



Figure 1. Historic False Creek by Sam Sullivan

The Future of False Creek South

Exploring ideas for a Co2 neutral, resilient and community-focused development

Tuesdays & Fridays 1:30 - 6:00

SALA Lasserre Studio

Inge Roecker

Overview

This False Creek Studio explores urbanism and architecture in the context of urban and community-scale design. It situates architecture in a complex, often contested public realm with the potential to address issues of social, environmental, and spatial justice.

The questions we explore are how can we design a neighborhood to address the pressing challenges we face from climate adaptation to changing societal needs?

We will start with precedent studies to learn from historic and contemporary theories and practices from which key design principles will emerge. With such principles and frameworks in mind, we will develop a new framework and strategies that will shape our site/project. Each student's final project will be situated within this framework and seen as a vehicle to test the studio's developed framework.

Today False Creek holds significant importance for residents and visitors alike in Vancouver. Whether strolling, jogging, or cycling along the Seawall, attending events at BC Place or Rogers Arena, exploring Science World, or shopping at Granville Island, many are unaware of the intriguing

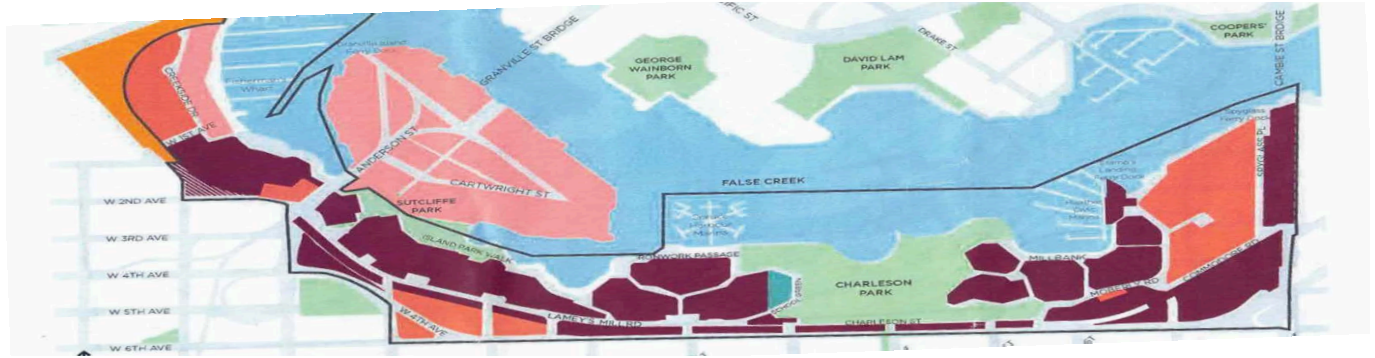
history behind this vibrant area. How did False Creek, after which this district is named, evolve into its present-day form?¹

For many years the False Creek and Fairview Slopes neighborhoods were covered by huge fir trees, and the Squamish Nation fished from the rugged shoreline. A shift came after 1887, when the CPR relocated its Pacific yards to the north side of the Creek. The forests were replaced by shipbuilding yards, sawmills, shingle mills, and various woodworking plants. False Creek's settler history dates back to 1791 when European explorers like José Maria Nárvaez and later Dionisio Alcalá Galiano, alongside English explorer William Broughton, initially overlooked its significance while navigating the area in search of the Northwest Passage. Galiano and Vancouver's meeting at Point Grey led to the naming of Spanish Banks but did not include exploration of False Creek itself, revealing its expansive size and indigenous settlements. Captain George Richards mistakenly identified False Creek as an inlet in 1859 during a survey for coal deposits, sparking industrial interest in lumber and eventual growth around the creek. The CPR's decision to extend its railway to Vancouver's English Bay in 1885 accelerated development, fostering industries like milling and manufacturing and connecting north and south shores with Granville Bridge in 1889, leading to the growth of residential areas like Yaletown.

By the mid-20th century, industrial decline and environmental degradation left False Creek polluted, prompting community-driven efforts in the 1960s to revitalize the area into a socially diverse residential district. South False Creek became a model of urban living, exemplified by Granville Island's opening in 1974 as a cultural and artisanal center. Expo 86 marked a turning point, redeveloping False Creek's north shore into a dense, ecologically conscious neighborhood and setting the stage for Vancouver-False Creek's emergence as a vibrant and sustainable urban community.

