

St. Dunstan's, Gordon Head

Prepared by Jesse Robertson (June 26, 2023; revised April 24, 2024)

Property Acquisition

Address	1806 San Juan Avenue, Victoria, BC
Legal description	LOT 2, SECTION 84, VICTORIA DISTRICT, PLAN 20562
First private landholder	Purchased by Charles Dodd in 1859.
Diocesan Acquisition	Purchased by the Diocese circa 1963

Narrative Overview

St. Dunstan's is located in the municipality of Saanich (Figure 1) in the territory of the lək̓ʷəŋən people known today as Songhees and Esquimalt nations. The Hudson Bay Company (HBC) sold Section 88 to Charles Dodd in February 1859. Malcolm Dunnett purchased and subdivided the lot in 1899. The Diocese purchased this property from his son around 1963.

Interpretive Summary

Decisions regarding future land use should bear the following considerations in mind:

⇒ The HBC sold the section containing the property in 1859. The specific lot was cleared around 1901 and owned by at least one family (the Dunnetts) prior to Diocesan possession in the 1960s. Diocesan ownership of this land did not contribute directly to the historical dispossession of lək̓ʷəŋən people from their territory.

⇒ Private property is considered “off the table” for Aboriginal treaty negotiations, such as those currently being pursued by the Songhees Nation.¹ Consequently, the BC Treaty Process offers few opportunities to return land to the Songhees and Esquimalt nations in their heavily urbanized traditional territories.

Historical Context

The site now occupied by St. Dunstan's was surveyed in 1858 (Figure 2) and sold by the following year as an influx of gold miners gave rise to increasing property values.² By Summer 1859, nearly all of Gordon Head (some 2200 acres) was privately held by thirteen men (Figure 3).³ The subdivided lot

¹ BC Treaty Commission, 'Land and Resources', n.d., <https://www.bctreaty.ca/land-and-resources>; 'Te'mexw Treaty Association', Te'mexw Treaty Association, accessed 15 May 2023, <https://temexw.org/>.

² Daniel P. Marshall, Laura Neilson Bonikowsky, and Eric Wright, 'Fraser River Gold Rush', in *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (Historica Canada, 2019 2006), <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/fraser-river-gold-rush>; *Tracing from the Official Map of Victoria District, 1858, 1858*, Land Title and Survey Authority of British Columbia Maps, University of Victoria Libraries, https://vault.library.uvic.ca/concern/generic_works/61fb615e-a8e1-432c-910a-847dfa1416a5; Vancouver Island House of Assembly, *Minutes of Proceedings of a Select Committee of the House of Assembly, Appointed to Inquire into the Present Condition of the Crown Lands of the Colony* (Victoria: Harries and Company, 1864), 10, <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcbooks/items/1.0221799>.

³ Ursula Jupp, *From Cordwood to Campus: In Gordon Head, 1852-1959* (Victoria: Ursula Jupp, 1975), 7.

where St. Dunstan's is located was purchased by Malcolm Dunnett in 1899. Mounds of clamshells were found beneath large trees when the site was cleared in 1901, suggesting historic Indigenous use or occupancy.⁴

Indigenous Presence and Land Use

Languages	ləkʷəŋən (North Straits Salish)
Governance	Songhees Nation; Esquimalt Nation; Te'mexw Treaty Association
Land use	Mounds of clamshells were found beneath large trees when the site was cleared in 1901, suggesting historic Indigenous use or occupancy. ⁵
Archaeological data	No known archaeological sites recorded on property.
Historic treaties	Douglas Treaty signed with the "Tribe or Family of Che-ko-nein" (1850), extending from Gonzales Point to PKOLS (Mount Douglas) and east to the shoreline. Thirty men receive about £79 in blankets. ⁶
Modern treaties	Songhees Nation is a member of the Te'mexw Treaty Association in Stage 5 of the BC Treaty Process (Negotiation to Finalize a Treaty). Esquimalt Nation is not involved in the treaty process.

Timeline

Italicized text indicates contextual information. **Bold** text indicates information specific to the property.

Date	Details
<i>1843</i>	Hudson Bay Company (HBC) erects Fort Victoria in ləkʷəŋən territory.
<i>13 Jan 1849</i>	HBC awarded ten-year charter for the "advancement of colonization" on the Colony of Vancouver Island. ⁷
<i>30 Apr 1850</i>	Treaty signed with the "Tribe or Family of Che-ko-nein," extending from Gonzales Point to PKOLS (Mount Douglas) and east to the shoreline. Thirty men receive about £79 in blankets. The list of numbered men includes Chee-al-thluc (also known as King Freezy), by many accounts the Songhees' leading chief. ⁸
1858	Section 84 surveyed. ⁹
<i>12 Jan 1859</i>	Diocese of British Columbia established amidst global expansion of British Empire and Church of England (38 new dioceses established between 1814-1859). The

⁴ Ursula Jupp, 'Dunnett Family Farmed on Site of St. Dunstan's Church', *Daily Colonist*, 6 March 1966, <https://britishcolonist.ca/>.

⁵ Jupp.

⁶ Wilson Duff, 'The Fort Victoria Treaties', *BC Studies*, no. 3 (Fall 1969): 14, 40–41.

⁷ 'The Colonization of Vancouver Island, 1849-1858', *BC Studies*, no. 96 (1992): 6.

⁸ Duff, 'The Fort Victoria Treaties', 14, 40–41.

⁹ Vancouver Island House of Assembly, *Minutes of Proceedings*, 37; 'Tracing from the Official Map of Victoria District'.

