

#### V. Traditional Big House

Completed May 1966, the Alert Bay Big House is modeled on the traditional residences of the Kwakwaka'wakw. This building is primarily used for potlaches. The Big House was enlarged and repainted c. 1987, at which time 'Namgis artist, Doug Cranmer, designed the extended house front. The Big House was lost to fire on August 29, 1997. The Grand opening of the new Big House was held May 29-30, 1999.



#### W. Janet's Guest House

Is owned by Janet Boon. The house was built in 1910, it was first owned by Emma & James Blackstone. Elbert, their son loved Alert Bay. James worked in the local saw mill.



# Your Guide to Historic Alert Bay



## **"Home of the Killer Whale"**

**See: U'mista Cultural Centre  
World's Tallest Totem Pole  
T'sasala Cultural Group (July & August)  
Alert Bay Ecological Park  
Historic Anglican Church  
and much much more**



Welcome to Alert Bay! We hope you will enjoy your visit to our community. This tour is designed to direct visitors to major points of interest and historic sites. For those who would like a ride we have 40K Taxi & Charters 250-974-5525.



#### A. Alert Bay Visitor Centre

The Municipal Hall (incorporated in 1946) occupied this building until December 1998. In 1998 the Library-Museum moved in. Then in 2013 it became the Alert Bay Visitor Centre. A collection of paintings by artist Chris Nancarrow depicts a year and a day of life along Front Street and Fir Street. These paintings were purchased by the Village of Alert Bay in 1987, for display purposes in the Visitor Centre.

#### A. Alert Bay Library-Museum

Echoing the Municipal Hall's recent past was a Fire Hall. This building continues to feature a tower on which the fire hoses were formerly hung to dry. In 1986-87 the space that once housed the fire truck was renovated to be the Visitor Centre, then in 2013 it became the Alert Bay Library-Museum. The Museum and archival collection now includes more than 7,900 catalogued historic and modern photographs of Alert Bay and area. They are organized into categories such as St. George's Hospital, Churches, street scenes and people. There are several exhibits of paintings and carvings by local artists, artifacts from local business, etc. The Alert Bay Public Library has a large collection open to the residents of Cormorant Island. Along with the present book collection there is access to books from other libraries in BC.



#### B. The Old Customs House Lodgings

Constructed in 1917, this building has been home to Canada Customs, a telephone exchange, CN telegraph outlet and Calico & Lace Tearoom. It is now the Old Customs House Lodgings.



#### C. Formerly the Court House

This building was constructed in 1923. It was designed for the BC Provincial Police, complete with living quarters, office and lock-up. The duties of the Provincial Police force were assumed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in 1950. The building used to serve as the community's Court House. It is now privately owned.

#### S. ABC Wharf

Dated to c. 1949, this building was formerly a company store for the net loft, owned by the Anglo British Columbia Packing Company. It is now owned by the 'Namgis First Nation and used as a net loft for its band members.



#### T. U'mista Cultural Centre

Central to Northwest Coast First Nations cultures, the ceremony of the Potlatch was outlawed by the Dominion Government in 1884. Thereafter, these ceremonies, which mark important occasions such as: births, marriages, deaths, or the transfer of names, etc. were forced underground. In 1921, forty-five people were charged with taking part in a large Potlatch on Village Island. Ceremonial regalia including coppers, masks, rattles and whistles were confiscated and distributed amongst museums and private collections throughout North America. The mandate of U'mista is to repatriate these artifacts. To date they have seen considerable success, although their efforts are ongoing. Much of the repatriated collection is now on display at the Cultural Centre. Also featured are traveling exhibits, a collection of documentaries dealing with Potlatch prohibition and cultural survival as well as a giftshop boasting a wide variety of works by Kwakwaka'wakw artists.



