THE ABUNDANCE OF AN URBAN VOID: THE UNFINISHED CAMPUS MIL

Celebrating Informality, Regulatory Ambiguity and Appropriation in Interstitial Space

Written By:	Maya Jain-Schlaepfer
University:	Concordia University, Design Major
Class:	Independent Study - DART 462
Supervisor:	Dr. Carmela Cucuzzella
Date:	April 20, 2021

Fig. 1

INTRODUCTION

In 2006, an inactive marshalling yard—a massive industrial division at the intersection of four distinct neighbourhoods in Montreal—was purchased by the University of Montreal and the City of Montreal. Both parties agreed that by 2022, this vacant swatch of land would be turned into a state-of-the-art university campus, the Campus MIL. Over the last 15 years, a range of formal and informal activity has taken place on the 38-hectare site, including the construction of university buildings and luxury condos, bold grassroots community gardening, underground music and dance events, as well as day-to-day appropriations by the surrounding residents. In this paper, the incomplete development site will be analyzed as a meaningful example of 'interstitial space', the 'open city', and an 'urban commons'. An array of conditions and particularities about the space make it an ideal case study for demonstrating the social and environmental benefits that arise out of informal, non-prescriptive, unplanned, ambiguous cavities that exist throughout cities. Despite a general rejection of these spaces by city officials and designers, they exist as the direct consequence of urbanisation, bureaucracy, speculative development and normative architecture and planning practices with prescriptive tendencies. This paper will attempt to demonstrate a more nuanced, dynamic perspective on urban development and a need to recognize the potential of transgressive, informal, bottom-up activity during a time in which cities are increasingly privatized and homogenized, commercialisation dominates and drastic gentrification is imminent.

Three theoretical frameworks have been selected to demonstrate the resources that arose from the Outremont site in its unfinished stages. The studies of Interstitial Space, The Open city and Urban Commons all share a critique of commercialization and privatization in the urban sphere. They each demonstrate strategies that arise out of local-led activations of urban space, which appropriate and mitigate the repercussions of prescriptive, top-down urban development. Studies on interstitial space focuses on the 'in-between' spaces of the city, often rejected by officials, which function as spaces for essential deviance, protection and nuance, tucked away from enforced norms. The Open City deals with the nurturing of adaptive, and versatile urban spaces which make for resilient built environments and which reflect local realities and foster democratic interaction between diverse urban dwellers. The concept of Urban Commons demonstrates the ways communities benefit from shared, self-managed resources outside of market and state logics. Observations of the informal activity and appropriation of the incomplete Outremont site in contrast with the planning and development processes, will be analysed as pertinent examples of these theoretical frameworks. I'd like to stress that I do not propose the conditions of the incomplete development site as sustainable, long-term nor systemic solutions to the issues that will be brought forward. This analysis will merely try to demonstrate the benefits of spaces which evade the hegemony of neoliberal forces.

OVERVIEW OF THE OUTREMONT SITE

The Campus MIL development is taking shape on what used to be an active industrial sector of Montreal. In the first half of the 20th century, Montreal was significantly urbanized and Outremont in particular was densified as a workers district.[1] The area drew in new immigrants while factories were being set up in the surrounding neighbourhoods that are today Parc-Extension, the Mile-End and the Mile-Ex. A continental railway network developed quickly after the Confederation of Canada was formed, and was an indispensable element for the industrial and commercial expansion of Montreal, Quebec and Canada.[2] In 1895 the city of Outremont was founded. In 1910, the Outremont marshalling yard was demarcated and put to use.[3] The marshalling yard featured a rotunda, maintenance tracks for steam locomotives and storage. The development of diesel tracks and electric trains led to the eventual decline of activity in the yard. From the 1960s onward, the commercial and industrial activity of the area diminished, and has been consolidated. The Outremont marshalling yard finally became inactive in 1985.

Today, this site is located at the border of distinct and disparate neighbourhoods. The land sits at the northern limit within the borough of Outremont, which consists of a majoritarily affluent francophone community as well as a significant and established Hasidic Jewish community. To the east is the Mile-Ex, a borough which includes the Atlantic, Marconi-Alexandra and Beaumont sectors. This area had historically been a manufacturing district for boxes, paint, electronics and textiles. The early 21st century marked the arrival of tech enterprise giants in the area. The sector was quickly co-opted by the AI and technology industry along with a wave of young, wealthy professionals. The surge in activity and attraction to the area also increased residential development investment interest.[4] The area is scattered with revamped warehouses full of creative tech startups, and a variety of luxury residential properties interspersed with the original triplexes built for the working class. The Mile-Ex area also has a reputation of alternative and underground creativity. Not all warehouses have yet been co-opted by these enterprises, some have long been occupied by artist collectives, small record labels, radio stations, and other creatives activities. The Atlantic sector known as 'Durocher' was notorious for its after-hours basement raves, and for its variety of cultural events such as art exhibitions, fashions shows, premieres, etc. Increasingly, these communities with less capital are being squeezed out of the sector.

To the North of the Outremont development site is the primarily industrial Beaumont strip and just north of that, the borough of Parc-Extension. Parc-Extension is a neighbourhood amongst the poorest and most densely populated in Canada; 43 per cent of residents live below the poverty line.[5] It has also hosted one of the most diverse communities of Canada including a multi-generational Greek immigrant population and increasingly a South Asian one. The neighbourhood "has been instrumental in facilitating the integration of newcomers to Canada through efforts of community organization, informal residents' networks and public spaces with cultural markers."[6] However, the sector has also been historically neglected by governmental investment and is severely isolated in the city. It is literally cut off by train tracks, high-traffic boulevards and a locked fence, built in the 1950s along the border of the Town of Mount-Royal (TMR). Signs along the fence still indicade today that TMR justified this fence as necessary for the safety of its children.[7]

TMR is located to the north-west of the Outremont development site, and just west of Parc-Ex. It was designed in the early 1900s as an urban utopia that attracted primarily wealthy white anglophones. Today it is diverse, but homogeneously affluent: a suburb in central Montreal, with residential blocks boasting detached mansions with landscaped yards and pools. A satellite image above the area demonstrates just how distinct the borough is from the others (See Fig. 3). TMR is green, blocks are shaped in concentric circles, lots are much larger and more spaced out. Meanwhile, Parc-Ex is visibly denser and follows a rigid grid structure. The Outremont development site is situated in a potent interstice of the city. Most likely, the marshalling yard, contributed to the segregation of boroughs that grew into wildy divergent sectors with contrasting architectural, cultural and socio-economic realities.

The site is also marked by other infrastructural particularities. The lot is located directly between two metros stations on Montreal's blue line. Just to the north is Acadie station and to the south is Outremont station. The lot is blocked off by CP rails to the north, the brutal Rockland overpass to the west, and an industrial maze to the east (See Figure). The site is marked by the presence of the train tracks which frame and cut across it. A few hundred meters east, down one of these tracks is a multi-use pedestrian path that borders and follows it. Here, there is space for bikers, runners, walkers and skiers, outdoor public gym equipment, planters, public art, and several well-used illegal crossing points (i.e. holes in the fence) that relink neighbourhoods cut off by the tracks. The multi-use path navigates around concrete and hostile infrastructures—between a massive overpass, beside train tracks blocked off by fencing and through private industrial sectors. It functions as one of the few human-scale transit routes in the area, and is used as a shortcut amongst the urban chaos.

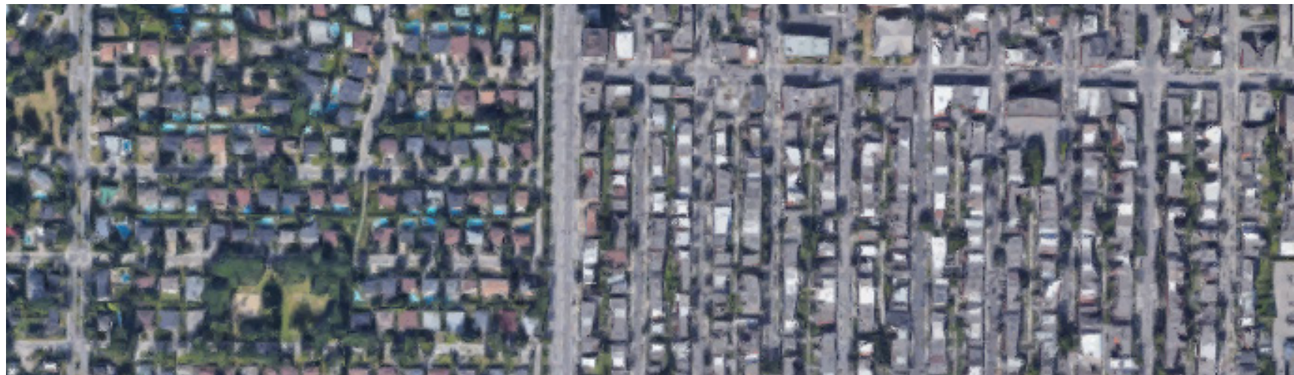
In 2005, the University of Montreal expressed interest in purchasing and developing the old marshalling yard. The lot was purchased by the University and the city from Canadian Pacific for $20 million. In 2006, an official proposal was put together that suggested the lot become a new neighbourhood with mixed university infrastructure, residential buildings and public facilities.It was framed as a vibrant contribution to Montreal's reputation as "a city of knowledge" and innovation.[8] After receiving support for the project municipally, provincially and federally, the City and UdM went ahead and purchased the lot to begin a process of planning and consultation. Between 2007 and 2013, a series of public consultation meetings, discussions and official assessments (including the consultations of the Office de Consultation Publique de Montreal [OCPM], several of the city's feasibility assessments, and the Urban, Economic and Social Development Plan [PDUES]) resulted in suggested amendments to the initial proposal. In 2010, a second iteration of the plan was made public. The final plans outlined 300,000m2 of university institutional buildings, at least 1300 housing units (30% of which would be affordable), 6500m2 of parks and municipal infrastructure, a central plaza and green main strip to stretch from Rockland to Parc avenue, bicycle and pedestrian routes integrated into the greater Montreal circuit, around 400 parking spaces, a new municipal services building and 2 pedestrian bridges between Outremont and Parc-Extension. All this would involve major infrastructural work including displacing one set of train tracks and constructing a train bridge to cross the site), soil decontaminating, and establishing water management.. As well, it would involve the displacement of an existing Outremont park, community gardens and the demolition of several buildings in the Atlantic district.

