OCCUPY GRIFFINTOWN

Activating Public Space

by

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ABSTRACT

From a Ghost town to a Sleeping town?

Griffintown was, up to recently, a forgotten neighbourhood in Montreal. The locals often referred to it as a “ghost town” due to the deterioration of the built environment. Although this image is not necessarily flattering, urban ruins are celebrated during walking tours, acting as collective memory anchors.

The neighbourhood is now facing rapid housing development (condos) because of its proximity to the downtown area as well as the Canal Lachine. The process of revitalization, in this case, does not allow for spontaneous action by residents and their role in the process has been neglected. While the revitalization of a neighbourhood is often associated with building anew or refurbishing old historic buildings, one must ask: could buildings and infrastructure in their actual state (more or less decaying), be useful for the creation of a new identity for the neighbourhood? Urban ruins, in their incompleteness have the potential to become anything and can therefore trigger imagination. With an increasing number of residents moving in and the (inevitable?) destruction of the existing fabric, the neighbourhood’s identity is shifting. Can public space help shape this new identity without neglecting the past?

With a particular interest toward the neighbourhood’s history marked by the development of means of transportation (boat, train, highway, etc.) and the idea of preserving some of the urban ruins, mobile public space is proposed as a way to activate four sites in Griffintown.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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PROLOGUE

MARIE looking at prices of condos in Griffintown on her laptop while sipping coffee in her kitchen in le Plateau, on the second floor of a duplex.

MARIE: Patrick, do you think it's a good idea to buy a condo right now in Griffintown? I mean we both got promoted, we definitely have the money...

PATRICK (*scowling*): I'm really not sure Marie, maybe we should wait? My friend, Vincent, the real estate agent, do you remember him?

MARIE looks displeased; she pinches her lips as if she was trying not to say something.

MARIE: mmm...

PATRICK: He warned me that the market was about to crash and that buying right now is not a good idea, especially not in Griffintown...

MARIE turning her laptop towards Patrick:

Figure 1: W Phase 3, Griffintown (Source: GCA immobilier, 2017)

MARIE: But look how pretty this is? We've been waiting too long already; let's just buy a condo!
 This Le William Condo looks amazing! Plus, were wasting money by renting!
 Come on Patrick...

PATRICK (*rushes out*): I'll think about it, oh no! I'm late for work, see you later Marie!

MARIE is left alone. She stops her research, thinking she had just found the perfect condo. She then opens La Presse on her computer as she does every morning.

Figure 2: Daily News (Source: image edited by author, original image from La Presse)

MARIE is stunned when she realises that there has been a disappearance in the exact same condo she was looking at.

MARIE (*to herself*): Maybe it's not a good idea after all...

*****

PATRICK comes back home reluctantly, knowing he will have to convince MARIE to give up the idea of buying a condo in Griffintown.

PATRICK: Marie, I'm Home!

MARIE (*watching the news*): Come watch TV, there's something about a missing girl in Griffintown!

NEWS REPORTER: A mysterious tenant has disappeared in Griffintown. She recently had moved in Le William Phase III. Opponents to the developer are using this situation to shed light on vacancy issues in the numerous new condo towers being built in the neighbourhood. They hope to stop the construction of phase IV of the project. According to the landlord M. McLeod, the police did not take his case seriously and he therefore had to hire a private investigator. Sources tell us his name is Terry Klein. While he denies being linked in any way to this story, the same group opposed to the developer presumably leaked a series of what seem to be his files.

Figure 3: Document Leaked: Fieldnotes

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(Source: image edited by author, original image from GCA immobilier)

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INTRODUCTION

"A good place to live is indeed a living space, it has and it remembers its past, its responsive to the needs of its present occupants and it suggests that there will be future changes to come." - Teresa Corina Johannesma

In North America, urban decline has been closely linked to suburbanization¹. Urban sprawl, or the "edge-less" city has contributed to the weakening of functionally diverse urban centers (housing, commercial and institutional functions) and the ever-increasing traffic load. Interestingly, "the art of building roads, vehicles and communication system is far more advanced and widespread than the art of making places".² Many cities are now in the process of bringing back housing into their downtown core and are looking for under-developed areas to be potentially revitalized.

Former industrial neighbourhoods are currently being gentrified in many cities because of their proximity to the waterfront and the downtown core. Since these areas were abandoned for a long period of time, their built environment is often in ruin, an advanced state of decay. Urban ruins can be characterized as "structures and places that have been classified (by someone at some point) as residual or unproductive"³. In the context of former industrial neighbourhoods they are seen as abandoned and damaged factories, foundries and infrastructure or simply wasteland. Paradoxically, ruins symbolise both the physical manifestation of the failure of the local economy, but also the potential for new wealth to be made⁴. Therefore, urban ruins are space at the interstice between a functional past and future.

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1. Chaland, Nicole and Lorenzo Magzul. (2008). "Understanding and Responding to Neighbourhood Decline and Renewal". Canadian Housing and Renewal Association, December 20, 2016. https://ccednet-rcdec.ca/files/ccednet/CHRA_Neighbourhood_Paper_R5-1_0.pdf.

2. Krier, Leon. (2009). *The Architecture of Community*. Island Press. p. xxi.

3. De Silvey, Caitlin and Tim Endenor,. (2012). "Reckoning with ruins" in *Progress in Human Geography*, p.467.

4. *ibid*, p.468.

This thesis focuses on Griffintown, a former industrial neighbourhood undergoing redevelopment in central Montreal. Being in transition, opposite built conditions coexist: new buildings and urban ruins; stability and instability; finality and possibility. Although this state of coexistence is temporary since eventually everything will be given a purpose, a new use, what could be the role- if any- of urban ruins in the urban renewal strategy? Current urban renewal strategies contribute to the creation of "placeless" environments. It is defined as the weakening of distinct and diverse experiences and identities in our everyday life.⁵ Could urban ruins, in their actual state, contribute to the creation of a new identity for the neighbourhood? Identity is based on both the experiences of the built environment, which are often shaped according to historical events, and the people experiencing them, reaffirming the importance of the social aspects of the redevelopment of neighbourhoods. This thesis project proposes the preservation of urban ruins as well as the use of mobile public space as a way to link four sites in the neighbourhood, creating a network of diverse, adaptable and ephemeral spaces, which would allow for the new residents to actively participate in the creation of a new identity for Griffintown.

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5. Relph, Edward. (1976). *Place and Placelessness*. Pion Limited:London. p.6.

Figure 5: Overlap of New and Old fabric (A garage partially destroyed and a condo tower behind).

Figure 7: Griffintown and Surroundings

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A neighbourhood is defined as: “a geographic unit with physical and social structures that are key determinants of the potential economic, social, cultural and political opportunities available to its residents”⁶. Social assets relate to the people living in the area and their investment in the community or in their particular culture. Environmental assets include the built environment (streets, housing, public space etc.) and that environment’s suitability (clean, safe etc.). Finally, economical assets can include investment in infrastructure, commercial services, adequate family income and accessibility to jobs.⁷

Neighbourhoods that don’t have a balance between social, economical and environmental assets are more vulnerable to decline. Griffintown was never a “balanced” neighbourhood because of its industrial nature. Industrial neighbourhood in Montreal were characterized by the cohabitation of dwellings, industrial buildings and railway equipment and by the absence or inadequacy of infrastructures and sanitary facilities as well as by the poor quality of a very large number of dwellings (slums).⁸ Therefore, it is the economical asset (infrastructure, accessibility to jobs etc.) that made it viable for a poor working class to live in Griffintown.