	Letters Patent creating the Diocese give the Bishop power to hold property on behalf of the church. ¹⁰
3 Feb 1859	Charles Dodd purchases Section 84 from the HBC. ¹¹
1859	By Summer 1859, nearly all of present-day Gordon Head (some 2200 acres) was privately held by thirteen men. ¹²
<i>31 Mar 1866</i>	Legislature of British Columbia removes Indigenous peoples' right to pre-empt land without the permission of the Governor. The prohibition would remain in effect until 1953. ¹³
1883	Section 84 divided among Dodd's seven children. ¹⁴
<i>6 Apr 1889</i>	Anglican Synod of the Diocese of British Columbia incorporated by Act of Provincial Legislature and empowered to acquire, hold, and sell property.
1898	Malcolm Dunnett acquires 10 acres of Section 84, the future site of St. Dunstan's. ¹⁵
1901	Dunnett begins clearing land with the help of Chinese labourers. Mounds of clamshells are found beneath large trees, indicating historic Indigenous use or occupancy. ¹⁶
<i>Early 1920s</i>	Rector of St. Luke's holds services in Gordon Head for a brief period. ¹⁷
<i>1955</i>	Diocese receives donation of land at Hawthorne and Majestic for site of St. Chad's (mission of St. Luke's). A building is purchased from the Dutch Apostolic Church and moved to the site. ¹⁸
<i>1959</i>	Diocese purchases newly cleared land at Feltham Road for site of St. Richard's (mission church of St. Luke's). ¹⁹
<i>16 Jan 1963</i>	Diocese begins examining potential properties near the physical centre of the parishes St. Richard's and St. Chad as step towards their consolidation. ²⁰
<i>Sep 1963</i>	Parish of St. Chad's joins St. Richard's at Feltham Road. ²¹

¹⁰ "Letters Patent of the Bishop of Columbia, 1859" (copy), 85.36, Archives of the Diocese of British Columbia, Victoria, BC (hereafter ADBC); G. Hollis Slate, 'New Light on Herbert Beaver', *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* 6, no. 1 (January 1942): 14.

¹¹ Vancouver Island House of Assembly, *Minutes of Proceedings*, 37.

¹² Jupp, *From Cordwood to Campus*, 7.

¹³ Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990), 41-42, 121.

¹⁴ Jupp, 41.

¹⁵ Jupp, 'Dunnett Family Farmed on Site of St. Dunstan's Church'.

¹⁶ Jupp.

¹⁷ Jupp, *From Cordwood to Campus*, 65.

¹⁸ Letter, Rev. Gordon Walker to Lt. Col. H. Fairfax-Webber (Lay Secretary, ASDBC), 13 Aug 1963, text 63, ADBC; Ursula Jupp, 'Our Church', *Daily Colonist*, 10 December 1972, <https://britishcolonist.ca/>; Jupp, 'Dunnett Family Farmed on Site of St. Dunstan's Church'.

Jupp.

¹⁹ Jupp, 'Our Church'.

²⁰ Letter, Charles E. Craig (Architect) to Rev. Gordon Walker, 16 Jan 1963, text 277.

²¹ Jupp, 'Dunnett Family Farmed on Site of St. Dunstan's Church'.

Circa Nov 1963	Diocese reaches agreement purchase the future site of St. Dunstan's from Charles Dunnett for \$12,900. ²²
Circa 1964-65	Portion of property's east side subdivided into six lots and sold to finance construction of a rectory. ²³
<i>Circa 1964</i>	Roman Catholic Church purchases St. Richard's site from Diocese for \$17,000. ²⁴
<i>6 Feb 1966</i>	First service at the newly consolidated church of St. Dunstan's. ²⁵
<i>6 Mar 1966</i>	St. Dunstan's dedicated. ²⁶
<i>1975</i>	Diocese sells land at Majestic and Hawthorne (former site of St. Chad's).

²² Agreement between Charles Andrew Dunnett and the Anglican Synod of the Diocese of BC, 1963, 2001-24, ADBC; Letter, Copeman and Henderson (Barristers and Solicitors) to the Diocesan Lay Secretary, 14 Nov 1963, text 277.

²³ Katherine Ellis and Angela McIndoe, eds., *Forged by Faith: St. Dunstan's Jubilee Book* (Victoria: UVic Printing Services, 2007), 7.

²⁴ Letter, Ven. A.E. Hendy (Parish of Gordon Head) to Lt. Col. H. Fairfax-Webber (Lay Secretary, ASDBC), 23 Jan 1963; Ellis and McIndoe, 8.

²⁵ Jupp, 'Dunnett Family Farmed on Site of St. Dunstan's Church'.

²⁶ Jupp.

Figures

Figure 1. Map showing current extent St. Dunstan's Gordon Head property.

PMBC Parcel Cadastre 000074926, iMapBC, Province of British Columbia.

Figure 2. Map showing allotment of sections in what is now Gordon Head, including Section 84 (LXXXIV).

"Tracing from the Official Map of Victoria District," 1858, Land Title and Survey Authority Maps, University of Victoria Libraries: https://vault.library.uvic.ca/concern/generic_works/61fb615e-a8e1-432c-910a-847dfa1416a5

Figure 3. Map showing ground cover and allotment of sections in what is now Gordon Head, including Section 84 (LXXXIV).

"Map of Victoria and part of Esquimalt Districts, 1861," 1861, Day & Son, CO 700/BRITISH COLUMBIA10, *The Colonial Despatches of Vancouver Island and British Columbia 1846-1871*, Edition 2.4, ed. James Hendrickson and the Colonial Despatches project (Victoria: University of Victoria): https://bcgenesis.uvic.ca/co_700-bc_10_vic_and_esqui_1861.html

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