



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: 463 King Street – Heritage Designation Report (File No. HER-05-2024)

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

463 King Street (the “subject property”), known as Best House 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 Gothic Revival style architecture in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the residence has historical/associative value because of its association with Thomas Best. Best House also contains contextual value because it is part of the historic fabric of the Old Town urban area. Based on this evaluation, it is recommended for designation under Part IV, section 29 of the OHA.

2. PURPOSE

This Designation Report 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 January 22, 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, Brock University Maps, Data and GIS Collection 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: 463 King Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON

Legal Description: Plan 86 Part Lot 281 RP 30R8012 Part 2, Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, L0S 1J0, Niagara Township, ON



 Subject Property

Designation
 463 King Street
 Old Town Urban Area
 Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake



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



- Subject Property
- Old Town

Designation
 463 King Street
 Old Town Urban Area
 Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake



Map 2: Subject Property in the Old Town Urban Area

3.3 Background Information

3.3.1 Architecture or Design

The Gothic Revival is a direct translation of medieval details and building practices to the Ontario climate. The style originated from England and was built on the picturesque tastes. The style revived specific mediaeval Gothic forms in a manner similar to the earlier revival of correct Classical precedents (Fram 2014). In Ontario several variations of Gothic Revival existed. Sometimes a Georgian frame is fitted with a variety of Gothic or Tudor details such as vergeboard, finials, scalloping, lancet windows, hood moulds, and carved label stops. Other times, specifically the churches, the layout is asymmetrical and picturesque (Kyle 2016).

The structure on 463 King Street is a bed and breakfast called Best House. It displays several characteristics of Gothic Revival architecture including the symmetrical façade, steeply pitched gable roof and projecting bay windows.

The architectural description of 463 King Street is as follows:

- The subject property is a single detached structure at the intersection of King Street and Mary Street.
- The subject property features an L-shaped plan with a rear addition.
- The subject property is two storeys in height.
- The east elevation (façade) of the building is symmetrical with three-bays.
 - The north elevation of the structure protrudes out and forms the shorter side of L-shaped plan.
 - Both the north and south elevations are symmetrical.
- The structure sits on a low stone foundation that seems to have been covered with concrete parging.
- The exterior wall cladding of the structure is brick which is laid in the stretcher bond.
- The roof of the subject property is steeply pitched gable roof with a centre gable on the façade.
 - The roof features overhanging eaves with moulded frieze detail.
- The openings throughout the subject property are segmentally arched with radiating brick voussoirs.
 - The openings on the façade and north elevation also feature stone keystones with carved in details.
 - The window openings on the subject property contain plain wooden lug sills and frames.
 - The windows are two over two double hung windows and some contain storm windows.
- Apart from the segmentally arched window openings the subject property also contains protruding bay windows on the north and south elevation.
 - The bay windows have a mansard roof with overhanging eaves and plain wooden frieze.
- The main entrance to the subject property is located on the façade and a

secondary entrance is located on the north elevation. Both the entrances feature wooden panel doors.

- The main entryway has sidelights and a segmentally arched transom.
- The entryway also features a netted storm door with wooden trim details.
- The wing addition on the rear is constructed of the similar style as the original building and consists of brick and rectangular window openings.

When examined against the typical characteristics of the Gothic 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) 463 King Street meets most of the characteristics of the Gothic Revival style, and therefore, can be considered representative of the style (**Table 1**).

Table 1: Characteristics of Gothic Revival Residential Buildings

Characteristics	463 King Street
Symmetrical or Asymmetrical elevations with symmetrical elements	Yes
Gable roof	Yes
Projecting bays	Yes
Pointed arch windows	No
Carved and turned woodwork	Yes
Polychromatic brickwork	No
One to two storeys	Yes
Stringcourses, mouldings, sills and lintels	Yes



Image 1: Facade (East Elevation) of Best House
(Image taken on: January 22, 2024)



Image 2: Northeast Corner of Best House
(Image taken on: January 22, 2024)



Image 3: North Elevation of Best house
(Image taken on: January 22, 2024)



Image 4: Southeast Corner of Best House
(Image taken on: January 22, 2024)



**Image 5: Brick Voussoirs and Keystone Details on Façade
(Image taken on: January 22, 2024)**

3.3.2 History

The Best House constructed on a part of Lot 281, was the homestead of the Mayor of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Thomas Frederick Best. He was the mayor of the Town from 1897 to 1901. The dwelling was constructed by Thomas Best in 1885.

