



# SOUTH OF FALSE CREEK – OFFICE SPACE BY CLASS AND BUILT FORM

## Land Use And Development - Profile

### Step 1: Understanding Yesterday and Today

## Metropolitan Core Jobs & Economy Land Use Plan

### Highlights

- Nearly two million square feet of office space south of False Creek is considered Class A; this accounts for 43% of total office space in the area.
- The Broadway employment area has the largest share of office buildings and space.
- Most of Class A space was constructed in the 1980s and 1990s. For today's Class B buildings, the 1970s were the most important period of construction.
- Class A buildings are significantly larger and have larger floor areas than Classes B & C.



**WHAT IS THE DISTRIBUTION OF OFFICE SPACE CLASSES SOUTH OF FALSE CREEK?**  
 The area South of False Creek (see Note 1) has approximately 127 buildings that contain significant amounts of office space. In addition, there are several buildings with government or institutional office space, which were not included in this analysis (e.g City Hall and the BC Cancer Agency).

Figures 1 and 2 and Table 1 show the distribution of office space and office buildings by class. It should be noted that many office buildings contain other commercial space, such as retail space on the ground floor.

20% of office buildings south of False Creek are Class A buildings. These account for 43% of office space. Class B has 38% of all buildings and almost the same share (36%) of total floor space. With 49 buildings, or 39% of all buildings, Class C has a relatively small share of floor space (19%). Four buildings have no class assigned to them. These account for 1% of total floor space.

Figure 1: Distribution of office buildings by class (Source: Space4Lease.com)

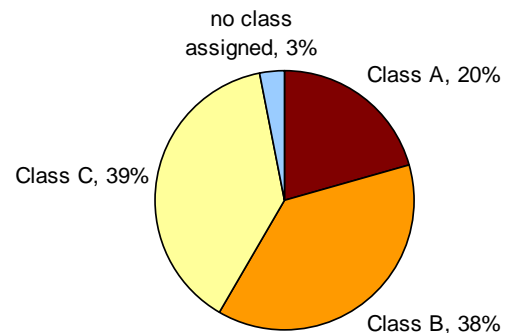


Figure 2: Distribution of office space by class (Source: Space4Lease.com)

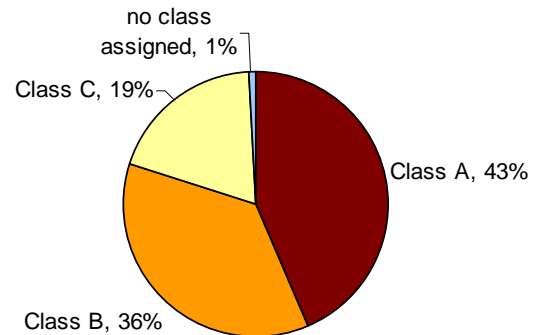


Table 1: Distribution by Class

Source: Space4Lease.com

Building Class	Number of Buildings	% of total buildings	Floor space (sq ft)	% of total floor space
Class A	26	20%	1,982,897	43%
Class B	48	38%	1,662,533	36%
Class C	49	39%	876,741	19%
no class assigned	4	3%	37,701	1%
Total	127	100%	4,559,872	100%

- Class C: These buildings are older and typically smaller in scale. Some Class C buildings have not been renovated and can be functionally outdated. However, many Class C buildings are located in heritage buildings or heritage districts, and their character value make them attractive locations for many companies.

Due to the varying definitions of the classes, the distribution of office space by class can vary for the same location, depending on what source one uses.

## WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT BUILDING CLASSES FOR OFFICE SPACE?

Office buildings differ widely in age, quality of improvements and location. One method to categorize buildings by these factors is to allocate them to three classes: Classes A, B, and C. In addition, extremely high-end building are classified as Class AAA.

There are no standard definitions for these classes. In Canada, the Real Property Association of Canada (RealPAC) and the Appraisal Institute of Canada (AIC) are in the process of developing standard definitions for terms used in commercial real estate, and future terms may include Class A, B, and C office space. In the meantime, characteristics have to be compiled from varying sources.

