

5. FORMER SETTLEMENT OF SILVER CREEK

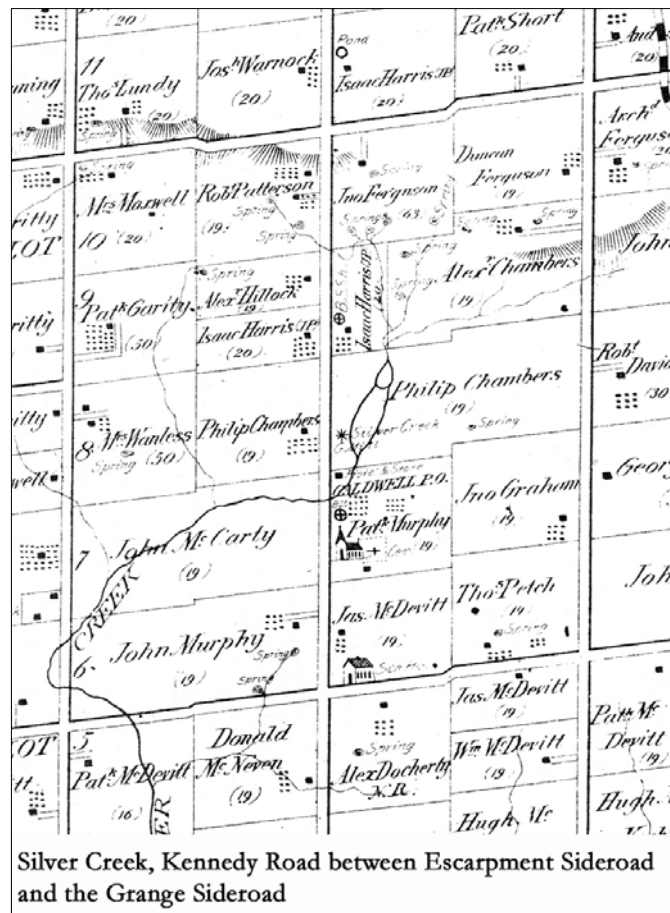
Note: All references to lots are East of Hurontario Street (EHS) unless otherwise noted.

5.1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Candidate CHL area is considered a candidate cultural heritage landscape in the category of an *organically evolved landscape*, as defined by the Town of Caledon: Criteria for the Identification of Cultural Heritage Landscapes. For study purposes, the area examined is centered on Kennedy Road between Escarpment Sideroad and Grange Sideroad. The local settlement patterns were influenced by the natural features of the area, which include the Silver Creek valley and the rolling terrain associated with Caledon Mountain.

This area is considered an excellent Candidate CHL because it clearly ‘embodies and/or is associated with’ a number of Caledon’s major historic themes, including *early pioneer settlement, farming, travel, and early industry*.

The area includes a number of well preserved 19th century buildings associated with the early settlement of the area, which, like most of central Ontario, is derived from immigration from the British Isles. The area is also home to the first Catholic Church in Caledon Township.



“Silver Creek” also known as Caldwell, c. 1877
Source: 1877 Historical Atlas of Peel County

5.2 INVENTORY

1. Physiographic Description

The Caledon Hills stretch across the township from Belfountain to Caledon East, forming part of the western end of the Oak Ridges Moraine. In the vicinity of Highway 10 and Kennedy Road is a steep rise up the Niagara Escarpment known as "Caledon Mountain".



Looking south on Kennedy Road from Escarpment Sideroad

Skirting along the top of the Escarpment is Escarpment Sideroad, which affords spectacular views over the rolling landscape.

Along Kennedy Road, a branch of Silver Creek, a tributary of the Credit River, has carved a valley into the undulating landscape. This tributary is borne of many springs that rise in the surrounding hills.

2. Processes

The area known as Silver Creek derives its name from the Silver Creek branch of the Credit River system. Settlement in the area dates from the early 1820s when both English and Irish pioneers immigrated to what is now central Ontario. Attracted by prospects of better economic conditions, they soon migrated to the newly opened Township areas. By the name of the creek it is possible that it was originally thought that precious minerals could be found here, another possible reason for its relatively early settlement.



