The contribution of urban morphology in the fulfillment of the promises of revitalization strategies based on the creative economy

A case study of Quebec City's Nouvo Saint-Roch and Montreal's Cité du Multimedia

Simon Carrothers
Alex Lachance-Fortin
Yenny Constanza Zambrano Ardila

ÉCOLE SUPÉRIEURE D'AMÉNAGEMENT DU TERRITOIRE ET DE DÉVELOPPEMENT RÉGIONAL

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An increasingly noticeable presence of the idea of "creativity" in planning strategies and urban revitalization

- « **Creative Nation Report** » Australia (1994) and « **Creative industries Task Force** » England (1997)

- John Howkins (2001) formulates the concept of **creative economy**

- Richard Florida (2002) introduces the concept of the **"creative class"**

- The Harvard Business Review has called the theory of the "creative class" of **"breakthrough ideas in business" for 2004.**

- Creation of the **Creative Cities Network** (UNESCO, 2004)

- **Creative Economy Report** of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2008)

UNCTAD classification of creative industries

Cultural sites: Archaeological sites, museums, libraries, exhibitions, etc.

Traditional cultural expressions: Art crafts, festivals and celebrations

Heritage

Visual arts: Paintings, sculptures, photography and antiques

Performing arts: Live music, theatre, dance, opera, circus, puppetry, etc.

Arts

Publishing and printed media: Books, press and other publications

Creative industries

Audiovisuals: Film, television, radio, other broadcasting

Media

Design: Interior, graphic, fashion, jewellery and toys

New media: Software, video games, digitized creative content

Functional creations

Creative services: Architectural, advertising, creative R&D, cultural & recreational

Source : UNCTAD, Creative Economy Report 2010, p.8

The broadening of the concept of the creative economy leads to urban development

Inclusion of creative industries and heritage

The strong appeal of revitalization strategies in relation with creativity

- Can work with the existing

- Highlight the strengths of the place

- Enhance the heritage and the identity of places and communities

- Attract investors and developers

Saint-Roch in the 1970's.
Source : Ville de Québec

Saint-Roch in 2012
Source : Simon Carrothers

Cité du Multimédia in 2012.
Source : Bing maps, 2012.

Cité du Multimédia in the 1980's
Source : SDM

Saint-Roch and Cité du Multimédia : Two great examples

Industrial neighbourhood that were devitalized in the 1970's and were the object of those strategies

An increasingly noticeable presence of creativity in planning strategies and urban revitalization

- **Baltimore City "Creative Baltimore" (2004)** promotes the city to the creative class: students, artists, entrepreneurs and young professionals

- **Memphis, "The Memphis Manifesto" (2003)** a local development plan prepared with the assistance of consultants from "Richard Florida Creativity Group" : investment in urban facilities (cycling trails, night clubs and recreation on the river banks) which, according to Florida, will attract members of the creative class to the city of Memphis.

An increasingly noticeable presence of creativity in planning strategies and urban revitalization

- **Michigan "Cool Cities" (2003)**
  Jennifer Granholm (2003) (Governor of Michigan) launched an initiative known as the "*Cool Cities*". She asked the mayors of 200 cities in Michigan to offer ideas for encouraging a "connected" environment which, according to the theories of Florida attracts the creative class.

- ***Montréal, ville du Savoir (2003)***
  The development plan of the City of Montreal (Montreal, City of Knowledge) is filled with references to Florida and in part on the relation between the importance of the creative class and local economic vitality.

  (Levine, 2004)

"Creating is the future of a city. As we have seen it in Montreal by festivals, by investing heavily in our entertainment district. It has created an environment that allows creators and culture to express themselves, it is our identity. It was absolutely necessary to use this niche of excellence to make Montreal a cultural metropolis of international stature. Culture and design are two vectors essential for the future of humanity. " (Gérald Tremblay, Mayor of Montreal, in Joubeaud, 2012)

Elected officials praise the concept

Both mayors of Montreal and Quebec city have clearly manifested their intentions to promote creativity and culture in order to foster economic development and revitalization of central urban areas

Is creativity a panacea ?

