



Doors Open 2013

Adaptive Reuse at the Distillery District

May 25 & 26

The Distillery District is delighted to participate again in Toronto's Doors Open celebration of the city's built heritage. To illustrate this year's Doors Open theme of "creators ... makers ... and innovators," we are focusing on the original architecture and adaptive reuse of the Distillery's oldest surviving building, the Stone Distillery at 36 Distillery Lane. Both David Roberts' 1860s building and the 2000s adaptive reuse display the creativity, innovation, and craftsmanship that result in superb buildings.

Put at its simplest, "adaptive reuse" means finding new uses for old structures without destroying their heritage value. While the entire building has been upgraded, today's emphasis is on the space that once contained the Power House for the distillery, where you are now standing. Views into other parts of the building are also available as you move through the displays.



Looking Up

This transformation involved deep understanding of architect David Roberts' (1810-1881) Victorian building; respect for the original fabric of the building (e.g., materials and building techniques); creative alterations (e.g., inserting a modern staircase into a 5-storey 1860s building); reliance on highly skilled craftspeople (e.g., masons and carpenters); and attracting tenants looking for unique and historically intriguing spaces.

As you explore the four-storey exhibition of heritage artifacts and the surrounding building, keep an eye out for the following examples of celebrating the original fabric of the building and upgrading it for use by tenants in the digital age.



Modern Staircase

How do you integrate the modern with the historic? The glass-and-steel staircase inserted into the Power House reflects the industrial heritage of the building, without obstructing views of the original structure. Elsewhere you will see modern sheet metal ducts snaking their way through exposed ceilings and an elevator unobtrusively inserted behind the open atrium space.



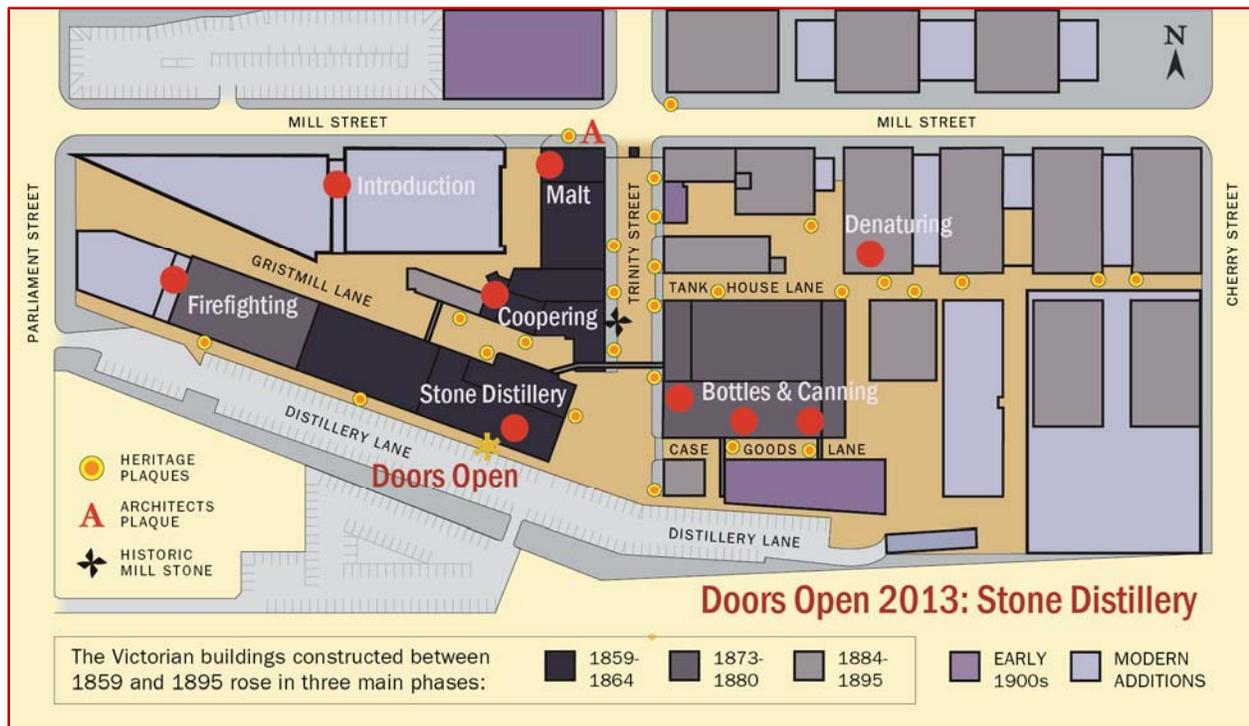
Stone Distillery Wall

The history of the building is inscribed on its walls. Rather than patching or hiding damaged walls, the materials are allowed to tell their story. Here you see the arched outline of the wooden casing that housed the flywheel of a huge steam engine; fragments of the highly-finished walls that encompassed the engineer's room; and part of the rough limestone walls that comprise most of the building.



Looking West

Be sure to pause on the third floor landing to look east and west through the glass doors into the Bimm office space. The view to the east shows sections of the two-storey wooden grain hopper where corn and other grains were stored. The view to the west shows a distilling column at the far south (left) corner, series of cast iron columns supporting double-beam timber construction characteristic of the distillery. Sheet metal ducts run westward under the exposed ceiling, again reflecting the industrial character of the building.



Industrial Heritage Artifacts Exhibits

When the Gooderham & Worts distillery closed in 1990, hundreds of industrial artifacts remained on site. To help visitors appreciate the working life of the distillery, exhibits of these artifacts have been installed at several locations throughout the District. See map for Doors Open and Artifact Exhibits.

Milling, Distilling & Aging, 33 Mill Street

This introductory exhibit offers a good overview of the industrial processes involved in creating whisky. Featured artifacts include a distillation control panel, grain mills and a section of barrel racking used for aging whisky.

Firefighting, Pumps & Pipes, 8 Distillery Lane

With fire an ever present threat, G&W maintained pumps and firefighting equipment at the ready, including the giant 1895 1200-gpm steam pump on display.

Coopering, Offices & Labs, 44 Gristmill Lane

These buildings contained barrel-making workshops, offices, labs and alcohol rectifying. Featured artifacts include barrel-making tools, and a giant 1870s safe.

Milling, Mashing & Distilling, 33 Distillery Lane

The 1860s Stone Distillery formed the heart of G&W operations, housing Milling, the Steam Engine, Mashing and Distilling. A dramatic, four-storey exhibit explains each process.

Bottling & Canning, 9 Trinity Street & 8 Case Goods Lane

Exhibits about bottling and canning operations include a large collection of G&W bottles and brands.

Denaturing & Coppersmithing, 24 Tank House Lane

Exhibits explore alcohol denaturing, as well as coppersmithing and general maintenance activities. Featured artifacts include a large double-hulled mixing kettle and early copper fabricating and wood working equipment.

Malting, 51 Mill Street

This exhibit explains the two-stage process used to transform grain into malt, one of the key ingredients used to make whisky.