In 1972, amidst a shift towards center-left politics at the federal and provincial levels, Vancouver elected a Mayor and aldermen largely affiliated with The Electors Action Movement (TEAM). This new leadership prioritized urban planning policies that emphasized a blend of land uses, social diversity, environmental conservation, and public housing. Reflecting the evolving societal values of creating a 'livable city' and enhancing 'quality of life', TEAM led efforts to reclaim city-owned industrial lands along False Creek's southern shore. They devised a comprehensive master plan

¹ <https://samsullivan.ca/short-history-false-creek/>



that proposed a balanced distribution of one-third non-market rental housing, co-operative housing, and condominiums, all within a landscaped Garden City framework.²

Urban design was strategically planned to promote social interaction through both outdoor collective spaces such as courtyards and plazas, and indoor facilities like the False Creek School and False Creek Community Centre. Public enjoyment of the waterfront was also a key consideration. Regardless of their housing status, residents were ensured views of the mountains, achieved by a gradual slope from three- or four-storey townhouses near the water to taller apartment complexes ranging from 8 to 12 storeys along 6th Avenue, Cambie Street, and Granville Street. The City collaborated with a diverse group of acclaimed local architects, including Downs Archambault and Thompson, Berwick, Pratt, whose collective efforts imbued False Creek South with an aesthetic richness that enhances its distinct character and community appeal.

Today, traveling along the 2.7 km seawall you are sure to enjoy the amazing sights and witness the distinct character of this beautiful area. The South False Creek Project, which was the vision of Alderman Walter Hardwick and bore the community you see today set a precedent for the creative redevelopment of industrial lands and for public access to the waterfront.

50+ years forward, South False creek is still loved by its residents, neighbors, citizens and guests enjoying this unique neighborhood along 2.7 km of shoreline, so what questions are emerging? Not only is this neighborhood unique in its physical shape, it's also unique in its legal and ownership structure. The land is leased from the city, which allowed many co-ops and rental buildings to be not only affordable but created strong community bonds. But fear is lingering as the leases are coming to its maturity and concern about the future of the neighborhood emerge. After all it is on prime real estate and just across the inlet we see another Vancouver development model. A grass root community action group called REPLAN was formed by residents from South False Creek to tackle the big question: What is the future of the neighborhood? What does False Creek Flats 2.0 look like, what needs have changed from demographic shifts to environmental concerns and the financial pressures due to its prime location. Members of Replan group will join us for workshops to discuss ideas and concerns about the residence of False Creek South.

² <https://heritagevancouver.org/top10-watch-list/2017/7-false-creek-south/>

As a class we will engage with the REPLAN group and through open knowledge sharing develop a vision for the future of South False Creek . We will work in a variety of scales from large scale, city issues to unitscale and discuss their interdependence. It will be a collaborative studio setting where each student will take on a part of the whole, and collaborative learning the pedagogical model, pinups are set up as collaborative learning workshops with invited guests joining in. It is a design studio and our explorations will be in the form of drawings, models and media.

Studio Structure

Ex. 1 - Precedent Studies - New Urban Districts / Panning Strategies

(each student can choose a project from a prepared list)

Ex. 2 - Context / Larger Issues at Play

(Studio project, each student researches one part of the project)

Ex. 3 - Design / Strategy / Guidelines / New Area Plan

(Studio project, each student is taking a part/topic of the strategic plan)

Ex. 4 - Building Design / Test the New Guidelines

(Each student designs a project to test the Studio designed Strategies)

Any parts of the sequence could also be done in pairs after discussing with the instructor.

Learning objectives

Students who successfully complete ARCH 520 will demonstrate

the ability to design buildings and the public spaces they extend to that embody diverse community needs and desires

1. the ability to respond to the development patterns and spatial morphologies of site and context
2. the ability to articulate a clear response to infrastructural, environmental, and ecological systems present in the studio assignment

3. an understanding of the regulatory instruments that are applied to development in the specific context of the studio assignment
4. an understanding of the broader implications of architectural design decisions on the evolution of cities; and the impact of urbanism on design.
5. the ability to use appropriate graphic communication techniques that address the above objectives

CACB Student Performance Criteria

Because all ARCH 520 studios are offered as option studios, we must demonstrate to accreditation evaluators that Student Performance Criteria A6: Urban Design, is met by each ARCH 520 studio.

A6 Urban Design: The student must demonstrate an ability to analyze and respond to the larger urban context where architecture is situated; its developmental patterning and spatial morphologies; the infrastructural, environmental, and ecological systems; to understand the regulatory instruments that govern this context; the broader implications of architectural design decisions on the evolution of cities; and the impact of urbanism on design.

