

Church of the Good Shepherd, Lasqueti Island

Prepared by Jesse Robertson (February 29, 2024; revised April 24, 2024)

Property Acquisition

Address	[None identified]
Legal description	LOT 3, SECTION 31, LASQUETI ISLAND, NANAIMO DISTRICT, PLAN 8885
First private landholder	Corporal Richard Prowse received a Crown Grant to the northeast quarter of Section 31 in 1889.
Diocesan acquisition	Land donated to the Columbia Coast Mission in 1952; Anglican Diocese of British Columbia receives title in 1970.

Narrative Overview

The Church of the Good Shepherd is located on Lasqueti Island (Xwe'etay) in the territories of various Coast Salish and Kwakwaka'wakw peoples (Figures 1 and 2). Indigenous groups connected to Xwe'etay include, but are not limited to, Halalt First Nation, K'ómoks First Nation, Lyackson First Nation, Penelakut Tribe, Qualicum First Nation, shíshálh Nation, Snaw-Naw-As Nation, Stz'uminus First Nation, Tla'amin Nation, Ts'uubaa-asatx Nation, and Wei Wai Kum.¹

Corporal Richard Prowse attained a Crown Grant to the northeast quarter of Section 31 in 1889 (Figure 3).² The land was acquired by the Lasqueti Land Company before 1952 when the section was subdivided and granted to the Columbia Coast Mission for \$1.00 (Figure 4).³ The Columbia Coast Mission transferred title to the Anglican Diocese of British Columbia in 1970.⁴

Interpretive Summary

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

⇒ This land was granted to a private individual in 1889, decades before it was held by the Columbia Coast Mission (1952) or Diocese of British Columbia (1970). The parcel, surrounding land, and nearby waterfront were subject to numerous interventions during this period, including overgrazing,

¹ The Xwe'etay/Lasqueti Archaeology Project describes “at least 14 First Nation groups with connections” to the island, of which five (Halalt, K'ómoks, Qualicum, Tla'amin, and Wei Wai Kum) are listed as current participants. In preparing a management plan for Salish View Nature Reserve (Lasqueti Island), the Islands Trust Conservancy sent letters to Halalt, Lyackson, Penelakut, Qualicum, shíshálh, Snaw-Naw-As, Stz'uminus, Tla'amin, and Ts'uubaa-asatx. Carrina Maslovat, Laura Matthias, and Islands Trust Conservancy, ‘Salish View Nature Reserve Management Plan, Lasqueti Island, BC’, 2020, 47, <https://islandstrust.bc.ca/document/salish-view-management-plan/>; Lasqueti/Xwe'etay Archaeology Project, ‘Home Page’, Lasqueti/Xwe'etay Archaeology Project, n.d., <https://www.lasquetiarc.ca>.

² Crown Grant Image G00310556002, NE1/4, Section 31, Lasqueti Island, Nanaimo District, Government Access tool for Online Retrieval (GATOR): [https://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/pls/gator/gator\\$queryforms.menu](https://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/pls/gator/gator$queryforms.menu)

³ Plan of the Subdivision of parts of the North-East & South-East 1/4s of Section 31, Lasqueti Island, Nanaimo District, British Columbia, approved 12 Feb 1952, 2001-24, Archives of the Diocese of British Columbia (ADBC), Victoria, BC; Indenture, Lasqueti Land Company to Columbia Coast Mission, 12 Sep 1952, file 10, box 12, reel A00966, PR-1311 Columbia Coast Mission fonds, British Columbia Archives (BCA), Victoria, BC; Elda Copley Mason, *Lasqueti Island: History and Memory* (Lantzville, BC: Byron Mason, 1976), 207.

⁴ Copy of Certificate of Indefeasible Title, 27 Jul 1970, ADBC.

introduction of invasive species, mining, cannery operations, road construction, and forestry. Diocesan ownership of this land did not contribute directly to the historical dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their territory.

⇒ The alienation of land from the Crown has been a central factor limiting Indigenous access to land in BC. Today, private property is considered “off the table” for Aboriginal treaty negotiations, such as those currently being pursued by nations with ties to Lasqueti Island (see below). Arrangements and/or transfers from private landowners will likely be required for these and other nations to regain stewardship and/or ownership over privatized lands.