Critics indicate that there are significant limitations to the consideration of the physical aspects of a place using this approach

- **Gentrification**
  Artists settle in devitalized areas and gives it a new atmosphere. This change boosts the real estate business and generate higher prices which eventually leads to the eviction of the less fortunate.

- **Decontextualization**
  All indices and all data Florida uses concern metropolitan area, he doesn't present any data on cities in any of his writings. (Levine, 2004)

In every city he goes, Florida uses the same language and the same solutions. (Vivant, 2009)

What are the effects of these revitalization strategies, in conjunction with the creative economy, in terms of urbanism

*Urbanism understood here as the association of architecture and urban design seen through the relation between urban form and activities and actors

Saint-Roch neighborhood
Source : Simon Carrothers

Cité du Multimédia
Source : Bing maps, 2012.

Two well-known cases studies

To answer this question, we used two cases of revitalization that have left a great influence in Quebec, the Saint-Roch district in Quebec city and the Cité du Multimédia in Montreal

A twofold approach

Debates and various criticisms

- Press Review

- Review of Literature

- Consultation of planning documents

- Meeting of key actors in the revitalization projects

Assessment of the physical interventions (architecture and urban design)

- Realization of a morphological urbanistic analysis of the two districts
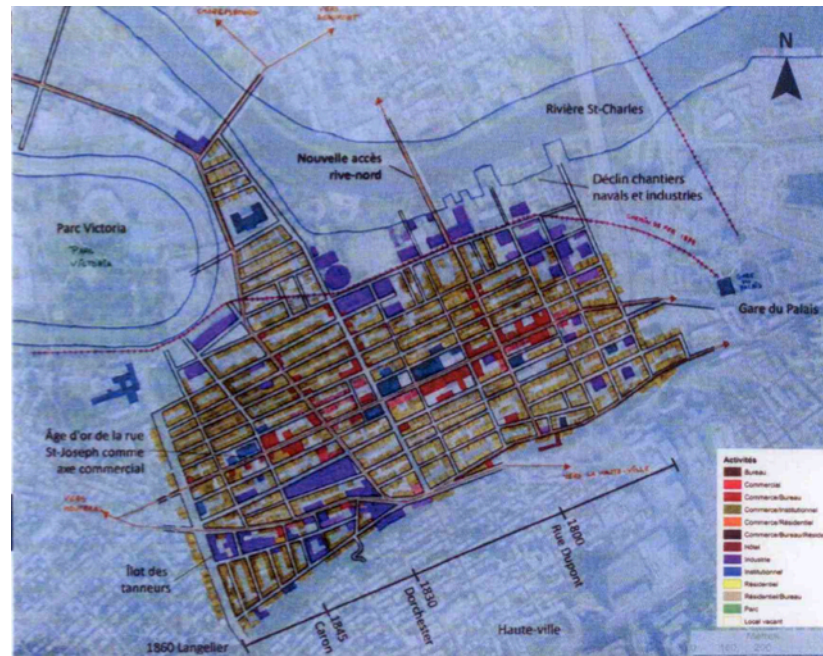
- Visit of the study sites

Two similar cases

- Old central industrial districts devitalized in the wake of economic change (quaternization of the economy, and the phenomenon of dissemination of centers in the periphery)

- Revitalization process undergone during the same period under the sign of the creative economy

- Extensively documentated

The apogee of the *Faubourg* Saint-Roch
Source: Circa 1900.

THE SAINT-ROCH NEIGHBORHOOD IN QUEBEC CITY:

A prosperous industrial neighbourhood, a *Faubourg*

A dynamic downtown

The three periods of the evolution

- **The 18th century:** A residential neighbourhood

- **The end of the 19th century:** The arrival of industries and commercial activities

- **The beginning of the 20th century:** The consolidation of the neighbourhood as Quebec downtown

