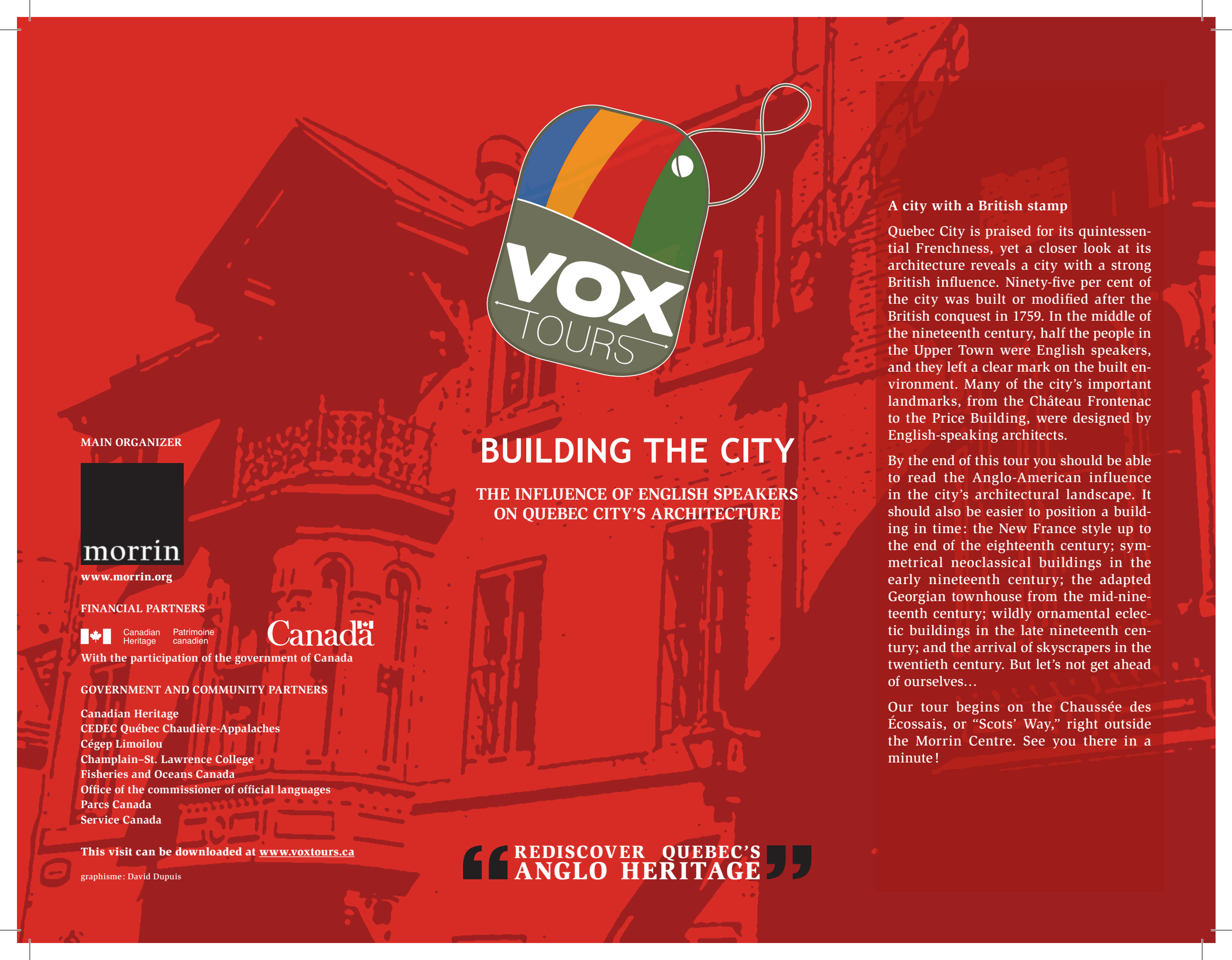

VOX TOURS

BUILDING THE CITY

THE INFLUENCE OF ENGLISH SPEAKERS ON QUEBEC CITY'S ARCHITECTURE