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

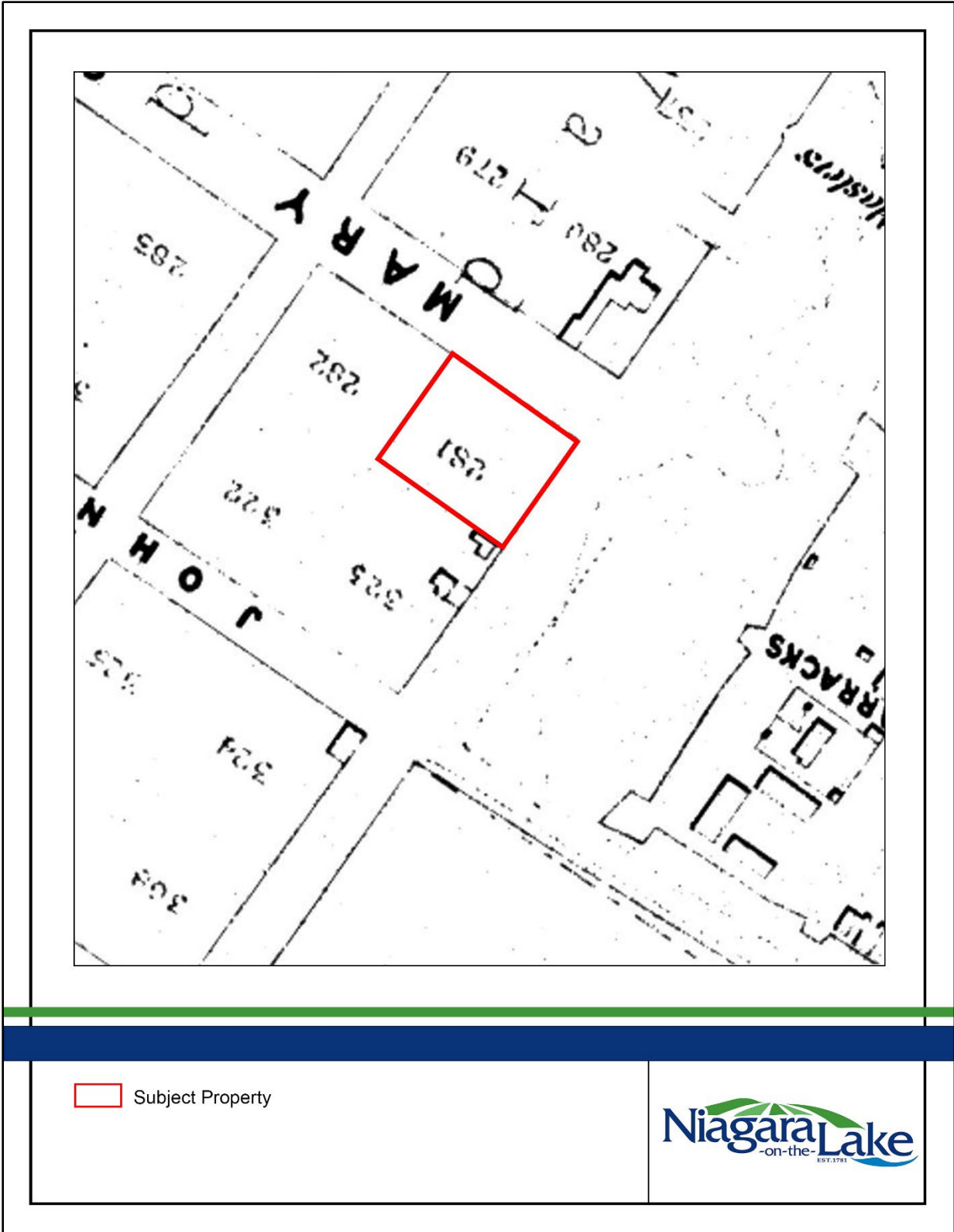
- The subject property is located in the Old Town urban area.
- The subject property is located at the intersection of King Street and Mary Street. King Street has been one of the primary connectors in the Old Town.
- In 1796, the Crown granted 1 acre in Lot 281 to a J. Vaneynen. Although the year is unknown, the rights to the lot reverted back to the Crown.
- In the following years the property was acquired by Joseph Edwards and was sold to James Whitten in 1812.
 - Joseph Edwards was of Scottish descent and came to Niagara in 1790.
 - He was granted land in Lake Erie in 1795 as a result of a petition and was described as a Newark merchant and Deputy postmaster.
 - In 1797, he was elected the Town's warden and re-elected in 1801-04.
 - In 1799, he was appointed the Town's first postmaster and in January 1800, he was made the first Justice of the Peace for the Niagara district.
- James Whitten was a local carpenter and a merchant. He appears to have also worked on the Miller House located at 46 Mary Street. Miller House is a Part IV designated building in the Municipal Heritage Register. James Whitten sold the property in 1828.
 - The Lot remained in the family for over 70 years. There is evidence to suggest that James built two small buildings close to Mary Street prior to 1817.
 - James fenced the Lot and divided it into smaller holdings.
- Lot 281 changed hands multiple times. During this time the Lot was also subdivided into 3 parcels. The subject property is located on the third parcel.
- Thomas Best acquired parcel 3 and constructed the subject property in 1885. He also acquired the rest of the parcels adjacent to the subject property.
 - Thomas Best was a successful businessman and a popular local politician.
 - He served several terms as councilman and as mayor from 1897 to 1901 and in 1912.
 - He also constructed the canning factory adjacent to the subject property, which is now known as the Pillar & Post Inn.
- According to Joseph E. Masters, 463 King St was owned after Thomas Best's death by Alexander Servos, Jack Schmidt, Vern Davy, Ray Hardison, Tom Russell, and according to a Trustees Record, by Mrs. Hardison in 1945. In the 1980s it was an attractive art gallery known as the Cobblestone.

