

**Urban Renewal and the Power of Community Advocacy in the Case of the Britannia  
Community Service Centre: A Portrait of the Community that was Expropriated**

By

Claire Shepansky

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## **Abstract**

Many stories of urban renewal schemes are of top-down planning — eradications of whole neighbourhoods in the name of modernism, which ultimately destroys the fabric of the communities they target; this was almost the fate of the east side of Vancouver in the 1960s if it had not been for forceful community activism. The neighbourhood of Grandview, which had been tragically neglected by City Hall, lacked essential community services, but rather than standing idle, community members took an active role in advocating for their needs. Students, neighbourhood groups and community organizations rallied together with civic staff and ultimately were able to realize their dream of an integrated community centre for Grandview, called the Britannia Community Services Centre. This case of community planning signalled a shift in city planning trends from high modernity urban-renewal plans to social planning with community involvement. This narrative seeks to shed light on those who are often overlooked in this success story — those who gave up the most for their community — the people living in the 77 homes that were expropriated. Ultimately, this story is a testament to the power of community planning and community engagement; it is an example of how a group of citizens advocating for their community can create meaningful and impactful change and positively affect the livelihood of an entire neighbourhood.

“There’s a tremendous commitment to Britannia and it’s very much a special place. That warmth that comes through, and commitment to the kids and to this particular community; it’s there and it’s very, very strong. I want to be sure that’s captured because that’s what makes the place unique.”

– Enzo Guerriero (A Great Idea, pg. 63)

## Introduction

The Grandview-Woodland neighbourhood (simply referred to as Grandview) in East Vancouver had lacked social services since its inception, however this changed after a valiant community movement pushed for the creation of the Britannia Community Services Centre — an innovative and centralized centre that became the heart of the community. This paper seeks to create a narrative of the community centre site’s history and explore the reasons the centre saw such widespread support — even from those whose lives had to be uprooted for its creation. City Hall’s neglect of the people living in the eastside in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century made necessary community activism, and while the fight for services resulted in the eviction of people in 77 homes, the sacrifices that these people made ultimately positively effected the community as a whole. While there is some secondary literature on the urban renewal that happened in these 60 years, Murray writes, “[Grandview-Woodland] has been almost completely ignored in the academic literature”<sup>1</sup>, and further I assert that there is a knowledge gap on the community that was affected by the renewal — specifically those whose homes were expropriated. In light of this, I seek to examine the people who lived on what is now the Britannia Community Services Centre site, and how they felt about the creation of the centre. My research will look at how the proposed centre impacted community building in Grandview and conversely how the community had a role in creating change. In order to contextualize my research it is important that I first give a brief history of the Grandview-Woodland neighbourhood as it developed through the twentieth century and examine the politics of planning trends in Vancouver in the 1960s.

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<sup>1</sup> K. Murray, Making Space in Vancouver's East End: from Leonard Marsh to the Vancouver Agreement. *BC Studies* 169 (2011) pg. 2.

## **Grandview-Woodland**

The history of Grandview dates back to the 1870s when it was part of a timber stand feeding the Hastings Mill but emerged as a community with permanent settlement in 1891 when the first house was built.<sup>2</sup> Initially, the community was made up of mostly English people, but also had a prominent Japanese community until 1942. After the 1950s, the neighbourhood became home to many immigrants, especially Italians and Chinese. Primarily comprised of working-class people, this neighbourhood on Vancouver's east side has historically been one of the poorest in the city which was further compounded by the fact that the neighbourhood severely lacked attention from City Hall in providing much-needed services and in improving living conditions (I will further discuss this in the following section, "Planning and the Eastside"). While there were some services available, many of them were established as community organizations (such as the YMCA) without any government support. It is documented that in light of a lack of social and civic services the residents of Grandview responded by establishing strong community groups, like the Chamber of Commerce, the Grandview Woodland Ratepayers (under Harry Rankin) and a student organization called the Association to Tackle Adverse Conditions (ATTAC). In 1964 the Woodland Park Area Resource Council was formed as a community advocacy group and was the first neighbourhood association in Vancouver. Then in 1967 this organization was reformed as the Grandview-Woodland Area Council (GWAC)<sup>3</sup>, which still exists today. It has been said by community members that this history of social and political unrest and action has played a major role in the shaping of the community, as it exists today.

