

The Rotary Centre for the Arts opened in 2002 in the centre of Kelowna's Cultural District.

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 community-based 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



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.

(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.

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.



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.



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.

Mr. Kronbauer took a wonderful series of photos of the area in 1928. Most were taken from the roof of what is now Flashbacks Nightclub; this image here gives the view west across Wittup's Pond, the rail barge slip, and Okanagan Lake in the distance.

