street when the garage door is open. In essence, the news-stand is an urban 'layer,' one that is approached by the passerby and serves to incite curiosity about what lies beneath the 'surface' of the foreground architecture. The café also, is permeable to the street. A counter-space, where the passerby can pick-up their morning coffee fronts the Boulevard, while one of the walls slides out towards the street, thereby increasing the floor-space of the café, while still lightly demarcating the café's boundaries [Figure 46].

Figure 46: Detail from the first floor plan showing the apartment-hotel's café and news-stand located on Boulevard Saint Laurent. The wall of the café slides out towards the sidewalk, expanding the floor-space of the café and bringing the café's program in closer proximity to the activity of the street. Image by author.

The Rue Clark façade addresses the residential character of the neighborhood, and celebrates the disappearing passageways that once criss-crossed through Montréal's urban fabric. This façade presents several invitations to the passerby to permeate further into the apartment-hotel complex. To either side of the footprint of this 'block' are passageways. The North passageway is more public, as it takes into consideration the existing driveway, while the southern passage is slightly less public, as its irregular shape takes into account the skew in plan of the triplex. A further example of how the passerby is encouraged to permeate the facade is evidenced in how passers-by can view into the artist's studios. **[Figure 47]** Part of the apartment-hotel's façade on Rue Clark slides out towards the street to create a passageway that wanderers may pass through, getting an even closer view into the artist's 'open' studio. Areas considered 'private,' such as the kitchen, have the potential to reveal themselves as a passageway. For example, in the case of the kitchen and its vulnerable content, the large garage doors that protect its opening to the street may be opened at the discretion of the artist, providing a view through it to the interior courtyard of the apartment-hotel complex beyond. Like the café's sliding wall found on the Boulevard Saint Laurent façade, a public water fountain has been placed on the wall of the triplex, (adjacent to the site on Rue Clark), functioning as an urban fixture and connecting the 'gallery of the street' to the domestic program of the apartment-hotel. In this way, the boundaries of the apartment-hotel are made apparent, however, one is able to perceive the activities that lie beyond these demarcations. A balcony on the upper floor of the unit that faces Rue Clark extends from an interior landing, and an opening - the large door that separates these two spaces - the interior space that forms the landing of the stairs which lead to the more private quarters found on the upper floor of the unit extends to the exterior and forms the balcony- means this space can be

easily expanded, thereby more emphatically connecting the interior living space of the unit to the activity of Rue Clark below.

The alleyway facades in contrast 'ignore' all rules, and are the product of accumulations of materials collected and used by the artist. These units attempt to capture the fleeting spirit of the alleyway, as elements such as staircases, which out of climatic necessity must be located inside the unit, assert their presence as they are 'pushed' out into the passageways. Additionally, an outdoor walkway that bridges the two alleyway units provides a place of pause and interaction for the artists who reside in the unit to which the outdoor walkway connects. The façade of this unit is composed of the materials used by the artist, described in more detail in later discussion of the specific quality of each unit. This element references the unique constructions found in Montréal's alleyways.

Figure 47: Detail from the first floor plan of the unit for the Painter or Sculptor, showing the various ways that the urban codex infiltrates and informs the design of the apartment-hotel. Image by author.

2.5: Scales of Urban Inhabitation

Through the arguments made in previous chapters, it is apparent that the city is inhabited at various scales. In the same way that the public space adjacent to Berson's stone yard is inhabited at an intimate scale characteristic of private space- as an 'outdoor room', so too are the domestic private spaces in this design informed by the infiltration of the larger scale of the urban framework within which they are located. One will recall that the placement of a chain-link fence bordering the lot occupied by Berson's, both demarcated a space of inhabitation and invited a view into the urban landscape beyond. In this way, the program was contained, yet not inaccessible. The activities of the site- for example, the opening of the gates to accommodate the coming and going of the stone yard's patrons- are subtly evocative of architecture's potential to infiltrate urban form. In this proposal, the apartment-hotel complex takes cues from the surrounding urban framework- the boundaries of the building's inhabitation are determined by the boundaries formed by surrounding buildings: where existing buildings begin and end, where breaks in their architecture occur to facilitate entrance and egress, and where openings, such as windows are placed. Each of these formal considerations speak of the larger urban framework of the city. In this way, the design cues of the background architecture speak of exactly just that, the 'background' where activities take place that define the urban character of the city, and the resulting urban codex. These activities often go unnoticed, but are essential to the function of urban space.