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<sup>2</sup> City of Vancouver Planning Department, *Grandview-Woodland: A Community Profile*, Vancouver, 1994. Pg. 1.

<sup>3</sup> J. Cooly, *The Britannia Community Services Centre: A lesson in Participatory Planning and Design*, Stoubsburg, 1979. ; City of Vancouver Planning Department, *Grandview-Woodland: A Community Profile*, Vancouver, 1994.



**Figure 1 – Left: Goads 1912 Fire Insurance map, which shows the Britannia site in 1912. Accessed from VanMap. Right: the present day Britannia Community Service Centre site. Accessed from Google Maps. This comparison shows the land surrounding the original Britannia Secondary School that was expropriated in the following sixty years.**

## The Britannia Site

Now that the neighbourhood has generally been given some context I will give a brief overview of the beginnings of the area that currently stands as the Britannia Community Services Centre site. The site's origin story starts in 1910 when Britannia Secondary School was established on a small block of land south of Parker Street, north of Napier Street and in between Woodland Drive and Cotton Drive (See Figure 1). At this time Grandview had already been established and was populated with full street blocks of houses surrounding the school. In the 1950s, the school population exceeded the building, and plans were made for an expansion — a cafeteria, gymnasium and playing field were to be built. The Vancouver School Board started buying land from homeowners on William Street, Napier Street, and Woodland Drive. The City of Vancouver Archives has records of contracts between the school board and contractors to tear down the buildings from 1953, which sheds light onto the atmosphere of the community at this

time. In one communication between Mr. King, (the City's Director of Construction and Maintenance, on the Britannia additions) and Mr. Hines (the Secretary-Treasurer of the Vancouver School Board at the time), Mr. King expresses concern about very high levels of vandalism and theft that were occurring in the expropriated houses.<sup>4</sup> The 1955 additions to the school were added onto the west side of the school and while these additions were necessary they unfortunately completely ruined the original stately, heritage façade of the school by covering up the grand staircase. The school was then expanded again in 1967 for the addition of a science wing. In total, approximately 30 houses were expropriated for the 1953 and 1967 expansions.

### **Urban Planning Trends in the Postwar Years of Vancouver**

Before I delve into exploring the process of the Britannia Community Services Centre's creation, I must first contextualize the political atmosphere and planning trends that sparked community demand for the community centre. Urban planning in Vancouver in the post-war years is described as a time of modernist proposals. Langford defines these years as a time when "planning was depoliticized and citizens were excluded from the decision-making process." Rather, he said, it was "planners, and engineers who were at the vanguard of high modernity and who used their skills and status to design prescriptions for the future."<sup>5</sup> Vancouver is said to have been "caught up with this culture of modernity."<sup>6</sup> A famous example of a modernist plan is Project-200, which was a proposal to build a highway that would run along the waterfront of Vancouver to Coal Harbour. This period of planning was evidently centred on new "modern" public works like highways and large modernist housing developments, but largely ignored the

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<sup>4</sup> Britannia High School – Removal of Houses, 1953, Box 58-C-3, Folder 10, Vancouver School Board Fonds, City of Vancouver Archives.

<sup>5</sup> W. Langford, Is Sutton Brown God? Planning Expertise and the Local State in Vancouver 1952,-73. *BC Studies* 173 (2012) pg. 2.

<sup>6</sup> W. Langford, Is Sutton Brown God? pg. 1.

effects that these urban-renewal programs would have on the vitality of lower-income neighbourhoods that they were targeting.

Part of this modernization scheme was large urban-renewal programs, the most significant in the narrative of Britannia being The City of Vancouver Planning Department's *Urban Renewal Scheme Three*, introduced in the early 1960s. This major urban renewal plan targeted the Strathcona neighbourhood, which was seen by City Hall as "an area of extreme decay... and blight on the city"<sup>7</sup>. The City of Vancouver Planning Department wrote in a 1968 document titled *Building and Planning Matters*, that "it was anticipated that positive improvement to the area and in particular the separation of industrial and residential uses would be achieved through urban renewal".<sup>8</sup> Now, while this might sound ideal for the residents of the Strathcona neighbourhood, in later planning department notes it is seen that the renewal plans for the area were primarily to build large modernist apartment buildings and a freeway connector (known as the East-West Freeway) that would connect the proposed Project-200 to Highway 1. Ultimately this urban renewal would have resulted in the eviction of people from hundreds of homes and "bifurcated the community."<sup>9</sup> However, *Scheme Three* saw a very significant ideological shift (which would actually prove to benefit the community) in 1968 when the area it targeted was expanded to include the Britannia site.

