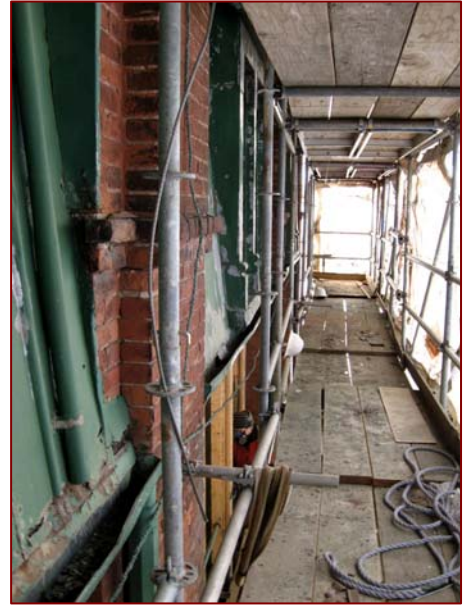


## Eavestroughs & Downspouts



**Pure Spirits Complex under wraps during blizzards and record cold spells**

*M*aintaining and restoring heritage buildings requires paying immense attention to detail, from the tiniest fastener to the largest roofing or other structural element. Take the example of restoring, and where necessary, replacing the guttering on the façade of the Pure Spirit complex.

Designed by David Roberts Jr. and built in the early 1870s, the linked buildings fronting on Trinity Street form one of the most distinctive, even elegant, façades on site. Fearful of explosions, the architect separated the “spirit houses” where alcohol was distilled into four, thick-walled, brick buildings, with a lot of wood and glass that would have exploded outward, leaving the buildings standing. (Fortunately, no great explosion ever tested the design theory.) The buildings were capped by a galvanized steel mansard roof and drained by copper eavestroughs and downspouts. The crowning cupola, however, is long-gone.



**Pure Spirits Complex in 1918 CTA**

In the intervening years, much has changed. Not only has time weathered the original materials, but new materials and methods were used at various times to repair or alter the building. For example, sections of copper downspouts were replaced with cheap aluminum spouts that are less sturdy and, arguably, less attractive than the originals.

During this record-breaking winter, masons, carpenters, and painters have worked high overhead, under tarps, to repair and restore the roof, windows, and guttering. The rolled sheet metal roof was repaired using original techniques, but a modern water-and-ice-shield was inserted underneath to improve weatherproofing. Damaged windows were repaired where possible, carefully following the original construction pattern, and replaced with three exact replicas where necessary at the very top.

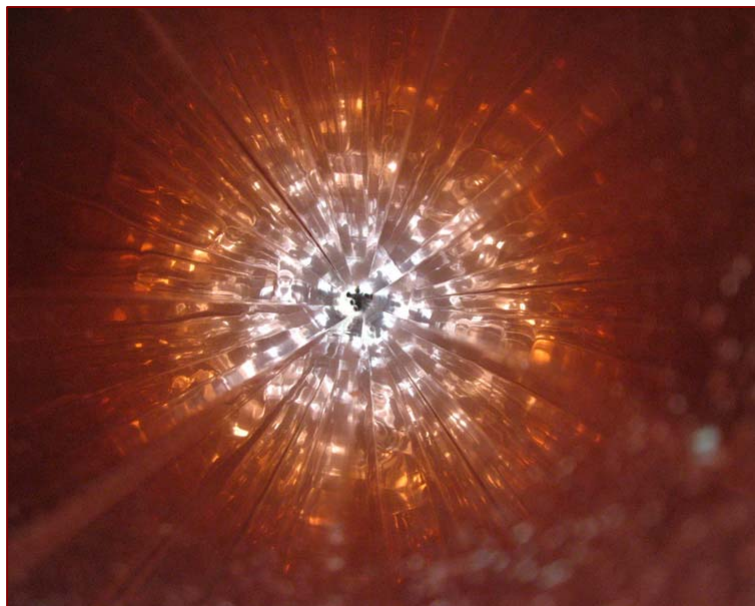
Meanwhile the copper guttering system, including eavestroughs and downspouts, received equally special treatment. The missing section of eavestrough above Building 53 at the corner, was replaced using a modern, copper section to match the surviving 1870s troughs over adjacent buildings.

At ground level, dented and unsightly aluminum downspouts were replaced with copper replicas matching the copper sections above; and ugly aluminum straps that had replaced the original fastening system were replaced by replicas of the original system. Rather than throwing straps around the outside of the pipes, the Victorian builders had attached downspouts to the building from behind the pipe, creating a streamlined profile. To reproduce this heritage effect, a dozen bronze “keys” had to be specially cast, plugged into the brick where old ones had broken off, and then attached to a ridge behind the pipes. And then everything was painted green, in line with earlier practice.

As you walk along Trinity Street, pause to inspect the historic new downspouts that reinforce the authenticity of this Victorian streetscape.



**Dented aluminum meets  
1870s copper**



**Copper downspout interior**



**Bronze key  
recast**

Please send your comments or questions to Manager of Heritage Services, Sally Gibson, [sg@thedistillerydistrict.com](mailto:sg@thedistillerydistrict.com).

For more about the history of the Distillery District, visit [www.distilleryheritage.com](http://www.distilleryheritage.com)