

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Bench Marking

Maurice Amiel · Tuesday, August 10th, 2021

Bench marking is about remarkable public benches made so because of their location, design and/or use.

What is more recognizable than the ubiquitous public bench, even partly visible, by the corner of one's eye, as shown below in a green setting along a bike path? One can easily imagine a bike leaning on the nearby tree and a biker resting on the bench.



The ubiquitous public bench

The benches presented here were photographed because their context gave each one, however their similar design, a certain personality to which I have responded and which I shall discuss under a suggestive heading to make the point.

The squeezed bench



Bench or entrance marker to colonnade?

Squeezed between car traffic on one side and pedestrian traffic on the other the role of this bench seems, not so much to offer the tired pedestrian an opportunity to rest on it, as to attract attention, together with the twin planters, to the entry of a small colonnaded pedestrian oriented stretch of businesses; what is missing, of course, is the trash bin that would have given credence to the bench pretended use.

The spectator's bench



Odd angle does not hinder evident use

This oddly angled bench, next to a drinking fountain and a shading tree, draws all its meaning from the presence of the tennis courts that are part of the neighbouring Westmount park. Its use can be appreciated by the stretch of exposed bare ground near it; note however the absence of litter around it ... probably mindful users and/or good maintenance!

The one-person bench



Can't beat the shady nook by the pond for privacy

The only example of a bench being used, here, by a comfortably seated man reading, occupying the center of the bench, and taking all the necessary space to cross his legs, clearly demonstrating his desire not be disturbed by other users. A “one-person” bench given its desirable location away from traffic, cozily located in a shady nook by a shallow man-made pond.

The forlorn pair of benches



Forlorn indeed and for good reason

That pair of benches, located at the intersection of two park pathways, seems not to be placed for use over any length of time ... consider the rigid planks of their straight seat and back and you have a perfect example of thoughtless design for a park bench.

The Post Office bench



Bench courtesy of Canada Post ?

Facing one of the few walk-in Post Offices left in Montreal, this bench has a way of tying perceptually the exterior Canada Post mail drop and mail sorting boxes. Becoming, under the red Post Office sign, somehow its representative it does attract attention to the otherwise unceremonious façade. The door to the Post Office is discretely located to the right of the mail drop box in a small façade recess.

End words

I would sincerely appreciate the reader's feedback about the way photographs and accompanying text complement each other.

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