

Hilda Symonds fonds

Compiled by John Werner (2022)



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 - Planning Publications, Speeches and Writings

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Fonds Description

Hilda Symonds fonds. – 1950-1996.

65 cm of textual records.

10 photographs.

Biographical Sketch

Hilda Symonds (1913-2003) was a community planner, educator and leader on planning issues in British Columbia. Over the course of her career she played a significant role in planning efforts in both Vancouver and across the province by serving as the first Executive Coordinator of the Vancouver City Planning Commission in addition to Director of Urban Affairs Programs at Continuing Education UBC.

Symonds was born in 1913 in Liverpool, England and received a Bachelor of Commerce degree in 1934. After working in a variety of fields including industrial welfare and personal management, she began her career as a teacher after arriving in Canada in 1948, and from 1959-1966 taught at the Crofton House School in Vancouver. In her next role as Director Urban Affairs Programs, Continuing Education at UBC (1966-1970), Symonds worked to offer adult education programs on urbanization and planning relating to area rehabilitation, housing, transportation and other issues. While in this role, Symonds edited the book *The Teacher and the City* and advocated for city planning curricula in local school systems.

Beginning in 1972, Symonds became the first ever Executive Coordinator of the Vancouver City Planning Commission after being an elected member of the commission since 1964. As Executive Coordinator, Symonds championed public input in the urban planning process and was key in the development of the *Goals for Vancouver* document which had a long-term impact on the city's planning decisions. Symonds would retire from this role in 1983 at the age of 70 but served on or chaired numerous civic committees in Vancouver and Victoria including the Heritage Advisory Committee, Downtown Advisory Committee, the Citizen Advisory Committee for the development of BC Place, the Provincial Capital Commission and more. In addition to work in Vancouver and British Columbia, Symonds was a member of various delegations to international or national conferences on metropolitan or city planning topics. This included being the Vancouver delegate to the National Capital Commission conference in 1988 as well as being part of the Canadian delegation to a meeting on metropolitan problems in Athens, Greece in 1975.

Symonds' authored or edited works include: *The Teacher and the City, Improving Human Settlements, Canada --An Urban Agenda* and *Meech Lake, From Centre to Periphery: the impact of the 1987 constitutional accord on Canadian settlements: a speculation*. Symonds also

received numerous awards throughout her life which include but are not limited to: Canada Centennial Medal (1967), Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal (1977), and the City of Vancouver Civic Merit Medal (1983). In 1984, she was made an Honorary Member of the Planning Institute of BC and in 2019 she was included amongst 18 women in Plan Canada's centenary issue.

Symonds died in 2003 at age 90.

Scope and Content

This fonds is arranged into three series that track with Symonds various roles as an urban planning professional. The Urban Education/Teacher in the City series contains records created or received by Symonds while she served in the Continuing Education department at UBC including her seminal effort to publish the *Teacher and the City* book. The second series, Commissions and Committee Work, details Symonds service on the Vancouver City Planning Commission in addition to other planning related committees she chaired or participated in for both the local B.C. context as well as internationally. The final series, Planning Publications, Speeches, and Writings, focuses on writings or pieces created by Symonds or publications she set aside for her own purposes. These range in date from the early beginnings of her urban planning career in the 1950s to well after her retirement in 1983. Types of records included in the fonds are correspondence, meeting minutes, photographs, journal articles, newspaper clippings, brochures, memoranda, reports and invitations.

Notes

Title is based on the contents of the fonds.

Records donated by Hilda Symonds' daughter, Diana Butler, in 2020.

The original order of the records was maintained by the archivist whenever possible with the exception of the Planning Publications, Speeches and Writings series. This series was re-arranged in chronological order to better serve users looking to see what publications correspond to the various stages of Symond's career.

File list available.

No further accruals expected.

Series Descriptions

Urban Education / Teacher in the City series. – 1966-1972.

26 cm of textual records.

Records in this series relate to Symonds role as the Director Urban Affairs Programs, Continuing Education at UBC in addition to her editing work on the *Teacher and the City* book. Multiple drafts of the book are included in addition to reports on the book's progress and correspondence between Symonds and her publisher Methuen.

Commissions and Committee Work series. – 1965-1988.

27 cm of textual records.

10 photographs, 20 x 25 cm and smaller.