Figure 8: Components of a Neighbourhood
(Source: Image edited by author, original content from Anne Makhoul)

6. Chaland, N. and L. Magzul. “Understanding and Responding to Neighbourhood Decline and Renewal, p.3

7. Makhoul, Anne. (2007) «ANC Sketches». December 21, 2016. <http://neighbourhoodchange.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/ANC-2007-Neighbourhood-Renewal-Process.pdf>, p.6.

8. Charlebois, Catherine et al. (2014). *Quartiers disparus: Red Light, Faubourg à M'lasse, Goose Village*. Les Éditions Cardinal. 311 p.

The Canal Lachine's construction in 1825 marked the beginning of the industrial era for the neighbourhood and for Montreal. Indeed, the Canal was a way to avoid the Rapids, allowing boats to go inland.⁹ Over the years, many varied types of factories were present in the neighbourhood ranging from heavy to light industrial factories (steam machines production, production of construction materials for buildings, carriages, boats and trains, food and alcohol, etc. to name a few). Two of the most known industries were the Dow's Brewery and the New City Gas, lighting up streets at night for the first time through the production of coal gas.¹⁰

The construction of the Canal, as well the numerous factories in the area provided opportunities for English immigrants, mainly of Scottish and Irish origin. However, residents were living in miserable conditions. Indeed, pollution was extensive due to the proximity of factories. Moreover, poverty was exacerbated by low salaries. For many, life was bearable due to the support of religious institutions who provided spiritual support and the possibility to escape poverty through education.¹¹

In the decade following the Great Depression the economic downturn, combined with the fact that boats could now navigate directly on the Saint-Lawrence River, caused industries to leave. The Canal Lachine was then put out of commission, marking the end of Griffintown's industrial role in the city.¹² Moreover, while the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway contributed to the industrial boom at the time, it also isolated Griffintown. Instead of letting the area de-industrialize and allow the existing community to stay there, the city of Montreal re-zoned it as light industrial.¹³ Residents could not build new houses or even renovate existing ones. In an ultimate effort to boost the economy of the area, the government decided to build a new highway (the Bonaventure highway), which did not slow down Griffintown's industrial decline and only contributed furthermore to its confinement and isolation.¹⁴ Indeed, infrastructures can sometimes become urban barriers. An urban barrier is defined as a break in the urban fabric causing disruption of the relationships of the surrounding people.¹⁵ Urban barriers such as the Canal Lachine, the Bonaventure highway and the elevated train structure surround Griffintown, making it a relatively isolated neighbourhood. In addition, the construction of the highway cut the Nazereth Fief - which represents a part of today's limit of Griffintown - in half. It was where most of the population was located. From that point on, the neighbourhood started to deteriorate to its current state. For further information on the history of the site, see appendix 1.

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9. Linteau, Paul-André. (2009). "Montréal". *Historica Canana*. Accessed Nov. 23, 2016. <http://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/montreal/>.

10. Hanna, David B. (2007). *Secteur de planification détaillée de Griffintown. Griffintown: Son histoire et son cadre bâti*. Ville de Montréal, Service de la mise en valeur du territoire et du patrimoine.

11. Ibid.

12. Janssen, Shauna. (2008). "Quartier épémère: Indeterminate territories and curatorial practice, in the individual space". (thesis master degree), Montreal, Concordia University, p.9.

13. Hanna, David B. (2007). *Griffintown: Son histoire et son cadre bâti*.

14. Ibid

15. Héran, Frédéric. (2011). "Le paradoxe du lien qui coupe: grandes infrastructures de transport, effets de coupures et accessibilité urbaine". December 19, 2016. www.polymtl.ca/mobilite/doc/Heran_Trplienquicoupe.pdf

Figure. 9: The Bonaventure Highway (Source: Radio Canada, 2014)

Figure 3.a

Figure 3.b

Figure 3.c.

Figure 3.d.

Figure 3.e.

David Wallace Marvin (1930-1975) captured Montreal of the 1960s and 1970s. These pictures are part of an exhibition called *street chronicles* at the McCord museum. They represent Griffintown and the beginning of its decline.

Figure 10. a, b,c,d,e: *Street Chronicles* (Source: David W Marvin, archives Musée McCord)

EVIDENCE # 1: URBAN BARRIERS

Figure 11. Partial Section of Wellington Street

Figure 12.: Partial Section of Wellington Street:
the Elevated Train Structure

*See Wellington street full section in appendix B

A CRITIC ON THE URBAN RENEWAL STRATEGY

Current urban renewal strategies contribute to the creation of a 'placeless' environment because the redevelopment is based primarily on political, economical and physical aspects, neglecting social ones. As Kevin Lynch explains : "Old areas are usually redeveloped to provide for some new use, to strengthen a center or an area, to remove unwanted activities or people, for profit, to increase property and tax values and to increase political prestige or control."¹⁶ Theory on urban renewal states that the first step to downtown revitalization is to establish a vision with a group that is composed of residents, promoters and professionals prior to the establishment of a plan and the modification of zoning laws.¹⁷ Yet, "today, criticism and public objections rarely cause delays in major architecture and urban projects."¹⁸

Montreal city council, in an effort to launch as quickly as possible the redevelopment of Griffintown, gave almost complete freedom to a developer and established a redevelopment plan in only one year. According to many, the democratic process was by-passed. Indeed, the City of Montreal gave the green light to elaborate a PPU (Particular Program of Urbanism) for the Peel-Wellington sector of Griffintown in order to accommodate the promoter Devimco. A PPU allows expropriation as well as the modification of height and density restrictions. Although public consultation allowed citizens to meet with the promoter, no public consultation was made to establish whether it was right to have a PPU in the first place (since other type of redevelopment processes exist). Moreover, consultation with the public was done very late in the process.¹⁹ The 2009 recession put a hold on the development, partially preventing the destruction of the existing urban fabric. It also allowed a critique of the overall planning process to be formulated. Important aspects of the critique included the new building heights and the lack of planning for new public space. As a result, the city finally submitted a new plan in 2013.

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16. Lynch, Kevin. (1981). *A theory of Good City Form*. The MIT Press, p.53.

17. Leinberger, Cristopher B. (2005). "Turning Around Downtown: Twelve Steps to Revitalization". The Brookings institutions-Research Brief, p.7.

18. Krier, Leon. *The Architecture of Community*. p7.

19. Le Sud-Ouest Montréal. (S.D.). "Programme Particulier d'Urbanisme (PPU) Griffintown secteur Peel-Wellington: principales étapes du cheminement". December 16, 2016. <http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/pls/portal/url/ITEM/469961FC-CDD5E0EAE0430A930132E0EA>.

Figure 13 : Changes Occuring in Griffintown

Public consultation was more thorough this time. However, as a citizen pointed out: "It is obviously futile to make suggestions about height and density or what should be done with the various parcels of land already spoken for."²⁰ In fact, at that time a lot of projects in Griffintown had already been approved, or were in the final stages of the approval process.

