



Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake

1593 Four Mile Creek Road
P.O. Box 100, Virgil, ON L0S 1T0
905-468-3266 www.notl.com

SUBJECT: 15618 Niagara River Parkway – Heritage Designation Report (File No. HER-07-2024)

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

15618 Niagara River Parkway (the “subject property”), known as Grand Victorian is a listed property on the Niagara-on-the-Lake Municipal Heritage Register of Properties of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest (the “Heritage Register”). The subject property contains strong architectural, historical and contextual merit for designation and was shortlisted by Town staff for a heritage designation study.

Research and analysis of the subject property indicates that the subject property meets several of the *Ontario Heritage Act* (the “OHA”) criteria for designation (as set out in Ontario Regulation or O. Reg. 9/06. The residence has architectural or design value as it is a representative example of the Queen Anne Revival style architecture in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the residence has historical/associative value because of its association with the Dicksons. Grand Victorian also contains contextual value because it is part of the historic fabric of the Niagara River Parkway area. Based on this evaluation, it is recommended for designation under Part IV, section 29 of the OHA.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide a Designation Report, which is required for any property that is considered for heritage designation under the OHA. The subject property was identified within the Town’s work plan for priority designations in response to Bill 23 amendments to remove properties from local Heritage Registers after January 1, 2025.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Method

This report examines the design of the property, its history and context with the purpose of evaluating it against the criteria set out by O. Reg. 9/06 (as amended by 569/22).

3.1.1 Field Survey

A field survey was conducted from the public right-of-way in order to gain a better understanding of the property and the context. The field survey was conducted on

February 28, 2024 by Sumra Zia, Heritage Planner II. Property owner permission to enter onto the private property may assist to gain a more fulsome understanding of the rear of the residence and any potential interior heritage attributes.

3.1.2 Research

Background research and information was obtained from the archives of Niagara-on-the-Lake, the draft Heritage Character Statement prepared by the Town in 2008, Town historian at NOTL Museum, online archives at the Public Library, Brock University Maps, Data and GIS Collection, Shannon Kyles website 'Ontario Architecture', Mark Fram, 'Well Preserved', and research by local historians.

3.1.3 Consultation

Town staff initiated this report, in consultation with the Municipal Heritage Committee, to address the deadline for all the listed properties on the Municipal Heritage Register. Properties listed on the Register as of January 1, 2023 must be designated or removed from the Register within two years (January 1, 2025).

3.2 Property Information

Civic Address: 15618 Niagara River Parkway, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON

Legal Description: 15618 Niagara River Parkway, Part Lot 19, Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, L0S 1J0, Niagara Township, ON



 Subject Property

Niagara Lake
-on-the-
EST. 1781

Map 1: Subject Property in the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake



 Subject Property



Map 2: Subject Property Along Niagara River Parkway

3.3 Background Information

3.3.1 Architecture or Design

The Queen Anne Revival Style was brought to Upper Canada by the wealthy upper middle class and the American architectural magazines during the final decades of the 19th century (Kyle 2016). Primarily based on rural, rustic Elizabethan and Jacobean forms, the style also incorporated some Classical motifs in vogue during the Queen Anne's reign (Fram 2014). The inspiration behind Queen Anne Revival style was to build according to medieval building principles to return to neighbourhoods and towns that had craftsmanship and community at their hearts (Kyle 2016).

The structure on 15618 Niagara River Parkway is a residence called the Grand Victorian. It displays several characteristics of Queen Anne Revival style including the complex roofline, decorative shingles, intricate woodwork, and a large verandah.

The architectural description of 15618 Niagara River Parkway is as follows:

- The subject property is a two and a half storey, single detached residential building.
- The plan of the building is irregular and appears to contain additions on the south elevation.
- The main exterior wall material used in the subject property consists of white stucco. Decorative fish scale shingles and wood siding is also used as an architectural detail in various locations.
- The residence has an asymmetrical façade (east elevation). The northeast corner on the façade protrudes out while the southeast corner protrudes out at an angle.
 - The subject property also contains a wrap-around verandah that spans over the façade and continues on the north elevation. The verandah projection from the exterior elevations is moderate.
- The roofline is complex with a variety of pitches and roof types with overhanging eaves.
 - The roof on the main structure is comprised of a combination of steeply pitched hipped roof with gable ends on the façade and north elevation.
 - The roof also contains pediments on the northeast corner and the southeast corner.
 - The wrap-around verandah comprises of a steeply pitched hip roof.
 - A single shed dormer is also located on the south elevation.
- The subject property also contains two sets of double chimneys. The chimneys feature plain panels and corbeled cornice details.
- The elevations of the residence contain various sizes of vertical rectangular window openings.
 - The protruding portions on the northeast and southeast corner contains pairs of rectangular window openings.
 - The central portion of the façade contains varying sizes of window openings, while the front dormer contains a row of smaller size openings

and the façade pediment contains Palladian inspired openings for three windows.