⇒ The property may present an opportunity to advance Indigenous access to significant cultural sites. Numerous archaeological sites, including middens, cleared beaches, and a large fish trap have been recorded in the False Bay area. The spit of land separating False Bay from China Cloud Bay (or Mud Bay) was once a major Indigenous settlement, forming one of the largest communities on the island. Church of the Good Shepherd is located immediately inland from this spit, less than 200 metres from False and China Cloud bays.

Historical Context

Lying in the middle of the Strait of Georgia, Xwe’etay/Lasqueti Island has been the site of permanent Indigenous settlements and a regional hub for travel and trade, as demonstrated by the numerous groups with ongoing connections to the island, and by obsidian (volcanic glass) found locally that can be traced to mainland British Columbia and as far away as Oregon and Idaho.⁵

The Church of the Good Shepherd sits in an area with extensive evidence of Indigenous use and occupancy. The Xwe’etay/Lasqueti Archaeology Project describes False Bay (Figure 5) as a carefully managed marine harvesting site featuring cleared beaches (e.g. to increase clam productivity) and a large fish trap. The bay was “lined with ancient settlements” constructed on raised shell midden platforms.⁶ The spit separating False Bay from China Cloud Bay (or Mud Bay) is described as supporting one of these settlements, “probably the home of a huge number of people, forming one of the largest communities on the island.”⁷ Church of the Good Shepherd is located immediately inland from this spit, less than 200 metres from False and China Cloud bays. Archaeologist Dana Lepofsky describes two large middens at the end of Pemberton Road, one of which may have been used as lookout and/or fortification site.⁸

Xwe’etay/Lasqueti Island appears to have suffered from devastating smallpox epidemics that spread through the region between the late-1780s and early-1860s.⁹ Still, there are indications that Indigenous people continued to visit the island in the early settlement period. One early settler spoke

⁵ Lasqueti/Xwe’etay Archaeology Project, ‘Obsidian and Ancient Trade Relations on Xwe’etay’, Lasqueti/Xwe’etay Archaeology Project, accessed 12 February 2024, <https://www.lasquetiarc.ca/about>.

⁶ Lasqueti/Xwe’etay Archaeology Project, ‘Summer 2022 Recap’, Lasqueti/Xwe’etay Archaeology Project, 2022, <https://www.lasquetiarc.ca/summer-2022-research>.

⁷ Dana Lepofsky, ‘Settlement Visits’, Lasqueti/Xwe’etay Archaeology Project, September 2021, <https://www.lasquetiarc.ca/sept-2021-field>.

⁸ Dana Lepofsky, ‘An Archaeologist’s View of False Bay’, n.d., 2, https://lasqueti.ca/files/an_archaeologists_view_of_false_bay2.pdf.

⁹ Lepofsky, 1.

with Indigenous people when they passed or stopped at the island around the turn of the century (c. 1900) and described there once being a “potlatch house [...] owned by the Pentlatch Indians.”¹⁰

The first settler arrived by the 1860s, raising sheep to feed Nanaimo’s growing population. These were the first of several introduced animals that changed local ecology through overgrazing.¹¹ Settlers continued to arrive following the survey of the island in 1875.¹² Corporal Richard Prowse purchased several lots, including the northeast quarter of Section 31 (Figure 3).¹³ Substantial economic activities took place in this area in subsequent decades, including mining, canning, and logging operations.¹⁴ The Main Road along the west side of the island was surveyed in 1919 and paved in the 1940s. Numerous ancestral remains were removed or destroyed at the latter date when labourers dug up middens for use in road surfacing.¹⁵

Ownership of the land had transferred to the Lasqueti Land Company by 1952 when a subdivided parcel was donated to the Columbia Coast Mission (Figure 4).¹⁶ Incorporated as a society in 1907, the Columbia Coast Mission (CCM) was founded by the dioceses of British Columbia and New Westminster to provide medical care and education to remote logging camps and coastal settlements.¹⁷ The need for such services shifted in the post-war period, however, as improvements in transportation (roads, speedboats, air travel) and communications (radio and telephone) reduced the isolation of coastal communities. One-time labour camps had grown into permanent settlements, whose spiritual needs might be better met by permanent parishes than mission ships.

