

The Bois de la Roche stables at 292 Senneville Road, are on the endangered list compiled by Heritage Montreal. The wooden horse barn, built between 1880 and 1900, and enlarged in 1902, was part of the country estate of Senator Louis-Joseph Forget, whose property was acquired by the Montreal Urban Community in 1991. These stables were enlarged by architects Edward and William Maxwell.

Portions of these stables are threatened, and there has been a collapse of one section in the past few years. A temporary structure has recently been put in place to hopefully prevent further damage.







The new Maxwell extension and silo in the foreground with the original horse barn peeking out from the rear, (left side).



This is the main structure one sees from the road. It is magnificent even with the plastic covered roof and vent towers that was done to protect the structure from the elements.



The Maxwell designed stable addition on the house side of the driveway. Extensive work has been done in the last few years to protect these buildings. The roof has been covered with heavy plastic material as well as all of the doors & windows.









The Maxwell building is on the left and the original horse barn is on the right



The Maxwell addition joins the original (shown at the rear) and continues to the front



The protective plastic covering has come loose in places. It is possible that the securing nails were driven into wood that was already starting to rot, and they simply did not hold



The original stable had a tin roof that was still in fairly decent condition, unlike the roof of the Maxwell addition on the right. There was a good chance that the asphalt singles replaced cedar shingles that Maxwell would have preferred during this time. It is also unlikely that the tin roof was the original material.



This photo from the rear shows the original horse barn on the left and the newer extensions on the right. Visually the new design blended in fairly well.

The original horse barn is less imposing than the extensions. There is a continuous window strip along the facade and has more dormers on the roof. This stable, despite being older, appears to be in relatively good condition.





The rear facade of the original horse barn.



**The little triangular window
matches the projected roof outline
above it.
Such a lovely detail.**





The plastic roof covering was done a number of years ago. However over time fierce winds removed much of this protection and exposed the then vulnerable roof to the elements.



You can see here that some of the strips of wood that held down the plastic have disappeared. The plastic then becomes free to lift and can then create a new problem of moisture getting trapped under the plastic and causing further damage. In addition, the former nail holes create more wounds in the wood for moisture to collect.

Wrapping a building roof in plastic should only be seen as a temporary solution.



The roof vents in these Maxwell buildings were very distinctive and quite marvellous. They had been well wrapped in plastic. This photo shows three different stages of roofing material. The cheapest solution were the asphalt shingles, and they were also the least durable. Repair work was done piecemeal over the years. It was a large and expensive complex and the building suffered accordingly.





October 2017;

The roof is in a very sad state. It is now only a matter of time. I had no idea how little.



February 2018;

A large part of the roof collapses in the mid section. The sound of the crash in the middle of the



February 2018;
When I went around to the rear of the building I was shocked to see the extent of the damage. It was brutal.



Luckily it appeared that the collapse affected only the mid section of the complex. The two end buildings appeared to be still intact.



The massive roof vent has toppled over. The bits of wood look like the spine of some huge





May 2018

A few months later a second collapse occurs.



The end building still appears to be intact. The big question is ‘what will the city of Montreal do now with these structures? Will they tear this mid section down and leave the ends as they are? If so, how will they protect the exposed parts of the good buildings? Or will they attempt to rebuild it as it was built?’





March 2019

**I was relieved to see that they had decided to clean up the damage carefully without bringing in the 'wrecking ball'.
Where they would go from here was not yet clear.**

**It was always a good sign to see
this turn up on the property.
It meant the workers had returned
to do more work.**





September 2019

With great relief I saw them bringing in new timber to help shore up the existing structure, which seemed to be relatively good. Originally, they had used a massive steel beam that ran the entire length of the building, and this was still intact. Where would the city go at this point. Would it be a complete restoration, or partial?





After the clean up the front facade is seen as having suffered not that much damage.



To the casual observer, the main structure appears to be sound. Everything here appears to be remarkably straight and as it should be. It is only the outer shell that suffered damage.





An interesting window detail from the original horse barn that was designed to reflect light downwards into the stable.



March 2020

The work was completed last fall to build a protective structure over the open area to the rear, and a good portion of the roof.



The new protection did not extend downwards far enough to cover open wounds in the roof. Will more be done next year? We should be thankful that this much was done.



In the summer the Maxwell barn becomes a marvellous backdrop for a garden set with a little play theatre thrown in.

















LAUGH









Google

























Along the laneway going into the property one will see these little figurines.



They are called the 'Alley Cats'



They are the 'Early Warning System' to warn against such predators as birds, voles and mice who might attempt to invade the garden.



Even during the winter they stand on guard, ever watchful











During my many dog walks I have never seen anyone looking at these buildings



Question; Will they notice when the buildings are gone?