It is important to note that the reason Project-200 and the East-West freeway was ultimately stopped was due to community activism. This started with individuals like Mary Lee Chan, Shirley Chan, and Bessie Lee knocking on doors informing Strathcona community

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<sup>7</sup> To Build a Better City – a 1964 City of Vancouver/CMHC film, BC History, YouTube Video, February 25 2014.

<sup>8</sup> Urban Renewal Scheme 3 (Britannia), 1966–1971, Box 142-A-1, Folders 7-8, City of Vancouver Fonds, City of Vancouver Archives.

<sup>9</sup> Enzo Guerriero (2016) Unrecorded oral history interview, April 2.

members the city's plan for their community and homes.<sup>10</sup> The movement would later formally organize under the Strathcona Property Owner and Tenants Association (SPOTA); the organization continued their fight and ultimately saved the Strathcona neighbourhood from the vast urban-renewal scheme that was planned for Strathcona and would have affected Grandview as well.

### **Planning and the East Side**

Before this 1968 amendment to *Scheme Three*, the Grandview neighbourhood was largely ignored by City Hall and lacked essential services. Murray's article discusses the lack of attention City Council paid to Grandview and their almost blatant dismissal of the people living on the east side of Vancouver. Further, Mr. Burch who was the publisher of the *Highland Echo* said in 1969 that, "over the last 35 years 170 people have been elected to City Council, but only ten were from the east side."<sup>11</sup> He further lamented that this had resulted in a lack of concern on the part of City Council, which led to a run-down condition of Strathcona and Grandview. This started to shift in the 1960s. Bob Williams (who graduated from Britannia Secondary) was elected to City Council in 1962 and is quoted saying he was "a kid from the eastside who was ready to raise hell about eastside issues."<sup>12</sup> Williams proved to be a fierce politician on City Council and proudly represented the community as one of the first voices on City Council for East Vancouver neighbourhoods.

### **The Dream**

Now that the political atmosphere and planning trends have been contextualized, I will focus the rest of this narrative on Grandview and the time leading up to the creation of the

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<sup>10</sup> Shirley Chan – Saving Strathcona in the 1960s, Interviewed by Bruce Macdonald, YouTube Video, Jan. 20 2016.

<sup>11</sup>Urban Renewal Scheme 3 (Britannia), 1966–1971, Box 142-A-1, Folders 7-8, City of Vancouver Fonds, City of Vancouver Archives. Document titled "Notes of a meeting held at Britannia Secondary School" pg. 3

<sup>12</sup> J. Zaslave and A. Vaughan, Bob Williams on the History of Planning in Vancouver. *West Coast Line* 39.2 (2005) pg. 266.



Britannia Community Services Centre, particularly the community activism, and expropriation of houses that enabled the centre's creation. Davitt and Martin describe the 1960s in Grandview as “the era of possibility,”<sup>13</sup> and Enzo Guerriero describes the 1970s as “the enlightenment of community engagement”<sup>14</sup>; it was a time of dreams for the community, visionaries creating plans and fierce community activism. As discussed in the previous sections, Grandview had severely lacked social services since its inception and by the late 1960s it was one of the only communities in Vancouver without a community centre and had significantly less parkland compared to other neighbourhoods, but this would soon change.<sup>15</sup>

In light of this, local activists took it upon themselves to ensure the needs of their community would be taken care of. One of the big initial steps toward achieving this goal was in 1967 when the Grandview-Woodland Area Council commissioned a report by Major Halsey of the Salvation Army that recommended the development of the Britannia Community Centre.<sup>16</sup> This became known as the Halsey Report and was the first formal document that got the idea brought to City Hall. A second 1967 report by the City of Vancouver's Social Development Committee which was entitled the *Community Services Centre Britannia - A Report of the Social Development Committee, City of Vancouver*, proposed the community centre as “A place which people regarded as theirs and through which they seek fulfilment and enjoyment... a focal point for the community and neighbourhood services which would encourage local initiative in developing a broad range of programs such as educational, recreational, social and cultural.”<sup>17</sup> This report asserted Britannia as the ideal location for the first community services centre (as

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<sup>13</sup> P. J. Davitt and K. Martin, *A Great Idea*, pg. 3

<sup>14</sup> Enzo Guerriero (2016) Unrecorded oral history interview, April 2.

