

Southwest False Creek  
from a Distance

Wendy Sarkissian  
Vancouver  
2007



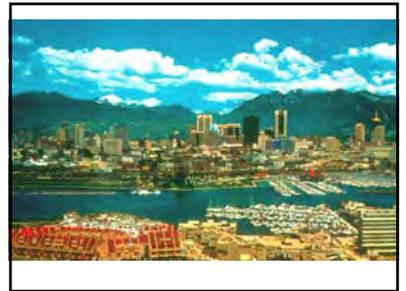
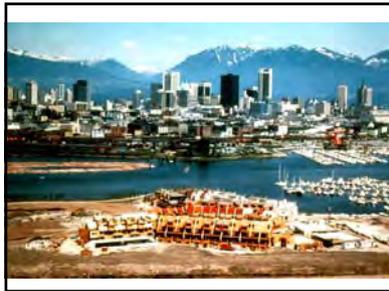
An appreciation ...  
What I see today....

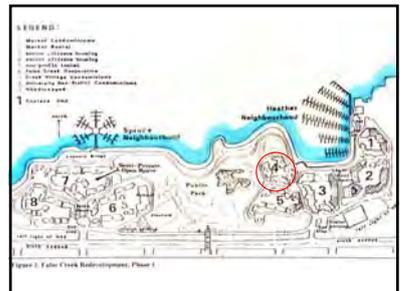
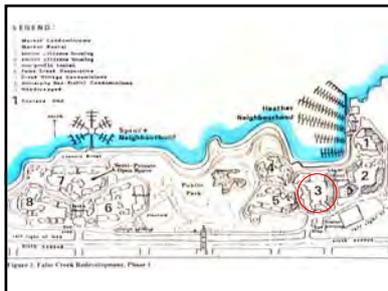
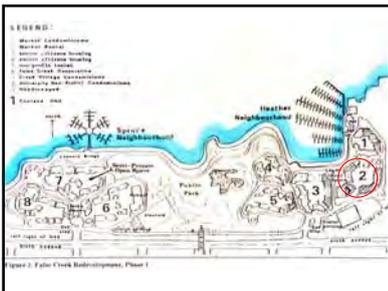
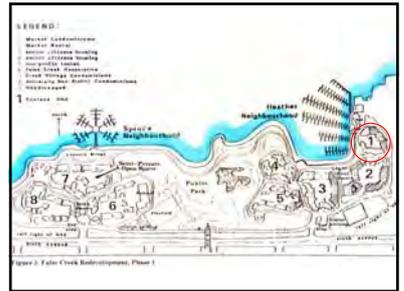
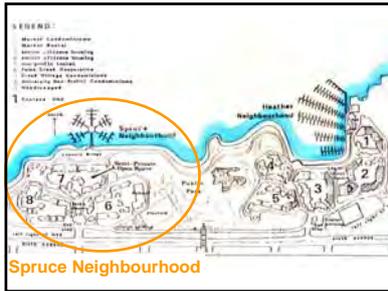
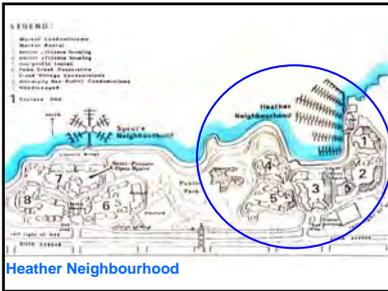
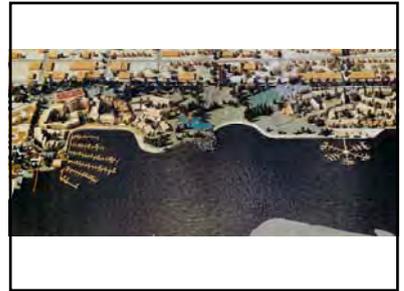
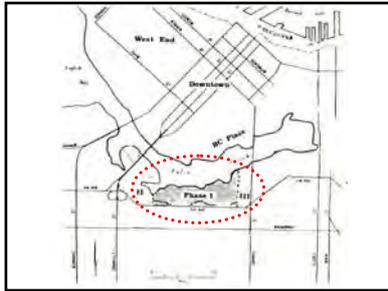