St. Cornelius Catholic Church

As indicated by the names on the 1859 Tremaine Map, and the presence of an early Catholic Church, relatively rare in the Township, this area had a strong contingent of settlers of Irish Catholic descent. By 1840 the community of Caldwell (its name derived from the local post office) and its surrounding parish supported 30-40 Catholic families.

Although the community was locally known as Silver Creek from the late 1820s, it was formally referred to as Caldwell following the opening of the post office. Both names appear on the 1859 Tremaine Map with the former seeming to refer to the general area while the latter refers to the hub at that time, a bend in the creek across Kennedy Road at the border of Lots 7 and 8. This node, which developed at the river

crossing, consisted of grist and sawmills as well as an inn and Orange lodge, store, post office with a blacksmith shop and the California Exchange (another hotel, possible reference to mining?) slightly to the north. Already by this time a schoolhouse had been built at the southwest corner of, what is now, the Grange Sideroad and Kennedy Road. Particularly impressive was the early establishment of a church, St. Constantine's, constructed on the W ½ of Lot 7, Con. II, on the lot belonging to Cornelius Murphy. It was the practice of the Catholic diocese at that time to construct only one church per township, thus, as the first Catholic church in the Township, St. Cornelius was referred to as "The Catholic Church of Caledon".

In 1873 the Township Assessment Rolls, which listed the names of inhabitants in each locality, township or village, refers to it as Caldwell, describing it as: *"a small village in the Township of Caledon, 14 miles from Brampton. It is situate on Silver Creek, a beautiful spring creek, which, although small, affords excellent water-power. Population about 60."*

By 1877, the Historical Atlas of Peel County shows the community had continued to develop with a second blacksmith's shop and most importantly St. Cornelius' Roman Catholic Church with associated cemetery, which had evolved from St. Constantine's and may well have been destroyed by fire. The Township map denotes the Caldwell post office, although the historical record, contained within the Historical Atlas, indicates the village name as Silver Creek.

3. **Patterns of Spatial Organization**

The Township of Caledon was surveyed in 1818 and 1819, using a conventional grid of concession lines (running north-south) and sideroads (running east-west). The concession roads were numbered from the 'Centre Road' (Hurontario Street). Side roads intersected the concession roads approximately every five full lots. The historic location of the concession roads and side roads remain intact. In the double front survey system, each half of a 200 acre-lot fronted on a different concession road, with the half-lot being 100 acres in size. The early settlers followed these patterns, and the field layout and property demarcations by fence and tree-lines were aligned to the roads, as were most laneways, buildings, and houses. The many strands of Silver Creek through these lots and the springs which are there origin influenced the placement of structures. It was a road crossing in association with adjacent milling potential which created the urban node known as Silver Creek. While there is some increased density of settlement over a purely rural landscape, there was no formal village subdivision of property, rather simply the linear development of a service centre for the neighbouring farms.

4. Elements

Circulation Networks

The road network through this area remains relatively unchanged with gravel surfacing. As noted above there does not seem to have ever been roads internal to Silver Creek core beyond the typical cart tracks.

Boundary Demarcations

In the northern section of the Candidate CHL area the branches of the creek form a natural boundary between the east and west halves of several lots, serving also to define the Candidate CHL area. The ridge at Escarpment Sideroad is a natural northern boundary to the whole Candidate CHL area. Between lots the typical demarcations of windows, hedgerows and cedar rail fences continue to be the visible demarcation of property boundaries.

Vegetation Related to Land Use

In the valley of Silver Creek, several farm complexes are nestled against a backdrop of rolling terrain and woodlands, with buildings well removed from the roadway. Others are located on higher ground, with laneway, farmhouse and outbuildings in a more traditional farm cluster, in close relationship to the road. Agricultural fields have been cleared in areas unobstructed by topography and natural features. Property boundary lines and farm lanes exhibit hedgerows and planted windbreaks. Tree plantations have been established in recent decades, and woodland areas are naturally regenerating.



Farm complex overlooking Silver Creek

Framing the long-range views of the Escarpment, the historic roadside tree canopy is rapidly diminishing due to age and widening of the road over time; without intervention, this historic element will soon be lost altogether.