Since the urban renewal process is based on a public (government) and private (real estate industry including promoters, bankers and investor) partnership, the city council was initially focused on encouraging promoters to buy land in the area. Therefore, buying land in the city has to be more profitable than in the suburbs.²¹ To attract future residents to come live in the area, downtown revitalization strategies play on the appeal of the so-called traditional downtown: the main street model (i.e. Disneyland utopia). The model proposes a "critical-mass" of pedestrian-scale use needed for the vitality of the street to be restored and pedestrian-scale use combined with accessibility to public transit and various services in order to attract more residents.²² Jane Jacobs in her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* argues that casual interactions with others on the everyday urban street leads to social cohesion and a sense of belonging. Moreover, she views existing cities as a laboratory to provide planning principles thus guiding the urban renewal strategy.²³

Figure 14: Disneyland Main Street (Source: Cindy Coffey, 2013)

20. OFFICE DE CONSULTATION PUBLIQUE DE MONTRÉAL. (2012). "Secteur de planification détaillée de Griffintown: Première étape de la consultation visant l'établissement d'un plan de développement intégré, Rapport de consultation publique", <http://ocpm.qc.ca/sites/ocpm.qc.ca/files/pdf/P56/rapport-griffintown.pdf>, p.11.

21. Leinberger. "Twelve Steps to Revitalization". 22 p.

22. Ibid.

23. Slideshare. (2016). "The Use of Sidewalks: contact" in *The Life and Death of American Cities* by Jane Jacobs, <https://fr.slideshare.net/Natalva001/the-uses-of-sidewalkscontact-jane-jacobs-1961>, viewed april 2 2017.

However, Urban renewal was denounced and rejected by intellectuals (Jane Jacobs, Richard Sennet) as well as Resident Associations who were advocating for the preservation of historical neighbourhoods²⁴. Around 1960, cities in United States were promoting mass housing to provide modern standards for the whole society. However, in many cases the urban renewal strategy was a synonym for “slum clearance and redevelopment” and often led to the destruction of the existing urban fabric and historical neighbourhoods. Moreover, it did not take into account the needs of the projected inhabitants.²⁵ One well-known example is the Pruitt-Igoe project in Missouri, a mass housing development that was bulldozed soon after its erection. While various causes are associated with its failure, the main one is most probably racial issues: the white city officials sought to carefully maintain segregation and prevent blacks from moving into white neighbourhoods.²⁶ Nevertheless, it remained in the public opinion as a symbol of the failure of modernism and mass housing altogether, initiating a debate. It also illustrated the acceptance of the dominant practices of the society by the architect of the Pruitt-Igoe project, who worked within the framework of the large-scale, high-rise, high-density and low cost model.²⁷ It is interesting to note that Jane Jacob’s criticisms were integrated into the urban renewal strategy, but as a way to give a sociological and economical credibility to the model rather than questioning it.

Figure 15: Demolition of Pruitt Igoe Housing in Saint-Louis, Missouri (Source: Poliecture, 2011)

24. Urban, Florian. (2012). *Tower and Slab: Histories of Global Mass Housing*. Routledge, p.30

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid. p. 22

27. Bristol, Katharine G. (1991). “The Pruitt-Igoe Myth” in JAE 44/3, University of California, Berkeley. <http://www.pruitt-igoe.com/temp/1991-bristol-pruitt-igoemyth.pdf>. p. 169.

In fact, there is a “modern” twist to this model: a higher density obtained by building towers. The necessity for a higher density is often validated by arguments on sustainability such as the preservation of nature and agricultural lands by reducing urban sprawl, reducing pollution by taking public transit and diversifying functions to allow proximity to work, school and services.²⁸ Indeed, the vision statement emitted by the City of Montreal states that the redevelopment plan for Griffintown will be based on the “values of the 21st century - a sustainable and more densely inhabited living environment”²⁹. Interestingly however, a higher density is also obtainable through the duplex/triplex model, reducing the scale of the buildings and providing a more human-scale relationship between the facades and the street. Many neighbourhoods in Montreal follow this model, such as the plateau Mont-Royal. In the 19th century, Griffintown had a population of about 60 000 people without high-rise buildings. Although it covered a larger area than it does now, the current demand of 3500 units for a population of 10 000 people could definitely be achieved without condo towers.³⁰

Figure 16 : Plateau Mont-Royal (Source: Montreal Living, N.D.)

28. Montreal. (2013). “Programme Particulier d’Urbanisme secteur Griffintown”. December 10, 2016. <http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/pls/portal/url/ITEM/DE41FF8A8918502AE0430A930132502A>, 93 p.

29. Ibid, p.16.

30. PROJET MONTREAL. (2012). “Le quartier Griffintown réincarné”. December 20, 2016. http://projetmontreal.org/wp-content/uploads/documents/document/Mem_Griffintown_OCPM.pdf, 16 p.

However, both the public (i.e the city) and private sector value the high-rise typology because it has the potential to be more profitable than other typologies. For promoters, it is a way to optimize the cost of the land by having more units and for the city, more residents create an important hub of taxpayers, providing a source of collective wealth. While taxes might eventually benefit the community, building at a rate that does not exceed the demand is critical for the revitalization process to be successful.³¹ However, the model on which the process is based favours the “more is better” approach, in terms of number of people in the street (vitality), but more importantly, in terms of the profit margins for developers and investors, leading other developers and investors to build new projects within walking distance of each other. This “increases the excitement on the street, pushing up rents, sales prices, and property values of existing property owners”³². This attitude of building first and then expecting people to come is based on the belief that a community only needs to undertake physical improvement (such as the improvement of the streetscape, or new buildings, street furniture etc.) to achieve a renewed downtown vitality.³³ Building multiple condo towers at the same time can lead to vacancy issues. Many empty units can put a downward pressure on prices.³⁴ In the short term, this might advantage and even encourage people to buy more condos, but if the economy is not doing well, excess units might remain empty, leading to the failure of the revitalization strategy and to “vertical sprawl”.

To summarize, there seems to be a blind faith in regards of people’s motivation; they will inhabit the neighbourhood if the economical and environment assets are fulfilled, and dealing with social aspects remains something secondary to the whole process. This attitude shows that lessons of the past, the reason why Griffintown declined in the first place, this imbalance between social, economical and environmental assets, are being ignored once again. More precisely, social aspects including demographics (who is living there), community organizations, social and cultural networks and community services are critical to a successful revitalization.³⁵

Figure 17: Vertical Sprawl (Source: *The Architecture of Community*, p. 440)

Figure 18: Urban Renewal Strategy: Actors

31. Leinberger. “Twelve Steps to Revitalization”. 22 p.

32. Ibid, p.2

33. Borovilos, George. (2002). « Downtown revitalization: The Kitchener experience ». PCED, Vol 8, december 20, 2016. www.pced.uwaterloo.ca/index.php/pced/article/download/37/29, p.92.

34. Leinberger. “Twelve Steps to Revitalization”. 22 p.

35. Makhoul, Anne. (2007) «ANC Sketches». December 21, 2016. <http://neighbourhoodchange.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/ANC-2007-Neighbourhood-Renewal-Process.pdf>, p.6.

An aspect that hasn't really been addressed yet is the relative inflexibility of the tower block, its programmatic strictness and the lack of possibility for residents to shape their environment³⁶. While located in very different cities, two recent condo projects in Calgary and Montreal seem to be practically identical. As Krier explains: "In modernist culture, identical copying inevitably results in the production of identical clones of whatever scale. They are identical multiples that have no identity, or have merely a group identity and are thus unable to make true place."³⁷ Yet, it is more than just an aesthetic issue; it is an issue of appropriation. True places relate to the idea of authenticity, which is the experience of a place or building either through unconscious or self-conscious design that expresses man's condition and humanity³⁸ and subsequently their culture. Do condo towers, in their actual state, have the potential to express people's different cultures, or people's distinctiveness? While some might attribute these similarities to the development of the international style, Florian Urban argues that it never became "international" because each context, each culture and each high-rise is different, explaining the success or failure of seemingly similar buildings. However, he does point out that "inhabitants have a hard time adapting their apartments to different lifestyles and requirements and the dependence on good management is high."³⁹ Whether or not the physical environment should express people's distinctiveness, the high-rise typology creates monoliths in the city, rigid and homogenous.

