

## **City of Vancouver Archives site history: contaminated sites and preliminary site assessments.**

UBC Geography 426: The Historical Geography of BC.

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### **Due Date: October 14, 2014.**

This assignment is worth 15% of your final grade.

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

Please cite all sources using appropriate footnotes. Published, secondary sources should be self evident, but references for primary sources need to include the name of the repository, and whatever info from the binder/fiche/map/etc that anybody else would need, to get their hands on it as quickly as possible.

### *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. 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. 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, please use your home address. If you live outside of Vancouver, I will give you an address to research.

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

On Sept 22 we will **visit the GIC**. Select 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? If possible, include copies of the air photos that you consulted with your report.

Over...

### *Structure*

Please begin the assignment with a site description, followed by a chronological narrative as informed by your archival sources. Include some commentary on the changes in the wider neighbourhood, and recommendations for a prospective buyer of the property, 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:*

- Wise use of secondary sources to inform your archival research.
- Creative and critical use of a wide variety of primary sources.
  - at a minimum, mandatory sources include the directories, fire insurance plans, water hook-up applications, photographs, and air photos.
- Evidence of strong analysis
- Synthesize these sources into a meaningful, fluid, articulate, chronological narrative.
- Correct use of citation.