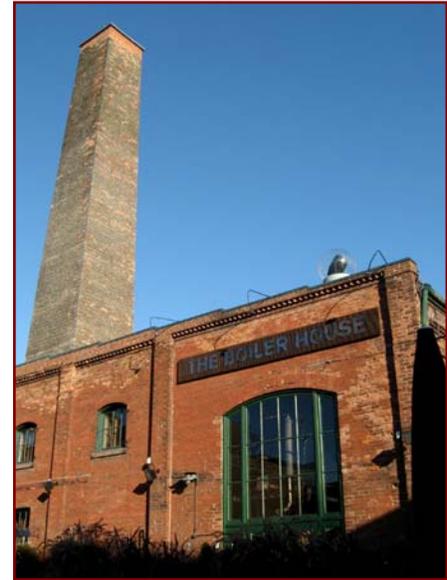
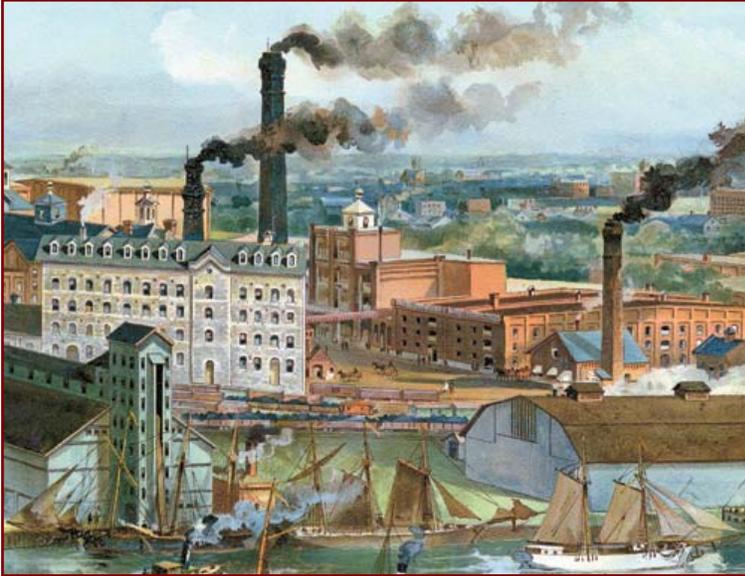


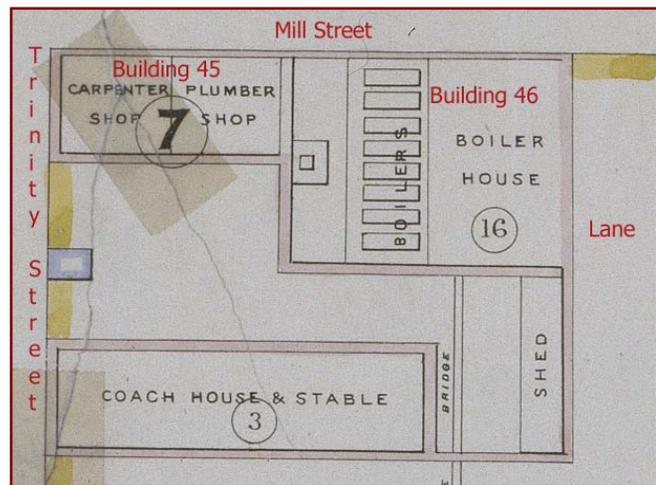
Building Histories

Buildings 45, 45a & 46: Maintenance and Boiler House



East Boiler House chimney dominates 1896 skyline *DHD* Restored Boiler House chimney

After the cattle sheds had been moved across the Don River and the Pure Spirits complex had been built on the east side of Trinity Street in the 1870s, more steam power was needed to operate the expanded distillery. For a time, a relatively small power house stood just west of today's Building 47, on the north side of Tank House Lane. Even though the Goad's map of 1880 indicates that the building housed two boilers with a combined power of 200 HP, this was obviously deemed insufficient, because a much larger boiler house – known as the East Boiler House – was built in 1886. It is this Boiler House that still stands and is also known as Building 46. Immediately to the west, at Trinity and Mill Streets, a maintenance building was built to support the Boiler House and the entire site.



