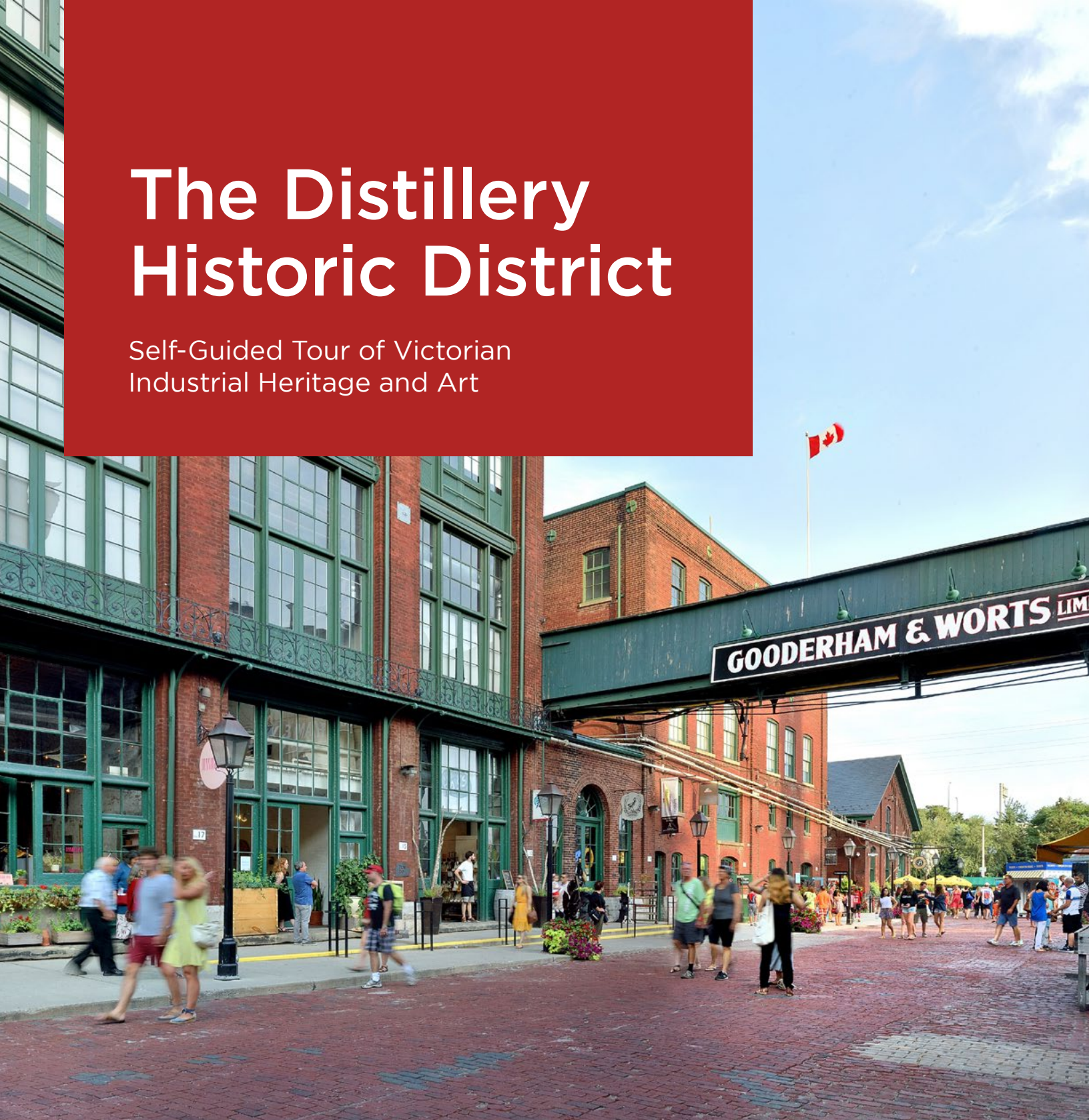


# The Distillery Historic District

Self-Guided Tour of Victorian  
Industrial Heritage and Art



The Distillery District is a National Historic Site containing 40 Victorian buildings and hundreds of industrial artifacts that collectively recall Canada's industrial past and the proud history of the former Gooderham & Worts Distillery.



