



Will the Goode house stay good
or is it about to go bad?

Description

Addition will modify the building beyond recognition and destroy its historic integrity

By David Nercessian

June 1, 2022

The Goode house in Westmount is in desperate need of a meticulous restoration but the city is considering plans to tack a two-storey Snoopy doghouse to its back. The addition will modify the building beyond recognition and destroy its historic integrity.

The phrase “nothing is sacred” is used so often that it’s trite. But in connection to **178 Cote St. Antoine Road**, it should rouse alarm. The Goode house and its neighbour at 168 Cote St. Antoine are two survivors of the original four houses of **Metcalf Terrace**. Number 178, apart from losing a layer of stucco, has remained essentially unchanged from its construction in **1840**.

The Goode house is in desperate need of restoration but the city is considering plans to tack a two-storey Snoopy doghouse to its back.

Like everyone else, I received an innocuous **Public Notice email** from the city on May 17. Usually, these concern such things as specific zoning modifications, but in this case my interest was piqued by the words *Demolition Application 178 Cote St. Antoine Road*. I knew the Goode house was recognized years ago as **Category I** so I assumed any plans for modification and above all demolition would be stringently examined and evaluated. I presumed that the demolition involved something minor, like eliminating a decaying outbuilding.



Goode house proposed renovations, front and back – Image: City of Westmount

However, when I clicked through to the plans, I discovered the project entails adding a large “new two-story volume” to the back of the house. A doorway and two windows are to be substantially enlarged, which entail cutting away the exterior stonework. A new basement entrance is to be cut into the side as well.

‘I hope “Protecting for future generations” doesn’t mean allowing the proposed modifications... I find gluing Snoopy’s doghouse to the back of the Goode house the antithesis of protecting it and maintaining its integrity.’

The *Westmount Independent* ran an [upbeat article](#) in November 2020 on recognizing the Goode house as a “local heritage landmark” (p. 10)



Existing East side of the Goode house as seen from Cote St. Antoine Road – Image: Google Maps

On the other side of Cote St. Antoine Road is a dense thicket of shoebox houses, the result of an earlier administration’s acquiescence to a developer’s application to sell off the large garden of No. 8 Forden Avenue.



Ironically, the shoeboxes, otherwise unencumbered by architecture, might actually profit by the addition of some elements of doghouse design.

But the city emphasizes the **“extraordinary” steps** taken to gain heritage recognition for the Goode house. An impressive paragraph in the above describes the city’s **recognition by Parks Canada** and its receipt of the **Prince of Wales Prize for Municipal Heritage Leadership**.

I hope “Protecting for future generations” doesn’t mean allowing the proposed modifications. I must be hopelessly unimaginative: I find gluing Snoopy’s doghouse to the back of the Goode house the antithesis of protecting it and maintaining its integrity.

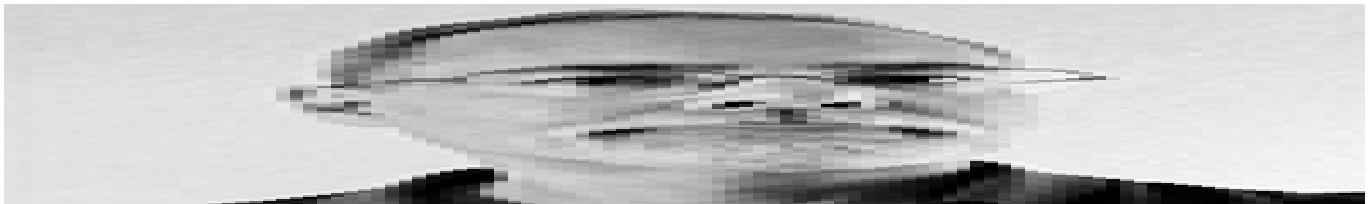
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Feature image: the existing Goode House, Google Maps

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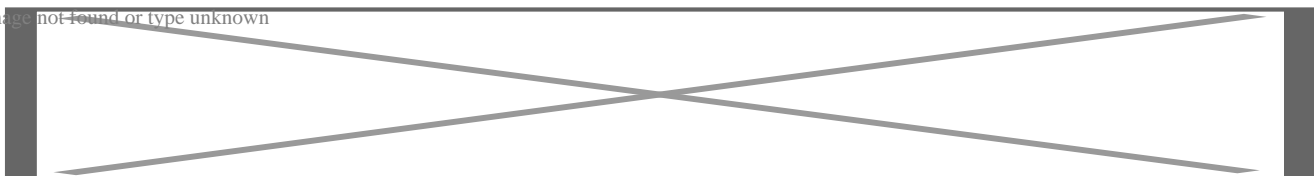
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About **David Nercessian** – *I was born in the erstwhile Children’s Hospital, then still the Western Division of the Montreal General. My family lived on Elm Avenue until 1960 when we moved to Rosemount Avenue. Except for a year in Algeria and four downtown, I’ve otherwise lived in Westmount.*

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