

ROTARY centre *for the* arts

H I S T O R Y



Over 20 years after Kelowna's cultural hub was founded, we look back on its origins.

Developed to bring the city a broad mix of visual and performing arts, the RCA is home to resident artists, an artist-run gallery, an intimate theatre space, a dance studio and other programmable space. This building was originally designed by local architect, John Woodworth. It opened in May 1965 and housed Growers Supply Company which supplied local orchardists and farmers with everything they needed in their crop production. Across Cawston Avenue from the warehouse/store was Growers Supply's own gas station.

As Kelowna's industrial activities moved north and slightly deeper into the Kelowna's North End, the opportunity was ripe to refocus use of this land more toward communitybased purposes. One by one, the City of Kelowna acquired most of the properties west of Ellis Street to the lake and from Queensway north to Clement Avenue. The Kelowna Art Gallery was opened in 1996, and this was followed a few years later with a Public/Private Partnership to open Prospera Place. Leading this change was the designation of The Laurel Packinghouse as Kelowna's first official heritage building. Housing the B.C. Orchard Industry Museum (opened in 1989) and The Wine Museum (opened in 1996), The Laurel Packinghouse also hosts a wide array of community events and activities. Today, these institutions and others form the heart of Kelowna's Cultural District – a six-block area between Ellis Street and Okanagan Lake and between Clement Avenue on the north and Queensway on the south.



Now called Cannery Lane, this photograph looks south toward the Laurel Packinghouse in the distance. The entire area was served by this network of rail sidings.

Kelowna Museum Archives #6443



For a few years Growers Supply was located on Ellis Street just south of the Laurel Packinghouse. In the mid 1960s it moved around the corner onto Cawston Avenue to a new building.

Kelowna Museum Archives #5456



Though the Okanagan Valley may be somewhat isolated in the province's interior, national brands such as "Aylmer" were an important part of the region's landscape in the 1920s and 1930s. With plants up and down the Valley, Aylmer processed both fruit and vegetable produce.

Kelowna Museum Archives #6402



In the late 1920s, Kelowna's north end held only a scattering of residences. Largely made up of Kelowna's working class housing district, the area did not begin to fill in to any significant extent until toward the end of World War II.

Kelowna Museum Archives #6412