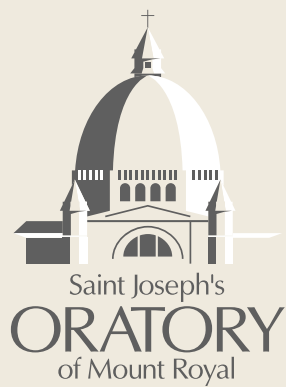


The Renovation Plan



April 2003



Saint Joseph's
ORATORY
of Mount Royal

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SAINT JOSEPH'S ORATORY OF MOUNT ROYAL

100 YEARS OF SPIRITUALITY AND HOSPITALITY IN THE HEART OF MONTREAL

On the mountainside facing the Laurentians, the dome of Saint Joseph's Oratory rises up above the landscape. The Oratory is an essential part of the Montreal skyline, as the Sacred Heart Basilica on the Montmartre Hill is to Paris and Saint Peter's Basilica by the river Tiber is to Rome. The Oratory is not only a reference point but also a beacon.

In this metropolis of festivals, arts and business, education and economy, progress and movement, the Oratory on Mount Royal offers an oasis of peace and quiet where the spirit can soar to new heights surrounded by harmony and beauty.

People from all walks of life feel welcome at the Oratory, regardless of age, circumstances, or spiritual convictions: Muslims and Christians stand side by side, Hindus and Catholics mingle, rich and poor visit without judging or being judged. Regardless of whether they are believers, agnostics or atheists, the Oratory provides everyone a peaceful haven to think and meditate.

The Oratory is the largest basilica in the world dedicated to Saint Joseph. Year after year, people come in pilgrimage from across the Americas to pray to Saint Joseph, who was declared the patron saint of Canadians in 1624.

The Oratory keeps alive the memory of Brother André, a humble member of the Congregation of the Holy Cross, who wanted to give his fellow citizens a place of worship in the heart of the city.

The small chapel, built by some of his friends, soon proved to be inadequate. Consequently the lower church, and later the basilica, were erected; eventually the gardens were added. The resulting complex is now admired by over two million visitors every year.

To celebrate the centennial of the first Oratory, the plan is to complete the outdoor and indoor facilities as they were originally intended, as well as to meet the needs of twenty-first century visitors. Part of the plan is to open to the public the extensive archives kept in the Oratory Library and Research Centre. Some of the documents are very old, some unique.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN: PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

1. The need for this project:

- The Oratory will be 100 years old in 2004. A complete re-design of the site is urgently needed to improve traffic circulation on the grounds, to ensure the safety of pedestrians and drivers, as well as to accommodate the growing number of visitors, many of whom are elderly or have limited mobility.
- The buildings used for religious ceremonies—the basilica, the old chapel, and the crypt (or lower church)—have always been carefully maintained. On the other hand, the wonderful space between the outer inner domes of the basilica was never completed and has yet to be opened to the public. From the top of its skylight, the 360 degree view is the most impressive panoramic view of Montreal and its surroundings.
- The Carillon, which the visitors particularly enjoy, was installed in 1954 on the roof of the Pilgrims' Pavilion, a location that is not very well suited to musical broadcasts.
- While the buildings have been carefully maintained, some are completely outdated, such as the reception area and the Pilgrims' Pavilion. The restaurant is unsuited to a new and much larger clientele.
- The Research Centre and the archives are no longer adequate for those who work there, nor for the public who wish to use these facilities.
- The layout of the road system and the grounds goes back half a century.
 - The annual number of visitors has gone up from 500,000 to 2,000,000.
 - Visitors include many persons with limited mobility. They are more likely to travel to the Oratory in chartered buses, cars, and taxis, or by public transportation.
 - The road system is not adequate for the present flow of traffic and cannot accommodate future growth.
 - The footpaths and roads intersect dangerously, putting pedestrians and motorists at risk.
 - The main entrance to the grounds was not conceived to accommodate the number of visitors and vehicles that now pass through it.
- The grounds are on the slope of Mount Royal—future plans aim at enhancing the safety of all and improving the traffic flow, particularly in bad weather and in winter.
- This major reorganisation and renovation can only be achieved with a comprehensive plan and careful implementation, so as not to interfere with the regular activities at the Oratory while the work is in progress. The aim is to complete most of the work for the centennial celebration in 2004.