The plan was marketed around the idea of a multipurpose sector brimming with life—work, play, creativity, innovation and research[9]—an environment that would gather students, professors, researchers, creatives, artists and entrepreneurs alike. Reduced parking, increased bike accessibility, an array of green and public spaces, rainwater recovery systems and the university's state-of-the-art building would all contribute to its reputation as a development with ambitious sustainability and quality of life goals. Even the city of Montreal's administration recognized the development as a flagship project for sustainability.[10] The construction is chalked up to be "ultra-modern", and innovation-focused. The Science Complex boasts lightweight 'high-performance glass walls', an agora garden and rooftop greenspace, and two high-tech 'hubs' connected by a library meant to accommodate teaching, research and innovation. One of the lead architects of the project, Anik Shooner, expressed pride in the project's 'social aspects' and the ways the space would "foster productive networks within the university as well as with the neighbouring residents".[11] The plans declared that the development would restore links between various communities, referring mainly to Outremont, Mile-Ex, and Parc-Extension. The official plans also claimed that the development would prioritize the participation of stakeholders and the proper integration of the site within the existing communities. The development project insisted that it would actively engage with the communities it would affect through public assemblies, communication with the media, conferences and active participation in activities such as the OCPM and the PDUES. The plans went on to win awards, and gain recognition for their sustainability-centered ambition. These awards included the National Honour in Planning and Analysis from the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects, and the Award of Excellence in Urban Design from the Canadian Institute of Planners. The Science Complex was certified Gold Leed ND.

Nonetheless, the promises of a utopian campus have been met with skepticism from the locals who have experienced first-hand the consequences of this mega-project. While news sources applaud the university, the City and planners involved for their attention to integration and sustainability, members from the surrounding neighbourhoods have argued instead that the new campus raises significant concerns such as gentrification, lack of public access and circulation issues and the consequences of a decade of ongoing construction.

An Outremont blog which shares information about the development on the site published a displeased review of the plans after their adoption by the executive committee, calling them 'outdated' and 'unconvincing'.[12] The author recalls the residential development that was proposed on the site in 1995 and dropped. At the time, Outremont had been an independent city, allowing for the organization of a referendum which cancelled the project based on concerns of density and building height. These new plans for the Campus MIL are not drastically different—a street grid extension of the urban fabric and a green esplanade copy-pasted from Boston's Commonwealth Avenue. The opinion piece critiques the static, dogmatic grid layout as a waste given such an opportunity to build on a brownfield: starting with a blank slate was a unique chance for an architectural variety. The author also addresses concerns brought forward by TMR and Outremont citizens that the traffic studies were not nearly sufficient given the site's proximity to north/south arteries such as Rockland. Overall, the blog assesses that the plans for the campus were not thorough in their assessments, that important links to surrounding neighbourhoods were addressed lightly and the design was not bold enough for Montreal's standards for enjoyable urban space.

Fig. 2



Around the same time, surrounding neighbourhoods including the Marconi, Beaumont, De Castelneau sectors underwent studies on the possible revitalisation of commercial streets, green spaces and circulation. Several analyses carried out by Héritage Montreal and other architectural organisations criticized the initial plans for not engaging enough with the other surrounding projects underway. Initial plans had not contextualized the neighbourhood within the existing urban fabric and this was eventually addressed in the revised plans.

One ongoing contention is the plan's lack of recognition for its disruptive presence for the borough of Parc-Extension. Parc-Ex's population is at comparatively higher risk in bearing the burden of the development, compared to nearby boroughs like Mount-Royal and Outremont. In 2011, before the public consultation process was fully complete, the city went ahead and approved the project. Members from the Parc-Extension Citizen Committee and other local community groups demanded a moratorium on the project until requests for more transparency, gentrification protection, social housing and job security were met.[13] To them, the consultation process had been symbolic at best. "Despite public messaging, the University of Montreal has failed to act or take responsibility for their impact on Parc-Extension," states a thorough report on the Campus MIL's gentrifying effects, put together by the Park Extension Anti-eviction Mapping Project.[14] The neighbourhood, rather than a luxury nextdoor campus, is needing social and material investment in an existing network of community organizations and support networks that reflect the neighbourhood's diversity. Not only one year after the campus has opened, a variety of serious issues have been felt: a specific form of gentrification, 'studentification', has started to solidify a speculative housing market in the neighbourhood. It has also led to the abrupt professionalization of an area that functions as the infrastructure of a multi-generational low-income and majoritarily new-immigrant community. Opportunistic landlords are hiking rent and forcing evictions in anticipation of the wave of students looking for housing near the new campus, causing the displacement and destabilization of longtime residents, community groups and support networks.[15] After the Campus MIL plans were made public, accusations arose that the project did not properly consider Parc-Ex's reality. Demands were made for the development to be treated as an opportunity to not only benefit Outremont, but to open up Parc-Extension, to remedy the resource-deficiency that has historically been the case, and to address the impending housing crisis. While the university has publicized their interest in developing good relationships with the surrounding neighbourhoods, it has not meaningfully engaged with mitigation strategies nor even publicly acknowledged the ways it has "exacerbated social and economic precarity in an already vulnerable area of the city."[16] Since the campus has opened, a slew of reports, articles and data collection demonstrate that the development's self-congratulatory promises of 'integration' and 'sustainable development' are lacking concrete structural presence and commitment in their engagements with Parc-Ex community groups. While those behind the development boast about a linkage between neighbourhoods, engagement with surrounding locals, and even increased accessibility to university education, long-time Parc-Ex residents and community groups are being rapidly displaced and destabilized.

The plans were approved in 2011 with the approximate completion of the project aimed for 2022, meaning a planned minimum of 11 years of execution. Much of the land designated for residential buildings was sold to private developers and the City and so a variety of construction projects since 2011 have been underway. Soil decontamination and leveling started almost immediately. The displacement of the southern CP train track and the construction of a train bridge were finished by 2016. Between 2016 and 2019, construction of the main arteries including Avenue Thérèse-Lavoie-Roux, the prolongation of residential Outremont streets, the construction of the Science Complex and the footbridge crossing from Outremont to Parc-Extension, the construction of the municipal services complex as well as the fabrication of the main public plaza and 'Parc Pierre-Dansereau' were underway. Condominium constructions around the site began as early as 2017. The completed UdeM Science Complex and adjacent plaza, 'Place Alice Girard', were inaugurated in the fall of 2019. And then, in March of 2020, the Coronavirus caused the temporary shut down of all operations. After a few months, the construction picked up again mainly for the prolongation of Avenue Thérèse-Lavoie-Roux to Parc avenue and the construction of residential condominiums.

ACTIVITY ON SITE

The Outremont site has been a host to a variety of both formal and informal activities. While it certainly has been accessed through official programming and public signaling in formal ways, it has also always been accessible to the public in informal contexts. The following section will give a general overview of the uses and appropriations of the space that have been documented and observed throughout the stage of development. Specific spatial conditions and circumstances have emphasized the site's accessibility for this range of activity and for the informal ways residents have animated the space.

FORMAL

Two main construction developments have been underway since around 2012: several condo projects including Mil Haus (developed by Mondev) and Vivre In Outremont (developed by Presti) and the monumental Science Complex of the University of Montreal. The university complex plays a major role on the site. The city has actively claimed an innovatory, cultural, and educational status of this development on account of the university's involvement and presence. The Science Complex did open in the fall of 2019 to students, faculty and researchers and then was partially closed due to the Covid-19 outbreak for over a year. The building stands tall in the centre of a mostly vacant development site scattered with construction (See Fig. 2). Regardless, university students, researchers and faculty formally animate the Outremont site through their daily visits to the campus, their research and studies.

The vast majority of the current construction activity is for planned luxury condominiums. Mil Haus Phase 1, located adjacent to the central axe of the new neighbourhood, is to be completed in the summer of 2021. The building consists of 1 to 3-bedroom apartments as well as two-story homes—all equipped with modern kitchens with quartz counter tops and stainless steel appliances, common areas including a rooftop elevated pool and large terrace, shared exercise facilities and yoga classes as well as area designated for commerce.[17] Next to this nearly completed site is another, larger residential development. And just on the other side of the train overpass, sandwiched in the Atlantic sector, are 3 other condominium buildings underway. The construction has been ongoing for nearly 7 years and though the activity is concentrated on particular lots on the vast site, it is an active force on the space. Construction vehicles are in and out throughout the week, workers scatter the site directing their trucks, open pits have been dug, gravel placed and displaced, three to six cranes loom over the site at any given time, existing buildings have been demolished and 6-story luxury glass buildings have been built, what feels like, overnight.

Other official activation of the site has included the leveling of the ground surface, the decontamination of the soil and the displacement and raising of train tracks, resulting in a different topography for the site. Along the track, some greenery was planted and the beginnings of landscaping on the site have included the planting of trees, bushes, flowers and grass lawns. These are the official, planned greenscapes which are starting to establish themselves on the site.

These formalized activities certainly animate the space and attract a variety of workers and university goers to what is mainly a void and under-construction 38-hectare site.

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

SEMI-FORMAL

The Outremont site is also host to a range of semi-formal activity. A variety of infrastructure has started being put in place that welcomes local communities to use the public site with a degree of flexibility.

Interspersed with the construction lots are public parks and plazas which have recently been built. For now they feel somewhat stark given their surroundings, but since their inauguration in 2019, they have been full of people. There is the beautifully landscaped 'Place Alice Girard' and the 'Parc Pierre-Dansereau', the ornamental lawn and benches in front of the Science Complex and the tiled 'blue line' walkway scattered with meeting tables that eventually crosses the tracks into Parc-Extension (See Fig. 4). These spaces function as transit paths, gathering spaces for outdoor picnics and barbecues, date spots, make-shift skateboard surfaces, playgrounds, paths for an evening stroll and as mini wildlife havens (See Fig 5). They drew people onto the development site and beyond the boundaries of these designated 'public' spaces—onto the vacant lots, dead-end roads and elsewhere on the site as well. These public open spaces are full of a variety of citizens from all surrounding neighbourhoods including families, teenagers, construction workers on break, and individuals in transit.

The main artery that passes through the lot, Avenue Thérèse-Lavoie-Roux, was built with wide, elevated bike paths on either side and large sidewalks that connect to the tiled plazas surfaces. These lanes are occupied consistently with bikers, runners and walkers. While these spaces are public and formally regulated—they invite a variety of activity, whether intended or not. They make the space even more pedestrian-friendly even though car traffic is significantly limited by the current shortage of car access and the lack of reason to be passing through the site by car.