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graphisme: David Dupuis

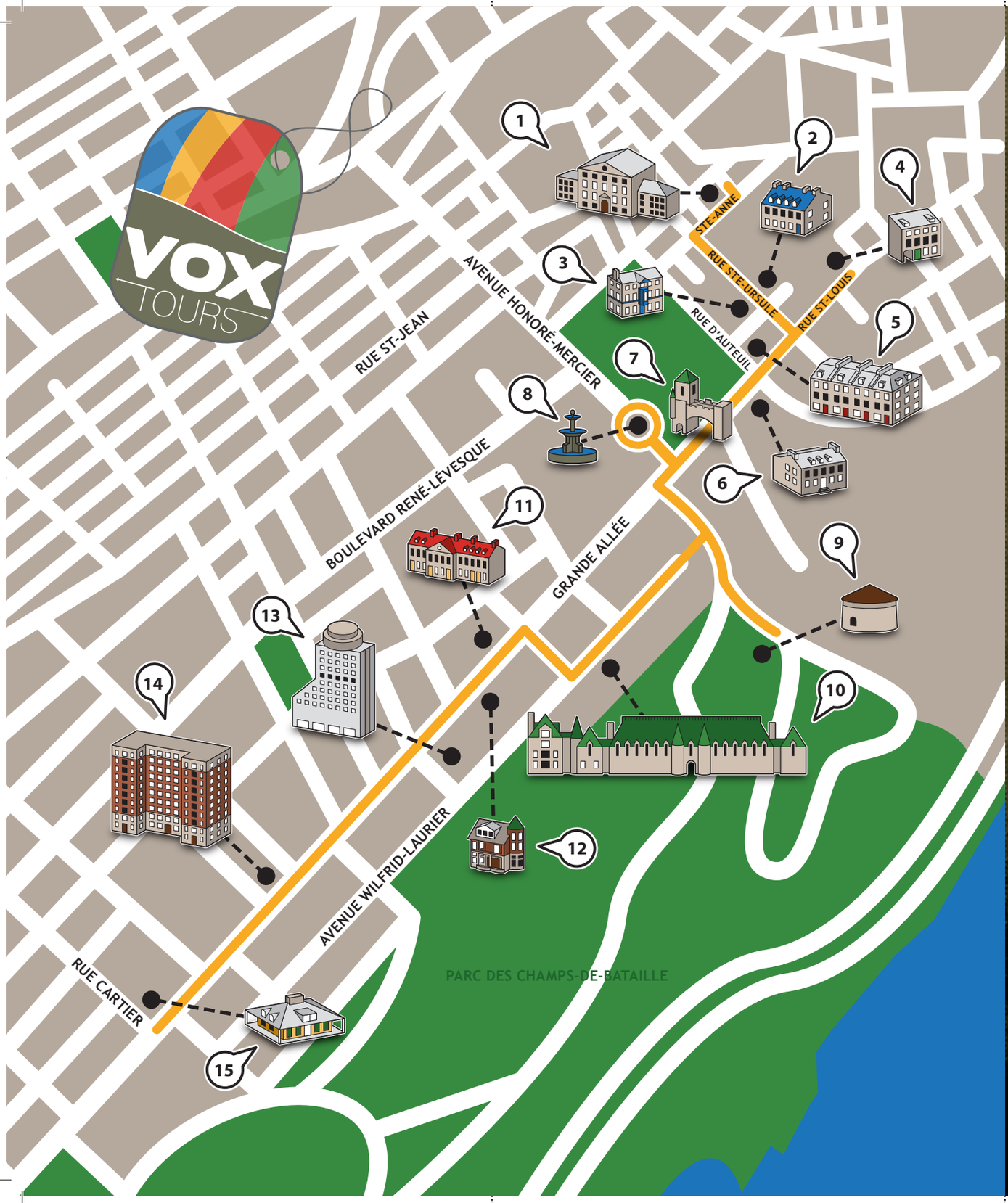
"REDISCOVER QUEBEC'S ANGLO HERITAGE"