3.3.2.1 Analysis of Maps

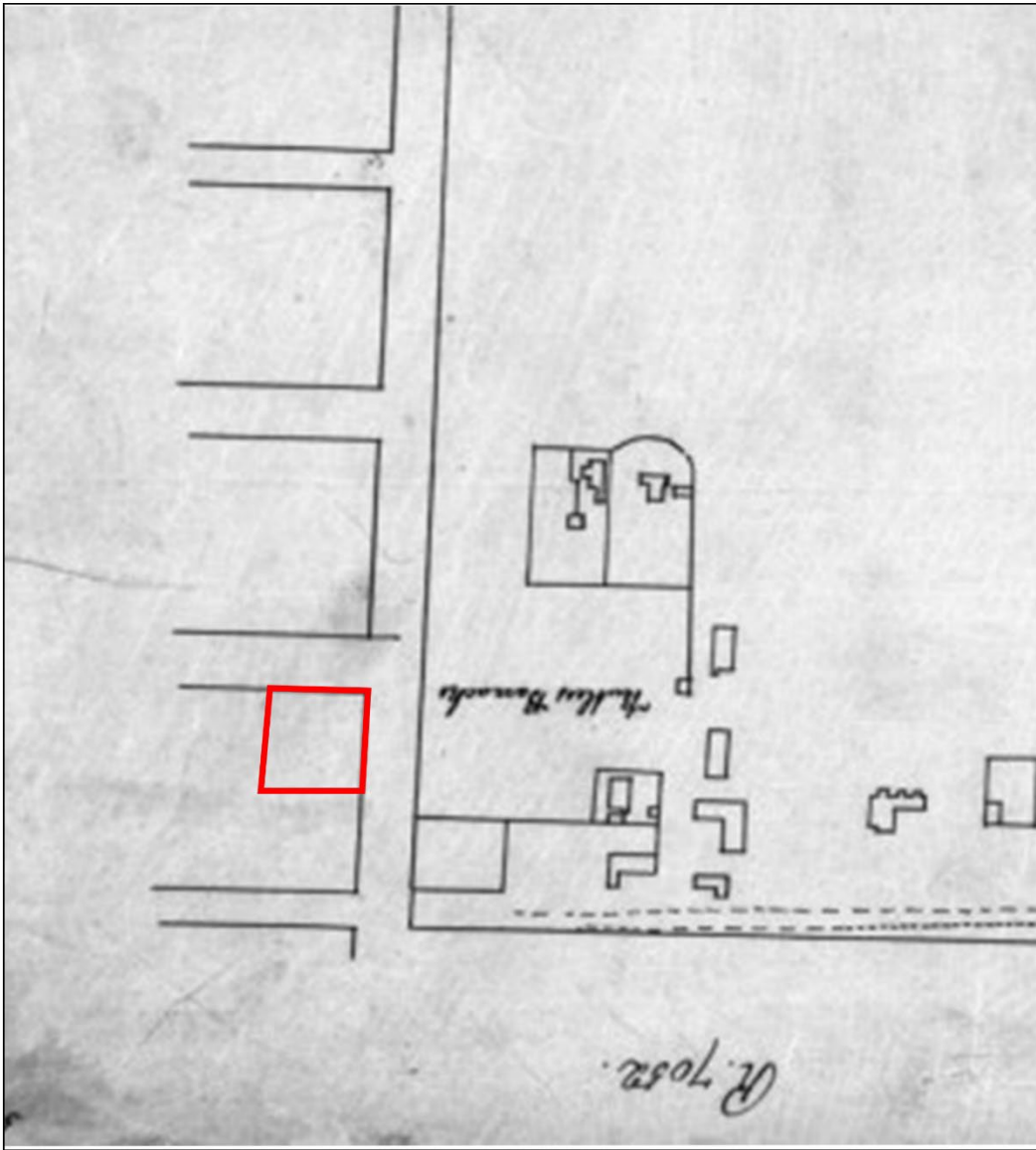
Map 3 - Map 7 provide an illustration of how the subject property and the property parcel has developed over time. Map 3 and Map 4 are similar and shows Lot 281 and structures on adjacent Lots 325 and 280. The map also shows the Butler's Barracks towards the east of the subject property. Map 5 and Map 6 from 1894 and 1910 are also similar and shows the railway lines on King Street running north towards the Old Town and branch off from John Street and run west. Map 7 is a fire insurance plan from 1949. It shows the subject property in the northeast corner of block labelled as 131. The subject property is shown as a two-storey brick construction with a single storey rear wooden addition. The subject property also contains a pair of bay windows on the south elevation and single bay window on north elevation. The map also shows that there might have been a gallery or verandah on the façade of the subject property which appears to have been removed since. Apart from the subject property, the map also shows Thomas Best's canning factory. The site is comprised of wooden, steel and brick structures. Towards the west of the subject property multiple wooden structures are also located.