Figure 19: New Condo District Griffin (Source: Métro, 2013)

Figure 20: FIRST Condo in East Village, Calgary (Source: Cody Battershill, 2014)

36. Urban, F. *Tower and Slab*, p. 174.

37. Krier, Leon. *The Architecture of Community*. p49.

38. Relph, Edward. *Place and Placelessness*. PAGE?

39. Urban, F. *Tower and Slab*, p. 174.

In general, the existing urban fabric-the buildings and their relationship to the streets-possesses a uniqueness that makes it distinguishable, and it is perhaps one of the reason communities often want to preserve it. Devimco's initial proposal was to introduce mass housing and completely change the street grid. It was not well received by the Griffintown Committee on Healthy Redevelopment, who claimed that it would go against Montreal's identity.⁴⁰ When thinking about Montreal's identity, the vibrant city center of the 1950 comes to mind. As Tom Patwell, a former resident of Griffintown before its decline explains: "When we lived in Griffintown, you never had to lock the door. No one did. The people were the best. You always had lots of friends and I'll tell you that if you bumped into someone that you knew growing up in Griffintown, no matter how long it has been, it's like you saw them yesterday."⁴¹

The City finally did not allow for the street grid to be modified and identified historic buildings to be safeguarded. While the city's motive for preserving part of the existing environment might be economical, it shows that it is still valuable. The uniqueness of older buildings may come from traces left by people that lived there over the years. As Hegel explains in *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*: "To appropriate something means basically only to manifest the supremacy of my will in relation to the thing and to demonstrate that the latter does not have being for itself and is not an end in itself (...) The manifestation occurs through my conferring upon the thing an end other than that which it immediately possessed. I give the living creature, as my property, a soul, other than that which it previously had; I give it my soul."⁴² Therefore, to possess is to modify (or at least having the option to) which implies, in this case, that the building never reaches its final state. I make it my own by transforming it; I transfer my values onto it, which is why property and identity are deeply intertwined. In that sense, even garages in Griffintown (a basic typology) have more "identity" than new condo towers. Simple gestures such as painting the bricks different colors, or the application of graffiti, are hints of people's appropriation of the built environment.

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40. COMITÉ POUR LE SAIN DÉVELOPPMENT DE GRIFFINTOWN, (S.D). "Règlement modifiant le plan d'urbanisme de la ville de Montréal-secteur peel-wellington (griffintown), http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:rX9qeb_OnfYJ:www.griffintown.org/projects/projetgriffintown/docs/memoireCSRG.pdf+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=ca. p.5.

41. Flavell, Dave. (1947). *Community and the Human Spirit: Oral Histories from Montreal's Point Saint-Charles, Griffintown and Goose Village*. Petrabooks. p. 180.

42. Lee, Pamela M. (2001). *Object to Be Destroyed: the Work of Gordon Matta-Clark*. The MIT Press: London, England. p.58.

Figure 21: Garages in Griffintown

Figure 22: Graffiti Truck, Gordon Matta-Clark, 1973 (Source: Wordpress, 2010)

If appropriation as described by Hegel seems to be something personal, it is interesting to think about what happens with a space that isn't individually owned and how it might be collectively appropriated. Gordon Matta-Clark, in his project *Graffiti Truck* explores the notion of appropriation by multiple people to form a collective piece. The collaboration invited residents of the Bronx to spray-paint his truck and later cut out pieces of it to form a series of canvases to be exhibited. For Matta-Clark, art making, because of its participatory, social and inclusive process, was understood as a democratic solution to the 'state of isolationism' created by urban and suburban space.⁴³ In that regard, the current primacy of private over public space is clearly visible in Griffintown's urban renewal strategy. In fact, no public place was planned until 2013 after many complaints were made. Therefore, architects that design high-rise buildings for housing are not only exposed to the difficulties of creating the semblance of a community inside their buildings, but also to the fact that the public area they design (i.e. the lobby) were the only new planned "public" spaces in Griffintown prior to 2013. Conceiving public spaces as the extension of high-rise buildings can be problematic. It creates various types of space (the street, the lobby) that are used mainly as access to buildings. People often pass through those spaces rather than engaging with them, contributing to the phenomenon of placelessness (or loss of identity).

New public space (or the lack of it) is often criticized by comparing it to the traditional city. However, dwelling on the past "vibrant" social life will not bring new solutions. Indeed, as Henri Lefebvre states: "The prescription is: there cannot be going back toward the traditional city, nor a heading flight toward a colossal and shapeless agglomeration. The past, the present, the possible cannot be separated."⁴⁴

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43. Lee, P. *Object to Be Destroyed*. p.58.

44. Lefebvre, Henri. (1996). *Writings on Cities*. Blackwell: Massachusetts, USA. p. 148.

*****

MARIE gets home early and immediately turns on her TV, anxious to see what had happen to the missing girl in Griffintown.

NEWS REPORTER: Since last week, more and more documents have been leaked. We now know the name of the missing girl: Laurence Dussault. Her boyfriend's name is....

Patrick gets home and hears the sound of the TV. He is fed up, Marie has been obsessing about this missing girl.

PATRICK(*talking loud*): Marie, I'm home!

MARIE ignores PATRICK and keeps listening to the TV.

NEWS REPORTER: ...Chartrand. He has been interrogated many time and revealed some crucial information about her.

PATRICK (*annoyed*): Marie, can we listen to something else sometimes?

*****

BACKGROUND CHECK THE MISSING TENANT

Documents leaked

First name	Laurence	Last name	Dussault
Address	Le William, Saint-Martin St, apt 802	Gender	M ☐ F ☒
	Griffintown, Montreal, H3J 1R6	Eye color	Unknown
Birth date	Unknown	Weight	Unknown
Ethnicity	☒ Caucasian ☐ African American ☐ Asian ☐ Hispanic ☐ Native American ☐ Other		
Phone number	Unknown	Email	a.paris@hotmail.ca
Other information	Name doesn't match with any credit card or debit account		
	Boyfriend's name on the lease is David Chartrand		

The urban revitalization in Griffintown has brought many new residents to the area. According to Statistic Canada census there were 6500 residents living in Griffintown in 2011, and 70% of them moved into the neighbourhood in the last five years (prior to 2011). Most of the new residents were already living in Montreal. However, about 14 % of the residents came from another city in Quebec and 13 % came from outside the country. Moreover, 37% of the residents in Griffintown are between the ages of 24 and 34 years old.

The missing tenant fits the profile since she did move approximately two months ago. Based on her name (if it is not made up), it seems she is from Quebec. It is very odd that she did not specify her birth date. Either mister Mcload made a mistake when checking her information on the lease or there is something else going on. He should be interrogated further. Finally, there is no record of a driver's license, which would suggest that the tenant is either walking or using public transit. The next page is a map illustrating the most plausible means of transportation for the missing tenant (in red).

