

CANADA

Marc de Caraffe

Hawthorne Cottage and Maison Trestler

Hawthorne Cottage

This picturesque cottage *orné* was built in 1830 by John Leamon, a local merchant. According to family tradition, in the winter of 1833-34 the building was moved over eight kilometres to its present location in the fishing port of Brigus, Newfoundland. The structure was later expanded to include a two storey addition at the rear, which was completed ca. 1920. The most famous occupant of the house was Arctic explorer Captain Bob Bartlett (1875-1946), the skipper of Peary's ship on his voyage to the North Pole.¹

Set within an enclosed garden, Hawthorne Cottage is a charming one-and-a-half storey frame structure laid on an elevated stone foundation and crowned by a low hipped roof. Historical records indicate that frames for buildings were shipped to Newfoundland from neighbouring provinces.² The building provides a good example of the modest suburban residences that were erected on the east coast of Canada during the first half of the 19th century. In this case, the balance between simplicity and variety is achieved by the main building and its addition, which together form simple, unadorned masses arranged in an irregular plan, a traditional feature of the cottage *orné*.³

In the interior of Hawthorne Cottage, each floor is divided down the centre by a hall. Rooms where visitors were greeted – the parlour and the dining room – are situated on the ground level. To ensure privacy, the bedrooms are on the first floor. Departing from Newfoundland fashion, the stairs are parallel with the front wall instead of being located on the axis of the hall. The central chimney, located in the hallway, is derived from a tradition two centuries old, of servicing the ground floor rooms by a central hearth.

The veranda, which surrounds the building on three sides, was constructed in 1863. It is distinguished by a handsome bellcast roof and by rough fretwork, which was probably machine cut. An important feature of houses designed according to the Picturesque Movement in Canada, the veranda offered a harmonious transition between the elegance of the garden and the warmth of the domestic interior.

The relocation of the cottage belongs within the building tradition of Newfoundland. Moving buildings was usually done in winter, as icy surfaces eased the hauling. To move a structure required runners made of green cut logs, long ropes and participation of all able bodies in the village for pulling. This tradition has been dramatically represented by modern Canadian artist David Blackwood.

Maison Trestler

This residence was built for a German soldier, Johan Joseph Troestler, who became a prosperous trader in the St. Lawrence valley after his retirement from the British army. According to three dated stones found in different parts of the house, the central section was constructed in 1798, the west wing in 1805 and