**Image 6: Historic Image of the Subject Property
(Source: Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum)**



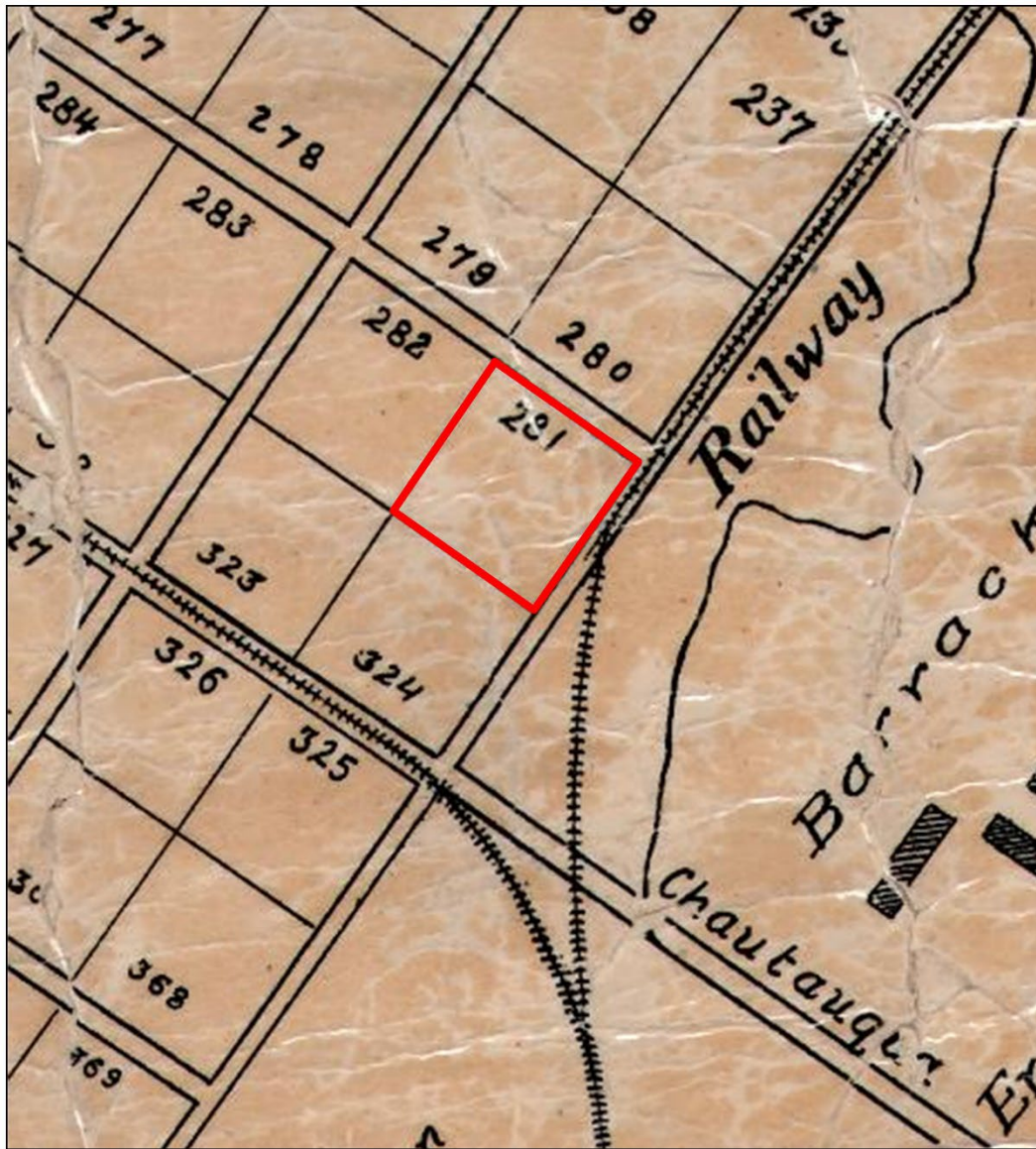
Map 3: 463 King Street, Lot 281 – 1845
(Source: Brock University Maps, Data and GIS Collection)



 Subject Property



Map 4: 463 King Street, Lot 281 – 1852
(Source: Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum – Author: Passamore)



 Subject Property



Map 5: 463 King Street, Lot 281 – 1894
(Source: Brock University Maps, Data and GIS Collection – Author: Frank B. Johnson)