Figure 23: Most Plausible Means of Transportation For the Missing Tenant

Documents Leaked

Figure 24: Document Leaked: Fieldnotes Update

First name	David	Last name	Chartrand
Address	4600 St-Dominique St	Gender	M ☒ F ☐
	Montreal, H2T 1T5	Eye color	Blue
Birth date	28-11-1988	Weight	Unknown
Ethnicity	☒ Caucasian ☐ African American ☐ Asian ☐ Hispanic ☐ Native American ☐ Other		
Phone number	514-343-6129	Email	d.char@hotmail.ca
Other information	Owns a driver's license for trucks		

During his interview, David explained he recently started going out with Laurence. He doesn't seem to know much about her. He thinks she is 26 years old and that she was living in le plateau before (a neighbourhood in Montreal). He said he met her when he was renting a truck at the company *King Transfer Van lines*. David was positive she was alone the day he met her. Therefore, she should own a driver's license for trucks. Moreover, according to him, she often rented trucks for work. However, he doesn't know exactly what kind of work she was doing or where. He last saw her four days ago and she was on her way to work.

Figure 25: Trucks Found Nearby the Condo

EVIDENCE #2: TRYPTIC

Figure 26: The Triptych: a Meal in Griffintown

This triptych explore the idea of consumption and the urban renewal strategy. Combining the destruction of buildings to a daily activity (eating) is a way of trivializing the destruction of entire neighbourhoods in the name of development.

Figure 27: The Triptych Part 3: the Power of the Individual in the Urban Renewal Process

Figure 28: The Triptych Part 1: Under Construction or Under Destruction?

Figure 29: The Triptych Part 2: the Monetary Value of Old Buildings vs New Ones.

Older buildings are cheaper and have "flavour" added by the previous owner's modifications.

EVIDENCE #3: THE MINIATURE

Figure 30: The Miniature : a Photobooth

PART 1

The miniature's concept was to recreate the environment of a movie scene and have the scene play inside to create a space inside a space. In this case, the scene is based on *Amélie Poulain* a movie in which the main character observes the lives of others and notices their particular habits. In this specific scene, the main character is in a photo booth. It is an interesting typology to think of since it is a very intimate space often located in public places such as metro stations. How do people act in public space at a smaller and more intimate scale? The box is made out of a shoebox, emphasising the element of surprise.

Figure 31: View When Looking Inside the Box

Figure 32: 1:1 Model of a Photobooth

Figure 33: Intimacy Created by the Curtain and the Size of the Space

PART 2

Figure 34: Fragments With and Without People

This picture shows the bottom part of the shoebox. In the movie *Amélie Poulain*, the main character looks for pieces of pictures left under the photo booth. She collects fragments of people's lives. In this case, the bottom part of the shoebox (or the photo booth) is composed of pictures divided in two: one side with and one without people. The left part expresses the experience of walking through ruins. Indeed, even if clues on how people once lived in the space are less obvious than on the right side, it is still possible to imagine how it used to be. The mirrors in the back reflect the person watching and were added as a way to engage the viewer in the scene.

URBAN RUINS

With all the projects authorized or in the process of authorization in Griffintown, the arrival of 10 to 12 000 new inhabitants will be problematic regarding their need for new public spaces.⁴⁵ Even if the initial urban renewal plan did not include any new public spaces, Griffintown is still in its redevelopment phase. Therefore, some urban ruins (i.e. abandoned and damaged building, infrastructure wasteland) are still present.

The urban ruins in Griffintown emerged after the city zoned the neighbourhood “light industrial”. As previously mentioned, the fact that industries were leaving caused the built environment to slowly decay rather than being bulldozed. If the city had taken the most logical choice, which was to let it evolve into a residential area, high-rise housing would have probably replace most of the industrial and housing buildings. In 1952, for instance, a group comprised of representatives from charitable, religious and union organizations worked with the City of Montreal Executive Committee toward slum elimination and the construction of low-cost housing in Montreal.⁴⁶ It led to the complete destruction of a neighbourhood adjacent to Griffintown, the Faubourg à m’lasse, which was replaced by the habitations Jeanne Mance, a high-rise building of 14 stories as well as the Radio Canada tower.⁴⁷

Figure 35: Faubourg à m’lasse Over the Years (source: centre d’histoire de Montréal, N.D)

45. PROJET MONTREAL. “ Le quartier Griffintown réincarné”.p.4

46. Charlebois, Catherine et al. (2014). *Quartiers disparus: Red Light, Faubourg à M’lasse, Goose Village*. Les Éditions Cardinal. p.236.ww

47. Ibid.

Rather than dismissing urban ruins as “space of waste and disorder”, this thesis explores the possibility of addressing issues of identity and public place creation in those under-terminated spaces. Public interest in this type of space is concerned with the protection of memory as a way to counter-act the modern day movement and its dismissal of the past.⁴⁸ History shapes the cultural landscape of a place (everything man-made), which directly affects how we experience it. In fact, “the catalyst that converts any physical location [...] into a place is the process of experiencing deeply.”⁴⁹ Identity, more specifically, relates both to the individual and collective experience of a place, by which a sameness and unity emerges, making it possible to differentiate that place from another.⁵⁰ Urban ruins, because of their temporal ambiguity, can allow reflexivity of a culture that interrogates its own becoming and could eventually lead to the definition of a new identity. Indeed, “Negotiating past and present, these ruins reveal the possibility of thought along lines that move through different temporal realms-between what occurred, what persists, and what can still occur-and thus suggesting the potential for change.”⁵¹

While Griffintown’s built environment before its renewal might have appeared unappealing to many, urban ruins have the potential to trigger people’s imagination. The locals often referred to Griffintown as a “ghost town” due to the deterioration of the buildings and infrastructures. In fact, “When a society is indifferent to space or a certain type of space (for instance, in our society, urban space when it has not been the object of planning), what happens is that unconscious structures seems to take advantage, as it were, of the indifference in order to invade the vacant area and assert themselves, symbolically or in actual fact...”⁵² In this case, both historical facts and the deterioration of the built environment contributed to the creation of the ghost town narrative. The haunted Griffintown Ghost Walk is described as a “visit [of] mysterious ruins, a polluted canal, a former burial grounds and creepy old buildings that are said to be haunted. [Moreover] a vacant, decrepit brewery hosts psychic in search of a murdered girl, a condominium reminds locals of its past as a chocolate factory, and the ghostly ruins of St. Ann’s Church sometimes produce paranormal activity.”⁵³

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48. Eshel, Amir. (2010). “Layered time” in *Ruins of Modernity*, Duke University Press: London, edited by Julia Hell and Andreas Schönle, p.135

49. Relph, Edward. *Place and Placelessness*. p.44.

50. Ibid.

51. Eshel, Amir. “Layered time”. p. 135.

52. Relph, Edward. *Place and Placelessness*. p.9.

53. HAUNTED MONTREAL (2009). “Haunted Griffintown: Haunted Montreal Ghost Tour”. Accessed Nov. 23, 2016. <http://www.hauntedmontreal.com/haunted-griff.html>.

Figure 36: Movies Expressing Fear of the Future

Top left: *28 Days Later*, bottom left: Charlie Chaplin: *Modern time*, on the right: *The Giver*, Coca Cola add+ Lady in the middle: *Goodbye Lenin*

If ruins allow us to project onto them our wishes and hopes for the future⁵⁴, they can also project our fears for the future. Movies often express them (see collage). Indeed, movie themes often relate to the lost of control over technology, the fear of forgetting our history, the fear of change etc. The collage, because of the different temporalities collapsing, relates to ruins. Indeed, "they force us to contemplate the past within the present, as well as the having-been of the past [...] and offer memory traces of an abandoned set of futures."⁵⁵

54. Eshel, Amir. "Layered time". p. 148.

55. Von Moltke, Johannes. (2010). "Ruin Cinema" in *Ruins of Modernity*, Duke University Press: London, edited by Julia Hell and Andreas Schönle, p.401.

