

## **The Rise and Decline of the Jubilee Business Block**

### **Beginning life as the Delta Business Block**

The Jubilee business block began its life as the first [Delta business block in 1886](#), a fairly successful shopping mall owned by a Mr Bill Birch, who used it as a one-stop shopping centre. During this time, locally renowned businessman, Alexander Stevens, had found some success with the Delta Centennial Carriage Factory, which was part of the original, successful area of the time. The Delta business block unfortunately burned down in a fire due a freak accident in 1895 with the addition of a poor, 19<sup>th</sup> century fire brigade. It was re-built, however, the following year in 1896 and in its place came the Jubilee Block which is still standing strong to this day.

The Jubilee Block replaced the Delta business block as part of the celebrations in 1887 for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, hence the name. This was the Queen's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her accession and coronation to the throne of the United Kingdom. Near this area of Delta is the [Denaut Mansion Country Inn](#), which has been in existence since 1848.

### **Original, Delta Block Features**

The Jubilee block still retains many of its original Bill Birch, Delta block features. There is still the original row of shops and stores with their large displays at the windows which once displayed popular, [19<sup>th</sup> century fashions, tinned goods and Lifebuoy soap](#). A century later this is still a popular commercial sector, but with recent failings in the economy, as of 2013, the area has been in steady decline. What was once a bustling area of retail where there even still exists the wooden cornice on the first floor façade and the wooden dentils in the bedmould of the cornice, now is an aged block easily missed. Much of this original, century-old architecture and detail has lived with the Delta community all this time, bringing with it the long-lived stories of its wonderful past. You can imagine the old fashioned Delta residents entering the original double doors and walking inside to admire the acutely decorated interior with the tin ceiling which also remains from an age when retail was still a new experience.

### **The Area in Steady Decline**

Of course there is still the chance of renewal, since with it exists a heart-warming history which gives it a poignancy that the locals of Delta would keep for themselves, unable to let it go like the original bank to one side of the block that is now a red brick building. This building still, like the Jubilee Block, has large, semi-circular arched windows. This was from a time when banks were also fairly new and people wanted security for their money and investments led the area to a steady increase and the economy would have been generally good for the time.

The unfortunate steep decline of this area over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century occurred due to the ever-growing commercial sector and the inevitability of the shopping mall becoming a common fixture of many Canadian cities. Although The Jubilee Block was one of the first shopping malls, it failed to compete in the fast-paced world in which we now live. It seems either good fortune or the good will of those who live in or around Delta to preserve its historically accurate personality.

### **Opportunity For Investment**

It now stands like an old man in this quiet village on County Road 42. Many of the local attractions in the village are camping, a beach, golf and [sightseeing at the Rideau locks and the Athen's murals](#). The Jubilee Block isn't given as much praise as the famous Old Stone Mill which was built in 1810,

about 80 years older than the block, but the Jubilee block could [benefit from future investment](#) if certain acknowledgement was given to it. If Delta gave more attention to the Jubilee Block and called it an attraction, working with its long-standing history and original architecture that many people would enjoy to see, then the Jubilee Block would probably thrive again. Many people would choose not to spend their money in a declining area such as the Jubilee Block, as investment doesn't seem worthwhile, but there are alternatives to temporary finances and these alternatives are a part of a larger investment in the area due to their spending. [Instant monetry borrowing](#) can easily help bring about those hard-to-come-by financial expenditures which would subsequently affect the local Delta economy surrounding the Jubilee Block in a positive way. It would seem that many people would be happy to spend their disposable income in this area, bringing the Jubilee Block into the glory it once held.

However, investment will only come about if the Jubilee Block is worth the hassle. There is and has always been an emphasis on the customer and investors would be asking the questions: [Why is this place better than anywhere else? Why is it worth the price? Do customers want to tell others about their experience?](#) Most people would be too flippant and quick to answer these questions, however having written already about the state of the standing, original 19<sup>th</sup> century architecture and features, its back story and its place in Canadian, retail history, certain focus on the Jubilee Block could actually see it rise from its own ashes and retain its once wealthy glory.

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