<sup>15</sup> J. E. Roberts, *Britannia Community Services Centre Organization and Administration Study*, Vancouver, 1972.

<sup>16</sup> City of Vancouver Planning Department. “Grandview-Woodland: A community profile.” In *Community Profiles 1994*. Vancouver, BC: City of Vancouver Planning Department, 1994.

<sup>17</sup> Community Services Centre (Britannia): A Report of the Social Development Committee, Vancouver BC, 1968.

was also outlined in the Halsey report) due to the high concentration of low-rent housing in the neighbourhood, the fact that the area now fell within the *Scheme Three* boundary, but most notably that the present school and park facilities on the site would incorporate well into the total scheme.<sup>18</sup> Both the Halsey Report, the Report by the Social Development Committee, and a following Report to the Joint Technical Committee of the Social Planning Department envisioned the Britannia site as being the perfect location to centralize headquarters for social services and bring together a library, health services, daycare facilities, recreation facilities and educational programs for Grandview.<sup>19</sup>

Meanwhile, the youth of Britannia were mobilizing. Years before the community centre was an official idea proposed to City Hall, students at Britannia recognized the lack of activities that were available to the young people in their community. Joe Ferrara said, “we began to just talk with our friends... about what it would be like to actually organize some things...our discussion was about the recreation that was available to us... our community centres were the pool halls, or the parks, that’s where we hung around.”<sup>20</sup> The students received guidance from John Minichiello, who had a philosophy that “the more students that were involved within their community, the more interest and the more pride they would have in their community.”<sup>21</sup> This informal group of Britannia students were dedicated to improving their community by providing activities for neighbourhood children like dances and track meets. While these events definitely benefitted the community, the group wanted to do more. This passion and commitment to their community was heightened after Minichiello showed the group GWAC’s Halsey Report, which

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<sup>18</sup> Community Services Centre (Britannia): A Report of the Social Development Committee, Vancouver BC, 1968, pg. 5

<sup>19</sup> City of Vancouver Social Planning Department, Proposed Community Services Centre (Britannia): Report to the Joint Technical Committee of the Social Planning Department, Vancouver, 1968. ; Community Services Centre (Britannia): A Report of the Social Development Committee, Vancouver BC, 1968.

<sup>20</sup>P. J. Davitt and K. Martin, A Great Idea, pg. 7

<sup>21</sup>Ibid

formally outlined the deficit of recreational opportunities in Grandview. The idea of a community services centre, with an ice rink, pool and running track, “really caught the students imaginations”.<sup>22</sup> The Britannia students then reached out to the student councils at Notre Dame Secondary School and Templeton Secondary School and in 1969 formed a group called the Association to Tackle Adverse Conditions (ATTAC) with Britannia students Joe Ferrara as the president and Enzo Guerriero, the vice president. This student-run organization quickly gained community support and at the first public ATTAC meeting held in the Britannia gymnasium 120 people attended. ATTAC became a major force for change in the fight for the community centre by rallying the neighbourhood behind the idea of the community centre, even going door to door to promote voting in favour of the area-wide vote for the five-year plan.

While ATTAC emerged as a powerful force there were other organizations that also vocally supported the proposed centre. Most notable are the Parents Group, the Strathcona Property and Owners and Tenants Association (SPOTA), and as mentioned previously GWAC. These three organizations (along with ATTAC) were present at a meeting held at Britannia on November 23, 1969 where representatives of City Council aimed to convince Minister Robert K. Andras to ensure federal government participation in the project.<sup>23</sup> Shirley Chan as the representative of SPOTA, stated the group’s position was in support of the creation of facilities but emphasized that they would be demanding that the community be involved throughout the entire process.<sup>24</sup> Further Mrs. B. Ambrose of the Parents Group wrote in support of the centre saying, “at the present time there are not sufficient facilities to service the area and take care of