Figure 37: Old Train Infrastructure "In Ruin" Next to the Canal Lachine

EVIDENCE #4:

Figure 38: An Invitation

Whether evoking nostalgia or shame for the past, the built environment, even partially destroyed, holds meaning and memories and therefore ought to be acknowledged. Environment should preserve a record of past action, so that present and future actions may become intelligible⁵⁴. Ideas of De Certeau and the situationist movement are embedded in the concept of walking tour. Indeed, situationist were advocating for new ways to experiment a city and focused on the notions of spontaneity, flexibility, variability . A walking tour is a way to link together in an informal way different parts of the neighbourhoods, or sites with a specific history. Through personal observations of Griffintown, a fictional narrative was created using the concept of the walking tour.

Figure 39: A Ghost Tour in Griffintown: Witnessing Changes

WELCOME TO GRIFFINTOWN

This ghost tour will give you a unique perspective on Griffintown. You did the right choice since most of Griffintown will change over the next few years. It is your **LAST CHANCE** to experience the neighborhood in its actual state! Once you will have completed the tour, a meal will be offered to you as a reward for facing your fears!

1- THE TIMELESS ZONE

Go next to a construction site. Stay there for at least ten minutes. Slowly, you become numb. You can't hear much nor see much. There, both the future and the past lies in front of you. Through the dust, you begin to imagine how it used to be, and how it's going to be. You might even see a ghost! Or is it just a construction worker?

Figure 40: A Construction Site

2- THE FORTRESS

Do you really want to go through the gates? Like a citadel, the train's structure with its large wall encloses the neighbourhood. If you get in, it is not guaranteed you will get out. Everything in Griffintown was, up to recently, in a state of degradation. If you still wish to get in, you must go through the dark tunnel. Some people have claimed they saw monsters guarding the tunnel, or at least their shadows. Good luck!

Figure 41: A Tunnel Under the Elevated Train Structure

3- THE IN-BETWEEN

Congratulations! You made to the other side! Now take a moment to explore this empty space. Through this corridor, you can access the other tunnels (for more frightening experiences!). As you are about to leave, you notice a red flashing sign far away.

**FARINE
FIVE ROSES**

Stories say that the neighborhood was cursed by a witch. Everyday, the flour use to cover Griffintown making any activity impossible, for you could not see.

Figure 42: Gap Between the Elevated Train Structure and a Building

4- THE WITCH HOUSE

The witch's house, hidden behind a container is fairly hard to find. Indeed, the witch after being chased by angry habitants of Griffintown for cursing the neighborhood found refuge there. Oddly enough, the area next to her house has not been under construction. There is also an empty lot nearby that no one has bought. Could it be one of her spell?

Figure 43: Abandoned Shack

5- THE ENCHANTED FOREST

The enchanted forest lies in front of you. You must go through it without getting lost. Indeed, units are stacked and you see endless balcony. Every hour, the forest seems to expand. Fast before it swallows everything!

Figure 44: New Condos in Griffintown

6- SAINT-ANN'S CHURCH

Saint-Ann's church used to be the heart of Griffintown's Irish Community. Now only ruins are left. When factories closed and people lost their job in 1940, the neighborhood's population dropped drastically. However, some say that people never actually left Griffintown. Watch out for the ghosts!

Figure 45: Saint-Ann's Park

*****

MARIE is talking on the phone to her friend.

MARIE: Liz, I'm telling you this girl is a thief! Who drives trucks for a living and can afford a new condo in Griffintown? I mean it's really suspicious...

PATRICK is on the couch and can finally watch sports on the TV. As soon as he hears MARIE talk about Griffintown, he increases the volume.

MARIE (*louder*): ARE YOU SURE THERE'S NEW EVIDENCE? WHICH CHANEL? PATRICK, CAN YOU CHANGE TO CTV FOR A SECOND?

*****

Figure 46: Model Close-up: Filling the Grid; Static vs Dynamic Movement

EVIDENCE #5: MOVEMENT IN SPACE

This grid explores people's occupation of the space (static vs. dynamic). The path begins at the metro station. The white thread represent the most dynamic path linking the metro station to major condo developments. The black thread marks places where people stay static (in condo towers, for instance). The different shades of grey represent spaces in between static and dynamic movement. This exercise was meant to explore circulation at the scale of the neighbourhood. This grid is then overlaid on a site plan of the neighbourhood.

Figure 47: Evolution of the Grid (being "filled up")

From left to right, the beginning of the path starts at the metro station and ends near the Canal Lachine (white= very dynamic, light grey=dynamic, dark grey= in between static and dynamic, black=static).

*dynamic implies that people do not tend to remain in those areas for long, they pass through them.

*static implies staying for a long time at the same location.

Figure 47: Evolution of the Grid (being "filled up")

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From left to right, the beginning of the path starts at the metro station and ends near the Canal Lachine (white= very dynamic, light grey=dynamic, dark grey= in between static and dynamic, black=static).

*dynamic implies that people do not tend to remain in those areas for long, they pass through them.

*static implies staying for a long time at the same location.

Figure 48: Second Layer: Site Plan (picture of model)

Figure 49: Layers Superimposed: the Elevated Train Structure

Metallic pins are placed higher and closer to each other to create an almost continuous surface, or a wall, around the neighbourhood, expressing the idea of the urban barrier.

Figure 50: Layers Superimposed: the Canal Lachine

Both layers are assembled to merge the movement of the people in the city to the built environment. As previously explained, identity relates to the experience of a place and has two main components: the physical environment and the people experiencing it. How do they merge? How does one influence the other on an every day basis?

Figure 51: In-between Layers

PROPOSAL

Protesting against contemporary models of urban renewal and notions of public and private space, this proposal aims to provide an alternative model for the creation of public spaces. In line with Lefebvre's conception of the city as an open-ended oeuvre - a celebration that consumes unproductivity (the main concern is not economical) ⁵⁶ - four sites that can be qualified as "urban ruins" are being activated. Each one represents a different type of urban ruin: the in-between space, the old building, the archaeological ruin and the old infrastructure. Using the walking tour model, these sites are to be related to one another by an event happening in sequence, allowing for visitors to explore the neighbourhood more thoroughly by moving from one site to the other. The event would be organised by residents and collaborators (artist, designers etc.). While main events, such as exhibitions, theater plays, music and dance shows, would take place every 2-3 months, day-to-day activities are also envisioned.

Figure 52: Site Plan Model of Griffintown

56. Lee, P. *Object to Be Destroyed*. p.92.

Because some of the sites have little or no infrastructure and services, mobile “urban rooms” will be at the disposition of residents who wants to personalise the various public places (adding a living-room, washrooms or a kitchen, for instance). The abundance of warehouses and garages present in the neighbourhood would store those “urban rooms”, or cargo-trailer trucks. The urban rooms, because of their flexibility and adaptability, contrast with the rigid condo unit typology. Moreover, the smaller scale of these mobile public places follows the exploration initiated by the photo booth typology.