The other major semi-formal activities on the site take place on an active agriculture and community hub lot. The Projets Éphémères is a collaboration between the University of Montreal's sustainability committee, local urban agriculture community organizations and participants from neighbourhoods across Montreal.[18] The Projets Éphémères project has been running since 2016 and each year has grown and changed in scope, with different community groups coming and going. Partnering organisations have included: Miel Montréal, an NGO focused on education around the importance of pollinators and responsible urban apiculture practices; Les amis de la montagne, another NGO protecting heritage and the ecology of Montreal's Mount-Royal; Jeunesse au Soleil, an organisation focused on financial, material and food assistance as well as recreational and education programming for youth; La Place Commune, a cooperative cafe and food hub centred around citizen participation, and the sharing of food resources/knowledge working out of Parc-Extension; On Sème, an organisation aimed at creating a community and a sustainable local urban agriculture system, especially valuing local producers and creators; Parc-Extension collective gardens association and, several others. These organisations have offered a variety of programming including summer-long agriculture training, low commitment volunteering opportunities, employment and internships, summer camps, film screenings and talks and, a variety of workshops in the fields of art, crafts, agricultural and architecture.[19] At the center of the lot is the Mont Réel, a large wooden pyramid that was built collectively as part of an architecture workshop. It functions as a shelter, as a stadium, gives a 360 panoramic view of the Outremont site and the gardens (See Fig. 6). When the space is active, the pyramid is covered in participants resting, chatting, playing and people-watching. Together, the organisations have shared the public lot each year creating a meeting space for participants from all over Montreal and for the local residents that live nearby. The space is wide open for the public to enjoy at all hours of the day.

Though much of the activity that happens on the site is formalized through the organisations' programming, much of the activation of the space is significantly informal: Spontaneous encounters between communities, late night youth hangouts, a haven for nature-lovers, and a space to enjoy wandering through. This space openly functions as a large experiment for the university, and for the organisations; It is prime for both formal and informal activity. The programming and attractions draws a diversity of people onto the Outremont site who might have never stumbled upon it otherwise and is inviting to spontaneous engagements.

Fig. 5

INFORMAL

An abundance of distinctly informal activity has taken place on the Outremont site during its development phase. The sector has a history of informal use because of its past of industrial abandonment. Additionally, its semi-completed landscapes and infrastructure, mixed with conditions of negligible surveillance of the site and reduced traffic on campus due to Covid-19 has led to a huge variety of day-to-day appropriations of the lots.

At the far east end of the lot, near the corner of Beaubien and Durocher, are several large industrial buildings that were converted into art and music studios throughout the 90s and early 2000s. These large warehouses hosted the iconic 'Moonshine' all-nighter parties which became a staple for Montreal's artistic and after-hours scene. Real estate "developments in Mile-Ex have and continue to affect these central communities. Skyrocketing rents and commercial projects have forced many artists in the neighbourhood to pack up...".[20] For a long time, Durocher provided a space that fostered creativity, gathered different communities, and was a place where Montreal's underground culture thrived.[21] The activity in this neighbourhood rode a line between legality and illegality—that is endemic to the nature of the alternative and the underground. Indeed, while these happening were in many ways legal, there were also venues that remained open past Montreal's closing hour, where drug use was typical, where alcohol was served without licensing, and in which artists would squat their studios. This activity swayed in and out of the sight of officials. A level of freedom was felt amongst the artistic community in these spaces to experiment, transgress and thrive. For this type of activity to happen, things had to be organized as informally as possible to avoid being shut down by city officials. Today, at least two blocks of the Durocher sector have been demolished for condo development as a consequence of massive land value increases in the area, partially caused by the Campus MIL development.

Accessible underground space was also found on the Outremont site. Urban explorers would take a ladder down to an echo-ing tunnel where beer cans and broken glass were scattered and wall tags covered the wall. signaling the continuous presence of visitors. Word spread quietly enough that over the course of several years, the space remained open for informal visitors. In 2019, a rave was held in the space. (See Fig. 7) The word was spread amongst the dance and music community, speakers were brought down, and many attended.

The train tracks that cross through Rosemont, Mile-Ex, the Outremont site, are infamous for the way they divide these neighbourhoods. They are bordered continuously with fencing that limits any access or crossing, creating long detours to get from borough to borough. Cutting across the tracks has become a common, and informal, way to bridge these divisions. Cut-out holes in the fence can be seen all along the tracks, which are in turn consistently patched by authorities which are then again dismantled by locals (See Fig. 8). Footprints line the sides of the tracks (within the fences), the evidence of locals on strolls or commuting. This is a major constant informal activity taking place around the site.

Furthermore, the massive vacant gravel and grass lots across the site are appropriated in unexpected ways daily. Perhaps these activities were emphasized by Covid-19 as residents of Montreal were desperate to find relatively uncrowded outdoor space to safely gather, exercise and get air. The large lot sandwiched between the Outremont Intergenerational Community Centre and daycare was covered in snow castles this winter (See Fig. 9). Locals would bring their cross country skis to the site after fresh snowfalls (See Fig. 10). The ambiguous hill on the side of the Science Complex became a tobogganing slope (See Fig. 11). The open fields and distinct architecture created the ideal location for the shooting of short films and photography projects (See Fig. 12). Drone and kite flyers also found the wide open lots perfect for their needs. Several brand new walls have been well decorated in graffiti—tags and larger artworks alike. Occasional dog walkers were able to let their pets off-leash to run across the vacant lots during moments when the site was particularly empty. During weekends, holidays and temporary Covid-19 stand-stils, the more approachable construction sites became play structures for kids. The plazas and grass became the site for crossfit classes. Skateboarders appropriated the mostly empty staircases and cement structures of the built complex and plazas. The dead-end loop around the UdM complex is consistently in use for jogging, biking and strolling. Generally, a great variety of daily appropriations of the space can be observed, which were characterized by the ambiguous qualities of the incomplete site.

Finally, informal plant growth has been a notable addition to the vacant lots. Recently displaced gravel pits are visibly distinguishable from those that have sat for several years based on the shrubby ground cover that had time to establish itself (See Fig. 13). The growth is most probably a mix of hardy invasive and native 'weeds' whose seeds got turned up or floated to the gravel lots and somehow managed to root themselves and meet their needs. Sparse wildlife pockets have shaped themselves out of what was prior industrial land regardless of future real estate and landscaping plans.

Fig. 6

Fig. 7

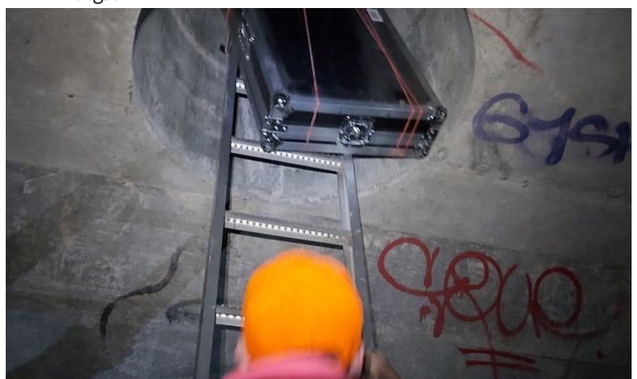


Fig. 8

Fig. 9

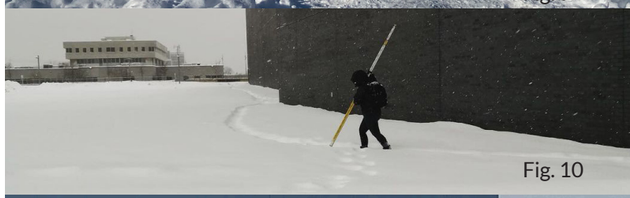
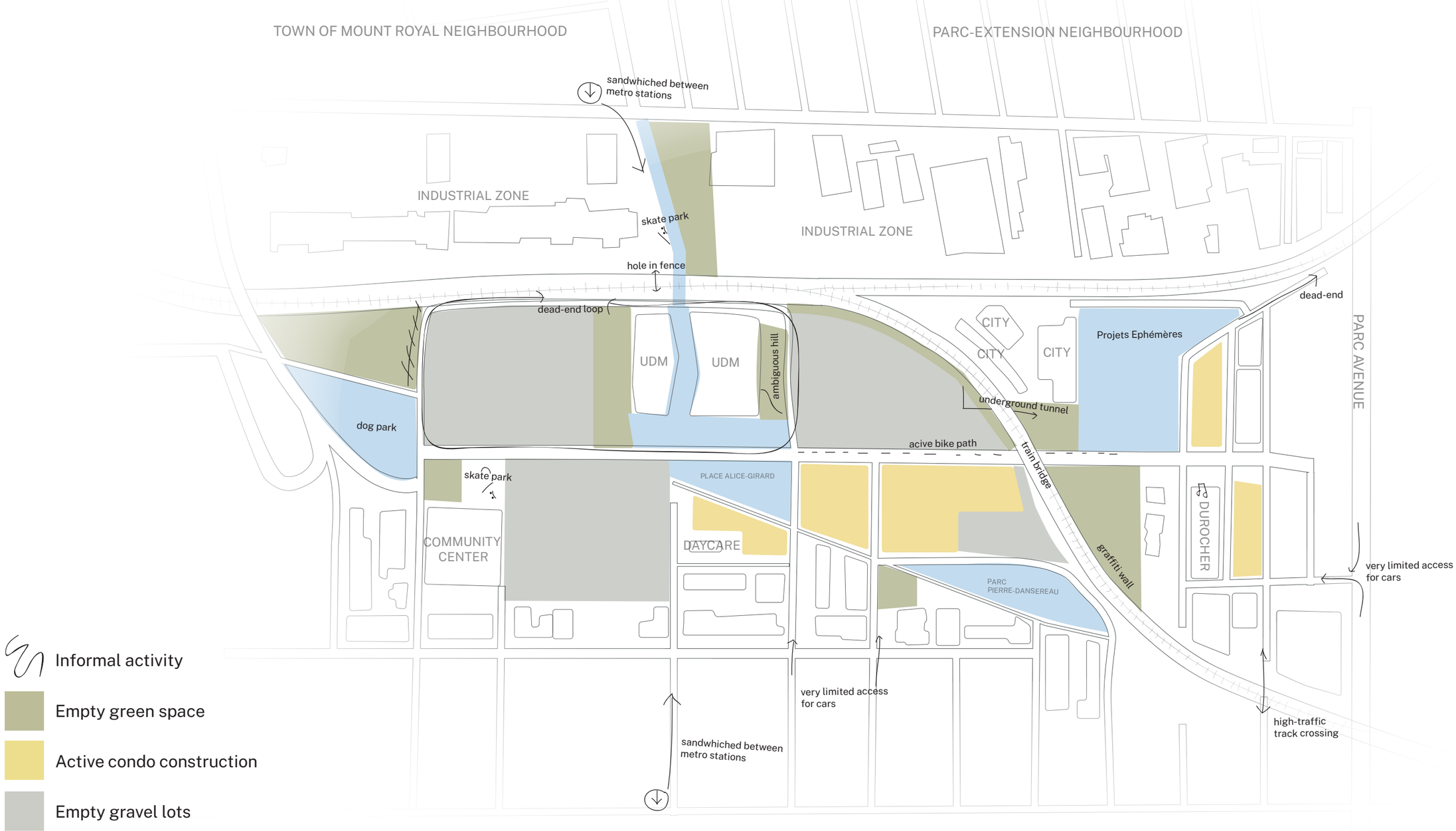