Hawthorne Cottage

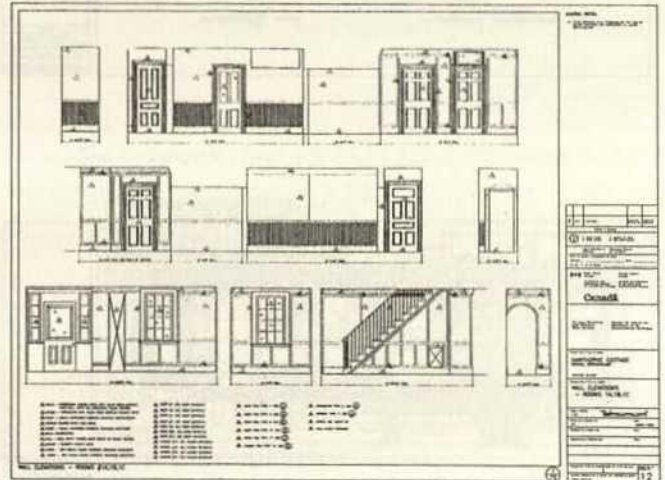
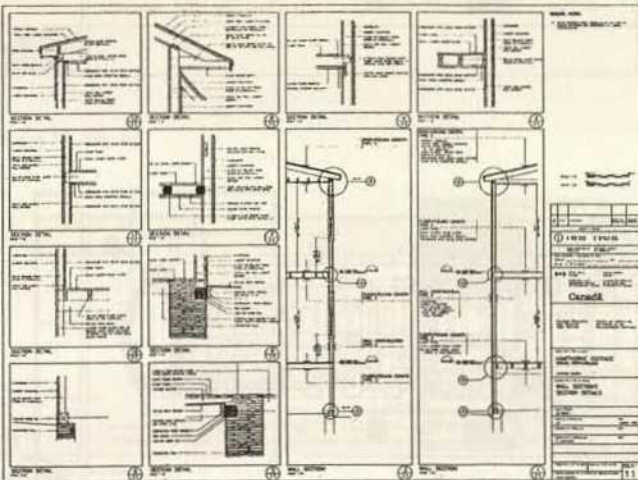
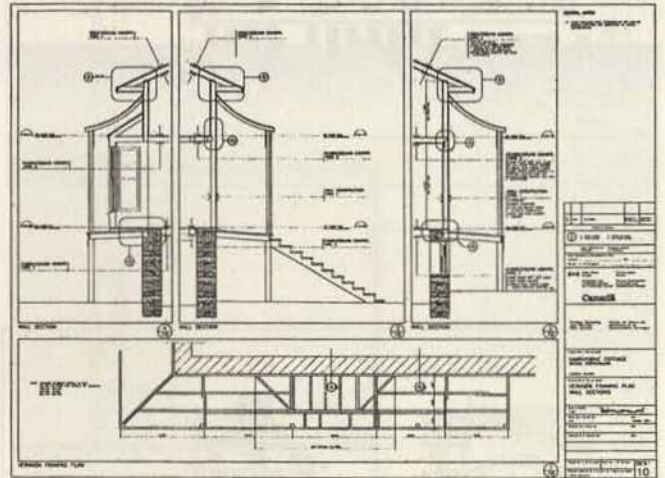
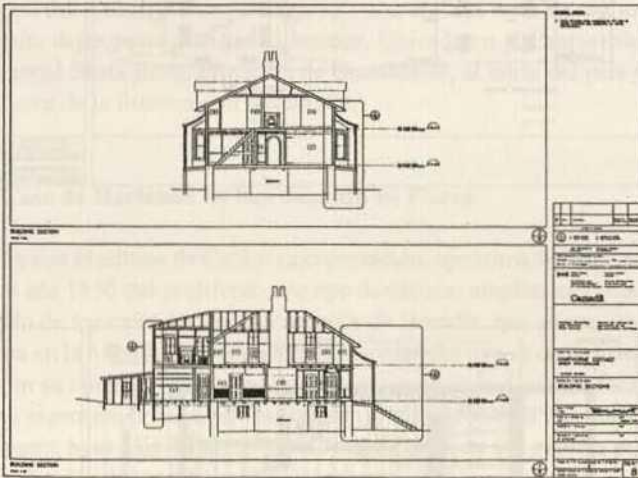
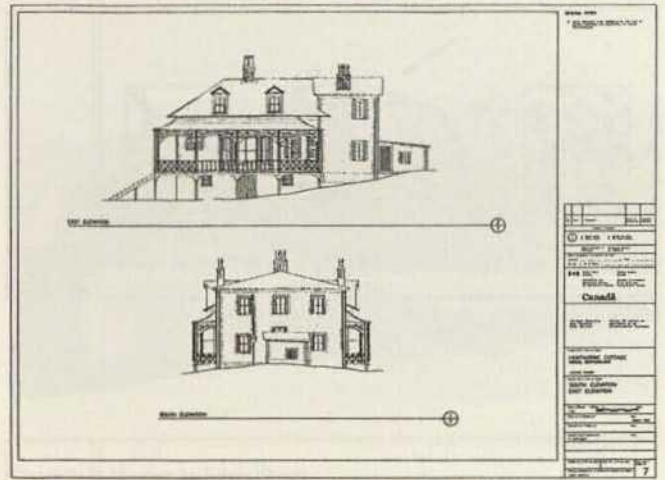
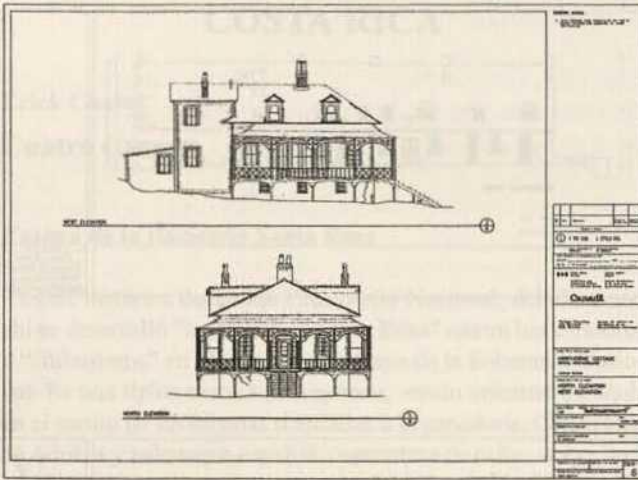
the east wing in 1806. The building and its location provide a good illustration of the construction and settlement patterns of early French Canada.⁴