The following is a summary of the major characteristics, based on information from the Urban Land Institute, All Business, Officespace.com and CB Richard Ellis:

- Class AAA: Landmark buildings in extremely favourable locations in the CBD. These buildings are the best of Class A office buildings.
- Class A: Prestigious buildings that have a definite market presence in excellent locations. They provide a large number of business amenities and have high quality building materials, as well as state-of-the art infrastructure and mechanical systems.
- Class B: Highly functional buildings in good locations with solid construction. They are less current in design and infrastructure than Class A buildings; however, Class B buildings in desirable locations can be renovated to be reclassified as Class A.

## WHERE ARE THE OFFICE BUILDINGS LOCATED?

Most of the office buildings and floor space south of False Creek are located in the Broadway employment area (see Note 2). Here, 75 buildings, which account for 59% of all office buildings South of False Creek, contain 70% of total floor space (see Table 2 and Figures 3 & 4). Within the Broadway corridor, most buildings are located in the Broadway West section (36% of both buildings and space) and in Broadway Central (20% of buildings and 32% of space). Very few buildings are located in the easternmost part of the corridor (see Figures 3 and 4).

The area with the second largest concentration of office buildings south of False Creek is Burrard Slopes. This area has 570,000 sq ft of office floor space in 26 buildings, which accounts for 13% of space and 20% of buildings.

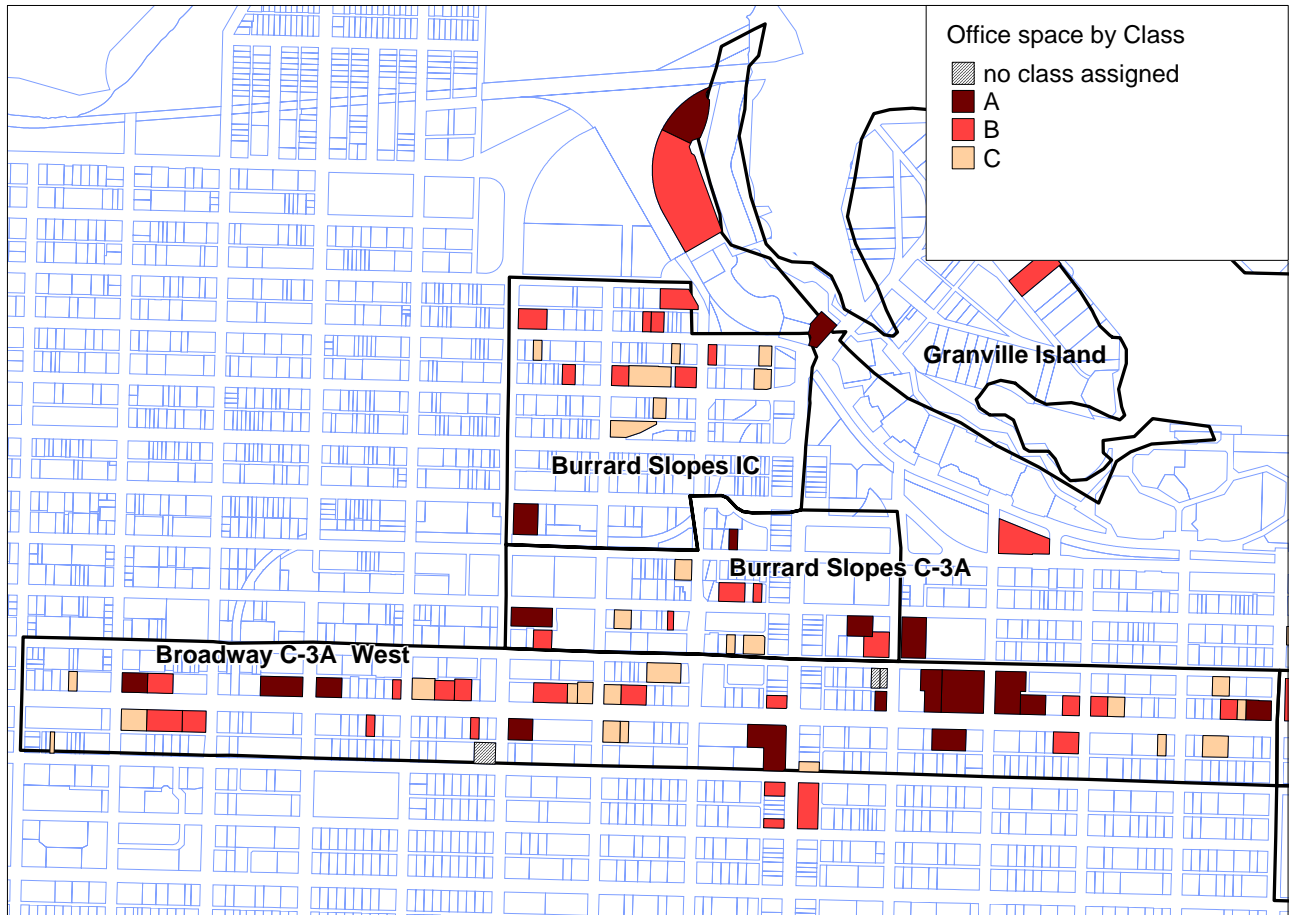
The Mount Pleasant employment area has 200,000 sq ft, or 4% of office floor space. The 12 office buildings in Mount Pleasant account for 9% of all office buildings south of False Creek.

