

# BC Assessment Notes

The UBC Library has obtained data from the BC Assessment office that you can use in your projects. This data must be handled in a confidential manner (i.e., you cannot share this data with anyone).

**Jeremy Buhler, the Data Librarian ([jeremy.buhler@ubc.ca](mailto:jeremy.buhler@ubc.ca)) indicated that:**

“The terms of use are more restrictive than many datasets and a breach by one researcher could affect access to everyone at UBC. To comply with BCA’s requirements, before granting access I meet with researchers to discuss the terms of use – they must agree to these in writing – and to orient them to the data. I recommend a 30 minute Zoom meeting for this, after which they may download the data.”

This is actually not an atypical data access situation. Once you are working in the private industry, or doing many forms of research (e.g., medical research), such restrictive data agreements are common. As such, going through this process would be a useful exercise for you, with respect to putting it down in your resume.

The BC Assessment agency (<https://www.bcassessment.ca/>) collects data from every property in BC; the data is used primarily for taxation purposes. As such, it collects an extensive array of data, from the age of the building to the lot size, from the number of units in an apartment or seniors building to the type of heating. Some descriptions of the data they collect can be found here:

- [Data Advice User Guide External.pdf \(bcassessment.ca\)](#)
- [Residential Inventory Extract External User Guide.pdf \(bcassessment.ca\)](#)
- [Commercial Inventory Extract External User Guide.pdf \(bcassessment.ca\)](#)

The age of the building could provide an indication of the earthquake sensitivity of the building (older buildings being less earthquake proof than newer ones), older buildings are less likely to have air conditioning than newer ones, older low-rise apartment / seniors buildings are less likely to have adequate air ventilation (so therefore people living in them are more likely to suffer from heat-related issues), etc. The total finished area versus the lot size would provide an indication of the capacity for adding laneway housing, and the likelihood that the lot has greenspace.

If you are working with census data you could summarize the housing data within a census unit by doing a spatial join (as was done with the crime data); you could determine what percentage of the housing was build prior to a given year, how many apartment units there are in a CT, where the seniors housing is across the city, etc.

If you feel that this data would be useful in your project you should contact Jeremy using the email address given above.

**Some of the main classes and the data that is contained within them are presented below.** Data that would be useful in a project includes:

## **Folio Address**

All of these details so that you can map the building being assessed.

**Folio Description**

Many of these details could be helpful. You can use the Width and Depth to calculate the lot dimensions.

**Valuation**

Many of these details could be useful (such as the Property Class code and the value).

**Residential Property Inventory Data (.txt format)**

Many of these details could be useful, such as year built, total finished area, number of stories, zoning code.

**Commercial Inventory Data (.txt format)**

Again, year build, number of apartments, number of seniors units, type of heating, and others.