

La Cardinale

Bringing a breath of freshness into a semi-detached Tudor in Ville-Saint-Laurent

The end of an era

This semi-detached house built in the 1950s in Montréal's Ville-Saint-Laurent neighbourhood saw three beautiful children be born and raised there. Over the years, many extensions were added to its aging structure. At the back, its broken-up spaces had only one opaque door and four small windows. Built without a foundation and worn by time, the annexes in the backyard were keeping the abundant natural light from coming into the kitchen. After the children fled the coop, the house needed to undergo major renovations, particularly to meet the needs of the owner's new lifestyle. The owner entrusted his project to L. McComber architects with three goals in mind: open the living spaces, make the most of the natural light and garden view, and preserve the spirit of this family home filled with memories.

Tudor, please

From the street, the existing façade is Tudor-inspired, with its wooden half-timbering and plaster on the second floor. The classic pattern is most obvious above the garage on the gable wall. By extending this space towards the back, a connection is created between the two sides of the house. On the side façade, red clay brick wraps around the ground floor to the deck. The second floor picks up the half-timbering pattern, painted in contemporary colours. Striking a contrast with the light grey walls, black geometric lines frame the windows and come together at the back in a triangular gable pattern. The end of the long structure projects against the back wall, with its black sheet-metal cladding and abundant windows exposing the open-plan living spaces inside. At its foot, the new back deck extends the kitchen by way of a large raised glass door.

The backyard at last

Inside, the living spaces are open-plan. By strategically removing certain partitions, the ground-floor layout opens the heart of the house onto the backyard. Right in the middle of the opened space, the large kitchen island reveals a change in level that offers a standing workstation on one side and a few seats on the other. In its extension, the double height maximizes natural light. Above, a narrow walkway connects the master bedroom to its bathroom, providing a spectacular top view into the yard on one side and the living room below on the other. With its steel Vierendeel railing and

thin wood board floor, it looks like a suspended footbridge.

Elegant but simple materials

In contrast with the unique exterior, the interior of the house is decorated with elegant simplicity. In the light-bathed kitchen, the slate floor and black marble countertop set a classic but contemporary tone. Throughout the house, frosted glass, light grey marble, and white painted drywall make for a cool but very striking palette. Preserved in its original state, the stained red oak panelling in the dining room inspired the choice of finishes for all the floors and built-in cabinetwork.

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En contraste avec l'extérieur plus singulier, l'intérieur de la maison est paré d'une élégante sobriété. Dans la cuisine baignée de lumière, le plancher d'ardoise et le comptoir de marbre noir donnent le ton, classique mais contemporain. Dans l'ensemble de la maison, verre givré, marbre gris clair et gypse peint blanc déclinent une palette froide mais très expressive. Conservées dans leur état original, les boiseries de chêne rouge de la salle à manger ont inspiré le choix des finitions pour l'ensemble des planchers et du mobilier intégré.

Specifications

Project name : La Cardinale

Location : Ville Saint-Laurent, Montréal, QC

Architect: L. McComber – architecture vivante

Design Team : Philip Staszewski, David Grenier, Olivier

Lord, Emmanuelle Lauzier et Laurent McComber

General Contractor : Construction Yannick Robert

Engineers : Latéral conseil

Photo credit : Raphaël Thibodeau

Project end date : November 2016

Area : 1290 sf

L. McComber – living architecture

L. McComber is an architectural and design firm well-known for the relevance of its urban design. From building residential units on irregular lots to designing niche businesses and transforming cramped or unloved spaces, each project unites evocative visuals with impeccable execution.

Laurent McComber, the firm's founding architect, started out working as a general contractor for eight years, melding construction with design. Since 2005, his approach has focused on the quality of relationships forged through each project and on the involvement of craftspeople in the design process. Surrounded by a dynamic and creative team, he is approached by clients who are passionate about architecture, including Piknic Électronik, Rise Kombucha and Bota Bota, just to name a few.

The firm's many awards and varied publications speak to the community's interest in its work. Recipient of the OAQ Prix d'excellence award for its Lignes aériennes project in 2009, L. McComber has more recently won the Grand prix du design award in 2015 for clinique D in Laval as well as the inaugural Frédéric Metz award - Commerce Design Montréal - for the Boulangerie Guillaume project in Montréal's Mile End district.