- The windows also contain plain sills and shutters.
- The structure also features intricate woodwork on its side elevations and the facade.
 - The wrap-around verandah is supported by decorated wooden columns placed at equal intervals along the verandah and its sides.
 - The verandah also features spindle-work, wooden brackets and raised wooden railings.
 - The subject property has wooden brackets along the overhanging eaves.

When examined against the typical characteristics of the Queen Anne Revival style as outlined by Mark Fram in “Well-Preserved: The Ontario Heritage Manual of Principles and Practice for Architectural Conservation” (1988), Shannon Kyles’ Ontario Architecture Website (2016), Mikel’s “Ontario House Styles” (2004), John Blumenson’s “Ontario Architecture” (1990) 15618 Niagara River Parkway meets most of the characteristics of the Queen Anne Revival style, and therefore, can be considered representative of the style (**Table 1**).

Table 1: Characteristics of Queen Anne Revival Buildings

Characteristics	15618 Niagara River Parkway
Irregular plans and elevations	Yes
Wrap-around verandah supported by wooden columns/piers	Yes
Palladian windows in gables	Yes
Mix shingles wall surfaces	Yes
Spindle-work and intricate woodwork	Yes
Gable and hip roof	Yes
Overhanging eaves	Yes
Coloured glass in windows	Unknown
Projecting bays, turrets, towers and chimneys	Yes



Image 1: Facade (East Elevation) of Grand Victorian
(Image taken on: February 28, 2024)



Image 2: Northeast Corner of Grand Victorian
(Image taken on: February 28, 2024)



Image 3: Southeast Corner of Grand Victorian
(Image taken on: February 28, 2024)

3.3.2 History

Grand Victorian is a structure on 15618 Niagara River Parkway. The house is anticipated to have been constructed in the 1870s by Quintin Johnstone and his wife Mary Johnstone.

Below is a brief history of the residence and the prominent community members who called the estate their home:

