

Concordia University Libraries Special Collections

Finding Aid - Overdale collection (P169)

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Concordia University Libraries Special Collections

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Overdale collection

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Summary information

Repository: Concordia University Libraries Special Collections

Title: Overdale collection

ID: P169

Date: 1986-#1988 (date of creation)

Physical description: 6 cm of textual documents
386 photographs
95 videocassettes
5 compact cassettes
1 audio reel

**Dates of creation,
revision and deletion:**

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

The Montreal neighbourhood known as Overdale was bounded by the following streets: Overdale on the south, René Lévesque on the north, Mackay on the west, and Lucien L'Allier on the east. In 1987, 77 persons who rented living quarters in the area were threatened with eviction as a developer had bought the properties and wanted to build a 650-unit condominium. Estimated to cost \$100 million, the development was to have twin 39-storey towers. The developer made a deal with the City of Montreal that would compensate him for relocating the residents. The developer would provide low-cost housing in a new building a few blocks away named Underdale. A press release from the City's executive committee has the headline A Montreal Precedent: Developer Commits Himself to Rebuilding Low Rental Housing to Ensure Construction of an Important Real Estate Project.

Only after the deal was made did the City inform the affected residents. Some, mostly roomers, accepted the deal of a small cash settlement and relocation to Underdale. The majority wanted their homes integrated into the developer's plan rather than have them demolished. The majority of City councillors and the executive committee were in favour of demolishing several buildings. A minority of City Council members were on the side of residents who wished to stay in their homes. Various tenants' rights and heritage and neighbourhood preservation groups were formed, including the Overdale Housing Cooperative, the Overdale Tenants' Association, Friends of Overdale, Les Amis d'Overdale-Lafontaine, and Save Overdale.

Residents used what were termed guerilla tactics in an effort to force the promoter and the city to change their plans. On several occasions residents and sympathizers were arrested for trying to prevent their eviction and the demolition of their homes. In March and June of 1988 the police riot squad showed up to evict the tenants who had still not left their homes. The buildings were emptied. Some were demolished and others boarded up. One of the houses affected, though not demolished, was the residence of Sir Louis-Hippolyte Lafontaine, prime minister of pre-confederation Canada 1848-1851, considered one of

the fathers of responsible government in Canada and one of those who assured that French would be an official language of Canada.

As of 2003, the Lafontaine house still stands, boarded up, and a parking lot operates where the demolished buildings had been located.

Custodial history

The fonds was transferred from Concordia University's Records Management and Archives Department to Concordia University Libraries' Special Collections March 16, 2016, April 19-20, 2016, May 5, 2016, and May 10, 2016.

Scope and content

The collection documents the events which occurred in 1987 and 1988 in the Overdale neighbourhood. It witnesses to the efforts made not only by the local residents but also architects, planners, and others to influence the City of Montreal to avoid demolishing historic buildings and established neighborhoods, and to preserve the city's built heritage.

The collection includes photographs, moving images, sound recordings, press releases, clippings, clippings, meeting notices, correspondence, reports, newsletters, statements on the Overdale resistance prepared by former residents.

Notes

Title notes

- **Source of title proper:** Title based on the content of the collection.

Immediate source of acquisition

The Overdale archives were donated to the Concordia University Archives in 2001 and 2002 by Robert Craig, a former member of the Overdale Tenants' Association and one of the first residents to organize resistance to the project when he and three other residents form the committee Sauvons Overdale / Save Overdale.

Conditions governing use

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Accruals

No further accruals expected.

Other notes

- **Publication status:** Published
 - **Level of detail:** Full
 - **Status description:** Final
 - **Rights:** Copyright belongs to the creator(s).
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Access points

- Multiple media (documentary form)
 - Urban planning (subject)
 - Montreal (place)
-

Series descriptions