2. Objectives of the renovation plan

- **Preserving the heritage:** To emphasise the main buildings used for religious ceremonies: the basilica, the chapel, and the crypt.
- **Functionality:** To meet the needs of the growing number of visitors; to improve the safety of pedestrians and motorists; and to provide a more pleasant visit for all.
- **Accessibility:** To significantly improve access for all visitors, whether they come alone or in groups, whether they are young or old, whether they are healthy and fit or have reduced mobility.
- **Safety:** To improve the flow of pedestrians and cars in and out of the grounds by redesigning the roads and footpaths to eliminate intersections of pedestrian and vehicular traffic.
- **Welcome:** To provide a more pleasant welcome by building a better located and equipped Visitors' Centre. All public services, such as restaurants and the gift shop, will be brought up to the latest standards in comfort and facilities.
- **Tourist attraction:** The area between the outer dome and the inner dome will be completed; the carillon will be relocated to improve the quality of its sound; the museum will be modernized and the library will be more accessible to researchers.
- **Comfort:** The new layout will greatly improve the flow of visitors, regardless of the size of the group or their interests—pilgrimage, tourism, prayer, quiet time, or people simply coming to admire the beauty of the Oratory and its surroundings.
- **Landscaping:** There will be more trees, shrubs and flowers, and less asphalt.
- **Research and documentation:** The research and consultation rooms will be enlarged and modernized to improve access to research material and to facilitate the instalment of modern working equipment.

MAIN RENOVATION PROJECTS

(Numbers refer to those on the plan on page 6)

1- Grand Walkway

Creation of a larger gathering place around the statue of Saint Joseph.
Elimination of intersections between pedestrians and vehicles.
Widening of the grand walkway and improvement of the landscaping.

2- Plateau

Redesigning the plateau area around the crypt to improve access and to facilitate outdoor celebrations and processions.
Creation of the Holy Family Place.
Elimination of parking and traffic in front of the Pilgrims' Pavilion and Holy Cross Pavilion.

3- Pilgrims' Pavilion

Replacing the old pavilion with a new, more accessible building that will contain a cafeteria, restaurant, snack bar, souvenir and gift shop, rooms for religious consultation, meeting rooms, and administrative offices.

4- Visitors' Centre

Construction of a Visitors' Information Centre that will contain meeting rooms and exhibition halls.
Linking the Visitors' Centre at the parking level and the Pilgrims' Pavilion by escalators and/or elevators for people with limited mobility.

5- Carillon

Moving the carillon to give it more prominence on the terrace
Creating a more acoustically appropriate environment.

6- Traffic

Safer entrances and exits to the grounds will be built and a private secondary road will be created for all service vehicles.
Elimination of dangerous intersections of pedestrians and vehicles.