## History

In the early 1830s, James Worts and brother-in-law William Gooderham emigrated from England to Upper Canada to establish a flour milling business. Their 70-foot tall windmill perched on the edge of Toronto Bay soon became a symbol of the new City of Toronto.

When the wind proved too erratic to power the mill, Gooderham & Worts (G&W) installed one of the earliest steam engines in Toronto. In 1837, a still was added to convert surplus grain into whisky, sowing the seeds that saw the little windmill in the wilderness grow into the largest distillery in the British Empire and, for a time, the world.

The most significant plant expansion came with the construction of the massive Stone Distillery completed in 1861 adjacent to the new Grand Trunk Railroad and the company's Lake Ontario wharfs. With the new plant in operation, production capacity grew from 80,000 to two million gallons per year—a 25-fold increase.

A Malt House and Cooperage were added in 1864. Additional stills were installed in 1873, and ten alcohol-storage buildings were constructed between 1879 and 1891 to facilitate the new government mandated requirement to age whisky before selling it. The final Victorian building was an 1895 pump house for G&W's fire department.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century brought two world wars, prohibition and smuggling, and finally globalization, leading to the decline and closing of the distillery in 1990 after more than 150 years of continuous production. The plant was reborn in 2003 as the vibrant arts, entertainment, and cultural district that you see today under the guidance and ownership of Cityscape Development Corporation and Dream Unlimited Corp.

1896 VIEW OF GOODERHAM & WORTS DISTILLERY  
LITHOGRAPH BY A.H. HIDER



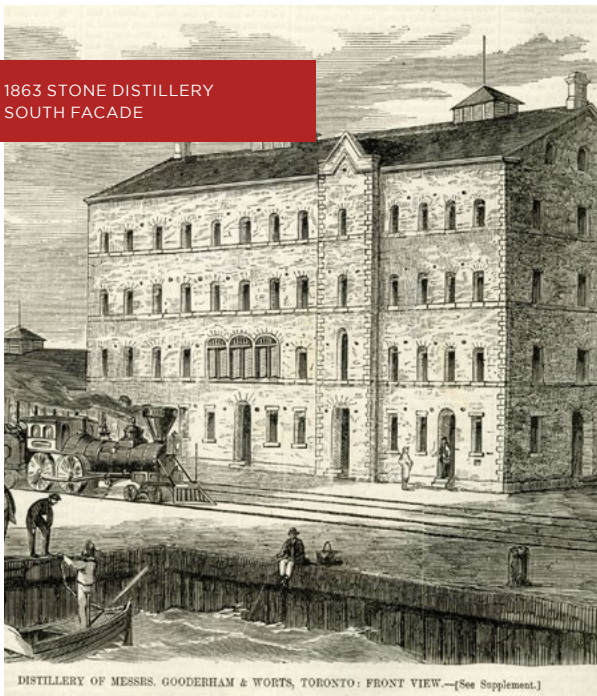
## Heritage site & buildings

Although the windmill is long since gone, most of the Victorian buildings constructed between 1859 and 1895 survive. In fact, G&W is the most intact Victorian era industrial site in North America.

As you wander among these splendid Victorian buildings, look for some of these distinct characteristics that make this site and its buildings unique:

- The site's architectural cohesiveness is emphasized by uniformity in building design, construction, craftsmanship and the coordinated palette of materials and colours.
- G&W's buildings are aligned and connected along internal streets, lanes and courtyards creating beautifully composed continuous articulated facades.
- Pitched roofs, decorative cupolas, chimneys and parapets create an industrial skyline of rare beauty.
- G&W incorporates Italianate detailing that includes round-arched openings, segmented arch windows, corbelled brickwork and neoclassical cupolas.
- Grand neoclassical design is utilized to emphasize the importance of G&W's massive Stone Distillery.
- G&W's Still Houses incorporate multistorey window walls designed to blow out in case of an explosion. Note also the elaborate decorative iron railing.
- Overhead pipes and bridges interconnect buildings, facilitating the movement of people and materials. Remember that these were industrial buildings that worked together like a well-oiled machine —despite their great beauty, their main purpose was utilitarian.