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<sup>22</sup> P. J. Davitt and K. Martin, *A Great Idea*, pg. 9

<sup>23</sup> Urban Renewal Scheme 3 (Britannia), 1966–1971, Box 142-A-1, Folders 7-8, City of Vancouver Fonds, City of Vancouver Archives. Document titled “Notes of a meeting held at Britannia Secondary School” pg. 2

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*

the needs of many living here.”<sup>25</sup> She further stated, “families need immediate help to deal with problems rather than going through long, complicated red tape with various social agencies scattered through out the city.” The plan for a centre would enable all of these services to be in the same location, which would provide on-spot services to these people.”<sup>26</sup> While all four groups were strong supporters of the centre being constructed, they also posed their concerns to the city representatives and the minister that the process of the centre’s creation wasn’t harmful on the community. Mr. W. Day acting as the representative for GWAC, emphasized the group was deeply concerned about the “problem of the loss of homes, especially the relocation aspect.”<sup>27</sup> At the end of this meeting Honourable R. K. Andras asserted that because of ATTAC, SPOTA and GWAC it is “obvious that the people involved are behind the project,” but further stated that the city would need “land write-down to finance the project and that urban renewal is the only way this can be done.”<sup>28</sup> Ultimately the minister stated that if the municipal and provincial governments support the project the federal government would help fund it.

### **ATTAC and the Community at Stake**

Clearly there was a need for centralized services in Grandview, neighbourhood advocacy for the idea and support from the city in favour of the community centre, but what about those who would be most affected? Those whose houses would have to be cleared? In total there were 77 properties that fell in the proposed area for the site. While ATTAC was a major supporter and rallied the community in support of the centre they also acknowledged their neighbours and classmates who lived on the proposed site would have to adjust their lives for the dream to be realized. So in order to really see how these people felt about centre, ATTAC commissioned a

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>27</sup> Ibid

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, pg. 3

survey entitled, “Report of Relocation Survey” which was conducted in April of 1969 for everyone living within the proposed zone.<sup>29</sup> The survey got responses from 72 families out of 117 that fell in the expropriation zone. In terms of demographics of the neighbourhood, when asked “what is your occupation” 71% responded labourers, while 27% semi-skilled and 1.1% professionals, while a mere 0.98% were retired. The area was ethnically very diverse, with 25% identifying their ethnic origin as Chinese, 22% Italian, 15% Japanese, 12% Ukrainian, 11% Scottish, 9.8% British, and 4.3% Norwegian. Most families had between one and five occupants in their households at 65%, while the other 35% said there were five to ten members in their households. Further, it was found that the average length of time families had been living in the community was 8.3 years.

Now in terms of surveying opinions about the community centre, when asked “what you think the area needs”, 82% responded more parks, 40% thought better road infrastructure, 73% responded with schools, 75% said libraries while most significantly, 100% of the respondents thought the area needed a community centre. Then, when asked, “do you think Britannia is the appropriate site for the centre?” 91.6% said yes, and when asked “are you in favour of a community centre?” 98% said yes, and finally 85% said they would use the facilities in the community centre. These results make it clear that even the people living in the closest proximity to the Britannia site were in favour of the centre and thought that it was the best location, signalling that they acknowledged that if that was the chosen site they would have to move. Then when asked, “if involved in being relocated for a community centre would you move out of the area?” 22% responded with yes, while the majority of 78% said no. The next thing the respondents commented on was selling their houses. It was recorded that the respondents valued

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<sup>29</sup> Britannia Community Services Centre – Expropriation, 1973, Box 100-B-4, Folder 3, Vancouver Properties Division, City of Vancouver Archives.

their properties between \$12,000 and \$ 30,000 and when asked, “would you protest if the city price was not acceptable?” 84.7% said yes. The document also notes that the 15.3% that said no were of Chinese origin.