The proposal therefore respects that existing architectures of the city are the result of organic development, and admits that adhering to a superficial architectural language or style would not be satisfactory. I

attempted to uncover a language of architecture that came from a study of urban practices, rather than one that superficially copied historical styles of the past. In essence, the urban logic of Montréal is not one that is dependant on an allegiance to a particular architectural style to 'fit in' or respond to its context. There is a certain logic to the existing fabric of the city, in that the minute, almost banal details of daily life are inscribed and encoded into the formal organization of its architectures. The careful placement and allocation of spaces have therefore developed so that they 'make sense' to how one inhabits the city. Examples of how this idea is manifest include everyday considerations of domestic architecture such as the placement of the mailbox, so that it is easily remembered upon arrival, or how the front porch, as viewed from the interior of the house, visually announces the arrival of visitors.

2.6: Density of Units

The density of the proposal is somewhat less than what is possible for the site to accommodate. Indeed, a greater number of apartment-hotel units than is currently being proposed could be located on the site had the proposal been for a taller building, or had the rooms been smaller. The logic behind this decision is the result of several considerations. Most importantly, the project specifically addresses three conditions presented by the site. Those conditions include the three main axes that intersect the site: Boulevard Saint Laurent, the alleyway, and Clark Street. Additionally, the potential density is relatively limited. The site is comprised of two lots. It is not in keeping with the urban fabric that the lot facing Boulevard Saint Laurent be composed solely of a residential use. In keeping with existing precedents, the first and perhaps second levels would house a commercial use, with floor 3 and potentially floor 2 used for residential use. In the same line of thought, the lot that faces Clark street has a potential capacity to hold two triplexes. In total, this configuration constitutes only six households. Given these consideration, the proposed number of units of the apartment-hotel being 12 is plausible.

As a working method, I have limited the number of units to 12. By limiting the number of units, the role of the surrounding 'urban codex' becomes much more evident. The specific space of inhabitation within each block of the artist studios as a function of the urban codex's infiltration could be studied in a more focused way. The footprint of each block, though somewhat diminutive in size, references specific relationships between existing architectures within the urban fabric. In a similar way that the metaphor of the artist as the paradigmatic urban traveler is used to emphatically describe the nature of the visitor's relationship to the city.

The simplicity of the singular 'home,' (organized within the larger complex of the apartment-hotel), aims to propose an idea or *parti* that registers what 'matters most' about the site. Furthermore, the ideas of the 'urban codex' are fluid enough to be applied in other architectural programs (not just those associated with dwelling), so the ideas presented in the apartment-hotel are intended to be 'scalable.' Evidence of the infiltration of the city and its hidden rules in the proposed apartment-hotel, for example, where the insertion of a single window in the artist's studio follows the dimensions and location of window in an adjacent architecture, or where a small place for sitting and pause is located to take advantage of a view of the city, could be designed in a way that accommodated a larger number of units and people. These urban considerations, applied in a way that is inclusive of several units, can be used to inform the design of the shorter stay units (labeled no. 8 on the plans). The risks of this decision (not to include more rooms) will be reflected upon at the conclusion of the project discussion.