7- Area between the inner and outer domes and the skylight

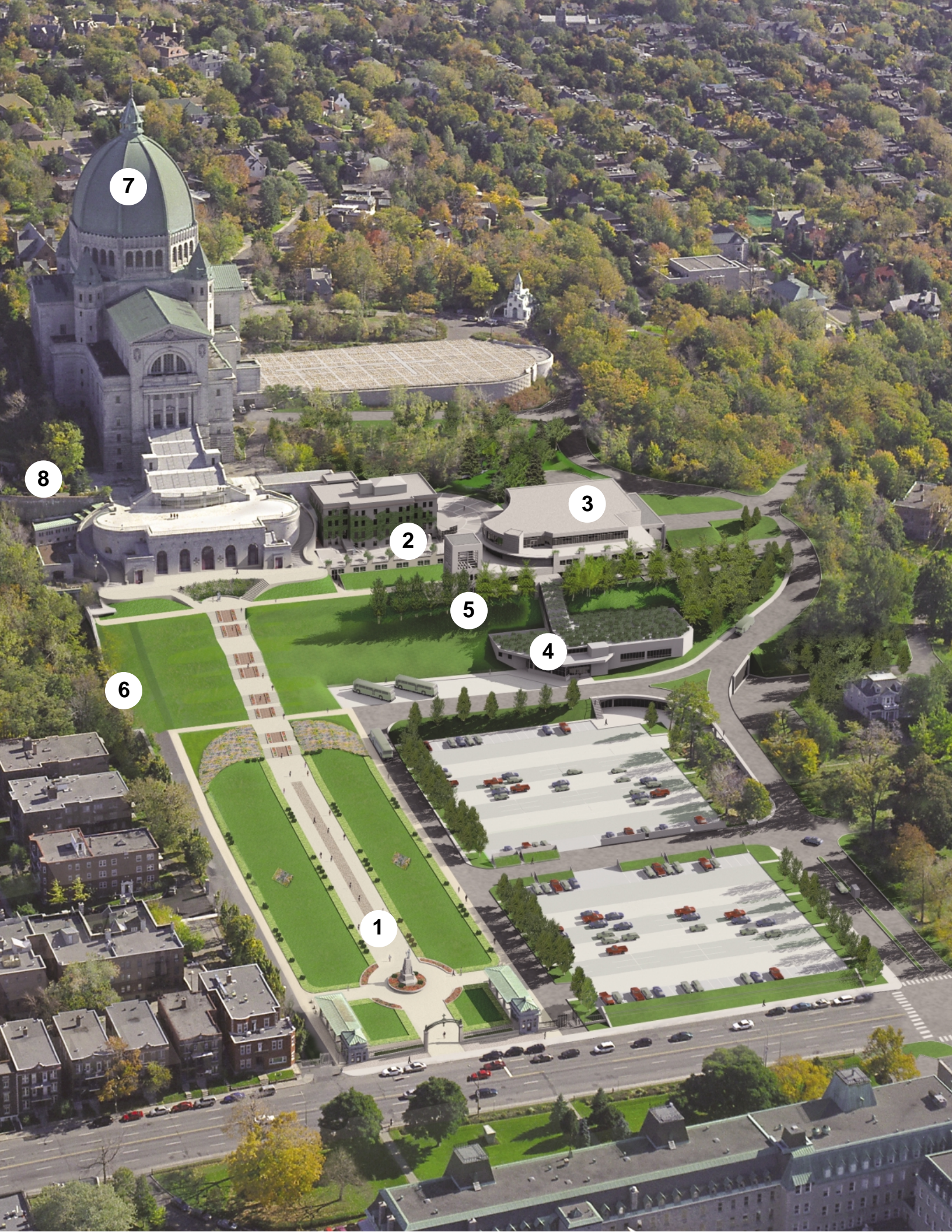
The area between the inner and outer domes as well as the skylight will be opened to the public.

8- Library, Research Centre, and other indoor improvements

Redesign of the library, archives, and Research Centre.
Transformation of the present library into a 'quiet room' for prayer and worship.
Installation of elevators for people with reduced mobility from the "salle des pas perdus" (upper antechamber) to the votive chapel at the level of the crypt.

9- Landscaping

Creation of new areas for rest and meditation.
Creation of new and improved wooded areas, green spaces, and flower beds.



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GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Respect for tradition and for the needs of the 21st century

The Grand Renovation Project at Saint Joseph's Oratory aims to adapt the existing grounds and buildings to the needs of visitors and pilgrims. As extra land has been acquired over the years, some of the service buildings and the access to the grounds need to be renovated to increase the safety of all. The general plan is shown on page 6; the numbers in brackets refer to the numbers on the plan.

A. DEVELOPMENT OF THE GRAND WALKWAY (1)

With the additional acquired land, the property is now wider, making it possible to redirect vehicular traffic away from the Grand Walkway. This was an important element for the original architects of the Oratory, Mr. Viau and Mr. Venne. They were not able to implement that element because of the sharp incline and the narrowness of the property; instead, the road had to zigzag up the hill and cross the main stairs and footpaths. A century ago there were fewer cars to contend with; fifty years later the traffic had increased significantly, but it was still nothing like the traffic jams that now occur. Such dense traffic poses a danger to pedestrians and is a nuisance for the pilgrims who climb the main staircase on their knees and pray.