August 22 2022

An opening appears in the roof covering

It is important to remember one thing.

There was always another part of my weekly drive that was rather magical.

This was seeing the hundreds of acres of beautiful, open countryside.

I was always amazed that this could still be found
within 20 miles or so of a major metropolis.

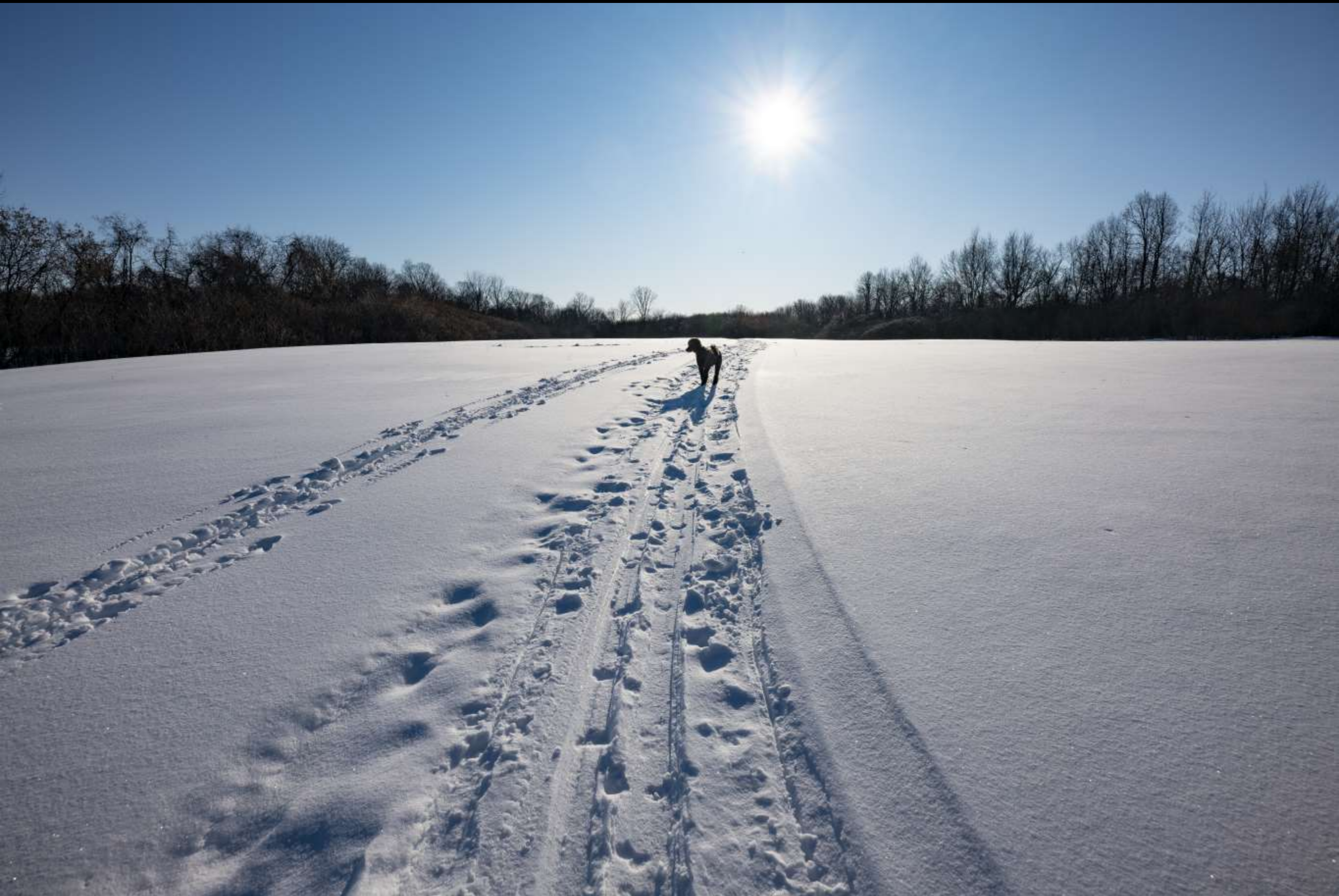
On occasion we might tend to be critical of the city of Montreal,
regarding the upkeep and maintenance of these old architectural buildings, but we
should remember that they are helping to protect and preserve this land for our
continuing enjoyment, and for generations to follow.

This is indeed remarkable, and we should be extremely thankful.

With the ongoing and relentless pressure to increase density of homes on the island,
it would be so easy, and logical to
see this land used in a different way.

The last slide shows another small island, in another part of the world. This is the
usual way to deal with the problem of limited land and increasing demand .

This could easily be Montreal, fifty years from now.



Enjoy the moment







The End