



Société
pour la Sauvegarde
du Patrimoine
de Pointe-Claire

Report
**Evening of discussion on the future of the *Pointe*
for the members of the Society**

January 27, 2015 at 7 p.m.
Maison Hyacinthe-Jamme-dit-Carrière, 152 Concord Crescent, Pointe-Claire



A successful evening, very nice and extremely constructive!
About fifty people were present.
Many very good ideas were raised.
The following is a synthesis of the evening.

Among those present:

- Claude Cousineau, City Councillor representing the Village
- Alison Birss from the CLD West-Island (West Island Economic Development)

Summary of the evening of January 27. Start: 7 p.m.

The evening's presenters: Claude Arseneault and Michel Forest (English sections)
Question period moderator: Alain Fortier

Course of the evening

- Objectives of the meeting
- Brief history, issues and examples
- Discussion period
- Summary and conclusion of the meeting

Objectives of the meeting

As its mission is to safeguard and enhance our heritage, the Society must play a proactive role in a matter as important as the future of the *Pointe*.

This meeting was primarily intended for members of the Society. Our goal: brainstorm and have a better understanding our members' ideas and concerns regarding the sale of the *Pointe* (the convent, the windmill as well as the entire site). Some non-members were also present at the meeting.

We know that serious discussions regarding the acquisition of the *Pointe* is currently taking place between the City of Pointe-Claire and the *Frabrique* (Parish) of St. Joachim (owner of the *pointe*). We emphasize at the outset that our Society hopes that the acquisition of the *Pointe* by the City of Pointe-Claire will be concluded as an essential step for the preservation and development of this exceptional heritage collection (convent, windmill and site).

The objective is for the integrity of the *Pointe* to remain preserved and that the heritage site of the *pointe claire* be accessible to the whole community for generations to come. It is important to reflect together on a new use for the convent, the windmill as well as the entire site.

To do this, it is essential at this stage, to take the pulse of our members and to get their ideas and suggestions on the repurposing of the *Pointe*, as well as their concerns in relation to this matter. It is important to reflect together on the heritage and the future vocation of the *Pointe*. It is our mission and it is for this reason that we invited our members on 27 January.

We presented a brief Powerpoint history of the *Pointe*:

- We spoke about *La pointe claire* from 1686 (first explorers)
- 1709-1710: Construction of the windmill
- 1787: The missionaries cross (father Pierre Sartelon)
- 1867: Construction of the new convent the existing Convent)
- 1958: The classes move
- 1963: Addition of two new wings to the convent
- 2013: Creation of *La pointe claire* heritage site by the City of Pointe-Claire
- September, 2014: Tribute to the sisters, *les Sœurs de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame(CND)*
- December 1, 2014: Departure of the last convent sister
- According to the two agreements of 1787 and 1866, the CND Sisters had the **usufruct** of the *Pointe* as long as they lived there, while the *Fabrique* (parish) continued to be the owner.

Position of the Parish: The *Fabrique* now wants to sell the *Pointe*: the priest's objective is for the site to be returned to the citizens, and it is for this reason that he wants the city to acquire it at a fair price.

Position of the City of Pointe-Claire: Mayor Morris Trudeau has said some very interesting things about the importance of Pointe-Claire's heritage. In the mayor's message in the Winter 2015 Newsletter delivered to all households in the municipality, he stated:

"In Pointe-Claire, we are particularly proud of our history..."

"The convent, along with the church, the windmill and the presbytery, are among the oldest buildings in PointeClaire Village. They represent a diverse, very rare and protected heritage."

"In order to protect this extraordinary site of great historical value for current and future generations, we are taking an active role in helping to plan the future use of the site and the convent, in the best interest of the community and the City of Pointe-Claire. We are attentive and vigilant in ensuring the protection of this magnificent site..."

On December 16, 2014 at a Pointe-Claire City Hall council meeting, and before the adoption of the 2015 City budget, the Society (represented by Claude Arsenault) asked the following question: "*Knowing that the city is currently in discussions with the Fabrique concerning the Pointe, is there a budget planned for the acquisition?*"

The response of the City, through its General Manager was: "*If there is an acquisition of the Pointe, financial resources will be there when the moment arrives. Since we are in discussions, no provisions are there for the moment as we do not know the exact numbers. We'll have a better understanding in 2015 and we will know then what funds will be allocated.*"

Our Society therefore finds that the City is serious about its acquisition of the *Pointe*.