Fig. 10

Fig. 11

Fig. 12

Fig. 13



Informal activity

Empty green space

Active condo construction

Empty gravel lots

Landscaped public area

CAMPUS MIL AS OF SPRING 2021

THE BENEFICIAL CONDITIONS OF THE INCOMPLETE SITE

Three theoretical frameworks have been selected to demonstrate the conditions of the incomplete Outremont development site which made this abundance of informal activity possible. Urban space that temporarily evaded the consequences of formalization, privatization and commodification, allowed for local activation and appropriation and, led to the organic emergence of a massive shared resource which directly benefited the surrounding communities.

Interstitial Space: Informality, Ambiguity and Transgression

Interstitial space is the term being used in current literature to describe the in-between spaces of the city—the derelict sites, dead zones, spaces of uncertainty, waste lands, terrains vagues or urban voids. These spaces usually exist between, under and around large infrastructural forms, are often small, irregular, seemingly inaccessible, and isolated. Sometimes they consist of forms that are incomplete or partly demolished. Often nature thrives in these spaces, reclaims and envelopes them freely, transforming them into wildlife havens. They are the part of the city that is classified functionless and empty, if not savage or dangerous. Think to the islands that surround highways, at the edges of industry, crisscrossing through office district alley-ways, or scattered throughout the city, littered with frail temporary construction fencing. Interstitial spaces are transient; They sometimes activate only part of the day—for example when downtown sectors empty out for the night or, for months at a time while construction is delayed and drawn out. And then the spaces are once again inhabited with purpose, function and order. Interstitial spaces are also palpably in a continuous process of change, being constantly shaped and reshaped by people and nature. There is a deep underlying desire in the city, for all that is informal to be removed or formalized.[22] And so, interstitial space fluctuates between formality and informality as local organisational structures set out to improve sites and cities begin to manage the activities that take place in them. These spaces are ambiguous and of difficult comprehension in the citizens' collective perception.[23] Their ownership, management and function is often undefined, in contrast to the formalized and codified city that provides us with clear behavioural expectations. Whether they are public or private is not often explicit and the activity that animates them fluctuates between formal and informal.

Interstitial spaces are the direct result of post-industrialism, and the massive infrastructural projects of the 20th century.[24] They are the scars left behind by urban development that disregarded human scale. Often, they become trapped in ambiguity as a result of the difficult planning restrictions they pose (ie. contamination and irregularity) and their complicated ownership rights, as a result of speculative development, or of parsimonious and bureaucratic 'future' planning of the city.[25] Interstitial space is the residue of the traditional city with its well-defined perimeters—of modern urban planning strategies that impose structure without consideration for organic life.[26]

Today, urban space is becoming increasingly privatized and commodified. The city has transformed into an object of economic and political speculation—a type of landscape that has no relationship with any specific culture or geography.[27] Land is viewed as real estate rather than space for emergent life and local urban ecologies. A functionally segregated city structure has become standard, where even public spaces are mono-functional and commercialized. These 'consumption-oriented spaces' are leading to cities of exclusion, systematically reinforcing the criminalization of activities and people that are not adjudged acceptable or that do not fit within the scope of marketing schemes.[28] We also see increased methods of control and the coercion of normative modes in the city, where every block, curb and cavity is zoned, regulated and managed.

This is where interstitial space delivers something unique. These spaces have long been rejected by city officials, architects and planners, for their connotation to unregulated disorder, dirt, and lack of functionality. But when we chose to look with more nuance, we see that informal activity animates these spaces in ways that are essential to urban dwellers. Improvised activities arise that could not otherwise exist in our overly regulated and commercialised society.[29] They are spaces where it is possible to get lost, hide and exist outside of surveillance and control. Those avoiding prosecution and criminalization for their creativity or for fulfilling their basic needs not met systemically, are able to find refuge in these spaces. The types of people and activity that the commercialized, restricted, and formal city denies, are able to find presence in the informality of the interstice. In this light, interstitial spaces can be understood as essential.[30] Even the public sphere is restricted to a very small scope of activity. The unique qualities of interstitial space enables spontaneous, temporary activity and nuance where multiple shifting social, political and economic meanings can co-exist. Interstitial spaces are sites of experimentation and of welcomed difference. They are spaces for transgression where disorder and complexity are nurtured. Interstitial space assists the breakdown of dichotomies such as public/private, planned/unplanned, city/nature, power/resistance, formal/informal. Rather, they bring to life an understanding of the city as something malleable, flexible, and active, continuously changing through uncontrolled reinventions. They subvert the determinism of planning and order. Rute Matos describes urban interstitial space in this context as "a dynamic membrane composed of systems that establish relationships, flows and processes among the activities taking place."[31] It is the interstices of the urban space which break down the established rigidity of the controlled city, leaving space for worlds of difference, experimentation and nuance. The cavities of the city that are deemed void, and undesired are in fact astonishingly full.

Fig. 14

The Campus MIL, during its years of abandonment and subsequent decade of development, served as a massive collection of transient interstitial spaces. A variety of qualities about the space make it an ideal example of the ambiguous, informal interstice that fosters transgression and nuance within the urban landscape. First, the site was historically industrial and then abandoned. From the 80s onward, these spaces were essentially deserted and unsupervised, providing an infrastructure to appropriate and explore. Large abandoned industrial sectors like this one can be seen in most major cities, covered in informal artworks and graffiti with traces of gatherings, squatting and creative activity. The marshalling yard sat at the intersection of several train tracks which connect and cut across various Montreal neighbourhoods. Locals have long used these tracks as urban exploration playgrounds and commuting routes. Once the adjacent industrial Atlantic sector was mostly idle, it functioned as an active underground creative hub which appropriated old manufacturing warehouses, turning them into open-concept loft studios. These spaces, abandoned by financial investment, were animated by several floors of creatives engaged in the local music and fine arts scene. The creative community was drawn to these sites, unphased by the dirt and decay of the warehouses that had been undermaintained by landlords who were waiting for land value to increase. These industrial sectors provide a bounty of interstitial space—old warehouses tucked away behind concrete infrastructure, sandwiched between car-heavy transitways and fenced-off railways and, the corners, alleyways, irregular spaces between under and around it all. These spaces were perfect hosts for a community seeking something tucked away from surveillance and the commercial world. This industrial sector functioned as an interstitial borough of Montreal for over a decade. It provided the conditions to nurture a transgressive community and a culture in Montreal which would not have been possible without interstitial space. A community grew in this sector of derelict warehouses, thriving in a space mostly ignored by commercial and legal authority.

Once plans for the Campus MIL had been approved and construction began, the site entered a state of continuous change. Photos demonstrate the significant transformations to the site which included demolitions, large gravel displacements and construction equipment making its way across the site (See Fig. 14). These massive construction projects, mostly unguarded by fence or barrier and the wide open spaces surrounding them became transient interstitial spaces. When workers were not occupying the main active areas, they and the spaces beside, around, below them became arenas for appropriation and for exploration. At night, you could spot teenagers gathering and socializing and on weekends, curious families strolling through taking advantage of the big open space. Once the Coronavirus put things on hold, children began using the more inviting constructions next to parks as playgrounds. The byproduct of a suspended and prolonged urban development project was interstitial space. And, it was consistently activated in ways unintended by authorities and the professionals involved. A large site like this, constantly evolving and swaying in and out of the attention of officials became an ideal place for locals to appropriate. Large empty lots are perceivably abandoned for many months until the construction equipment moves in from another lot and a new project is underway. In the meantime, these spaces are interpreted into whatever the locals want them to be—parks, film sets, ski trails, a tobogganing hill, play yards, and photography sets. These spaces allow for this type of informal appropriation, and the blurring of rules. Whether the land is public or private is unclear and of little importance. Locals can be seen transgressing these boundaries haphazardly simply because of the arrangement of such a large, ambiguous, unsecured space scattered with greenery and public infrastructure. Rather than turning to streets dominated by cars or engaging in commercial activities, the Outremont site became a haven for those looking for space.

Wildlife also certainly found refuge in the interstitial spaces of the Outremont development site. As construction slowly managed more and more of the surface area, the borders of the lots and train tracks and the spaces stuck in development-limbo began hosting a green ground cover—most likely a mix of hardy perennial invasive and native species. It is rare to see such large unlandscaped green fields in the centre of the city. It is only because of the qualities of the site—abandoned, derelict, undeveloped—that the little wildlife havens came to be. Some short shrubs around the borders of the train tracks which cross the site are often full of small birds. The tracks function as a sort of green alleyway of the city that is known to attract a variety of wildlife. It is clear that the official plans of the Campus MIL do not involve any laissez-faire rewilding. But in the meantime, as contractors work diligently at bringing to life the master plan of architectural professionals, certain areas evade their attention and a natural process is given the space to propagate informally.

The Projets Éphémères site is also a lively interstitial space which sways in and out of formality. Organisers took advantage of what they knew was valuable abandoned space to host a complex network of institutions, local organizations and individuals from around Montreal. On paper, the project is an official collaboration between community groups and the University of Montreal. While it does function as a formal space for urban agriculture programming, it is also in constant evolution and has been consistently ambiguous in terms of accessibility to the public; The space is wide open at all hours and there is no obvious policing of the activity that goes on outside of what is organized. The name 'ephemeral projects' is indicative of the project's impermanent, transient and evolutionary nature. It is tucked away within a massive construction complex and old abandoned industrial sector; It is quiet, hidden and green—essentially an interstitial haven. It is the qualities of interstitial space which brought this project to life—derelict space at the margins of supervision, fostering programming discordant to commercial logic, with complex and ambiguous purpose. The space hosts an ever-evolving collaboration between community members. It makes for quite a nuanced, complex membrane of both formal and informal activity. At the Projets Éphémères site, all is flexible, ideas come to life, diversity is encouraged and money nor formality is imperative.

