



Stroll through Toronto's Distillery District to discover architectural gems



People walk through the Distillery district in Toronto on Dec. 18, 2017.

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Distillery District millers William Gooderham and James Worts established one of Toronto's first waterfront industries here in 1832; its windmill became a landmark in the young town. The site operated – including through Prohibition – until 1990; a decade later it began its second life as a retail, cultural, and residential neighbourhood, a likely precedent for 21st-century downtowns.

At the moment, it feels slightly Disneyfied, but the brawn and patina of the architecture give the place some soul.

CRISTIN TIERNEY

7. Canary District, precinct plan and block plans

Cherry and Mill streets

Urban Design Associates and du Toit Allsopp Hillier

2004

Public realm and urban design

The Planning Partnership and Phillips Farevaag Smallerberg

2015

A rare master-planned neighbourhood in Toronto, this district was expropriated in 1987

for an affordable-housing scheme that came to be called Ataratiri; then the land sat fallow for nearly 20 years before being rebuilt in a hurry to serve as the athletes' village for the 2015 Pan Am and Parapan Am Games. A Canadian dream team of architects and planners assembled a coherent mid-rise district that expresses the best of architecture and urbanism of its period: walkable, tightly detailed, formally coherent, and very grey. A consistent, six-metre ground floor creates strong retail and public spaces, while the public realm includes wide sidewalks with granite curbs. The plaza along the north side of Front Street (positioned to catch sunlight) includes two fine works of public art, Tadashi Kawamata's Untitled (Toronto Lamp Posts) and The Water Guardians by Jennifer Marman and Daniel Borins.