Discussion Session: Start at 7:20 p.m.

The table was set for our members to participate in an enlightened discussion.

Procedure: We asked those who wanted to speak to present **their most important ideas (suggestions, questions, concerns)** for the reuse of the convent, windmill and/or the entire site (a maximum of 2 minutes timed by our moderator) in the language of their choice. There were five 2' x 3' boards at the front of the room where ideas were written down, according to the five major themes:

- Heritage
- Culture
- Social
- Recreation Tourism
- Miscellaneous

Everyone was given the opportunity to express themselves. Once everyone was able to do so, we held a second opportunity to speak. The ideas already raised were endorsed or discussed further.



IDEAS RAISED

The ideas on the five boards were synthesized by Michel Forest and were noted by Julie Brunet:

1. Heritage

- Heritage interpretation centre / museum
- Exhibition hall
- Village activities, period costumes, etc.
- Enhancement of heritage / history (ie. Terrebonne and Europe)
- Restore the windmill to make flour (make the windmill sing again) / eco-museum
- Village heritage is an opportunity to revitalise the Village
- Office for the *Société pour la Sauvegarde du Patrimoine de Pointe-Claire*
- A functioning windmill would be a great attraction
- History research centre
- Students / youth: windmill mechanics and restoration
- Educational archaeological excavations accessible to the public
- Wheat could be to Pointe Claire what fur is to Lachine
- Office for the Quebec Family History Society (with lease \$ - they need 3,000 square ft.)
- Space for the *Société pour la Sauvegarde du Patrimoine de Pointe-Claire* archives
- City of Pointe-Claire archives (they need 3,000 square. ft., development)
- Work place or laboratory for university graduate students (ie, history, architecture, urban planning) to promote research projects
- Heritage tours (the *Pointe* and the Village)
- Summer camps
- Make the restoration process of the windmill an integral part of an activity
- Create a link between the *Pointe* and *Maison Antoine-Pilon*

2. Culture

- Access to citizens, priority for Pointe Claire citizens
- Theatre, especially a summer theater (there are none in the region) and children's theater
- Performance and exhibition hall(s)
- Multi-use hall(s)
- Evening and week-end training courses
- Reading area
- Light and sound events
- Artists in residence or visiting artists
- A LOCAL place for artists (does not exist)
- Artistic events (ie, musical) with the church just next door
- Workshops (paying, in order to generate income), ie, "Masterclass" of painters or others.
- Clubs

3. Social

- Space for Pointe-Claire associations that lack space
- Weddings (in association with Village restaurants and merchants). Note that the convent is right next to the church!
- Retirement home (ie, St. Bernard Island)
- Community area
- Small convention centre
- Reception / Conference hall
- Outdoor activities around the windmill
- Poetry reading and history for children, etc.
- Special events

4. Recreation Tourism

- Tourist information centre
- Revitalisation of the Village
- Attract boaters from Lake St-Louis
- Auberge (NPO non-profit organisation), hostel (with "staying power")
- Create a very good restaurant with typical Quebec cuisine and a young chef
- Café, small restaurant (NPO)
- Yoga centre
- A richness of leisure sports in winter as in summer (ie, kite-surfing, paddling, skating, cross-country skiing, etc.)
- Promote cycling (a stopping place)
- Maritime circuit (*parcs bleu*) that connects sites along the river (Tresler House, the windmill and other places can be combined with dinner in the Village or other)
- Access to water: it would be a unique place
- Part of the convent could be rented (potential income)

5. Miscellaneous

- Any centre must be multifunctional
- Youth camps
- Create a garden (ie, Seigneurie Joly de Lotbinière, French colony)
- Relocating City of Pointe-Claire administrative departments (involving the City)
- Training for adults (ie, carpentry, traditional crafts and other workshops)
- Project with a strong educational value, as a reminder of the presence of the nuns and their mission