Enzo Guerriero, vice president of ATTAC and head of the ATTAC Relocation Committee was one of the students who went door-to-door delivering surveys; almost 50 years later he still remembers the significance of this face-to-face interaction with the community and largely attributes this community engagement to the success of Britannia. He said that almost all of the homes had children and the families therefore saw the importance of the centre for the livelihood of the community. He further lamented that a major reason this community of people were in support of the centre despite the possibility of losing their homes, was because education was a high priority. He acknowledged that a large portion of the neighbourhood were immigrants who generally were untrusting of bureaucrats so the engagement of ATTAC and kids acting as translators for their parents was significant in rallying support and getting the message of Britannia across.

### **Ideas becoming Reality**

After negotiations and sorting out the cost splitting between levels of government and municipal branches, in 1969 the proposal was approved by the Vancouver City Council in collaboration with the Parks Board, Library Board and School Board; the community centre which was once just a dream, was now a reality.<sup>30</sup> The next step was for the city to acquire the land through expropriations, which was approximated to cost \$2,000,000 in the grand project budget of \$7,250,000<sup>31</sup>. In total 77 houses were expropriated and while the exact number of

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<sup>30</sup> University of British Columbia. School of Community and Regional Planning. *An evaluation of Local Area Planning in Vancouver*. University of British Columbia. Vancouver, 1979, pg. 40.

<sup>31</sup> Britannia Community Services Centre – Site Acquisition: General, 1974, Box 100-B-4, Folder 3, Vancouver Properties Division, City of Vancouver Archives.

residents is unknown it is important to note that many of the houses were split for multiple families and many were rooming houses.<sup>32</sup> A City of Vancouver fonds document states that overall the land acquisition process was fairly smooth except for five owners that were more reluctant to sell.<sup>33</sup> I'm going to talk about three owners in particular.

First I'll discuss William McCartney of 1471 William Street.<sup>34</sup> McCartney, who was 86 at the time, had lived in his house for 48 years and complained the city was forcing him out of his home without giving him enough money to buy another house in the city, he said, "I don't want to block anything. All I want is a fair deal". The city offered him \$21,000 but he said, "I've been running all over the city looking for houses... all can get with what the city is offering is a dump." Alderman Harry Rankin noted it has always been the city's policy to pay "fair market value" for the land it takes over, regardless of the cost involved in the owners exchanging his home for a similar one elsewhere. However, after McCartney's plea, council adopted a new policy, which would require the city to meet fair exchange costs when expropriating houses.

In the two other cases, communications between city staff note that by 1973 the city went to significant lengths to encourage the residents to sell their property even by offering the resistant owners, Mr. Colapinto (and family) and Mr. Wong (and family) rent-free temporary accommodation.<sup>35</sup> The city resorted to court-ordered possession, which forced the owners to sell. In these cases the reason the owners were resistant wasn't in light of the centre, but rather they simply wanted more money than what the city was offering them for their properties.

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<sup>32</sup> For a full list of the 77 houses and residents expropriated for the Britannia Community Services Centre see appendix.

<sup>33</sup> Britannia Community Services Centre – Expropriation, 1973, Box 100-B-4, Folder 3, Vancouver Properties Division, City of Vancouver Archives.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid

<sup>35</sup> Britannia Community Services Centre – Site Acquisition: General, 1974, Box 100-B-4, Folder 3, Vancouver Properties Division, City of Vancouver Archives.



Figure 2 - Classified ads showing the initiative taken by City of Vancouver employees in relocating people in the community. Britannia Community Services Centre – Site Acquisition, 1974, box 100-B-4, Folder 3, Vancouver Properties Division, City of Vancouver Archives.

committed to the development of the centre but also to the wellbeing of the families that were giving up their homes.

Finally, after years of community activism, reports, meetings, negotiations between all levels of government, expropriations and construction, the Britannia Community Services Centre was officially opened to the public on June 5, 1976.<sup>38</sup> While this marks the end of this narrative, I note that the community engagement that spurred the centre's inception and creation didn't stop here but rather continues to be significant to the Britannia Community Services Centre's core

The city was responsible to help find places for people to live and in some cases such with the Colapinto family city employees offered transportation for the families to visit new houses.<sup>36</sup> In a folder from the City of Vancouver properties fonds are a few folded-up classifieds sections from 1973 newspapers on which a city employee had circled properties that were in the neighbourhood or close by. Ads for property in Grandview were circled with more vigour, such as a suite for rent off Commercial Drive and First Avenue, and a property on Napier Street (see Figure 2).<sup>37</sup> This shows that the city was not only