One must also consider that the spaces allotted to each visitor constitutes a large work area suitable to the activities of an artist. The Cormier studio, located at 3450 A Rue Saint Urbain in Montréal provides a precedent of the city 'handing over' a piece of the urban fabric to artists in exchange for their aesthetic contributions. The artist is therefore provided with an architectural program, a functional space to support their artistic activities. In this proposal, the units are sleeping and working quarters, and they also will function as a gallery space for exhibitions, or 'open studio' events. The careful division of living and working space and consideration of public and private uses, ensure that hosting such an event is feasible. The most private spaces of the unit can be closed off and essentially 'disappear' to the visiting public, if so desired. The result is an architecture

that is layered, and able to celebrate the existing conditions and their related activities (those events that make and remake the city on a daily basis) on special occasions. The rhythm of the city infiltrates and is made apparent through the specific 'rules' of architectural space in relation to its urban framework.

2.7: The Design of the Apartment-Hotel Units [Appendix A]

The design includes gestures that take into consideration the fact that the visited city can be at times a very anonymous place for the visitor. Architecture has the potential to mediate this social discomfort, giving rise to and providing reasons for people to engage in social interaction. The way this design answers the question of providing a less vulgar and intimidating way for the visitor and resident to 'open the lines of communication,' is by including spaces of overlap between the street and the realm of the apartment-hotel.

The proposed program aims is to create a space giving 'access to the city' in the most complete way possible- that is, to create a space from which the visitor can comprehend the city's urban order and the morphological history of the site where the apartment-hotel sits. On the scale of the individual, the specific architecture of the apartment-hotel speaks of how individuals animate the spaces of the city. Montréal's preference for vibrant public spaces is taken into account in the design of the individual units of the apartment-hotel complex. The design for the units contained within the apartment-hotel project follow the same basic layout, acknowledging the repetitive logic that typifies accommodation architecture. The proposed three-part building is engaged in the urban fabric and urban life in the following important ways. The program is a more precise version of the apartment-hotel, as it integrates temporary living space with studios for three types of artists: Painters and Sculptors, Craftspersons and Found-Art Artists, and Photographers and Sound Artists.

The project is organized into three distinct blocks. The design of the building footprint and section is generated by architectural and urban

design cues from the surrounding neighborhood. The unit for the painter or sculptor is located on the west side of the site faces Rue Clark. It is a 2 storey unit, with a double height studio space to accommodate the activities of the artist. There are three large units in this block, with space to accommodate more than one artist, or an artist who has a family staying with them. The unit for the found object artist or craftsperson is located in the middle of the site. There are two units located here, both three storeys high. The first floor contains the studio space, and the third floor contains the more private spaces for sleeping and bathing. The second floor is largely outdoor, and provides views for the artist into the adjacent alleyways and courtyard space, in order for them to be on the look-out for various 'abandoned' materials that might be useful to their craft. The photographer or sound-artist unit is located on Boulevard Saint Laurent. It occupies the third floor of the block, above the café and news-stand, on the first floor and the apartment-hotel gallery and administration and amenity spaces below on the second floor. The position of this unit allows for artists to selectively filter and collect sounds and views of the activities of the Boulevard as well as the architectural programs located below.

Unit for the Painter or Sculptor:

Contained in the Rue Clark block, the Painter's or Sculptor's unit promotes display through the transparency of the tectonic language and material palette employed. As this unit faces Rue Clark, it will be visible to passers-by, and attempts through its massing and apertures to engage individuals with the process of artistic creation contained within. As previously mentioned, large garage doors on the West and East façade can be opened, so that the kitchen space is revealed to the city, in essence, becoming its own 'alleyway,' providing a view to the interior of the

apartment-hotel complex. The large window on the North side of the unit reveals the activities of the artist to those walking through the passage-way on the North side of the unit. This large window swings in, to metaphorically 'let the city in.' Additionally, the larger window sills invite passersby on nearby Rue Clark, or perhaps those passing through the apartment-hotel complex, to stop and take a seat on the ledge provided by this 'extra space.'

