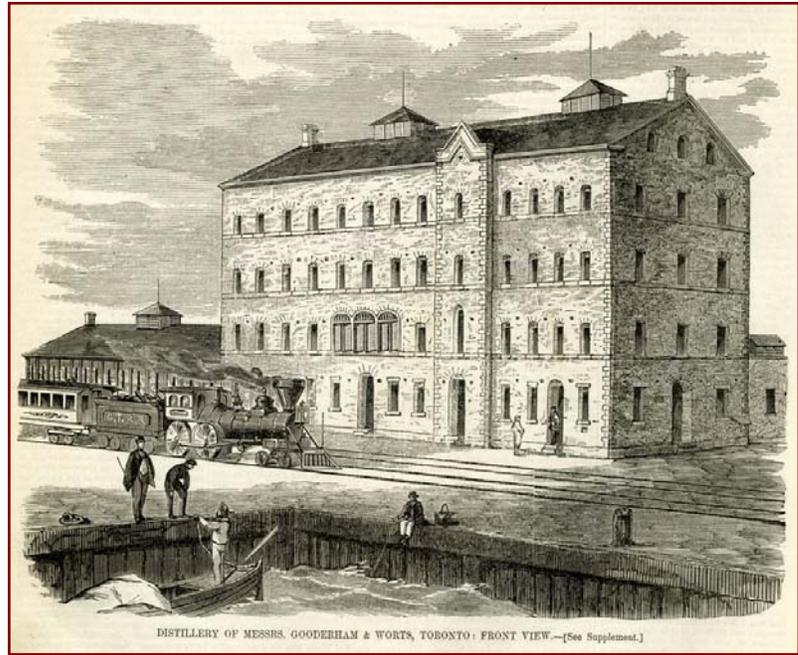


Distillery History Mystery What was “Building One”?



Two candidates for Building One

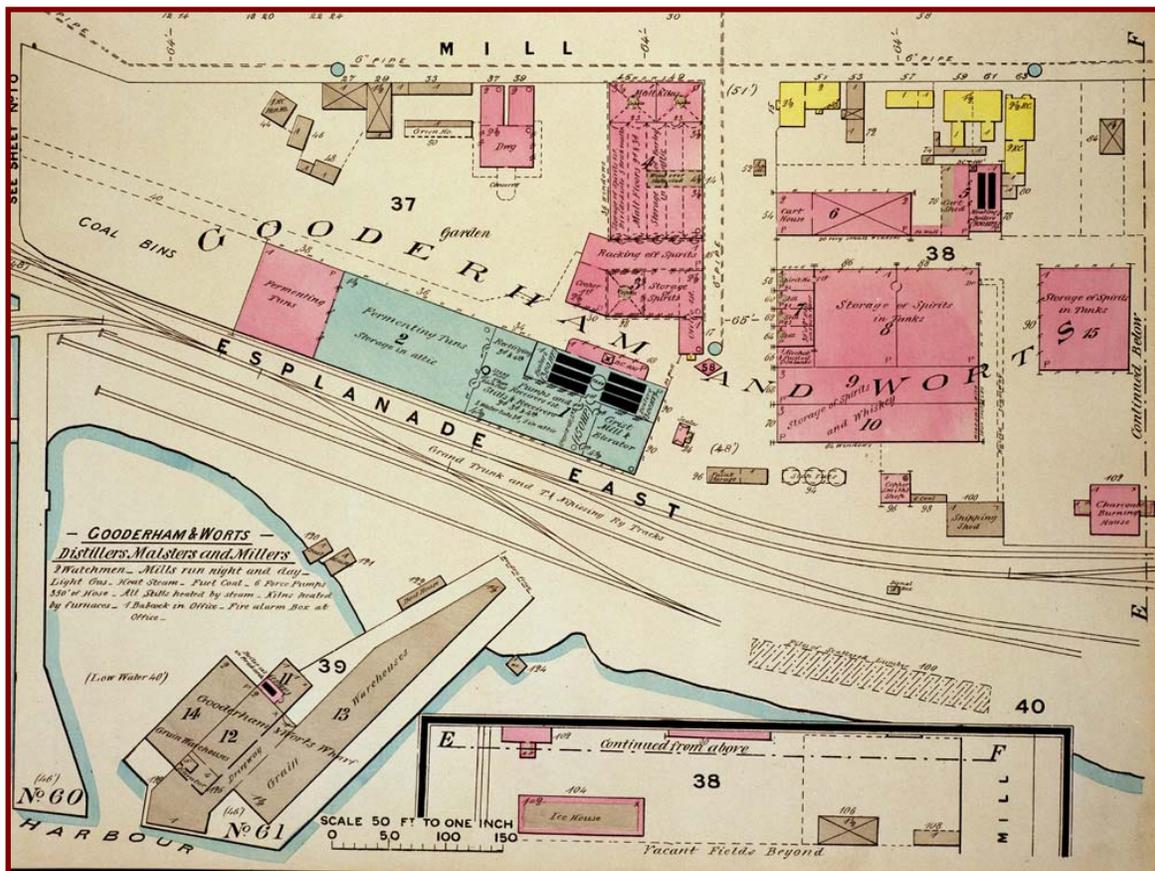
1830s Windmill by Owen Staples 1860s Stone Distillery in *Canadian Illustrated News* TPL

