



Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake

1593 Four Mile Creek Road
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905-468-3266 www.notl.com

SUBJECT: 167 Four Mile Creek Road – Heritage Designation Report (File No. HER-26-2024)

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

167 Four Mile Creek Road (the “subject property”), 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 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 in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the property also has historical association with the Queenston Cement Works company. The subject property contains contextual value because it is essential in maintaining the historic character of the 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 legacy listed properties from local Heritage Registers after January 1, 2027.

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.

3.1.1 Field Survey

A field survey was conducted in order to gain a better understanding of the property and the context. The field survey was conducted from the public right of way on February 28th, 2024 by Sumra Zia, Heritage Planner II.

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, NOTL Museum, 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 legacy 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 four years (January 1, 2027). The properties that are removed from the register cannot be relisted for a period of five years.

3.2 Property Information

Civic Address: 167 Four Mile Creek Road, St. Davids, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON

Legal Description: Part Lot 91, Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Niagara Township, ON

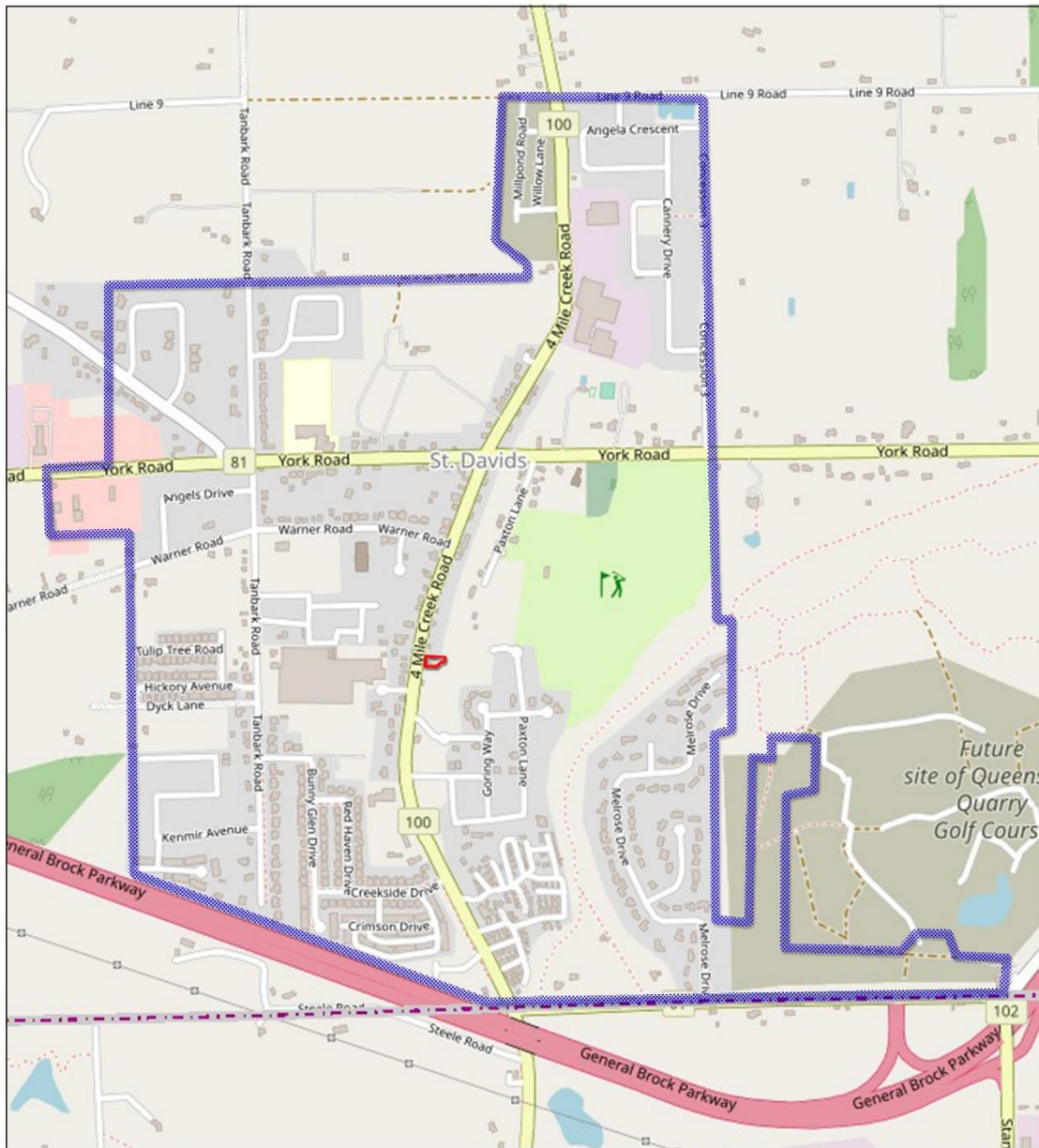


 Subject Property

Designation
 St. Davids Urban Area
 167 Four Mile Creek Road
 Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake



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



- Subject Property
- St. Davids

Designation
 St. Davids Urban Area
 167 Four Mile Creek Road
 Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake



Map 2: Subject Property in St. Davids Urban Area

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 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 167 Four Mile Creek Road displays several characteristics of the Queen Anne Revival style including the complex roofline, decorative shingles, and intricate woodwork. The subject property also displays influences of the Italianate style such as the double windows and pairs of wooden brackets under the overhanging eaves.

The architectural description of 167 Four Mile Creek Road is as follows:

- The subject property is comprised of a one and a half storey detached dwelling with a T-shaped plan.
- The west elevation (façade) of the subject property faces Four Mile Creek Road while the east elevation (rear) of the property backs into wooded land owned by the Queenston Golf Club.
- The residence has a symmetrical façade around a central tower.
 - The entrance to the subject property is located centrally beneath the abutting tower.
 - A pair of double windows are also located on either side of the symmetrical façade.
- The side elevations of the subject property have similar design elements along the central axis of the subject property.
- The main entrance of the subject property features a covered porch. The centre of the porch protrudes out and contains a pediment.
 - The porch is supported on circular wooden posts and also contains wooden railings.
 - The frieze detail on the porch features a wooden cornice with dentils and pairs of wooden brackets.
- The main construction material of the residence appears to be Queenston cement blocks with partial stucco finish.
 - Apart from the stucco finish, the central tower, side gables and dormers on the side elevations are clad in fish-scale and cedar shake shingles respectively.
- The subject property appears to have a full basement of rubble stone material which is raised from the rear of the subject property.
- The south elevation of the subject property also contains a single brick chimney. The chimney has a wider and angular profile at the top that transitions into a

- rectangular chimney at the bottom.
- The subject property has a complex roofline containing gable, and hipped roof and dormers with overhanging eaves. The eaves contain wooden cornice with dentils and pairs of wooden brackets.
 - The central tower on the façade has a steeply pitched hipped roof.
 - The main structure of the residence has a cross-gable roof with gable ends on both the side elevations as well as the rear elevation. The gable ends feature moulded fascia with dentils.
 - The dormers towards the northeast and southeast corner of the subject property are triple gable dormers.
 - The bay window on the south elevation contains a mansard roof, topped off with metal cresting detail.
 - The window openings in the subject property range from segmentally arched openings on the first storey to rectangular vertical openings on the second storey.
 - The windows on the first storey contain plain wooden trim within the structural openings of the windows with plain concrete lug sills.
 - The windows on the second storey, on the other hand, contain plain wooden trim on the outside of the structural window openings with wooden slip sills.

When examined against the typical characteristics of the Queen Anne Revival 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), and John Blumenson’s “Ontario Architecture” (1990), 167 Four Mile Creek Road 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	167 Four Mile Creek Road
Irregular plans and elevations	No
Verandah or Wrap-around verandah supported by wooden columns/piers	Yes
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: West Elevation (façade) of Subject Property
(Image taken on: February 28, 2024)**



**Image 2: Southwest Corner of Subject Property
(Image taken on: February 28, 2024)**



**Image 3: South Elevation of Subject Property
(Image taken on: February 28, 2024)**



**Image 4: Northwest Corner of Subject Property
(Image taken on: February 28, 2024)**

3.3.2 History

The subject property is located in the St. Davids urban area. The subject property is called the Black House. The house was constructed in 1902 and is believed to have been constructed as a wedding present for George Neil Black and Mabel Ontario Usher. The design and the construction of the house also appears to have been undertaken by the Black and Usher family.