The act of 'opening in' a window therefore becomes a way for the inhabitant to invite passersby into their domestic space, in essence, an architectural indication that the inhabitant is open to having people near. The large opening on Rue Clark that opens to transform into the 'gallery of the street,' engages artists and their work with the everyday life of the passer-by. The unit supports the activities of painters and sculptors through its spatial layout as well as with the spaces it reserves for the storage of materials and work. The artist will likely spend most of their time in this unit, as the artistic process is time intensive, with much focus *in situ* on a specific canvas or material.

Unit for the Craftsperson or Found-Art Artist:

Contained in the middle block, bisected by the alleyway between the painter's and sculptor's unit and the photographer and sound-artist unit, the craftsperson's or found-art artist's unit promotes functionality of movement in space, as this type of artist processes a great deal of material while working with a number of tools and instruments, all of which must be readily accessible. Because the unit shares a boundary with the alleyway and its front door is very large, and because of a generous stoop without a guard rail, passersby would be invited to look inside. The life of

the artist could be punctuated by these visits. One of the alleyway units includes a pass through opening where passersby can hand materials to the artist whose work pertains to the found-arts. This space is comparable to a natural extension of the alleyway, an infiltration. The life of residents could become punctuated by pauses of passerby, stopping to peer into the studio's windows. This unit responds to the urban site condition of the alleyway, and employs a system of storage integrated within the façade. The materials contained within the shelving apparatus attached to the structure visually compose the character of its façade. The façade therefore becomes depictive of the nature of the artist's work. It is likely other artists who will pass by this unit, as it is situated within the nucleus of the larger complex. The method of construction therefore imparts knowledge of the technical aspect to a certain craft. Additionally, the unit's proximity to the alleyway makes it functionally convenient to bring in larger found objects, from the network of alleyways to which the units are spatially connected. The spaces allotted for the storage of materials and tools is of high importance in this unit.

Unit for the Photographer or Sound Artist

Located inside the block that faces Saint Laurent, the Photographer's or Sound Artist's unit allows for a critical filtering of external stimuli. These units, by their placement, allow street sounds and imagery to filter into their realm. The artists residing in these units, critically assess this external stimuli, and use it in the production of their art. This faces Boulevard Saint Laurent, and employs a tectonic that is largely insulated from the city, except at strategic apertures that allow for light and sound to pass into the artist's creative world. The unit of the sound artist or photographer attempts to go unnoticed to the surrounding street, acting as a kind of

architectural observer of the life and activity of the Boulevard. A sense of 'inconspicuousness' is further substantiated by a façade which conforms to the larger city of consensus; responding to the spatial framework already in place by virtue of the adjacent constructions. Its proximity to the Boulevard means that the unit can act as an instrument of sorts, taking in the city, and perhaps presenting its work by projecting it out through the unit to the urban environment. This unit also addresses the larger urban characteristic of Montréal, the *porte-cochère*, as the units share a balcony, bridging the *porte-cochère* below that slices through the apartment-hotel complex.

2.8: Role of Public and Private Spaces

As described, each unit has the potential to function as a gallery space, in addition to housing a domestic program. During certain times of their stay, the artist may choose to host an open house to put their work on display for residents of the city. Consequently, a number of the city's residents will be entering the private domestic space of the artist. The private space that contains the architectural program- mostly closely associated with the domestic realm: acts of cooking, sleeping and bathing - are enclosed in a centralized core in the unit. If residents will be entering the artist's unit, the artist has the ability to close off these private spaces, so that they are out of view. This sets up an interesting dichotomy, as the visitor, usually shut out from the domestic spaces of the city, has the capacity to keep certain aspects of their everyday life private, and these spaces take on an element of the unknown private space. In this way, the space of the visitor is not simply the generic space of the typical hotel room.

Conclusion of Part II:

Despite the way modern travel has demystified the places in the world we have never yet been to, the visited city holds a promise of anticipated mystery; it is there that the familiar will become strange, and where the urban fabric will be navigable only through the visitor's discovery of spatial anchors. The visited city is indeed characterized by the 'geometry and anguish,' Lorca spoke of.