Source: Google map, 2012.
Realization: Yenny Zambrano

The factors of the devitalization

Starting from the late 1950's

• Urban sprawl

• The deployment of the suburbs

• The relocation of industries and centers of economic activity

Source: Google map, 2012.
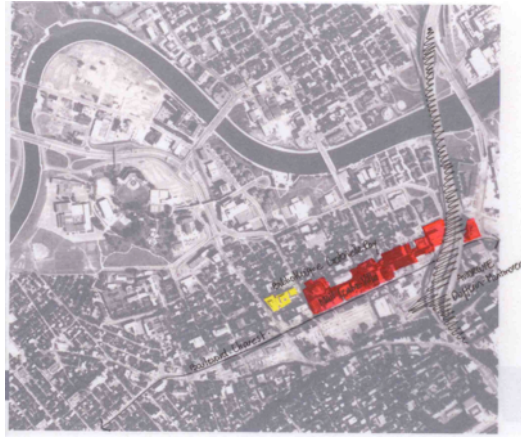
**Saint-Roch,
during the 1960-1980**

- Exodus of people outside the neighborhood

- Vacant spaces

- Built environment deteriorated

3 stages of revitalization efforts:
3 types of strategies

1. 1960-1980 : Period of urban renewal : Transformation of central neighbourhood into suburban sets

2. At the turn of the 1980's: Discussion tables to define projects

3. From 1990 until now. Action! The will to transform the physical environment

Gréber-Fiset plan, 1956.
Source : Plan de circulation et de Transport 1968, SciELO 2012.

Source: Google map, 2012.
Realization: Yenny Zambrano

The Saint-roch mall
Source: Ville de Québec.

1. 1960-1980 : PERIOD OF URBAN RENEWAL

Transformation of central neighbourhood into suburban sets

- **State planning and investment**

  - Highway plans

  - Zoning

  - Concreting of the Saint-Charles river

  The Greber-Fiset plan (1956) and The Vandry (1968)

  - Transforming the main street into a mall (1974)

Consultation table

2. AT THE TURN OF THE 1980'S

Discussion tables to define projects

- Built environment seen through a serie of specific sites rather than through a master plan

- Implication of different actors to define orientations and goals

- Very little attention on the physical aspects per se

Interventions targeted on the physical environment.
Source: Google map, 2012.
Realization: Yenny Zambrano

Saint-Roch gardens (1992)
Source: QuébecUrbain, 2012.

Complexe Méduse, 1995.
Source : Ville de Québec, 2010.

Recycling of patrimonial buildings (1992)
Source : Ville de Québec, 2010.
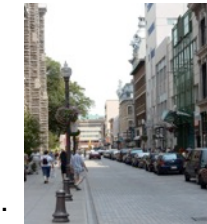
Saint-Joseph street.
Source : L'esprit du Nouvo Saint-Roch, 2008

3. From 1990 until now: ACTION!

The will to transform the physical environment

- **A series of targeted interventions on the built environment**
  - The Saint-Roch gardens
  - New beginning for the Saint-Joseph street
  - Recycling of patrimonial buildings
  - A new place for culture
  - The national center of new technologies
  - New residential projects
  - Renaturalization of the river Saint-Charles

Saint-Roch gardens, a place of convergence.
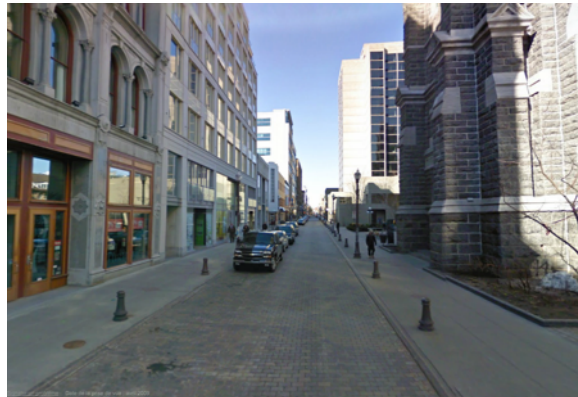Source : L'esprit du Nouvo Saint-Roch, 2008.

De la Couronne street
Source : FlickR, 2012.

The effects of those strategies on urbanistic morphology

- Positive effects
  - Pleasant urban place
  - Neat urban composition work
  - The « îlot fleuri» as a place of convergence
  - New social diversity

Coexistance, but not cohabitation.
Source: Google map, 2012.
Realization: Yenny Zambrano

The Saint-Joseph street
Source: Google map, 2012.