Below is a brief history of the construction of the residence and the St. Davids neighbourhood:

- St. Davids area was inhabited by the First Nations before the United Empire Loyalists arrived from the United States to show their support and loyalty to Britain.
 - Pre 1652, the area was occupied by the Neutral Indians of St. Davids that were replaced by the Seneca Tribe of the Iroquois Confederacy.
 - In the late 1700s Peter Secord moved to the area and was one of the first settlers to commence farming in St. Davids.
 - The settlement patterns of the St. Davids neighbourhood signify it is amongst the oldest remaining settled communities in Ontario.
 - In 1781, when the Niagara Peninsula was purchased by the British from the Mississauga First Nations, the land was divided into 100-acre lots and the land was granted to the United Empire Loyalists.
 - Subsequently, the St. Davids area developed as an important milling centre. The area included four gristmills, a sawmill, a tannery, a shoe shop, candle and barrel factories, two churches, a school and thirty to forty homes.
 - After the destruction of York (now known as Toronto) as an aftermath of the war of 1812, St. Davids was the capital of Upper Canada for several months under DeRottenberg in 1813 and for a short period of time under Drummond in 1814.
- The area of St. Davids is named after Major David Secord, who was a sergeant in the Butlers Rangers, major in the Lincoln Militia, magistrate in 1796 and a member of the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada.
- In 1798, the original 100-acres for Lot 91 was granted by the Crown to Peter Secord.
- In 1799, all 100-acres were first transferred from Peter Secord to David Secord Junior and then from David Secord Junior to David Secord Senior. Further transfer and subdivision of the Lot 91 is unknown.
- The date when the Black family acquired part of Lot 91 is unknown.
- The subject property was completed in 1902 for George Neil Black and Mabel Ontario Usher and is part of the historic St. Davids neighbourhood.
- It was constructed using cast-in-place natural cement produced by the Queenston Cement Works company also known as Isaac Usher & Son.
 - The Queenston Cement Works company was run by Mabel's father, Isaac Usher, and brother, Hudson Usher, between 1885 to 1904.
 - The cement plant was established in 1885 towards the east of St. Davids

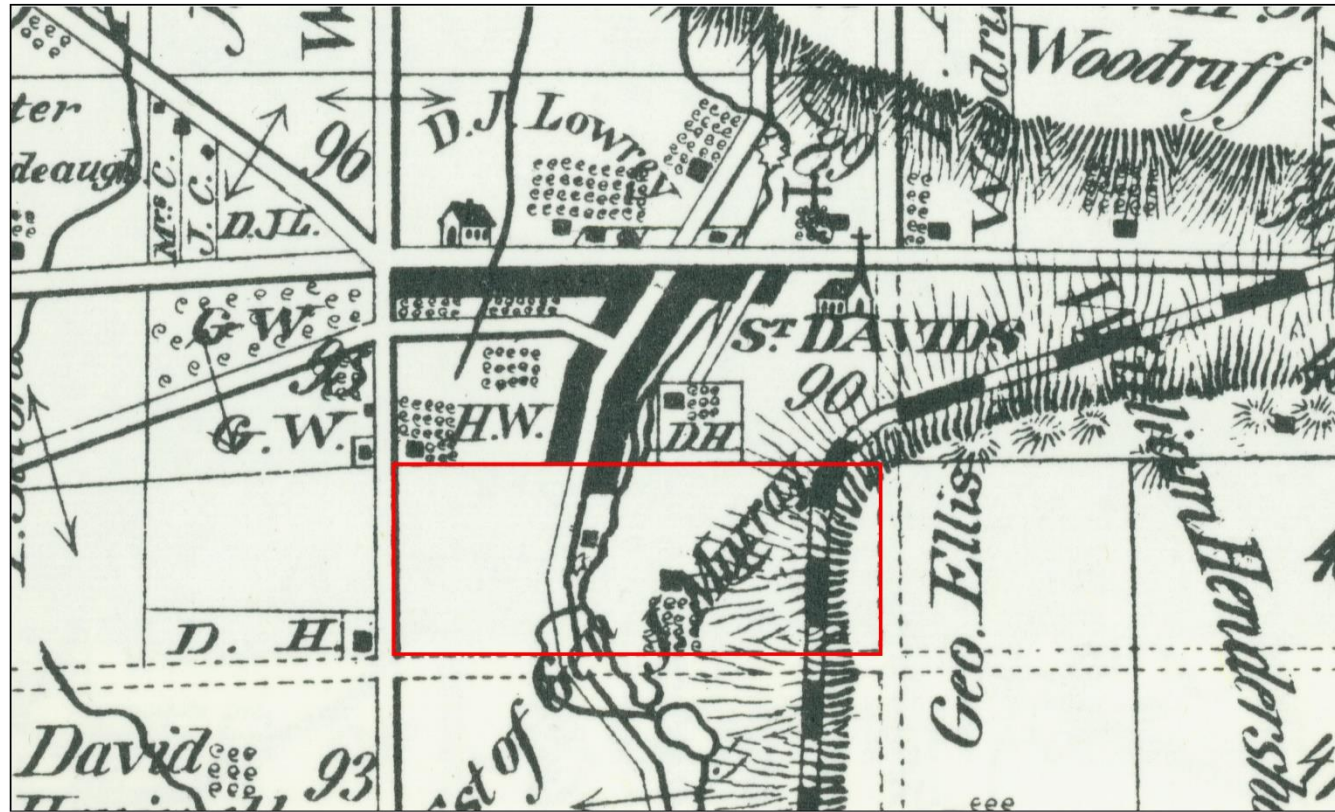
- and on the face of the Niagara Escarpment.
- The raw material for the plant was sourced from the Niagara Escarpment. During the excavation of the Welland Canal, a thick layer of natural cement rock was discovered under the blue dolomite in the escarpment. William Hendershot, who owned a portion of the quarries, leased a portion to Isaac Usher to establish a cement plant.
- The cement plant initially had three steam operated kilns which were later expanded to six kilns.
- The plant eventually shut down in 1904, when Portland cement was introduced to the construction industry.
- At the height of its operation, Queenston Cement Works, supplied natural cement to the Sault Ste. Marie and St. Lawrence canals.
- Apart from the major infrastructure projects, Queenston Cement Works also supplied cement to residences in the St. Davids urban area. Among these houses, the Black House is one of the few surviving examples of a residence constructed using natural cement.
- Apart from starting the Queenston Cement Works, Isaac Usher was a masonry contractor, who also worked on the Welland Canal. Some of his other contracting jobs included railroad and waterworks construction.
- Hudson Usher, who was the son of Isaac Usher, was a partner at the Queenston Cement Works. He was in charge of the cement plant from the age of sixteen up until the partnership between him and his father dissolved in 1901. Hudson Usher was also responsible for the operation of the Queenston Heights Stock Farm.
- Historical information about the construction of the subject property indicates that concrete was used to erect the foundation, basement subfloor, exterior walls and the basement interior walls.
 - Floor joists were set on ledgers, and then cast into the concrete for all the floors. For the attic space, joists and ledgers were extended all the way to the exterior wall to allow attachment to the cornice frieze.
 - It also appears that the cement for interior and exterior walls was poured in semi-regular courses due to the noticeable variations in the level and depth of the pour lines.