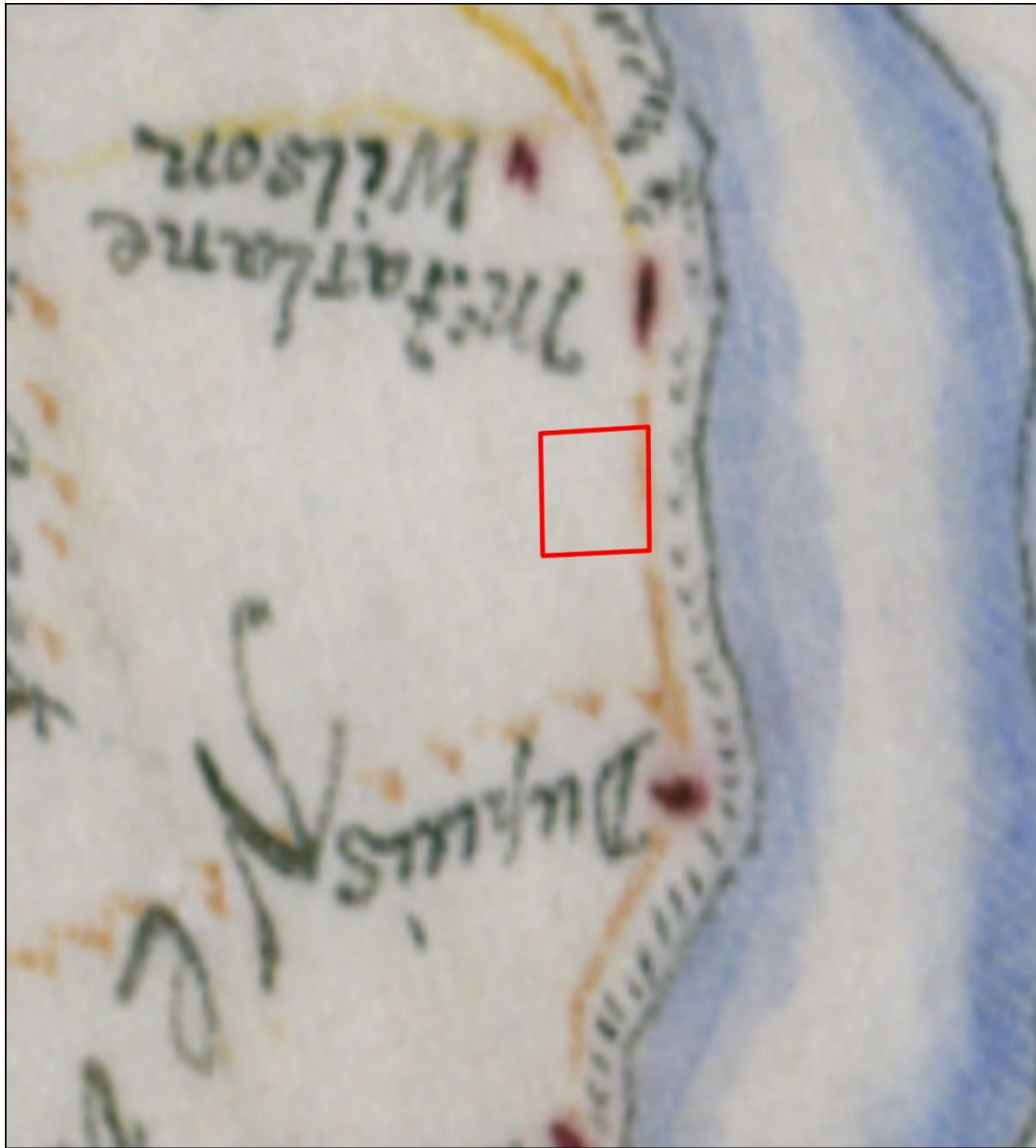
- The subject property is located near the Queenston urban area. Queenston was a small village located west of Niagara River, beneath the escarpment and was known as West Landing before 1790. It is now a part of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake.
- The subject property is located along Niagara River Parkway. The road has been a primary connector of the Old Town and the Queenston urban area.
- A patent for Lot 19 was received by Walter Butler Sheehan in 1794 along with a patent for Lot 28.
- In 1865, the 200-acre farm property was purchased by Samuel Dillon Mills. Mills was a farmer from the City of Hamilton.
- In 1875, Mills sold the farm to Quintin Johnstone and his wife, Mary Johnstone. In exchange for the farm Quintin sold a portion of his property on an island in Nova Scotia. Quintin Johnstone was a Land Surveyor from the City of Brantford.
 - The Johnstones held the ownership of the property from 1875 till 1883. It is anticipated that it was during this time that the Grand Victorian was constructed.
- In 1883, the property was acquired by Robert Warren who within a month sold the property to Grace Dickson and John Geale Dickson.
- Grace Allen Dickson was the daughter of a prominent St. Louis, Missouri businessman. She was the second wife of John Geale Dickson.
- John Geale Dickson, was the grandson of Honourable William Dickson who emigrated from Scotland in 1792.
 - William Dickson was a cousin of Robert Hamilton and was in the trading business with him. He moved into a large-scale land speculation and is responsible for the settlement of lands around Galt.
 - John Geale Dickson's father, Walter Hamilton Dickson was a lawyer and held seats in the Legislative Assembly, the legislative Council and was appointed to the senate of the New Dominion of Canada.
- John Geale Dickson was the founding father of the Niagara-on-the-Lake golf club. He encouraged the establishment of the Niagara Golf Club. In 1881 he appointed his brother to be the captain. The Golf Club is one of the oldest in North America.
- The Dicksons carried out some renovations and improvements to the existing house. They also added a dwelling for tenant farmers.
- In 1896, Geale Dickson sold the property to a Buffalo coal merchant, Mark Packard.
- In 1899, the property was purchased by Willis Kingsley Jackson.
 - Jackson was a respected businessman from Buffalo and purchased the

property as a summer home for his family. At this time the property was known as Riverscourt.