1863 STONE DISTILLERY  
SOUTH FACADE



## Heritage 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.

### 1 Bottling & canning

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

### 2 Milling, distilling & aging

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.

### 3 Firefighting, pumps & pipes

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.

### 4 Coopering, offices & labs

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

### 5 Milling, mashing & distilling

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.

### 6 Denaturing & coppersmithing

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.

### 7 Malting

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

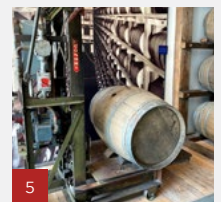
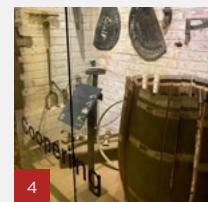


#### Construction phases

- 1859-1864
- 1873-1880
- 1884-1895
- Early 1900s
- Modern additions

#### Historical objects

- Heritage plaques
- Architectural plaques
- Historic Mill Stone





## Artwork installations

The Distillery District is a dramatic fusion of old and new. An inspired blend of Victorian Industrial architecture and stunning 21st century design and creativity. While visiting The Distillery, you will find many meaningful art pieces throughout the site.

### 1 IT

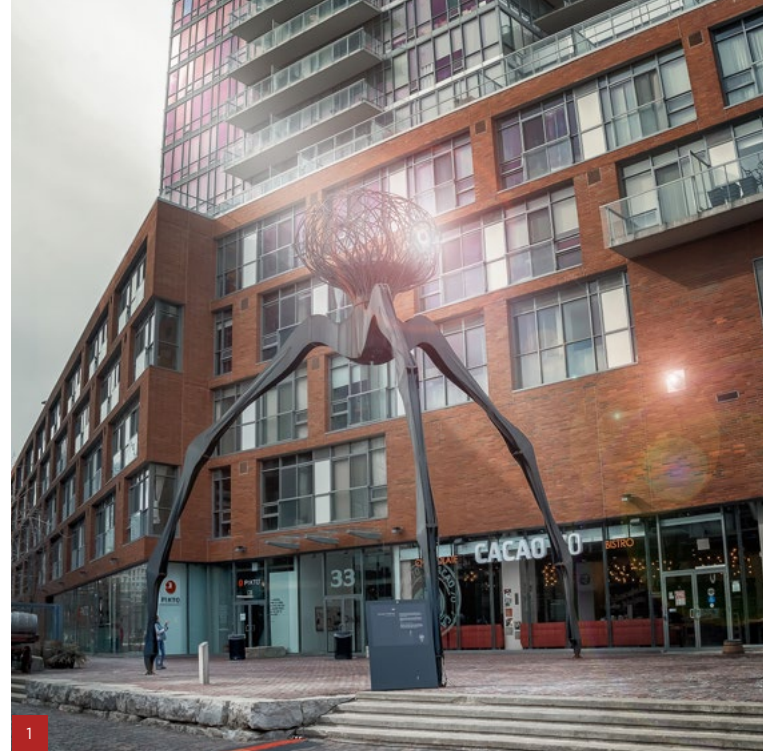
“IT” by Michael Christian is a 40 foot tall, spider-sharped statue. It was originally created for the Burning Man festival, where people could go to the top to view the horizon.

### 2 Symbolic Peace

“Symbolic Peace” is a laser cut, cold rolled steel sculpture inspired by the strength of diversity in our community. It is representative of individuals and communities living together in harmony despite their superficial differences, and the fact that only together can we create something greater and more beautiful than the individual parts.



