

The History of the VanDusen Site

The more we know about the history of the VanDusen site, the more we appreciate the garden we have today. Part A gives a quick review of the history of the site, and factors which led to the creation of the golf course. Part B will have a detailed look at the layout of the golf course itself, related to the present day features of the Garden.

A The History of the Site - 1886 to 1912

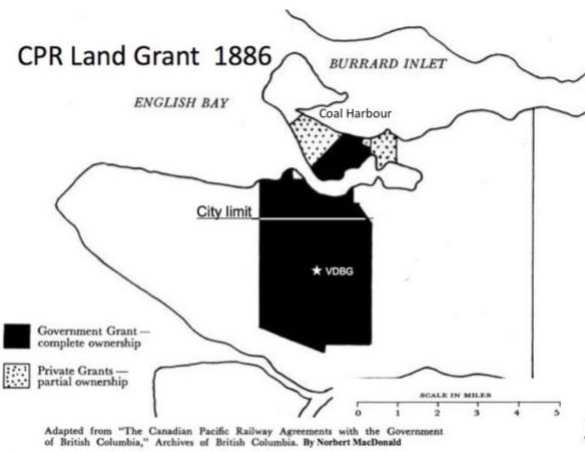
In the late 1800's almost all of the of the Lower Mainland was dense coniferous forest. This 1895 photo of 'North Arm Road' which later became Granville Street, was taken near 37th Avenue, so it was very close to the site of VanDusen.



VCA "Str P16"

In 1886 a large part of the forested Lower Mainland, about 6,000 acres, was given to the **Canadian Pacific Railway**. Seen here superimposed on an outline map, this land was given to the company by the **1886**

Land Grant - *not to be confused with the earlier, Federal Land Grant*, which was to bring the railway across Canada to Port Moody, at the head of Burrard Inlet. **This later land grant was given by the newly incorporated City of Vancouver and the Provincial Government**, just to have the railway brought the last 12 miles, from Port Moody to Coal Harbour!



At this time in 1886 the official Vancouver City southern limit was at the present day 16th Avenue, shown on the map, but the little logging town only actually occupied a few blocks near Coal Harbour - and the future site of VanDusen was well south of the city limits.

The CPR logging crews immediately started clearcutting the forest and subdividing and selling its land, of course starting with the most valuable land near Coal Harbour. In 20 years, by 1906, the CPR had developed and sold its lands within the city limits; by 1911 Shaughnessy Phase 1 had been developed, between 16th Ave and King Edward, designed only for the wealthiest of Vancouver's citizens.

Now the CPR Executive want to develop Shaughnessy Phase 2, south from King Edward down to 37th Ave - already clear cut, it was not an attractive place for wealthy buyers! They set to work pulling out the stumps and have to think about how to make this an attractive place to live – so far out of town...



CVA "Str N33" Granville St S. from Connaught Ave 1911

The CPR came up with the idea of building a Golf and Country Club which would be an important social centre in the area – those who bought a lot would be guaranteed membership in the club! By 1912 construction of the golf course was well under way – old photos from the Vancouver Archives show most of the land completely cleared, and on this one we can see circular greens and a new fairway, freshly planted with new trees just for the golf course. CVA "Van Sc P122"



One takeaway from this is that evidence points to all the original trees having been removed, so that **the oldest trees in the Garden are probably now no more than 120 years old.** (NB It is *possible* there is an exception to this – Samantha Sivertz has pointed out that our largest Western Red Cedar has a crooked trunk, which may have made it less

valuable to the loggers as a cut tree, and of more use to them as a place to secure their heavy equipment... we are still awaiting analysis of the tree bore test results.

At the same time in 1912, on 5 acres of the golf course, the **Point Grey Reservoir** was built, above ground to aid gravity feed of water to the Municipality of Point Grey. Note the arches which give it a very strong structure, and the roof, here shown partly installed, also has the strong arched design, This reservoir, disused since 1960, is still intact under the Stone Garden today, and forms the main hill of the Sino-Himalayan area.



CVA "371-2991"

B) Playing A Round at VanDusen 1912 - 1960

The Shaughnessy Golf and Country Club had the first 18-hole golf course in the area. It was a very highly regarded course, and attracted important tournaments, as well as being a busy social centre for many family celebrations. There were regular visits from eminent out of town visitors (like Cary Grant!) The locals could rub shoulders with the rich and famous, CPR executives, and many business deals were agreed there.

This **1950's tournament scorecard**, with an aerial photo of the course was found in the BC Golf Museum, every hole clearly labeled. We can even see all those trees planted on the golf course in 1912.

Shaughnessy Heights Golf Club From The Air
 SHOWING THE GOLF COURSE AND THE CLUBHOUSE

PLAY SAFE AND ENJOY THE TOURNAMENT

* Indicates Locations Where Many Scenes of Action May Be Observed.