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 and Map 4 shows Lot 91 with its original extents. It also shows Four Mile Creek Road and York Road and their orientation. The maps also show a railway line running through the Lot. Map 5 from the 1910s shows the subject property along with various other structures in the vicinity along Four Mile Creek Road. Map 6 and Map 7 from the 1930s and 1950s shows more built structures around the subject property together with agricultural fields.



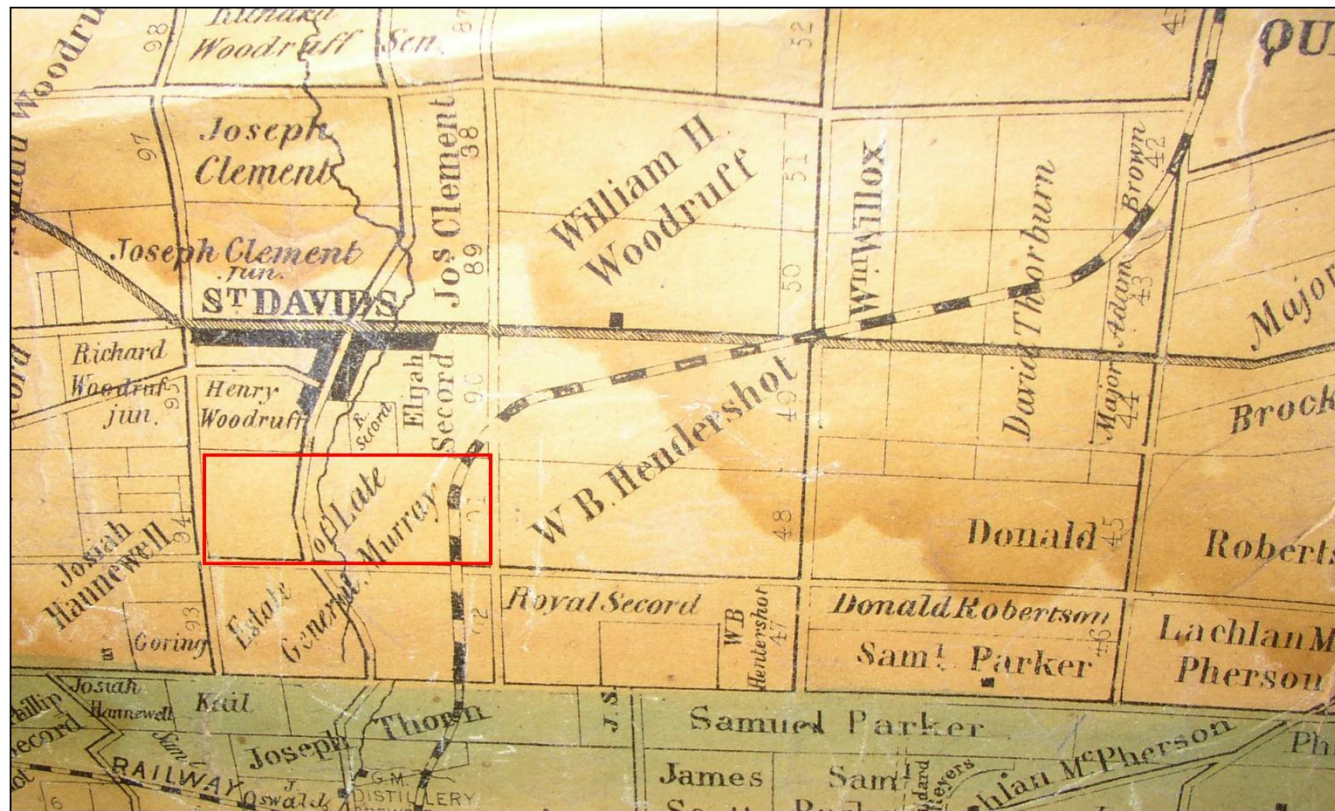
Figure 1: Queenston Cement Works Plant – 1904