As the waterways constituted the main access routes of France's colony in North America, the land was subdivided in narrow lots fronting on rivers. Settlers would first construct a temporary shelter and then proceed to clear the surrounding land. The shelter would later be replaced by a house made of square timber. Once a farmer was comfortably settled, he would build a stone addition to the timber house. The addition became the main house; the timber structure a summer kitchen. The timber building would eventually be replaced by a stone structure, resulting in a large rectangular residence made of whitewashed fieldstone.⁵

Troestler bought a square timber house in 1786 in Dorion, near Montréal, and 12 years later, he started to build his stone residence, which also served as a trading post. In its final form, the two-storey house measured 41.2 m by 11.9 m. The walls, made of local Potsdam sandstone, are one metre thick. The gabled roof, covered with cedar shingles, has a sharp 45 degree angle. To build his house, Troestler made use of contemporary French-Canadian construction techniques. With its main floor directly on the ground, its low walls and massive roof, and its central chimneys, the house possesses characteristics common to 18th century buildings of the St. Lawrence valley. Some innovations which first appeared in the 19th century can also be seen: the sharp angle and the overhang of the roof, the numerous openings on the two façades and the symmetrical disposition of the chimneys.

Maison Trestler

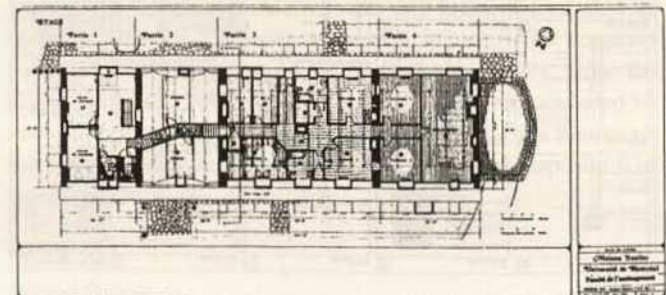
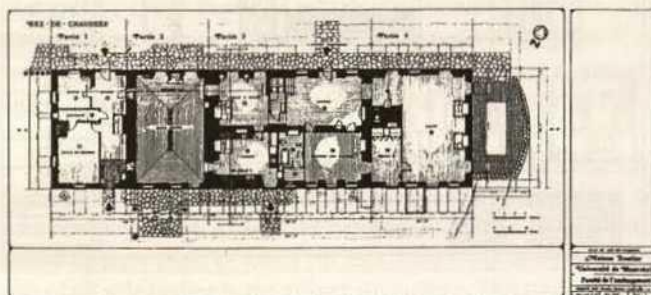
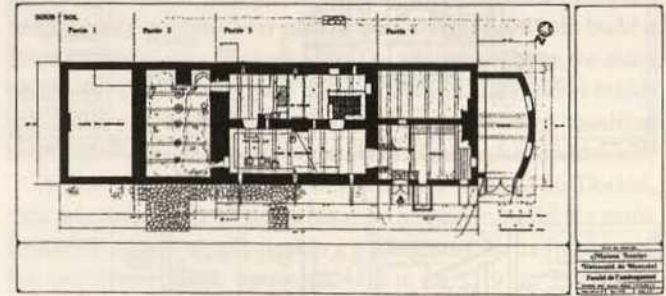
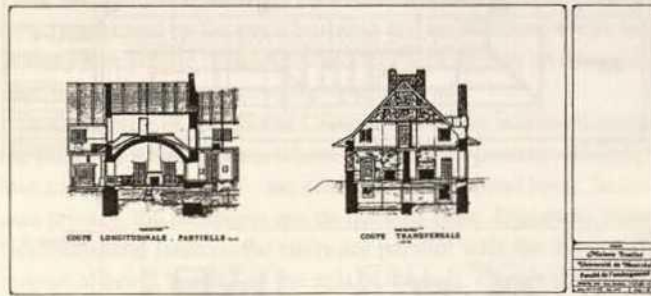
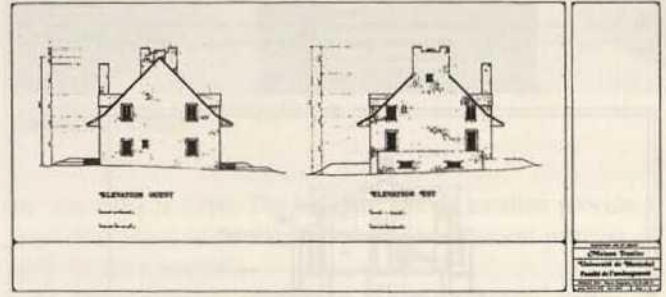
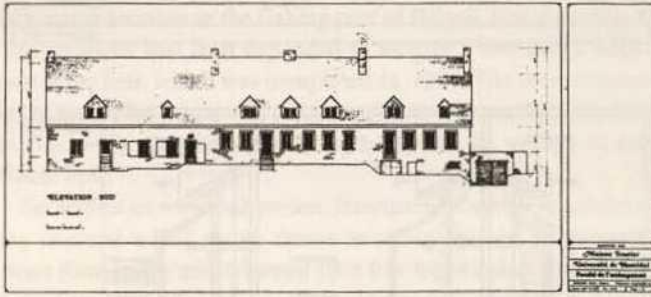
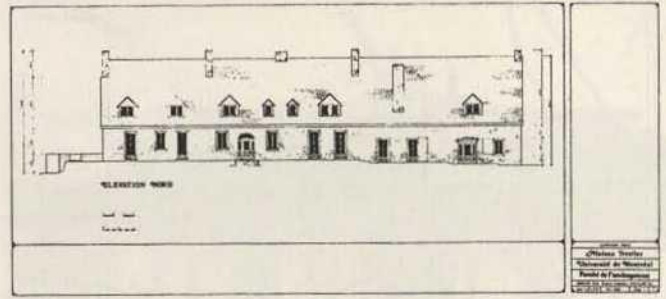
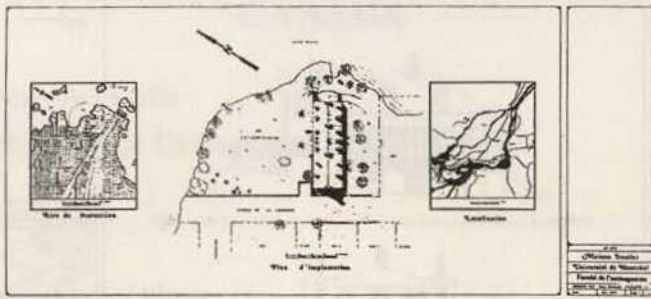