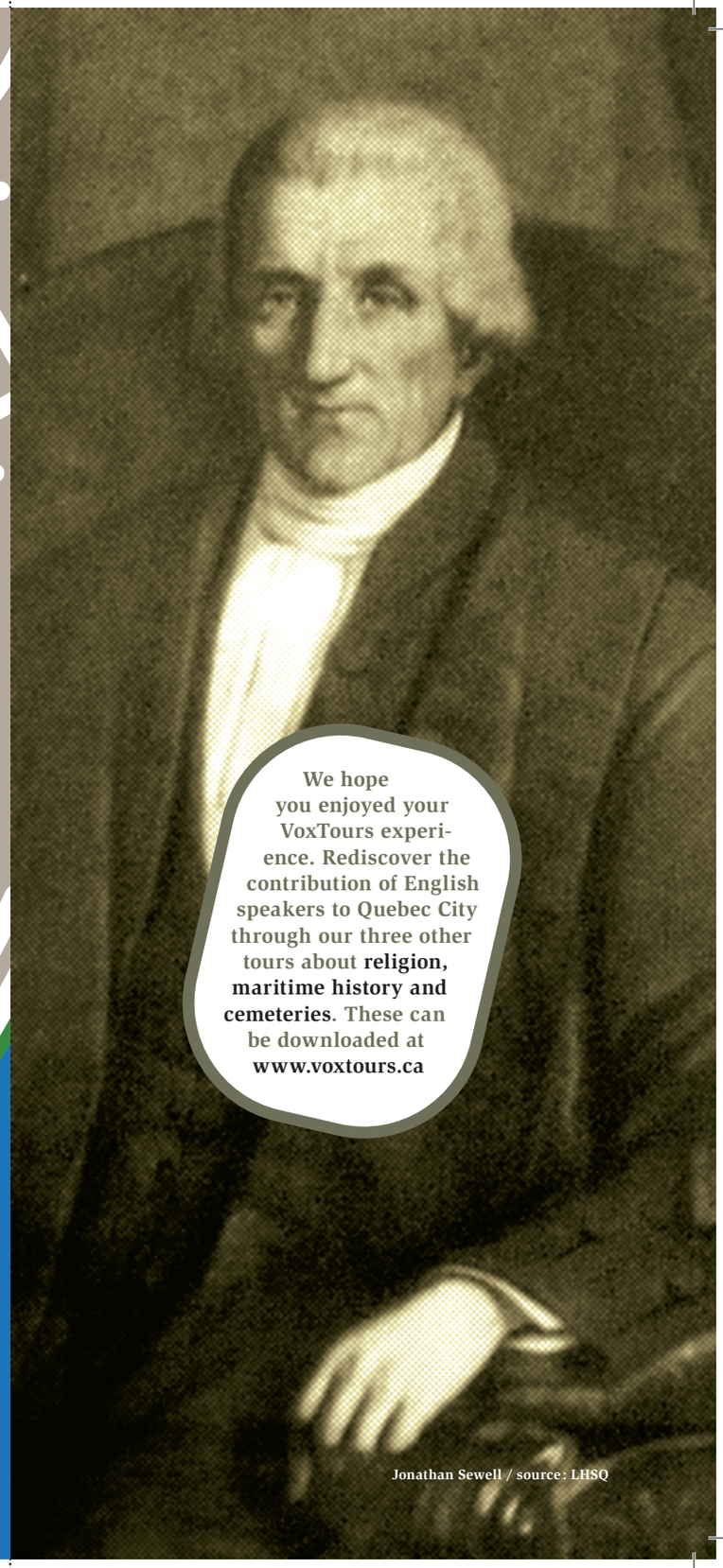
A city with a British stamp

Quebec City is praised for its quintessential Frenchness, yet a closer look at its architecture reveals a city with a strong British influence. Ninety-five per cent of the city was built or modified after the British conquest in 1759. In the middle of the nineteenth century, half the people in the Upper Town were English speakers, and they left a clear mark on the built environment. Many of the city's important landmarks, from the Château Frontenac to the Price Building, were designed by English-speaking architects.

By the end of this tour you should be able to read the Anglo-American influence in the city's architectural landscape. It should also be easier to position a building in time: the New France style up to the end of the eighteenth century; symmetrical neoclassical buildings in the early nineteenth century; the adapted Georgian townhouse from the mid-nineteenth century; wildly ornamental eclectic buildings in the late nineteenth century; and the arrival of skyscrapers in the twentieth century. But let's not get ahead of ourselves…

Our tour begins on the Chaussée des Écossais, or "Scots' Way," right outside the Morrin Centre. See you there in a minute!





We hope you enjoyed your VoxTours experience. Rediscover the contribution of English speakers to Quebec City through our three other tours about **religion, maritime history and cemeteries**. These can be downloaded at **www.voxtours.ca**

Jonathan Sewell / source: LHSQ

15

Country villas

Henry Stuart house, 82 Grande Allée West
Cornelius Krieghoff house, 115 Grande Allée West

The part of the city we are in now wasn't always this densely populated. The two older villas on either side of the street, both built in 1849, used to be surrounded by greenery. These homes weren't lived in by farmers, however. They were the country villas of the wealthy elite.

The notion of creating a social environment close to nature and far from the noise, coal dust and agitation of the city became popular in the nineteenth century. The cholera and typhus epidemics of the 1830s and 1840s accentuated this trend, as wealthy citizens sought to flee the disease-carrying miasmas of the city. These villas belonged to rich merchants and highly placed civil servants, most of them British.

This type of architecture was meant to mimic the quaint and picturesque aspects of country life, but without its toil and hardship. Both homes have verandahs, an architectural import from India brought to Quebec by British colonial officers — the word "verandah" itself comes from Sanskrit.