Buildings 45 & 46, ca. 1889 (labels added) *DHD*

Together, these buildings provide insight into the nitty-gritty of industrial life. By some standards, the functions might not be characterized as “glamorous,” but power and maintenance were both essential to the successful operation of a major industrial site like Gooderham & Worts. This was true at the beginning and it remains true in the post-industrial period.

Designed by [David Roberts, Jr.](#) and built in 1886, the East Boiler House was a one-storey, high-ceilinged brick building whose major feature was the 156-foot [chimney](#) that once dominated the local skyline and still rises about 130-feet from the western side of Building 46. The style is classic Roberts: a red-brick box, set on a stone foundation, composed of panel-and-pier walls with a decorative sawtooth brick course defining the tops of each panel. The number, size, and location of openings varied over time, leaving distinct traces on the walls, both inside and out. The boiler function was also written in masonry on the western façade where several now-bricked-in stoking holes were located behind the boilers.



Exterior stoking hole

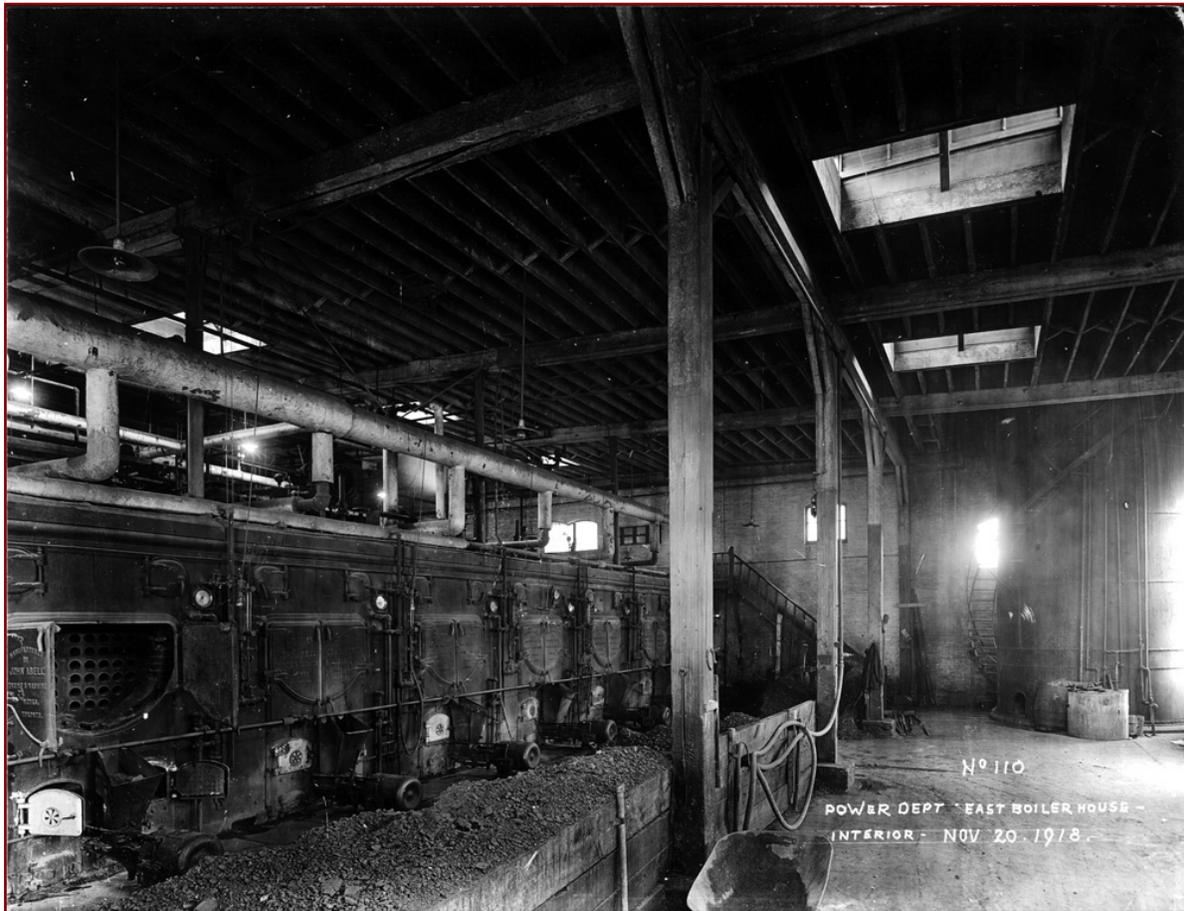


Interior bricked-in eastern window



Metal door to chimney

The vast interior space (88.5 x 75 feet) boasted a 25-foot high ceiling; a system of timber posts and cast-iron columns that divided the space into three north-south bays and rose the full height of the structure to support wooden roof beams; exposed brick walls; and ventilating skylights. From the mid-1880s until at least the mid-1920s, the building contained a battery of eight, 100 HP John Abell Company boilers (similar to the four found in [Building 2](#)). These Toronto-made boilers were aligned in a north-south direction in the western part of the building, where an English-made E. Green & Son “economizer,” to save on fuel, had also been installed between the boilers and the 15-foot-square base of the chimney. (The chimney top was 8-foot-square.)



Building 46, looking north along battery of eight Abell boilers, 1918 CTA 1583-110