 Lot 91



Map 3: Lot 91 – 1800
(Source: Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum)



 Lot 91



Map 4: Lot 91 – 1862
(Source: Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum)



 Subject Property



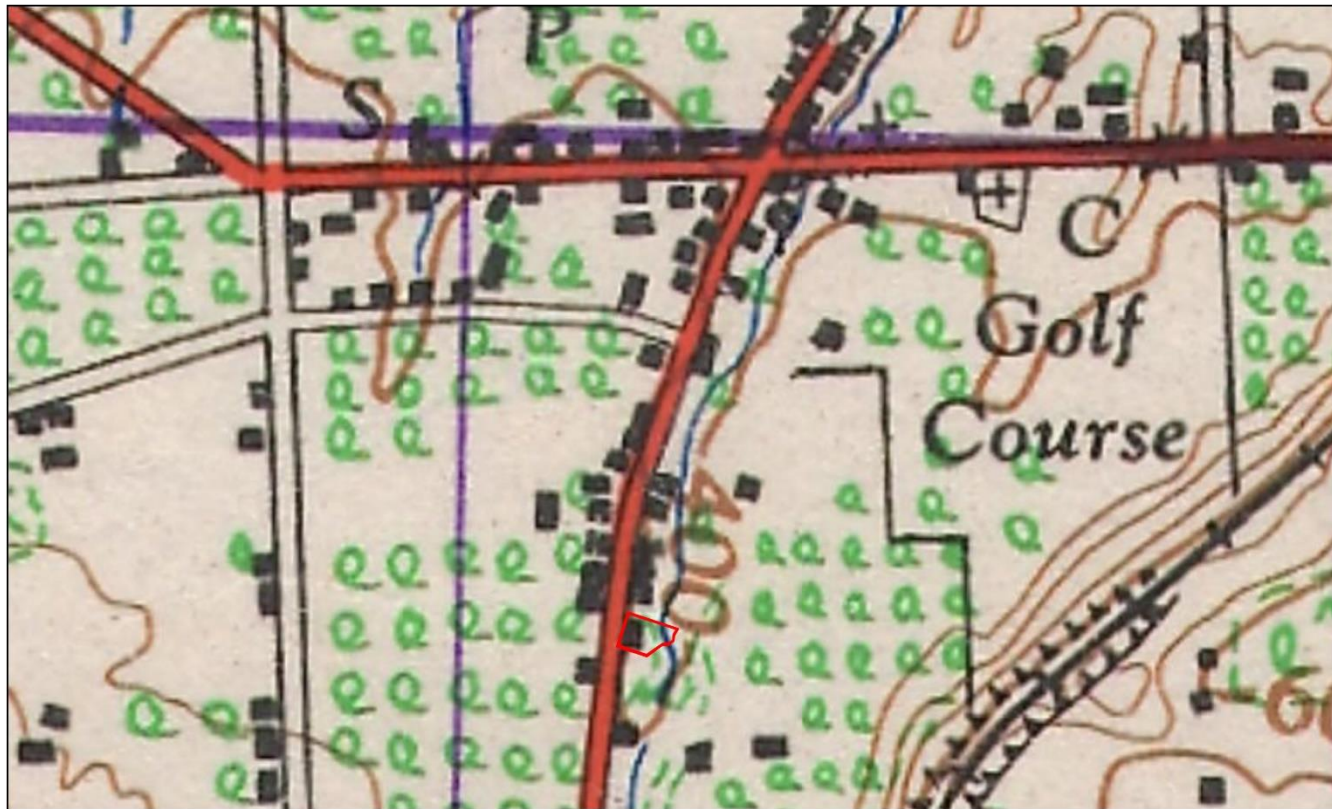
Map 5: 167 Four Mile Creek Road – 1910s
(Source: Niagara Topographic Maps by Decades, Brock University Maps, Data & GIS)