Both villas were restored in the past few decades. The smaller Krieghoff house was saved thanks to the efforts of Esther Greaves, who moved to Quebec from Toronto in 1995 because of a love affair with the house:

"I came down for the weekend with the idea of simply getting over this folly that had taken possession of me. The real estate agent opened the front door — the house is very gloomy and dark — and I was just awestruck. I felt something very peaceful about the dimensions of the house. It totally appealed to me. And here I am.

The restorations, once they got under way, took about a year and a half. The house had to be almost rebuilt, but the structure was sound. Because it's a heritage house the idea was to save absolutely everything that was salvageable. Anything that wasn't had to be rebuilt authentically."

The Henry Stuart house was restored by the Conseil des Monuments et Sites du Québec, which offers guided tours on its architecture and the history of the families that lived here. Tea is even served in the gardens during the summer. Why not top off your architectural tour with a visit to this interior space?

If you still feel like walking, take a right on Rue Cartier, an interesting commercial street.

VOXTOURS | BUILDING THE CITY

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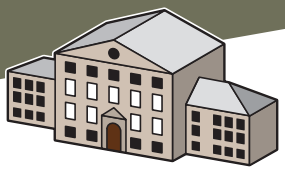
14 | New York skyscrapers
15 | Country villas

Total walking distance:
2.5 kilometres

Optimal time and period:
Year-round

1

Neoclassical ensemble



Chaussée des Écossais

The Morrin Centre, St. Andrew's Church and the Presbyterian Manse located on this *chaussée* are early examples of British influence in Quebec's landscape. The style of these buildings is referred to as neoclassical, neo-Palladian, classical English or Georgian. It's best not to get caught up in the names. The two things you should remember about this style are the strong references to ancient Rome and Greece and the importance of symmetry and prescribed proportions.

Look towards the Morrin Centre and notice the triangular section at the top, called a pediment. The circular window is called an oculus (meaning "eye" in Latin). There's a frieze right below, and fake columns, or pilasters, going up the building. Although the building is built on a hill, attempts were made to make it look symmetrical.

Now turn around and look across the lawn to St. Andrew's Church and you'll see the same triangular pediment and references to classical architecture.

This type of architecture became popular in Britain in the eighteenth century. A generation of aristocratic youth topped off their education with a one-year Grand Tour of Europe. After the mandatory stop in Italy, they came back with a new enthusiasm for classical architecture. Most of the institutional buildings erected in Canada between 1800 and 1820 were built in this style. Construction began on the Morrin Centre in 1808 and on St. Andrew's a year later.

Now let's see how the style translates to domestic architecture. Walk up the *chaussée* and turn left (pause).

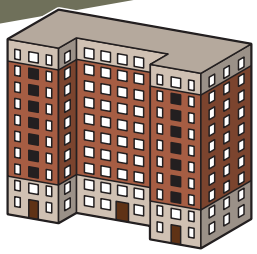
The building you see here is St. Andrew's Manse, where Presbyterian ministers have lived with their families since 1837. The classical references aren't as obvious but they're still there: the pediment above the door, the symmetry, etc. This is the neoclassical style reduced to its simplest elements, and that's how it was generally applied to domestic architecture.

To better understand how the British influenced Quebec's architecture, we need to know what came before. To see that, let's walk over to the James Thompson house.

Turn around and walk two blocks past the Morrin Centre. Then turn left on Sainte-Ursule until you see an off-white house with blue trim at number 47. It's the only home on the street with its front door in a perpendicular alley. A plaque identifies it as the James Thompson house. Start walking! Distance: 275 metres

14

New York skyscrapers



The Claridge, 220 Grande Allée East

Highrise buildings, such as the one we see here, originated in the English-speaking world. They were made possible by two new developments. A safe steam-powered elevator was invented in the United States in the 1850s. Furthermore, new English technology for the mass production of inexpensive steel beams led to buildings with steel skeletons rather than load-bearing walls. Buildings could be higher, as you no longer had to build thick outer walls to hold everything together on the lower floors.

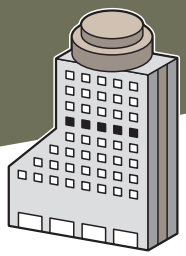
The first tall buildings in Quebec were hotels, followed by upscale apartment buildings like these that tried to mimic the luxurious life of hotels. New York City is full of such highrises, largely built out of brick but with decorative details at the top and bottom. This type of architecture is meant to echo the organization of a classical column. Quebec City has only a few buildings like these. The Claridge is in front of you, and the Château Saint-Louis is a few blocks down on the left. They represent the influence of an American way of living and building in a French-speaking city.

