

History of Development

Charles Street Terminal

15 Charles Street W, Kitchener, Ontario

1880s – 1950s

From 1882 until 1958, the Berlin Gas Commission operated a coal gasification plant on Gaukel Street between Charles and Joseph Streets. The majority of the facility was located on the west side of Gaukel Street but the main gas-holding tank was located on the Subject Site. The environmental contamination caused by the former coal gasification plant required significant remediation efforts led by the City of Kitchener on surrounding sites beginning in 2007. Regional staff led environmental assessments of 15 Charles St W in 2022.

1940s – 1980s

In 1949, expanding on their father's downtown furniture business, Roy and Ross Bulla (Bulla Bros Ltd.) opened a department store on the site as the anchor for the *Bullas Building*. This mixed-use development was used for commercial, residential and innovative placemaking features, including a public fountain and two concrete and quartz statues created by artist Helen Waimel depicting sea goddesses riding dolphins, which are now on display at Centre in the Square. The brothers and their visionary development contributed to the eventual expansion of Charles Street from a laneway into the main urban corridor it is today.

1980s – 2000

The site was left vacant in 1987, and by 1988 local modernist architect John Lingwood created the design of the new Terminal building for the City of Kitchener's transit service which operational by 1992.

2000 – 2019

On January 1, 2000, ownership of the terminal transferred to the Region of Waterloo, the operator of Grand River Transit (GRT), when Kitchener Transit and Cambridge Transit merged. It became the GRT Transit Hub and Greyhound Bus Terminal.

2019 – 2022

In 2019 the completion and launch of GRT's Light Trail Transit System shifts the centre of transit in Waterloo Region, ending operations of the Charles Street Bus Terminal. The central Victoria Park ION Station is located 130 meters from the terminal. From 2020-2022, the site was temporarily used by Grand River Hospital as a COVID Testing and Vaccination Centre.