Outside of the employment areas, just over half a million square feet of office space can be found. These office buildings are located on Granville Street south of 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue, as well as near Burrard Slopes and Granville Island.

Table 2: Distribution of office buildings and space by employment area

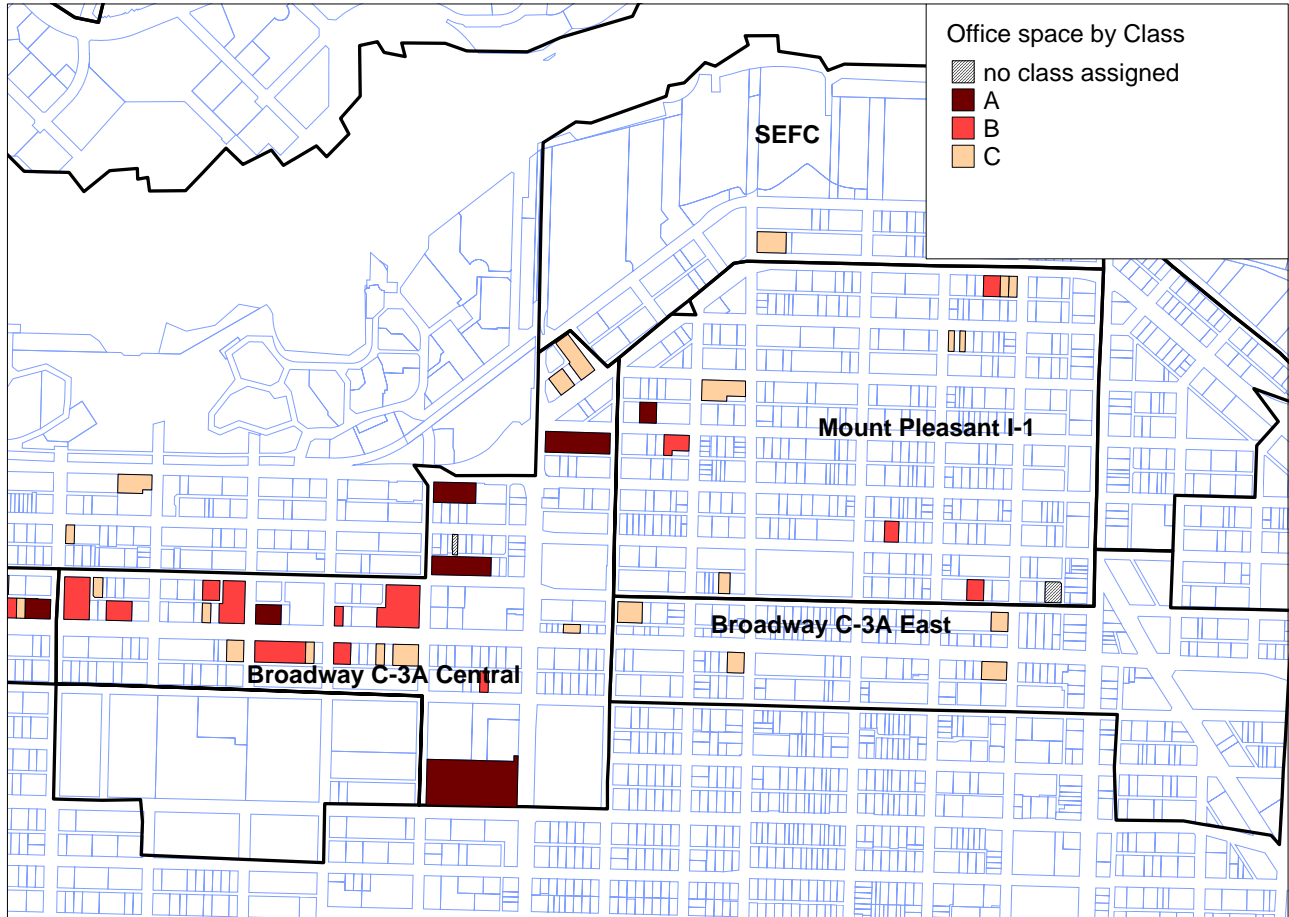
	Number of buildings	% of total bldgs	Total floor space	% of total floor space
<b>South East False Creek</b>	1	1%	31,000	1%
<b>Mount Pleasant</b>	12	9%	201,733	4%
<b>Broadway total</b>	75	59%	3,210,594	70%
Broadway East	4	3%	92,152	2%
Broadway Central	25	20%	1,470,427	32%
Broadway West	46	36%	1,648,015	36%
<b>Burrard Slopes total</b>	26	20%	574,885	13%
Burrard Slopes South	11	9%	275,460	6%
Burrard Slopes North	15	12%	299,425	7%
<b>Granville Island</b>	1	1%	18,884	0%
<b>Outside of employment areas</b>	12	9%	522,776	11%
<b>Total</b>	127	100%	4,559,872	100%

