

## NEIGHBOURHOODS

This reference guide provides an overview of the types of records from the City of Vancouver Archives that relate to researching local areas and communities, including examples of specific fonds or collections. Please keep in mind that additional records may be found among the total Archives' holdings.

Records may be accessed either through record requests submitted for retrieval from our secure storage, self-serve microfiche access copies in the Reading Room, or, if digitized, viewed as a digital copy from our online database. Record retrievals run Monday-Friday, 10:00-4:30.

### General Tips:

- Before 1929, Vancouver as we know it today was divided into three municipalities: Vancouver, Point Grey and South Vancouver. Boundaries of these municipalities can be seen in this 1914 map ([AM1594-: MAP 70-: LEG1276.1](#)). Click on the image of the map to view the largest version and zoom in and out.
- The *names of some Vancouver streets have changed* in the past, which may affect searching the address of a particular property. A valuable resource is the book, *Street Names of Vancouver* by Elizabeth Walker, which provides an alphabetical listing of streets and avenues. Copies are available in our Reading Room or through the Vancouver Public Library.
- Vancouver is divided into 23 distinct neighbourhoods for which their *names and boundaries* can be identified from the [City's website](#)
- The phrasing "*local areas*" or "local area planning" is a common identifier that can be searched from our database
- Try also searching *local, colloquial or former neighbourhood names*  
e.g. "Tea swamp," "South Granville," "False Creek Flats" or "Eburne"
- The Archives' Reading Room holds a set of reference binders containing a collection of news clippings and articles on various streets and places in Vancouver (from the Major Mathews' collection)
- Consult the **reference guide on researching buildings and houses** for a more detailed overview on researching built structures within a neighbourhood.

## CITY RECORDS

City records used as primary sources related to City operations and development of Vancouver. Search the Archives' database for Departmental records, including maps and photographs.

- **City Council Minutes** ([COV-S31](#))
- **City By-laws** ([COV-S36](#))
- **Development Permit Files** ([COV-S178](#))
- **Planning Department Maps, Plans and Drawings** ([COV-S445](#))
- **Planning Department reference library** ([COV-S697](#))
  - Consists of reference material created and used by Planning Department staff
  - Includes Planning and other departmental reports, as well as studies, reports and news clippings produced by external bodies, 1927-2010
- **Sectional Maps** (multiple series, e.g. [COV-S508](#))
  - Used for an overview of surveyed areas showing development history of neighbourhoods and to determine legal description of lots
  - Maps for former municipalities of Point Grey ([COV-PG-S247](#)) and South Vancouver ([COV-S674-: MAP 871](#)) are also available
- **City Publications Collection** ([PUB](#))
  - Includes the publication series "Community Profiles," 1994 with demographic data ([PUB-: PDS 139](#))

## PRIVATE SECTOR HOLDINGS

Private records used as primary sources on community organizations, businesses, individuals and families, and other topics related to neighbourhood development and events in Vancouver. Our holdings of private records, identified as "AM" (or formerly "Add. Mss." for "Additional Manuscripts") can be searched using our online database. Suggestions of related fonds are:

- **Fire Insurance Plans**
  - Maps created by fire insurance companies showing details on individual properties, including type of construction, number of storeys, positioning of building on lot and lot features such as location of driveways, oil tanks and fire hydrants
  - Consult our **fire insurance reference guide** for more information
- **Community Planning Association of Canada, BC Division fonds** ([AM683](#))
  - Consists of board minutes, reports, maps and other records related to regional planning, 1949-1978
- **Dunbar History Project fonds** ([AM1533](#))
  - Consists of research and project records created through the Dunbar Residents Association, 1998-2010

## PRIVATE SECTOR HOLDINGS continued

- **Major Matthews Collection ([AM54](#))**
  - See Series 22 - Street and Place Names, Vancouver Area ([AM54-S22](#))
  - See Series 23 - Topical and Categorical Files ([AM54-S23](#)) for records related to businesses, individuals, and other subject files
  - Files contain compilations of notes, correspondence, pamphlets, and ephemera
- **Strathcona Property and Tenants' Association (S.P.O.T.A.) fonds ([AM734](#))**
  - Consists of Association records that began out of community activism against the City's urban renewal program in the late 1960s, 1966-1971
- **Sunset Community Association fonds ([AM68](#))**
  - Consists of Association records, including fundraising efforts and a time capsule, 1937-1956

## PHOTOGRAPHS

Used for images of local communities. A large number of photographic material has been digitized to search, view, and download directly from our database. Try searching street names, intersections and landmarks. Also, searching “aerial” or “oblique” will bring up any overhead aerial views. Suggestions of related records are:

- **Major Matthews Collection ([AM54-Series 4 - Collected Photographs](#))**
  - Photographs available online from the Archives' database or a smaller amount of access prints can be viewed in the Reading Room
- **City of Vancouver Archives Photograph Collection ([AM1376](#))**
  - Photographs available online from the Archives' database; a smaller amount of access prints can also be viewed in the Reading Room
- **City of Vancouver Aerial survey Photographs ([COV-S136](#))**
  - Created by the Planning Department, these photographic prints show perpendicular views of parts of the city taken 1950-1991
  - Accessed by cross referencing key maps to identify particular areas
- **City of Vancouver Heritage Inventory 1986: Photograph Survey ([COV-S639](#))**
  - Photographs showing buildings, schools, parks, and monuments from various neighbourhoods

## PAMPHLETS

Used for information about a range of events or issues from various sources. Includes brochures, advertisements, reports, invitations and more. Pamphlets can be searched through our online Archives' database.

- **City of Vancouver Archives Pamphlets Collection ([AM1519](#))**

## NEWS CLIPPINGS

Used for information about individuals, families, businesses, and other organizations, industries, events and issues etc. There are different sets of clippings, each with its own alphabetical sequence:

- Major Matthews Collection ([AM54-Series 17- News clippings](#)) 1860-1970
- City of Vancouver Archives News Clippings Collection ([AM1519-S1](#)) 1919-2007
- Pacific Press newspaper clippings ([AM1616-S3](#)) 1930-1973

## CITY DIRECTORIES

Annual directories (1886-1996) produced by private firms listing names of residents, properties, and businesses (some years are B.C. directories and include other regions). Please note that directories were compiled by private firms for business purposes so they are convenient and broad in scope, but not authoritative and there are demographic omissions. Directories can be reviewed as bound books as well as on microfilm in the Reading Room.

See also our reference guide on city directories for more a more detailed overview. City directories for the years 1860-1955 have also been digitized and can be [viewed online through the Vancouver Public Library](#).

## BOOKS

Secondary sources used for historical overviews of the development of Vancouver and neighbourhoods. The Archives' has its own reference library collection that can be accessed when visiting the Archives. Some general suggestions are:

- City of Vancouver Archives Library Collection ([online here](#))
  - *Collingwood Pioneers: Memories of a Vancouver District* (FC 3847.52 N53 1990)
  - *Early Vancouver* by J.S. Matthews (FC 3847.49 M37 E2 1932): a seven volume account of conversations between Matthews and early residents. An index to all volumes is available in the Reading Room. *Early Vancouver* has also been transcribed and can be searched online from our website: [Major Matthews' Early Vancouver](#)
  - *False Creek* by Robert K. Burkinshaw (FC 3847.4 B87 1984)
  - *Gastown: The 107 Years* by Gary Bannerman (FC 3847.52 B355 1974)
  - *Heritage Walks Around Vancouver* by John Atkin and Michael Kluckner (FC 3847.7 K68 1992): contains neighbourhood histories

## BOOKS continued

- *Inventing Stanley Park* by Sean Kheraj (FC 3847.65 .K44 2013)
- *Mount Pleasant Early Days: Memories of Reuben Hamilton Pioneer, 1890* (FC 3847.49 R48 M68 1957)
- *Saltwater City: An Illustrated History of the Chinese in Vancouver* by Paul Yee (FC 3847.9 C5 Y43 1998)
- *Strathcona: Vancouver's First Neighbourhood* by John Atkin (FC 3847.52 A84 1994)
- *The Drive: A Retail, Social and Political History of Commercial Drive, Vancouver, to 1956* by Jak King (FC 3847.25 .K56 2011)
- *Vancouver Book* by Chuck Davis (FC 3847.3 V35 1976): contains neighbourhood maps and histories (1976)
- *Vancouver: A Visual History* by Bruce Macdonald (G 1174 V3 S1 M32 1992): gives cartographic snapshots of Vancouver every decade from 1850's to the 1980's
- *Vancouver: The Way It Was* by Michael Kluckner (FC 3847.4 K59 1984)

Search our holdings: <https://searcharchives.vancouver.ca/>

Please contact the Archives for further questions about our holdings or to discuss your research topic with an archivist.

Phone: 604-736-8561

Email: [archives@vancouver.ca](mailto:archives@vancouver.ca)

1150 Chestnut Street, Vancouver B.C. V6J 3J9