In contrast, an urban development project is underway that plans for commercial spaces, institutional buildings and private property. While the Campus MIL proudly plans for a green central axis and public infrastructures, soon the mini ecosystems and locals who appropriated large ambiguous spaces will no longer be free to do so. The site will consist of the planned grid, regulated and supervised as the formal city; Soon the Campus MIL borough will expect locals to comply with the formalized and normative ways of interacting with the public sphere. Of course, at its edges and between its structures interstitial space will always exist.

The Open City: Bottom-up, Emergent and Versatile Spaces for Coexistence

The 'Open City' is a framework and set of conditions that infuses the ideas of Richard Sennet, Jane Jacobs, Albert Pope, Lewis Mumford and others, whose research in urban planning regarded the city as emergent and unpredictable, as a problem of organized complexity.[32] The open city is posed as an imperative remedy to the consequences of urban planning practices that dominated the mid-20th century. Overly deterministic master plans, standardized high-rise blocks, the growth of suburbia, the segregation of function and the proliferation of zoning regulations have jointly manufactured 'closed cities' which are effectively brittle—cities which are not responsive to the lived reality of those that inhabit them.[33] These trends in city development used planning as a functionalist tool to achieve economic and political goals rather than as a reflection of local needs and realities. A tension can be felt today between the visions of professionals and the reality of the everyday. In well-intentioned efforts to maintain urban order, architects like Le Corbusier, Ebenezer Howard and Walter Christaller created highly rigid environments that wound up dividing people, stifling local innovation and obstructing change.[34] In contrast, the 'open city' is founded on spatial conditions which are adaptive and non-prescriptive, which stimulate encounter, diversity, and the unforeseen. Ultimately, the open city deals with issues of co-existence amongst diverse city dwellers, bottom-up local innovation as well as issues of resilient, adaptive built environments.

Sennet outlines 5 principles which produce and maintain an 'open city'.[35] First, is the primacy of public realms, where encounter and interaction between diverse people is fostered. Second, is the porosity of urban boundaries: the preservation of interstices which actively link heterogeneous pockets of urban life, rather than segregate them. Third is the punctuation of places by emphasizing local identity and resisting homogeneity. Fourth is an evolutionary approach to the built environment—an understanding that it is never completed, and in constant repair or repurposing. Finally, the condemning of master plans and instead the favouring of impromptu adaptation and collage.

When the city is understood from a perspective of emergence then, incremental and place-specific phenomena are what lead change rather than the abstract theories or previous design experiences of 'experts'. Sennett declares that while the 'closed city' belongs to the professionals, the planners and the masters, "the "Open City" is a bottom-up place. It belongs to the people."[36] While the closed city renders citizens passive, the open city invites humans to forge the spaces they live in. "Small-scaled growth and change is encouraged through a process of co-creation among city governments, citizens, business and non-profit sectors, as well as development professionals."[37] Unlike the closed city, the open city enables local innovation.

Process, is central to the open city. It puts the linear, deterministic understanding of planning the built environment into question.[38] Rather, it recognizes "an evolution that emerges from local existing resources which requires the incremental and unpredictable intervention of multiple individuals"—of entire networks stakeholders.[39] The city's form and the way it is lived, are in a state of nonlinear becoming that is never completed. Spontaneity, the unforeseen, conflict and dissonance are admitted to, and welcomed. This understanding of urban environments reflects an ecological vision of evolution. Environments and their web of stakeholders benefit from complex interactions between diverse organisms. Rigid, static and uniform environments have proven inevitably doomed in time.[40] When needs and conditions change, the open city responds, rather than relying on demolition and erasure of mono-functional constructions. The open city incorporates the unpredictable, is responsive to lived realities, and is effectively more resilient.

The diverse and porous urban design that Sennett suggests, stimulates encounter and interaction. Sennett argues for spaces where social experience expands beyond like-minded groups, where political certainties are confronted and where people learn to live with and benefit from ambiguity, contradiction and complexity.[41] The open city translates the 'open society'—"tolerant, inclusive governance, diverse groups developing flexible mechanisms for resolving inevitable differences"- into physical spaces.[42] In a closed city, integration is of importance—every part of the system has a place and all outliers are rejected; Diversity and innovation pose a threat of disruption.[43] Rather, the open city champions dissonance and complexity in resistance to big capitalism's predictable and balanced form.[44] It fosters diversity and co-existence.

Physically speaking, Sennet suggests that the open city involves 'borders' and 'incomplete forms'. By borders, he refers to the liminal spaces where groups interact in ecology and where exchange between racial, ethnic and class communities is nurtured. And by incomplete form, he refers to 'light architecture' open to additions, that relates with the spaces around it, is non-prescriptive and multi-purpose. One key example of this type of environment is open street life—diversified spaces, in direct dialogue with the surrounding buildings, which foster impromptu interactions and the organic emergence of the unpredictable. This type of space is waning in the modern city dominated by prescribed function, private ownership, and excessive regulation.

The open city, through a process of disordering, has the potential to provide more appropriate and resilient built environments, to facilitate innovation and change, to enable citizens to transcend difference and to work through complex, ambiguous and ill-defined problems.[45]

The incomplete Campus MIL site provides conditions which fosters elements of the 'open city'. Though it was not the intention of the architects, the development site became a porous and flexible space, host to local innovation, diverse encounters and unconstrained adaptation. While Sennet argues that the Open City is not merely spontaneous—it involves radical intentional disordering—his framework is nevertheless useful in analysing the types of beneficial conditions which arose on the site.

The marketing for the new Campus MIL development described the marshalling yard as scar across Montreal's fabric which had, for nearly a century, divided boroughs. The site and the tracks which extend from it can be understood as a sort of 'border'. Sennet describes a border as the urban space which distinguishes between areas, where varying groups might meet, and come together around the activities on the margins. A useful ecological example of this phenomenon is a shore—the edges of both water and land ecosystems, which meet and foster a diversity and complexity that is impossible when each ecosystem is entirely separate. Since the pedestrian bridge was built across the CP train tracks, the stark division between Outremont and Parc-Extension has become slightly more porous. Distinct communities both enter into an interstitial zone which brims with ambiguity and invites spontaneous appropriation. The informal activity across the interstitial space is enacted by residents of neighbourhoods on all sides of the site. Spontaneous interaction between them arises, unconstrained by formality. An array of Hasidic, east Indian, and French-Canadian families sprawl out on picnic blankets in a half-finished park-field. Side by side they cooperatively appropriated, managed and shared the benefits of the open space each weekend when the first spring of Covid-19 arrived. The Projets Éphémères site also actively invites members from the Parc-Extension, Rosemont, Outremont boroughs and elsewhere, to participate and coexist in agricultural and educational activities, by utilizing a web of local community groups which transcends the division. The marginal nature of the project fosters unexpected interactions, broadened community linkages, natural ecosystems and agricultural cultivation. An informal experiment in an interstice like this would not be possible in a city centre dominated by regulation, financial pressure and an obsession with order. The Outremont development site as a whole is a porous open border which connects disparate groups and fosters coexistence.

As well, at the moment the site is fundamentally non-prescriptive. Seeing as most of the space is still formally 'void' and 'useless', any authority over the space has yet to inscribe the environment with expectation and regulation over what is acceptable use of the space. These qualities allowed for impromptu appropriation and adaptation of the space. The large empty green and gravel lots, the temporarily abandoned construction sites and the unguarded piles of metal and concrete all became multi-purpose recreation spaces. The site was claimed for such a vast array of unintended activity—construction sites became ski trails, picnic lawns, skateboarding surfaces, film sets, jogging tracks, etc. Children transformed a snow field into a fort world which passing strangers would later stumble upon and add to. Families decided to toboggan off the side of the Science Complex and eventually engraved stairs into the snow hill for themselves and the nexts to use.

The Projets Éphémères site is also genuinely adaptive. Participants and collaborators describe the project as an ongoing experiment which changes as feedback and results become clear and as the composition of those involved transforms.[46] Again, its name indicates how the project was intended to transform from the start. In 2017, the Mont Réel was added to the lot, changing the scope of engagement and accessibility to the site. The project also functions out of several shipping crates (See Fig. 15). This was a low budget starting point for the hub to build on and repurpose based on the needs of the programming. These are examples of the incremental and place-specific transformation which empower local communities and which the Open City cherishes. At times these structures became a stage for workshops or film screenings. Other times it became a yard for an evening event with drinks and music. During the day, a variety of community groups scatter the lot working the gardens. And at night, the structures host groups socializing. This space is profoundly multipurpose and undictated by authority.

For now, the development site does not claim any form of order. For now it is a space of assumed contradiction and dissonance: A harsh space full of raw material and machinery hosts family gatherings; A brand new modern glass structure sits surrounded by children playing in dirt gravel fields; A dense concrete sector in the center of Montreal island hosts a large green agricultural site. Activities are not segregated by built forms. Instead, a web of interrelated incongruous activities spans the entire site. An abundance of unregulated and unorganized activity, appropriation and transgression transpires across the site. Informality fosters an ambiguity and flexibility conducive of spontaneous activity. The unforeseen arises on this site daily. The adaptability of these spaces make the site more versatile and resilient than the development projects being imposed between these existing neighbourhoods. It's probable that no activity as experimental, locally relevant and catalyzing will stem from any clearly defined, financially driven and bureaucratic urban planning process.

Shortly, the master plans of 'expert' architects and urban planners will be implemented and will take the place of the informal fabrications the community has created during these 15 years. Architects and planners involved, publicized their intention to build links between communities. They assume that they are able to design diverse interactions in what will be a neighbourhood dominated by institutions, private luxury property and regulated public space. Locals have voiced worries that such a rigid and commercialized neighbourhood addition might contribute to the segregation of neighbourhoods rather than invite in diverse communities with divergent socio-economic realities.[47] Who is this hyper-modern 'public' space surrounded by expensive institutions reserved for? The type of spaces that arises from these big-budget, high-tech plans are monumental international-style glass towers with no particular identity. They follow a trend of modern developments which can be found in large cities across the globe and which have no relation to local culture or place. This includes the luxury condo developments that will surround the University. Manufacturing warehouses in Atlantic, will be demolished along with the communities animating them to avoid the costs of repair and retrofitting and, brand new exorbitantly priced residential highrises will be erected in their place. These practices are evidently brittle. Much of the development's land is being planned to meet a financial agenda, and in the process extinguishes diversity and disregards local needs and emergent activity.