Figure 3: Distribution of office buildings by class - South of False Creek western section



Note: The zoning districts noted here are identical to the employment areas.  
Government and institutional office space is not shown.

Figure 4: Distribution of office buildings by class - South of False Creek eastern section



Note: The zoning districts noted here are identical to the employment areas.  
Government and institutional office space is not shown.

#### WHEN WAS OFFICE SPACE SOUTH OF FALSE CREEK BUILT?

As mentioned above, office space classes vary in their characteristics. Typically, however, Class A space is located in newer buildings, or in buildings that have had extensive renovations. Class C on the other hand can be more often found in older buildings.

It is important to note that at the time of their construction, many buildings may have been top end office space, but are no longer considered as such due to aging of these buildings and innovations in

office space technology. For example, a Class A building 20 years ago may today be a Class B building.

The vast majority of office space south of False Creek was built in the 1980s and 1990s (see Figure 5 and Table 3). In fact, all of what today is considered Class A space was constructed in those two decades, with only one building completed in the 1970s. For today's Class C space, the 1970s were the most important period for construction. A relatively large share of Class B space, 14%, was constructed in the 1950s. More than one third of Class C space was constructed in the 1970s, with another 30% in the 1950s (see Note 3).

Figure 5: Office space by class - year built

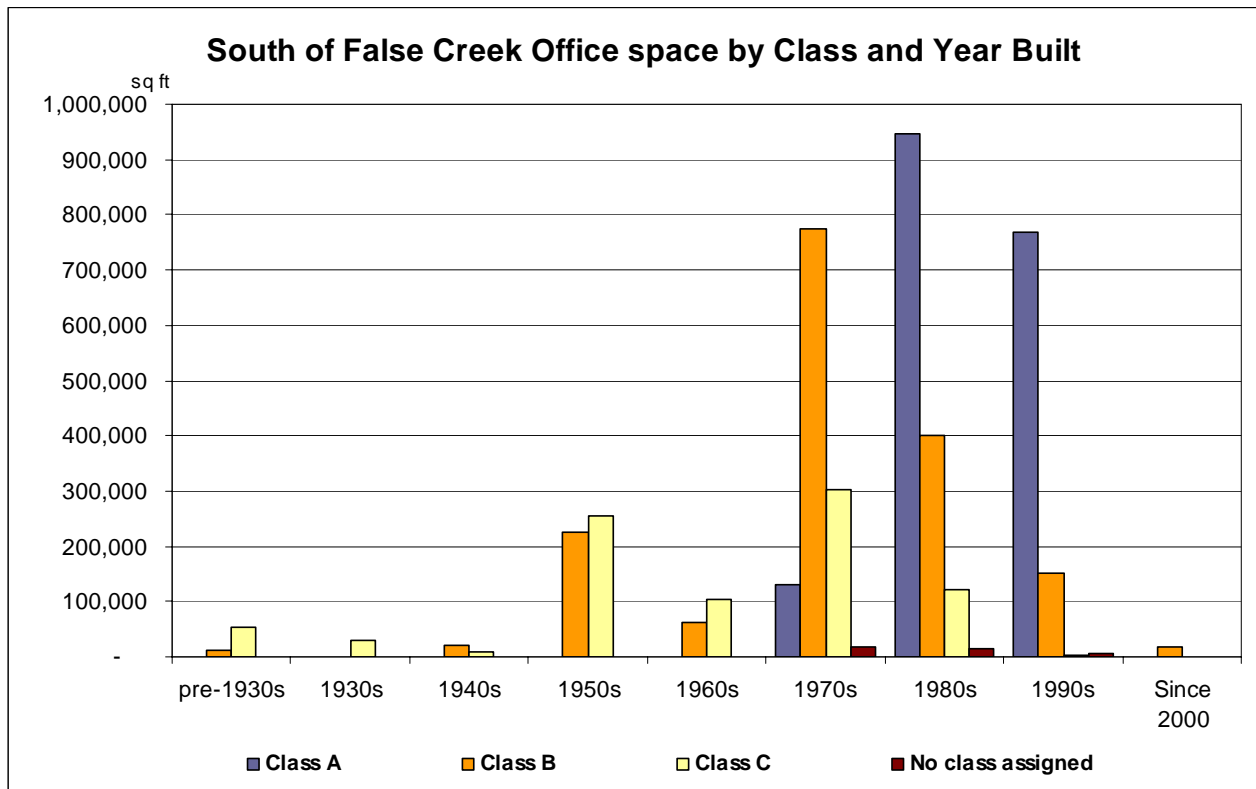


Table 3: Office space classes today by year of construction of building (see Note 3)

	pre-1930s	1930s	1940s	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	Since 2000
<b>Class A</b>									
Class A (sq ft)						132,000	945,256	767,439	
% of total A space						7%	48%	39%	
A buildings						1	12	10	
<b>Class B</b>									
Class B (sq ft)	12,000		19,871	225,170	62,271	774,348	400,758	151,115	17,000
% of total B space	1%		1%	14%	4%	47%	24%	9%	1%
B buildings	1		2	5	4	15	13	6	2
<b>Class C</b>									
Class C (sq ft)	53,898	28,784	9,700	255,709	103,309	301,725	120,406	3,210	
% of total C space	6%	3%	1%	29%	12%	34%	14%	0.4%	
C buildings	4	1	1	12	7	15	8	1	
<b>no class assigned</b>									
sq ft						17,000	13,900	6,801	
% of total no-class assigned space						45%	37%	18%	
no class assigned buildings						2	1	1	

WHAT ARE THE BUILT FORM CHARACTERISTICS OF OFFICE SPACE SOUTH OF FALSE CREEK?