The term “understanding” means that students are exposed to these criteria, a precursor to the Comprehensive Studio and its higher bar of “ability.” Other SPDs that you should consider integrating into your studio syllabus, lecture and exercise materials:

A1. Design Theories, Precedents, and Methods

A2. Design Skills

A3. Design Tools

A5. Site Context and Design

C1. Regulatory Systems

Evaluation

The design studio is a unique place where an ongoing exchange between student and instructor as well as amongst students is a critical component of the learning process. The design studio is also the place of production. Students are expected to diligently engage the studio work, and use each studio session as an opportunity to explore fresh questions and ideas.

The final evaluation of your work will be at a session after your final studio presentation when you will be asked to digitally submit the sum total of your work from the term and leave it for final marking.

By the end of this term you will be expected to be able to clearly articulate the intentions and design objectives of your work and to successfully translate these into two and three-dimensional form. Your work at that time should also show initiative in self-directed research to support and extend its own inquiries.

Your work will be graded for both scope and rigor in studio projects, and for your ability to

successfully collaborate and participate in class meetings. Your work should show initiative in self-directed research to support and extend your inquiries. Grades will be assigned as follows:

25% Quality of the creative generative idea

30% Development of the architecture and its representation

25% Collaborative engagement and timely fulfillment of studio obligations

20% Depth and clarity of participation in studio discussions, work and culture

References / Readinglist

Organization	Website
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Heritage Vancouver: False Creek South	https://heritagevancouver.org/top10-watch-list/2017/7-false-creek-south/
Vancouver's once controversial False Creek South community now a model of innovation, Michael Geller	https://www.vancouverisawesome.com/courier-archive/opinion/vancouver-once-controversial-false-creek-south-community-now-a-model-of-innovation-3116681
The impact of place-based grassroots activism when challenging the real estate state: Strategies and successes of the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, Robyn Chan	https://summit.sfu.ca/_flysystem/fedora/2024-01/etd22801.pdf
Lessons of Success from False Creek South and Granville Island, Don Alexander	https://ojs.library.queensu.ca/index.php/cpp/article/view/14164
Vancouver's False Creek: a photographic history, Raymond Parker Photo	https://raymondparkerphoto.com/vancouver-false-creek-a-photographic-history/

False Creek Official and Area Development Plan	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1M1iXiZg0kmZlwS430q2qg8ghAZxCMbuk/view?usp=sharing
Community Housing Trust	https://www.falsecreeksouth.org/community-housing-trust/
Eliason, Mike. "Baugruppen" series, Parts 1-7, The Urbanist (May 2014).	https://www.theurbanist.org/category/environment-and-sustainability/baugruppen/
Forster, Wolfgang and William Menking, eds., The Vienna Model: Housing for the Twenty-First Century, Berlin: Jovis, 2016.	https://www.vienna-model.at/en/prinzipien/
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Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation. Rental Market Report: January 2023 Edition. February 2023.	https://assets.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/sites/cmhc/professional/housing-markets-data-and-research/market-reports/rental-market-report/rental-market-report-2022-en.pdf?rev=8eb3acc0-89b3-49d1-a518-0a381f97b942 .
City of Vancouver Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability Department. High-Density Housing for Families with Children Guidelines. Vancouver, 1992 (last amended 2022).	https://guidelines.vancouver.ca/guidelines-high-density-housing-for-families-with-children.pdf

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- Cupers, Kenny. "Human Territoriality and the Downfall of Public Housing." *Public Culture* 29, no. 1 (2017). <https://doi-org.eu1.proxy.openathens.net/10.1215/08992363-3644445>.
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- Gifford, Robert. "The Consequences of Living in High-Rise Buildings." *Architectural Science Review* 50, no. 1 (2007). <https://doi.org/10.3763/asre.2007.5002>.
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- Kalantari, Saleh, and Mardelle Shepley. "Psychological and social impacts of high-rise buildings: a review of the post-occupancy evaluation literature," *Housing Studies* 36, no. 8 (2021). <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02673037.2020.1752630>
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World Health Organization. Basic documents: forty-ninth edition (including amendments adopted up to 31 May 2019). Geneva: World Health Organization, 2020.

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Schedule

September 2024

	T		F
W1	3		6 Exercise 1
W2	10		13
W3	17	18 LECTURE	20 Exercise 1 Present

W4	24 Exercise 2	27
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October 2024

	T	F
W5	1	4 Exercise 2 Pin up/ workshop
W6	8 Exercise 3	11
W7	15	18 Exercise 3 Pin up /workshop
W8	22 Exercise 4	25
W9	29	1

November 2024

	T	F
W10	5 Exercise 3 Pin-up / workshop	8 Exercise 4
W11	12 MID TERM BREAK (11-13)	15 Individual Feedback
W12	19	22 Exercise 4 pin up

W13

26

29

Feedback

December 2024

T

F

W14

3

6

Last Day of Classes

10

13

Final Presentation TBD