Buildings, Structures and Objects

*Note that * denotes properties designated under the Ontario Heritage Act.*

At its peak in the late 19th century, the community of Silver Creek comprised three hotels, a store, saw mill, grist mill, blacksmith shop and wagon factory, several farms, a church, post office and the local schoolhouse. As with many 19th century hamlets, settlement in Silver Creek revolved around the local mills, which were established in the early 1820s by English

settler Timothy Chambers. Chambers was later joined by his brother Philip, who operated one of the hotels. Several of the original 19th century structures remain in excellent condition, including the community buildings. Several well-kept 19th century buildings, some associated with the founding families of Silver Creek still exist.

16419 Kennedy Road* (Silver Creek Schoolhouse)

Located at the north-east corner of the Grange Sideroad and Kennedy Road, the brick schoolhouse was constructed in 1884. It is considered one of the best preserved and architecturally interesting schoolhouses in Caledon. The original log schoolhouse on the property was built c.1850.



Silver Creek Schoolhouse

The current building was designed more ornately than most schoolhouses with semicircular window heads, brick buttresses, and brick detailing more characteristic of church architecture. The schoolhouse was in use until 1963, and is now maintained as a private residence.

16631 Kennedy Road (St. Cornelius Catholic Church and cemetery)

The first Catholic church in Caledon Township, and one of only two 19th century Catholic churches in the Town of Caledon. Its name is derived from a local farmer and innkeeper by the name of Cornelius Murphy who donated five acres of land on which to build the original church. The original church, St. Constantine's, constructed around 1834, was a small log structure situated on the same site. Murphy died not long after the first church was completed, and his tombstone can be seen in the cemetery beside the existing church. The **St. Cornelius Rectory** is located directly south of the church.

Also the **c. 1880s 2-storey brick farmhouse south of church** is of note.

16761 Kennedy Road

The c. 1850s stone farmhouse that once housed the Caldwell post office. Currently pending heritage designation (at time of the CHL evaluation).

16849 Kennedy Road

Large two-storey frame farmhouse with wrap around verandahs, built c. 1896.

16834 Kennedy Road

Located north of the point where Kennedy Road crosses Silver Creek, the former California Exchange, one of the three hotels that once served the area, still remains. The Ontario Gothic farmhouse was built by Philip Chambers in 1865.

A family burial ground on the property includes the gravesite of Philip Chambers, and three of his children, who died in a diphtheria epidemic of 1861, which tragically claimed the lives of seven children in three local families.



Former California Exchange

Settlement Clusters

By the latter half of the 1800s, the accessibility of the surrounding roads and the presence of a water-powered mill site allowed Silver Creek to develop to a community of 150 residents, three hotels, a store, grist mill, blacksmith shop and wagon factory. However, the bypassing of Silver Creek by the railways that traversed the area in the 1870's, limited its growth. With the road network, natural topography and many built elements still intact, the original settlement pattern and community structure of Silver Creek is still very evident.

Archaeological Sites

While the specific Candidate CHL area has not itself been subject to archaeological survey archaeological sites have been registered along a section of Silver Creek in close proximity to Hurontario Street and just west of the Candidate CHL area. Using the standard criteria for predicting the potential for pre-historic sites, i.e., (proximity to water etc.), the area around Silver Creek exhibits high archeological potential. As well, there is historic archeological potential associated with locations of former buildings and structures such as barns or the grist and saw mills, blacksmith shops, earlier church etc.

4. Site Context

The rolling nature of Kennedy Road as it descends the Escarpment typifies the natural terrain of Caledon Township, and offers long range views south to Toronto and Lake Ontario. The 19th century schoolhouse and church still grace the knoll just north of the Grange Sideroad. There are spectacular views westward to the Escarpment and Devil's Pulpit, which is the 'signature' landmark of the area.



View to Devil's Pulpit from Kennedy Road

5.3 EVALUATION

To be identified as a CHL an area must clearly embody both heritage significance and integrity. The following Significance Criteria are excerpted from the *Town of Caledon: Criteria for the Identification of Cultural Heritage Landscapes*, and are provided here for reference.