Fig. 15

An Urban Commons: De-Commodification, Cooperation, and Fulfilling Needs

In the modern market economy, cities have become deeply controlled by financial mechanisms and state regulations. Technocratic and corporate-led urban development dominate and have made it difficult to find spaces in the city which are not privatized, commodified or regulated by the state. This has grave implications—destroying spaces of encounter, reinforcing social division, excluding all those who lack the funds to participate in commercialized space and, displacing large portions of the population. Urban commons and 'commoning' have become strategies for critical planners and citizens who are looking for ways of envisioning a different order and of democratizing the city. In its simplest terms, the commons are a collection of shared resources which is self-regulated and collectively managed by its users. The commons are also significant for the way they represent a third mode of production beyond capitalism and socialism and their blends—a way of disentangling our lives from market and state, and a means of creating a more egalitarian and cooperative society.[48] Urban commons might look like community gardens, reappropriated land for squatting, low-equity cooperative housing or even interstitial spaces.

The idea of the commons is not at all new. The self-regulation of collective resources is customary, as has been for milenia, for people all over the world. In the late 1960s an ecologist, Garett Hardin, brought forward the idea of "The Tragedy of the Commons", which had profoundly influential effects on social science and our understanding of resources. His proposition was that a commons was bound to fail or deplete without the intervention of privatisation because individuals would inevitably pursue their own best interest; That the overexploitation of natural resources was inevitable and would lead to ecological disaster. Since the 1980s, this framework has begun to splinter. And, thanks to the distinguished work of Elinor Ostrom, which won the Nobel Prize in Economics in 2009, the validity of the commons as essential to the reproduction of communities and ecosystems around the world is more widely accepted. She brought significant attention to the anti-capitalist notion of the commons, and the idea that neither private, nor state-owned entities were the answer to sustaining them.[49] She gathered a set of principles from observations of successful commons, which involved conflict resolution mechanisms and well defined rights to self-management systems, among several other conditions.[50] Her work was fundamental in reopening the conversation on the necessity of the commons. This theory focused mainly on shared land and resources—tangible shared assets managed by groups of people collectively. Today the notion has extended to the intangible—knowledge, data, the internet, etc. And, theorizing the urban commons is particularly important in a time when the global population lives primarily in cities.[51] It is becoming increasingly understood how critical the urban commons are to regenerating a sense of place and community, to co-existence and learned democracy, to defending ecosystems and resources and, to meeting the needs of urban populations.

The *urban* commons deals with assets, co-managers and conditions which diverge from previous studies on the commons which focused mostly on a rural context. Amanda Huron brings forward two main traits which make urban commons particularly unique: that they exist in saturated space, and that they involve cooperation between strangers.[52] The urban commons exists within a complex mesh of mixed motives: a fluid and constantly changing society, regulatory bodies and financial incentives. This type of saturated space full of entangled needs, actions and regulations makes for particular challenges when achieving an urban commons. As well, whereas a traditional rural commons involved the participation of people that had known one another for generations, an urban commons involves mixed and changing communities which have possibly never known one another. It's also interesting to note that the urban commons take place in the city—a place that historically represented waged labour and the imperative to participate in capitalism.[53] Cities are already commodified spaces shaped by colonization and law, where ownership boundaries are clearly defined, coexistence is regulated and land exists as investment potential.[54],[55] These qualities of the city make it almost paradoxical to think that the collective management of de-commodified assets might be possible in urban space.

As mentioned, a neoliberal logic now dominates city development and fails to address the needs of residents. "Any idea of a city oriented towards the common good, as expressed in antiquity is no longer a fundamental principle for governing bodies", Huron states.[56] Consequently, new urban commons emerge from needs unfulfilled by the City's institutions, often in moments of crisis. There is a dire need and struggle for a secure quality common space that will not be subjected to commodification and lead to displacement. Individuals excluded from capital-driven urban environments are vulnerable and seek access to resources. It is often the excluded who become core constituents of urban 'commoning' projects. Urban commons also require robust communities to maintain and sustain them, for their success is constantly faced with a conflicting force that aspires to privatise, to monopolize on the commonwealth, to pull the commons into the private sphere or turn them into state property. "The idea and the practice of the commons has struggled to survive in a world increasingly governed by capitalist economies intermeshed with state regulations".[57]

Gidwani and Baviskar make a crucial distinction between 'the commons' and 'the public' of the city. While the 'public' is a juridical category, state owned and regulated, the 'commons' is sustained by dancing in and out of formality. Gidwani and Baviskar point out that etymologically and historically 'commons' were presented as "that which lie at the frontiers, or within the interstices of the territorial grid of law."[58] The urban commons is more than public service, parks and public transit, it also involves the informal appropriative action of communities; For example, streets function as transit ways but also as shared assets that function as space to work, live, dream and voice dissidence; Or, garbage dumps which collect unwanted things become a shared asset for recovering material and food.
It's worth noting that commons often emerge from "regulatory slippages"; For example when governments become passive, or are caught in conflicts of interest (ie. market forces aiming to maximize profit and state forces trying to balance protection for residents while assuring capital accumulation.)[59] It is not uncommon for private owners and local governments to renounce management due to uncertainty, leaving space for communities to exercise autonomy and self-manage abandoned resources. And, evading notice and the rigidity of law is central to sustenance of the commons in order to avoid the profound desire in the neoliberal city to transform commons into commodity and property.[60] Cities, in their quest to lure investors, entrepreneurs and consumers, wilfully erase or rob and commercialize the cultural contributions of those who bring to life the city as we know it.

Silvia Federici underscores the commons as enmeshed with an explicit critique of capitalism on a global scale. The commons exist in contrast with commodity; Resources are understood for their use value rather than their financial value. Federici highlights how crucial it will be to deepen our understanding of the commons beyond communal management of resources, social service or buffers against the impacts of neoliberalism; In order to avoid the commons becoming "a pathway to capitalism with a human face" or a haven for those who can afford it, they will need to be centred around autonomy, around reclamation of control over our own reproduction.[61]

The abandoned marshalling yard, the interstitial spaces that surrounded it and the Outremont site during its development provided resources which became an urban commons. Resources including land, incomplete infrastructure, streets, materials, greenery and public programming, were shared and managed informally by local residents. Again, the empty gravel and green lots, dead-ends and open space were appropriated for all kinds of leisure activities and gatherings. The space became a large resource for locals to meet their needs. When the Coronavirus hit and the government imposed regulation on gathering, this lot became essential for many as a way of doing so safely. Private and commercialized space was not a solution to these issues, instead, a large pool of common accessible space was. As the space evolved into a zone scattered with formal public infrastructure, locals became more comfortable appropriating the other informal resources for themselves. Those that use the space have collectively managed the resource in informal ways; For example illegal holes that function as openings for transit routes across the train tracks, are constantly patched and reinforced by authorities. Systematically, these holes are re-cut and maintained by a variety of citizen strangers, for all to benefit. The Projets Éphémères site is also an extremely pertinent example of an urban commons. It is a green and educational space which at least 8 different community groups share at any given time. The resources—shipping crates, sheds, the Mont Réel platform, tables, shaded areas, tools, plants, food, educational programming, social gatherings and ambiance—are shared amongst users, many of them with the public at large. And the space is never blocked off so anyone can benefit from its pool of resources. Formally it is also host to a hefty schedule of events open to the public. The space and its resources are understood for their multiple uses, for both their tangible and intangible benefits to the public—rather than for their financial revenu.

These examples of urban commons arose from what Kwon coins a 'regulatory slippage'. This massive space, suspended in an execution phase of construction and planning for more than 15 years became fertile for 'commoning'. Ownership has never been of importance to those that use this space informally. Instead their focus has been about ways of sharing the ambiguous space, appropriating and benefiting from the circumstance. For now, the proprietors of the vacant lots and interstitial spaces do not exercise their agency. And the unsupervised, semi-completed public spaces including streets, bicycle lanes, plazas and parks are great hosts to the type of unintended appropriations that Gidwani and Baviskar emphasize in their distinction between the commons and the public.

This example of a commons does face the challenges of the urban context brought forward by Huron. First, the Outremont site exists in a space saturated with the conflictual and complex incentives of capitalist markets, government regulations, public institutions and individual strangers. The precarious balance that allowed for the commons, is at the mercy of land owners and financial investors including the University of Montreal, the City of Montreal, Presti and Mondev (luxury real estate developers). Land surrounding this site like the Mile-End and the Mile-Ex are pertinent examples of a wider gentrification trend—a wave of urban development which progresses outward from downtown, affecting one neighbourhood after another every decade or so. Areas that were once accessible to a variety of classes, which housed immigrant communities for several generations and which allowed for community groups and creatives to access affordable space, were transformed drastically by developers and entire communities were displaced. The Outremont site is also subjected to the mixed motives of the City. While it claims to aim for increased quality of life, and urban development which benefits the community, the City of Montreal is also actively developing its built environments to attract investors and consumers. Other actors including grassroots community organizations and local residents also are forces at play. Secondly, the managers of the space are a boundless group of strangers. Members from the array of surrounding communities all share the commons and benefit from the space. On the informal site, not much direct negotiation and management seems to take place between these strangers. But on the Projets Éphémères site, an evolving constitution of strangers is in a constant state of co-management of the space.

Similarly to most commons, the site is subject to a dominant conflicting force which wishes to monopolize and privatize. The flexibility of the site is possible only in this moment of suspended regulation. Soon, it will be clear which lots are private and which are 'public' and the types of activity which transpire be monitored and regulated. The space the incomplete site provides will be mostly covered in private residential and institutional buildings. Since the Projets Éphémères hub is on university land, it will either eventually be displaced, erased or co-opted into the university. Plans show that its lot is not designated to be an urban agriculture community project, it is planned to be developed into an institutional building. Perhaps the Projets Éphémères were named this out of foresight for the institution's extensive development plans. Perhaps this land is too financially valuable for an institution to consider extending a project without revenu. The major benefits that the Projets Éphémères provides will most likely be overruled by the university's development goals which function on a foundation of market logic. The Outremont site, once this regulatory slippage subsides, will be intolerant to the appropriation of locals. And the commons which emerged and are not demolished, will struggle to resist their opposing forces.

