

## **City of Vancouver Archives Micro-history: Contaminated Sites and Preliminary Site Assessments.**

UBC Geography 426: Historical Geography of BC.

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September 29, 2010.

### **Due Date: October 13, 2011.**

This assignment is worth 10% of your final grade.

Target length, four pages double spaced. Do not spend more than five hours on this assignment.

Please cite all sources using appropriate footnotes.

### *Background:*

At the City of Vancouver Archives, you will be introduced to some tools that can provide insight into historic land uses. Being able to compile such histories is a practical skill to have. Often this information is desired by people who wish to protect themselves against inheriting somebody else's toxic hazards. Individuals considering purchasing or developing a property, or lending money to a business, want to make sure that there are no hidden 'surprises' buried beneath the soil or leaching through the grass from a neighbouring parcel of land. These individuals do not want to be liable for the cost of cleaning up a mess created by others.

In these instances, a preliminary site investigation profile is compiled from readily available sources, including past and present uses. Interviews are also conducted with people who have been involved with the site, including neighbours. This 'due diligence' records search protects an individual from future claims against them. If the initial search turns up cause for concern, then physical testing of the site may be necessary.

### *The Assignment:*

After our tour, your job is to make use of the city directories, fire insurance maps and other sources to construct a site-use history. If you live in Vancouver, feel free to use your home address. If you live outside of Vancouver, you may wish to research the former Expo lands on False Creek, the area underneath the Oak Street Bridge, the intersection of 18th and Dunbar, the intersection of 6th and Cambie, 9250 Oak Street or 41st and Collingwood.

What activities took place on and around your site over time? Might they have produced any causes for concern?

When you return to UBC, visit the GIC and look at a reasonably spaced sequence of air photos for your address. Do they confirm the information you have already collected? Do they tell you anything new, not found in your archival sources?

### *Structure*

Please begin the assignment with a site description, followed by a narrative as informed by your archival sources. Include some commentary on the changes in the wider neighbourhood, and recommendations for the prospective buyer based on your reading of the archival record. Don't forget to include a brief outline of the sources that you would ideally consult if you had unlimited time for the project.

### *Marking Rubric:*

Creative and critical use of wide variety of primary sources.

Synthesize these sources into a meaningful, articulate, chronological narrative.

Correct use of citation.