#### U. Former 'Namgis House (1975) St. Michael's Residential School (1929)

Originally built in 1929, just one of BC's numerous residential schools. These schools were designed as much to inculcate native children with Anglo-European beliefs and values as they were to provide them with a basic education. Prior to the construction of "St. Mike's", designed for a capacity of 200 students, boys and girls had been accommodated in two separate buildings. In addition to regular academic subjects, the curriculum included carpentry, boat building and farming. During the 1950's, the school was virtually self-sufficient with its own farm, herd of cattle, water and electrical plant. The St. Mike's was one of the last residential schools to close in the early 1970's. The building was turned over to the 'Namgis First Nation in April, 1975. February 15, 2015 demolition of this building started and was completed by mid April 2015. May 18, 2015 'Namgis members had a blessing of the Land ceremony.



### O. Former site of BC Packers Plant

Constructed in 1870 as a Fish Saltery then in 1881 was changed into a Fish Cannery, in 1902 was purchased by BC Packers. The canning of fish took place until 1941. The Plant has seen several additions over the years. A wharf for example was constructed in 1916. The last of the existing buildings that make up the old cannery was completed prior to 1950. Instrumental in the establishment of a settled community in Alert Bay the cannery store further provided an outlet for the monthly mail service in effect in 1890. In 1949, the Federal Government contracted a more formal arrangement to lease a space for a post office in the cannery store. BC Packers has since pulled out of our community. The building was taken down January 2003.



### P. Council Hall

This building was first established as the Alert Bay Indian Day School in 1900, with Mrs. Paterson Hall, the Reverend Hall's wife, as its first teacher. During the Potlatch Trials of 1922, the building was temporarily co-opted as a lock-up for Kwakwaka'wakw elders accused of participating in the Village Island potlatch (see U'mista brochure for more information). The Day School was eventually closed in 1947, when new classrooms were built near what is now a soccer field. The following year the school was renovated and subsequently re-opened as a Council Hall. Bingo's and other fundraising efforts are among the activities for which the building is now used.



### Q. Christ Church-Anglican

So as to secure a permanent workforce on the Island, saltery founders Spencer and Huson persuaded the Reverend James Hall to relocate his newly established mission from Fort Rupert to Alert Bay. By 1878, the construction of mission house was complete. The church itself was built under the

supervision of Reverend Hall and held its first service on Christmas Day 1892. Service was conducted in both English and Kwak'wala. Reverend Hall's memory is preserved in the stained glass window above the altar. The "Cook Window" depicts Jesus at the helm of a fishing boat, the "CN", and is inscribed, "I will make you fishers of men." A more recent addition, the Centennial Window commemorates the church's first one hundred years. Scenes from this era depicted in the window include: Christ Church itself, the former St. Michael's residential school, St. George's Hospital, the mission ship Columbia and a 'Namgis canoe, the first mode of transportation used by Reverend Hall in these parts.

### D. Former site of the St. George's Hospital and Nurse's Residence

St. George's Hospital is no longer in existence. It was tucked behind the old nurse's residence. The original hospital, constructed in 1909, was lost to fire. St. George's was the 3rd hospital building to occupy this locale. This building was lost to fire June 10, 2004. Our new Cormorant Island Health Centre opened its doors March 2002 and is located behind the U'mista Cultural Centre.



### E. St. George's Chapel

Designed by S.M. Evenlight, this chapel was built in 1925, as a memorial to Mrs. Paterson Hall. Upon her retirement as President to the Ladies Auxiliary of the Church of England, Mrs. Hall was awarded an honorarium. She in turn donated the funds to the Columbia Coast Mission for the construction of the chapel. The furnishings were a gift from Mrs. Georgina McPennell, also of the Montreal Diocesan Women's Auxiliary and the Toronto Auxiliary Babies Branch donated the baptismal font. The organ came from the Anglican Parish Hall. Also kept in the chapel is the former St. Michael's School Bible, dated 1850. The chapel is located next to the century old Christ Church-Anglican.

### F. 'Namgis Original Burial Grounds

Memorial totem poles marking some of the graves in this century-old burial ground commemorate deceased members of the Kwakwaka'wakw. Figures on the totem poles depict family crests (see booklet on Totem Poles, available at the Alert Bay Visitor Centre).





### G. Alert Bay Shipyards

Dated to 1908, the original Shipyard was started by Spencer and Huson, son of one of Alert Bay's first permanent settlers. An adjacent machine shop was built and operated by Dick May who arrived in Alert Bay c. 1920. The boat shed was originally owned by a family of Japanese boat builders until their forced deportation from the coast in accordance with the Canadian Government's relocation policy during World War II.



