



Shore of False Creek, Archives; 1902

The late 1800's was an important time in the development of False Creek. At one time, the Flats was a tidal salt basin that extended just west of present-day Clarke Drive. In less than three decades, the area changed from a quiet inlet inhabited by thousands of waterfowl in dense forest, into a busy waterway serving the industrial centre of the city. With the growth of rail and sea transportation facilities, the False Creek Flats saw a major transformation.

In 1885, the western terminus of the Canadian Pacific Railway's (CPR) transcontinental line moved from Port Moody to Coal Harbour and English Bay, and facilitated tremendous growth for what soon became the City of Vancouver.

MODERN HISTORY

As Vancouver started to grow, housing and a number of sawmills were constructed around False Creek. In 1913, the Great Northern Way railway was extended through the Flats to service the city's growing industry and population. Primarily built on piles, and low trestles, the Great Northern Railway formed the foundation for the first filling of the Flats to begin.



CN Rail Station, Archives; 1917

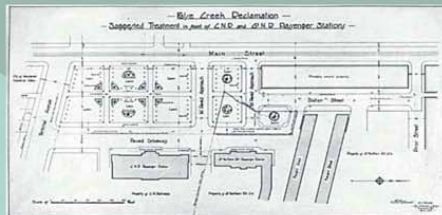
Between 1916 and 1917, intermittent and inconsistent filling had occurred as far west as what would eventually become Main Street. Much of this fill was excavated material from the Grandview Cut, as the massive amount of material coming from this railway project needed to be diverted elsewhere. The catalyst for moving much of this fill to the Flats was the push of CN into the False Creek Basin and the subsequent development of a major passenger rail station close to Mount Pleasant and the downtown peninsula.

By the mid-1920's, the rail presence in the Flats was firmly established. Given increased industrial activity, a growing economy, and an expanding residential population, the City was indeed beginning to grow with the railways. By the 1920's, plans were firmly underway to structurally fill the remaining portion of the Flats. The plan (below centre) is a land reclamation plan to fill from the new CN Passenger Rail terminal to Main Street between Terminal Avenue and Prior Street. With the filling of the Flats and the presence of two major rail corporations being well established for long distance freight hauling, industry pushed more aggressively into today's False Creek Basin. This increased industrialisation and intensive use of the shoreline marked the formative days for the shaping of our modern shoreline.

From the 1960's forward, the neighbourhood's surrounding the False Creek Flats began to see dramatic residential, retail, and commercial growth to support the growing population in Vancouver. With this kind of growth also came the need for industrial uses that could support a growing city. The Flats began to find its modern-day niche. Between the 1980's and 1990's, City staff recognised the need for some significant policy moves in order to better understand and secure the City's industrial lands (see 'Policy Background').



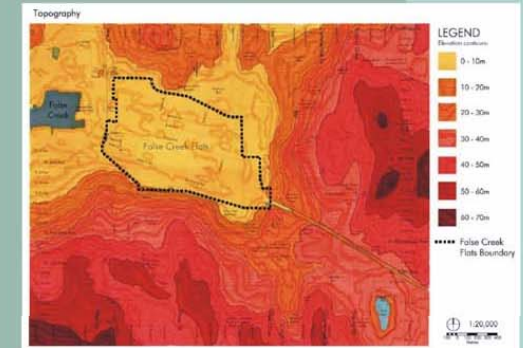
Great Northern Station, Archives; 1929



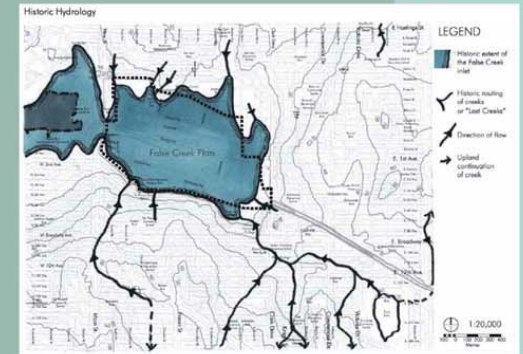
False Creek Flats land reclamation plan, COV Engineering; 1923



View east from Granville St. Bridge; 1928



Courtesy of Peter Russel, UBC Planning 2004



Courtesy of Peter Russel, UBC Planning 2004



the False Creek Flats

SITE HISTORY



CITY OF VANCOUVER