



ROYAL  
BUILDING  
SYSTEMS



# Maison Sainte-Marie

## PROJECT DETAILS

### CLIENT

Rev. Michael Knox SJ,  
Director of Martyrs' Shrine

### LOCATION

Martyrs' Shrine  
Midland, Ontario

### ARCHITECT & DESIGNER

Royal Homes

### PROJECT DATE

October 2017

### PROJECT DURATION

7 months

### PROJECT SCOPE

- 6 modules
- Comprising of 3 floors
- Totalling 5,268 sq. ft.

### BUILDING DESIGN

- 17th-century French Cottage architectural design

## Overview

The Martyrs' Shrine is a Roman Catholic church and national historic site in Midland, Ontario, Canada that commemorates the lives and deaths of the 17th-century Jesuit martyrs. The project request was to build Maison Sainte-Marie, a residence for the six priests at the Martyrs' Shrine. The new residence was to replace the existing seasonal home where the priests could only reside from May to October. The new residence would provide a permanent home enabling continuous pastoral services for the community year-round.

## Vision

The design of the new Maison Sainte-Marie needed to embrace the 400-year-old heritage of the site and serve as the residence of the six priests who would live there. The community wanted a home that would echo 17th-century French cottages – buildings that would have been familiar to St. Jean de Brebeuf and the other priests who gave their lives here. A Tudor-style home or cottage of that time was decided on. It would blend in with the other buildings as well as being a good option for maintenance free exterior finishes.





## Project Journey

Maison Sainte-Marie is the first Jesuit home in the country to have an open concept design. By building with a combination of prefab and on-site construction, the home was completed over the winter. In the spring, the priests moved into Maison Sainte-Marie, and a new chapter in the long history of the Martyrs' Shrine began.

The Martyrs' Shrine is a National Historical Site. Some of the design elements were approved by the Vatican. To honour its rich history, some of the unique relics of martyrs were placed in the floor.

While there was a lot of focus on the old look and feel we also incorporated many new and modern technologies, from state-of-the-art modern modular construction to high energy-efficient heating and cooling systems. The project included higher-end cabinetry for all bathrooms, as well as kitchens. In addition to these modern features, the accessible design included an elevator that serviced all three floors for some of the elderly gentleman that lived in this home.

## BUILDING DESIGN

Maison Sainte-Marie is comprised of a residence, the spiritual counselling room, and the chapel. The exterior of the home was built to last and require little maintenance. The Tudor-style look was created using cement board and composite timbers to hide the seams. These building materials were purposefully selected over traditional stucco and wood because for their endurance in harsh winter climates. Even the tall entrance door could easily be mistaken for wood but is actually fibreglass.

## INTERIOR DESIGN

The interior design had to balance the diverse needs, priorities and uses of the property. The windows needed to capture abundant natural light and take in the superb views of the Wye Valley, but also be positioned to provide privacy from pilgrims at the Stations of the Cross only 60 feet away. The most public parts of the home are the spiritual counselling room and the chapel, whose ceiling is lined with cedar to mimic the look of a traditional longhouse. These areas are intentionally located just off the front door, allowing clients to visit for a counselling appointment, or guests to attend a private worship service without venturing too far into the house.

Inside the home, the interior design offers a clean and masculine look and feel. The wood trim is simple, dark-stained pine. The bedrooms were strategically laid out in a way that emphasizes privacy, with doorways not adjacent to one another. The home's fittings, from door hardware to cupboard hinges, are mainly black iron to reflect the materials and style familiar to the first priests at this site. This period style is consistent throughout the house, including the kitchen cabinetry, which features simple shaker doors with black fittings and is equipped to cook for more than 20 people. The communal living spaces for sitting, reading, and conversing are also open and airy.



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