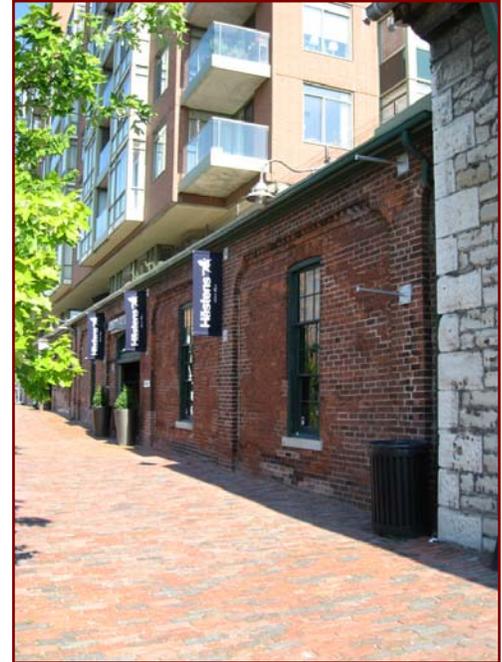


Building Histories

Buildings 8 & 9: Maintenance & Molasses Tanks



1896 view shows Buildings 8 & 9 as a single structure DHD



Base for 39 Parliament Street

Now forming the base for the Distillery District's second condominium structure at 39 Parliament Street, Buildings 8 and 9 share an unusual, neighbourly history – sometimes working together and sometimes operating relatively independently of one another.

Contrary perhaps to expectations based on similar structures found elsewhere in the Distillery District, these two buildings were *not* created to store barrels or tanks of whisky. They were actually built shortly before the great period of rack-house and tank-house expansion necessitated by the Government of Canada's 1885 requirement that whisky be aged for two years before being sold. (Instantly, Gooderham & Worts had to double storage capacity, which led to the building of nearly a dozen rack houses and tank houses over the next decade.)

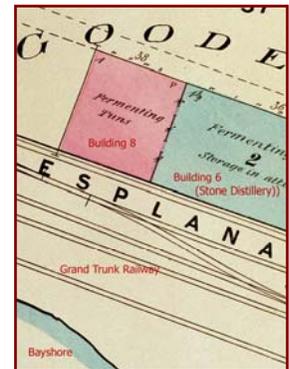
Because these two buildings were relatively small, located on the southwest fringe of the site, and were often behind other more dramatic buildings (such as the great [grain elevator](#)), they do not feature in many graphic images and when they are shown, they are not always depicted accurately. For example, in the 1896 chromolithograph reproduced here, they are shown as a single structure having more "bays" than they do in reality (a combined total of eight rather than the dozen indicated). Nevertheless, their location near both Toronto Bay and the railway, their height, and their relation to each other seem accurate and useful to recall, especially when [both bay and railway](#) are now far away.

Buildings 8 and 9 were probably designed by [David Roberts, Jr.](#), in a style very similar, but not identical to other one-storey red-brick buildings on site. Here, the projecting north- and south-façade piers are round-shouldered, rather than straight; the roofs are nearly flat, rather than slightly pitched; the downspouts occupy arched niches; and the structures are essentially square rather than rectangular. Otherwise, the exteriors of the 20-foot high, pier-and-panel brick structures set on coursed-limestone foundations strongly reflect Roberts, Jr.'s slightly later buildings, even to the extent of including a decorative, sawtooth brick pattern across the top of the recessed panels.



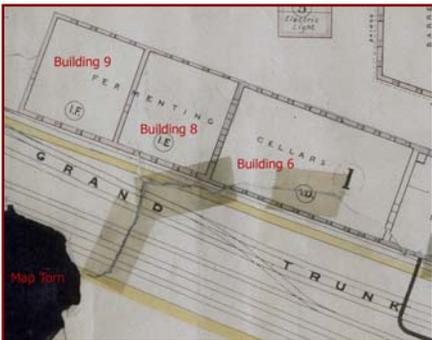
North façade: Buildings 8 and 9 meet

Building 8 was constructed sometime between about 1877, when it failed to show up on [Timperlake's lithograph](#) of the site, and 1880, when it appeared on the first Goad's map of the area. Oriented toward the shoreline rather than the grid created by Trinity Street, Building 8 was, in effect, an extension of the [Fermenting Cellar](#). It abutted the west wall of the limestone cellar and was linked by doors. Sadly, no descriptions of its equipment or operations have survived. George Gooderham's August 1882 incorporation agreement simply described it as the "West end of Fermenting Cellar size 80' x 80' height 20 built of brick with felt roof."