 Subject Property

Niagara Lake
-on-the-
EST. 1781

Map 6: 167 Four Mile Creek Road – 1930s
(Source: Niagara Air Photo Index, Brock University Maps, Data & GIS)



 Subject Property



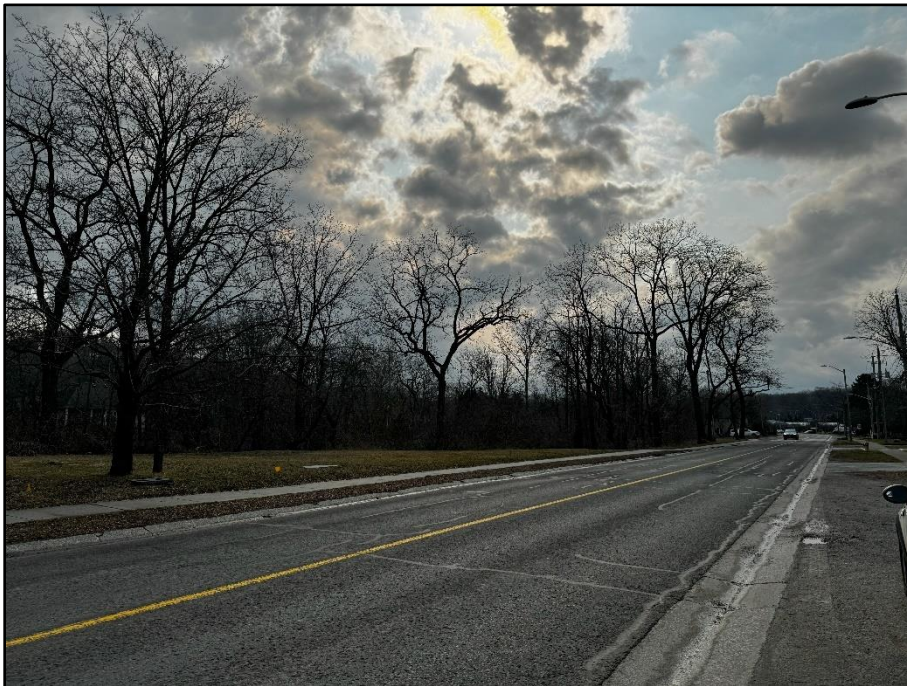
Map 7: 167 Four Mile Creek Road – 1950s
(Source: Niagara Topographic Maps by Decades, Brock University Maps, Data & GIS)

3.3.3 Context

- 167 Four Mile Creek Road is located in the urban area of St. Davids in Niagara-on-the-Lake.
 - The urban area is comprised of mixed-use structures, civic buildings and residential buildings.
 - The area is also comprised of a variety of bed and breakfasts, inns, cafes and the St. Davids Golf Club.
 - Four Mile Creek is also located towards the west of the subject property.
- The subject property also lies in close proximity to several other Listed and Part IV Designated properties in the area.
 - The Listed properties include; 184 Four Mile Creek Road, known as The Pines, 185 Four Mile Creek Road, known as The Hanniwell House, and 190 Four Mile Creek Road, known as The Sleeman House.
 - The Part IV Designated properties include; 214 Four Mile Creek Road, known as Woodbourne House and 137 Four Mile Creek Road, known as the Secord Mill.
 - The historic homes and buildings contribute to the historic character of the area.
- The subject property is located east of Four Mile Creek Road. Four Mile Creek Road is significant as the primary transportation route and connection for the Niagara region. It served as a trade route for the United Empire Loyalists and the Indigenous people before them.
- The residence has a moderate setback from the Four Mile Creek Road.
- The residence is set on a decent sized parcel which is flat towards the west of the parcel but slopes down towards the east, which is the rear of the property.
- The landscaping on the subject property includes a few trees towards the front and rear of the subject property.
- The access to the residence is directly from Four Mile Creek Road through a paved pedestrian walkway and a separate gravel driveway.
- 167 Four Mile Creek Road is set within a picturesque landscape and the form of the house is grounded and it creates a harmonious dialogue with the tall trees and open space that surrounds the subject property.
- The Four Mile Creek Road streetscape can be described as:
 - The structures are comprised of single to two storey structures.
 - Moderate setbacks from the road.
 - Mature trees lining both sides of the streets
 - A mixture of cladding materials, ranging from clapboard to brick.
 - Double lane road with pedestrian pathways on both sides of the road.