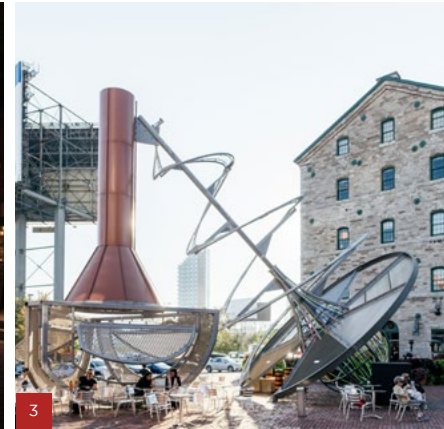
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### 3 Still Dancing

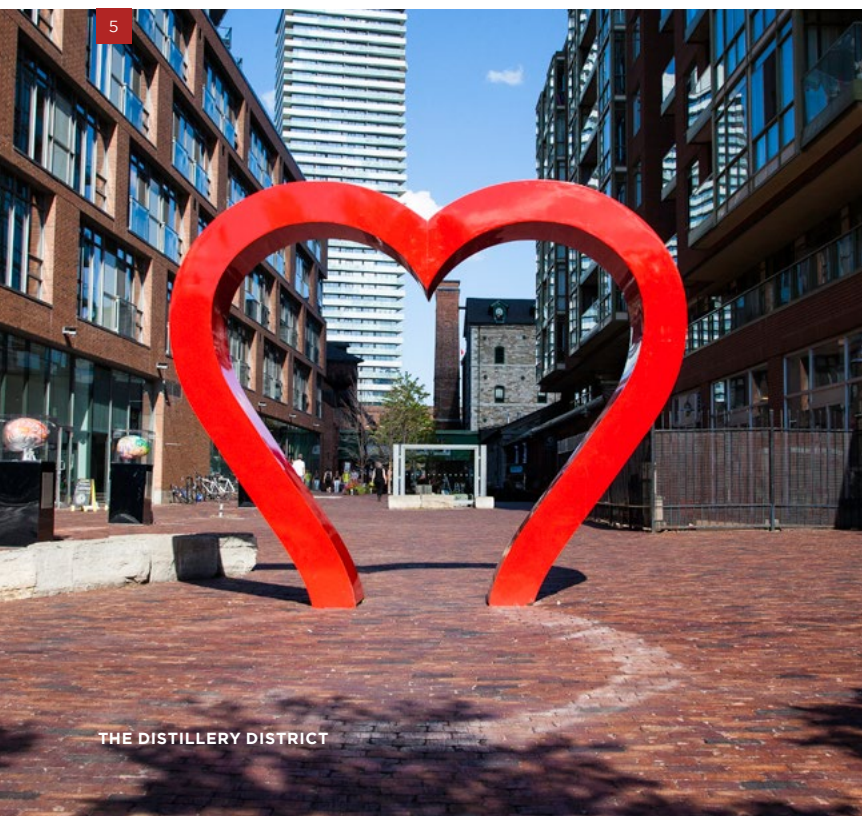
“Still Dancing” is a sculpture designed by American sculptor Dennis Oppenheim (1938-2011). The main portion of the sculpture is a 38-foot chimney-like structure. The top of the chimney leads to the arc of colours, with the lines representing a liquid formation from a distillery.

### 4 Love Locks

The “Love Locks” installation is made of steel and local reclaimed lumber, which keeps in line with The Distillery’s industrial-chic vibe. Hundreds of locks hang from metal mesh inside the bold capital letters and an adjacent heart. Snap a photo of your lock on the “Love Locks”!

### 5 Big Heart

“Big Heart” stands 14 feet tall and 12 feet wide and is fabricated out of hot rolled steel. It was created as a visual reminder to put love into everything we do. As one physically travels through the big arch, they are encouraged to reflect on their heart’s desires, and the love they have to share with others.



## Want to know more?

Heritage Toronto plaques are located at the principal entrance to each heritage building that give a brief description of the building's original use and its date of construction.

Information about architects David Roberts Sr. and David Roberts Jr., the father and son team responsible for the design of all of the Victorian buildings on site, can be found on a plaque at the southwest corner of Mill Street and Trinity Street.

The Distillery Heritage Website contains much more information about the history of the site including artifacts, architecture, distilling, and the people involved with G&W over its more than 150 year history. You can also scan the QR codes found on the artifact labels throughout the site using your smart phone or tablet that will take you to the Heritage web site.



To arrange a guided tour of the site,  
please call **416.642.0008**

**[distilleryheritage.com](http://distilleryheritage.com)**  
**[thedistillerydistrict.com](http://thedistillerydistrict.com)**