1880 Goad Plate 11 (labels added) CTA

Its companion, Building 9, was constructed a few years later, between 1884 when it failed to show up on the [Goad's map](#) for that year, and 1889 when both buildings appeared on a [Gooderham & Worts plan](#). Building 9 was another extension of the "fermenting cellars," built during boom years for the Victorian distillery. Again, no details about its equipment and operations have surfaced, for example, whether it had wooden fermenting tuns (like the 1860s fermenting cellar) or copper ones (like later versions). Building 9, of course, blocked Building 8's western door and western façade, and provided a new western door to the complex.

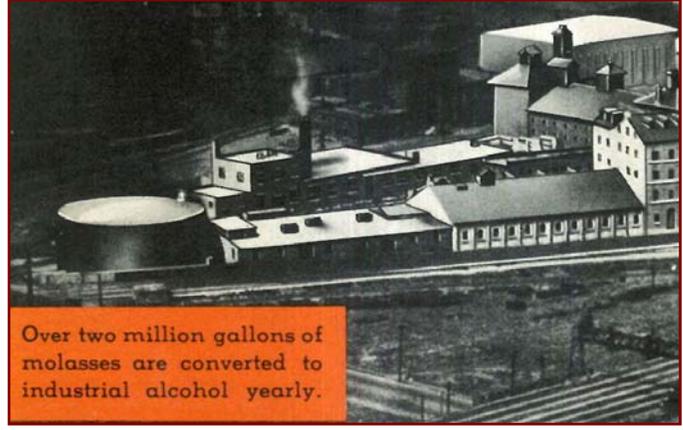


1889 G&W plan DHD (labels added)

Just when Buildings 8 and 9 were converted into other uses remains unclear. Certainly, by the time of the Great War, when Gooderham & Worts and neighbouring General Distillery were used for [war work](#), Building 8 had been converted into the [Shipping and Drum Cleaning Department](#), while Building 9 had been transformed into a [Pipe Shop](#). Col. Albert Gooderham's post-war report on the work of British Acetones commented simply that Gooderham & Worts maintained "well-equipped steamfitters', carpenter and coppersmiths' shops," that were used jointly by the two companies. But it's not clear where these were located, if they included Buildings 8 and/or 9, or what equipment they contained. Nevertheless, the 1918 photograph clearly indicates that the maintenance function was moving into the southwest corner of the site.



“Pipe Shop” in Building 9 (centre), 1918
CTA 1583-59



Still no molasses tank in Building 9, 1937
from G&W's Alcohol in Industry, DHD

Both Buildings 8 and 9 were involved in storing molasses. Whether Building 8 contained a molasses storage tank before the 1940s remains unknown. But around 1939 or 1940, a great hulking, riveted-steel tank for storing molasses was inserted into Building 9, half-inside and half-outside the building. Known as Molasses Tank 2, this container filled most of the floor space (75 x 75 feet) and projected an additional 20 or so feet through the roof. Building 9 also contained a scale tank to measure molasses. The fact that the tank in Building 8 was known as Molasses Tank 4 suggests that it was added to Building 8 after the larger tank was installed.



Steven Evans' mid-1990s photograph captures the strange tank and creeping desolation after the distillery closed down and before the new Distillery District emerged

Building 9's larger tank could hold 850,000 gallons of molasses that was pumped directly up from the Gooderham & Worts dock on Toronto Bay where molasses barges landed, through a pipeline that ran underground roughly along Parliament Street, to the valve and pipes still viewable outside Building 9.

While molasses – unlike grains – needed no mashing, its composition presented some problems, especially in a cold country like Canada. During winter, it would become too thick to pump ... unless it was heated. This helps explain why a large storage tank was inserted into an existing building that was no longer needed for its original functions. The base of the building, aided by a set of heated steam coils in the bottom of the tank, could keep some of the molasses thin enough to be transferred into the smaller, warmer tank in Building 8. (The molasses above the roofline remained too cold to move.) The molasses in this warmer tank could then be pumped into the fermenters as required.