**Image 5: View of Four Mile Creek Road looking North
(Image taken on: February 28, 2024)**



**Image 6: View of Four Mile Creek Road looking South
(Image taken on: February 28, 2024)**



**Image 7: View of Adjacent Property across Four Mile Creek Road
(Image taken on: February 28, 2024)**



**Image 8: View of Adjacent Property at 166 Four Mile Creek Road
(Image taken on: February 28, 2024)**



**Image 9: View of Adjacent Vacant Land towards the South of Subject Property Looking North
(Image taken on: February 28, 2024)**



**Image 10: View of Adjacent Vacant Land towards the South of Subject Property Looking South
(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 167 Four Mile Creek Road based on the O. Reg 9/06 criteria (as amended by 569/22).

Table 2: Evaluation of CHVI of 167 Four Mile Creek Road

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>167 Four Mile Creek Road is a representative example of the Queen Anne Revival style with influences from the Italianate style. The one and a half storey detached dwelling has a T-shaped plan. The subject property features a symmetrical façade with a central tower protruding out on the façade, a central entrance and a pair of double windows on either side of the entrance. The façade also contains a covered porch with a pediment, which is supported on wooden posts and wooden railings. The frieze detail on the porch features a wooden cornice with dentils and pairs of wooden brackets. The main construction material of the residence is natural Queenston cement with partial stucco finish. Apart from the stucco finish, the central tower, side gables and dormers on the side elevations are clad in fish-scale and cedar shake shingles respectively. Black House also contains a complex roofline with the central tower having a steeply pitched hipped roof and the main structure of the residence with a cross-gable roof with gable ends on both the side elevations as well as the rear elevation. The gable ends feature moulded fascia with dentils. The overhanging eaves in the roofline contain wooden cornice with dentils and pairs of wooden brackets. The house has a bay window on the south elevation with a mansard roof, topped off with metal cresting detail. The window openings in the subject property range from segmentally arched openings on the first storey to rectangular vertical openings on the second storey. The windows on the first storey contain plain wooden trim within the structural openings of the windows with plain concrete lug sills. The windows on the second storey, on the other hand, contain plain wooden trim on the outside of the structural window openings with wooden slip sills.</p>
<p>The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>167 Four Mile Creek Road displays a high degree of physical value as being an early example of a poured concrete construction in the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Research into the construction</p>

Description	✓	Value
degree of craftsmanship or artistic value		<p>methodology indicates that floor joists were set on ledgers, and then cast into the concrete for all the floors. This method of construction varied from the general wooden frame structures found in the Town and therefore gives an insight into the alternate construction craftsmanship being utilized in the early 1900s.</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>
The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of technical or scientific achievement		167 Four Mile Creek Road does not display a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.
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>167 Four Mile Creek Road has historical associations with Queenston Cement Works company also known as Isaac Usher & Son. The Queenston Cement Works company was run by Isaac Usher and Hudson Usher, between 1885 to 1904. The cement plant was established in 1885 towards the east of St. Davids and on the face of Niagara Escarpment. The raw material for the plant was sourced from the Niagara Escarpment. At the height of its operation, Queenston Cement Works, supplied natural cement to Sault Ste. Marie and St. Lawrence canals. Apart from the major infrastructure projects, Queenston Cement Works also supplied cement to residences in the St. Davids urban area. Among these houses, the Black House is one of the few surviving examples of a residence constructed using natural cement.</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		167 Four Mile Creek Road does not have the potential to yield information that contributes to the understanding of a community or culture.

Description	✓	Value
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	✓	167 Four Mile Creek Road reflects the work of Isaac Usher as a cement masonry contractor. During the early 1900s the most common material for the construction of residences was considered to be stone or brick masonry with wooden frames. During this time, he experimented with cement as a construction material.
The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining, or supporting the character of an area	✓	167 Four Mile Creek Road has contextual value because it is important in maintaining the character of the area. 167 Four Mile Creek Road is part of the historic fabric of St. Davids urban area as it lies in close proximity to various other historic buildings and also buildings listed and designated on the Municipal Heritage Register. It acts as a character supporting resource for St. Davids.
The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually, or historically linked to its surroundings	✓	167 Four Mile Creek Road has contextual value because it is historically linked to its surroundings. The house was constructed using natural cement produced by the Queenston Cement Works. The company was run by Mabel's father, Isaac Usher, and brother, Hudson Usher, between 1885 to 1904. The natural cement material used in the construction of the house was mined from the Niagara Escarpment.
The property has contextual value because it is a landmark		167 Four Mile Creek Road is not considered a landmark.

5. STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST

This section provides the statement of CHVI for 167 Four Mile Creek Road which is located in the St. Davids urban area. It consists of a one and a half storey Queen Anne Revival style residence with Italianate influences which was constructed in 1902.

Statement of CHVI

167 Four Mile Creek Road is a representative example of the Queen Anne Revival style with influences from the Italianate style. The one and a half storey detached dwelling has a T-shaped plan. The subject property features a symmetrical façade with a central tower protruding out on the façade, a central entrance and a pair of double windows on either side of the entrance. The façade also contains a covered porch with a pediment, which is supported on wooden posts and wooden railings. The frieze detail on the porch features a wooden cornice with dentils and pairs of wooden brackets. The main construction material of the residence is natural Queenston cement with partial stucco finish. Apart from the stucco finish, the central tower, side gables and dormers on the side elevations are clad in fish-scale and cedar shake shingles respectively. Black House also contains a complex roofline with the central tower having a steeply pitched hipped roof and the main structure of the residence with a cross-gable roof with gable ends on both the side elevations as well as the rear elevation. The gable ends feature moulded fascia with dentils. The overhanging eaves in the roofline contains wooden cornice with dentils and pairs of wooden brackets. The house has a bay window on the south elevation with a mansard roof, topped off with metal cresting detail. The window openings in the subject property range from segmentally arched openings on the first storey to rectangular vertical openings on the second storey. The windows on the first storey contain plain wooden trim within the structural openings of the windows with plain concrete lug sills. The windows on the second storey, on the other hand, contain plain wooden trim on the outside of the structural window openings with wooden slip sills.

167 Four Mile Creek Road displays a high degree of physical value as being an early example of a poured concrete construction in the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Research into the construction methodology indicates that floor joists were set on ledgers, and then cast into the concrete for all the floors. This method of construction varied from the general wooden frame structures found in the Town and therefore gives an insight into the alternate construction craftsmanship being utilized in the early 1900s.

167 Four Mile Creek Road has historical associations with Queenston Cement Works company also known as Isaac Usher & Son. The Queenston Cement Works company was run by Isaac Usher and Hudson Usher, between 1885 to 1904. The cement plant was established in 1885 towards the east of St. Davids and on the face of Niagara Escarpment. The raw material for the plant was sourced from the Niagara Escarpment. At the height of its operation, Queenston Cement Works, supplied natural cement to Sault Ste. Marie and St. Lawrence canals. Apart from the major infrastructure projects, Queenston Cement Works also supplied cement to residences in the St. Davids urban area. Among these houses, the Black House is one of the few surviving examples of a residence constructed using natural cement.

167 Four Mile Creek Road reflects the work of Isaac Usher as a cement masonry contractor. During the early 1900s the most common material for the construction of residences was considered to be stone or brick masonry with wooden frames. During this time, he experimented with cement as a construction material.

167 Four Mile Creek Road has contextual value because it is important in maintaining the character of the area. 167 Four Mile Creek Road is part of the historic fabric of St. Davids urban area as it lies in close proximity to various other historic buildings and also buildings listed and designated on the Municipal Heritage Register. It acts as a character supporting resource for St. Davids.

167 Four Mile Creek Road has contextual value because it is historically linked to its surroundings. The house was constructed using natural cement produced by the Queenston Cement Works. The company was run by Mabel's father, Isaac Usher, and brother, Hudson Usher, between 1885 to 1904. The natural cement material used in the construction of the house was mined from the Niagara Escarpment.

5.1 HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES

- Two storey Queen Anne Revival style residence with Italianate influences
- Symmetrical façade
- Central tower on façade
- Central entrance
- Pair of double windows on facade
- Covered porch with pediment, wooden posts and railings
- Frieze, cornice with dentils and pairs of wooden brackets on porch
- Natural Queenston cement used for construction
- Fish-scale and cedar shakes shingles on central tower and side gables
- Cross-gabled roof with hipped roof on the central tower
- Moulded fascia with dentils on gable ends
- Overhanging eaves with denticulated cornice and pairs of brackets
- Bay window on the south elevation with a mansard roof, topped off with metal cresting detail
- Segmentally arched openings on the first storey and rectangular vertical openings on the second storey
- Location on Four Mile Creek 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. 167 Four Mile Creek Road meets six 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.