<sup>36</sup> Ibid

<sup>37</sup> Ibid

<sup>38</sup> J. Cooley, *The Britannia Community Services Centre: A lesson in Participatory Planning and Design*, Stoudburg, 1979. ; M. Clague, *Creating the Britannia Centre: a Working Report about an innovative approach to the provision of human services: the formative years, 1970–1978*, Vancouver, 1988. ; P. Davitt, and K. Martin. *A Great Idea: The Creation of Britannia Community Services*. Vancouver, 2001.



today. Now, almost 40 years since the inaugural opening, the Centre is entering a new era and is slated to be redeveloped within the next ten years.

### **Conclusion**

While it becomes clear that a community centre was desperately needed in Grandview, there has been a lack of acknowledgement of those who sacrificed the most to make the centre happen; the 77 families whose homes were expropriated. These families enabled the growth of the community and were (for the most part) co-operative in the process because they acknowledged the positive impact a community centre and centralized location of social services would have for families in this low-income community. While the east end had been widely ignored by City Hall, the 1960s were a turning point in the repression of the neighbourhood because of the fierce advocating for East Vancouver. The inspirational narrative of the Britannia Community Services Centre is a story of a community coming together and fighting for their needs; it's a story of noble sacrifice and triumphant success.

## **Acknowledgements**

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*VanMap*, Goads Fire Insurance Map 1912. Vancouver BC: City of Vancouver Archives, Goads Map date, July 3 1912, geocoded December 2014.

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## Appendix

### Community Centre Expropriations

The following tables were compiled using the 1972, 1973, and 1974 City Directories from The Rare Books and Special Collections Archive at the University of British Columbia. Information for each property was copied as the city directory had listed. An X means there was no information for the property and therefore can be assumed the property had been demolished. An = sign is used when information for a property was the same as listed in a previous year.

#### Parker Street

| Street number          | 1972  | 1973   | 1974 |
|------------------------|---|--|------|
| (Woodlands intersects) |   |  |      |
| 1501                   | Mah K   | Vacant   | X    |
| 1511                   | Wanchulak M Mrs.  | No return  | X    |
| 1517                   | 1) Black K<br>2) McGirl M J   | = & Coleman B                                      | X    |
| 1521                   | Chang Ali   | =  | X    |
| 1523                   | Kuan W  | No return  | X    |
| 1529                   | Mathison B C  | No return  | X    |
| 1537                   | Miller L G  | Vacant   | X    |
| 1539                   | Stojke O  | =  | X    |
| 1549                   | Joe Yat   | =  | X    |
| 1557                   | 1) Churchill J Mrs.<br>2) Juzenas A                                   | Greater Vancouver helpful neighbour workshop store | X    |
| 1559                   | Schadt W  | Vacant   | X    |
| 1581                   | Cain F Mrs.   | No info  | X    |
| 1591                   | Smith W P   | =  | X    |
| (Cotton intersects)    |   |  |      |
| 1617                   | Chew O N  | Vacant   | X    |
| 1623                   | Grimson V   | =  | X    |
| 1629                   | Baker W   | =  | X    |
| 1637                   | Samuel S J  | No return  | X    |
| 1639                   | Yargeau C E   | Welch A. Mrs.                                      | X    |
| 1642                   | 1) Croft N M Mrs.<br>2) Graham H<br>3) Sangreet H<br>4) Laframboise J | X  | X    |
| 1649                   | No return   | Vacant   | X    |
| 1651                   | 1) Nahnychuk O<br>2) Herman E   | X  | X    |

|      |  |             |                 |
|------|--|-------------|-----------------|
| 1652 | Vacant<br>a) Domato J Mrs. &<br>Pignatelli A | X           | X               |
| 1656 | Golko A & Guthrie H                          | X           | X               |
| 1671 | No return                                    | Liberty D D | Galanopoulous D |
| 1677 | Ford A P                                     | =           | Vacant          |
| 1680 | Blair T J                                    | =           | Argue Mary      |