Respect for the past

The first stairs were made of wood and were reserved for the pilgrims. In the 1940's, cement stairs were built on either side of the wooden ones. The original drawings for the Oratory and grounds show very large staircases, similar to those found in front of European cathedrals. The new plan finds its inspiration in the original design, with its proposed classical garden and stairs on the slope. The large wooden stairs will be framed by shrubs and flowerbeds. The manicured gardens will be in the French style. The Grand Walkway will become not only a well-protected area reserved for prayers, but also the focal point leading to the Oratory.

On either side of the central wooden stairs, there will be granite steps. A statue of Brother André, the founder of the Oratory, will greet the pilgrims at the top of the steps. This Grand Walkway is designed to facilitate religious activities and processions. It will also eliminate congestion when there are busloads of visitors milling about. At present the crowds can be quite overwhelming on certain special days and celebrations.

B. SEPARATE ACCESS FOR VEHICLES AND PEDESTRIANS (6)

All welcoming facilities for visitors arriving by car or bus will be located on the western side of the Grand Walkway, away from the 'sacred' area. The present situation, combining traffic, parking, and visitors in one area must be remedied, since it is not compatible with the desired surroundings.

The current situation is a result of physical restrictions of the original site. With the acquisition of additional land to the west of the Oratory, this can now be improved.

Visitors arriving by public transport (STM bus), chartered buses, or by car, will be greeted at the new pavilion at the foot of the hill, where information about the sanctuary will be available. Guided tours will also start out from this point. Those who wish to go up on foot will have easy access to the Grand Walkway.

Those wishing to reach the crypt or the basilica quickly will be able to use the stairs or an escalator. This will replace the existing exterior staircase, which is in bad condition. Access to the upper grounds will be restricted to cars for people with limited mobility, the shuttle bus, and service vehicles. Access via Kingston Road will be controlled and limited to service vehicles and suppliers.

Parking will therefore be restricted to the foot of the hill and will be entirely surrounded by trees and shrubs. There will be two sections for cars and one for buses. Restricting parking to the foot of the hill will create a much more pleasant atmosphere at the 'plateau' level during outdoor gatherings.

C. VISITORS' PAVILION AND EXHIBITION HALL (4)

The new Visitors' Pavilion at the foot of the hill will have a number of rooms available for community activities, and halls to present exhibitions on different themes, such as sacred art, Quebec's religious heritage, and the history of the Oratory. All heavy equipment, cleaning materials, and maintenance vehicles will be kept in the basement of the new building rather than outdoors as is done presently. The car parking lot will be divided in two sections, both surrounded by trees and shrubs.

Vehicular access for visitors and personnel will only be possible at the entrance from Queen Mary Road. The current vehicles' entrance to the school of the Petits Chanteurs du Mont-Royal will be closed and all vehicular traffic will have to use the main entrance to the Oratory.

D. CARILLON (5)

Honouring the music

Saint Joseph's Oratory considers music a priority. Les Petits Chanteurs du Mont-Royal, the adult choir, the organ concerts, and the carillon recitals all bring an added element of solemnity to the gatherings and celebrations.

An enchanting carillon

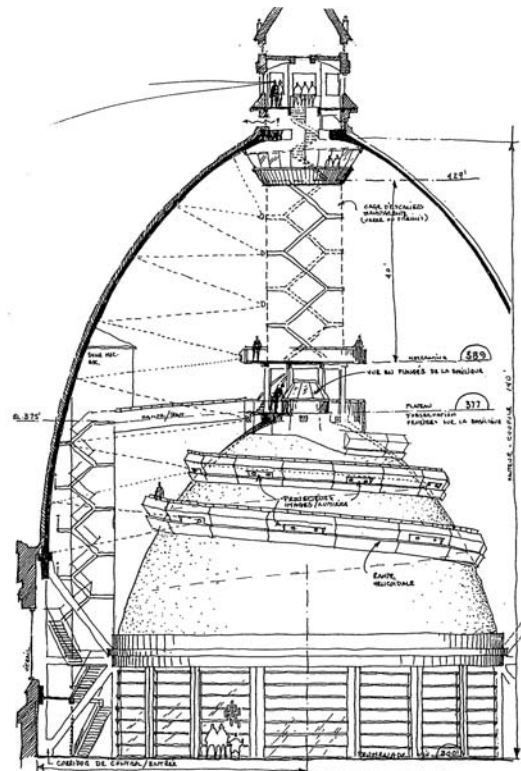
The prestigious Oratory carillon comprises 56 bronze bells made of a copper and pewter alloy. This instrument is one of the great carillons of North America. Its bells were cast by Maison Paccard et Frères in Annecy-le-Vieux, France. The largest of these bells weighs 1,500 kg, whereas the smallest weighs only 5 kg, with a total weight of 10,900 kg. These bells were intended to be installed on the Eiffel Tower in Paris. However, the project was never completed and the bells were then lent to the Oratory for its 50th anniversary celebrations in 1954. Generous benefactors subsequently gave them to the Oratory.