The apartment-hotel strongly inflects the sense of temporary belonging that visitors seek for the duration of their stay. In terms of architectural typologies, the apartment-hotel is a hybrid building composed of programmatic elements that speak simultaneously of transience and permanence. Through the inclusion of fewer supports to domestic life than one would find in a 'home,' the apartment-hotel heightens the visitor's displacement, structuring and locating the visitor's new collection of sequences and rituals of inhabitation. In essence, the architecture of the apartment-hotel holds the potential for the visitor to more fully participate and experience the lived reality of the city. Through its incompleteness as a 'home,' and through its interconnectedness with its urban environment, the apartment-hotel implicitly reminds the traveler that their experience of the city is temporary or fleeting. The apartment-hotel room's 'missing programmatic elements' in themselves assert a presence: one is reminded of how they 'made do without it,' or how a new understanding or appreciation of the city, and of life itself, was garnered as a result of the temporary home's limitations.

The privileged position occupied by the visitor in the visited city is that of objective witness to the activities of everyday urban life. While habituated

dwellers come to overlook it, the visitor notices the essence of a city's careful architectural orchestration. The visitor's objectivity can be a very positive element in visited urban space. The apartment-hotel addresses this concern by providing the 'reason,'-through the inclusion of simple programmatic provisions- for visitors to partake in social interactions essential to the experience of daily life in the visited city.

The degree to which a visitor is allowed access to the city is determined by the permeability of the spaces that constitute the urban fabric. This relationship is clearly inscribed in the level of permeability between individual units of accommodation architecture and the larger urban context. This thesis has explored marked differences amongst the accommodation conditions provided by the mainstream, boutique and apartment-hotel; one can suppose that the impact on the urban fabric is of equal significance.

Boulevard Saint Laurent is and continues to be a 'corollary space' to the city's official formal spaces. This street stands as a strong illustration of a city's capacity to 'infiltrate' architectural form, and reciprocally, of architecture's capacity to register a city's identity - in order to in turn reveal it to a visitor through the production of urban space.

Given where I have arrived at in the design of the apartment-hotel, it would be possible to re-consider the program, and further articulate the artists' studio program from that of the apartment hotel. Limiting the number of units allowed for a focused exploration of the 'urban codex's infiltration' of specific spaces of inhabitation within the unit, but it also has several consequences that are seemingly at odds with the theoretical component of this thesis. For example, the density of the apartment-hotel

being somewhat less than what the site could accommodate, connotes gentrification.

The urban analysis and historical research in chapters 1, 3 and 4 did reveal that small-scale interventions were most suited to the neighborhood. We also saw an example of a large construction on Boulevard Saint Laurent, the 'megablock' formed by Cinema Ex-Centris, that was not strongly receptive to its urban fabric and context. The small-scale proposal presented above responded to these findings. The processes that affect neighborhoods' fabrics and social balance over time are site specific, and finding the correct architectural response to an urban site like the one studied here it is never simply a matter of 'density,' or 'public space.' What this thesis underlines is that in order to make an architecture appropriate, the city must be examined on a case by case basis, interweaving 'familiar' urban elements amongst those that are 'strange' and not easily found elsewhere. From the perspective of travel and discovery, it is often the aberrations or differences in the visited city that incite a sense of joy or discovery in the visitor's experience of urban space. Still, the proposal runs the risk, in practice, of being exclusionary due to the number of rooms it yields. It is therefore important here to note the metaphoric dimension of this thesis. The proposal's footprint exists more so as *parti* generated by the conditions of Montréal's surrounding urban codex than as an intervention that is cognizant of more practical considerations. Metaphors can be useful in generating narratives or rethinking certain architectural conventions regarding program, but ultimately must be used carefully. From an architectural vantage, especially, it is necessary to recognize their limitations when applied to real world situations and in addressing issues of practicality. For these reasons, it becomes apparent that a programmatic reversal may have