Rooms options in cargo-trailers (close up)

Figure 53: “Urban Rooms” in Cargo-trailer Trucks

*The type of truck may vary according to needs/availability

Operating at the scale of the neighbourhood, four sites in Griffintown are to be activated by events organised by residents in collaboration with architects, designers or artists, allowing residents to get directly involved in the creation of public place and providing an alternative to the current urban renewal process. The use of sites in their current physical state (or very few modifications) is promoted as a way to instantly test ideas and work with the historical fabric of the neighbourhood rather than building anew.

1

The elevated train structure marks the entrance of the neighbourhood. To inhabit the barrier and the gap created between it and the rest of the urban fabric, a series of installations are envisioned using the alleyway model. Because of the proximity of the primary school, events might be more family oriented.

2

The residents' headquarters provides a space of exchange for architects, artists and residents where various political opinions, complaints and ideas about public space can freely be expressed. Public space design can then be debated and tested on other sites (1,3 and 4).

3

While Saint-Ann's park is already a public space, events held in this location can bring awareness to the history of the neighbourhood. In general, it also encourages residents and visitors to use more the space.

4

This urban laboratory provides a unique experience through art and design prototypes. Moreover, one of the tunnel is used for trucks, or "urban rooms" to be personalized according to various events and needs.

SELECT YOUR SITE (S)

Wellington tunnel Saint-Ann Park 1130 William St CN under-used space

Access to the old port

Segregated area (train structure)
Existing fabric (in red) disappearing

Saint-Ann's Bedrock

Tunnel vs Viaduct

Proposed itinerary from site to site

SELECT YOUR ROOM (S)

The kitchen

The living room

The bedrooms

The bathrooms

The pool

ACTIVATE GRIFFINTOWN !

Option A: a kid's community party.

In this scenario, kids from a kindergarden go to the park. Some of them play in the pool, others on the bedrock. Once they have played enough and want to cool down, they can go in one of the the two bedrooms where an adult will read them stories. On the roof, parents and employees supervise the kids.

SITE 1: THE IN-BETWEEN SPACE

The gap between the elevated train structure and other buildings or lots creates a “corridor” which offers a lot of potential to host public activities. The almost continuous concrete surface could be used as a surface to display works of art and other exhibitions, for instance.

Figure 54: The “Corridor”

Figure 55: Site Plan of Site #1

PROPOSAL

Figure 56: Griffintown's Entrance from Nazareth Street

Figure 57: Paint Workshop in the Alleyway

Paint workshop organised by a local artist selling painting nearby in the alleyway. Parents of kids going to the school nearby were invited to participate (although it is open to all).

Figure 58: Sensorial Installation in One of the Tunnels Under the Elevated Train Structure

SITE 2: THE DECAYING BUILDING

The site consists of three parts of buildings constructed at different times and is currently vacant. A printing house used the buildings in the last years of activity; the main building has already had a mixed function (commercial on the first floor, residential on top) and was constructed in 1880 in a colonial style (mansard roof etc.). Because the building was falling apart, a metallic facade was added following the old building's shape. While this building has no "historical value", according to the city of Montreal, its location- at the verge of the developed part of the neighbourhood- is quite interesting.

Figure 59: Old Building to be Demolished
1134, William Street, Griffintown

Figure 60: Site Plan of Site #2

RESIDENTS' HEADQUARTERS

Process

These two vignettes explore how to “activate” this decaying building. A new subdivision of space is imagined inside: one larger room at the bottom and many smaller ones on top. The alternating red and green lights indicate which rooms are used and they animate the facade (red=in use, green= vacant). The smaller rooms are recording studio for residents who wish to broadcast their thoughts to other residents.

Figure 61: View of the Existing Facade Animated by Lights

Figure 62: View of the Existing “House” Inhabited

Division of space inside: one large meeting room and many smaller rooms to record opinions (broadcasting resident’s concerns). “Urban rooms” allows for activities outside (adjacent buildings are destroyed in this view).

RESIDENTS' HEADQUARTERS

Inspired by the metallic facade mimicking the shape of the existing brick building, the final proposal for this site is to pour concrete on the building, keeping once again the shape and openings of the initial building, but anchoring it permanently. This decaying house is located next to ETS University and is one of the few remaining house at this scale in the neighbourhood.

ETS: University of Advanced Technologies

Figure 63: Residents' Headquarters Section

Figure 64: Recording Studio

Figure 65: Bar Area

SITE 3: ARCHEOLOGICAL RUINS

Saint-Ann's Park is already a public place. However, it is not a very lively one. It used to be the communal center of the Irish community of Griffintown, who would gather to go to Saint-Ann's church. To make this public place more dynamic, the "urban rooms", or cargo-trailer trucks could simply be positioned around the park or where there is pavement.

Figure 67: Site Plan of Saint-Ann Park (Site # 3)

SITE 3: ARCHEOLOGICAL RUINS

Figure 68: Activation of Saint-Ann Park with "Urban Rooms"

Using both the "rooms" and the built environment (in this case, the foundations) to activate the site. Refer to page 52 for more information.

SITE 4: INFRASTRUCTURE IN DECAY

The Wellington tunnel entrances are currently partially blocked. Homeless people use them as shelters. At some point they were used as venue for shows (illegally). They are completely blocked at the opposite end since cars now use the bridge to cross the Canal Lachine.

Figure 69: Wellington Tunnel (source: exploration urbaine)

Figure 70: Wellington Tunnel Site Plan

SITE 4: INFRASTRUCTURE IN DECAY

The urban-lab: a celebration

Figure 71: 1:50 Model of the Wellington Tunnel Entrances

Figure 72: Residents and Artists Personalizing an "Urban Room"

Figure 73: View of an Installation Made by an Artist Inside One of the Tunnels

Figure 74: The Artist With His Installation

Figure 75: A music Concert In Another Tunnel

Figure 76: Crowd Watching a Music Show

Figure 77: Visual Projections Inside One Tunnel

(PROPOSAL)

The dismissal of residents' opinions in the redevelopment of Griffintown speaks for the lack of influence they have over politicians, promoters and the city. As Lefebvre explains: "The property system has not changed, and neither has the relation with the hierarchy of powers. There is a contradiction between the need to organize space according to the demands of society and private property, which is increasingly in conflict with collective interests"⁵⁷. One striking example of public place that succeeded in offering an alternative to the dominant ideologies is the House of people built throughout Europe at the end of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.⁵⁸ It was radical community centers for workers initiatives such as cooperatives, newspaper, political clubs, libraries brought together around a central cafe, bar or meeting hall."⁵⁹ The political effectiveness of the House of the People was precisely to use every day activities (such as drinking wine or coffee) and associate it with a popular movement for economic change and political inclusion of the working class.⁶⁰

Therefore, this project aims to provide both spaces of celebration (**see site #4, Wellington tunnel**) and of resistance (**see site #2, the headquarter**) where people would be able to challenge the dominant practices and imagine alternative public places. The idea of an open-ended city proposed by Lefebvre, interestingly, echoes the incompleteness of ruins. They symbolise the promise of action in space (either by building or destroying) but also between humans. Action is the act of taking an initiative, placing oneself as a social actor in the web of human agents, according to Arendt's conception.⁶¹ As Lefebvre explains: "Work on the urban cannot limit itself merely to recording what has been produced. We must look ahead and propose things.(...) Even architects are more interested in what has been built than in the future of the city."⁶² Therefore, the people's capacity to participate, or to act is crucial in exploring new ideas for public space which is why appropriation of public space through visual element (art, installation etc.) or sounds (recording of opinions) was explored.