### I The May House

This house was built in 1925-26, by Dick May for his German bride. Fir Street did not extend this far at that time.

### J. Former Methodist Church

Built in 1913, this building became the first United Church in Alert Bay. In 1946, it was taken over by the Pentecostal Mission.



### K. Nimpkish Hotel

Originally built on 'Namgis First Nation land in 1920, its owners Moses Alfred and the McJanet's were denied a license to operate a beer parlour and hotel because they were on First Nation land. Moses sold his share of the business to the McJanet's and in 1925; they decided to relocate the building by barge to its current location so they could obtain a license.

### L. Alert Bay Lodge

This building was formerly the Alert Bay United Church constructed from a panabode kit. The church was built in 1961, with a loan plus a grant from the Board of Home Missions to replace the building ceded to the Pentecostal Mission. During much of the 1980s, the church was without a resident minister. The congregation was served until 1989, by Reverend Don Eisner who would fly his own small plane to various communities such as: Alert Bay & Mahatta River to provide services & religious counseling. By the latter part of the decade the congregation had dwindled to a mere trickle and the United Church decided to pull out of Alert Bay altogether. Renovations for the conversion of the church into an accommodation took place in 1991.

### M. Alert Bay Ecological Park

A natural swamp fed by an underground spring. It provided an especially useful water source for entrepreneurs Spencer and Huson's fish cannery in 1881 (formerly Fish Saltery 1870). When a dam was built halfway up the hill to store water for the cannery it caused the springs at the top of the hill to flood the surrounding area, thus killing the trees. Nonetheless, these tall naked trees provide much-favoured perches for bald eagles and ravens. The Village of Alert Bay has since built a boardwalk through the swamp and three nature trails provide access through the surrounding forest area.



### N. Our Lady of Assumption Church

In 1863, the first Catholic missionaries were sent to establish a mission among the Kwakwaka'wakw. The mission of the assumption was founded in Fort Rupert in August 1863. Having relocated to Harbledown Island, the missionaries discovered they were not welcome and subsequently abandoned the mission in 1874. It was more than half a century later in 1943, before Our Lady of Assumption Chapel was constructed to serve the Catholic citizens of Alert Bay. The first service was held on Easter Sunday of that year, by Father J.L. Bradley, who was later a Bishop.



**Restaurants**

**Hours may change without notice.  
Please contact them directly**

Bayside Grill 81 Fir Street 250-974-3101	8:00 AM-2:00 PM 4:00 PM-8:00 PM Daily
Shop Rite Deli 99 Fir Street 250-974-2777	9:00 AM-4:30 PM Monday 9:00 AM-5:00 PM Tuesday-Saturday
<b>May Close Lunch 1:30 PM-2 PM</b> <b>may close early if short staffed</b>	
Gordie's Restaurant & Lounge 4 Maple Road 250-974-2670	12:00 PM-2:00 PM 4:00 PM-8:00 PM Tuesday-Saturday
Orca Inn 291 Fir Street 250-228-4959	5:00 PM-9:00 PM Wednesday-Saturday
Nimpkish Hotel & Restaurant 318 Fir Street 250-792-3565	4:30 PM-8:30 PM Friday-Sunday Dining Room (sit) 4:30 AM-8:30 PM Daily Take Out
Duchess' Bannock & Dessert 50 Broughton Street 250-974-8216	Stay tuned for new hours at new location
Culture Shock 010 Front Street 250-974-2848	<b>Shock Style Java &amp; Smoothies (drinks only)</b> 12:00 PM-4:30 PM Tuesday to Saturday