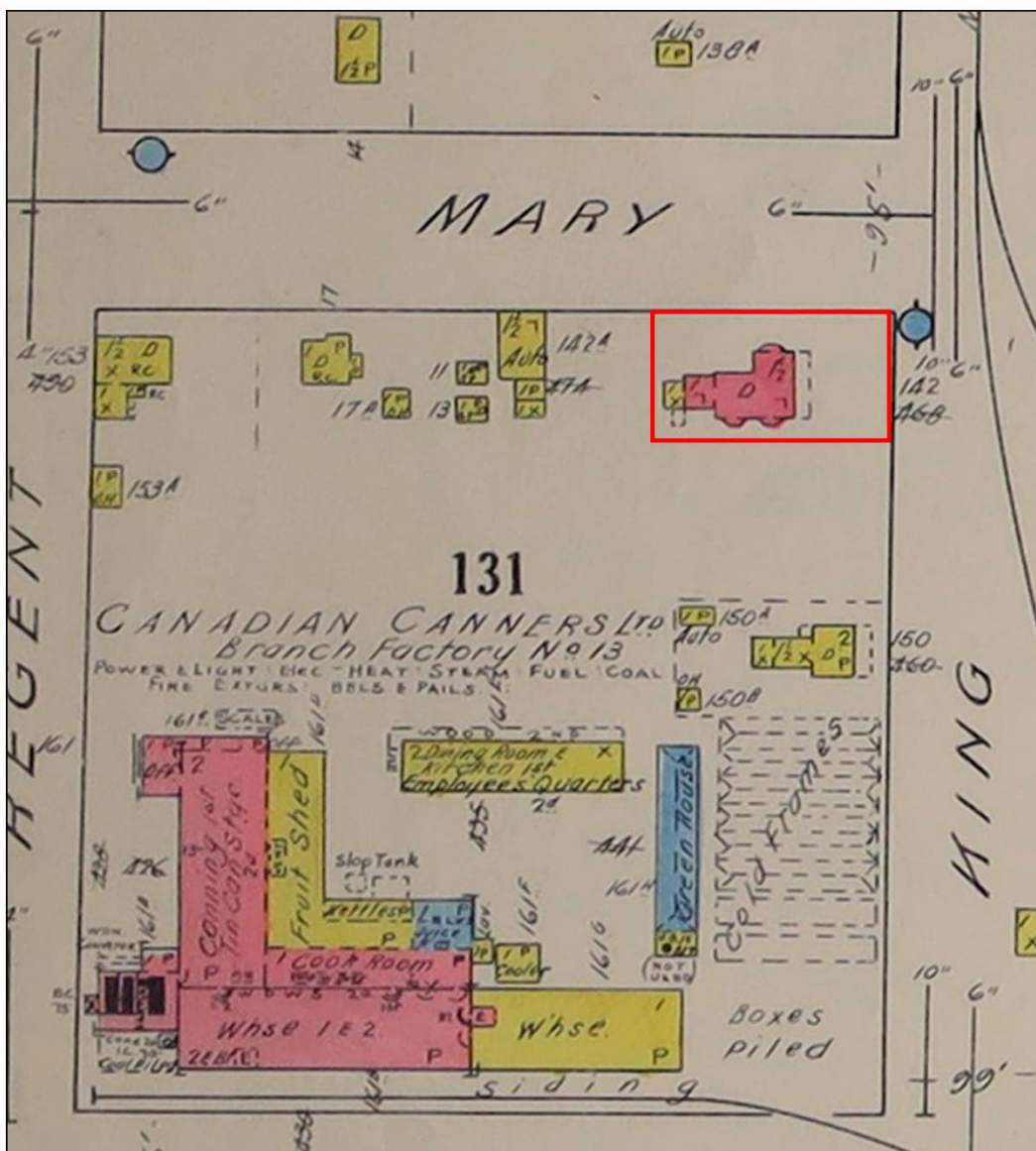


 Subject Property



Map 6: 463 King Street, Lot 281 – 1910

(Source: Brock University Maps, Data and GIS Collection – Author: Alexander Niven)



Subject Property



Map 7: 463 King Street – 1949
 (Source: Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum)