Keep walking down Grande Allée until you reach Rue Cartier, the last stop on our tour. Distance: 275 metres

Space Needle in 1961 / source: Wikipedia

13

Revolving restaurants



Loews Le Concorde
1225 Cours du Général-De Montcalm

From the 1940s to the 1980s, vast areas of North American cities were demolished and replaced by freeways and large concrete skyscrapers. This process, which originated in the United States and came to be known as urban renewal, led to the growth of suburbs and the decline of city centres. Some of the negative reactions to Victorian architecture expressed at our last stop allow us to understand the mindset behind this renewal.

Urban renewal hit Quebec City in the 1970s. More than 1,200 homes were demolished to widen boulevards and make way for skyscrapers. In 1974 alone, four of the city's tallest skyscrapers were inaugurated. Loews Le Concorde, the hotel before you, was one of these. The Italianate home of Cyrille Duquet, the little-known Quebec inventor of the modern double-ended telephone handset, originally stood on the site of this hotel.

Le Concorde showcased an Anglo-American innovation: the revolving restaurant. Invented by an American architect named John Graham, the world's first revolving restaurant was built atop an office building in Honolulu in 1961. Graham also designed the Space Needle for the next year's Seattle World's Fair, which again included a revolving restaurant. The concept took off. Every city wanted one. As revolving restaurants spread, they quickly lost their novelty value. This emblem of progress and prosperity soon came to be seen as sixties kitsch. Revolving restaurants are no longer being built in the West, and many have stopped turning. Nevertheless, they are still seen as a symbol of progress in some parts of Asia. In certain cases, the progress is illusory — Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea, has ten revolving restaurants, seven of which are unfinished.

The next two stops involve a bit of walking, so you may stop here if you're tired. If you choose to explore these two bonus stops off the beaten track, you'll discover a touch of New York and a legacy of British India in Quebec City, and then end up on a lively commercial street. Keep walking until you reach 220 Grande Allée East. Distance: 325 metres

2

New France vernacular architecture

James Thompson house, 47 Rue Sainte-Ursule

The James Thompson house now belongs to a retired anglophone firefighter named Greg Alexander, who runs it as a bed and breakfast.

This house was built 34 years after the British conquest for James Thompson, a Scottish Highlander who had fought alongside Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham. But there was little British influence in Quebec's architecture after the conquest, because most buildings were designed and built by local masons and carpenters of French origin. Hence the James Thompson house is fairly typical of the type of building that existed in New France.

Settlers in New France initially reproduced the styles of their homes in Normandy and Brittany. Quebec's harsh winters meant that people kept a big fire going throughout the season. Sparks flew from the chimneys, leading to major blazes that burned down the city several times. After one too many fires, new building regulations were put in place forcing people to build in stone rather than wood. Roofing was to be done with flame-resistant tin tiles aligned diagonally. All the buildings were whitewashed like this one — the bare stone walls seen at Place Royale and elsewhere in the city are a recent architectural preference. In short, before the British came, Quebec was a city of whitewashed buildings with steep brightly coloured tin roofs.

Nevertheless, it could be argued that the Thompson house shows some British influence: the ground floor is slightly raised, the front door was originally in the middle and the interior layout was more classical.

Now let's walk a few steps up the street to number 55 where we'll learn of another British architectural feature. Distance: 25 metres

3

Bow windows, bay windows, oriel windows

53–55 Rue Sainte-Ursule (oriel windows)
62–68 Rue Sainte-Ursule (bow windows, bay windows)

Buildings in New France tended to have flat outer walls. The buildings we see here have all kinds of windows projecting from the main walls: bow windows, bay windows and oriel windows. These are a British import that began appearing in Quebec during the late nineteenth century. They were inspired by a Victorian fashion for all things medieval.

The windows on the right side of the street, between 62 and 68 Sainte-Ursule, are generally called bay windows because they extend all the way down to the foundations. Bow windows also extend all the way down, but are usually curved, rather than having the angular edges we see here.

The proper word for a window that projects out from the upper floors, as seen at 53 and 55 Sainte-Ursule, is an oriel window.

Even today in France, buildings tend to have flatter outer walls than the ones across the English Channel. If it hadn't been for the British, there would be fewer buildings like these in Quebec, or perhaps none at all!

Walk up Sainte-Ursule and turn left on Saint-Louis until you reach our next stop at 60 Rue Saint-Louis. A sign should identify it as Maison Crémazie. Distance: 100 metres

12

Eclecticism

William Marsh House, 625 Grande Allée East

Built in 1899, this home is one of the more extreme examples of the eclectic architecture that flourished in turn-of-the-century Quebec. It was designed by a Toronto architect who mixed many architectural styles and building materials. A contemporary observer, historian William Wood, referred to these homes as being "*disgustingly studded with meretricious gewgaws*" and saw them as the architectural equivalent of jazz music, which he despised. Dr. Canac-Marquis also lamented such homes, as they were "*encrusted with towers or turrets like warts on a nose.*" Today this home is considered a heritage monument. The interior is well preserved and worth a peek.