CONCLUSION

The unfinished Campus MIL fostered the ideal conditions for appropriative activity amongst locals. The scale of the development, its position amongst distinct neighbourhoods, an extensive construction period and a shutdown caused by the Coronavirus, all contributed to this. The site became characterized by informality and regulatory ambiguity, allowing for transgressive and bottom-up activation of the space. This paper analyzed the Campus MIL through three frameworks—Interstitial Space, The Open City and Urban Commons—to demonstrate how more sincerely socially-oriented, nuanced and dynamic perspectives on urban development might help to mitigate the consequences of a surge in commercialization and privatization of cities. This is a celebration of the interstices which evade the neoliberal city—which challenge financial understandings of land value, which welcome the outliers, shelter the unacceptable, provide for those in need and, which foster cooperation and co-existence.

While this case study is an ephemeral example, seeing as the campus will increasingly formalize and privatize into the future, this analysis raises questions around our relationship to urban development at large. How might planning better reflect the lived realities of locals? How might we de-commodify urban space in ways that meet the needs of natural ecosystems and people? How might an understanding of the built environment as emergent and adaptive, change the way we implement plans? *How can the informal abundance within interstitial space inform us?*

ENDNOTES

1. “Campus Outremont Université de Montréal.” Analyse et orientations du projet d’aménagement. Cardinal Hardy et associés architectes, Provencher Roy et associés architectes, University of Montreal, June 2006. Pg. 7
2. “Historique du Projet: Il était une fois... la gare de triage.” Université de Montreal. https://campusmil.umontreal.ca/le-mil/historique/
3. Bizier, Hélène-Andrée. “La gare de triage d’Outremont.” Mémoire Vivante, Société d’histoire d’Outremont, Summer 2017. http://histoireoutremont.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Memoire-vivante_no375e_final-Leger.pdf
4. “How Mile-Ex is Becoming the Tech Hub of Montreal.” Dev McGill, October 2019. https://www.devmcgill.com/en/how-mile-ex-is-becoming-the-tech-hub-of-montreal/#:~:text=Mile%2DEx%20is%20a%20name,maybe%20part%20of%20Little%20Italy
5. Abdulla, Shazam, et. al. “Universities can squeeze out low-income residents in cities like Montreal.” The Conversation, March 2020. https://theconversation.com/universities-can-squeeze-out-low-income-residents-in-cities-like-montreal-131834
6. Nichols, Naomi, Emanuel Guay, Alex Megelas, et al. “Homelessness, Hardship and Public Action in Gentrifying Areas: The Case of Parc Extension, Montreal.” The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, April 2019.
7. Cinto, Marcello Di. “The Great Wall of Montreal.” Geist, Fact and Fiction North of America, 2012. https://www.geist.com/fact/essays/the-great-wall-of-montreal/
8. “Campus Outremont Université de Montréal.” pg. 3
9. “Développement du Site Outremont.” Rencontre D’Information, Université de Montreal, November 2013. https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=ZGVmYXVsdGRvbWFpbnxjb2FsaXRpb25tYXJjb25pYmVhdW1vbnR8Z3g6NWUzYzBhNDZlYjBiYTdiZQ
10. Letarte, Martine. “MIL Campus: birth of a neighbourhood.” UdeMNouvelles, September 2019. https://nouvelles.umontreal.ca/en/article/2019/09/23/mil-campus-birth-of-a-neighbourhood/
11. “Science Complex at the MIL Campus of the Université de Montréal.” Architect Magazine, October 2019. https://www.architectmagazine.com/project-gallery/sciences-complex-at-the-mil-campus-of-the-universite-de-montreal_o
12. “Le Nouveau Campus d’Outremont.” Outremont Autrement, February 2011. http://outremont.canalblog.com/archives/2011/02/21/20445824.html
13. McMahon-Sperber, Sarah. “Citizens demand moratorium on UdeM’s Outremont campus project approval.” The Concordian, March 2011. http://theconcordian.com/2011/03/citizens-demand-moratorium-on-udem%E2%80%99s-outremont-campus-project-approval/
14. “MIL façons de se faire évincer: The University of Montreal and Gentrification in Park Extension.” Park Extension Anti-Eviction Mapping Project. Anti Eviction Montreal, 2020.
15. “MIL façons de se faire évincer.”
16. “MIL façons de se faire évincer.”
17. Milhaus Condos Locatifs.” Mondev. https://www.milhaus.ca/“
18. “Projets Éphémères: Accueillir les communautés avoisinantes.” Université de Montréal. https://www.umontreal.ca/universite-citoyenne/projets-ephemeres/
19. Maranda-Gauvin, Sara. Personal Interview. March 13, 2021.
20. Ricci, Stéphanie. “Montreal’s Durocher Art Space at Risk.” The Link, October 2019. https://thelinknewspaper.ca/article/montreals-durocher-art-space-at-risk
21. Ricci, Stéphanie.
22. Wall, Ed. “Infrastructural Form, Interstitial Spaces and Informal Acts.” Infrastructural urbanism: addressing the in-between, DOM publishers, 2011.
23. Matos, Rute S. “Urban Landscape: Interstitial Spaces.” Globalisation in Landscape Architecture, Volume 13, No. 1, 2009, pg
24. Doron, Gil M. “The Dead Zone and the Architecture of Transgression.” City: Analysis of Urban Change, Theory, Action, Volume 4, Issue 2, 2010.
25. Doron, Gil M.
26. Matos, Rute S.
27. Matos, Rute S.
28. Shaw, Pamela, Joane Hudson. “The Qualities of Informal Space: (Re)appropriation within the informal, interstitial spaces of the city.” Occupation: Negotiations with Constructed Space, University of Brighton, July 2009.
29. Shaw, Pamela, Joane Hudson.
30. Wall, Ed.
31. Matos, Rute S.
32. Levinson, Nancy. Interview with Kees Christiaanse. Conversations: Curating the Open City, September 2009. https://placesjournal.org/article/curating-the-open-city/?cn-reloaded=1
33. Helleman, Gerban. “The Open City.” Urban Spring Time, March 2018. http://urbanspringtime.blogspot.com/2018/03/the-open-city.html
34. Helleman, Gerban.
35. Angel, Shlomo. “Building and Dwelling Review: A Manifesto for the Open City.” Wall Street Journal, July 2018. https://www.wsj.com/articles/building-and-dwelling-review-a-manifesto-for-the-open-city-1530909806
36. Helleman, Gerban.
37. Smith, Tim. “Urban Design Next: A Conceptual Framework for the Open City.” Medium, June 24, 2019. https://medium.com/@tims.sera/urban-design-next-a-conceptual-framework-for-the-open-city-52235e63a2df
38. Porqueddu, Elena. “Toward the Open City: Design and Research for Emergen Urban Systems.” Urban Design International, Volume 23, 2018, pg. 236-248.
39. Porqueddu, Elena. Pg. 239
40. Sennet, Richard. “The Open City.” Urban Age, November 2006. https://urbanage.lsecities.net/essays/the-open-city
41. Sennet, Richard.
42. Levinson, Nancy.
43. Sennet, Richard.
44. Sennet, Richard.
45. Smith, Tim.
46. Maranda-Gauvin Sara. Personal Interview. March 13, 2021.
47. Adams, Emmanuel. “Killing a Neighbourhood: For Residents of Montreal’s Parc-Ex, a New University Campus Brings New Hardships.” Canadian Dimension, August 2020. https://canadiandimension.com/articles/view/killing-a-neighbourhood
48. Caffentzis, George and Silvia Federici. “Commons Against and Beyond Capitalism.” Community Development Journal,Volume 49, January 2014.
49. Bradley, Karin. “Open-Source Urbanism: Creating, Multiplying and Managing Urban Commons.” Commoning in Differentiated Publicness, Footprint Magazine, 2015, pg. 91-108.
50. Ostrom, E. “Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action” Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press,1999
51. Huron, Amanda.
52. Huron, Amanda..
53. Huron, Amanda.
54. Zouein, Marwan, Maha Issa. “Urban Interstitial Spaces as Commons.” The Place that Remains: Recounting the Unbuilt Territory, The Department of Architecture and Design at the Lebanese American University, Beirut, March 2018.
55. Huron, Amanda.
56. Zouein, Marwan, Maha Issa.
57. Huron, Amanda.
58. Gidwani, Vinay, Amita Baviska. “Urban Commons.” Economic and Political Weekly, Volume 46, Issue no. 50, December 2011.
59. Huron, Amanda.
60. Gidwani, Vinay, Amita Baviska.
61. Caffentzis, George and Silvia Federici.

WORKS CITED

Abdulla, Shazam, et. al. “Universities can squeeze out low-income residents in cities like Montreal.” The Conversation, March 2020. https://theconversation.com/universities-can-squeeze-out-low-income-residents-in-cities-like-montreal-131834

Adams, Emmanuel. “Killing a Neighbourhood: For Residents of Montreal’s Parc-Ex, a New University Campus Brings New Hardships.” Canadian Dimension, August 2020. https://canadiandimension.com/articles/view/killing-a-neighbourhood

Anderson, Elsa C., Emily S. Minor. “Vacant Lots: An Underexplored Resource for Ecological and Social Benefits in Cities.” Urban Forestry & Urban Greening, Volume 21, 2017, pg 146-152.

Angel, Shlomo. “Building and Dwelling Review: A Manifesto for the Open City.” Wall Street Journal, July 2018. https://www.wsj.com/articles/building-and-dwelling-review-a-manifesto-for-the-open-city-1530909806

Bizier, Hélène-Andrée. “La gare de triage d’Outremont.” Mémoire Vivante, Société d’histoire d’Outremont, Summer 2017. http://histoireoutremont.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Memoire-vivante_no375e_final-Leger.pdf

Bradley, Karin. “Open-Source Urbanism: Creating, Multiplying and Managing Urban Commons.” Commoning in Differentiated Publicness, Footprint Magazine, 2015, pg. 91-108.

Bumbaru, Dinu. “Commentaires sur le projet d’implantation d’un campus de l’Université de Montréal sur le site de la gare de triage d’Outremont.” Letter to M. André Beauchamp. Héritage Montréal, April 2007.

Caffentzis, George and Silvia Federici. “Commons Against and Beyond Capitalism.” Community Development Journal, Volume 49, January 2014, pg. 92-105.

“Campus Outremont Université de Montréal.” Analyse et orientations du projet d’aménagement. Cardinal Hardy et associés architectes, Provencher Roy et associés architectes, University of Montreal, June 2006.