By 1962, superintendent Rev. Patrick Ellis reported a “lack of men, money and facilities” to adapt to this changing context.¹⁸ The following year, Rev. Ellis proposed transferring CCM holdings to its founding dioceses.¹⁹ Accordingly, in 1980, the CCM transferred title to the Church of Good Shepherd to the Diocese of British Columbia.²⁰

¹⁰ The Pentlatch people are today part of K’ómoks First Nation. Mason, *Lasqueti Island*, 3.

¹¹ Douglas L. Hamilton and Darlene Olesko, *Accidental Eden: Hippie Days on Lasqueti Island* (Halfmoon Bay, BC: Caitlin Press, 2014), 27–28.

¹² Mason, *Lasqueti Island*, 3–5.

¹³ Crown Grant Image G00310556002, NE1/4, Section 31, Lasqueti Island, Nanaimo District, GATOR: [https://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/pls/gator/gator\\$queryforms.menu](https://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/pls/gator/gator$queryforms.menu)

¹⁴ *Lasqueti Island*, 42–43, 45, 98, 192–93.

¹⁵ Mason, 73; Dana Lepofsky, ‘Coast Salish Ancient Burial Practices’, Lasqueti/Xwe’etay Archaeology Project, accessed 12 February 2024, <https://www.lasquetiarc.ca/about>.

¹⁶ Indenture, Lasqueti Land Company to Columbia Coast Mission, 12 Sep 1952, file 10, box 12, reel A00966, PR-1311 Columbia Coast Mission fonds, BCA; Plan of the Subdivision of parts of the North-East & South-East 1/4s of Section 31, Lasqueti Island, Nanaimo District, British Columbia, approved 12 Feb 1952, 2001-24, ADBC; Mason, *Lasqueti Island*, 207.

¹⁷ Michael L. Hadley, *God’s Little Ships: A History of the Columbia Coast Mission* (Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing, 1995), 30–31.

¹⁸ Hadley, 247–48.

¹⁹ Hadley, 255.

²⁰ Copy of Certificate of Indefeasible Title, 27 Jul 1970, ADBC.

Indigenous Presence and Land Use

Languages	Hul'qumi'num; she shashishalhem; Comox, or Éy7á7juuthem; pent'lach (Coast Salish) Liq'wala (Kwak'wala)
Governance	Halalt First Nation, Hul'quminum Treaty Group, K'ómoks First Nation, Lyackson First Nation, Penelakut Tribe, Qualicum First Nation, shíshálh (Sechelt) Nation, Snaw-Naw-As (Nanoose) Nation, Stz'uminus (Chemainus) First Nation, Tla'amin Nation, Ts'uubaa-asatx (Lake Cowichan) Nation, Wei Wai Kum, and Wei Wai Kum/Kwiakah Treaty Society, and others ²¹
Land use	<p>The surrounding area shows extensive evidence of Indigenous use and occupancy. The Xwe'etay/Lasqueti Archaeology Project describes False Bay (Figure 5) as "lined with ancient settlements" constructed on raised shell midden platforms, and host to numerous interventions in the adjacent intertidal zone, including cleared beaches (e.g. to increase clam productivity) and a large fish trap.</p> <p>The spit of land separating False Bay from China Cloud Bay (or Mud Bay) is described as supporting one of these settlements, "probably the home of a huge number of people, forming one of the largest communities on the island."²² Church of the Good Shepherd is located immediately inland from this spit, less than 200 metres from False and China Cloud bays.</p> <p>Inland activity included plant harvesting and hunting. Xwe'etay is the Coast Salish word for "yew tree," and referred to the abundance of such trees on the island.²³ Archaeologist Dana Lepofsky has found evidence of Douglas Fir harvesting in the post-contact period.²⁴ The 1875 survey described the surrounding area as featuring cedar, fir, alder, salal and ferns.²⁵</p>
Archaeological data	<p>The Archaeology Branch of British Columbia has not recorded any archaeological sites on the property.</p> <p>The Xwe'etay/Lasqueti Archaeology Project has recorded numerous archaeological features in the immediate area (see above). Archaeologist Dana Lepofsky has noted two large middens at the end of Pemberton Road</p>

²¹ The Xwe'etay/Lasqueti Archaeology Project describes "at least 14 First Nation groups with connections" to the island, of which five are listed as current participants. In preparing a management plan for Salish View Nature Reserve (Lasqueti Island), the Islands Trust Conservancy sent letters to an overlapping group of nine nations. Maslovat, Matthias, and Islands Trust Conservancy, 'Salish View Nature Reserve Management Plan', 47; Lasqueti/Xwe'etay Archaeology Project, 'Home Page'.