During the First World War, when Gooderham & Worts had been transformed into British Acetones to support the war effort, the boilers in Building 46 combined with boilers in the no-longer-extant West Boiler House, to provide steam power. (The John Abell boilers in Building 2 were held in reserve.) During the war, distillery boilers consumed an astonishing 4000 tons of coal. But this figure could have been much higher had it not been for the “close supervision of the plant” provided by Mechanical Superintendent F. W. Barron. The only early photographs of the interior of the Boiler House date from this period, one of the battery of boilers reproduced here and another view along the top of the boilers. These boilers were probably removed in the 1950s.

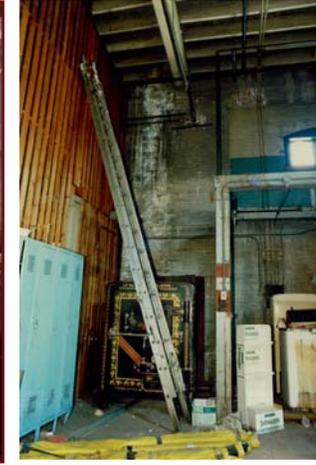
Both the exterior and interior of the East Boiler House changed over time as uses of the building changed. Some of these alterations can still be read in the walls, with various opening blocked in. For a time, the old Boiler House was used as a bonded warehouse to store alcohol in special areas enclosed by wood-slatted partitions. For a time, it was also used for canning antifreeze on a mezzanine level connected to the ground floor by a conveyor. By the mid-1980s, near the end of the distillery’s industrial life, Building 46 was used primarily for storage of plant ladders, carts, office furniture, artifacts, equipment, lumber, even the 1875 office safe.



**Chimney & storage
ca. 1986 by L. Turner**



**Boiler House under reconstruction
2003 by Thane Lucas**



**Artifacts & storage
ca. 1986 by L. Turner**

Around 2003, the grand-but-storage-stuffed East Boiler House was transformed into an award-winning restaurant that epitomizes “industrial chic.” In the process, [Mackay | Wong](#) emphasized the soaring scale of the original structure; retained major structural elements and some of the industrial patina acquired over many years; opened up the large, bricked-in doorway at the southeast corner; used modern industrial materials where necessary; and recycled older materials wherever possible. For example, the shelves behind the bar were fashioned from 115-year old fir reclaimed from a nearby rack house. More recently, an important industrial heritage artifact – a [water still](#) dating from about 1900 – was placed in the upper portion of the reopened entrance ... to striking effect. This artifact can be admired from both inside the restaurant and from Distillery Lane outside.