E. BETWEEN THE TWO DOMES (7)

When the basilica was first built, the architects intended the area between the outer dome and the inner dome, as well as the skylight that crowns it, to be open to the public. This project was never completed due to financial restrictions.

The renovations now planned include finishing this project, and this will provide Montreal with its only 360 degree view of the city and region. On a clear day, the US border will be visible to the South and the Laurentians to the North.

Vertical cut showing the area between the outer dome and the inner dome



F. LIBRARY AND RESEARCH CENTRE (8)

Thousands of documents—some rare, some unique—are stored in the library, but they are difficult for the public to access. Furthermore, the Research Centre has become outdated.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

This section provides a more detailed description of the work to be done. The map on page 6 shows the new grounds as they will look when the work is completed.

1. Grand Walkway

The design of the Grand Walkway and its landscaping aim to create an artistic green space that stretches from the entrance gate on Queen Mary Road to the summit of the skylight on top of the dome of the Oratory. This area on the eastern side of the grounds, away from all vehicular traffic, will be used exclusively by the pilgrims.

Features:

- a) At the beginning of the walkway, a large area around the statue of Saint Joseph will incorporate the two existing gatehouses. This area serves as a gathering place for various celebrations, such as Brother André's birthday on the 9th of August.
- b) The Grand Walkway will be much larger than the current one.
- c) Frère André Street will be extended to intersect the Grand Walkway, and will help to ease traffic congestion during large celebrations.
- d) Flowerbeds will replace the existing cement steps on both sides of the central staircase, creating a protective barrier for the pilgrims.
- e) Two new staircases for visitors will be built of granite, similar to the staircases leading to the Basilica.
- f) At the top of the steps, a statue of Brother André will greet the pilgrims. New staircases will be built to reach the crypt level and/or the Pilgrims' Pavilion.

2. Plateau

Currently pedestrians, buses, shuttle buses, and other traffic all meet on the Western side between the Pilgrims' Pavilion and the Holy Cross Pavilion. The road winding up the hill is inadequate and inaccessible to people with limited mobility and to parents with very young children.

The only means for people with limited mobility to get to the crypt is through the door of the Votive Chapel. From the parking area, the view of the Basilica is usually blocked by tour buses and cars. Pollution, noise, and odours from all those vehicles are unpleasant and can spoil the pleasure of one's visit.

Features of the plateau:

- a) At the crypt level, the plateau area will be redesigned to provide better access for all and to facilitate celebrations that involve outdoor processions.
- b) Links will be built between the plateau and the main visitors' services; points of interest will be renovated.
- c) On the plateau, special areas will be designed for pastoral services.
- d) The view of the Basilica will be improved.
- e) The space between the Holy Cross Pavilion, the Pilgrims' Pavilion, and the Chapel will become available as a meeting point for celebrations at the Chapel.
- f) The plateau will be renamed Holy Family Place.

3. New Pilgrims' Pavilion

The present building on the plateau is old and outdated, and needs to be replaced. It is not well located, it has no aesthetic value, and its interior is not practical. A new and safer building will be a great improvement.