The Distillery Historic District contains over forty heritage buildings that have been numbered from #2 (the 1860 Boiler House on the east side of the Stone Distillery) to #75 (the 1927 Rack House that rises eight storeys east of Trinity Street). Nowhere is there a Building 1. This raises the obvious question: what and where was Building 1?

Perhaps Building 1 was the first building raised by Gooderhams and Worts on the site: the 1832 Windmill that made the site both productive and famous. Productive because from the beginning the grist mill – whether powered by wind or steam – was a successful business that laid the foundation for the even more successful distillery. And famous because it became the symbol of 1830s Toronto in numerous publications over the years. Even if the numbering system had been applied after the first building was demolished in the early 1860s, perhaps the proud owners commemorated it by designating it number one. In effect, retiring the number.

This question, of course, raises the issue of when the numbering system was instituted – a still unresolved issue. Clearly, it was not applied to David Roberts, Sr.’s buildings along the west side of Trinity Street in the plans from the mid-1860s. Only functional names, such as “Steam Mill & Distillery,” “Office,” “Rectifying House,” “Kilns” and so on were used.

The first building numbering system found so far appeared in Charles E. Goad’s first and most detailed plan of the distillery site in 1880.



Goad's 1880 plan of the distillery numbers buildings from 1 to 15 CTA

Goad's plan numbered the buildings using a combination of time and space. It's largely, but not precisely chronological in construction. And it leaves out smaller buildings, some of which were numbered in later schemes. So Goad's plan made the earliest and most important building – the Stone Distillery – Building 1. It then moved north along the west side of Trinity Street for the next building numbers, not returning to the 1861 [Grain Elevator](#) complex associated with the Stone Distillery until numbers 11 through 14. The last building numbered – the tank house built in 1879 (now Building 63 and housing a brew pub) was the last building constructed before the plan was created. Later Goad's plans of the site are smaller in scale and do not number the buildings. (The numbers appearing on many buildings are lot numbers, not building numbers.)

Goad's scheme is interesting, but it was not followed by later schemes, and was almost certainly created by Goad rather than Gooderham & Worts. In fact, the company did not appear to use this scheme, since no numbers appear in George Gooderham's 1882 incorporation agreement that described all Gooderham & Worts property in considerable detail.

The first company scheme so far identified appears on an [1889 Plan of the Distillery](#). It's a rather complicated scheme, employing both numbers and letters, and using a combination of chronology, building groups, and geography. While interesting, the resulting numbers are not the same as the final scheme now found on site. The entire Stone Distillery (including fermenting cellar) was Building 1, with alphabetical subdivisions (e.g., the mill is designated 1A, the general distillery area is 1C, and the fermenting cellars, including the [brick additions](#) of around 1880, are 1F.) The highest numbers, 39 and 40, are attached to two "proposed" buildings that were soon

constructed on the north side of Mill Street (later known as Building 42/Rack House D, and Building 43/ Rack House I). Clarity would suggest the need for a simpler scheme.



