Montréal’s Municipal Courthouse

The renewal of a heritage building

National Executive Forum on Public Property
Victoria, B.C.
May 2006

In the beginning…

“City hall annex” is a functionally obsolete heritage building
- the municipal courthouse
- leased to the MUC for Police headquarters

The mandate of the Municipal Court as evolved
- the City requires a modern and functional courthouse with proper infrastructure
- Department heads “hate” the building and want to move
- Need 7 courtrooms vs. 7 existing
- Need to regroup staff from all the legal department

Requirements for Police headquarters have evolved
- The MUC requires a modern facility

Preliminary studies point to a 50M$ courthouse project on a new site
- City takes an option on land
The Court of the Record – City Hall Annex
Built in 1913
➢ To house the Court of the Recorder
➢ to free space at City Hall
➢ 120,000 ft²

The Municipal Courthouse and Police HQ
Doubled in size in 1963
➢ 248,000 ft²
➢ 11.5 M$ (2000)
➢ Police headquarters
➢ Communication center
➢ Helipad
➢ “Modern” HVAC
Attempted improvements

1980’s
- Expressed need for extra space for both the Courthouse and the HQ
- Concerns about security, fire prevention and conformity to codes
- International competition for a new courthouse

1990’s
- Chief judge wants a new courthouse (~50M$)
- City secures an option on land
- Attempt to sell the building to the MUC
By the mid-'90s

The building has become totally obsolete
- Mechanical systems
- Electrical systems
- Technological infrastructure
- Court operations
  - Number of halls
  - Security of officials and public vs. prisoners
- Insufficient space
- Fire prevention
- Conformity to codes
- Asbestos contamination

The Administrative Complex
The building in context

1995: Crisis

The courthouse administration demands a new building
- Budget is confirmed at 45 M$ + land

Renovation of the existing building for police use is expensive and impractical

Alternate use for the building:
- Demolish
- Sell to turn into condos

The local economy as slowed and the City is looking for a more reasonable project

The population would not easily accept the loss of the landmark

Possible to renew the facility into a modern courthouse
Decision: Financial aspects

- Building a new courthouse: 45M$ + land
- Leasing a new courthouse: 32M$
- Renewing the existing facility: 27M$

Decision: The client

Influential players

- Chief judge
- Mayor & Executive committee
- Head of the legal department
Decision factors

Image
- Monumental building
- Accessibility and visibility of the site

Courthouse activities
- Uninterrupted sessions
- Improved quality of services
- Better separation of circulation for judges, suspects, public
- Improved mix of courtroom sizes improves treatment of various cases
- Consolidation of activities at a single site
- Room for expansion
- 2 new courtrooms
- Refurbished facilities and equipment

Facilities
- Modern infrastructure: HVAC, IT, document management spaces, archives
- Conformity to codes
- Removal of contaminants

Completion by 2000

Phasing

- Ph1: 1995 - new courtrooms, archives, revised HVAC, asbestos removal, code conformity
- Ph2: 1997 - Rest of levels 1 & 2, roof and technical spaces Codes, HVAC, fire prevention
- Ph3: 1996 - Courthouse & HQ vertical transportation
- Ph4: 1997 - Stone work, doors and windows
- Ph5: 2000- Removal of the cell bloc
- Ph6: 2000 - Vertical transportation for judges, suspects, prisoners, public escalators & freights
- Ph7: 2000 - Levels 2, 3 & 4
The best plans...

Police HQ only moved out in 2001
  - Minor activities will not be relocated until 2007

Municipal mergers (2001)
  - Slowed all processes down
  - Modified the court’s mandate with devolution of responsibilities from Québec superior court: some redesign required

Municipal demergers (2006)
  - Slowed all processes down
  - More devolution of responsibilities: more redesigned required
  - Remains at the agglomeration level

Phasing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ph</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ph1</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>new courtrooms, archives, revised HVAC, asbestos removal, code conformity</td>
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<td>2000</td>
<td>Levels 2, 3 &amp; 4</td>
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<td>Phase</td>
<td>Delivery</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 New courtrooms, archives, codes</td>
<td>Planned 1995-07, Actual 1998-06</td>
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<td>2 Renovated 1st and 2nd floor courtrooms and offices + mechanical spaces</td>
<td>Planned 1997-03, Actual 1999-06</td>
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<td>3 Elevators</td>
<td>Planned 1996-04, Actual 1998-11</td>
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<td>4 Building envelop</td>
<td>Planned 1997-10, Actual 2000-11</td>
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<td>5 Cell bloc demolition and 5th floor</td>
<td>Planned 2000, Actual 2007-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Elevators for judges and prisoners</td>
<td>Planned 2000, Actual To be redefined</td>
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<td>7 a) Level 2</td>
<td>Planned 2000, Actual 2004</td>
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<td>b) Level 3 (last police functions)</td>
<td>Planned 2000, Actual 2009</td>
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<td>c) Level 4</td>
<td>Planned 2000, Actual 2003</td>
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Final portrait

Completion will take 11 years rather than the planned 5.

One architectural/engineering team will have done all the professional services, working with in house staff.

4 different contractors have already worked on the project and at least 2 more are expected.

Total expected cost for completed project (±2009): 22M$
  
  (18% less than budget) and less than 50% of the new building budget.

Facility accommodates 15% more staff than planned.

The court’s mandate is significantly expanded and now covers 40% more territory (Complete island vs. original 9 boroughs).

There is still room for expansion of activities.

Sometimes, we do…

City Hall partially renovated in 1990-1994 (2 upper floors including the attic).

Modified in 2001 to accommodate the new expanded city administration.

Second phase (political spaces) already underway:

- Council chambers
- Executive offices
- Building envelop
- HVAC
- Code & fire prevention compliance
Sometimes we don’t

Former Grand Trunk train station and hotel
Renovated into the Jacques-Viger office building
Sold to a private developer with the obligation to renovate and maintain the architectural character of the complex

Sometimes, we think about it

John Ostel’s Quebec Superior Courthouse
Now the Lucien-Saulnier office building housing the finance department

Scope:
- Building envelop
- HVAC
- IT infrastructure
- Fenestration
- Historical interiors
- Code and fire prevention issues