Features of the Pilgrims' Pavilion:

- a) The architects have planned a simple design to complement the Basilica.
- b) Each floor will be on a single level with easy access for people with limited mobility. The building will have its own elevator and escalators.
- c) Lower Level:
Reserved for general administration offices and visitor services, the Pilgrimage Office, and the Consultation Office.
- d) Plateau Level:
This level will contain the gift shop and other visitors' services, the information kiosk, and a distribution stand for information material. Through a large window, visitors will be also able to see the carillon player in his studio.
- e) Upper Level:
Overlooking a terrace, the new cafeteria will have a magnificent view. A new and more visible bell tower will be built on the terrace. The sound will project towards the north, the area most frequently visited. All food services will be on this level, including the cafeteria, the snack bar, and the dining room.

4. Visitors' Centre with elevators and escalators

Planning traffic on a site located on a steep hill is a major challenge.

At the moment, many visitors are daunted by the idea of climbing 203 steps to reach the door of the Basilica. Therefore, many go up by car as far as the plateau level and park there, leaving parking spaces at the bottom of the hill underused.

The Grand Project aims to reduce traffic on the hill to the strictest minimum.

Features of the Visitors' Centre:

- a) A new Visitors' Centre will be built at the foot of the hill at the back of the parking lot, away from (to the west of) the Grand Walkway. The bus landing and the bus parking lot will be located near this building.
- b) The Visitors' Centre will be linked to the Pilgrims' Pavilion by staircases and escalators, offering a view of the gardens, the hill, the crypt, and the Basilica. There will also be an underground corridor and an elevator to the Pilgrims' Pavilion for people with limited mobility.
- c) Garages for trucks and maintenance equipment will be located in the basement of this building and under the new access road.

5. Carillon

The carillon, having been loaned to the Oratory for its 50th anniversary celebrations, was temporarily installed on the Pilgrims' Pavilion. Since 1954, millions of pilgrims and visitors have enjoyed its joyous and distinctive music.

The carillon must be moved to a more acoustically appropriate location. Once moved to the Holy Family Place, the carillon can be used as an integral part of the celebrations to offer a whole new musical experience.

6. General traffic on the grounds of the Oratory

Pedestrian and vehicular access to the grounds of the Oratory needs to be improved, in order to create a better flow of traffic and maximum security for all concerned.

- a) Queen Mary Road access:
Traffic lights at street level will control the flow of cars and pedestrians. The new lights will be to the west of the existing entrance, between the main parking lot and the park.
- b) Access to the main parking lot will be through a new entrance on the western side of the grounds, away from the Grand Walkway.

The building known as the 'Auberge', located in the middle of the lower parking area, will be demolished to make way for the new parking area.
- c) Traffic in front of the Visitors' Centre will be limited to buses and taxis and will be one-way only.

Buses will unload and load passengers at the foot of the hill. The plateau area will be accessible only to pedestrians and for religious celebrations. The bus parking lot, next to the Visitors' Centre, will be hidden by trees and shrubs on two sides. All buses will leave the parking area via the road between the two car parking lots.
- d) Frère-André Street will be extended to the general parking area and will cross the Great Walkway. It will be closed to traffic by movable cement blocks and opened up to ease the flow of traffic only on very special occasions. The northern extension of Frère-André Street (east-west) will remain but only at street level, to allow traffic to turn east on Queen Mary Road.
- e) Service Roads:
The existing service roads will be improved. The private Kingston Road will be reserved for service and supply vehicles, well away from the view of visitors.
- f) Creation of parking areas to the west of the Pilgrims' Pavilion:
This parking area will be reserved for authorised vehicles, short-term parking (mainly for people with limited mobility), and for the use of the Holy Cross Pavilion residents.

7. Between the inner and outer domes and the skylight

Original concept and expansion

When the Basilica was built in the 1920s, the plan included access to the skylight via the four towers at the Basilica level. Stairwells and structures were built in the north and east towers in 1965-1966 and an elevator well was installed in the west tower. Lack of funds prevented the construction from being finished.

Completion of the work is now planned in order to give Montreal an outstanding tourist attraction.

