



Doors Open 2015

Pure Spirits Scale Tank Loft: Adaptive Reuse

May 23rd

The Distillery District is delighted to participate again in *Doors Open*, Toronto's annual celebration of its built heritage. This year visitors will have a rare opportunity to inspect one of the Distillery's most unusual spaces: the Scale Tank Loft atop the Pure Spirits complex, which has been transformed from industrial space into a modern, multimedia design office.

David Roberts, Jr.'s 1873 Pure Spirits complex consisted of seven buildings that were linked functionally and architecturally. Because of the potentially explosive nature of distilling, each of the four stills fronting on Trinity Street was contained in its own, very solidly built structure. The Scale Tank Loft, where all alcohol produced at the Distillery was weighed in huge tanks before being piped off to other locations for aging, denaturing or distribution, was completely separated from the stills by a massive masonry wall. There was no direct access, seriously complicating any adaptive reuse of the **adjacent-but-compartmentalized** spaces, all with floors at different elevations.

Put at its simplest, "adaptive reuse" means finding new uses for old structures without destroying their heritage value. It involves preserving, restoring, and reconfiguring historic buildings and spaces to accommodate new uses, new technologies, and modern requirements. Because of its complexity and relative remoteness, the Pure Spirits Scale Tank Loft was the last space so adapted ... and one of the most intriguing. We hope that your visit to the Pure Spirits Loft will be a highlight – literally and figuratively – of your Doors Open day.

As you climb the stairs, notice the **metal blast-proof door** that once connected the still room on your right with a tank-storage room on your left. All doors that you pass here and many in the Loft space are modern additions. Turn left at the top of the stairs. The Reception area occupies part of the former **Mixing Room**, with a waterproof lead floor that protected the wood floor beneath, where raw alcohol was blended with distilled water and various (secret) flavourings.

Look up over the door to see one of the industrial heritage artifacts remaining in this space, the **copper condenser and boiler** that was attached to a polar water still behind the wall. This artifact group provided the distilled water required during the blending process. (The Polar Still can be seen at the El Catrin restaurant at 18 Tank House Lane. And one of the flavouring tanks that used to be here is now on view at 33 Mill Street.)

Move past the open studio area and up to the actual **Scale Tank Loft**, dominated by three massive **copper tanks**, each standing on giant **platform scales** manufactured by the Fairbanks Company around 1898. Notice the classical elegance of Victorian industrial design, with gilt lettering and fluted columns. These tanks have been converted into modern editing suites, accessible by doors cut-out of the tank walls and protected by sound-proofing affixed to the curved walls.

The final viewing point is the new **deck** that was built out over part of the oldest tank storage house on site. All the doors and windows inserted into the original 1870s built fabric are new, but reflect the style of the originals found around the site. Here you can enjoy the most spectacular views available on site. Looking east, you can trace the pipes that once carried alcohol from the Pure Spirits complex to other locations. And looking west, toward the Stone Distillery and downtown in the distance, you can see the enclosed Gooderham & Worts pipe bridge across Trinity Street that once carried alcohol, but now carries digital cable.



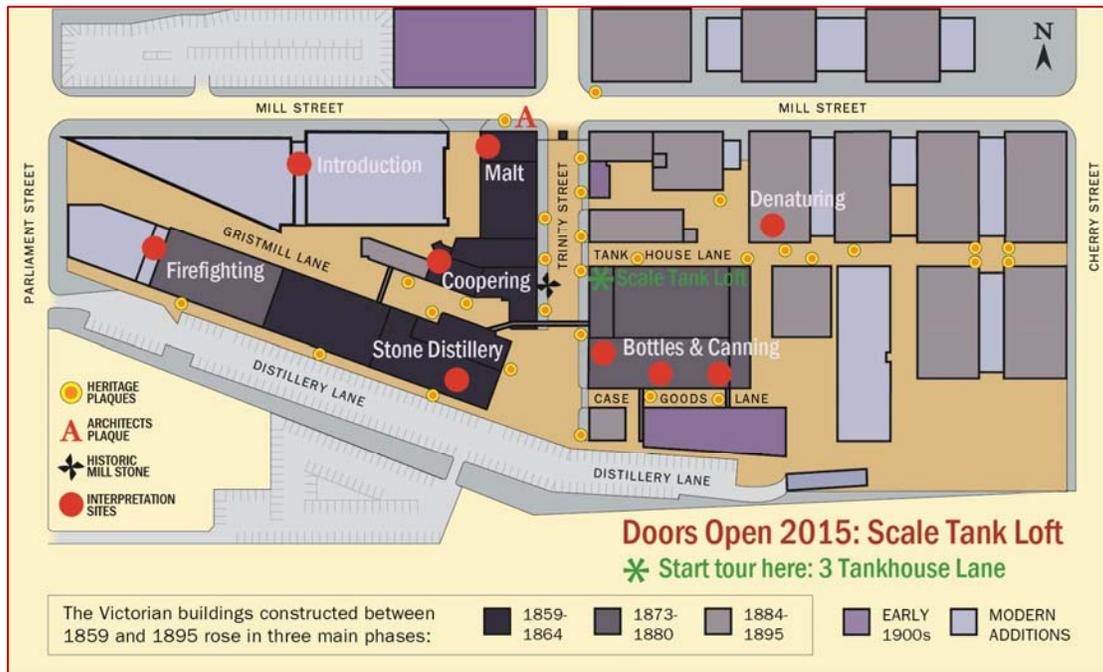
Condenser & Boiler



Scale Tank & Entrance to Editing Studio



View west from deck



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.