### Woodland Drive

| Street number       | 1972  | 1973   | 1974   |
|---------------------|---|--|--------|
| (Parker intersects) |   |  |        |
| 1011                | Gee S   | =  | X      |
| 1019                | 1) Arcadi E<br>2) Bains M S   | Nam j  | X      |
| 1023                | De Fazio G  | X  | X      |
| 1029                | Fong Yim  | X  | X      |
| 1037                | 1) Damagoto S rooms<br>2) Knowles E J<br>3) Kryska C W                    | X  | X      |
| 1041                | Tung Ngai Yin   | X  | X      |
| 1047                | Eng Hing Tong   | X  | X      |
| (Napier intersects) |   |  |        |
| 1115 apartments     | 1) Shumizu G<br>2) Tanaka T<br>3) Uno June<br>4) Letgen G J<br>5) Adams G | 1) =<br>2) =<br>3) =<br>4) No return<br>5) No return | Vacant |
| 1129                | Shimizu G S   | Shimura F  | Vacant |
| 1175                | Henderson B D   | X  | X      |
| 1185                | Fong A  | X  | X      |

### Mclean Drive

| Street address | 1972         | 1973 | 1974 |
|----------------|--------------|------|------|
| 1008           | Mah Y P      | X    | X    |
| 1010           | Rothery P    | X    | X    |
| 1016           | Basey J      | X    | X    |
| 1022           | Low G        | X    | X    |
| 1030           | Chan Jong Yu | X    | X    |
| 1042           | No return    | X    | X    |
| 1056           | No return    | X    | X    |

|                     |                 |               |   |
|---------------------|-----------------|---------------|---|
| 1058                | Feng K          | X             | X |
| 1068                | Quan Lin Him    | X             | X |
| 1070                | Sturrock M Mrs. | X             | X |
| 1072                | No return       | X             | X |
| (Napier intersects) |                 |               |   |
| 1104                | Toscano F       | X             | X |
| 1108                | Romanelli A C   | X             | X |
| 1116                | Mayall J        | X             | X |
| 1124                | Yee Ching Man   | =             | X |
| 1128                | No return       | Wong Gar Guey | X |
| 1130                | Quatrano L      | =             | X |
| 1136                | Quon tze man    | =             | X |

### Cotton Drive

| Street address | 1972   | 1973                  | 1974 |
|----------------|--|-----------------------|------|
| 926            | 1) Ing S<br>2) Leong Y                               | =<br>=                | X    |
| 936            | Choo Bak Gen   | =                     | X    |
| 948            | Chee Wing J  | =                     | X    |
| 1104           | Karlo P  | =                     | X    |
| 1112           | 1) Allen J I<br>2) Bertrand I<br>3) Zeiduks M E Mrs. | =<br>Waldron R J<br>= | X    |
| 1120           | Evoy J E<br>Hagre S                                  | =<br>=                | X    |

### William Street

| Street address      | 1972           | 1973     | 1974               |
|---------------------|----------------|----------|--------------------|
| (McLean intersects) |                |          |                    |
| 1459                | Hoy B          | Shum yeu | X                  |
| 1471                | McCartney W E  | =        | X                  |
| 1479                | Jung Yee       | Vacant   | X                  |
| (Cotton intersects) |                |          |                    |
| 1637                | Gibson D Mrs.  | X        | X                  |
| 1641                | Colapinto P    | =        | Under construction |
| 1643                | Wong Chum Sang | =        | X                  |

### Napier Street

| Street address  | 1972  | 1973 | 1974 |
|-----------------|---|------|------|
| 1488 Apartments | 1) Cottengain E<br>2) Fekete J F<br>2a) Dickson G<br>3) James R<br>4) Hicks J L<br>5) Calhoun H | X    | X    |

|      |  |                      |   |
|------|--|----------------------|---|
|      | 6) Cousson P   |                      |   |
| 1616 | Kwan L   | X                    | X |
| 1618 | Campanile F  | Rao S M              | X |
| 1630 | Strachan   | X                    | X |
| 1631 | 1) McAuley J Mrs.<br>2) Savant E Mrs.<br>3) Leacock A<br>4) Goodman E<br>5) Pipe R E<br>6) La Pointe W A | 1) =<br>2) =<br>4) = | X |
| 1633 | Crooks G F   | X                    | X |
| 1636 | Halperin S   | X                    | X |
| 1642 | Vacant   | X                    | X |
| 1648 | Burge E. Mrs.  | X                    | X |