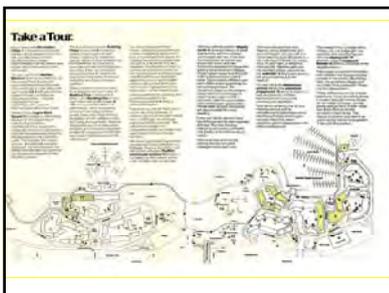
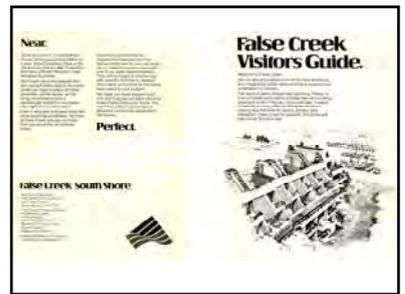
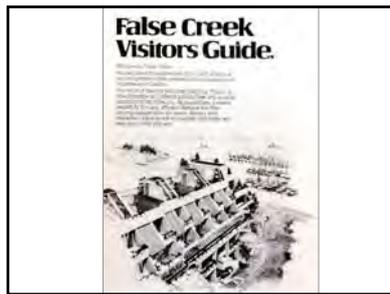
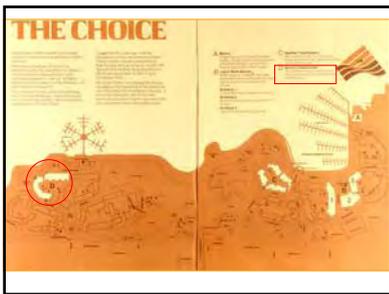
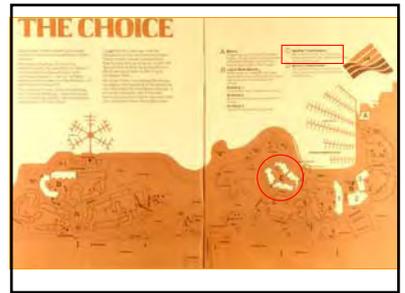
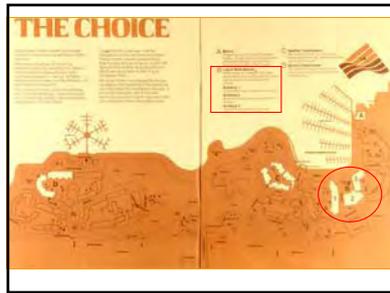
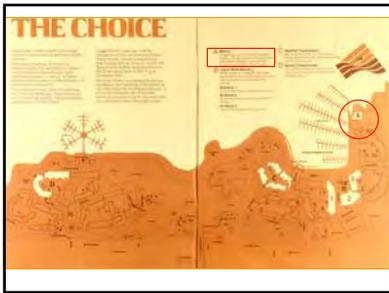


**In the Early Days...**









**Design Awards: Who Cares?**

Clare Cooper Marcus & Jacqueline Vischer  
*Canadian Housing Design Council, 1981*

- 5 regions nationally
- BC section of the body
- 95 entries
- site visits to 15 by panel
- women panellists: any connection between residents' criteria and judges' (professional) criteria?

## Sites studied

1. Barclay infill (West End inner city)
2. False Creek Terrace (above original False Creek)
3. False Creek ("Birch Walk")
4. English Bay Village (West End)
5. Meadowlands (outer suburbia: 1.5 hours from CBD)

## Residents' Criteria

- **Livability:** is development enjoyed and appreciated by those living there?
- **Construction quality:** does the building work? Is it well built?
- **Appearance:** does development look interesting, attractive and innovative?



## False Creek Area 6, Phase 1 Post-Occupancy Evaluation of a New Urban Neighbourhood by Dr Jacqueline Vischer

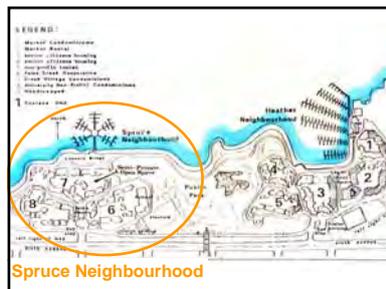
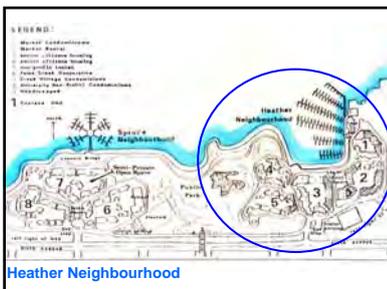
## Phase 1



- Built 1975-79
- Occupation began 1976
- 37 acres
- 850 dwellings in 2 neighbourhoods
  - Heather: 527
  - Spruce: 323
- Plus:**
  - + 1 primary school
  - 15-acre park
  - shops
  - 1 liveaboard marina
  - 1 pleasure boat marina (116 moorings)

## Later Phases

- Phase 2 built 1980-83
- Phases 3 and 4 built 1985-90



## City of Vancouver Planning Goals 1

- **Affordable housing** in desirable downtown location (64% subsidized units)
- **Bring families** with children back from suburbs
- **Social diversity** via household mix:
  - Elderly 18%
  - Couples with no children 23%
  - Single-person households 18%
  - Families with children 35%
  - Accessible to people with a disability
- **Social diversity** via economic mix:
  - 33% low income
  - 33% middle income
  - 33% high income

## City of Vancouver Planning Goals 2

### Design principles:

- Attractive
  - Liveable
  - Medium-density
  - Diverse
  - Urban with suburban qualities
- Apply “Patterns” to site plan and built form
- 8 housing clusters
- 7 architectural firms selected

## A Pattern Language Design Guidelines

1. Mixed tenure
2. Mixed economic groups
3. Priority to pedestrian circulation
4. Public parks
5. Little parking
6. Shared open spaces