- Jackson was an officer and a member of the Niagara Golf Club along with the Dickson brothers.
- Other notable owners of the property have included Joseph G. de Puisayne, the Honourable William Allan, Robert Warren, Lewis Shickluna, Samuel D. Woofruff, Samuel D. Mills

3.3.2.1 Analysis of Maps

Map 3 - Map 7 provide an illustration of how the subject property has developed over time. Map 3 from 1815 shows the lot as vacant with various buildings found towards the north and south of the subject property. Map 4 is similar but shows the functions of these buildings as an Inn and farms. This map reiterates the development of the area for tourism and leisure activities. Map 5 from 1910, shows a structure on the subject property and on the adjacent property. Map 6 shows the development of the surrounding area into farmland and shows the clear outline of the subject property. Map 7 from the Regional Municipality of Niagara, shows the full extent of the original Lot 19 that the subject property is located on.



 Subject Property

Niagara Lake
-on-the-
EST. 1781

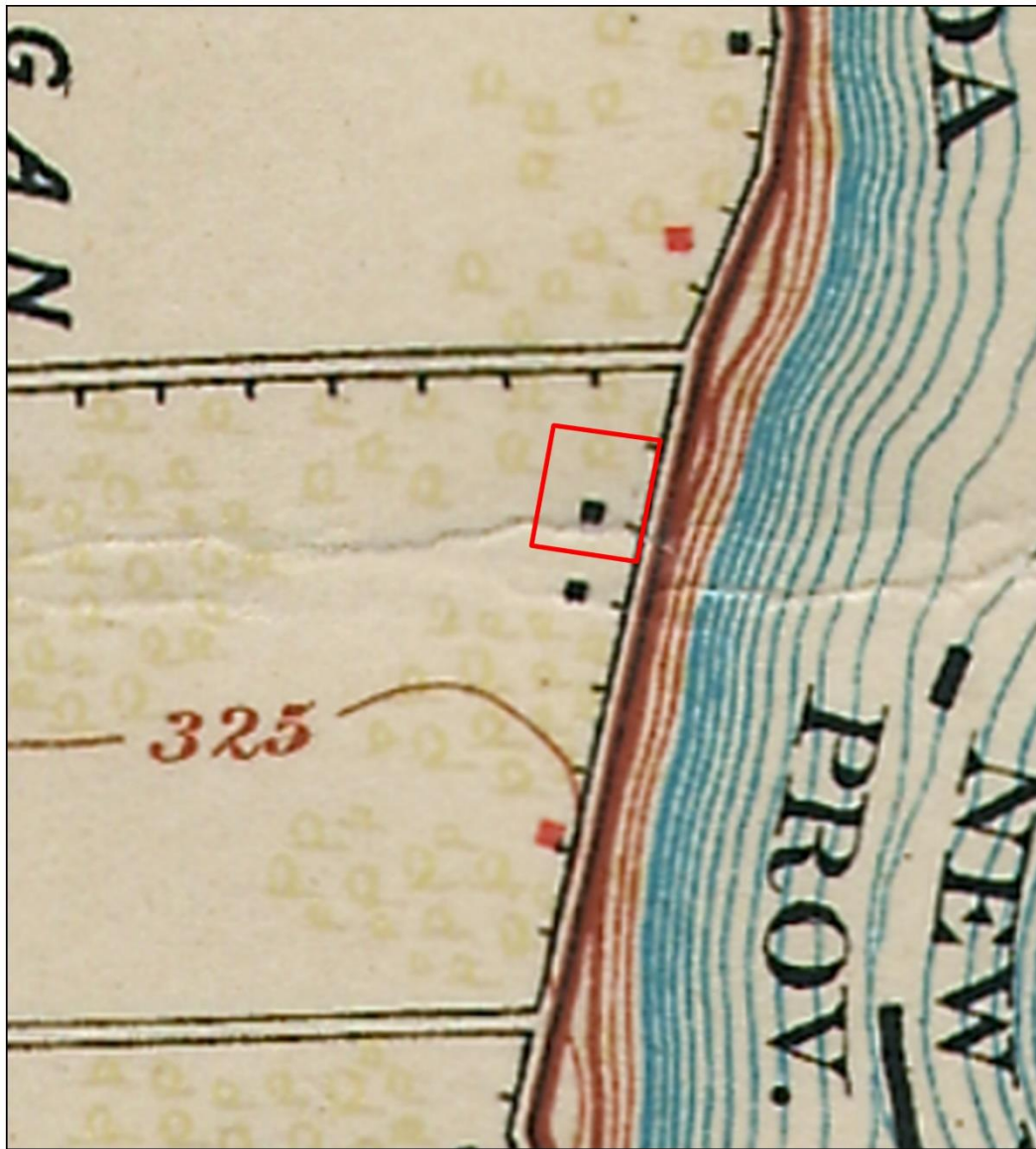
Map 3: 15618 Niagara River Parkway – 1815
(Source: Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum – Author: W. A. Wesfield)