La reine street
Source: Google map, 2012.

But…

- Fragmentation of the neighbourhood

The residential neighbourhood
Source: Google map, 2012.
Realization: Yenny Zambrano

The arrival of industries
Source: Google map, 2012.
Realization: Yenny Zambrano

THE «CITÉ DU MULTIMÉDIA» IN MONTREAL:

A prosperous industrial neighbourhood, a _Faubourg_

A dynamic industrial center

The two periods of evolution

- **The 19th century:** A residential neighbourhood

- **The end of the 19th century:** The arrival of industries

Relocation of the industries.
Source: Google map, 2012.
Realization: Yenny Zambrano

The factors of the devitalization

Starting from the late 1960's

- The closing of the channel of Lachine

- The relocation of industries and centers of economic activity

Built environment deteriorated.
Source : Société de Développement de Montréal, 1996.

**The « Cité du Multimédia »,
during the 1960-1980**

- Exodus of people outside the neighborhood

- Vacant lots

- Built environment deteriorated

3 stages of revitalization efforts:
3 types of strategies

1. 1960-1980 : Period of urban renewal : Transformation of central neighbourhood into suburban sets

2. At the turn of the 1980's: Discussion tables to define projects

3. From 1990 until now. Action! The will to transform the physical environment

The construction of the Bonaventure Highway
Source : McCord museum.

1. 1960-1980 : PERIOD OF URBAN RENEWAL

Transformation of central neighbourhood into suburban sets

State planning and investment

- Highway plans

  - The Bonaventure Highway

2. AT THE TURN OF THE 1980'S

Discussion tables to define projects

- Built environment seen through a serie of specific sites rather than through a master plan

- Very little attention on the physical aspects per se

  - Purchase of all the grounds by the public for a real estate project

The Cité of the Multimédia.
Source: Google map, 2012.
Realization: Yenny Zambrano

The 8 phases of the Cardinal-Hardy-Provencher-Roy development plan.
Source: Google map, 2012.
Realization: Alex Lachance-Fortin

3. From 1990 until now: ACTION!

The will to transform the physical environment

One major plan

- Finding private investors

- Tax credits coming from the government
  - Reopening of the channel of Lachine

  - Cardinal-Hardy-Provencher-Roy development plan

Emphasis on the spatial heritage
Source: Le groupe immobilier de Montréal, 2012.

The effects of those strategies on urbanistic morphology

- Positive effects

  - Emphasis on the spatial heritage
  - Significant increase of the residential offer that brought back the residents
  - Opening of many offices that make fonction the shops
  - Use of the unused buildings

Formation of subsets.
Source: Google map, 2012.
Realization: Yenny Zambrano

But…

- Formation of subsets

- Little mixity of uses in the activities

- Detachment of the neighbourhood from the rest of the city

Two similar cases

…

- Old central industrial districts devitalized in the wake of economic change (quaternization of the economy, and the phenomenon of dissemination of centers in the periphery)

- Revitalization process undergone during the same period under the sign of the creative economy

- Extensively documentated

Two similar cases …

… yet two different approaches

The difficult dialogue between the metropolitan and the neighborhood scales

The neighborhood as a whole vs. the neighborhood as a collection of lots and buildings

The city as a leader of an urban project v.s. the city as a facilitator for real-estate developments

The difficult dialogue between the metropolitan and the neighborhood scales

SAINT-ROCH
A rupture from within

1. Dislocation of a neighborhood

2. One entity fragmented in two parts, one each side of a main street

3. South section connects to a logic of metropolitan development

CITÉ DU MULTIMÉDIA
A rupture from the rest

1. The Cité du Multimédia as a whole detaches from it's context

2. Monofunctional center core

3. Perimeter composed of large office buildings and boulevards which generate a lot of traffic

4. No public spaces to link the different areas

The neighborhood as a whole vs. the neighborhood as a collection of lots and buildings

SAINT-ROCH
Towards a Master plan

1. Work on public space to enhance the land aspect in order to attract businesses and investors and to create a pleasant space for residents