Significance

Significance Criteria

While any landscape upon which humankind has left their imprint is a cultural landscape, only those cultural landscapes that have a deep connection with the history of the jurisdiction can be identified as cultural heritage landscapes. To be considered significant from a heritage perspective it must be demonstrated through the Inventory Report that the Candidate CHL meets one or more of the following criteria:

- A. Is associated with events that made significant contributions to the broad patterns of area history, i.e., strong association with central themes.*
- B. Is closely associated with the lives of individuals and/or families who are considered significant to the history of the area.*
- C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a particular settlement pattern or lifeway whether derived from ethnic background, imposed by the landscape, was the practice of a specific historic period or a combination of the above.*
- D. Manifests a particularly close and harmonious long-standing relationship between the natural and domestic landscape.*
- E. Has yielded or is likely to yield information important to prehistory or history.*
- F. Is strongly associated with the cultural and/or spiritual traditions of First Nations or any other ethnic and/or religious group.*

Integrity

A CHL must be able to be justified as distinct area of contiguous heritage integrity. The key individual elements which constitute the cultural heritage landscape and the way in which their interweaving makes a unique 'place' must still clearly reflect the historic period and/or organic evolution from which the heritage significance derives.

Conclusions

This Candidate CHL is considered to be of heritage significance under several criteria categories but most strongly under Significance Criteria 'A':

The key elements of the area – the Silver Creek valley, the historic roads, and several seemingly well preserved 19th century farm properties and several community buildings - remain in historic

relationship to each other. There is relatively little new development within the stretch of Kennedy Road between the Escarpment Sideroad and the Grange Sideroad.

Spectacular long-range views on Kennedy Road, south west to Lake Ontario and westward to the Escarpment and Devil's Pulpit, still exist relatively intact. Views to and from several of the individual sites have not changed significantly from the historic period. Maintenance of these traditional views and vistas will play a large part in maintaining the CHL's integrity.

The area exhibits over all integrity. The original settlement patterns, relationships of natural and built elements, and representative historic themes – all of which lend the area its significance - can be understood and appreciated.

5.4 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The area typifies an early 19th century settlement cluster developed as a service node for the surrounding farming community and as a resting place for travellers. It developed quite early for Caledon, forming around a road crossing of Silver Creek, in an environment well suited for milling. As well as its importance as an early hamlet it is unique as representing the beginnings of the Irish Catholic community in Caledon Township, as home to St. Cornelius, “the Catholic Church of Caledon”.



Brick farm complex on Kennedy Road

The original community structure and lifestyle are clearly evident in the well-preserved historic buildings, which include the church, schoolhouse, several farms and a former hotel. Further investigation would no doubt reveal particular characteristics of this early Irish and English community, both material and with regard to lifeways.

The historic relationships of built structures to the surrounding natural environment – the valley farms, church and schoolhouse on high ground - are apparent. Through its stories the community illustrates the challenges as well as the successes of 19th century rural living.

Furthermore, as an *organically evolved 'continuing landscape'*, Silver Creek “retains an active social role in contemporary society closely associated with the traditional way of life, and which the evolutionary process is still in progress” as the church is still active and farming is still present.

Character Defining Features (Numbers refer to Caledon CHL Inventory database)

- SC-1 16631 Kennedy Road, St. Cornelius Catholic Church and cemetery, and St. Cornelius rectory directly south of church.
- SC-2 *16419 Kennedy Road, Silver Creek Schoolhouse
- SC-3 16761 Kennedy Road, and family cemetery
- SC-4 16849 Kennedy Road, Silver Creek Farm

SC-5 16834 Kennedy Road, California Exchange (former hotel)

SC-6 c. 1880s 2-storey brick farmhouse south of church.

SC-7 Silver Creek valley

Others (not mapped)