From the mezzanine



Heritage water still in window *Pete Paterson*

In contrast to the East Boiler House and many other structures at the Distillery District, Building 45 served essentially the same purpose – maintenance – throughout its industrial career. Probably designed by David Roberts, Jr. and constructed in 1887, a year after the East Boiler House, Building 45 was originally a single, open space devoted to a “fitting shop.” By 1889, it was a “carpenter shop” in the west half and a “plumber shop” in the east half. Over time, it retained these or very similar functions. A hundred years later, when

the distillery was about to close down, it was still a carpenter's or wood shop off Trinity Street and a pipe or machine shop abutting the Boiler House.

During its heyday, something like 14 carpenters worked out of this small space, building shipping crates for various products, making repairs to buildings, and constructing windows and performing a variety of other key tasks. "Many a great furniture builder came out of the wood shop," noted millwright Jim White. It was here that post-World War II carpenter, [Jack Bentley](#), crafted ordinary and extraordinary pieces like the celebrated corner cabinet still in Building 32. Even at the end of the distillery's life, White and his co-workers were still using a planer that dated from the early 1900s and was kept on the sill of a small window on the north wall. Originally belt-driven, this planer had been converted to an electric motor in the 1960s. "The carpenters would open this window to allow the longer boards to travel through the planer and exit through this opening," Jim White recalled.

Meanwhile, plumbers and pipefitters worked out of the eastern half of Building 45 right from the 1880s until the end of the Gooderham & Worts distillery. They, too, were key employees, who manufactured and repaired piping (of which there was a great deal, both inside and [outside](#) distillery buildings), kept the sprinkler systems in good repair, tested and serviced all water operations, inspected all trucks, tankers and railcars before products were loaded, and made general repairs throughout the site.

Again, Jim White identified and summarized responsibilities of the men who occupied both sides of Building 45 from the mid-1980s until the end in mid-1990. "I trained with the plant engineer Richard Martland, the plant welder Bobby Kane, the plant plumber Dave Sellars, the plant pipefitter Mike Fenton and the plant carpenter Ron Malone. It was our duty to ensure the efficient running of all equipment, eliminate the risks of product contamination prior to shipping of product, ensure the preservation of the buildings and artifacts and to maintain records stating all was undertaken." Several of these maintenance workers posed in the [last-barrel photo](#) of summer 1990. Larry Turner documented both spaces around 1986 when they were full of equipment, workbenches and materials, and painted silver.



**Two views of Building 45, ca. 1986 by Larry Turner
Carpentry shop (west half)**



Pipe shop (east half)

Around 2003, Building 45 was radically transformed from Victorian workshops into a modern restaurant. The dining and bar area occupies the old carpentry and some of the pipe shop, while public washrooms and a small kitchen are installed in the rest of the pipe shop. Once again, the industrial heritage has been celebrated, materials recycled (the tables and bar are made of old rack-house wood), and large photographs by Steven Evans act as movable space dividers that evoke a strong sense of industrial place.



Building 45 today

The Boiler House group is completed by a third, small, single-story structure – Building 45a – that was probably built in the 1920s, closely following the David Roberts, Jr. style of red-brick, panel-and-pier construction that characterizes Buildings 45 and 46. In the 1980s, the north end of Building 45 was an employee lunchroom with simple furnishing, while the southern section was divided into a Timekeeper’s Office and a small First Aid room. Today, the entire building has been converted into a bakery and sandwich shop.



Building 45A, Lunch Room, ca. 1986 by Larry Turner



Baker at work, 2007

As you tuck into something delicious from one of these modern eateries, cast your mind back to the boiler operators, carpenters, pipefitters and other staff members who roamed this area from the mid-1880s onward.

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

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