been more appropriate here, wherein the inclusion of more of the shorter stay units, which are more evocative of the 'background architecture' that describe the character of Boulevard Saint Laurent, would take on more importance, and the artists' studio and infrastructure (gallery, café) would recede. This reversal of program would allow the 'background' architecture- that which supports the ritual of the everyday- to be more clearly registered. The inclusion of more shorter stay units also more clearly distinguishes this project from comparisons to that of the 'Boutique' hotel.

This thesis has discussed in detail the 'ritual of the everyday,' however it acknowledges that this term is vague at best. One who has occupied the position of the visitor can understand how being in an unknown place for a substantial amount of time alters the way that their day unfolds. For the duration of their stay, a constant sense of unsettlement describes the visitor's ritual. However, on the return home, the visitor clings to the traces of passage, in an attempt to duplicate and recapture a time when they did not feel the burden of responsibility of their material possessions and 'usual life,' nor feel the limits of the four walls that, rather than revealing their sense of displacement, enclosed and protected them for a time. The subtle differences in one's daily ritual form the essence and pleasure of travel: a situation of amorous disarray of place. These slight adaptations, and the awareness of a potential different order of life, are considerations that never fully leave the traveler.

Montréal's code is more a codex than a code, a metaphorical manuscript the visitor 'pages through' for the duration of their stay. The *flâneur* experiences urban space through architecture codex."reading this unbound document, awaiting revisions. The visitor uncovers the layers of the city's development. This thesis has demonstrated that the architecture

of Montréal is most successful when guided by the rules of such a 'codex.' This codex is flexible, malleable enough to acknowledge sites and places of 'apparent absence' that reveal the city through their emptiness. In the same way, the experience of the traveler is heightened by reminders of their displacement, when there is room enough to absorb new experiences. Specific spatial conditions and devices - the porte-cochère, alleyways, external staircases, voids and yards- were responsible for the sense of constant transformation that permeated Montréal's urban fabric, while ensuring that the city's architecture remained tied to the scale of the individual. The Apartment-Hotel for Artists, discussed in the second part of the thesis, attempted to illustrate how these devices can be reinterpreted in a contemporary language of architecture. This thesis acknowledges that it has explored a limited palette of the spatial devices, and that the fabric of Montréal undoubtedly proffers many more that carry an equal, and perhaps more substantial weight in conveying the ideas discussed here.

Fundamentally, this thesis attempted to illustrate that cities like Montréal possess a strong and legible urban morphology that allow for a continuity of inhabitation, as the city in a sense occupies its architecture. Through a process of deep inhabitation, both residents and visitors play a formative role in the architecture of the city, and conversely, the city comes to deeply infiltrate architectural form, describing itself in every space. This narrative connects the city to life, and life to the city. One never forgets the City in the architecture it contains, and urban space remains locked in a union of constant consideration of the architecture that it gives rise to. Urban space and architecture evolve simultaneously, in a process of organic development. In this way, architecture finds its place in the city, and the city infiltrates architectural form. As a hybrid typology, the

apartment-hotel inherently evokes a sense of transient belonging essential the visitor's discovery of urban space. It provides a home that encourages the visitor to discover the city, and invites the surrounding urban activities to be influences that infiltrate personal daily rituals. The specificity of this narrative, the union of architecture and city, awaits discovery by the visitor.

Appendix A: Design of the Apartment-Hotel Units

Appendix A.1: Perspectives of the unit for the Painter or Sculptor. Image by author.

Appendix A.2: Perspectives of the unit for the Found-Art Artist or Craftsperson. Image by author.

Appendix A.3: Perspectives showing the courtyard space of the apartment-hotel. Image by author.

Appendix A.4: Perspective showing the outdoor gallery of the apartment-hotel. Images by author.

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