The home was built for William Marsh, son of Baptist minister David Marsh. His descendants still live in Quebec City today. Ronald Blair recalls his grandfather:

> *"W.A. Marsh had a shoe factory on Saint-Vallier street, which has been torn down. He died before the First World War. He had nine children, and we were taught the order: a boy and a girl, a boy and a girl, a boy and a boy and a boy, and a girl and a girl!"*

Our next stop is just a few steps down, the large concrete skyscraper before you. Keep walking! Distance: 100 metres

Bay windows

Drill Hall

11

Quebec's Scottish Boulevard

Stadacona Terrace, 650 Grande Allée East

You are now in the main commercial sector of Grande Allée. This boulevard is frequently called the Champs-Élysées of Quebec, but the real model is probably the New Town of Edinburgh, Scotland. In the eighteenth century, a city of broad boulevards and Georgian terraces was built outside the medieval core of Edinburgh. The fame of this "New Town" spread throughout the Empire. Wealthy Scottish immigrants came to Quebec to occupy influential positions and wanted to import a slice of home along with them.

Although the street now features many restaurants and nightclubs, it was originally a prestigious residential street populated by British immigrants. Lot sizes were larger than in the old city, meaning that homes could have front yards and front steps like their British counterparts. This red-roofed building is a perfect example of the classical British terrace houses that sprouted up all over the streets of Edinburgh. It was built in 1847 and was originally called Stadacona Terrace. Made up of several adjacent single-family homes, it was designed to look like one large palatial building.

Now let's contrast this classical formality of the early nineteenth century with the eclectic architecture that came later. Walk a few steps down the street and take a look at the building across the street at 625 Grande Allée. Distance: 40 metres

4

Porte cochère

Maison Crémazie, 60 Rue Saint-Louis

Many cities have back lanes. These were traditionally used to deliver coal for heating or to park horses in the stables out back. The layout of Quebec City during the French period did not call for such lanes. French colonists rented their dwellings and their horses.

The new British entrepreneurs and colonial administrators who settled in the Upper Town preferred owning their homes and horses. They had to find ways of adapting the old city's small lots to this use. They built *portes cochères* — large gateways right through the buildings, like the one you see here.

Walk through and have a look at the converted stables out back, which still have their stable doors. Press pause, then come back to the front.

This particular home was built in 1830 by architect John Phillips and sold to a lawyer named William Smith. It is typical of hundreds of homes built in the Old City during the period, a Quebec City adaptation of the London townhouse. Built as a narrow single-family dwelling three to four storeys high, it represented not only a new type of architecture but a new British way of living.

We'll find out more about this way of living at our next stop. Walk back down Rue Saint-Louis towards the city walls and stop on the corner of Rue d'Auteuil, where you'll find a row of such townhouses. Distance: 150 metres

Château style

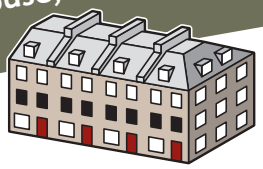
Château Frontenac

Railway Station

Oriel windows

5

Adapted London townhouse, terraced housing



77–83 Rue d'Auteuil

Walk across Rue d'Auteuil to get a good look at the four similar buildings behind you on the corner.

These buildings could easily be in London or Edinburgh. They were originally four separate single-family townhouses clustered together in what the British call "terrace housing." As in their counterparts in Britain, the front door opened directly into a long hall with a curving staircase. The gentleman's office was on the ground floor, and the master bedroom and reception area one flight of steps up. The children or servants lived in the rooms with smaller windows on top. The kitchen was in the basement. These homes were also ornamented with classical details: columns and pilasters around the front door and rounded doorways inside.

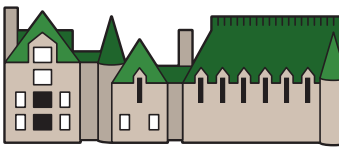
There are several differences between the Quebec model and the London prototype. We've already mentioned the *porte cochère*. In addition, London houses were usually set back a few feet from the street with a small front garden and outdoor steps. This was difficult to duplicate in Old Quebec because of the small lot sizes. Property owners built directly on the edge of the street and brought the front steps inside, leading immediately to a second door. In addition to increasing living space, this arrangement also insulated the interior from the winter cold. The tin covering of roofs and dormer windows, which are not found in the London townhouse, were retained in Quebec. The result is a hybrid of British architecture and Quebec traditions.