Many factors play a role in determining what office space class a building is assigned to. These include location, building size, infrastructure provided within the building, and others. Table 4 provides a summary of some built form characteristics and how they vary by building class:

- There is a clear decrease in average site area and building size from Class A through to Class C. The largest site, however, can be found in Class B.
- Average densities are quite similar in Class A and B, but significantly lower in Class C.
- The average typical floor area size is much larger in Class A than in B and C.
- Class A buildings have on average more recently been constructed than the other two classes.

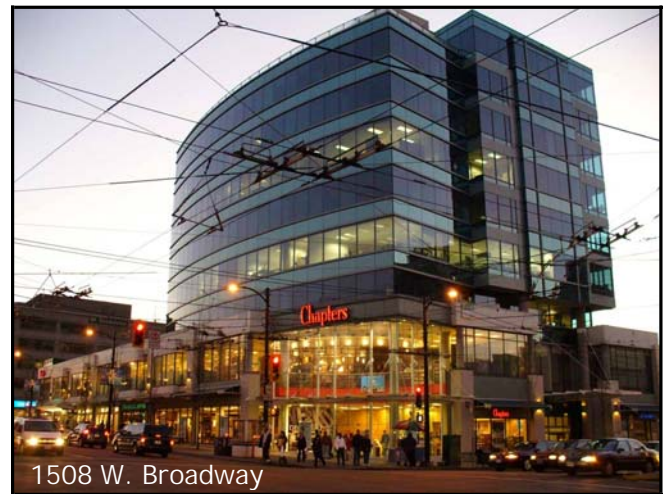
Table 4: Built form characteristics

	<b>Class A</b>	<b>Class B</b>	<b>Class C</b>
<b>Site area (average)</b>	<b>31,809</b>	<b>19,666</b>	<b>11,541</b>
range from	3,694	3,856	3,128
to	144,946	171,704	29,721
<b>Buildings size (average)</b>	<b>76,265</b>	<b>34,636</b>	<b>17,893</b>
range from	11,000	4,387	3,210
to	302,000	192,250	50,000
<b>FSR (average)</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>2.0</b>
range from	1.5	0.4	0.4
to	6.1	6.3	5.0
<b>Typical floor area (average)</b>	<b>11,202</b>	<b>7,583</b>	<b>5,853</b>
range from	2,800	1,856	1,600
to	25,000	20,000	15,000
<b>Number of floors (average)</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
range from	2	1	1
to	13	19	11
<b>Age (average)</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>42</b>
range from	8	5	10
to	28	94	103

Examples of Class A buildings

1508 W. Broadway is a relatively new Class A office building at the corner of Granville Street and Broadway. The nine-storey building was completed in 1998. It has retail on the first two floors and seven storeys of office space. With a building size of over 145,000 sq ft, 1508 Broadway is one of the largest office buildings south of False Creek.

Year built: 1998  
 Site area: 48,065 sq ft  
 Building Size: 146,486 sq ft  
 FSR: 2.92  
 Typical floor size: 10,732 sq ft  
 Height: 9 storeys



375 W. 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue is an example of a new mixed use building in Mount Pleasant. The four storey building contains two floors of industrial space and office space on the third and fourth floor. The building was completed in April 2006.

Year built: 2006  
Site area: 12,041 sq ft  
Building Size: 29,000 sq ft  
FSR: 2.42  
Typical floor size: approx. 8,000 sq ft  
Height: 4 storeys



1401 West 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue is located in Burrard Slopes. The building was constructed in 1979 and was renovated in 1999. The four storey building contains a fitness studio and retail on the ground floor, and three floors of office space.

Year built: 1979  
Site area: 20,716 sq ft  
Building Size: 54,544 sq ft  
FSR: 2.74  
Typical floor size: 16,300 sq ft  
Height: 4 storeys

#### Examples of Class B buildings

Broadway Plaza at 601 W. Broadway is the largest Class B building south of False Creek. The 190,000 sq ft large building includes retail and restaurant space. With 12 storeys, it is also one of the tallest buildings in the area. Broadway Plaza was constructed in 1980.

