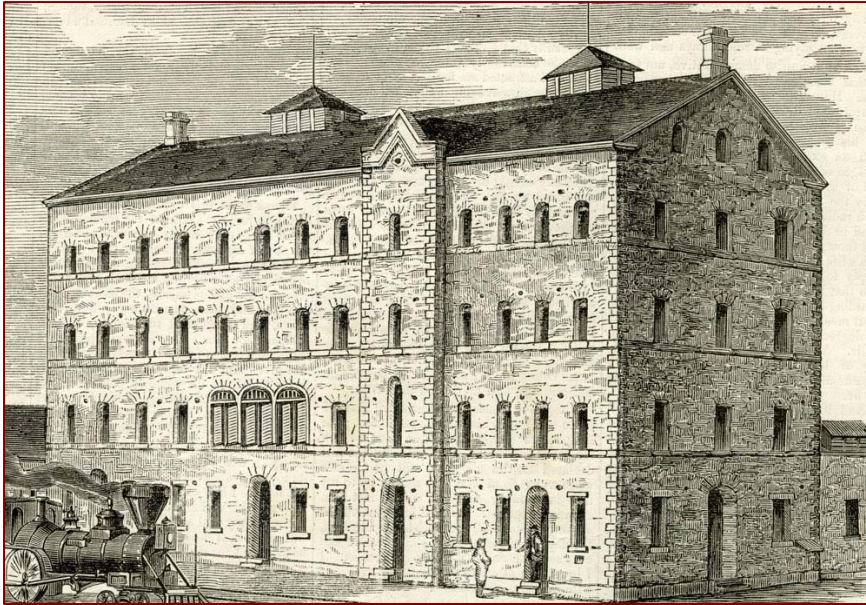


Architecture: Dormer Windows



Stone Distillery, April 1863



TPL 5th floor, ca. 1867 DHD/CTA

Over time, architectural details may change. Perhaps for stylistic reasons. Perhaps for functional reasons. Perhaps for convenience or cost or a variety of other reasons. The up-and-down history of dormer windows on the Stone Distillery provides an intriguing example, especially since there were several changes, but few clear explanations.

When David Roberts, Sr.'s [Stone Distillery](#) opened in January 1861, it had no dormer windows protruding from the roof. Only three windows at either gable end of the long fifth floor admitted natural light. A slightly ripped plan of the fifth floor, probably drawn around 1867, confirms that floor was divided into three functional sections: a granary at the eastern end that received and fed grain into [the mill](#) below; hoppers in the middle that fed ground grain into [mash tubs](#) below; and [distilling](#) equipment at the west end, including spirit receivers, water, and stills connected to equipment on lower floors. Some light shown on the granary (right) and distilling (left) in the 1863 illustration from the *Canadian Illustrated News*.

Presumably, the architect and proprietors felt that these top-floor processes required no extra light, a view confirmed when the distillery was rebuilt after the devastating [fire of October 26, 1869](#). The 1870 Stone Distillery maintained exactly the same profile as the earlier version. But, for unknown reasons, this opinion changed between about 1873 and 1877 when a dozen, south-facing dormer windows were inserted into the fifth floor roof, as is indicated in another painting owned by Gooderham & Worts.

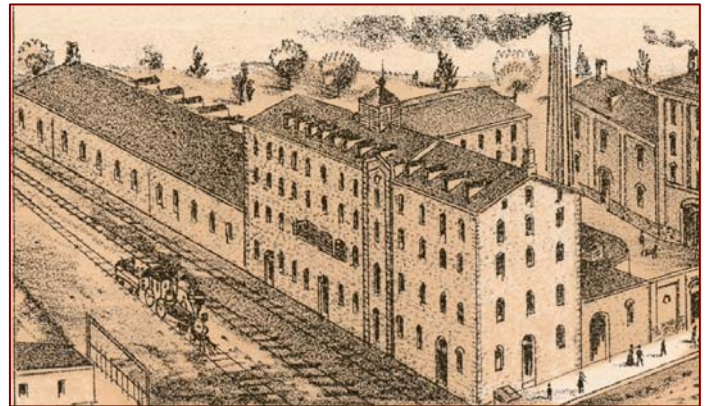


No dormers, May 1870 DHD



First dormers, ca. 1873 DHD

The new dormer windows were set back from the edge of the roof, allowing light to fall on work and workers below, but not allowing Victorian workers to gaze out the windows. Timperlake's 1877 bird's-eye view of the distillery suggests that they were located about half-way up the slope of the roof. Unfortunately, there are no known descriptions of whether and how equipment, technology, or work flow might have changed in the mid-1870s. Nor is there evidence that initial light conditions were actually inadequate. But for some reason, changes were made.



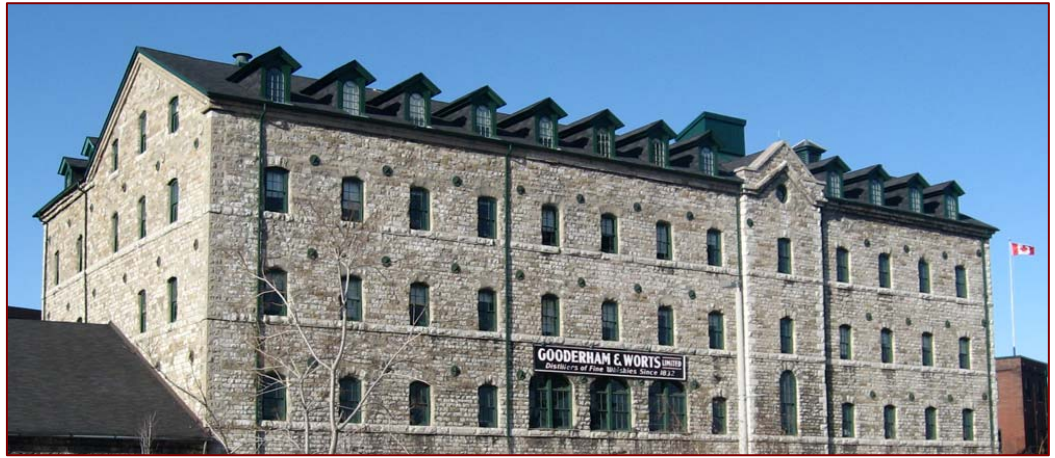
Bird's-eye view of dormers, 1877 CTA

The dormers stayed put for nearly a hundred years, as [images](#) from various periods confirm. In fact, it was only in the late 1960s that they were removed, apparently as a cost-saving measure when the original slate-tile roof had to be replaced. By then, Gooderham & Worts was no longer producing grain alcohol, so milling and other operations were no longer needed. Simply boarding over the old dormer openings rather than restoring them, and re-roofing with asphalt shingles rather than slates were the most economic decisions to take.

It was only in 2006 that dormers returned to the Stone Distillery. To make the top floor of the Stone Distillery more attractive to modern tenants, working at desks rather than industrial tasks, new dormers were re-inserted into the roof. While the design of the dormers replicated the original, the location was distinctly different. They were placed lower down on the roof so that office workers could enjoy natural light ... and spectacular views out over the city and the lake.



No dormers, 1960s



New dormers overlooking the view, 2008

SG

A “dormer” is a small, roofed window, with vertical front and sides, that is set into the slope of a roof and projects from it.

Please send your comments or questions to Manager of Heritage Services, Sally Gibson, sg@thedistillerydistrict.com.

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