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57. Lefebvre, Henri. *Writings on Cities*. p. 211.

58. Kohn, Margaret. (2001). " The Power of Place: The House of the People as Counterpublic" in *Polity*, Vol 33 No.4, The University Chicago Press, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3235514>, Accessed 15-03-17, p. 511-512.

59. Ibid, p. 503

60. Ibid.

61. Eshel, Amir. " Layered time". p. 148.

62. Lefebvre, Henri. *Writings on Cities*. p. 211.

POLITICAL CONSULTATION

Thesis defense was presented inside a 15' U-Haul truck as a way to experience the scale of the space. While it did create an intimate setting around seven people were inside the truck during the presentation. In general, the truck's scale definitely contrasts with the site in which they will be used and with condo towers in the neighbourhood.

Figure 78.a: A Community Consultation In a Remote Setting

POLITICAL CONSULTATION

Figure 78 b. : A Community Consultation In a Remote Setting

Figure 78 c.: A Community Consultation In a Remote Setting

Wood planks inside the truck were used to pin up panels; a projector and a seating area were set up.

BOARDROOM TRUCK

Figure 79. Boardroom In a 15' Truck

This boardroom truck is inspired by the set up used for the political consultation. Foldable chairs and tables to be placed outside of the truck allowing presentations to be held in front of a larger public, depending on the number of people attending the event. The longer surfaces of the inside of the truck are equipped with clipping board to allow for various pamphlet, political programs etc. to be pinned up. A kitchenette, coffee station and integrated couch and heaters are also pro-

EVENTS TIMELINE

site	type of events	frequency	"Urban rooms"
 Residents' Headquarters	Political and social	2-3 times a month (punctual events)	Not required unless number of participants is too important (see boardroom)
 The Alleyway	Social, artistic and leisure	Once a month (events often last for a week)	Required most of the time. Stay on site for the duration of the event (more or less a week)
 Saint-Ann Park	Social, artistic and leisure	Once every other month (punctual event)	Always required. Most trucks stay only while the event last. However, local businesses (including restaurants) that wish to have "pop up" stores can rent trucks on a daily basis (or bring their own)
 Wellington Tunnel	Social, artistic and leisure	Organised events Twice a year. Space of informal socialisation when there is no planned event. Site accessible to experience installations on a monthly basis and possibility to add installations or request the site for an event.	Volunteers or people involved in events can personalize their "urban rooms" in the truck factory, where equipment will be at their disposition: tools, donated furniture and materials.

Table 1: Type of Events and Timeline for Each Site

EARLY PLANNING 2017

Residents' headquarters
  Saint-Ann park
  Wellington tunnel
  Alleyway

December 2017

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
				Cooking classes: christmas edition Learn to cook traditional Christmas recipes. location: residents' headquarters time: 2 pm	1	2
Winter exhibition Various "urban rooms" will display some of the work normally exhibited in galleries in Griffintown location: St-Ann's Park time: 8am-5pm	3	4	5	6	7	Public consultation with Griffintown's mayor Public negotiations with the mayor regarding fundings for various activities. location: residents' headquarters time: 1:30 pm
Skating ring and beaver tail Open to all and makes a great family activity. location: the alley-way time: 8am to 8 pm	10	11	12	13	14	15
						16
17	18	19	20	21	Christmas dinner In collaboration with organisation for homeless as well as "la popote roulante", free lunch is offered. location: St-Ann's Park time: 8am-5pm	22
				General Assembly Residents Association New year resolutions: come listen to residents' testimony location: residents' headquarters time: 8 pm	Igloo Fest Griffintown In collaboration with Igloo Fest Montreal, a serie of ice installations and shows are offered Location: Wellington tunnel time: 7pm- 3 am	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Residents' headquarters
  Saint-Ann park
  Wellington tunnel
  Alleyway

ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

GRIFFINTOWN RESIDENT'S ASSOCIATION (MAIN PARTICIPANTS, CURRENTLY EXISTS ONLY AS A FACEBOOK GROUP)

COMMUNITY CENTER TYNDALE ST-GEORGES (LITTLE BURGUNDY)

ASSOCIATION DES POPOTES ROULANTES DU MONTREAL MÉTROPOLITAIN

DANS LA RUE (FOR HOMELESS)

RÉSO (PROVIDING JOB SEEKING TOOLS)

LIBRARY GEORGES-VANIER

ART CENTER OF MONTREAL (LOCAL ARTISTS LIVING IN GRIFFINTOWN FOR A FAIR PRICE)

LOCAL BUSINESSES INVOLVED

MARYSE CASOL-CONTEMPORARY ART

ARSENAL ART CONTEMPORAIN

DIVISION GALLERY

1700 LA POSTE

GALERIE LISABEL

THEMES

Figure 80: Themes Explored in Thesis

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APPENDIX 1

Griffintown: a Social Timeline

- Griffintown's limits use to be composed of both the Nazareth Fief and the Saint-Gabriel Farm. This distinction explains the varying lot division and street orientation that will happen later.
- The Nazareth fief is sold fraudulently to Mary Griffin. With the destruction of the fortifications, the fief is divided in a grid that follows the one of the existing city. Therefore, continuity was expected with the city.
- First wave of immigration from Ireland, Scotland and England
- The Presbyterian Church added a school, mainly for protestants.
- The Canal Lachine now cuts the Saint-Gabriel farm in two. It then is divided in lots, adding 50% of territory to Griffintown's neighbourhood. Moreover, there are two fires in the Nazareth Fief that mainly affect the protestant community establishments.
- Provides more job opportunities
- Provides more job opportunities
- Extreme poverty hits Griffintown. Considering the few institutions being able to help its residents, the Pub becomes the only refuge (with the church). It's in these bad conditions that the murder of Mary Gallagher occurs. It is this period that most people refer to when they think of the 'ghosts' of Griffintown.
- The financial crisis is over but repeated flood and disease made life hard in the neighbourhood.
- WWI brought jobs back into the neighbourhood
- The new railway structure now divides the neighbourhood in two and destroys a big part of the protestant's settlement
- The government finally decides to intervene and set minimum salary as well as insurance for people in need who just lost their jobs.
- WWII brought jobs back into the neighbourhood
- A new seaway opens in the Saint-Lawrence River, making it possible to by-pass the Canal Lachine
- The city changes the zoning law to only industrial in an attempt to encourage factories to stay in Griffintown.
- a The city changes the zoning law to only residential acknowledging the industrial decline
- The construction of the Bonaventure Highway isolates even more the neighbourhood rather than boosting the industrial activity
- a The neighbourhood embraces the car and factories become warehouses and mainly garages. Empty lots are used for parking. Slowly, garages are being transformed into loft and commercial space to provide more services to residents.
- Saint-Helen and Saint-Ann are closing because residents have left the neighbourhood with the decreasing jobs available as well as poor conditions of the houses that can't be rebuilt because of the zoning law. A group, the Griffintown's People Association fights for preservation of houses
- The reopening of the Canal Lachine for leisure brings back interest to the area
- The promoter Devimco proposes a new plan to the city and the process of urban renewal begins.

Figure 81: A Summary of Griffintown's History Focusing on Social Aspects

APPENDIX 2

**Wellington Street Section:
an Increasing Density**

WELLINGTON STREET SECTION

An Increasing Density

Figure 82: Full Section of Wellington treet in Griffintown