Because Molasses Tank 4 in the southeast corner occupied less than a quarter of the floor space, there was plenty of room for the Maintenance Shop that came to share the building. Even in 1994, when industrial archaeologists reported on the condition of the various distillery buildings and heritage artifacts, Building 8 was still in remarkable shape:

Much of the building is a machine shop and all machines are driven by overhead pulley systems from two electric motors. The equipment includes an engine lathe, shaper, vertical milling machine and a drill press. The machine shop is noteworthy in that it is in such unusually good working order, still powered by line shafting and belting, evocative of a turn of the century small manufacturing facility. One would expect to find a maintenance/millwright shop associated with a distillery, but the scale of this shop is appropriate to the whole of the G&W operation rather than strictly associated to the stone distillery. The room also contains a carpentry and metal working area equipped primarily with modern tools and a large sheet metal shear.

The shop clearly contained a mixture of modern and vintage equipment that was still used by the last plant manager to maintain distillery buildings even after the plant shut down in 1990. Some of the heritage artifacts are on display at various locations around the Distillery District. For example, line shafting and belting and an early drill press are in Building 47.



Building 8: Molasses Tank 4 and shop



**Building 9: Molasses Tank 2 and scale tank
ca. 1986 by Larry Turner**

Although much changed inside and out, Buildings 8 and 9 still retain features reminiscent of or directly from their years of distillery life. On the outside, the north and south facades have been retained so be sure to inspect, and admire, their design and construction before entering the buildings. Note also the large valve that controlled the flow of molasses from the underground pipe from the dock into Building 9 near the ground on the south side.



Molasses pipe valve

Like later rack and tank houses, the interiors of Buildings 8 and 9 were originally large, single volumes that featured an exposed roof system, double joist beams carried on square wooden columns standing on concrete bases and resting on projecting corbels rather than being embedded in the walls. When the buildings were transformed into the (visual) base for 39 Parliament Street, the original columnar structure was replaced by the massive, round concrete columns with flaring capitals now on view. But concrete floors and exposed ceilings were reintroduced to commemorate the structures' industrial heritage.

Building 8 is, of course, no longer a Maintenance Shop. But it does have on display a 1900 anvil, with evidence of the heavy hammering it withstood, and a large, much-battered and honourable old workbench. Note also one of the aluminum, "explosion proof" telephones from the 1960s. The original dimensions and sense of being in a single large volume of space have also been recaptured. And projecting brick corbels that used to hold timber beams can also be seen high up on the walls.



Building 8: workbench (left), corbel (top right), 1900 anvil (lower right)

Building 9 is, of course, no longer a Molasses Tank building. But the art gallery does contain a large fragment of the steel-riveted molasses tank that used to occupy the entire building. Be sure to inspect the distinctive riveting patterns - two-rivet rows along the bottom; single-rivet rows in the midsection; and three-rivet rows along the south side - placed where stresses required. Note also the very gradual curve of the ten-foot long piece that indicates just how large the original tank was; and the large

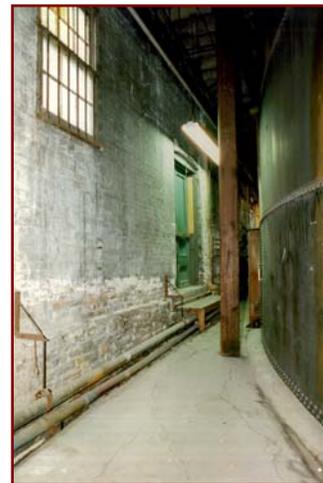
hole through which the warm molasses flowed. Be sure to look also at the large duplex pump near the south entrance, once used to transfer molasses and is representative of the many duplex pumps that once moved liquids around the site.



Two views of the fragment of 40-foot high molasses tank
Side: gradual curve



Front: rivet patterns



Building 9 ca. 1986
by Larry Turner

Sometime when you cycle, walk, or drive past 39 Parliament Street, stop to admire the second-floor “molasses tank” element that was incorporated into the modern architecture to pay homage to the building’s industrial heritage. It’s a nice touch.

Many thanks to Steven Evans for granting permission to reproduce his striking photograph.

Many thanks also to industrial archaeologist Chris Andreae for placing the surviving fragment of the molasses tank in historical context.

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

For more about the history of the Distillery District, visit www.distilleryheritage.com.

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