## Post-Occupancy Evaluation

- Financed by CMHC
- 1<sup>st</sup> survey: census to collect demographic data
- 2<sup>nd</sup> survey: residents' attitudes and experiences
- 212 respondents, randomly sampled
- One-to-one interviews
- Behavioural observations of parks users and shared open spaces
- Recommendations for future phases

## Topics Addressed by the POE

1. Locational choice
2. Social Mix
3. Design Principles

## Results 1 Locational choice

- 15% moved from suburbs
- 42%: selected FC over suburban location
- 62%: few choices for affordable housing
- Reasons for choice:
  - feels secure
  - attractive appearance
  - quiet

## Results 1 Locational choice

- Most important features:
  - Access to downtown
  - Playgrounds
  - Close to work
- Location choices: no difference between households with or without children
- **Most kept cars**

## Results 2 Social Mix

- Aware neighbourhood mixed Most felt “enriched” by other groups
- Homogeneous enclaves: residents know neighbours better
- Renters more tolerant than owners
- Residents in social housing: more participation
- Territorial behaviours re: perceptions of diversity
- Physical setting and architecture: affect feelings about privacy

## Results 3 Design Principles

- Appreciated high-quality design
  - Like a little village
  - Pedestrian streets
  - Being close to water
- Less satisfied with shared space
  - Balconies and terraces unusable
  - Semi-private gardens not secure
  - Too many cars
    - Some parking on pedestrian streets
    - Too many children playing in enclave gardens
  - Windows of street-level units not private

## Results 3 Design Principles

- Dwellings:
  - Sound insulation problems in party walls and ceilings
  - Quality of indoor finishes
  - Not enough space indoors

## Conclusions 1-2 years after occupation

- Unlikely to move back to suburbs
- Living **close to work** a feature
- Living **downtown**: not adequate incentive to give up cars
- Success of **social mix** depends on quality of spatial planning and architectural design
- Households **without children**: not tolerant of children in enclave shared spaces
- **Clustering**: can create sense of greater density
- **Social mix** targets: hard to sustain over time

## My Photo Album

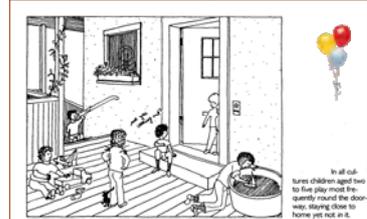
## False Creek South Context



## Children's Play



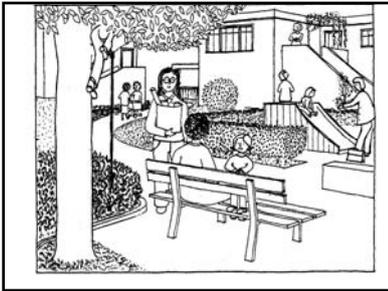
## Doorstep Play



## Children and Shared Space

Children will comprise more than 80% of users of such spaces if they are designed with the above criteria in mind.





Building Form  
Entries and Access  
and Safety





Access and Privacy  
"Territorial Continuum"

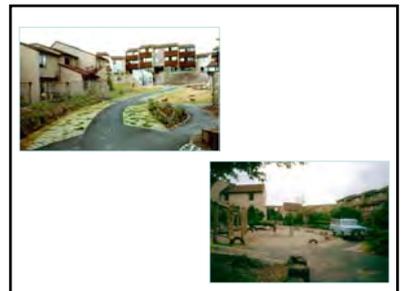




Parking



Landscaping





Rubbish and Storage



Services and Facilities



Density



## Social Life Today

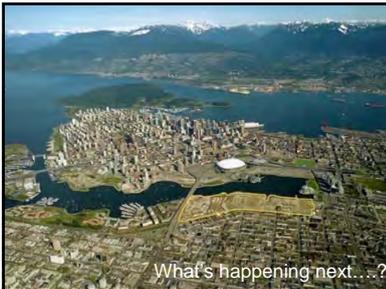
### Shari, a False Creek South resident remembers a dear friend

May 2007

*When we first met, we went on a walk with my dog Boomer around the False Creek area. Arvida led me to natural retreats contained within the hustle and bustle of the city. We sauntered along rails and visited a pond, abundant with foliage and wildlife.*

*While I delighted in the overall milieu, Arvida introduced me to a different perspective. The buds and blossoms were pretty, but the intricacies behind and within each flower were even more intriguing. The dead branch nearby was something to behold.*

*I felt transcended. This was my invitation to the magic that Arvida continued to offer.*



### What's happened since 1986?

Debate about design of housing at higher densities moved into new territories

- Ecological and cultural concerns
- Density increases
- Mixed use
- Building façades changed

**-But** some universal principles  
STILL ignored by planners and designers

### So what about thirty years after occupation?

1. Unlikely to move back to suburbs???
2. Living close to work a feature ???
3. Living downtown: incentive to give up cars ???
4. Success of social mix depends on spatial planning and architectural design ???
5. Households without children: tolerant of children in enclave shared spaces ???
6. Clustering: sense of greater density ???
7. Social mix targets: sustained over time ???

## Contact for the Survey

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## Comments and Questions



## A bow of gratitude to:

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Concord Pacific Developments  
Hillside Developments