Visit

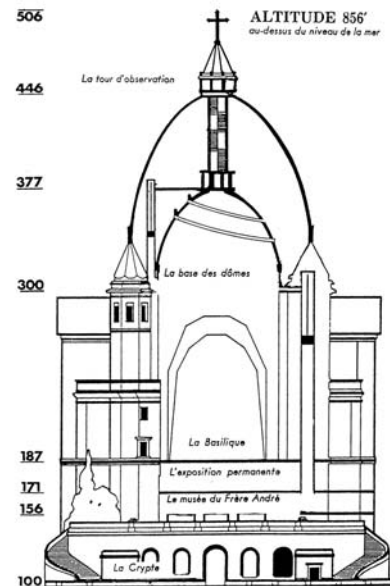
Once the skylight is open to the public, visitors will be able to admire the view of the Basilica from high above, visit an exhibition of artefacts at level 300, enjoy the impressive area between the inner and outer domes, and admire the stained glass windows circling the base of the outer shell.

On the spiral ramp from the mezzanine to the skylight, the main attraction will be a spectacular audio-visual presentation projected on the inside surface of the outer dome, an extraordinary circular surface of 100 feet in height and 120 feet in diameter at the base.

At level 377, the top of the inner dome, the main altar will be visible through windows 200 feet below. This area is 25 feet in diameter and provides access to the next level ten feet higher.

From level 377, two staircases climb up to level 429, a height equivalent to a six-story building. At level 479, the visitors will be in a circular glass room: the skylight.

The skylight is 17 feet wide and is reached by a six-foot wide opening in its centre. Each of the eight windows is over five feet wide. From here, the highest point on the island of Montreal, visitors can see the most spectacular view of the city. In clear weather, the American border is visible to the south and the Laurentians to the north.



Crypt and basilica's elevation

Technical data:

- a) Capacity of the skylight: 30 visitors at a time
Capacity of the area between the two domes: 340 visitors
- b) Duration of visit in the skylight – 15 minutes
Duration of visit to the skylight and between domes – 30 minutes
Duration of visit including time to ascend and descend – minimum 45 minutes.

- c) Access by staircases and high-speed elevators (600ft/min.)
Each elevator can carry 10 passengers on a 200-foot ride every five minutes. Ten passengers every five minutes, or 12 trips per hour, equals 120 people per hour reaching the skylight, plus those who climb the stairs. Waiting time in line should be minimal given such a quick turnaround.
- d) The appeal of the visit is threefold: the beauty of the view from the highest point on the island; the interesting historical and architectural interior views; and the multimedia projection on the walls between the two domes.

8. Library and Research Centre

The existing library is far too small, with no possibility of expansion in its present location. It is also difficult to access, under-used, and neither functional nor appealing to readers and researchers.

The new library and archives will be located together in the area currently occupied by the secretariat offices, on the Eastern side of the grounds. The library will be open to the public.

The area now occupied by the library, not far from Brother André's tomb, will become a 'quiet room' for prayer and worship.

The Research Centre, specialising in Saint Joseph and spiritual life, will be enlarged and will become part of the reorganised library.

9. Landscaping

a) Trees:

For many decades, Saint Joseph's Oratory has been a pioneer in tree conservation by maintaining and renewing existing green spaces and planting new trees.

Where renovations are planned, a complete inventory of trees (ten centimetres and taller), shrubs, and flowers has been drawn up. It will greatly facilitate the implementation of a plan aimed at protecting existing trees, as well as help to steer future planting.

A similar inventory has been drawn up for the wooded areas where new construction work is planned. The inventory also includes a circular ten-meter area around each of these construction sites. It is important to minimise the impact of the construction work on each site and to implement protective measures wherever necessary.

When the work is completed, there will be at least one hundred new trees.

b) Queen Mary Road:

The green belt will be extended to the west along the parking area.

c) The Grand Walkway:

The flowerbeds will be extended from Queen Mary Road right up to the crypt level.

d) Footpaths and Slopes:

By eliminating the asphalt roads in front of the Oratory, it will be possible to reduce the incline of certain slopes. Some paths will be kept and reserved for pedestrians and small snow-clearing vehicles.

e) Parking Areas:

Trees will surround the parking areas. The general parking area, at the level of Queen Mary Road, will be flat and hidden by a wall of trees.



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