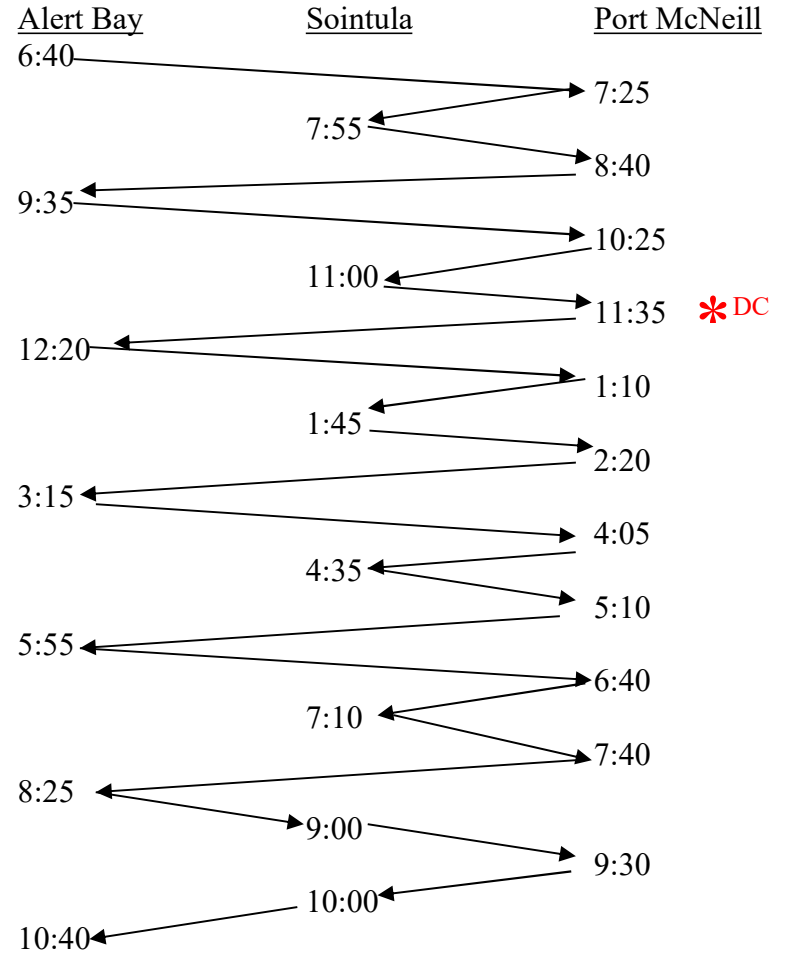
**Showers: you must supply own towel, soap, etc.**