G&W's 1889 site plan identifies the Stone Distillery and nearby buildings as Building 1

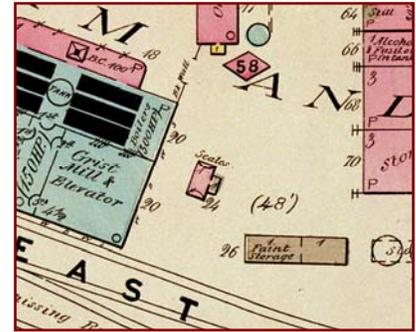
After 1889, many more buildings were added to the site, including a related business called General Distilling that was created in 1902 at the northwest part of the site to manufacture industrial alcohol; and the final two large buildings added by [Harry C. Hatch](#) in 1927. The General Distilling buildings were demolished between the two world wars, which explains some of the gaps found in today's numbering scheme. But Building 1 was not among this group.

Just when today's scheme was enacted remains unknown. So far, the earliest definite use of the scheme is 1924, when the Gooderham & Worts Toronto property was appraised after Harry C. Hatch and associates purchased the company in 1923 from the Gooderhams. Here, the buildings were numbered from #1 to #76, with detailed descriptions and values provided. It matches today's numbers remarkably well, with the obvious exceptions of Buildings #74 and #75 that were built in 1927, and a few other minor differences. The Stone Distillery complex, for example, comprised Buildings #2 through #7, just as it does today. The Malt House and Kiln Buildings were #35 and #36 respectively. And so on.

What was Building 1? It obviously was no longer the Stone Distillery. And it certainly wasn't a sentimental reminder of the demolished Windmill. It was the little Weigh House (aka Scale House) that used to stand in Trinity Square just to the east of the Stone Distillery and first Boiler House that used mammoth amounts of coal. Whether this was a tip-of-the-hat to the important job that the Scale House – like all

on-site scales – performed, or simply its central location is unknown. But it was certainly not numbered at all on the 1880 Goad’s plan or other early plans. And it was given pride of place in the 1924 scheme, even though other relatively small buildings remained unnumbered.

The Scale / Weigh House was built between about 1877 (when it did not appear on the Timperlake lithograph) and the 1880 Goad’s map. It was a small, single-storey, red-brick building, about 18’6” by 17’3”, standing 12’6” high, and bearing a shingle roof. Like other utilitarian buildings at the distillery, it displayed decorative brickwork in its gable. It was located adjacent to the coal-consuming boiler house, and near all forms of transportation – lake (when shipping was important), railway tracks, and vehicular roads. Its primary job was probably to weigh deliveries of coal.



“Scales,” 1880 Goad Plan CTA

For at least 50 years (1880s to 1920s), and probably until its demolition in the 1970s, the Weigh House sheltered a Fairbanks wagon platform scale, with a capacity of about 10 tons. The wagon or truck would drive onto the 8 x 14-foot platform and the scale man would take its measure. The building also contained – according to the very thorough 1924 appraisal – a couple of “settees,” coal heater, and miscellaneous small tools. Everything the worker needed for comfort and efficiency.



Weigh House: Horse, Sail & Rail era, 1884 DHD Weigh House: Rail, Truck & War era, 1918 CTA

So, when all is said and done, there were several building numbering schemes at Gooderham & Worts. Today’s scheme has been in effect since at least the early 1920s and was created during the era when the Gooderham family still owned the company. Several “Building Ones” have been identified. But the “final” Building One was the unprepossessing little Scale House with a big job. When you sit on a nearby patio, check the time on the public clock, or just wander across Trinity Square, imagine the horse-drawn carts and soldier-escorted vehicles that were manoeuvred onto the Fairbanks scale, weighed, and moved along to deliver their loads.

Many thanks to Art Jahns in Walkerville, Ontario for photocopying pages from the February 1924 appraisal of Gooderham & Worts that provided the key clue to solving this history mystery in such an unexpected manner.

Goad's 1880 plan contains many numbers. Some are dimensions. Some are street addresses. Some are lot numbers. Some may be related to fire-fighting (the plan was created as a Fire Insurance Plan). The scheme suggested in this article appears to account for the numbers inserted into various buildings or building groups.

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

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