The terrace house we see here, narrower than most, was built in 1845. The architect was Michel Patry, a francophone. By the 1840s, francophone architects had not only integrated the British way of building, but had adapted it to local traditions.

Now walk across Rue Saint-Louis to the fenced-in rectangular home standing on its own, number 87. Distance: 25 metres

10

Château style



Drill Hall, 805 Avenue Wilfrid-Laurier

Quebec City has many castle-like buildings: the Château Frontenac, the main railway station and this building — the Drill Hall. This corresponds to a style, the Château style, which was popular from the 1880s to the 1930s. In the United States, the style was used mostly for the mansions of the wealthy elite. Here in Canada it was used for larger public buildings and great railway hotels. Though the style is inspired by French castles in the Loire Valley, most of the early architects were English speakers. They twisted the classical French structure, creating asymmetrical castles like Bruce Price's Château Frontenac. Different materials were also used: British brick sometimes replaced the stone of French castles, and copper roofs were left to develop a patina of soft green. In the early twentieth century, the Château style came to be considered distinctively Canadian. For a while, it was even the mandated style for all new government buildings.

The Drill Hall is interesting for two main reasons: it is the earliest Château-style building in the city, and one of the few designed by a francophone architect. Perhaps this explains why it is more symmetrical and closer to its original French inspiration. It was designed by Eugène-Étienne Taché between 1884 and 1887 — Taché also built the National Assembly across the street and coined the motto of Quebec: "*Je me souviens.*" He was an ardent francophile and his buildings sought to bring out the French character of Quebec City. He was nevertheless inspired by an Anglo-American fashion for the medieval and picturesque. Taché was aware of this mingling of identities, and once wrote, "*Born among the lilies, I grew up among the roses*" — lilies being a French symbol and roses a British one.

A major fire destroyed most of the Drill Hall in April, 2008, making national headlines. Local attachment to the building was such that calls for its reconstruction were immediate.

Walk across the large square towards Grande Allée. Turn left on Grande Allée until you reach number 650. Distance: 200 metres

9

Landscape and military architecture

Plains of Abraham / Citadel / Martello tower

Are you on top yet? Sublime, isn't it? In fact, creating viewpoints like these was essential to landscape architects like Frederick Todd, who designed this park in 1912. Todd was inspired by British traditions that aimed to remodel nature and make it look like a landscape painting, creating an idealized terrain that accentuated the picturesque. This British tradition came about in the eighteenth century as a reaction to the formal symmetry of aristocratic gardens. It grew out of a larger romantic movement that saw nature as a place to get in touch with one's true self and escape the artificialities of social life.

Public parks and gardens first appeared in England in the 1840s. Before this time, gardens were meant as private spaces that existed solely for the enjoyment of their wealthy owners. The concept of public parks took off in North America with New York's Central Park. It was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, the first person to use the professional title of "landscape architect." Olmsted taught Frederick Todd, who later designed important urban parks throughout Canada.

In addition to being an urban park, the Plains of Abraham are also known as the National Battlefields Park. The notion of a park that commemorates a battle was popularized in the late nineteenth century in the United States. The initial idea was to transform American Civil War sites into symbols of reconciliation. Similarly, the Plains had the purpose of fostering greater social cohesion between French and English speakers, who had fought each other on this site in 1759.

Many of the military structures around you are British additions built after the conquest to ward off an American invasion that never came. The round Martello tower in the distance was built in the early nineteenth century. It was one of four built in the city to protect its western edge. One hundred and forty such towers were built throughout the British Empire from Australia to Sri Lanka to Ireland. The active fort behind you is the Quebec Citadel, begun in 1823.

This part of the Plains housed a division of the Quebec Cartridge Factory until 1938. Alex Addie remembers the factory as a boy:

> *"During the First World War they had an arsenal where they made cartridges, located in the small dip in the land next to the Citadel. The arsenal blew up one night. It didn't do any damage, but it threw cartridges and stuff all over that area. Well you can imagine little scavenger kids like us were there immediately. And we all had great boxes of the caps. We put them on the streetcar tracks and they went off with a marvellous bang! The poor streetcar drivers going down Grande Allée were bang-bang-banging all the way down! We'd also take the cartridges, take off the bullet, and inside were sticks of cordite. We'd put these strips of cordite in the water pipe beside the school and light them. The flames would go shooting thirty feet in the air! Well, that went on for some time until Joe Wormington blew off his thumb and one finger."*

Let's move onto our next stop. Walk back down the way you came and turn left on the first street, Avenue Wilfrid-Laurier, until you reach the front of the castle-like building with the green roof. Distance: 375 metres

6

Earliest example of a purely English home in Quebec

Jonathan Sewell house, 87 Rue Saint-Louis

Remember St. Andrew's Manse, where we started our tour? This house looks similar, doesn't it? In fact, it was built at least 35 years earlier, in 1803, making it the earliest example of a purely Anglo-American house in Quebec. The story of its owner goes a long way towards explaining why it was built.