Alert Bay Campground-----**Open: April to September**

**Phone: 250-974-5213**  
**Monday to Friday 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM**

**BC Ferry Schedule**

Aurora Capacity 47 Vehicles 142 Passengers



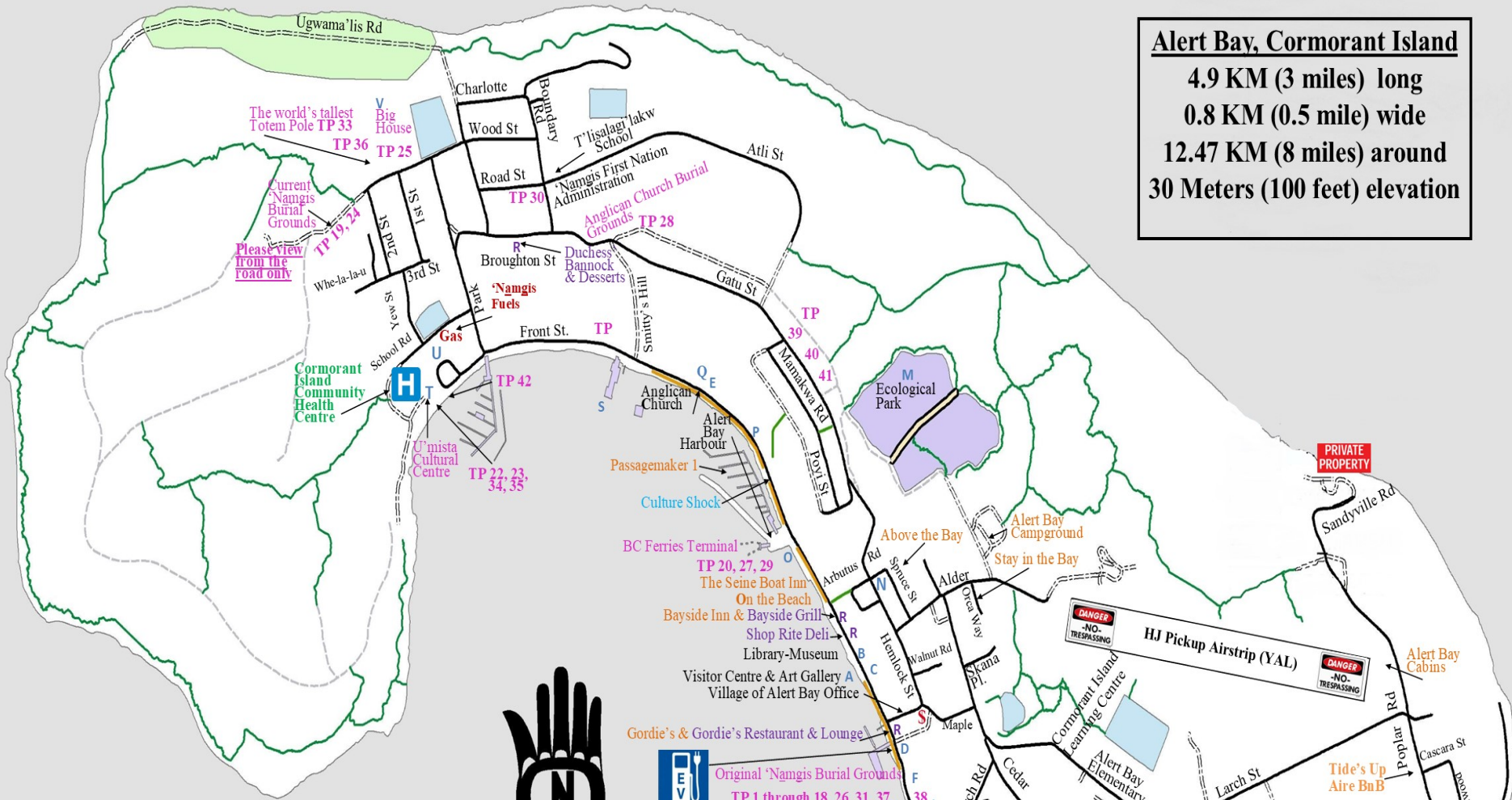
Note: **Sunday's only**, Aurora will depart Alert Bay at 6:40 AM and go to Sointula and depart at 7:10 AM  
For more information call: 1-877-222-1949

**\*DC-Dangerous Cargo days no passengers are permitted on the Ferry**  
**DC Runs that affect Alert Bay every other Tuesday:**

2024: Jan 9, 23	2024: Aug 6, 20	2025 Mar 4, 18
Feb 6, 20	Sep 3, 17	Apr 1, 15, 29
Mar 5, 19	Oct 1, 15, 29	May 13, 27
Apr 2, 16, 30	Nov 12, 26	Jun 10, 24
May 14, 28	Dec 10, 24	Jul 8, 22
Jun 11, 25	2025: Jan 7, 21	Aug 5, 19
Jul 9, 23	Feb 4, 18	Sep 2, 16, 30



**Alert Bay, Cormorant Island**  
 4.9 KM (3 miles) long  
 0.8 KM (0.5 mile) wide  
 12.47 KM (8 miles) around  
 30 Meters (100 feet) elevation



**Alphabet-** Matches Pictures and Paragraphs in Historic Guide Brochure

**TP-** Totem Pole or Archway # in Totem Pole Guide Brochure

**Accommodations**      \$- VanCity

**R-** Restaurant              Gas-'Namgis Fuels

**H** - Hospital

**Paved Streets:** —————  
 are on google maps

**Trails:** —————  
 are not on google maps

Gravel Roads: - - - - -  
 Gravel Roads: - - - - -  
 - - - - -

**EV** Original 'Namgis Burial Grounds  
 TP 1 through 18, 26, 31, 37,  
 Please view from the road only

**DANGER NO-TRESPASSING**  
 HJ Pickup Airstrip (YAL)  
**DANGER NO-TRESPASSING**