

Researching Heritage Buildings

There is existing research and/or digitized records for many of Vancouver's heritage sites and buildings. When researching a specific building, we recommend the following steps.

Step 1—Basic Search

First try **googling** the address you may learn helpful information such as alternate addresses, year built, and names of architects or builders which will help refine your search.

Step 2—Refined Search

Next use the following resources to search for more information, using any material you have gathered from your basic search.

- [Heritage Site Finder Interactive Map – Vancouver Heritage Foundation](#)
- [Places That Matter Plaque Project – Vancouver Heritage Foundation](#)
- [Past VHF Tour Brochures and Map Guides](#) - choose a tour or map guide to view brochures
- [Vancouver Building Register](#) - register of well known buildings in the central business district and some private residential
- [Grandview Database](#) - information concerning houses in Grandview area
- [Docomomo Canada BC Register & Gallery](#) - database of modern buildings, sites and neighborhoods
- Blogs about Vancouver's history and heritage buildings:
 - [Every Place Has a Story](#) - Eve Lazarus
 - [Past Tense Vancouver](#) - Lani Russwurm
 - [Spacing Vancouver](#)
 - [Vancouver Is Awesome](#)
 - [When an Old House Whispers](#) - James Johnstone
 - [Changing Vancouver](#)
 - [Building Vancouver](#)

- Publications:
 - *Exploring Vancouver: the Architectural Guide* by Harold Kalman & Robin Ward
 - *Vancouver Heritage Inventory Phase II 1986 Summary Report* (in VHF office only)
 - *Building the West: Early BC Architects* by Don Luxton
- Search the [VHF Reading Room](#), Vancouver Public Library [Catalogue](#) or your local library for more books.

Notable authors to search:

- John Atkin
- Michael Kluckner
- Donald Luxton
- Eve Lazarus
- Chuck Davis
- Harold Kalman
- Aaron Chapman

Step 3

If you need more information or could not find anything published about your building continue your investigation with the following:

- [VanMap](#) - geo-rectified map of Vancouver that is good for verifying legal descriptions and locations of addresses. If the lot existed before 1912 it will be visible on the 1912 Goad's Fire Insurance Map layer
- [Building Permit Database](#) - records include year of issued permit, architect, owner, type of permit, and cost of construction
- [BC City Directories](#) - list of addresses and their occupants 1860-1955
- [BC Vital Statistics](#) – records of births, deaths and marriages
- [City of Vancouver Archives](#) (search online for documents but note that not all are digitized)
 - Vancouver Schools Inventory
 - Heritage Advisory Committee (minutes, reports, data sheets and photographic inventory containing info of buildings considered by the committee for heritage designation)

- Vancouver's Building Heritage by Nancy Oliver (description of streetscapes and heritage buildings throughout Vancouver, appendix of architects, appendix of buildings built prior 1900)
- Private Papers and Pamphlets (research projects on buildings throughout Vancouver)
- Water Permits
- Property tax Assessment records

Buildings on the Vancouver Heritage Register have paper files at City Hall. Contact **Hugh McLean** to arrange a visit Mon-Fri to view paper files: hugh.mclean@vancouver.ca Heritage Group, Urban Design Division Planning & Development Services. *please note these resources are located at 515 West 10th Avenue, Vancouver.

- [Transcribimus/Global Civic](#) - early civic documents of Vancouver
- [Land Titles](#) - detailed information of each land title can be accessed through the [Land Title Survey Authority](#) *fees for each transaction researched*
- [Census Records](#) - to find people, does not directly relate to buildings
- [Newspapers](#) - Heritage Vancouver has a good inventory of where to access old newspapers

Helpful Research guides

- [Vancouver Public Library Guide to Researching Your Heritage Building](#) - recommends books and maps, and the side bars list useful online resources
- [Heritage Vancouver Permit Database FAQ](#) - scroll down to *Further Resources*
- [Conducting research on residential homes](#) by Stephanie Warner
- [New Westminster Heritage's Guide to Researching Old Houses](#)
- [North and West Vancouver Guide to Heritage House Research](#)
- [Researching Heritage Buildings](#)

- [Vancouver Historical Society](#) - will give research advice, email info@vancouver-historical-society.ca
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Online Street Maps and City Plans

- [VanMap](#) - geo-rectified map of Vancouver, compare the city now with the 1912 Goad's Fire Insurance Map layer
- [City Records, Plans and Fire Insurance Maps](#)
- [Vancouver Street Names](#) by Elizabeth Walker - documents historic street names
- [Map of Musqueam Place Names](#)

Street Maps and Sectional Maps can also be viewed in person at the Vancouver Public Library.

Online Historical Photos

- [Photos of BC and the Yukon VPL](#)
 - [Open Library Digital Collections UBC](#)
 - [City of Vancouver Archives](#)
 - [BC Archives Collections](#)
 - [Changing Vancouver Then and Now Images](#)
 - [A Pictorial History of Grandview](#)
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For more information on Vancouver's heritage, history and architecture visit VHF's website.

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