3.3.3 Context

- 463 King Street is located in the urban area of Old Town in Niagara-on-the-Lake.
 - The urban area comprises of mixed-use structures, civic buildings and residential buildings.
 - The area also comprises of a variety of bed and breakfasts and Inns.
 - The residence is located in proximity to the Queen-Picton Heritage Conservation District.
 - According to Parks Canada, Niagara-on-the-Lake was established in 1779 as a supply depot for British Loyalist forces. By the end of the 18th century, it had developed into a major military and cultural centre and served briefly as the capital of Upper Canada. The town's grid plan, laid out in 1794, was based on the Imperial model plan for new colonial towns. Niagara-on-the-Lake was destroyed by fire in 1813, and then rebuilt by Loyalist settlers.
- The subject property is located opposite to the Butler's Barracks which is a National Historic Site of Canada.
 - Butler's Barracks is a military complex that is composed of five wooden buildings. These buildings are located at the edge of the Commons behind Fort George.
 - The heritage value of the Butler's Barracks lies in the remaining military buildings on site and the role they played for the military history of the area.
- Property adjacent to the subject property towards the north at 433 King Street is a Part IV designated property in the Municipal Heritage Register. The property is an example of a Neo-Classical style of architecture and is known as Powell-Wisch House or Brockamour.
- The property located at 46 Mary Street is also a Part IV designated building. The property is located towards the west of the subject property. It is an example of the Georgian style of architecture and is known as Miller House.
- The subject property is located at the intersection of King Street and Mary Street.
- The Best House is located on a modest property parcel facing King Street.
- The residence has a substantial setback from King Street and Mary Street and is visible from the road.
- The primary access to the residence is through a pedestrian pathway leading from King Street. The pathway is paved and leads straight to a raised platform at the main entrance. A secondary approach is accessed through Mary Street.
- The King Street streetscape can be described as:
 - King Street is considered one of the primary roads in the Old Town urban area.
 - The structures are comprised of two to three storey structures.
 - There is open space in the form of parks and gardens in the vicinity. These include the Veterans Memorial Park, the Gardens at Pillar and Post and the open landscaped area at the Butler's Barracks National Historic Site.
 - The properties are a mixture of large estate lots and smaller residential buildings.
 - Moderate to large setbacks from the road with well maintained and manicured front lawns.
 - Mature trees lining both sides of the streets.

- A mix of clapboard and brick construction.
 - Double lane road with paved pedestrian pathways on both side of the road.
- The Mary Street streetscape can be described as:
 - The structures are comprised of one to two storey residences.
 - The properties are smaller residential buildings.
 - Moderate setbacks from the road with well maintained and manicured front lawns.
 - Mature trees lining both sides of the streets with green belts on both sides of the road.
 - A mix of clapboard and brick construction.
 - Double lane road with paved pedestrian pathways on both side of the road.



**Image 7: View of King Street Looking North
(Image taken on: January 22, 2024)**



**Image 8: View of King Street Looking South
(Image taken on: January 22, 2024)**



**Image 9: View of Butlers Barracks from King Street
(Image taken on: January 22, 2024)**



**Image 10: View of the Subject Property at the Intersection of King Street and Mary Street
(Image taken on: January 22, 2024)**



**Image 11: View of Mary Street Looking West
(Image taken on: January 22, 2024)**

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

The following section provides an evaluation of the significance of 463 King Street based on the O. Reg 9/06 criteria (as amended by 569/22).

Table 2: Evaluation of CHVI of 463 King Street

Description	✓	Value
<p>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</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>463 King Street is a representative example of Gothic Revival architecture which was built on picturesque taste and revived mediaeval Gothic forms. The structure is two storey brick construction with some stone and wood details. The façade of the subject property is symmetrical and contains three bays. The side elevations of the building are balanced and contain symmetrical elements. Typical of Gothic Revival structures the roof of the structure is gable with overhanging eaves, moulded frieze and features a centre gable on the façade. The openings of the structure are segmentally arched with radiating brick voussoirs, carved keystones, wooden lug sills and wooden frames. The windows themselves are two over two windows. The main entryway to the subject property is simple and contains segmentally arched transom and sidelights. The subject property also features protruding bay windows on the south and north elevations. The bay windows have a mansard roof with overhanging eaves.</p>
<p>The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic value</p>		<p>463 King Street does not display a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic value.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of technical or scientific achievement</p>		<p>463 King Street does not display a high degree of technical or scientific achievement. The construction techniques used in its construction are typical of those used at the time of its construction.</p>