Year built: 1980  
Site area: 55,520 sq ft  
Building Size: 192,250 sq ft  
FSR: 6.32 (based on BCAA figure, which includes parking areas)  
Typical floor size: 9,500 sq ft  
Height: 12 storeys



## Examples of Class C buildings

The Clairmont Building at 1177 West Broadway is an 11 storey office building with restaurant and retail space at ground level. The building was constructed in 1971. With 11 storeys, the Clairmont Building is the tallest Class C building south of False Creek. The Clairmont Building was built under previous zoning and the density of 5.02 FSR is therefore higher than what is permitted today.

Year built: 1971  
Site area: 11,453 sq ft  
Building Size: 50,000 sq ft  
FSR: 5.02  
Typical floor size: 4,900 sq ft  
Height: 11 storeys



1525 West 8<sup>th</sup> Ave. is a smaller office building in Burrard Slopes. The building was constructed in 1973. It has two storeys on West 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and three at the rear of the lot.

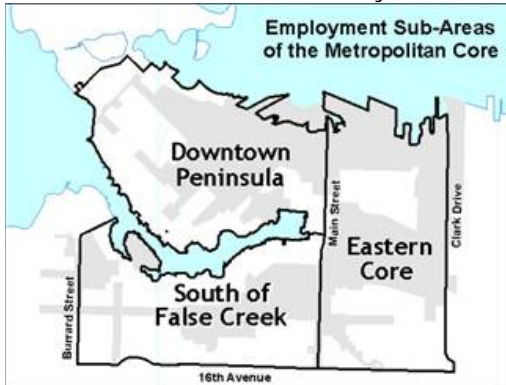
Year built: 1973  
Site area: 13,649 sq ft  
Building Size: 22,562 sq ft  
FSR: 1.67  
Typical floor size: 6,900 sq ft  
Height: 3 storeys



## Sources / Contacts

This Information Sheet was published by the City of Vancouver. It is one in a series of Information Sheets produced for the Metropolitan Core Jobs and Economy Land Use Plan. The purpose of this initiative is to develop a long term land use policy plan to accommodate future economic activity and jobs in the Metro Core. For further information, please e-mail [corejobs@vancouver.ca](mailto:corejobs@vancouver.ca) or visit the website [www.vancouver.ca/corejobs](http://www.vancouver.ca/corejobs)

- 1) South of False Creek refers to the part of the study area that is located south of False Creek. The area is bordered by Burrard Street on the west, Main Street on the east, False Creek on the north and 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the south (see the following map). However, for the purpose of this analysis, the entire Broadway C-3A West employment area was included. This area includes all buildings on the north and south sides of Broadway, and extends west of the South of False Creek areas to Vine Street.



- 2) The Broadway employment area is not the same area that is usually referred to by commercial real estate companies. The latter include the Broadway Tech Centre in East Vancouver and other buildings along Broadway located east of the area here referred to as "South of False Creek".
- 3) The year of construction refers to the year the building was completed in. At the time of construction, the building may have contained a different class of office space (e.g. a Class A building 20 years ago may today be a Class B building).
- 4) The floor space ratio (FSR) is a measure of density and is calculated by dividing the total floor area of the building by the site area. Certain building elements are excluded from FSR calculations, therefore, the FSR stated here cannot be derived from the building size and site area stated here.

### Sources:

Data for most of the analysis were downloaded from Space4Lease.com in December 2005. Some minor adjustments were made to reflect residential space and match the data more closely with BC Assessment data.

Real Property Association of Canada (RealPAC), January 2006.

[http://www.realpac.ca/index.cfm/ci\\_id/3042/la\\_id/1.htm](http://www.realpac.ca/index.cfm/ci_id/3042/la_id/1.htm)

Urban Land Institute. Office Development Handbook. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.

All Business, January 2006. <http://www.allbusiness.com/articles/StartingBusiness/872-25-1827.html>

Officespace.com, January 2006. <http://www.officespace.com/Terms.cfm>

CB Richard Ellis in: Downtown Seattle Association, Economic Information. January 2006.  
[www.downtownseattle.com/content/businesses/OfficeSpace.cfm](http://www.downtownseattle.com/content/businesses/OfficeSpace.cfm)