2. Interventions all across the neighborhood, on both private and public lands

CITÉ DU MULTIMÉDIA
Construction and renovation of buildings

1. Focus on building interventions (construction of new buildings)

2. Interventions strictly on the lots owned by the city and then sold to developers

The city as a leader of an urban project v.s. the city as a facilitator for real-estate developments

SAINT-ROCH
**An urban project led by the city**

1. The revitalization project was already initiated before the financial support was found

2. ICTs have strengthened existing collective project

3. Subsidies for housing (artist studios, heritage facades) for artists, for ICTs businesses

4. Three development axes articulated around the idea of a living environment
   - Culture
   - ICTs
   - Education

CITÉ DU MULTIMÉDIA
Real-estate developments facilitated by the city

1. Need to find a profitable project, the land, a real estate development project, and investors, we already there

2. ICTs have initiated the revitalization project

3. Subsidies to attract firms

4. One main development axe articulated around the ideas of zoning and site
   - ICTs

The Cité of the Multimédia.
Source: Google map, 2012.
Realization: Yenny Zambrano
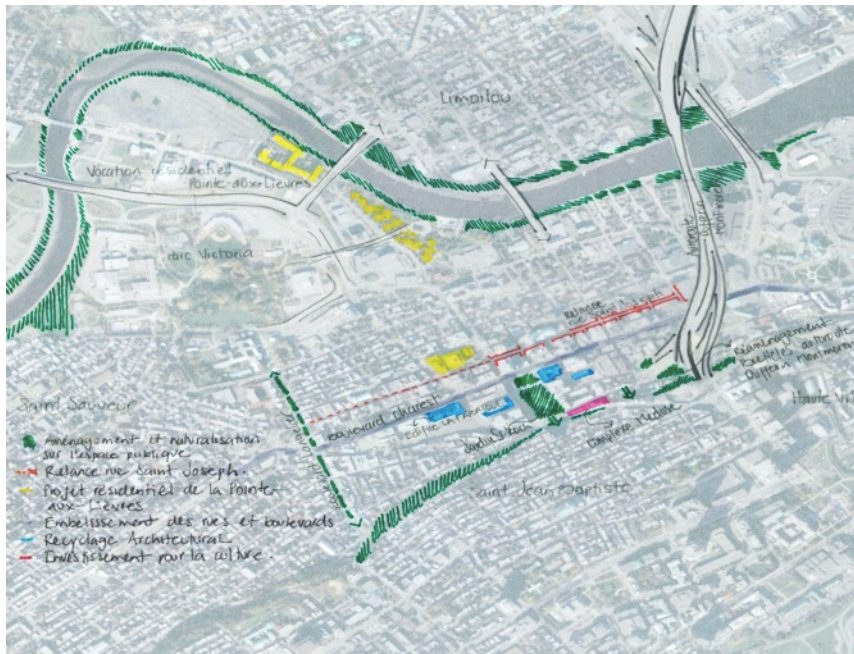
Interventions targeted on the physical environment.
Source: Google map, 2012.
Realization: Yenny Zambrano

A subtle,
but fundamental difference

Both cases show a series of interventions

In Quebec city the interventions were targeted in the light of a master plan, of a vision

In Montreal, interventions were put forward essentially as real-estate opportunities arose

Both cases show a series of interventions… But

IN QUEBEC

- The civic participation lead to an appropriation of the public space

- Continuity in the evolution and the implication of the City and Government

IN MONTREAL

- There were practically no civic participation in this project

- Rupture in the evolution of the project

The creative economy was used as a mean to give a specific identity to the Saint-Roch and Cité du Multimédia revitalization projects, thus attracting success

The morphological dimensions were seen solely in terms of architecture, that is to say, buildings and urban composition, at the expense of a consideration of the urbanistic morphological dimensions, which are multiscale, form and strength at the same time

Based on our analyzes, we understand that interventions made as part of revitalization projects under the sign of the creative economy, as seen with the cases of Saint-Roch neighborhood and Cité du Multimédia, do not show consideration of urban morphological dimensions

At this stage of our research it would be interesting to address the question of identifying what type of interventions would be suitable to establish a dialogue between the interventions already performed, and between the different fragments