Rolling terrain of Caledon Mountain

Tree-lined, gravel surfaced Kennedy Road

Various split rail fences, and hedgerows

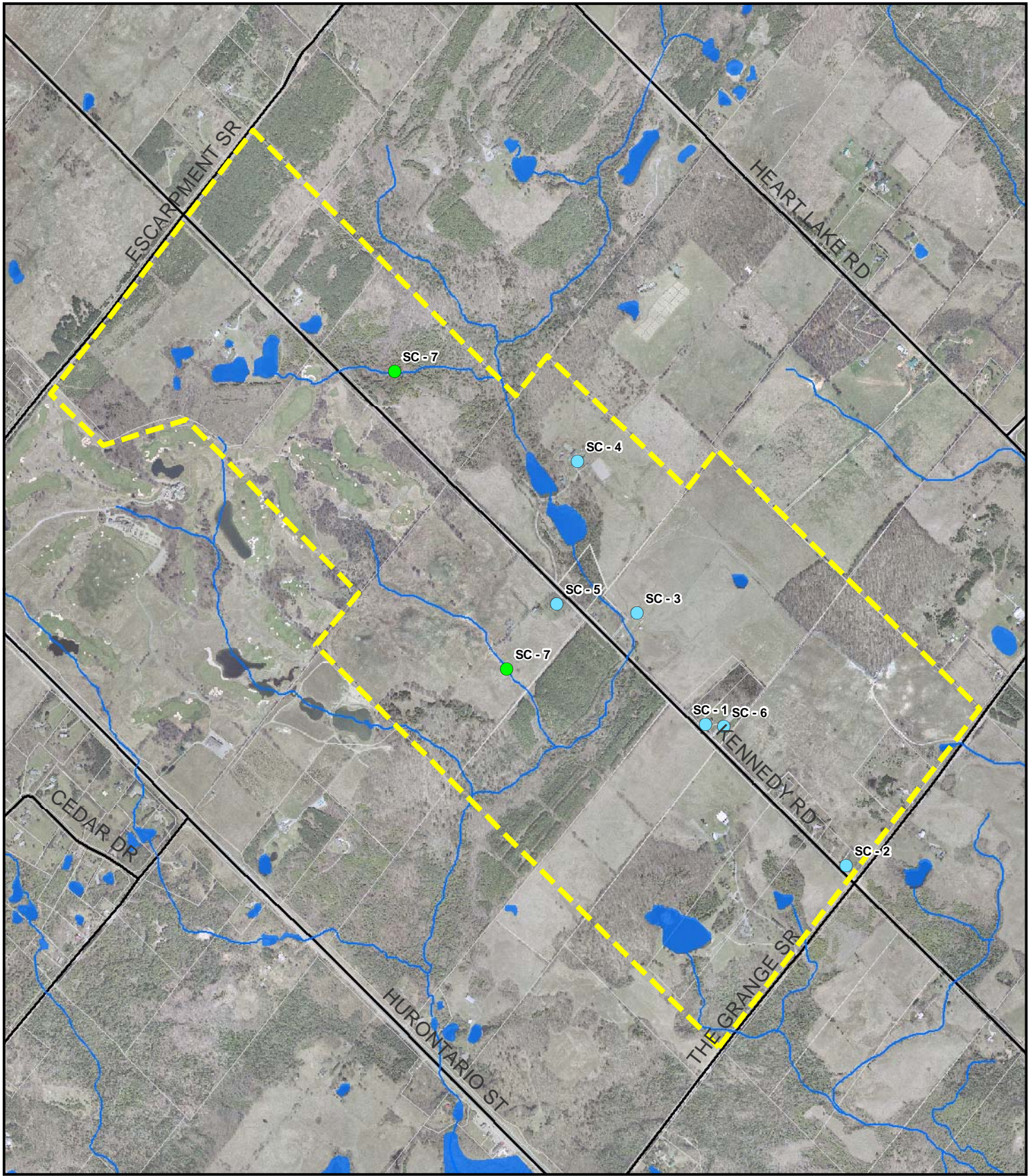
Long range views - south to Lake Ontario, and west to Devil's Pulpit and Escarpment;

It is thus recommended that the Candidate CHL referred to as the Former Settlement of Silver Creek be identified as a CHL.

5.5 BOUNDARIES

The boundaries to the Silver Creek CHL are generally defined by Escarpment Sideroad to the north and Grange Sideroad to the south which appears to be the extent of the core of the original community. Boundaries to the east and west are generally the half-lots to either side of Kennedy Road, which, particularly through lots 7-10, are bounded by the stream valley(s).

Views and viewsheds internal to the CHL, such as the Silver Creek valley area, and externally, westward to the Escarpment and Devil's Pulpit, particularly from the church and schoolhouse, and south along Kennedy Road to Lake Ontario, are important considerations in preserving the special character of this CHL.



- Character Defining Elements**
- Road
 - Built
 - Landscape
 - CHL Boundary
 - Rivers / Streams
 - Lakes / Ponds
 - Property Boundary (2006)