 Subject Property

Niagara Lake
-on-the-
EST. 1781

Map 4: 15618 Niagara River Parkway – 1840
(Source: Brock University Maps, Data and GIS Collection – Author: Benjamin Spicer Stehelin)



 Subject Property

Niagara Lake
-on-the-
EST. 1781

Map 5: 15618 Niagara River Parkway – 1910
(Source: Brock University Maps, Data and GIS Collection)



 Subject Property

Niagara Lake
-on-the-
EST. 1781

Map 6: 15618 Niagara River Parkway – 1934
(Source: Niagara Air Photo Digital Images 1930s Series Brock University Maps, Data and GIS Collection)



 Subject Property



Map 7: 15618 Niagara River Parkway – 1969
(Source: Brock University Maps, Data and GIS Collection – Author: Regional Municipality of Niagara)

3.3.3 Context

- 15618 Niagara River Parkway is located near the Queenston urban area on the Niagara River Parkway.
 - Niagara River Parkway is a listed resource on the municipal heritage register.
 - The Parkway began as a Native American trail, skirting the Niagara River, crossing the Niagara escarpment, winding past Niagara Falls and continuing south to Lake Erie.
 - Farmhouses and inns were built alongside it, and the portion of the road now contained in Niagara-on-the-Lake became the main land-based communication avenue between the Village of Queenston and Old Town.
 - In 1912, the road was paved, and it became a 'two-lane minor arterial route' administrated by the Niagara Parks Commission. It was extended in 1936.
 - The entire Parkway is 56 kilometers in length, and it is classified as a 'Scenic Route' between Queen's Parade and Table Rock.
 - Currently, the Parkway is home to a number of new vineyards, as well as the tradition complement of farmhouses (new and old) and inns.
- Towards the east of the subject property a plaque by Archaeological and Historic Sites Board is located. The plaque is dedicated to Joseph-Genevieve, Comte Du Puisaye who was a soldier, politician, diplomat and colonizer from France.
- The Grand Victorian is located on a large estate lot and integrates picturesque effects to complement its architecture. The estate faces the Niagara River on the east.
- The Grand Victorian was designed facing the Niagara River to take advantage of the picturesque surroundings. The residence has functioned as a summer residence for the better part of the 20th century.
- The residence has a moderate setback from Niagara River Parkway and is partially visible from the road due to the mature trees lining the side of the road.
- The access to the residence is through Niagara River Parkway.
 - The estate is enclosed in a boundary wall comprised of hedges and mature trees.
 - The gravel driveway leading to the subject property is lined with mature trees.
- The Niagara River Parkway streetscape can be described as:
 - The area comprises of a variety of large estate lots, farmsteads, and tourism activities.
 - The structures are comprised of two storeys to three storey structures with substantial setbacks from the road.
 - Mature trees lining both sides of the streets.
 - A mix of clapboard, brick and stone construction.
 - Double lane road with no pedestrian pathways on the side of the road.