This series includes records from Symonds participation on various planning related commissions and committees. Most prominently this includes the Vancouver City Planning Commission in which Symonds served as Executive Coordinator until 1983. Other pertinent examples include the National Capital Commission, Goals for Vancouver (part of the Vancouver City Planning Commission), the B.C. Place Citizens Advisory Committee and others. One file of photographs is present which mainly depicts Symonds with fellow employees or committee members.

Planning Publications, Speeches and Writings series. – 1950, 1965-1986.

13 cm of textual records.

Series consists of planning related publications or articles written by Symonds or saved by her. This also includes some written speeches she delivered at a handful of different events such as the Winnipeg Urban Planning Workshop.

File List

URBAN EDUCATION / TEACHER AND THE CITY

BOX 1

- 1-1 Urban Education, 1966-1971
- 1-2 UBC Extension – Urban Affairs, 1967-1970
- 1-3 CMHC Urban Studies Project – Year I, 1968-1969
- 1-4 CMHC Urban Studies Project – Year I, 1968-1969 [duplicate]
- 1-5 CMHC Urban Studies Project – Year I, 1968-1969 [draft]
- 1-6 CMHC Urban Studies Project – Year I Interim Report, 1968
- 1-7 CMHC Urban Studies Project, Year I Interim Report, 1968 [draft]
- 1-8 Report to CMHC, 1969

BOX 2

- 2-1 Foreword, *Teacher and the City*, [n.d.]
- 2-2 *The Teacher and the City*, March 1-2, 1968 [3 copies]
- 2-3 *Teacher and the City Program*, 1968
- 2-4 *Programs Currently in Progress*, ca. 1968
- 2-5 *Publication Correspondence*, 1969-1971
- 2-6 *The Teacher and the City [Publicity Packet]*, 1971
- 2-7 [Letters of Appreciation], 1967
- 2-8 *Teacher and the City [Clippings, Correspondence and Drafts]*, 1967-1972
- 2-9 [Minutes and Correspondence] *CMHC/Teacher in the City*, 1969-1971
- 2-10 *Teacher and the City, Chp. I-IV, [Draft]*, n.d.

COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEE WORK

- 2-11 Civic Dinners [Programs and Invitations], 1965-1991

BOX 3

- 3-1 Papers of International Conference on Urban Economy and Planning, 1988
- 3-2 *Internet*, 1967-1971
- 3-3 Vancouver City Planning Commission (1 of 3), 1973-1983
- 3-4 Vancouver City Planning Commission (2 of 3), 1972-1982
- 3-5 Vancouver City Planning Commission (3 of 3), 1973-1988

3-6 DA Review by Doxiadis Associates, 1969-1971

BOX 4

- 4-1 Vancouver Composite Committee, circa 1975
- 4-2 Community Planning Association of Canada and Other Committees, 1967-1985
- 4-3 Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 1977
- 4-4 B.C. Place Citizen's Advisory Committee, 1980-1983
- 4-5 B.C. Place – Terry Fox, 1982
- 4-6 Urban Council for Canada, 1975
- 4-7 Habitat UN Conference on Human Settlement, 1975-1983
- 4-8 10 Photographs, 20 x 25cm and smaller, n.d.
- 4-9 National Capitol Commission, 1975-1976
- 4-10 Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board [Posters], circa 1963
- 4-11 Urbanarium – Committee/Conference, 1984-1985
- 4-12 TEAM Council, 1985, 1988
- 4-13 Goals for Vancouver – Vancouver City Planning Commission, 1978-1980

PLANNING PUBLICATIONS, SPEECHES, AND WRITINGS

BOX 5

- 5-1 [Publications on Vancouver City Planning], 1950, 1968, 1975-1976
- 5-2 [Newspaper Clippings], 1965, 1976, 1980, 1989
- 5-3 University Women Club of Chilliwack, April 18, 1967
- 5-4 Community Arts Council of Vancouver, 1967-1968, 1996
- 5-5 Cariboo Regional Plan, 1972
- 5-6 [Writings on or by Hilda Symonds], 1967-1975
- 5-7 Park and Tilford Trophy, 1977
- 5-8 Kamloops Regional Plan, 1978
- 5-9 Growth Alternatives Forum – Mid Vancouver Island, 1981
- 5-10 Fraser River Estuary Study, 1981
- 5-11 Victoria Songhees Publications, 1982, n.d.
- 5-12 [Vancouver Legacies Program], circa 1986
- 5-13 Winnipeg Urban Planning Workshop, March 7, 1986
- 5-14 Saskatchewan Design Council Awards Program, 1986