Remarks / Observations

- A golden opportunity to revitalize the village with the historic site!
- Exceptional historical value
- The 5 themes raised above are non-exclusive; they are highly interrelated
- Development of the Village
- Cultural and tourist aspects must be COMPLEMENTARY
- Much has been made of the need to ATTRACT people (visitors, tourists, etc.) to Pointe-Claire to spend money and contribute to Pointe-Claire's local economy
- The issue of building MULTIFUNCTIONALITY was repeatedly raised
- Slow grinding wheels: they are still waiting!
- Parallel to the great pride French cities have in their and heritage and windmills

- Parallel to coastal cities in Europe and Mexico, where everything is geared towards the highlighting of their local heritage
- There are parking solutions (shuttle, parking behind the Marguerite Bourgeoys school and other)
- The example of St-Bernard Island was raised by several
- The Friends of Pointe-Claire Village will write a memorandum
- The Society has expertise in heritage to capitalise on
- On the issue of heritage, nothing is ever won in advance; but if the popular will is there, with patience and perseverance, anything is possible.

Concerns

- It's a heritage site, requiring respect and compliance with precise rules
- Parking (twenty spaces only) is an important issue (discussions with the *fabrique* and Marguerite-Bourgeoys school are pending)
- Lighting is required at night
- Need shuttles for transportation
- It must be a social economic project (raised by a number of people)
- Accessibility (wheelchairs)
- Local residents do not want too much traffic
- Convent not accessible for now (closed)
- What's in the building (ie, kitchen)

Questions

- **What's happening with the heritage centre in *Maison Antoine-Pilon*?** At a meeting in January 2014, the City asked us a hypothetical question. If we had only one choice, would we want to acquire the convent or *Maison Antoine-Pilon*? We said the convent, stressing that is indeed possible to save both! Just like the City of Châteauguay did. They own *Maison Lepailleur* and St. Bernard Island.
- **Will it be possible to hold events this summer?** No
- **We do not know what is happening politically.** We know that the municipal evaluation is \$7.8 million.
- **Will the sale be made to the highest bidder?** No, not necessarily. Respect for the site's history will most likely be taken into consideration by the *Fabrique*.
- **How to obtain funding?** There are various programs that exist, federally with Canadian Heritage which requires the support of the City. Also the Ministry of Culture can be approached for the restoration of the windmill. As an example, the *Fabrique* obtained \$1,000,000 from the *Fondation du patrimoine religieux* for the restoration of the church. Funding research must be carried out.

Note: Attendees had received a preparation notebook before the meeting which included 11 questions to get them thinking about the issues related to the future of the Pointe. The notebooks were collected at the end of the evening.

Presentation of examples of successful reuses of historic places

Michel Forest (museologist)

Saint-Bernard Island Complex in Châteauguay

The village of Kamouraska

La Maison Authier in Amos

Le Vieux Saint-Eustache

Conclusion of the meeting: 8:45 p.m.

We raised many interesting proposals and original ideas which demonstrate that our members and citizens have the future of the *Pointe* at heart, as well as the importance that it remains accessible to the entire community.

We must keep in mind that *La pointe claire* has been a heritage site since 2013 and designated as such by the City of Pointe-Claire. This designation imposes a particular respect for the integrity of heritage buildings and the site, in harmony with the environment. The objective of a heritage site is to ensure its preservation and development and requires that the future use of the *Pointe* is compatible with this particular status.

The success of this evening with everyone's contributions emphasize, as suggested in the position we have taken (located on the back of our 2015 Historical Calendar), indicates that we are now at a new stage in the process of safeguarding and developing the *Pointe*. To move forward, it would be desirable to hire a consulting firm to conduct a study of redevelopment opportunities for the *Pointe* site.

For this study, we know that we can count on financial support from the West Island CLD, subject to obtaining the support of the City of Pointe-Claire. We have asked for a meeting with the City to discuss the project.

By hiring a consulting firm that already has experience with heritage issues, we can establish a very definite picture of the possible reuse and development of the historic convent building and the windmill's rare heritage, along with the exceptional site which is the *Pointe* of Pointe-Claire.

As part of the opportunities study, a public consultation of the same type as the January 27 evening and open to all Pointe-Claire citizens would be organized. The needs of the project and all of its ins and outs would be better defined. Thanks in part to the work done during this evening of discussion, the project will better represent the expectations of community members who have the future of the *Pointe* at heart. Thank you to all participants.

End of the evening at 9 p.m.