**Image 4: View of Niagara River Parkway Looking South
(Image taken on: February 28, 2024)**



**Image 5: View of Niagara River Parkway Looking North
(Image taken on: February 28, 2024)**

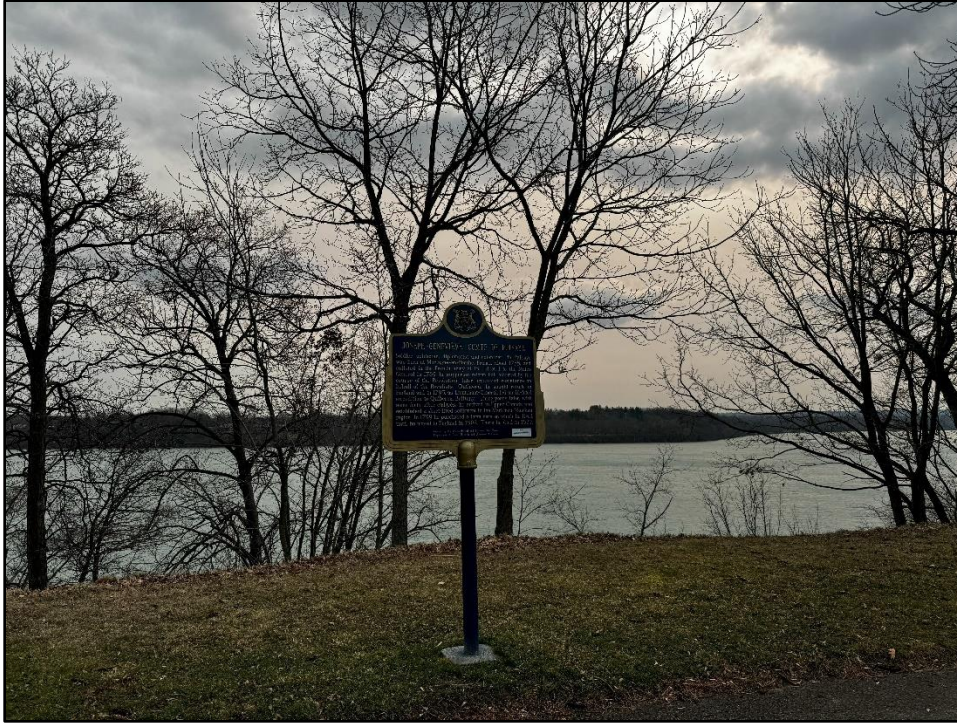


Image 6: View of Plaque for Joseph-Genevieve with the Niagara River in the Background
(Image taken on: February 28, 2024)



Image 7: View of Front Yard of the Subject Property
(Image taken on: February 28, 2024)



**Image 8: View of Context Towards the North of Subject Property
(Image taken on: February 28, 2024)**



**Image 9: View of Context Towards the South of Subject Property
(Image taken on: February 28, 2024)**

4. EVALUATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST (CHVI)

The following section provides an evaluation of the significance of 15618 Niagara River Parkway based on the O. Reg 9/06 criteria (as amended by 569/22).

Table 2: Evaluation of CHVI of 15618 Niagara River Parkway

Description	✓	Value
The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative, or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method	✓	15618 Niagara River Parkway is a representative example of the Queen Anne Revival style architecture. The white stucco house features an irregular plan with protruding portions on elevations. The two and a half storey residence has a complex hipped and gable roof with overhanging eaves and cornice details, an asymmetrical façade, wrap-around verandah, double chimneys, fish scale shingles and wooden sidings. The complex structure also features pediments and shed dormer windows and varying sizes of rectangular window openings. The Queen Anne Revival house also features intricate woodwork in the form of spindle-work on the verandah, wooden columns, raised wooden railings, and wooden brackets.
The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic value	✓	15618 Niagara River Parkway displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic value as seen in the pediments, cornice, wooden columns in verandah and the double brick chimneys. The pediment on the northeast corner of the building features fish scale shingles as well as wooden siding. The pediment also contains three windows with wooden surrounds. The scale of the double brick chimneys is very imposing on the structure. The chimneys feature corbelled cornice detail and plain panels on its sides. Additionally, there may be some of the interior features that could hold physical value and could be examined at a later time. At the time of this designation report, the interior of the residence was not investigated.
The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of technical or scientific achievement		15618 Niagara River Parkway does not display a high degree of technical or scientific achievement. The construction techniques

Description	✓	Value
		used in its construction are typical of those used at the time of its construction.
The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization, or institution that is significant to a community	✓	<p>15618 Niagara River Parkway has historical value as being the residence John Geale Dickson and being associated with the Dickson family. John Geale Dickson was the grandson of Honourable William Dickson and the son of Walter Hamilton Dickson. William Dickson was the cousin of Robert Hamilton and was in the trading business with him. He is also credited for the settlements of lands around Galt. John Geale Dickson himself was the founding father of the Niagara-on-the-Lake golf club. He encouraged the establishment of the Niagara Golf Club. In 1881 he appointed his brother to be the captain. The Golf Club is one of the oldest in North America.</p> <p>15618 Niagara River Parkway also has associative value as being the summer residence of Willis Kingsley Jackson. Jackson was a respected businessman from Buffalo and purchased the property as a summer home for his family. At this time the property was known as Riverscourt. Jackson was an officer and a member of the Niagara Golf Club along with the Dickson brothers.</p>
The property has historical value or associative value because it yields or has the potential to yield information that contributes to the understanding of a community or culture		Research into 15618 Niagara River Parkway has not yielded information that contributes to the understanding of a community or culture.
The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, builder, artist, designer or theorist who is significant to a community		15618 Niagara River Parkway is designed in the Queen Anne Revival architectural style with some outstanding design elements, though research has been unable to yield information on the builder or the architect of the residence that would be significant to a community.
The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining, or supporting the character of an area	✓	15618 Niagara River Parkway has contextual value because it is important in maintaining the character of the area. 15618 Niagara River Parkway is part of the 'Scenic Route' of