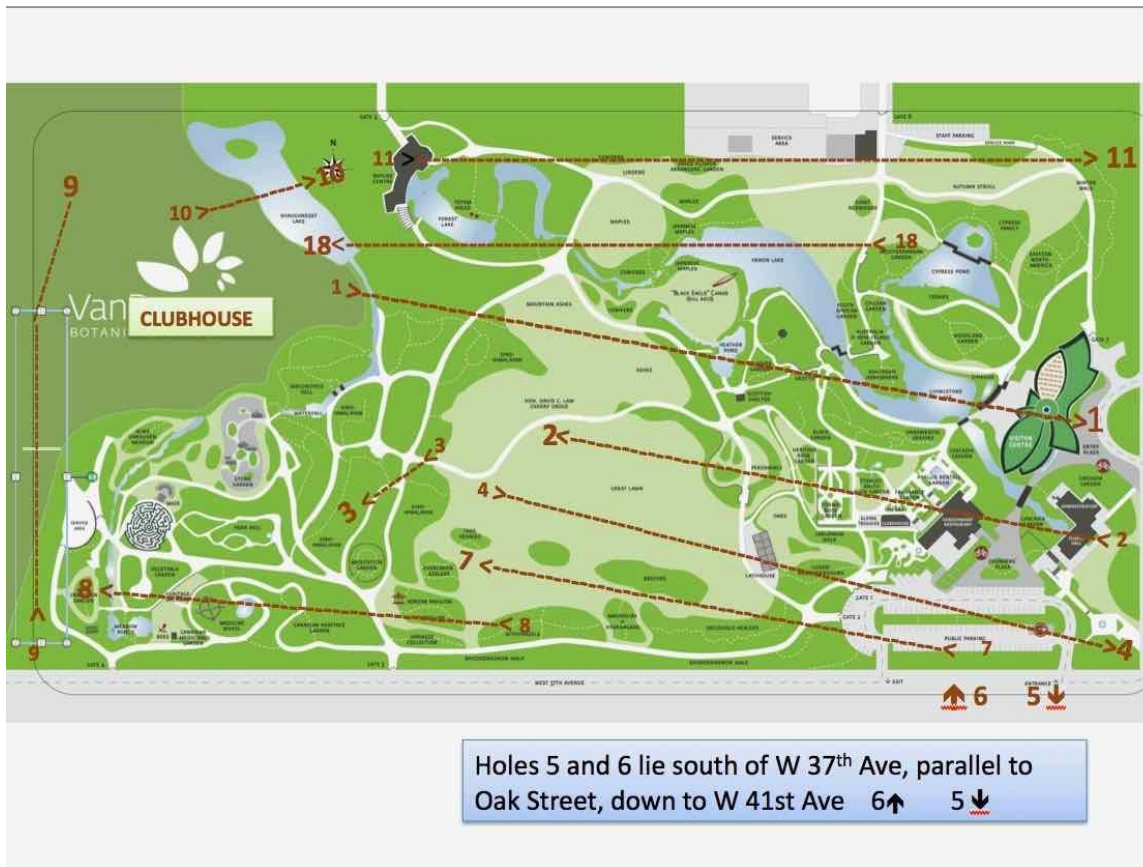
ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE INDIVIDUAL HOLES.

Shaughnessy's Course

Hole	Par	Distance	Hole	Par	Distance
1	5	375	10	3	160
2	4	438	11	5	515
3	3	133	12	4	330
4	5	500	13	4	330
5	4	400	14	4	350
6	4	410	15	4	374
7	4	400	16	4	360
8	4	350	17	3	222
9	4	355	18	4	400
Club	32	3325	In.	35	3021
		TOTAL	72		4196

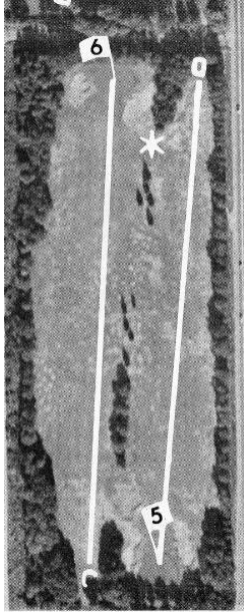
The entrance was in the northwest corner, on 33rd at Cartier – close by were the clubhouse, the parking lot, and the Point Grey reservoir (covered over with grass). Five short holes lay east of Oak St, and two long holes were parallel to Oak St, between 37th and 41st. The knowledge that the Stone Garden lies directly on top of the reservoir indicates the location of the clubhouse – just outside the boundary of the present-day garden, where the Shaughnessy Place condominium development is now. The parking lot was on the present sunflower meadow!

By resizing this scorecard image and superimposing it on a modern map of the garden, every fairway and feature of the golf course can be seen in its relationship to our modern garden. Careful inspection of all the aerial photos shows *there were no water features on the golf course* – this is a reminder that the waterfall and every stream and lake in the Garden was the creation of Bill Livingstone. So as you imagine playing a round of golf, keep in mind that there was no water then...

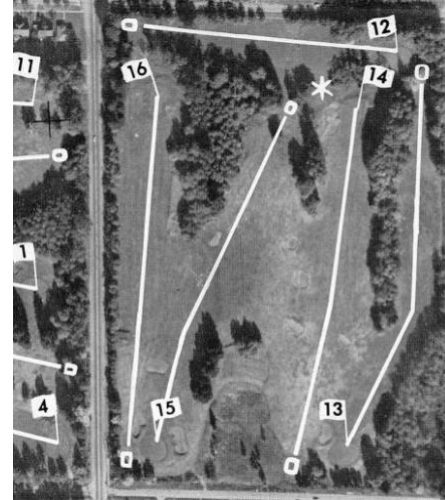


Holes 12 to 16 were across Oak Street! →

Holes 5 and 6 lie south of W 37th Ave, parallel to Oak Street, down to W 41st Ave 6↑ 5↓



Holes 5 and 6 were south of 37th Ave, parallel to Oak St – now occupied by condominiums, residential housing and a seniors' care home.



Golfers had to cross Oak St to get to these five short holes, #12 – 16. This area is now occupied by Eric Hamber Secondary School and a small park on the south side

The total distance required to walk around the course was over 6 km – more if you were not accurate with your drives!

In the 1950s, with the great demand for housing after WWII, the surrounding lands were soon fully developed, and for the CPR the golf course was no longer important to attract buyers to the area. The CPR decided that it would be more profitable to develop the golf course itself for building. They gave notice to the Shaughnessy Golf and Country Club that they would have to vacate the land and find a new home by 1960, and applied to City Hall for rezoning.

C The Fight for the Garden (1960 – 1970)

... will be the next installment, still to come.