²² Lepofsky, 'Settlement Visits'.

²³ Dana Lepofsky, 'Lasqueti's Coast Salish Name', Lasqueti.ca, 17 December 2020, <https://lasqueti.ca/archaeological-heritage/xweetay>.

²⁴ Dana Lepofsky, 'Douglas Fir CMTs', Lasqueti/Xwe'etay Archaeology Project, accessed 12 February 2024, <https://www.lasquetiarc.ca/about>.

²⁵ "Lasqueti Island," FB22/1875, PH1, Land Title and Survey Authority of British Columbia.

	(immediately northwest of the property), one of which may have been used as lookout and/or fortification site. ²⁶ Many archaeological sites were disrupted or destroyed when Main Road was paved in the 1940s. ²⁷
Historic treaties	None
Modern treaties	The Tla'amin Final Agreement went into effect on April 5, 2016. K'ómoks First Nation, Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group (including Halalt First Nation, Lyackson First Nation, Penelakut Tribe, and Ts'uubaa-asatx Nation), Te'mexw Treaty Association (including Snaw'naw'as Nation), and Wei Wai Kum/Kwiakah Treaty Society (including Wei Wai Kum) are currently in Stage 5 of the BC Treaty Process (Final Agreement Negotiations). shísháhlh Nation is currently in Stage 4 of the BC Treaty Process (Agreement-in-Principle negotiations). Qualicum First Nation and Stz'uminus First Nation are engaged in discussions with the Province outside the BC Treaty Process.

Timeline

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

Date	Details
<i>Late-1700s</i>	Smallpox spreads through the Strait of Georgia with devastating impacts on Indigenous populations. ²⁸
<i>13 Jan 1849</i>	HBC awarded ten-year charter for the “advancement of colonization” on the Colony of Vancouver Island.
<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 Letters Patent creating the Diocese give the Bishop power to hold property on behalf of the church. ²⁹
<i>c. 1860s</i>	First settler arrives on Lasqueti Island by the 1860s, raising sheep to feed Nanaimo's growing population. ³⁰
<i>1862</i>	A new wave of smallpox spreads through the Strait of Georgia with devastating impacts on Coast Salish and Kwakwaka'wakw populations. ³¹

²⁶ Lepofsky, 'An Archaeologist's View of False Bay', 2.

²⁷ Lepofsky, 'Coast Salish Ancient Burial Practices'.

²⁸ Lepofsky, 'An Archaeologist's View of False Bay', 1; Robert Boyd, *The Coming of the Spirit of Pestilence: Introduced Infectious Diseases and Population Decline among Northwest Coast Indians, 1774-1874* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 30–31.

²⁹ “Letters Patent of the Bishop of Columbia, 1859” (copy), 85.36, ADBC; G. Hollis Slater, 'New Light on Herbert Beaver', *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* 6, no. 1 (January 1942): 14.

³⁰ Mason, *Lasqueti Island*, 3–5.

³¹ Boyd, *The Coming of the Spirit of Pestilence*, 188–90.

31 Mar 1866	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. ³²
Before 1875	Corporal Richard Prowse, formerly among British forces on San Juan Island, moves to Lasqueti. ³³
Aug-Nov 1875	Lasqueti Island surveyed and divided into sections. The surveyor describes the section line nearest to the church site as featuring cedar, fir, alder, salal and ferns. ³⁴
c. 1880	"Old Bill Mine" opened on China Cloud Bay. Around 20 tons of ore are removed. ³⁵
6 Apr 1889	Anglican Synod of the Diocese of British Columbia incorporated by Act of Provincial Legislature and empowered to acquire, hold, and sell property.
11 Apr 1889	Corporal Prowse attains a Crown Grant to the northeast quarter of Section 31. ³⁶
1907	Columbia Coast Mission (CCM) incorporated as a society to provide medical care and education to logging camps and coastal settlements. ³⁷
1915	False Bay Fishing and Canning Company established, spurring modest population growth on the western side of the island. Cannery production slows with declining demand after World War One. ³⁸
c. 1934	CCM begins holding intermittent meetings in schoolhouses on Lasqueti Island. ³⁹
1936	Rev. Alan Greene (CCM) makes first of many visits to Lasqueti Island, presiding at monthly services, christenings, marriages, and burials, and transporting individuals to and from the mission hospital at Pender Harbour. ⁴⁰
1938	Rev. Greene proposes establishing a parish on Lasqueti Island. ⁴¹
1940s	Middens and ancestral remains disrupted with the paving of Main Road (adjacent to the future church site). ⁴²
After 1945	New means of extraction and a demand for all kinds of timber spur a logging boom on Lasqueti Island, including False Bay. ⁴³

³² Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990), 41–42, 121.