Description	✓	Value
<p>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>	<p>✓</p>	<p>463 King Street has associative value as being the residence of the mayor of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Thomas Frederick Best. Thomas Best constructed the residence in 1885. Thomas Best was a successful businessman and a popular local politician. He served several terms as councilman and as mayor from 1897 to 1901 and in 1912. He also constructed the canning factory adjacent to the subject property, which is now known as the Pillar & Post Inn.</p> <p>463 King Street has historical value as being owned by various important persons in the Town as Lot 281. It was owned by Joseph Edwards, who was the Town's warden, first postmaster and the first Justice of Peace and by James Whitten who was a local carpenter and a merchant. James Whitten is believed to have worked on multiple historic properties in the Town.</p>
<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</p>		<p>463 King Street does not have the potential to yield information that contributes to the understanding of a community or culture.</p>
<p>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</p>		<p>Research into 463 King Street has not revealed any builder or architect associated with the construction of the structure.</p>
<p>The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining, or supporting the character of an area</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>463 King Street has contextual value because it is important in supporting the character of the area. King Street streetscape majorly consists of commercial properties that are two to three storeys high with a large to moderate setback from the road. Most of the building are historic structures that are lined with mature trees. The area also consists of various designated sites that includes the Butler's Barracks which is a National Historic Site,</p>

Description	✓	Value
		and 433 King Street and 46 Mary Street which are part IV designated properties on the Municipal Heritage Register.
The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually, or historically linked to its surroundings	✓	463 King Street has contextual value because it is functionally linked to its surroundings as being part of the Pillars and Post Inn. The building adjacent to the subject property was also constructed by Thomas Best as a canning factory and was later converted to the Pillar and Post Inn. The Pillar and Post Inn also have designated gardens towards the south of the subject property.
The property has contextual value because it is a landmark		463 King Street is not considered a landmark.

5. STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST

This section provides the statement of CHVI for 463 King Street which is located on the King Street in the Old Town urban area. It consists of a two storey Gothic revival residence which was constructed in 1885.

Statement of CHVI

463 King Street is a representative example of Gothic Revival architecture which was built on picturesque taste and revived mediaeval Gothic forms. The structure is a two-storey brick construction with some stone and wood details. The façade of the subject property is symmetrical and contains three bays. The side elevations of the building are balanced and contain symmetrical elements. Typical of Gothic Revival structures the roof of the structure is gable with overhanging eaves, moulded frieze and features a centre gable on the façade. The openings in the structure are segmentally arched with radiating brick voussoirs, carved keystones, wooden lug sills and wooden frames. The windows themselves are two over two windows. The main entryway to the subject property is simple and contains segmentally arched transom and sidelights. The subject property also features protruding bay windows on the north and south elevations. The bay windows have a mansard roof with overhanging eaves.

Best House is associated with being the residence of the mayor of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Thomas Frederick Best. Thomas Best constructed the residence in 1885. Thomas Best was a successful businessman and a popular local politician. He served several terms as councilman and as mayor from 1897 to 1901 and in 1912. He also constructed the canning factory adjacent to the subject property, which is now known as the Pillar & Post Inn. The subject property is historically associated as being owned by various important persons in the Town as Lot 281. It was owned by Joseph Edwards, who was the Town's warden, first postmaster and the first Justice of Peace and by James Whitten who was a local carpenter and a merchant. James Whitten is believed to have worked on multiple historic properties in the Town.

Best House supports the historical character of the area. King Street streetscape majorly consists of commercial properties that are two to three storeys high with large to moderate setback from the road. Most of the building are historic structures that are lined with mature trees. The area also consists of various designated sites that includes the Butler's Barracks which is a National Historic Site, and 433 King Street and 46 Mary Street which are part IV designated properties on the Municipal Heritage Register. 463 King Street is also functionally linked to its surroundings as being part of the Pillars and Post Inn. The building adjacent to the subject property was also constructed by Thomas Best as a canning factory and was later converted to the Pillar and Post Inn. The Pillar and Post Inn also have designated gardens towards the south of the subject property.

5.1 HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES

- Two storeys Gothic revival style structure
- Red brick construction

- Symmetrical three-bay façade
- Gable roof with centre gable on façade
- Overhanging eaves and moulded frieze
- Segmentally arched openings with two over two windows
- Radiating brick voussoirs, carved stone keystone and wooden lug sill
- Protruding bay windows
- Main entryway with wooden panel doors, segmentally arched transom and sidelights
- Location along the King Street
- Setback from the road
- Location opposite to Butler's Barracks and adjacent to 433 King Street
- Historical connection to Pillars and Post Inn

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. 463 King Street 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.