Drawings of Hawthorne Cottage

A distinguishing feature of the interior is found in the large vaulted room, which was used to store trading goods. This room measures 10.97 m by 6.31 m and is 11.88 m high. For security against fire and theft, the doors were made of iron. In urban areas, vaults are usually found in basements of commercial residences. The Trestler house is a rare example of a residence with a vaulted room on the ground floor.

In the first half of the 20th century, the Trestler house was bought by Gustave-Henri Rainville. He remodelled it in the Quebec revival style, then a fashionable interpretation of traditional local architecture, by installing several double dormers on the roof and by opening a central door on the north side. Rainville also did some remodelling in the interior, setting up false beams on ceilings in an attempt to embellish it.



Drawings of Maison Trestler (Université de Montréal)

Notes

- 1 Dana Johnson, "Hawthorne Cottage, Irishtown Road, Brigus, Newfoundland", Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office, Building Report 92-84, Ottawa, Ontario.
- 2 Gerald L. Pocius, "Architecture on Newfoundland's Southern Shore: Diversity and the Emergence of New World Forms", *Bulletin*, Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada, Volume 8, No. 2 (June 1983), p. 14.

- 3 Janet Wright, *Architecture of the Picturesque in Canada*, Studies in Archaeology, Architecture and History, Parks Canada (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1984), p. 28.
- 4 Marc de Caraffé et Nathalie Clerk, "La maison Trestler, 85, rue de la Commune, Dorion, Québec", rapport au feuilleton, Commission des lieux et monuments historiques du Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, 1981.
- 5 Marc de Caraffé et Nathalie Clerk, "La maison Girardin, 600, avenue Royale, Beauport, Québec", *Ibid.*, 1982.