

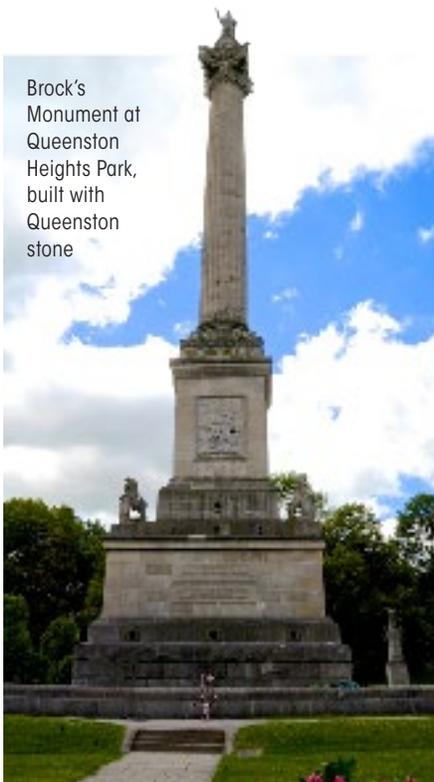
# Fit for a queen

*By Michael Scott*



Redevelopment  
at the former  
Queenston Quarry

Remembering Queenston Quarry: long-time supplier of stone for some of Ontario's most distinguished buildings



Brock's  
Monument at  
Queenston  
Heights Park,  
built with  
Queenston  
stone

Located in the Niagara community of St. David's, just off Highway 405 and Four Mile Creek Road, Queenston Quarry is arguably Ontario's best-known and most historically significant quarry. For over 150 years, stone from this quarry contributed greatly to the building of Ontario cities.

Renowned buildings across the entire province — from 19th century houses, to museums, to canals, to Ontario's legislature — were constructed using Queenston limestone. In fact, stone from Queenston Quarry was once one of the most important and widely used types of stone in all of Canada.

Remnants of the Queenston site can still be visited today, although redevelopment is quickly changing the face of this once active quarry.

Established in 1837, Queenston Quarry

is located in the Niagara Escarpment area and UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Many quarries in Queenston were first opened during the construction of the Grand Trunk Railway which ran in Ontario, Quebec and the northeast United States. The quarry continued to be productive into the 1990s.

The silver-grey crinoidal limestone extracted from Queenston Quarry has been compared to Indiana limestone — although the former tends to be coarser and harder. These qualities are believed to be more conducive to local conditions compared to stone imported from Indiana. Queenston stone is also very durable and has low absorption and porosity.

## HISTORIC STRUCTURES

In Toronto, stone from Queenston Quarry can be found within structures at Queen's Park and the Royal Ontario Museum, which are both renowned for incorpo-

rating material extracted in the province. The two structures are considered by many to be some of Toronto's most important and most beautiful landmarks.

Early Toronto transportation hubs, such as Union Station and the Gibraltar Point Lighthouse on The Toronto Islands, also used Queenston stone. It's clear that Queenston limestone is an integral part of the city's architectural heritage.

It's no surprise that many buildings in Niagara Falls, St. Catharines, Welland and in surrounding towns and villages also took advantage of this impressive local resource, creating a wealth of notable structures. In the Niagara Region, the stone was most famously used in the construction of Brock's Monument at Queenston Heights Park. Nestled atop the Niagara Escarpment and standing 185 feet high, the monument was constructed between 1853 and 1856 as a fitting tribute to Major General Sir Isaac Brock — a hero of the War of 1812 — who helped make Canada the country it is today.

Other well-known buildings in the area that incorporated Queenston stone

include the Old Post Office and Customs House on Park Street in Niagara Falls (also a national historic site); the second Welland Canal; buildings at Hamilton's McMaster University; the post office in St. Catharines; and the Goat Island Bridge in the Niagara Falls State Park in New York that sits adjacent to the Horseshoe Falls on the Canadian side. Over the years, the stone was also used in much of the infrastructure constructed in the Niagara Region, including local canals and bridges.

Currently, the former Queenston Quarry site is undergoing a major redevelopment.

The proposal includes housing, a golf course, a winery and other recreational opportunities. Bringing the project back full circle, the new buildings in this location will be built with the limestone extracted from the site. In addition, there has been discussion about making the quarry a national historic site, which would be very fitting given that many of the buildings constructed from the stone have already earned this distinction. ●

*Michael Scott is policy and legislation manager at the Ontario Sand, Stone & Gravel Association (OSSGA).*

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