³³ Mason, *Lasqueti Island*, 5.

³⁴ "Lasqueti Island," FB22/1875, PH1, Land Title and Survey Authority of British Columbia; Mason, 3.

³⁵ Mason, 45.

³⁶ Crown Grant Image G00310556002, NE1/4, Section 31, Lasqueti Island, Nanaimo District, GATOR: [https://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/pls/gator/gator\\$queryforms.menu](https://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/pls/gator/gator$queryforms.menu)

³⁷ Hadley, *God's Little Ships: A History of the Columbia Coast Mission*, 30–31.

³⁸ Mason, *Lasqueti Island*, 42–45.

³⁹ In 1970, Rev. Alan Greene wrote that Lasqueti was served by CCM ships "from the year 1934 or thereabouts." Elda Mason suggests that the Rev. Sydney Holmes visited Lasqueti aboard the Columbia Coast Mission ship *Fredna* from 1927 to 1932. Rev. Alan Greene to Bishop Gartrell, 30 Nov 1970, 2001-24, ADBC; Mason, 136.

⁴⁰ Rev. Greene to Bishop Gartrell, 30 Nov 1970, 2001-24, ADBC; Mason, 161–62.

⁴¹ Hadley, *God's Little Ships: A History of the Columbia Coast Mission*, 86.

⁴² Mason, *Lasqueti Island*, 73; Lepofsky, 'Coast Salish Ancient Burial Practices'.

⁴³ Mason, *Lasqueti Island*, 192–93.

1949	Lasqueti Land Company formed to manage former settler John Stapleton Grey Pemberton's landholdings on the east side of the island. ⁴⁴
12 Feb 1952	Lasqueti Land Company subdivides northeast quarter of Section 31. ⁴⁵
12 Sep 1952	Lasqueti Land Company grants Lot 3, Section 31 to the Columbia Coast Mission for \$1.00. ⁴⁶
<i>27 Sep 1953</i>	Bishop Godfrey Gower (Diocese of New Westminster) dedicates Church of the Good Shepherd. ⁴⁷
<i>1963</i>	Lacking the "men, money, and resources" to adapt to the changing needs of post-war coastal settlements, superintendent Rev. Patrick Ellis proposes transferring CCM holdings to its founding dioceses. ⁴⁸
27 Jul 1970	CCM transfers Lot 3, Section 31 to the Diocese of British Columbia. The value of land was estimated at \$500. ⁴⁹
3 Oct 1980	Unlocked church building, in general disuse by Diocese, employed "for [unsanctioned] living accommodation every summer by various transients." ⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Mason, 194.

⁴⁵ Plan of the Subdivision of parts of the North-East & South-East 1/4s of Section 31, Lasqueti Island, Nanaimo District, British Columbia, approved 12 Feb 1952, 2001-24, ADBC; Mason, 207.

⁴⁶ Indenture, Lasqueti Land Company to Columbia Coast Mission, 12 Sep 1952, file 10, box 12, reel A00966, PR-1311 Columbia Coast Mission fonds, BCA.

⁴⁷ Some secondary sources give the date as 27 Sep 1952. Rev. Greene to Bishop Gartrell, 30 Nov 1970, 2001-24, ADBC; Mason, *Lasqueti Island*, 207.

⁴⁸ Hadley, *God's Little Ships: A History of the Columbia Coast Mission*, 247-48, 255.

⁴⁹ Copy of Certificate of Indefeasible Title, 27 Jul 1970; D.S. Mitchell (Lay Secretary) to H.L. Henderson (Harman & Co.), 20 Jul 1970, 2001-24, ADBC.

⁵⁰ Ted Smith to J.W.B. McPherrin, 8 Oct 1980, 2001-24, ADBC.

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