At the age of eight in Cambridge, Massachusetts, a terrified Jonathan Sewell saw his family home sacked by American revolutionaries. The family, loyal to the crown, escaped the revolution. Sewell later settled in Quebec and played an important role in the government. Although he mastered the French language and civil law, the fear of revolution stayed with him. He was anxious about the loyalty of the French-speaking masses. His proposed solution was the anglicization of all French-speaking children and government control of the Roman Catholic Church. Britishness needed to dominate in order to ensure long-term stability. Sewell wanted his own home to reflect this Britishness and set about building a home that differed from the New France architecture around him. Others soon followed suit.

Shirley Nadeau, an active volunteer for several organizations in Quebec's English-speaking community, lived here in recent years:

> *"Maison Sewell is now owned by the Government of Canada and is used as a residence for military officers. Before this, it was used at various times as the office of the Lieutenant Governor of Quebec, the Premier of Quebec, and it was also used as a consulate and even housed the Quebec archives. Now divided into two large apartments, my husband and I lived there with our two children from 1987 to 1991. It was hard to imagine Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Sewell with their sixteen or more — some sources say as many as twenty-two — children living there two centuries ago."*

Turn right and start walking towards the fortifications and through the city gates. Distance: 100 metres

7

Heritage preservation and romanticism — military architecture

Porte Saint-Louis

It is mainly because it is a fortified city, the only one north of Mexico, that Quebec City is now recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. These fortifications weren't always seen as beautiful or interesting. In the 1870s, they had become obsolete as defence structures. The city's Special Committee on City Improvement was planning to knock them down. Canada's British Governor General, Lord Dufferin, was horrified at the suggestion. He wrote:

"By dint of using abusive language, calling them Goths and Vandals… I have succeeded in compelling [them] to agree to a compromise, namely, — to leave the walls… and to allow me to send a very clever architect I know at home who has a specialité for picturesque mediæval military construction."

Lord Dufferin / source: BAnQ

Lord Dufferin's "*very clever architect*" was a fellow Irishman, William Lynn. Lynn designed many of the major Victorian buildings in Belfast. Following the late-nineteenth-century British fashion for all things pseudomedieval and romantic, he built wildly ornamental buildings that looked as though they belonged in fairytales.

Although the neo-Gothic trend was strongest in Britain and in the British Empire, it affected the rest of Europe as well. In fact, the idea of improving on past designs through neo-Gothic additions was popularized by French architect Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, who had performed a similar job on the fortifications of Carcassone. Was the inspiration for Quebec's gates British, or was it French? A bit of both, probably.

Walk outside the gates towards the large Fontaine de Tourny in front of the National Assembly. Distance: 125 metres

8

Heritage preservation and romanticism — a French fountain

Fontaine de Tourny

The wild ornamentation of nineteenth-century architecture fell out of fashion for much of the twentieth century. Modernists considered it vulgar, like icing on gingerbread, preferring architecture with smooth angular lines, architecture that revealed the internal structure, not unlike the concrete buildings on the far left. Recent decades have led to a renewed appreciation for the nineteenth century, which probably explains why this fountain is here now.

The fountain was designed in 1854, and won a gold medal at the Universal Exhibition of Paris the following year. Six identical copies were cast. This particular one was purchased by the mayor of Bordeaux to celebrate the arrival of running water in the city. The figures on the fountain symbolize rivers, navigation and fishing. By the 1960s, the fountain was in a terrible state. It was sold to a man who dismantled it and used the pieces as decorative accessories in his manor. The rusted pieces were eventually bought by an antique dealer in Paris.

So what does this French fountain have to do with the contribution of English speakers to local architecture? Well, the fountain was purchased by a local anglophone of Scottish descent named Peter Simons. His family has lived in Quebec since 1812. The Simons family still manage the province-wide department store chain La Maison Simons, founded in Quebec City in the 1840s. The fountain was offered as a gift and token of love for the City of Quebec on the eve of its 400th anniversary in 2008.

Walk back up from where you came and turn right on Grande Allée. When you reach the Cross of Remembrance, take a left through the metal gates into Battlefields Park. Walk up the small hill towards the footbridge over the Citadel walls. The climb is a bit steep, but the view is worth the effort! Distance: 375 metres