Cinto, Marcello Di. “The Great Wall of Montreal.” Geist, Fact and Fiction North of America, 2012. https://www.geist.com/fact/essays/the-great-wall-of-montreal/

“Defining Complex for New University of Montreal Campus.” Project 2020, LeMay. https://lemay.com/projects/university-of-montreal-sciences-complex/

“Développement du Site Outremont.” Rencontre D’Information, Université de Montreal, November 2013. https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=ZGVmYXVsdGRvbWFpbnxjb2FsaXRpb25tYXJjb25pYmVhdW1vbnR8Z3g6NWUzYzBhNDZlYjBiYTdiZQ

Doherty, Mike. “Why Cities Should be Open- and Unpredictable.” Maclean’s, May 2018. https://www.macleans.ca/culture/books/why-cities-should-be-open-and-unpredictable/

Doron, Gil M. “The Dead Zone and the Architecture of Transgression.” City: Analysis of Urban Change, Theory, Action, Volume 4, Issue 2, 2010, pg 247-263.

Federici, Silvia. “Re-Enchanting the World: Feminism and the Politics of the Commons.“ Social Thought and Political Economy Program. University of Massachusetts Amherst, April 4, 2019. Lecture. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d7v8vorm3sg&ab_channel=SBSUMass

Fêtes des Récoltes du Campus Mil: Soulignons les 5 ans des projets éphémères. On Seme, Universite de Montreal, September 2019. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58e4fdae414fb55747a5cc77/t/5d890b30e49d411d18cf6b81/1569262389035/Journal+des+partenaires_2019.pdf

Gidwani, Vinay, Amita Baviska. “Urban Commons.” Economic and Political Weekly, Volume 46, Issue no. 50, December 2011.

Helleman, Gerban. “The Open City.” Urban Spring Time, March 2018. http://urbanspringtime.blogspot.com/2018/03/the-open-city.html

“Historique du Projet: Il était une fois... la gare de triage.” Université de Montreal. https://campusmil.umontreal.ca/le-mil/historique/

“How Mile-Ex is Becoming the Tech Hub of Montreal.” Dev McGill, October 2019. https://www.devmcgill.com/en/how-mile-ex-is-becoming-the-tech-hub-of-montreal/#:~:text=Mile%2DEx%20is%20a%20name,maybe%20part%20of%20Little%20Italy

Huron, Amanda. “Working With Strangers in Saturated Space: Reclaiming and Maintaining Urban Commons.” Antipode, Volume 47, Issue 4, January 2015, pg. 936-979.

“Le Nouveau Campus d’Outremont.” Outremont Autrement, February 2011. http://outremont.canalblog.com/archives/2011/02/21/20445824.html

Le Projet du Campus Universitaire d’Outremont: Résumé de l’analyse de faisabilité technique et financière, Bureau de gestion des grands projets, Direction du développement économique et urbain, City of Montreal, February 2011. http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/proj_urbains_fr/MEDIA/DOCUMENTS/20110200_ResumeAnalyseFTF_CampusOutremont.pdf

“Le projet en bref: Portes Ouvertes sur le projet du site Outremont et ses abords.” University of Montreal and the city of Montreal, February 2017. http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/PRT_VDM_FR/MEDIA/DOCUMENTS/PORTES%20OUVERTES%202017%20-%20SITE%20OUTREMONT%20ET%20SES%20ABORDS.PDF

Letarte, Martine. “MIL Campus: birth of a neighbourhood.” UdeMNouvelles, September 2019. https://nouvelles.umontreal.ca/en/article/2019/09/23/mil-campus-birth-of-a-neighbourhood/

Levesque, Luc. “The terrain vague as material- some observations.” Amarrages, 2002. http://www.amarrages.com/textes_terrain.html Accessed on March 6, 2021.

Levinson, Nancy. Interview with Kees Christiaanse. Conversations: Curating the Open City, September 2009. https://placesjournal.org/article/curating-the-open-city/?cn-reloaded=1

“Liste de documentation pour la gare de triage d’Outremont.” Office de Consultation Publique de Montréal, 2007. https://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/consultation-publique/gare-triage-doutremont/documentation

Maranda-Gauvin Sara. Personal Interview. March 13, 2021.

Matos, Rute S. “Urban Landscape: Interstitial Spaces.” Globalisation in Landscape Architecture, Volume 13, No. 1, 2009, pg 61-71.

McMahon-Sperber, Sarah. “Citizens demand moratorium on UdeM’s Outremont campus project approval.” The Concordian, March 2011. http://theconcordian.com/2011/03/citizens-demand-moratorium-on-udem%E2%80%99s-outremont-campus-project-approval/

“Milhaus Condos Locatifs.” Mondev. https://www.milhaus.ca/

“MIL Montreal, un milieu de vie: Evolution du projet.” Ville de Montreal, le Portail Officiel de la Ville de Montreal. http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?_pageid=5798,143406520&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

“MIL Montreal: Le Projet.” Projets Urbains, Ville de Montreal Urbanisme. http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?_pageid=9517,123331598&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

“MIL Montréal (Site Outremont et ses abords).” City of Montreal. Interactive Map. https://smvt.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=8610fe5f46b84a079295f0a4ec292ce7#

Nichols, Naomi, Emanuel Guay, Alex Megelas, et al. “Homelessness, Hardship and Public Action in Gentrifying Areas: The Case of Parc Extension, Montreal.” The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, April 2019.

Ostrom, E. “Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action.” Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press,1999

“Outremont Campus, Université de Montréal.” Project 2009, Provencher_Roy. https://provencherroy.ca/en/projet/outremont-campus-universite-de-montreal/

Park, In Kwon, Jiyon Shin, Jin Eon Kim. “Urban Commons as a Haven for the Excluded: An Experience of Creating a Commons in Seoul, South Korea.” International Journal of the Commons, Issue 14, September 2020, pg 508-524.

“MIL façons de se faire évincer: The University of Montreal and Gentrification in Park Extension.” Park Extension Anti-Eviction Mapping Project. Anti Eviction Montreal, 2020. https://antievictionmontreal.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/MIL-fa%C3%A7ons-de-se-faire-%C3%A9vincer-LUniversit%C3%A9-de-Montr%C3%A9al-et-la-gentrification-%C3%A0-Parc-Extension.pdf

“Phases de développement: Un Projet de développement durable exemplaire.” Université de Montreal. https://campusmil.umontreal.ca/le-mil/phases-de-developpement/

Porqueddu, Elena. “Toward the Open City: Design and Research for Emergen Urban Systems.” Urban Design International, Volume 23, 2018, pg. 236-248.

“Projets Éphémères: Accueillir les communautés avoisinantes.” Université de Montréal. https://www.umontreal.ca/universite-citoyenne/projets-ephemeres/

Ricci, Stéphanie. “Montreal’s Durocher Art Space at Risk.” The Link, October 2019. https://thelinknewspaper.ca/article/montreals-durocher-art-space-at-risk

“Science Complex at the MIL Campus of the Université de Montréal.” Architect Magazine, October 2019. https://www.architectmagazine.com/project-gallery/sciences-complex-at-the-mil-campus-of-the-universite-de-montreal_o

“Science Complex at the MIL Campus of the Université of Montréal.” Build-ing, October 2019. https://building.ca/gallery/sciences-complex-at-the-mil-campus-of-the-universite-de-montreal/

“Science Complex - Campus MIL.” Case Studies, EBC Civil Building Mining. https://www.ebcinc.com/en/casestudy/science-complex-campus-mil/

Sennet, Richard, Pablo Sendra. Designing Disorder: Experiments and Disruptions in the City. Verso Books, April 2020.

Sennet, Richard. “The Open City.” Urban Age, November 2006. https://urbanage.lsecities.net/essays/the-open-city

Shaw, Pamela, Joane Hudson. “The Qualities of Informal Space: (Re)appropriation within the informal, interstitial spaces of the city.” Occupation: Negotiations with Constructed Space, University of Brighton, July 2009.

Smith, Tim. “Urban Design Next: A Conceptual Framework for the Open City.” Medium, June 24, 2019. https://medium.com/@tims.sera/urban-design-next-a-conceptual-framework-for-the-open-city-52235e63a2df

“University of Montreal Outremont Campus (MIL).” Projects 2011, LeMay. https://lemay.com/projects/universite-de-montreal-outremont-campus/

“Vivre in Outremont.” Vivre MTL, Presti Homes and Development. https://vivremtl.com/

Wall, Ed. “Infrastructural Form, Interstitial Spaces and Informal Acts.” Infrastructural urbanism: addressing the in-between, DOM publishers, 2011, pg 145-158.

Zouein, Marwan, Maha Issa. “Urban Interstitial Spaces as Commons.” The Place that Remains: Recounting the Unbuilt Territory, The Department of Architecture and Design at the Lebanese American University, Beirut, March 2018.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Fig. 1 Archmtl. “Campus MIL / site Outremont”. July 22, 2018. Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/p/Bli4w9fjBpM/
Fig. 2 Jain, Maya. Google Maps Screenshot, April 19, 2021.
Fig. 3. EBC. “Science Complex - Campus MIL” 2019, https://www.ebcinc.com/en/casestudy/science-complex-cam pus-mil/
Fig. 4 Nippaysage. “#placealicegirard”. February 1, 2021. Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/p/CKxOgYJnZj9/
Fig. 5 Nippaysage. “Espace vert sur la rue Beaumont”. May 17, 2020. Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/p/CATY0MQni5H/
Fig. 6 Katalizo_org. “Merci a tous d’etre venus en si grand nombre hier”. August 2, 2019. Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/p/B0rIxOWH9_p/
Fig. 7 Anonymous.
Fig. 8 Jain, Maya. Personal Photograph. February, 2021.
Fig. 9 Jain, Maya. Personal Photograph. February, 2021.
Fig 10. Frederiquehinse. “Partons à l’aventure”. February 5, 2021. Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/p/CK7MIE5nvRu/
Fig. 11 Jain, Maya. Personal Photograph. February, 2021.
Fig. 12 Jain, Maya. Personal Photograph. February, 2021.
Fig. 13 Jain, Maya. Personal Photograph. February, 2021.
Fig. 14 Archmtl. “Campus MIL view”. October 4, 2017. Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/p/BZ2dKZ6Ac4M/
Fig. 15 Archmtl. “Campus MIL / site Outremont”. July 22, 2018. Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/p/Bli4w9fjBpM/