Description	✓	Value
		Niagara River Parkway. The area majorly comprises of large estate lots and farmhouses with substantial setbacks from the road, with winding driveways and landscaped lawns with mature trees.
The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually, or historically linked to its surroundings		15618 Niagara River Parkway does not have contextual value because it is not physically, functionally, visually, or historically linked to its surroundings.
The property has contextual value because it is a landmark		15618 Niagara River Parkway is not considered a landmark.

5. STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST

This section provides the statement of CHVI for 15618 Niagara River Parkway which is located on the Niagara River Parkway near the Queenston urban area. It consists of a two and a half storey Queen Anne revival residence.

Statement of CHVI

The Grand Victorian has architectural value because it is a representative example of the Queen Anne Revival style architecture. The white stucco house features an irregular plan with protruding portions on elevations. The two and a half storey residence has a complex hipped and gable roof with overhanging eaves and cornice details, an asymmetrical façade, wrap-around verandah, double chimneys, fish scale shingles and wooden sidings. The complex structure also features pediments and shed dormer windows and varying sizes of rectangular window openings. The Queen Anne Revival house also features intricate woodwork in the form of spindle-work on the verandah, wooden columns, raised wooden railings, and wooden brackets.

The Grand Victorian displays a high degree of craftsmanship and artistic value as seen in the pediments, cornice, wooden columns in verandah and the double brick chimneys. The pediment on the northeast corner of the building features fish scale shingles as well as wooden siding. The pediment also contains three windows with wooden surrounds. The scale of the double brick chimneys is very imposing on the structure. The chimneys feature corbelled cornice detail and plain panels on its sides.

15618 Niagara River Parkway has historical value as being the residence John Geale Dickson and being associated with the Dickson family. John Geale Dickson was the grandson of Honourable William Dickson and the son of Walter Hamilton Dickson. William Dickson was the cousin of Robert Hamilton and was in the trading business with him. He is also credited for the settlements of lands around Galt. John Geale Dickson himself was the founding father of the Niagara-on-the-Lake golf club. He encouraged the establishment of the Club. In 1881 he appointed his brother to be the captain. The Golf Club is one of the oldest in North America. The Grand Victorian is also associated as being the summer residence of Willis Kingsley Jackson. Jackson was a respected businessman from Buffalo and purchased the property as a summer home for his family. At this time the property was known as Riverscourt. Jackson was an officer and a member of the Niagara Golf Club along with the Dickson brothers.

The Grand Victorian is important in maintaining the character of the area. 15618 Niagara River Parkway is part of the 'Scenic Route' of Niagara River Parkway. The area majorly comprises of large estate lots and farmhouses with substantial setbacks from the road, with winding driveways and landscaped lawns with mature trees.

5.1 HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES

- Two and a half storey Queen Anne Revival style residence
- Asymmetrical façade
- White exterior finish

- Protruding northeast and southeast corners
- Complex hipped and gable roof with gable ends and pediments
- Overhanging eaves with cornice and wooden brackets
- Wrap-around verandah
- Two pairs of double chimneys
- Fish scale shingles and wooden siding
- Shed dormer on south elevation
- Varying sizes of rectangular window openings
- Intricate woodwork in the form of spindle-work on verandah, wooden columns, and raised wooden railings
- Historical association with John Geale Dickson and Willis Kingsley Jackson
- Location along the Niagara River Parkway
- Moderate setback from the road

6. CONCLUSION

O. Reg. 9/06 as amended by 569/22 of the *OHA* requires that to be designated, a property must meet at least two of the criteria. 15618 Niagara River Parkway meets four of the criteria for determining CHVI as outlined in *O. Reg. 9/06*, therefore it is worthy of designation under *O. Reg. 9/06* of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.